tial enemies, reducing the chances of misperceiving non-hostile acts, and, to some extent, constraining deployments and capabilities that could cause "undue" anxiety about "surprise attack". *Most Confidence-Building Measures, as a consequence, attempt to improve or aid decisions about the correct interpretation of ambiguous acts and information.* Indeed, it is the ultimate objective of virtually all CBMs that potential adversaries not choose the wrong course of action because they misunderstood each other's acts (and, to a lesser extent, intentions). In a very real sense, CBMs can be seen as devices for inserting new sensitivities and concerns into the formal and informal decision-making processes of adversary states.[93] The importance of using a decision making approach in order to understand Confidence-Building is increased considerably by the fact that at least some social science "theories" or "models" of decision-making devote a great deal of attention to the disruptive influence of misperception and cognitive phenomena in decision-making. In fact, it is increasingly the case that academic decision-making thinking pays a considerable amount of attention to the ways in which *various natural cognitive processes interfere with the sound evaluation of information and the rational selection of choice options. THESE ARE ALSO MAJOR CONCERNS RELEVANT TO THE OPERATION OF CBMs.* Although it may not be the usual way of organizing the analysis of CBMs and Confidence-Building thinking, it seems obvious that a decision-making-oriented analytic perspective is both appropriate to and useful for a sound understanding of the Confidence-Building process.[94]

Although it is true that there is no explicit model of the Confidence-Building process in the literature, it is still possible to see in most Confidence-Building thinking the *direct influence* of operating assumptions very similar to those found in social science's dominant decision paradigm – the "Rational Actor Model of Decision". This is most evident in the assumption that *increased information and reduced uncertainty can yield improved understanding of and control over events.* This facilitates "optimal" choices in decision theory and yields reduced chances of misperception, distrust and unintended conflict in Confidence-Building. Further, it is no distortion to view the Confidence-Building process as *a rational effort to control misperception and uncertainty.* To appreciate the ramifications of this, we must look, if only briefly, at rationality and rational decision-making more closely.

Although other analysts had earlier considered the limits of rational choice and rationality in human decision-making models, Graham Allison[95] is generally credited with having moved the issue of rationality in foreign policy decision-making to centre stage for the analytic community. In fact, it is fair to say that he shaped the thinking of an entire generation of analysts. Allison's basic point was simply that different facets of a complex policy reality became visible when one moved away from an exclusive reliance on the traditional analytic framework which assumed that decision-makers made more-or-less rational choices. He sug-

111

---

[93] It is not clear at this stage whether decision-making is merely important to understanding the Confidence-Building process or if it can be said to function at the very core of that process to the same extent that it does, say, in deterrence. The best current treatment of deterrence – Patrick Morgan's *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Beverley Hills: SAGE, 1977) and its 1983 revised edition – makes a very strong case for considering deterrence theory to actually *be* a theory of decision-making. I have argued elsewhere that it is even more useful to consider deterrence to be a neutral procedural framework into which different decision-making process assumptions can be placed. Different assumptions animate the operation of deterrence in different ways. I strongly suspect that some varieties of CBMs are similar to deterrence in this respect while others are more clearly *facilitators* of sound decisions. These are possibilities worthy or further consideration.

[94] John Steinbruner makes an even broader point about the centrality of decision-making to all political analysis in his difficult but thought-provoking book, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision: New Dimensions of Political Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974). He observes: "Since the making and executing of decisions is obviously a major component of what any government does, virtually all political analysis has rested in fact upon assumptions about decision making, ..." p. 7.

[95] *The Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971). This ground-breaking work remains interesting and useful to this day.