

17 November 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Editor, Studies in Intelligence

FROM : David Y. McManis
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT : Proposed Book Review for Publication in
Studies in Intelligence

1. The attached review of Robert Jervis' 1976 book, Perception and Misperception in International Politics has become particularly timely again as world events such as the Korean Air Lines Flight 7 shootdown demonstrate a vastly different view of the world among nations. It should be highlighted to intelligence analysts.

2. Recommend this review be published in an early issue of Studies in Intelligence.


David Y. McManis

Attachment:
As stated (h/w)

A REVIEW OF PERCEPTION AND MISPERCEPTION IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS,
ROBERT JERVIS, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY
1976, 445pp.

THERE ARE FEW EVENTS IN RECENT HISTORY THAT HAVE CRYSTALLIZED PUBLIC OPINION AS THE SHOOTDOWN OF KOREAN AIR LINES FLIGHT 007. THE UNFOLDING OF THOSE EVENTS TOOK A CIRCUITOUS PATH OF UNDERSTANDING FOR MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SINCE REALIZED, PERHAPS SOME FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT THE SOVIETS PERCEIVE THE WORLD MUCH DIFFERENTLY THAN THE U.S. PERCEIVES THE WORLD. WHATEVER THE SPECIFIC REASON FOR SHOOTING DOWN A DEFENSELESS CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT, THE GENERALIZED REASON LIES IN A DIFFERENCE OF SOCIETIES AND A ZENOPHOBIC PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD EMBEDDED IN A BUREAUCRACY LADEN WITH RULES TO MEET MOST SITUATIONS. THE CIRCUMSTANCE POINTS OUT WITH GREAT DEFINITION THAT PERCEPTION IS AS MUCH A FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS IT IS IN PERSONAL RELATIONS. ALTHOUGH NOT NEW, THIS VOLUME BY ROBERT JERVIS FILLS THE BILL AS A WAY TO BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND PERCEPTIONS OF PEOPLE AS DECISION MAKERS IN AN INTERNATIONAL SENSE.

THIS EXCELLENT BOOK SHOULD BE REQUIRED READING FOR EVERY INTELLIGENCE ANALYST. IT COMBINES A SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, HISTORY, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PSYCHOLOGY IN A WAY THAT MAKES IT CLEARLY UNDERSTANDABLE WITH SUBJECTS THAT RELATE DIRECTLY TO INTELLIGENCE INTERESTS.

ROBERT JERVIS USES TOPIC SENTENCES, SUMMARIES, AND LISTED CONCLUSIONS TO MAKE HIS POINTS EASY TO UNDERSTAND. EXAMPLES ABOUND THAT ILLUSTRATE IN A STARK WAY THE PROCESS OF HUMAN

PERCEPTION AND HOW THAT HUMANITY IS TRANSFERRED TO RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS.

THIS VOLUME HAS DIRECT IMPACT ON WARNING. IT EXPLAINS FROM MANY PERSPECTIVES WHY INTELLIGENCE PEOPLE CAN PROVIDE A CORRECT ASSESSMENT THAT IS NOT CORRECTLY PERCEIVED BY THE DECISION MAKER. THE PITFALLS OF INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS INFLUENCED BY PERCEPTIONS ARE ITEMIZED. EVEN THE VISUAL CUES RECEIVED FROM THE MOST GENERALLY ACCEPTED "FACTUAL" SOURCE OF INFORMATION-IMAGERY-TAKE ON A NEW DIMENSION.

THE DISCUSSION PROVIDES FOOD FOR THOUGHT AS ONE ATTEMPTS TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE OF OTHER NATIONS. PROFESSOR JERVIS MAKES A STRONG CASE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCE DURING THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF EARLY ADULthood TO ANALYZE THE IMPACT ON FUTURE DECISIONS. THIS ARGUES FOR THE SOMEWHAT FORGOTTEN PRACTICE OF THOROUGHLY STUDYING THE BACKGROUND OF LEADERS OF POTENTIAL ADVERSARY NATIONS. INTELLIGENCE BIOGRAPHERS--TAKE HEART.

THE READER IS CONSTANTLY CHALLENGED BY THE LOGIC OF HIS EXAMPLES TO ASK WHETHER A DECISION OR AN ANALYSIS HAS USED ALL THE INFORMATION THAT IS AVAILABLE OR WHETHER ONE SUBCONSCIOUSLY LEFT OUT FACTORS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY ARE PART OF A CENTRAL BODY OF EVIDENCE THAT OPENS NEW THEORIES OR ANALYSES. FOR EXAMPLE, EUROPEAN MILITARY PEOPLE DID THAT WHEN ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAVALRY IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.

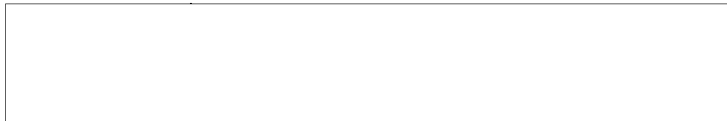
"...MANY EUROPEAN OBSERVERS ATTRIBUTED THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF CAVALRY IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR TO THE UNUSUAL TERRAIN AND THE SOLDIERS' LACK

OF TRAINING, NUMBERS, AND LEADERSHIP. IN THIS WAY
THE EUROPEANS WERE ABLE TO AVOID RECOGNIZING THE
IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW FACTOR THAT WOULD APPEAR IN
THEIR OWN FUTURE WARS--THE GROWTH OF FIREPOWER."

(p.302)

JERVIS HAS IMPORTANT THINGS TO SAY ABOUT ANALYZING EVIDENCE
THAT ARRIVES BIT-BY-BIT AND THE TENDENCY TO FAIL TO LOOK BACK AT
TRENDS OR TO PROJECT TO THE FUTURE. ANALYSIS IS IMPACTED MOST BY
SUDDEN EVENTS; THEREFORE, THE GRADUALLY DEVELOPING SITUATION
LOOMS MORE DANGEROUS BECAUSE WE MAY FAIL TO COMPREHEND ITS
SIGNIFICANCE.

STARK, LOGICAL, HISTORICAL EXAMPLES FILL THIS VOLUME. IT IS
A PRIMER IN PERCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND SHOULD BE REQUIRED
READING FOR ALL INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS.



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