THE WORLD IN THEIR MINDS: INFORMATION PROCESSING, COGNITION, AND PERCEPTION IN FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONMAKING

by Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger

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This is the most comprehensive study yet written of the dynamics that underlie information processing in foreign policy decision-making, the resultant biases and errors, and the implications for the quality of decisions.

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Review

"The World in Their Minds (meaning the perception of those national decisionmakers whose actions affect us all) is a very good title; it is also a very good book... More than anything, this is a compendium of the manifold ways that misperception and, hence, miscalculation can enter into seemingly rational policy choice... The cases of Vietnam for the Americans and the Yom Kippur War for the Israelis constitute the primary data base for the wealth of illustrations cited, but numerous and apt examples are drawn from other pertinent events."

Canadian Public Policy

"An ambitious and virtually encyclopedic... survey of the existing psychological and organizational information-processing literature as it applies to foreign policy decisionmaking. Vertzberger has illustrated it amply with historical examples. For those unfamiliar with the literature, it would make a splendid introductions; for those who are familiar with it, the book provides a useful review and reference."

American Political Science Review

"Excellent... Strongly recommended to political communication students, students and practitioners of foreign policy analysis, and, of course, to critical readers in the White House."

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In terms of decision-making in foreign policy, this work should be a classic. Vertzberger is both comprehensive as well as challenging in this book. While admittedly this is no light read, it is well worth the effort. The research possibilities that can be gleaned from Verzberger's theoretical considerations in themselves make this book worthwhile. It is a pity it is not better read and cited in the relevant literature. In the realm of foreign policy analysis, the impact of personality on decision-making is perhaps the most contentious. The role of personality in foreign policy encompasses cognitive processes, background, personal characteristics, motives, and beliefs, and assumes that decision making is the result of individual 'human agency'; that is, that ultimately, it is individuals who make decisions, not states, which Jensen (1982:13) describes as a 'legal abstraction'. Cognition is critical to perception, and the way in which a decision maker perceives the world, himself, or his enemy is vital to understanding why certain decisions are taken and others bypassed (Jervis, 1976). You are here. Analysis. The World in Their Minds: Information Processing, Cognition, and Perception in Foreign Policy Decisionmaking. share. The World in Their Minds: Information Processing, Cognition, and Perception in Foreign Policy Decisionmaking. by Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger. ‘Excellent...Strongly recommended to political communication students, students and practitioners of foreign policy analysis, and, of course, to critical readers in the White House.’ Journal of Communication. share.