

Opinion

Unintelligent use of intelligence plagues superpowers

"Intelligence," when used in the governmental sense, means secret information, usually about another government or operation. But intelligence also means the ability to learn, reason, understand and direct one's thought effectively. A government is expected to possess the second before it engages in the first.



Loren Steffy

But in the aftermath of the destruction of Korean Airlines Flight 007 in 1983, both the U.S. and Soviet governments displayed unintelligent use of their intelligence.

In his new book, "The Target Is Destroyed," Seymour Hersh maintains that what U.S. intelligence knew about the downing of the airliner wasn't reflected in the accusations flung at Moscow.

Hersh claims that U.S. intelligence had indica-

tions that the Soviets were confused by the jet's presence and erroneously identified it as a U.S. reconnaissance plane. Despite this, the Reagan administration publicly denounced the Soviets, claiming it had hard evidence that the Soviets knew KAL 007 was a civilian jetliner prior to shooting it down.

Hersh says if the administration had waited another 10 hours until the intelligence reports from posts in the North Pacific were analyzed thoroughly, it would have had a better picture of what actually occurred. Instead, it launched an anti-Soviet campaign to sway world opinion.

The Soviets, however, were equally uninformed. Hersh interviewed the Soviet high command and found it didn't truly understand what was going on until two days after the plane was shot down.

Rather than admit that they made serious errors in judgment, the Soviets allowed world opinion to portray them as criminally evil.

Obvious questions still remain unanswered. Why

did pilots familiar with transoceanic flights stray so far off course, let alone into Soviet airspace? But the KAL 007 incident raises even greater questions about intelligence capabilities and how governments deal with intelligence reports.

Ignorance does not justify the loss of the 269 who were aboard KAL 007. But before the incident is filed with other Soviet atrocities, a closer look is in order.

The Soviets had been on edge about U.S. operations in the area where the plane was shot down. The United States had sent battle groups into the Kurile Islands area — a region the Soviets consider vital to strategic interests. Although U.S. forces remained in international waters, they made the Soviets uneasy.

The events surrounding the KAL 007 disaster reveal a sloppy flow of information that is especially unsettling in this nuclear age. The entire pretense of the nuclear deterrent, the reason neither superpower will instigate a nuclear offensive, is

that top-ranking officials are making supposedly informed decisions. Clearly, in the case of the Korean jetliner, this did not happen.

But the intelligence problems that plagued the KAL 007 incident are still with us. The recent handling of the Nicholas Daniloff case shows similar chain-reaction of decisions based on "intelligence." Both sides backed themselves into a corner, hurling accusations and perpetuating misunderstanding. Once superpower nations get a lump of pride in their throats, it's difficult for them to swallow it.

The games played in the international intelligence arena are little different from those of schoolyard. Neither nation is willing to admit anything wrong; neither is willing to let the other forget that it did.

When viewed in this context, the dictionary definitions of "intelligence" don't apply. It is a misnomer at best, an oxymoron at worst.

Loren Steffy is a senior journalism major and the Opinion Page editor for The Battalion.



Silver Taps becoming tarnished with apathy

Being an active Ag is demanding. Time management is crucial. RHA meets regularly. Intramurals are thick this time of year. Dorm councils, Saddle and Sirloin, Tiddley-Winkers Anonymous, OPAS, Student Government, Campus Crusade, Monday Night Football and the Hall of Fame take their toll. And on and on.

Jeff L. Brady
Guest Columnist

Priorities. We can't let tedious, time-consuming non-essentials crowd out the necessities in our day.

Listen up, cadets, this includes you. Yes, dear-hearts, even some of our beloved, time-honored institutions may have to be bent or rearranged if our campus is to be world-class, right?

I mean, there are still only seven days per week. And so many of us are so involved in so many campus groups. What can we do? Some things just have to slide. Right?

Horsehockey. Two people attended Silver Taps last week. Me and some guy named Mel. The families were there, of course, in a group around Sully after having driven two or three hundred miles to attend this special, highly-acclaimed ceremony.

Mel is a transfer student from Stephen F. Austin. He didn't realize until Tuesday night that these crusty, outdated rituals whereby Texas A&M is set apart are just too time-consuming for us active Ags to take seriously.

It was a solemn affair, as usual, but the awe-inspiring hush of a silent, reverent student body — the kind my upperclassmen introduced me to four years ago — was somehow absent.

Mel and I stood there, surrounded by darkness, as the Ross Volunteers clomped by and the blackbirds fluttered from tree to tree. Mopeds sputtered through campus behind us and the screams of flag football players floated over from the Olsen intramural fields just within earshot. Music blared from a jam box near Rudder Fountain. Headlights swung through the trees from time to time. And soon the buglers' final notes drifted away, and we were left to ourselves.

Tarnished Taps seemed more appropriate.

Twenty minutes once a month is an awful lot to ask. I mean, what a waste of

time, right? Consider: Putting away books and notes, throwing on something decent to wear, walking all the way to the Academic Building, then ALL the way back — Golly!

And just think of all the hassle those poor off-campus Ags. Zoning Might as well suggest a trip to the Holy Land.

I was checking my mail this morning at the Memorial Student Center when I overheard two women discussing the matter:

Amanda: I left the library, and then I was, walking back to my Beemer when all the lights just shut off. All over campus. I thought I would just die. It was definitely un-cool. I could have been raped or even have had my Gucci ripped off.

Missy: Tell me about it. The next thing I knew I was being pulled back and freaked. And like all these arms were marched by with big guns, right?

Amanda: Yeah, I heard of something like this before, but I always thought it was just for Corporate people. You know nothing we should attend.

Missy: I know. But can you even check on the guys or see if everyone's wearing their jackets when it's so dark, anyway? Am I right, right?

Amanda: Well, made it back and thank God. It really burned me up — nearly missed a class. Jeez!

What's the difference? Silver Taps was held. The Ross performed. Lights on campus still dimmed. Why should any of us attend, anyway? Let's just let those "Corps-type" people to carry on their tradition. Then we can

having our mixers and meetings and flag football games right through the first Tuesday night of every month. Not worry about it. It'll still be our tradition, right?

We'll still be Aggies, right?

It'll still be a special, solemn ceremony for those who have to go, right?

Sure. And when it comes our turn, we'll be honored one quiet, cool Tuesday night somewhere down the line. The whole campus will turn out, right?

Horsehockey.

Jeff L. Brady is a senior journalism major

How old is too old to drink?

If the federal government really wants to fool around with the drinking age, it should start at the other end.

Lewis Grizzard

What I mean is the government should first do something about older drinkers before it starts meddling with the younger ones.

There are several reasons I think this:

1. Older people can drink a lot more than younger people because they've had more practice.
2. Also, they can afford more to drink. It's tough to get all that drunk when you're on a six-pack-a-week budget.
3. Older people have a lot more reason to drink than younger people. I drink more now than I did when I was 20. That's because when I was 20 I hadn't been through three divorces and the Nixon presidency.
4. Older people are sloppier drunks than younger people. When older peo-

ple get drunk, they do things like cry, call their ex-wives in Montana and sit around piano bars making fools of themselves trying to sing "Melancholy Baby."

Young people, on the other hand, get sick when they drink too much. A few beers later they throw up and go to bed while their elders are still out crying, calling their ex-wives in Montana and sitting around piano bars making fools of themselves trying to sing "Melancholy Baby."

As we all know by now, the government has blackmailed the states into raising their drinking age to 21. Otherwise, the states would face a loss of federal highway funds.

Fine, but how old should a person be before the government mandates he or she must QUIT drinking and no longer be an embarrassment in public or be a threat to do something stupid like driving while plastered?

Thirty? No. Most 30-year-olds still have no idea what they are going to do with their lives and need a drink every

now and then to, convince themselves that one day, they, too, will own a Porsche.

Thirty-five? That's still too young. By the time a person is 35, he or she has the Porsche and needs to drink to escape the anxiety of wondering from whence the next payment will come.

Forty? Heavens, no, and there's a good reason for that. I'll be 40 in a couple of weeks. I hate to think of having to face that occurrence without the benefit of a few cocktails.

So, how about 45? Or 50? Or 55? Stop me anytime here. Sixty? Seventy? Why don't we simply pick a number at random and say: OK, you're 61 (a number at random) and no more booze for you.

Unfair? We did that to young people, didn't we? We picked what sounded like a good number, 21, and we said: We don't care if you're married, a parent, a soldier, whatever. Be 21 or be gone.

You know what practically every kid says at least a million times? "It's not fair," that's what they say.

And, sometimes, they're right.

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Mail Call

Difficult to condemn Corps

EDITOR: It would be difficult to condone the actions of the Corps of Cadets at yell practice on Oct. 3. However, it becomes difficult to condemn them entirely, either, after reading the remark attributed to Jeff Newberry, a sophomore English major: "We knew what we were getting into, and we knew senseless violence was going to be the reaction" (Wednesday's Battalion).

Sophomoric: "especially immature and over-confident" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1969).

Jerri Sosvile

Old Ag upset with Corps

EDITOR: Whoop to Karl Palmeyer's opinion Thursday. Hiss to the conduct of the Corps of Cadets at yell practice.

I am not condoning the actions of the individuals who walked across the field, but to actually beat your fellow Aggies?

Whatever happened to the Aggie brotherhood and friendship? Do Aggies do this to other Aggies? No way. They should be ashamed of themselves. I do not want to

be considered part of or allied with their horrible conduct. Escorting the offenders off of the field is Marxist conduct!

My father, who was in the Corps years ago, said they never would have done anything like that! He was shocked when I told him what had happened. You've got an old Ag asking you "What have you done to yourself, Corps? Have you forgotten what you stand for?"

Remember your code of honor and act accordingly. You are disgracing the rest of us!

Carol Czyz '87

Good bull!

EDITOR: In reference to Karl Palmeyer's article Thursday, "Corps turns yell practice into tradition of violence," we have one thing to say:

WHOO! GOOD BULL! RED-ASS!

Kirk Rice '87

Clay Baker '87

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

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