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To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy of Sciences Study on Social & Behavioral Science and Improving Intelligence for National Security" <baruch@cmu.edu>

From: Lloyd Etheredge <lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net>

Subject: The Psychological Warfare chapter; Theirs & the US response; integrating Keohane

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Colleagues:

A decade ago, it might have been reasonable to view anti-Americanism in the world as a naturally-occurring political phenomenon, like the weather, that we could do little about. And, possibly, to imagine that the numbers reflected only superficial public opinion, like the ups and downs of Presidential popularity. But, today, the best analysis probably is that it reflects psychological warfare (combined with new communication technologies) and that America is losing.

Thus, I urge you to include, as a major chapter, a systematic and rigorous review of relevant US government/DNI data systems and analysis methods. And warfare strategy. Social scientists know a great deal about how to study attitudes, political images, attitude change, and competitive political marketing: Pioneering studies of propaganda and psychological warfare accompanied the growth of quantitative social science in the United States in the early 20th century [e.g., Lasswell's Propaganda Technique in World War I], and the field accelerated with the study of new mass media technologies during the economic and political turmoil of the 1930s, WWII, and the analysis of Communist and anti-colonial revolutions in the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Experimental studies of persuasion and attitude change (e.g., the Yale Communication and Attitude Change Program founded by Carl Hovland) have built a strong multi-method body of knowledge that also informs a modern universe of commercial and political marketing companies. <1>

We should be doing better. I am attaching two relevant columns by Thomas Friedman, which indicate that America is, in reality, losing. Even after the election of Barack Obama and his early television interviews for Arab television and his Cairo and Oslo speeches.

Possibly, a new chapter will be needed in IR textbooks.

- Re imperial hubris: The Bush Administration gave self-expression to many people who wanted to destroy the power of the mullahs as part of a Grand Strategy to end anti-American terrorism, promote democracy, and otherwise modernize the Islamic world. I think you will find that religious fundamentalists in Islam reacted as you might expect - given the reactions of US Christian fundamentalists to Communism. Thus there are more enemies, and more leaders and institutions who find their interests aligned with a range of passionate jihadist responses, than many Americans (including American students) - living inside our own media bubble (except for Tom Friedman) - currently grasp. Psychological warfare losses include deeper political dynamics, inherited from the Bush years, than you may find analyzed via DNI databases. <2> <3> And, several years ago, there apparently were about 2,400 jihadist Websites that may be creating senses of reality beyond our ken.

- You may find another "connect the dots" problem. Our Washington, DC political psychology/IR luncheon group had an off-the-record briefing, late in the Bush Administration, from a senior NSC staff member assigned to public diplomacy/psychological warfare. The NSC staff had a good grasp of the R&D programs, and the range of experiments and initiatives, that should be underway. However the senior inter-agency Principals Group to set policy, commit resources, etc. had (after two years) never met because its members were too busy with short-term war-fighting. And yet another turn-around Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy (Karen Hughes, as I recall) had folded her tent and departed. If Admiral Blair imagines that all of the dots (including the social science dots) were connected in the Bush Era system that he inherited a year ago, he might be wrong.

Without funding and new content analysis capabilities, it is difficult for most US social scientists to monitor these psychological warfare/IR issues that Thomas Friedman has raised. In some respects, he is *de facto* the nation's only early warning system.

- Re biological warfare: The possibility that Friedman is right, and of a shifting emotional consensus in the Islamic world, represented in the recruitment (and videotape) message of the Jordanian doctor who sacrificed himself in an act of (in his mind) revenge and altruism, is an additional motivation for US action. A generation of students across Islamic universities have access to knowledge and technologies that can be evolved into biological weapons and, if the ethical restraints of MDs are starting to erode, the urgency of this strong psychological war-

fare chapter in your Report has increased.

Lloyd Etheredge

<1> Ithiel de Sola Pool, a student of Lasswell, co-edited the Handbook of Communications (1974) - about 1000 pages - with a good overview through the early 1970s. Daniel Lerner's Psychological Warfare Against Nazi Germany (1949) became a standard early reference for this period, with a useful update from MIT Press in 1971. Later, Lasswell and Lerner also co-edited a four volume compendium of propaganda studies beginning with the ancient world.

<2> Roger Hurwitz at MIT has, I believe, started to do content analysis of mosque sermons and may have a useful independent analysis.

<3> Robert Keohane, a member of the NAS, co-edited a volume re Anti-Americanisms in World Politics that was published by Cornell UP in 2006. The DNI system may have additional data that permit the testing of psychological warfare models, especially to explain the trends that Friedman perceives across the recent five years. Friedman's focus on The Narrative as his unit of analysis - rather than public opinion attitude measures - may be helpful to understand psychodramas and the motivations for action that become engaged.

November 29, 2009

Op-Ed Columnist

America vs. The Narrative

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

What should we make of Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, who apparently killed 13 innocent people at Fort Hood?

Here's my take: Major Hasan may have been mentally unbalanced _ I assume anyone who shoots up innocent people is. But the more you read about his support for Muslim suicide bombers, about how he showed up at a public-health seminar

with a PowerPoint presentation titled “Why the War on Terror Is a War on Islam,” and about his contacts with Anwar al-Awlaki, a Yemeni cleric famous for using the Web to support jihadist violence against America _ the more it seems that Major Hasan was just another angry jihadist spurred to action by “The Narrative.”

What is scary is that even though he was born, raised and educated in America, The Narrative still got to him.

The Narrative is the cocktail of half-truths, propaganda and outright lies about America that have taken hold in the Arab-Muslim world since 9/11. Propagated by jihadist Web sites, mosque preachers, Arab intellectuals, satellite news stations and books _ and tacitly endorsed by some Arab regimes _ this narrative posits that America has declared war on Islam, as part of a grand “American-Crusader-Zionist conspiracy” to keep Muslims down.

Yes, after two decades in which U.S. foreign policy has been largely dedicated to rescuing Muslims or trying to help free them from tyranny _ in Bosnia, Darfur, Kuwait, Somalia, Lebanon, Kurdistan, post-earthquake Pakistan, post-tsunami Indonesia, Iraq and Afghanistan _ a narrative that says America is dedicated to keeping Muslims down is thriving.

Although most of the Muslims being killed today are being killed by jihadist suicide bombers in Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Indonesia, you’d never know it from listening to their world. The dominant narrative there is that 9/11 was a kind of fraud: America’s unprovoked onslaught on Islam is the real story, and the Muslims are the real victims _ of U.S. perfidy.

Have no doubt: we punched a fist into the Arab/Muslim world after 9/11, partly to send a message of deterrence, but primarily to destroy two tyrannical regimes _ the Taliban and the Baathists _ and to work with Afghans and Iraqis to build a different kind of politics. In the process, we did some stupid and bad things. But for every Abu Ghraib, our soldiers and diplomats perpetrated a million acts of kindness aimed at giving Arabs and Muslims a better chance to succeed with modernity

and to elect their own leaders.

The Narrative was concocted by jihadists to obscure that.

It's working. As a Jordanian-born counterterrorism expert, who asked to remain anonymous, said to me: "This narrative is now omnipresent in Arab and Muslim communities in the region and in migrant communities around the world. These communities are bombarded with this narrative in huge doses and on a daily basis. [It says] the West, and right now mostly the U.S. and Israel, is single-handedly and completely responsible for all the grievances of the Arab and the Muslim worlds. Ironically, the vast majority of the media outlets targeting these communities are Arab-government owned _ mostly from the Gulf."

This narrative suits Arab governments. It allows them to deflect onto America all of their people's grievances over why their countries are falling behind. And it suits Al Qaeda, which doesn't need much organization anymore _ just push out The Narrative over the Web and satellite TV, let it heat up humiliated, frustrated or socially alienated Muslim males, and one or two will open fire on their own. See: Major Hasan.

"Liberal Arabs like me are as angry as a terrorist and as determined to change the status quo," said my Jordanian friend. The only difference "is that while we choose education, knowledge and success to bring about change, a terrorist, having bought into the narrative, has a sense of powerlessness and helplessness, which are inculcated in us from childhood, that lead him to believe that there is only one way, and that is violence."

What to do? Many Arab Muslims know that what ails their societies is more than the West, and that The Narrative is just an escape from looking honestly at themselves. But none of their leaders dare or care to open that discussion. In his Cairo speech last June, President Obama effectively built a connection with the Muslim mainstream. Maybe he could spark the debate by asking that same audience this question:

“Whenever something like Fort Hood happens you say, ‘This is not Islam.’ I believe that. But you keep telling us what Islam isn’t. You need to tell us what it is and show us how its positive interpretations are being promoted in your schools and mosques. If this is not Islam, then why is it that a million Muslims will pour into the streets to protest Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, but not one will take to the streets to protest Muslim suicide bombers who blow up other Muslims, real people, created in the image of God? You need to explain that to us _ and to yourselves.”

December 16, 2009

Op-Ed Columnist

www.jihad.com

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Let’s not fool ourselves. Whatever threat the real Afghanistan poses to U.S. national security, the “Virtual Afghanistan” now poses just as big a threat. The Virtual Afghanistan is the network of hundreds of jihadist Web sites that inspire, train, educate and recruit young Muslims to engage in jihad against America and the West. Whatever surge we do in the real Afghanistan has no chance of being a self-sustaining success, unless there is a parallel surge _ by Arab and Muslim political and religious leaders _ against those who promote violent jihadism on the ground in Muslim lands and online in the Virtual Afghanistan.

Last week, five men from northern Virginia were arrested in Pakistan, where they went, they told Pakistani police, to join the jihad against U.S. troops in Afghanistan. They first made contact with two extremist organizations in Pakistan by e-mail in August. As The Washington Post reported on Sunday: “ ‘Online recruiting has exponentially increased, with Facebook, YouTube and the increasing sophistication of people online,’ a high-ranking Department of Homeland Security official said. ... ‘Increasingly, recruiters are taking less prominent roles in mosques and community centers because places like that are under scrutiny. So what these guys are doing is turning to the Internet,’ said Evan Kohlmann, a senior analyst with the U.S.-based NEFA Foundation, a private group that monitors extremist

Web sites.”

The Obama team is fond of citing how many “allies” we have in the Afghan coalition. Sorry, but we don’t need more NATO allies to kill more Taliban and Al Qaeda. We need more Arab and Muslim allies to kill their extremist ideas, which, thanks to the Virtual Afghanistan, are now being spread farther than ever before.

Only Arabs and Muslims can fight the war of ideas within Islam. We had a civil war in America in the mid-19th century because we had a lot of people who believed bad things _ namely that you could enslave people because of the color of their skin. We defeated those ideas and the individuals, leaders and institutions that propagated them, and we did it with such ferocity that five generations later some of their offspring still have not forgiven the North.

Islam needs the same civil war. It has a violent minority that believes bad things: that it is O.K. to not only murder non-Muslims _ “infidels,” who do not submit to Muslim authority _ but to murder Muslims as well who will not accept the most rigid Muslim lifestyle and submit to rule by a Muslim caliphate.

What is really scary is that this violent, jihadist minority seems to enjoy the most “legitimacy” in the Muslim world today. Few political and religious leaders dare to speak out against them in public. Secular Arab leaders wink at these groups, telling them: “We’ll arrest if you do it to us, but if you leave us alone and do it elsewhere, no problem.”

How many fatwas _ religious edicts _ have been issued by the leading bodies of Islam against Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda? Very few. Where was the outrage last week when, on the very day that Iraq’s Parliament agreed on a formula to hold free and fair multiparty elections _ unprecedented in Iraq’s modern history _ five explosions set off by suicide bombers hit ministries, a university and Baghdad’s Institute of Fine Arts, killing at least 127 people and wounding more than 400, many of them kids?

Not only was there no meaningful condemnation emerging from the Muslim world _ which was primarily focused on resisting Switzerland's ban on new mosque minarets _ there was barely a peep coming out of Washington. President Obama expressed no public outrage. It is time he did.

"What Muslims were talking about last week were the minarets of Switzerland, not the killings of people in Iraq or Pakistan," noted Mamoun Fandy, a Middle East expert at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London. "People look for red herrings when they don't want to look inward, when they don't want to summon the moral courage to produce the counter-fatwa that would say: stabilizing Iraq is an Islamic duty and bringing peace to Afghanistan is part of the survival of the Islamic umma," or community.

So please tell me, how are we supposed to help build something decent and self-sustaining in Afghanistan and Pakistan when jihadists murder other Muslims by the dozens and no one really calls them out?

A corrosive mind-set has taken hold since 9/11. It says that Arabs and Muslims are only objects, never responsible for anything in their world, and we are the only subjects, responsible for everything that happens in their world. We infantilize them.

Arab and Muslims are not just objects. They are subjects. They aspire to, are able to and must be challenged to take responsibility for their world. If we want a peaceful, tolerant region more than they do, they will hold our coats while we fight, and they will hold their tongues against their worst extremists. They will lose, and we will lose _ here and there, in the real Afghanistan and in the Virtual Afghanistan.

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