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To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy Committee on Improving Intelligence" <baruch@cmu.edu>

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

Subject: 150. Misperception Analysis as a Component of DNI Briefings? Hoffmann's evidence re President Reagan and the End of the Cold War.

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Colleagues:

I write to bring to your attention additional examples and evidence about designing a component of US intelligence/advice based on misperception analysis and what specific US (or foreign) political leaders need to know as political leaders. [They are not scientists, engaged in a scientific enterprise, but also politicians with skills and instincts that can be engaged if they see creative possibilities for changing misperceptions, building coalitions, negotiating settlements, etc.]

The Case of Ending the Cold War

There is a very suggestive discussion re Ronald Reagan and the end of the Cold War in David E. Hoffman's The Dead Hand: The Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race and Its Dangerous Legacy (NY: Anchor Books, 2010), p. 96. The book, which won a Pulitzer Prize, is based on some unusual access and guidance on both the US & Soviet side. It is a leading testament in the new, emerging Establishment/revisionist history of the Cold War - "it was so dangerous and costly . . . how could anyone have done this for so long?" and contributes to a further agenda (George Shultz appears to be a key inside source for the Reagan years and is a leader in this movement) to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

Misperception Analysis: A New Component of DNI Briefings?

Theoretically, the book also gives strong (but partial) support to a theory of Robert Jervis about misperception. It strengthens the claim that analyzing and dealing with misperceptions in the US and/or on the part of leaders/elites in other countries could be a highly productive approach:

"Reagan later recalled in his memoir, "Three years had taught me something surprising about the Russians: Many people at the top of the Soviet hierarchy were genuinely afraid of America and Americans. Perhaps this shouldn't have surprised me, but it did. In fact I had difficulty accepting my own conclusion at first. . . ." "During my first years in Washington," Reagan said, "I think many of us in the administration took it for granted that the Russians, like ourselves, consid-

ered it unthinkable that the United States would launch a first strike against them. But the more experience I had with the Soviet leaders and other heads of state who knew them, the more I began to realize that many Soviet officials feared us not only as adversaries but as potential aggressors who might hurl nuclear weapons at them in a first strike. . . ."

"In December, Reagan was thinking anew about his dream of eliminating nuclear weapons. 'This is his instinct and belief,' Shultz told his aides at the State Department. 'The president has noticed that no one pays any attention to him in spite of the fact that he speaks about this idea publicly and privately.' . . ."

Nancy Reagan has said that "there is no guile in Ronnie" and, whatever might be made of what a politician writes in his diary/memoirs, the passage conforms with Shultz's view, also expressed in Hoffmann, that Reagan went through a genuine arc of learning based on emotion-charged and vivid experiences across three years. [Thus, a theory of Jervis, re misperception, would be accurate *descriptively*; However it does not simply seem to be a cognitive phenomenon/process in this case. And most members of this own Administration - except Shultz - did not draw the same lessons from the same experiences, so other variables would be part of the equation.]

[It also is worth noting in this passage - as Alexander George emphasized in discussions with Russians - that it can be very difficult to perceive the US government accurately: Even though Reagan was President of the United States, "no one pays any attention to him . . ."]

Misperception Strategies: "Bringing People Along"?

Hoffman's book suggests that George Shultz had a sensibility about "bringing people along" in a learning process, on both sides of the Cold War.

Shulz's sensibility is an interesting psychological analysis/theory for the 21st century world. In earlier eras, when wars were fought because the dominant technology/economic system was agricultural (thus, battles to conquer, control, and tax populations and land) or industrial (monopoly control of vital raw materials and international trade - still true, in the case of oil) psychological explanations and learning might have been less relevant. But the world could be entering a new economic/political era in which psychological shifts - e.g., dealing with misperceptions, learning and thinking - are more powerful, realistic options

Your Report might be a useful catalyst for further attention to these possibilities via DNI analysis.

best wishes,
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