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To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, US National Academy of Sciences Committee on Improving Intelligence" <baruch@cmu.edu>, "Dr. Richard Atkinson - Chair - NRC/DBASSE" <rcatkinson@ucsd.edu>, "Dr. Kenneth Prewitt - Chair, Committee on Social Science Evidence for Use" <kp2058@columbia.edu>  
From: Lloyd Etheredge <lloyd.etheredge@poliscience.net>

**Subject: 197. A Red Team Field Experiment: Rapid Learning and the Possibility of an Afghanistan Breakthrough in Two Years.**

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Colleagues:

Several steps further in General Petraeus's tradition of applying multi-disciplinary behavioral science, there may be additional ideas that improve the effectiveness of Afghanistan strategy.

As you know, a review by the National Intelligence Council concludes that high youth unemployment rates in Islamic countries increase recruitment to terrorist violence.<1> One million jobs for unemployed or under-employed young people can be created in Afghanistan, a country with a per capita GDP of \$900, for about \$1,000 each.<2> Quickly reducing the Taliban's ability to recruit can change the future of the war.

**The CCC Strategy**

America's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) is an excellent, low-cost model. During the Depression 2.5 million young people lived in camps where they received basic necessities (including health care) and were taught literacy and employable skills. They also provided unskilled manual labor for environmental and other projects (e.g., roads, public health). They received a monthly wage; \$25 of the \$30 was sent to parents.

I suggest that a Red Team (with advice from the National Academy of Sciences, as needed) design a field experiment and implement a CCC strategy quickly and boldly in a selected

province in Afghanistan. If it reduces new terrorist recruitment, the strategy can be used at other sites in Afghanistan and extended to other countries (e.g., Yemen) where inhibiting new youth recruitment to terrorist violence is a high priority for the United States.

The ultimate size of the project will depend upon the data: However Afghanistan has a current population of only 29.1 million people, and the Congressional Research Service estimates the fiscal 2011 cost of the Afghanistan War to be \$119.4 billion.<sup><2></sup> Thus if the coefficients from the field experiment show the CCC strategy to be a good idea, the new dimension might be scaled upward to change the future of the war quickly and decisively. It is a strategy that cannot be matched on the other side.

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<1> See # 40 at [www.policyscience.net](http://www.policyscience.net) at II. D.

<2> [CIA - The World Factbook](http://cia-world-factbook.com), online (2009 estimate). Wolfram Alpha (online) gives a lower (2008) estimate of \$466/capita..

<3> Amy Bellasco, [The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11](#). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. RL33110. September 2, 2010), p.3. The cost, using the methods of Stiglitz and Bilmes developed for the Iraq War, could be higher (Stiglitz and Bilmes, [The Three Trillion Dollar War](#), 2008). The current strategic mix of the Obama Administration is, by its current review, producing only limited evidence of (possibly fragile) military success after two years, so an experiment (# 40, that I outlined in November, 2009) to explore a fresh, plausible, and bold idea could be worthwhile.

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