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To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy panel on social science to improve Intelligence" baruch@cmu.edu

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

Subject: Strengthening Coercive Diplomacy: Alexander George's legacy and rapid learning

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Study Members:

The irrationalities and other limitations of 20th century crisis decision making [e.g., increased by fear and stress] beginning with the outbreak of WWI, and extending in the Cold War through the Cuban Missile Crisis, were too dangerous and produced too many mistakes. The slow-motion, surprise-free, confrontations and slow escalations of a new coercive diplomacy framework express the methods that Alexander George's research helped to fashion.

The National Academy of Sciences might want to recommend that the DNI conduct faster, psychologically-informed, post-mortems on the recent use of these methods so that they can, if possible, be refined and strengthened quickly.

- Assume for the sake of analysis, for example, that there are several recent cases where US foreign policy and classic deterrence failed, and coercive diplomacy also may have failed:

1. Saddam Hussein: Two Failures? For example: Why did coercive diplomacy not work in the two cases involving Saddam Hussein? Classic deterrence certainly failed before his invasion of Kuwait. And in the second confrontation with America, he lost everything - his nation and his life - and he was not even racing to acquire WMD's/nuclear weapons, which might have made his resistance of inspection a rational alternative. Surely, it would have been in the interest of the US to deter his invasion of Kuwait successfully and produce a non-violent settlement of the issues after 9/11. Why did US foreign policy fail? And are there lessons to be learned?

2. From 2/26/1993 to 9/11/2001. Similarly, consider 9/11. We sometimes forget that Islamic militants already had tried to destroy the World Trade Center violently, eight years earlier, using a powerful bomb in a rented van in 1993. The bomb, detonated in the underground garage, was intended to topple the North Tower into the South Tower and destroy both. This attack and the 9/11/2001 attack appear to have been organized by the same Al-Qaeda operative (Khalid

Sheikh Mohammed); it became part of a pattern of later Islamic attacks between 1993 and 2001. Yet it was only after 9/11 that the US mobilized an army, invaded and overthrew the Taliban government of Afghanistan, organized its intelligence services to kill or neutralize most of the top 100 Al-Qaeda officials and operatives involved in the 9/11 attack, and has placed Osama bin Laden on the defensive in one of the world's most remote locations. Why - before and especially after 2/26/1993 - did US deterrence fail? Did the US attempt to apply coercive diplomacy (or classic deterrence and credibly threaten Osama bin Laden) - and, if so, what lessons should be drawn?

3. The former Yugoslavia. Or take the case of the former Yugoslavia and NATO military interventions. NATO's military victory could have been seen as a foregone conclusion. Why did deterrence fail? And are there lessons for improved coercive diplomacy?

What Lessons has the DNI Drawn? What Lessons Should the World Draw?

In each of these cases there has been an opportunity for post-mortem interrogations by US intelligence agencies. But have the data been acquired and analyzed with the right questions in mind? What lessons to improve classic deterrence and coercive diplomacy has the DNI drawn? And what interviews/data systems can be placed in the public domain, to allow independent scholars to examine the lessons to improve future professional diplomacy of all nations?

Diagnosing Areas for Improvement

Even at its best, coercive diplomacy may not always work. But it might be strengthened and improved: For example, does America have a problem of making credible threats, especially across cultural boundaries? Or is hubris (on the other side) a continuing source of irrational calculation that we should consider how to engage more successfully? Or will the DNI discover that a domino theory sensibility is such a shared, cross-cultural, feature of international political psychology that it requires further improvement in US methods to give credible guarantees to adversaries [i.e., if, from their domino theory perspective, N. Korea or Islamic mullahs in Iran show weakness that dangerously arouses the appetite of the American hegemon?] <1> <2>

yours truly,
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<1> I listened recently to a lecture about the history of the British Empire. The speaker (Patrick Allitt) noted, in passing, that the Prime Minister, Lord North, feared that unless the king and his ministers were firm and resolute in their response to the Boston Tea Party and other public provocations by American

Colonials, they would send messages of weakness that could encourage rebellions in India, slave rebellions in the West Indies, invite French attacks in Canada and elsewhere, etc. An historic database, in the public domain, would be useful for teaching as well as research.

Would it be accurate to assume that the DNI does not have a good historical/current database to evaluate domino theories? They come in different forms: Eisenhower, for example, was a former WWII army commander who thought geographically about falling dominoes via massed invading armies that moved across contiguous national frontiers. But the Prime Ministers of empires (or Lyndon Johnson), for example, seem more readily to have a theory of public and global psychodrama - i.e. their nation as a unitary persona that impresses itself as a vivid and deterring image in the minds of potential adversaries & embodying emotional/psychological characteristics (e.g., strength of will.) George Kennan - to cite an opposing theory - thought all of these imaginings were over-wrought and that Realist statesmen on opposing sides could readily distinguish between core, vital interests (for which any great Power would fight) and mere peripheral, distant skirmishes - and of course the British defeat at Yorktown did not trigger the effects that had alarmed Lord North.

<2> An overview of George's legacy by leading scholars, edited by Stanley Renshon, was published last year in *Political Psychology* 29:4 (August 2008).

Dr. Lloyd S. Etheredge - Fellow, World Academy of Art & Science
Director, Government Learning Project
Policy Sciences Center Inc.
127 Wall St., Room 322 - Box 208215
New Haven, CT 06520-8215
URL: www.policyscience.net
301-365-5241 (v); lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net (email)