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To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy Committee on Improving Intelligence" <baruch@cmu.edu>, "Dr. Richard Atkinson - Chair - NRC/DBASSE" <rkatkinson@ucsd.edu>, "Dr. Theda Skocpol - National Academy of Sciences and Past President, APSA" <ts@wjh.harvard.edu>, "Bill Nordhaus - National Academy of Sciences" <william.nordhaus@yale.edu>, "Dr. David Shaw - PCAST" <dshaw@blackpointgroup.com>, "Dr, Karen Cook - Retiring Chair, AAAS Section K" <kcook@stanford.edu>, "Dr. Carole Pateman - President, APSA" <pateman@ucla.edu>, "Dr. Robert Keohane-National Academy of Sciences" <rkeohane@princeton.edu>, "Dr. Robert Axelrod - National Academy of Sciences" <axe@umich.edu>, "Dr. Jonathan Cole - CASBS" <jrc5@columbia.edu>, "Dr. G. Bingham Powell, Jr. - APSA Vice President" <gb.powell@rochester.edu>, "Dr. Aletha Huston - COSSA" <achuston@mail.utexas.edu>, "Dr. David Lake - ISA" <dlake@ucsd.edu>, "Dr. John Keeler - President, APSIA" <keeler@pitt.edu>, "Dr. Susan Collins - VP - APSIA and Dean" <smcol@umich.edu> "Dr. Kishore Mahbubani - APSIA Exec. Board and Dean" <sppdean@nus.edu.sg>
From: Lloyd Etheredge <lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net>

Subject: 237. Red Team: Philanthropy & Cognitive Maps for the Islamic World

Dear Dr. Fischhoff, Dr. Atkinson, and Colleagues:

In light of unfolding events across the Islamic world - and the ending of DNI/CIA/US government support for autocratic regimes - it would be helpful for the National Academy of Sciences and a Red Team project to organize discussions of visionary projects among potential donors. Today, the routes to achieve many worthwhile goals are, in preliminary ways, a science: The Soros Foundations and the National Endowment for Democracy (

[1. www.ned.org](http://www.ned.org)), for example, have several decades of experience with developing and

applying theories about the strengthening of democracies and civil societies in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. There is a growing international network of institutions of higher education (www.apsia.org) that offer professional graduate training in international relations and conflict management.

Thinking Deeply and Quickly

Whatever secrecy was required prior to recent events, the US government now has an obligation to think deeply, and quickly, about the new road.

The challenges, beyond Egypt, will be greater. The Egyptian case was an almost pure (Hollywood movie) example of an autocratic individual ruler being confronted by a widely-based opposition that sought non-violent, democratic change. By contrast, in many other Islamic countries, the current autocrat rulers are tied to specific tribes, factions, extended networks of family and friends, and/or Islamic sects that have received unequal rewards and privileges for many years and who, also, are threatened. Iraq is a “post-liberation” warning: The cycles of revenge killings and sectarian violence, and the continuing use of suicide bombing as a feature of its domestic politics, could become a future across the region.

It could be helpful, to many foundations, NGOs, and professional social science societies, to take a fresh look at strategic options. And to have a conceptual map of a revolutionary and a democracy-building process and to know what projects would be useful.

Democratic Organizing and Conflict Resolution Skills.

For example, in the 1990s the Institute for Victims of Trauma (IVT) responded to an interest from mental health professionals in the Islamic world, and organized a conference in Cairo (with participation from the World Federation for Mental Health) about the potential for building psychology-based conflict management in the Islamic world. Ideas included curricula in institutions of higher education and K-12 across the region, and other innovations. The IVT project had support from within Islam: there were religious leaders who believed that conflict resolution and mediation skills could be

expressions for passionate religious commitment and worthwhile to include as options in religious education. [And this is even more true today, alongside the current option of suicide bombing as an expression of religious commitment.]

In these earlier years, a critical mass of financial and institutional support was not forthcoming - and, in truth, many of the autocratic Islamic governments of the region had traditional methods to deal with conflict. Today, this early, visionary pathway could be worth re-engaging. Dr, Leila Dane, who organized the IVT project, has been a President of the American Psychological Association's Division (48) of Peace Psychology: APA and the Division's current leadership and members (and Dr. Dane) might be among the participants in a workshop to think deeply and scope-out possibilities. Also: the Association for Professional Schools in International Relations (APSIA) whose members offer graduate programs in conflict management, the Association for Conflict Resolution, the Search for Common Ground (www.sfcg.org) network, and others. Dr. Theda Skocpol, a former President of APSA, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 2008: she is a specialist in revolutionary processes who might have suggestions.

In each of these cases, the primary role for the US institutions could be to support their members and professional/scientific networks in Islamic countries..

IOM Participation?

Another constructive set of possibilities would be to develop additional training for health practitioners in the Islamic world to assist healing for victims of trauma. Post-traumatic stress disorder can be treated in specific, research-based ways. The Institute of Medicine could identify links for creating workshops and training: also, there is an International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies that helps to develop international training and international (cross-cultural) treatment guidelines. [Even most Realists, today, can accept that building shared humanitarian concerns contributes to cultural evolution - although, obviously, there will be strong disagreements about how much difference it makes.]

LE

Dr. Lloyd S. Etheredge - Fellow, World Academy of Art & Science

Director, Government Learning Project

Policy Sciences Center

URL: www.policyscience.net

301-365-5241 (v); lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net (email)

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