Date: Tue, 22 Mar 2011 23:04:19 -0400
To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy Committee on Improving Intelligence"
<baruch@cmu.edu>, "Dr. Theda Skocpol - National Academy of Sciences"
<ts@wjh.harvard.edu>, "Bill Nordhaus - National Academy of Sciences"
<william.nordhaus@yale.edu> "Dr. Daniel Goroff - OSTP" <dgoroff@ostp.eop.gov>, "Dr.
David Shaw - PCAST"<dshaw@blackpointgroup.com>, "Dr. Robert M. Hauser - Exec.
Director, DBSSAE" <hauser@ssc.wisc.edu>, "Mr. Jake Sullivan - Director, Policy Planning
Staff via Ms. Marisa S. McAuliffe" <mcauliffems@state.gov>, "Dr. Richard Cooper"
<rcooper@harvard.edu>, "Dr. Richard Levin - Member, President's Council of Advisers on
Science and Technology"<richard.levin@yale.edu>,
From: Lloyd Etheredge <lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net>

Subject: 252. <u>**Red Team: The Pakistan War; Expected Value [Danger]**</u>
<u>**v. Hollywood Danger. Riedel and a Scientific Upgrade**</u>
<u>**for World Politics**</u>

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

It is alarming that public attention focuses on the Afghanistan War when our almost-exclusive
concern should be success in a (different and more dangerous) Pakistan War. It also is alarming
that the American government may continue to think about danger, or potential danger to
America, in Pakistan through the influence of American culture, and a century of danger in
Hollywood movies and almost sixty years of American television shows with similar scripts and
endings.

Thus, I write to suggest that a Red Team/National Academy of Science project apply a simple
scientific approach to danger (by multiplying the dangerous outcome times its probability to
compute an expected cost) and, thereby, achieve a rational and prudent analysis.

<u>Realpolitik: Pakistan may be, de facto, the most dangerous nation in the world to</u>

America; Afghanistan is insignificant.

   Afghanistan, in geopolitical terms, is peripheral to everything: New aerial surveillance technology and the presence of US troops already have achieved America's limited goal of preventing *jihadists* from operating safe havens in rural Afghanistan where troops can be massed and terrorists trained.<1> By contrast, Pakistan is becoming a major and serious country, with 180+ million people (in a world of 7 billion people, it is the sixth largest in the world, 96% Muslim and 54% below the age of 19), with the fastest growth of a nuclear arsenal in the world (it is on track to passing Great Britain as the world's fourth largest nuclear power). It also has a highly volatile and violent internal politics (with public violence a weekly occurrence: last year, more than 10,000 Pakistanis were killed or wounded in more than 2,000 incidents), that American policies (most, to support the mission in Afghanistan) are making worse. At this point, there are more terrorist/*jihadist* groups in Pakistan than anywhere else in the world. Currently, the US targets people in Pakistan and drops bombs on them about twice a week.<2>

   Riedel's new <u>Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of the Global Jihad</u> (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2011) makes the case, for a Red Team review, that Pakistan is hugely different from Afghanistan and - especially in light of motives, means, opportunities, and potential recruits for global *jihadism* - the most dangerous country in the world for America's future. Thus, by any analysis of power - hard, soft, smart, etc. - this is a country toward which there should be a strong, high-priority policy package to build a positive relationship. It has a government that the US should not destabilize and a polity (including a youth generation) that it should not anger without a deep and truly compelling reason. Even if members of the government in Pakistan can be pressured or bribed (e.g., the US has given $9 billion in unaccounted funds to Pakistan over the past decade), it is not necessarily wise to do what it will agree to do.<3>

   - The election of President Obama was a godsend to America. Now, it gives a window of opportunity of six years (but perhaps much less) to solve the global *jihadist* confrontation from the Bush years and get relations with the Islamic world (notably, Pakistan) on track. In the meantime, it may require only one further terrorist event in America, especially involving any nuclear material, traced to Pakistan, to destroy the belief that the Department of State and CIA

are deftly managing risks.

Hollywood Danger v. Science

In Hollywood, danger adds excitement for both the hero and the audience. Danger - rather than deterring action - serves the plot and, while minor characters may die and the hero suffer some injury, temporary setbacks, and tough moments, we know who will prevail. [Indeed, true heroes are victorious even when experts proclaim that the odds are impossible; and a starship captain on Star Trek can exceed the safety specifications of his starship and override the loud warnings of his Chief Engineer without blowing-up his vessel.] A century of Hollywood movies and sixty years of television dramas based on similar scripts, ill-equip the American government to respond rationally to danger.

The scientific/mathematical approach to danger is more realistic and prudent.<4> <5> <6> If the penalty of losing a bet is $100 and the probability of losing the bet is p=.20, then an expected cost of playing such a game repeatedly - a realistic cost which needs to be part of the budget and planning - is $20 per round. [Hedge fund managers make billions of dollars because their software ignores Hollywood fantasies about risk and heroism.] If the 9/11 attacks produced a domestic economic cost of $10 billion in the US [and the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, www.iags.org, says that it was much higher], and there is a 5%/year chance of at least one similar attack in a NATO country if current US policy continues in Pakistan, what is the real (expected) cost of current risk, 2011-2015? Hollywood might say "zero" because the odds are excellent that the Obama Administration will beat the odds each year. But a scientist would say _____ ? And if this happens and an expanded Pakistan War can be fought for 50% of the $3 trillion Stiglitz estimates for the Iraq War, this would add an expected cost of $_____?

Pakistan 2025 and Scientific Calculations

I suggest that a Red Team/National Academy project quickly do a revised analysis of the Pakistan War and scenarios for US-Pakistan relations to 2025, with downside analyses using an Expected Value approach to danger. And look, then, at options and revised packages of policies. What - for example, applying Riedel's analysis of past American overconfidence and mistakes and current trends - could do wrong? <7> Will we have further warnings of tipping/breaking

points before the danger becomes imminent or it is too late?

This calculation may be sobering. Assume that Afghanistan no longer exists as a threat to America: What are the better options to "win" [by different definitions] the Pakistan War?

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<1> I outlined earlier [# 247 and # 248 at www.policyscience.net at II. D] how new aerial surveillance technology assures that residual US forces in the country + growing Afghanistan forces can deprive the Taliban or al-Qaeda of any "safe haven" for massing troops or building substantial anti-American training camps in rural areas even if, today, these groups really want to return to a location in remotest Afghanistan.

<2> There also are civilians killed in Pakistan and we might extrapolate from the 9/11/2001 air attacks in America what the sustained emotions of family members and friends and political effects might be in Pakistan [although the effects may be different from America's extraordinary multi-war, 10+ year reaction, for several reasons]. The symbolic fact that the bombers are drones and that "release" buttons are pushed by Americans outside the country - i.e., and the US operation does not involve manned US bombers - may not make a psychological difference in Pakistan.

<3> As Riedel reviews, the people being designated as targets by Pakistani intelligence, and being killed, are not necessarily America's enemies. Duplicity is pervasive and the Pakistani government has its own enemies.

<4> I leave aside, for the sake of this argument, my earlier paper about reinventing statistics for the DNI [#139 and # 158]. However: A Red Team/National Academy study thinking afresh about this problem may conclude that mathematics that work for the physical sciences also need to be reinvented for the DNI's work: For example: public events may not be statistically independent. (And, for example, a 9/11 attack may not simply be a highly unlikely random event in a Poisson distribution but be the leading edge of deep, cumulating, and powerful changes in a

system.)

<5> Alternatively, heroes may sometimes make their own odds and Goethe's advice that true commitment realigns the forces of the universe, and has magic in it, may have wisdom in it.

<6> Another possibility concerning governments, probability, and risk calculations: One of the issues in the comparative study of political behavior is how the structural properties of political systems affect later decision making by winners. In America, almost everybody who runs for President begins as an unlikely winner, with the odds against them, and somebody wins through organizing people and perseverance. It helps to be overconfident and to persevere, like a hero in a Hollywood movie. The structural characteristics may affect foreign policy calculations of US Presidents who are elected in a way that (for example) they do not in China since Mao.

<7> The supposedly rational strategy of "raising the cost" often does not work as expected in the Islamic world (or in Vietnam, etc.). It would be helpful for a Red Team/National Academy study to nail-down the explanation of why, sometimes, this apparently sophisticated and obvious political analysis is wrong.

Recent work by Scott Atran, Robert Axelrod, and Richard Davis, "Sacred Barriers to Conflict Resolution" in Science (August, 2007), pp. 1039-1040, may be relevant. The US national security managers speak with assurance about "raising the cost" to the enemy in Pakistan through drone bombings. But Atran et al. argue that rational economic models may not be predictive of some committed opponents. If America also can be portrayed with an Enemy image, even America's impressive drone technology, used to "raise the cost," can enroll adolescent males in opposition and harden the enemy. [Re a theory of Israeli mistakes, see #3 at www.policyscience.net at II. D.]

Dr. Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director
Government Learning Project
Policy Sciences Center

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

[The Policy Sciences Center, Inc. is a public foundation that develops and integrates knowledge and practice to advance human dignity. Its headquarters are 127 Wall St., Room 322 PO Box 208215 in New Haven, CT 06520-8215. It may be contacted at the office of its Chair, Michael Reisman (michael.reisman@yale.edu), 203-432-1993. Further information about the Policy Sciences Center and its projects, Society, and journal is available at www.policysciences.org.]