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

From: Lloyd Etheredge <lloyd.etheredge@yale.edu>

Subject: 6. *Their* Misperception Rates of America; Cold War Lessons

Dear Dr. Fischhoff & colleagues:

The Cold War was too long, too dangerous, and too costly. In part, because of misperception and mistaken predictions (especially by the Communist side). Thus it might be revealing to frame a new routine question for Admiral Blair to pose in national estimates: *"What are the misperceptions and likely faulty predictions of the US by the intelligence services of other countries?"*

As I understand Bruce Bueno de Mesquita's new forecasting method, he claims that he is at 90% & doubling the CIA's baseline. If we assume that Iran - which does *not* spend \$75 billion/year on foreign intelligence - is at the CIA's own 45% accuracy baseline, does this imply that they - without Bueno de Mesquita's methods - could be misjudging the likelihood of an Israeli strike against their nuclear facilities? Or America's desire to eliminate Islamic fundamentalists and the power of Iranian mullahs?

Analyzing Other Nation's Misperception and a Safer World

This analysis could be a very useful investment in a safer world. Presidents, as politicians, get motivated by misperceptions because (unlike a *Realpolitik* analysis) they can do something about misperceptions. Hamburg's No More Killing Fields makes brief references to extraordinary and worthwhile Western initiatives that got underway after the Cuban Missile Crisis. When I was teaching at MIT, my suite-mate, Lincoln Bloomfield, was quietly heading-off the Moscow (with high level US blessings) to develop crisis simulation exercises for top Soviet leaders because the social science research of Holsti, George, Lebow, and others pinpointed the danger of crisis misperceptions and mistakes that decision makers could reduce.

- As we move into the new US-Iran Cold War, and continue the nuclear-weapons-involved

confrontations of Pakistan-India and N. Korea v. others, perhaps this reframed question, using his new methods, will suggest to Admiral Blair that a smart investment in a much safer world will be for President Obama quietly to send people trained by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita to Tehran, Islamabad, New Dehli, and Pyongyang?

- I will defer to Philip Tetlock (Breslauer & Tetlock (Eds.), Learning in U.S. and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1991) for other ideas re the new and more refined analysis that earlier research suggests Admiral Blair might want his staff to make routinely about the misperceptions & learning curves of other nations (toward the US and each other).

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