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To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy of Sciences Study on Social & Behavioral Science and Improving Intelligence for National Security" <baruch@cmu.edu>

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

Subject: The War on Drugs: Upgrading data and analysis. George Shultz and George Soros

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Commission Members:

It would be exciting to experiment with innovative ideas related to DNI forecasting. For example, alongside its fifteen-year forecasting projects, every five years, the National Intelligence Council might prepare an annual volume with specialized or experimental projects. It may be possible to stimulate useful discussion and thought.

To start, what would you think about recommending a volume about national/international drug policy, its alternatives, and a universe of data improvements and rigorous experiments that could stimulate public discussion?

In the Bush Administration, the data and analysis produced by the DNI system [which acquired responsibility for the Drug Enforcement Administration] were an insult to thoughtful readers. It is a good example of how the DNI's work under Admiral Blair can be upgraded and how good analysis and forecasts might lead to more rational and effective national and global policy.

Starting with Relevant Numbers and Good Analysis

At the beginning of the Bush Administration one of your predecessors, the National Research Council's Committee on Data and Research for Policy on Illegal Drugs wrote (2001) that government data systems and analysis "are strikingly inadequate to support the full range of policy decisions that the nation must make.... It is unconscionable for this country to continue to carry out a public policy of this magnitude and cost without any way of knowing whether and to what extent it is having the desired effect." <1> The title of Robinson and Scherlen's book from Syracuse University Press in 2007 is an apt summary of their analysis of still-unsolved problems that Admiral Blair has inherited from the Bush years: Lies, Damned Lies, and Drug War Statistics: A Critical Analysis of Claims Made

by the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

- An alarming implication of the Robinson and Scherlen book is that the DNI system also might not have provided accurate data and reliable analysis to President Bush.

The DNI and the Shultz/Soros Challenges

As you may know, former Secretary of State George Shultz has challenged [at least for the case of marijuana prohibition] the rationality of spending huge sums on legal prohibition while making the problem worse. With demand constant, as law enforcement achieves success it reduces supply but drives up the price. This, in turn, energizes the illegal industry to increase supply, create more users/addicts, and, thus, stimulate more robberies and felonies to pay the prices. America has achieved the world's largest percentage of its people in jail without much apparent net benefit. Globally, the industry is expanding its hold on young people in dense, impoverished urban areas of UDCs, where the use of drugs is marketed as hip and modern. It is hard to think of any problem that destroys more lives, that we could do something about.

The Soros Foundation has organized discussions of these issues. It has made claims - for example, that prohibition and the resulting profitability of illegal drugs itself drives intense predatory marketing/addict creation and vastly increases human suffering - that deserve a full independent review by the US intelligence community: <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/drugpolicy>. [There also are fierce costs to Mexico from maintaining US prohibition and high prices: the Wikipedia "Mexican Drug War" article claims 16,000+ deaths in the past three years, including more than 1,000 prosecutors, military officers, and police; and widespread corruption.]

We are paying \$75 billion/year: This analysis should be public and it should meet the highest standards. We ought to know what the DNI system thinks, what the real data and evidence show, and what the DNI system is telling President Obama. This quality of analysis could stimulate creative thinking and get somewhere.

Lloyd Etheredge

<1> Charles F.Manski, John V.Pepper, and Carol V.Petrie (Eds.) Informing

America's Policy on Illegal Drugs: What We Don't Know Keeps Hurting Us.
(Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001). Online at
<http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309072735>, p. 2.

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