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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: Wartime scientific advice - 2: Connecting dots - Yemen is another youth-bulge/high unemployment UDC

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Colleagues:

May I add a (wartime) comment about connecting the dots?

Yemen is a "youth bulge" and high unemployment UDC. [The CIA's estimate is that the overall unemployment rate is 35%+ and the youth unemployment rate is at 50%+.] One of the good, memorable, social science/evidence-based warnings to emerge from the DNI's Global 2025 forecasting exercise was to recognize and predict that "youth bulge" and high unemployment UDCs will be among the most likely sources of recruiting new terrorists, including anti-American terrorists.

I discussed this social science evidence, including specific citations from the Report, in a memorandum to your Study Group on November 21, 2009, "Fresh Thinking: Experiments to Reduce Terrorism and UDC Violence." I also suggested "next step" initiatives to develop CCC-like corps that could jointly address these emerging problems, help with global health, and teach marketable skills. [There is a reference copy available from Ms. Chauvin at the National Academy of Sciences and (as my # 40, online at www.policyscience.net, under II. D.)

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Data Systems, Reports, Governments that Connect Dots

As you consider examples of data systems, analysis, and connecting dots (to reference President Obama's mandate), you might want to consider this higher-order problem of going step-by-step in one's head, beginning from the databases and analysis in Global 2025, and moving to the bold experimentation and effective prevention of terrorism that the President (and the American people) want. At the individual/cognitive level this requires moving from serial recognitions of complexities to integrated complexity (a challenge which is represented in Tetlock's expertise on your Study group).

But "connecting the dots" is not just an individual challenge. Even more, it is a state-of-the-art system-design challenge. At this point, I do not see Washington/Obama Administration institutions connecting these dots successfully, for Yemen + the more general case. And the academic world cannot yet help a great deal - although with the content analysis methods, especially linked to growing economic hardships (# 15, September 24, 2009) we probably could develop independent and systemically useful warnings. And (perhaps) suggest worthwhile political/economic ideas before events shift the focus to dispatching CIA Small Kill Teams to further locations around the world.

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