

Date: Mon, 12 Oct 2009 01:27:28 -0400

To: "Admiral William Fallon - Co-chair, CSIS Commission on Smart Global Health Policy" <wjf@wjfallon.com>

Subject: **Fresh thinking - 3: Health & smart power: foresight about global economic hardship and UDC effects**

Dear Admiral Fallon:

I am forwarding an analysis for General Jones, from February, about the role that US global health plans can play in responding to deepening economic hardship and the new political instability that will result, especially in UDCs.

Increased violence and vanishing benefits

As you know, the dreams of your Commission and almost everyone else can vanish if there are further regime failures and growing violence in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. Admiral Blair's forecasts [beginning with 25% low-to-moderate political instability, including regime change, last year] are reviewed in the attached Newsweek article - it is an area of worrisome developments that, by now, has become almost invisible in US news media. Historically, an analogy is the political effects of the Depression, that were global and ignited sequences of political changes and violence across the next two decades.

Responding to the most vulnerable

I am not sure how much can be done for health-based strategic planning: I wrote an earlier book about American CIA interventions in Central America, including the Carter-Reagan years when an Arab oil embargo drove GDP steeply downward by 30%-40% in countries with highly unequal distributions of income, no safety nets, and unresponsive oligarchies. In those years, violence-prevention foresight was not available. But humanitarian foresight - and high-visibility initiatives for the most vulnerable (*especially child health and nutrition*) - could help to hold things together. I urge you to take a high priority look at this strategic (smart power) opportunity as part of your plan.

Re Estimates

Academic social science is unlikely, from outside the government, to help you to refine strategic estimates and smart power priorities. The USIP's assessment (of the attached proposal for a rapid upgrade in forecasting ability) was that the work was outside their budget and involved concurrent engineering (for a new research capability, monitoring public communications systems in UDCs) beyond their expertise and mandate. Right now, the best route for better university-based forecasting is via the new National Academy of Sciences panel on improving research methods for intelligence, chair by Fischhoff (referenced in an earlier message). But the Chair tells me that a Report will not be completed until at least the late spring of 2010 - a bit late! - and there will be several years to implementation and results (under normal academic/NSF pacing). Traditionally, CIA warnings are not linked, in USGOV strategic plans involving UDCs, to rapid learning and high priority prevention.

best regards,
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