Date: Wed, 21 Apr 2010 12:13:18 -0400
To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy Committee on Improving Intelligence" <baruch@cmu.edu>
From: Lloyd Etheredge <lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net>

Sub**ject: Pentagon Papers research programs: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq (2). A strong National Academy of Sciences recommendation**

Dear Dr. Fischhoff & colleagues:

I hope that the National Academy of Sciences will make a strong recommendation to develop systematic, state-of-the-art Pentagon Papers research programs for the ongoing US involvement and decisions in Afghanistan, as well as other cases (Iraq, Iran, the war on terrorism including Yemen, etc.). In the long run, we (and the new DNI system) need to do the best job that we can to learn what works and what mistakes can be avoided in the future. Also, these US cases will be studied for a generation: American graduate schools (APSIA) are building professional training programs with expanded foreign enrollments of future diplomatic practitioners. The baseline of what the US and its allies are doing (however it turns out) probably will increase the future mean for the region. But we will need the documents and empathy-rich resources that permit behavioral scientists to understand, and allow students to relive imaginatively, the many "once-we-believed and there have been setbacks . . . but now we know, and we have forward momentum . . ." cycles.

<u>The Behavioral Sciences and International Security Analysis: Two Baseline Cases - David Miliband and Hillary Clinton</u>

As you outline the kinds of key assumptions, theories, and assessments to be included in a lesson-drawing research program, you might find the attached article ("How to End the War in Afghanistan") by British Foreign Secretary David Miliband (in the current <u>New York Review of Books</u>) a good basis for a rigorous propositional inventory. He was a graduate student in international security at MIT - after my time on the faculty, but he studied with people who knew the Lasswell/political psychology traditions and he has probably included the Alex George, Irving Janis, Robert Jervis, etc. Cold War lessons in his thinking. Also, Hillary Clinton worked in the Lasswell policy sciences tradition as a student at Yale Law School - I cannot make an assessment of her knowledge of specific po-

litical psychology/international security theories, but I think that whatever she and the Obama Administration have been doing about Afghanistan will merit a fresh, scientific look: We might be looking at lessons beyond the Cold War/Vietnam lessons. <1>

You also might want to contact Larry Berman and other Vietnam-era specialists for their recommendations to improve upon McNamara's 1960s research model. Leslie Gelb, who directed the earlier Pentagon project, also might have research/misperception recommendations and hypotheses - he was Chair at the Council on Foreign Relations and has written a current lesson-drawing book (Power Rules: How Common Sense Can Rescue American Foreign Policy) that expands on The Irony of Vietnam assessments.

Lloyd Etheredge

<1> Some of the lessons - e.g., *hubris* and mistaken conceptual overlays/forecasts based on models of Western democracies and misleading cultural assumptions by countries that are heirs to the Protestant Enlightenment - may still be relevant. Also, George Kennan and other earlier Realist IR theorists might have asked what areas of the world would not have the slightest inherent geopolitical significance to US interests - and would probably have included remote, poor Afghanistan. The unresolved domino/public drama theories from the Cold War period - e.g., the messages and effects of US withdrawal, and the role a US persona plays in foreign imaginations to establish and maintain US global power and deterrence - also still may be relevant.

How to End the War in Afghanistan

April 29, 2010. [Cover date: published 4/1/2010]. The New York Review of Books

by David Miliband

Soviet strategists reached strikingly similar conclusions. When the Soviet forces in Afghanistan withdrew in 1989, they left behind a government, led by the Afghan Communist Mohammad Najibullah, that survived for three years. It did so - in the words of advice from the Kremlin - by "forgetting communism, abandoning socialism, embracing Islam, and working with the tribes." As with every other regime in

modern Afghan history, the Najibullah government could not have existed without external subsidy. And so it fell when Boris Yeltsin's newly independent Russia cut all aid to Kabul.

Britain's experience in the nineteenth century, and the Soviet Union's in the twentieth, showed that the best way, perhaps the only way, to stabilize Afghanistan in the long term is to empower the Afghans themselves in charge so that they can secure and govern their own villages and valleys.

To achieve this, the Afghans need full political and military support, and generous economic subsidy, from outside. But the Afghan people neither need nor welcome our combat troops on their soil any longer than is necessary to guarantee security and set them on a course to regulating their own affairs.

A recent study of Britain's bloody withdrawal from Kabul in 1842 concluded that the first cause of that disaster was the reluctance of junior officers to tell their superiors the truth about the dire situation the British forces found themselves in. I know from my own discussions with diplomats and commanders in the field that such "happy talk" is no longer the order of the day.

Getting Afghanistan right means getting down to ground truth. These are the facts as I see them

· The Afghan people are tired of thirty years of war. They have been traumatized by the fighting and the denial of basic rights and opportunities. The majority of them hate, for good reason, the brutality of the Taliban. But sometimes they see them as their only protection from other brutal powerbrokers or warlords.

· The Afghan government led by Hamid Karzai faces competing demands from its own people, from powerful criminal and commercial interests, and from the international community. But it lacks the capacity to govern. The concerns about its credibility run deeper than last fall's elections, which were marred by widespread corruption and fraud. They also relate to the very structure of the political system.

· The Afghan insurgency is a broad but shallow coalition, with shifting relationships, geographical bases, and tactics. The Taliban is led by members of the former Talib regime under Mullah Omar, who has been based in Pakis-

tan's border areas. A variety of other factions are also operating, including the Haqqani network, Hizb-e-Islami, and a range of smaller groups. These groups all trade on the uncertainties of the people and the weaknesses of the state.

· The Taliban are still despised - one recent poll suggests that only 6 percent of Afghans want them back in power. But they do now have organized cadres that enjoy some limited support - in the south, east, and north - and are able to mount operations in Kabul and elsewhere.

· Having fled Afghanistan, al- Qaeda's senior leadership is now also hiding in Pakistan's tribal areas. A significant number of its leaders have been killed or arrested. Despite the historical ties between al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, their relationship is predominantly tactical and local. Yet al-Qaeda retains the capacity - including through its affiliates in other countries, such as Yemen - to plan and carry out deadly attacks around the world.

· There has been a significant change in Pakistan in the last eighteen months under President Asif Ali Zardari's democratic government. The reality and threat of domestic terrorism has brought new purpose to civilian and military leadership, and new consensus between leaders and the Pakistani electorate. It is now realistic to talk about complementary pressure on the insurgencies on both sides of the border.

The Afghan and international strategy over the last eight years has been to focus on building up the key functions of the state and delivering better lives for the Afghan people. Despite many setbacks, there is a real record of achievement here, continuing today. The return of five million refugees in recent years is perhaps the greatest sign of the growing confidence of Afghans in their safety and security, and an important indicator of our own progress in protecting them. Still, polling shows that Afghans regard the lack of security as one of the biggest problems; last year more Afghan civilians were killed in insurgent attacks than ever.

In 2003 the Afghan National Army numbered fewer than two thousand. Today it is over 100,000 strong, though the ethnic balance within it - and particularly the proportion of Pashtuns - is weak. The total will grow by a third by the end of the year, and further in the years to come. Afghan soldiers are gaining frontline combat experience, including in the current Moshtarak operation in Helmand province. Plans are now being developed for the transfer of "lead security responsibility" to

the Afghans - district by district and province by province - once the Afghan National Security Forces, local government, and other institutions are able to meet key conditions of effectiveness. As the Afghan National Army gets stronger, international forces will be able to withdraw from combat operations - although their training and mentoring of their Afghan counterparts will need to continue for a number of years.

Concerning education and health, in 2001 only one million Afghan children attended school, all of them boys. This year we expect to see seven million Afghan children enrolled in school - a third of them girls. Eight out of ten Afghans now have access to health care.

Poppy growing and the drug trade are major problems for Afghanistan; but during the past two years there have been successive reductions in poppy cultivation: 19 percent in 2008, 22 percent in 2009. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that cultivation will not increase in 2010. Improvements in governance and security, along with high wheat prices, have supported these results.

The achievements of the National Solidarity Programme - which aims to improve local and regional government - would be a remarkable story in any country. Over 22,000 village councils have been elected by their peers since 2003. They have not just designed but implemented almost 40,000 development projects, and are now forming, from the bottom up, district councils.

There are also areas where progress has not been so impressive. We are now stepping up our efforts to address these concerns, and the Afghan government needs to do much more:

· Justice and law and order are a critical battleground. The Afghan National Police number almost 100,000, but the biggest problem is now quality, not quantity. Part of the force is involved in the drug trade. It also suffers from illiteracy, patronage by criminals and insurgents, and corruption. The Afghan government is launching a robust and far-reaching program of reform. But the government needs, with our help, to build up the informal judicial structures for resolution of criminal and civil disputes. That is, after all, what Afghans often mean by the rule of law.

· Despite the success of the National Solidarity Programme, civil administration remains an extremely difficult and uphill struggle. In large parts of the

country, district governance is almost nonexistent; half the governors do not have an office, fewer than a quarter have electricity, and some receive only six dollars a month in expenses. Over the next two years the international community has promised to help train 12,000 civil servants to serve on the district level.

· Last, there is the problem of corruption. According to January's BBC/ABC/ARD poll, 95 percent of Afghans see corruption as a problem in their local area. In some regions Afghans are paying an average of $100 in bribes to officials every year. Such widespread abuse has deep roots. President Karzai has promised to tackle corruption and build independent institutions to monitor and drive progress. The international community will judge him by his actions, not his words. Donors are trying to provide him with incentives by promising to channel more aid through the government as certain tests are met, for example the verification and publication of the assets of senior officials and ministers; the adoption of new procedures for senior appointments; and a clear timeline for the enactment of comprehensive anti-corruption legislation.

The achievements of the last eight years would not have been possible were it not for the tireless efforts and unstinting bravery of our troops. Without them, the insurgency would have overwhelmed the Afghan government and probably overrun Kabul. Our development work would have ground to a halt. And al-Qaeda would have seized more space to plan its terrorist atrocities.

The work ahead - on each of these fronts - is both clear and pressing. The additional troops that the United States, Britain, and others are deploying are vital if progress is to be made. Britain's commitment and determination will endure until we have achieved our shared objective - an Afghanistan that must not again be used as a basis for international terrorism.

Brennan Linsley/AP Images

A girl watching an Afghan National Army soldier searching an area thought to have been used as a Taliban firing position, Pech Valley, Kunar province, January 24, 2010

However, even on the most optimistic reading of present plans, the Afghan authorities will not be able to govern their land in sustainable or acceptable ways un-

less the scale of the insurgency itself is reduced. And only then will we be able to withdraw our forces confident that we will not have to return. The strengthened efforts of our military forces are an important part of this. As General McChrystal said recently, the role of the military is to "try to shape conditions which allow people to come to a truly equitable solution to how the Afghan people are governed." This raises the core political challenge for Afghanistan, one that has been neglected for far too long.

The Bonn Agreement of 2001 and the process that followed it fell short of a truly balanced political settlement. The Northern Alliance came to Bonn as the new masters of Afghanistan. But they were not representative of the broader Afghan population, including the Pashtun majority in the south. It was right that the Taliban leaders were excluded from Bonn. But other more significant and legitimate groups were seriously underrepresented, most notably the various Pashtun confederations from which the Taliban draws its strength.

The two jirgas that followed Bonn led to a top-down, highly centralized political structure for a country whose people have always had a strong predilection for managing their own affairs at the local level. Furthermore, new arrangements in Kabul did not do justice to tribal and other informal, traditional, and community-based structures. Corruption has exacerbated these problems.

The unconstrained accumulation of financial resources by malign power brokers has eroded tribal balance. Finally, from Iran in the west to Pakistan in the east, from the Central Asian Republics in the north to the regional powers of India, China, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Turkey, the Bonn Agreement failed to bind Afghanistan's neighbors into the long-term project of building a new, more peaceful country.

The lesson I draw from history is that Afghanistan will never achieve a sustainable peace unless many more Afghans are inside the political system, and its neighbors are in agreement with a political settlement.

Political Outreach

There is now an international consensus behind a program to reintegrate Taliban fighters, which the UN defines as "the process by which ex-combatants acquire ci-

vilian status and gain sustainable employment and income." The logic behind this program is simple. As military pressure on the insurgency increases - as the dangers of continuing the fight grow and the prospects of success look more remote - those on the periphery of the insurgency will start to review their allegiances. We have seen this happening in fits and starts in recent years.

For such realignments to be sustained there needs to be not just employment but protection from retaliation by former allies. That is the significance of President Karzai's proposed National Council for Peace, Reconciliation, and Reintegration, and of the $150 million the international community has already pledged to fund it.

But I would emphasize that a re-integration program will have a major impact only if it is coupled with a serious effort to address the grievances of those whom President Karzai describes as his "disaffected compatriots" - i.e., the Taliban and other insurgents. Without a genuine effort to understand and ultimately address the wider concerns that fuel the insurgency, it will be hard to convince significant numbers of combatants that their interests will be better served by working with the government than by fighting against it.

Some insurgents are committed to al-Qaeda's violent extremist agenda. There will never be reconciliation with them - they must be beaten back. But the majority are not. They share conservative Islamic beliefs and, linked to that, strong views about what is a just social order.

Their rallying cry is the expulsion of international forces. But they are also motivated by their intense dissatisfaction with the Afghan government and Afghan politics - which they see as corrupt and incompetent.

The idea of anyone reaching out to political engagement with those who would directly or indirectly attack our troops is difficult. We have no more right to betray our own values than those of the Afghan people who pray that the Taliban never come back. But dialogue is not appeasement; nor is allowing political space for discussion with opposing forces and politicians.

The Afghans must own, lead, and drive such political engagement. It will be a slow, gradual process. But the insurgents will want to see international support for it; and international mediation - for example under the auspices of the UN - may

ultimately be required. So there needs to be clarity about the preconditions for any agreement: those who want a political say in their country's future must permanently sever ties with al-Qaeda, give up their armed struggle, and accept the Afghan constitutional framework. In doing so their interests would be recognized and given a political voice but would be constrained by the nation's laws and balanced by the interests and views of others.

In his repeated offers to talk directly to insurgents, President Karzai has made clear that while such preconditions should set the terms of any eventual agreement, they should not prevent a dialogue from developing. The build-up of international and Afghan military forces should concentrate everyone's mind. Dialogue provides an alternative to fight or flight. Any such process of political outreach will take time and effort to prepare, let alone conclude. But the time to start laying the foundations for dialogue is now, so as to take advantage of the growing Afghan and international military presence.
President Karzai has proposed for April 29 a great consultation - a grand peace jirga - involving around 1,400 members and guests. They are to include parliamentarians, provincial councils and governors, religious and tribal leaders, and representatives from civil society organizations and women's groups. This should be the start of a process of building a new national political settlement. He has said:

> The objective will be to get guidance from the Afghan people on how to move forward towards reintegration and reconciliation - where reconciliation may be possible - and chart out an action plan in consultation with the Afghan people.

What might such a political settlement look like? An outsider can only offer suggestions.

First, there should be arrangements, whether formal or informal, to ensure that the legitimate tribal, ethnic, and other groups that feel excluded from the post-Bonn political settlement are given a real stake in the political process and are able to compete for political representation. A peace settlement must include the vanquished as well as the victors. To do this, the new arrangements should give voice to the different blocs of opinion and influence. Access to political office and government jobs should be opened up. And efforts should be made to broaden the ethnic base of the Afghan National Army. All of this would encourage Afghans to address their grievances, and those of their broader community, from within the

system. And it would offer them a part in building stability and security in Afghanistan so that - and this is a key objective of many of the insurgents - the international forces will be able to withdraw from combat, initially into a training and support role, and then altogether.

Second, the provincial and district governors and their associated assemblies of elders should be given new governing powers, so that the walis (or provincial governors) and the uluswals (district governors) have the confidence, competence, and capacity to govern in the best interests of those they represent. Recruiting the right people for these jobs is essential - and in view of the challenges of upholding justice and the rule of law, the police chief and local magistrates are equally important. Local governors and local assemblies also need to be given more direct responsibility for overseeing development, adjudicating disputes, providing local security, and reintegrating local insurgents and their sympathizers.

Third, a new legislative process should be established - not necessarily involving constitutional change - between president and parliament, in order to give parliamentarians a real stake in the success of the political settlement. Such a stake would encourage them to participate as well as to criticize, and would ultimately lead to the development of something completely alien in Afghanistan today, but critical to democracy - a constructive or loyal opposition.

Fourth, underpinning all this must be a more concerted effort to prevent and eradicate corruption. President Karzai's promises to tackle the culture of impunity and to establish a new anti-corruption unit are important. Emphasis must also be put on how the Afghan government - with international help - can counter the extensive drug trade. This goes to the heart of ordinary people's concerns about corruption and lack of the rule of law. Part of this is about ensuring that the new political settlement includes many more checks and balances - such as independent courts - and much greater emphasis on transparency and accountability to ensure that government at all levels and in all guises is the servant, not the master, of the Afghan people.

The External Political Settlement

No country's politics can exist in a vacuum, least of all Afghanistan's. For too long it has been the victim of external meddling and interference. Today competing regional interests are being pursued in Afghanistan, and the country's tribal and eth-

nic groups - in the south, the east, and the north - still roam freely and find refuge across its borders. Those who oppose the government still draw on funding, support, and shelter from abroad. If Afghanistan is to have a more peaceful and prosperous future, it needs not just a new internal political settlement but also a new external political settlement.

Given the scale of the geopolitical challenges in this region - including the long-running tensions between India and Pakistan and the presence of Iran - it can seem that Afghanistan is fated to remain the victim of a zero-sum scramble for power among hostile neighbors. The logic of this position is that Afghanistan will never achieve peace until the region's most intractable problems are solved. But there is an alternative and ultimately more promising possibility, by which Afghanistan poses so many dangers that it becomes the place where more cooperative regional relations are forged.

The first step is a greater recognition by all of Afghanistan's neighbors and the key regional powers of two simple facts. Fact one: no country in the region, let alone the international community, will again allow Afghanistan to be dominated, or used as a strategic asset, by a neighboring state. Fact two: the status quo in Afghanistan is damaging to all. Crime, drugs, terrorism, and refugees spill across its borders when Afghanistan's great mineral wealth and agricultural land should instead be of benefit to the region. These two facts can and must provide the basis of a shared interest around which the countries of the region can coalesce.

Second - and this point is more complex - there needs to be a more honest acknowledgment of the different interests and concerns of Afghanistan's neighbors, so that efforts can be made to provide reassurances. Pakistan is essential here. It holds many of the keys to security and dialogue. It clearly has to be a partner in finding solutions in Afghanistan.

Pakistan is a country of 170 million people. It is a nuclear power. Pakistan will act only according to its own sense of its national interest. That is natural. Its relationship with Afghanistan is close to the core of its national security interests. Pakistan fears the build-up of a non-Pashtun Afghan National Army on its doorstep, and it is perpetually worried about India's relationship with Afghanistan.

It has also had a difficult relationship with the US for a generation. That is the significance of the Obama administration's determination to pursue a new security,

economic, and political relationship with Pakistan. This policy opens up a vital opportunity to address Pakistan's concerns - and ours. The Kerry-Lugar Act - which provides for over $7 billion in nonmilitary aid over the next five years, but makes the support conditional on the Pakistani government taking effective action against militants in its territory - is an important down payment in this regard.

But progress cannot be achieved simply by a more serious, more equal US–Pakistan strategic security understanding, crucial though that is. Alongside Pakistan's fears about its western border, fears about Pakistan's own involvement in Afghanistan need to be addressed. Every country needs to accept that, just as there will be no settlement in Afghanistan without Pakistan's involvement, so there will be no settlement in Afghanistan unless India, Russia, Turkey, and China are also involved in the search for solutions. China is Afghanistan's largest foreign investor. India has already pledged $1.2 billion for reconstruction in Afghanistan. It has a big part to play. Moreover, the Iranian regime - whose nuclear policies have flouted the UN and that has a record of attempting to destabilize its neighbors - must acknowledge that the best way to protect its investments or promote the interests of Afghans that share its Shia faith is to work to promote peace, not undermine it.

The Iranian government's refusal to take part in the recent London Conference on Afghanistan was completely shortsighted.

Third - and this is where the external settlement connects most clearly to the internal political settlement - there needs to be greater transparency with respect to the future direction of Afghan foreign policy. It is for the Afghans to decide how to do this, but their involvement is critical in building confidence and reducing miscalculation. Linked to this, there will need to be consistency and clarity about the presence, activities, and future plans of the international forces in Afghanistan.

Fourth, economics should be the great lubricant for better regional relations. Afghanistan can benefit all its neighbors if it becomes the land bridge of Central Asia, South Asia, and the Gulf. After all, the Silk Road was the passage for trade for many centuries. There are common interests not just in trade and transport, but in managing and sharing water and electricity and harnessing economic growth for the benefit of Afghanistan and the neighboring countries.

Fifth is the question of the forum in which this work should move forward. The

process must be led by the countries in the region. Only these governments can decide whether the multitude of existing bodies such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference can provide the basis for the serious and sustained regional engagement that is now needed. The Afghans should take the lead, in partnership with the UN. In time perhaps this could lead to a standing Conference on Stability, Security, and Cooperation in South Asia. Above all, Afghan citizens must decide the future political process in their country. Important as the neighbors' legitimate interests are, they cannot supplant, nor will we allow them to supplant, the Afghan government and the Afghan people. The days are long gone when powerful countries would dispose of a smaller, vulnerable neighbor to suit their own ends.

Conclusion

If we successfully implement the strategy I have outlined, a better future for Afghanistan is not a utopian goal. Within two to five years it is realistic to aspire to see the country still on an upward trajectory, still poor but stable, with a just peace, with democracy and inclusive politics taking hold at all levels, and with incomes growing. The urban population should have access to electricity. More shops will be open in the local bazaars and more children - in particular more girls - will be going to schools. Most grassroots insurgents _the so-called ten-dollar-a-day Taliban - should be resettled in their villages with at least some of the insurgent leaders taking part in the legitimate political process. Communities will be increasingly able to rely on the Afghan National Security Forces for protection - or to protect themselves. International troops will have stepped back from the front line - though they will still have a role, and sometimes a dangerous role, in training and mentoring their Afghan counterparts. The neighbors will be working together, preventing trouble, not fueling it. And above all, al-Qaeda will be kept out.

I have been to Afghanistan six times as British foreign secretary. On my first visit in July 2007 I attended the funeral of its last king, Mohammed Zahir Shah. The grief I witnessed was palpable and deep, but so too was the sense of national unity. Ethnic allegiances and historic feuds were put aside to mourn the passing of the "father of the nation."

This unity is not expressed today through allegiance to a monarch. Instead it is founded on a deep desire among the people to live life as they see fit. The military surge is vital to success; so is investment in the civilian economy; but now is the

time for Afghans to pursue a political settlement with as much vigor and energy as we are pursuing the military and civilian effort. That is how to end the war in Afghanistan.

_April 1, 2010

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