

September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009

# THE DYNAMO . ORG

## I. RESEARCH

- Quick summary of progress
- Express, and briefly comment on, each derived hypothesis
- Freely discuss interesting and provocative ideas

## II. BLOGS

- Provide feedback – criticisms, suggestions, *etc.*
- Encouragement 1: **Post ideas** even if they are raw – peer-review will enhance your post
- Encouragement 2: **Comment critically** to find flaws in each other's positions and assertions
- Encouragement 3: **Don't be afraid**, and don't be fooled by the illusion of perfection

## III. GETTING ANALYSIS RIGHT

- The following has been adapted from the wisdom of Kenneth G. Lieberthal, Senior Fellow and Director at The Brookings Institution<sup>1</sup>:

(i) *On improving the capabilities of analysts:*

- **Recruit older analysts** – Many professors, *e.g.*, could contribute valuable maturity, life-experience, and deep country knowledge to our publications.
- **Seek area specialists** – There is no substitute for the key analyst with deep substantive knowledge and experience on a single country or issue. The more specific your research, the more likely you are to be successful, and the more respect you attain.
- **Cross disciplines in analytic partnerships** – On critical topics, lead a joint-discipline research project with another to develop unique analysis. This would foster, for example, greater integration of political and technical analysis of missile development.

(ii) *On improving the utility of analytical products:*

- **Use powerful agents** – Engage organizations, experts, and academics, if possible and potentially rewarding (*e.g.* cite Brookings; have lunch with a researching professor).
- **Publish formal dissenting opinions, similar to Supreme Court decisions** – Exploit the resource of *group calculation*, and group publication, such that dissenters can write specific dissenting opinions, and even those who agree can pen concurring opinions that articulate a distinctive analytical approach.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2009/09\\_intelligence\\_community\\_lieberthal.aspx#](http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2009/09_intelligence_community_lieberthal.aspx#)

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(iii) *On improving the ability to elicit and utilize high quality analysis:*

- **Articulate questions and priorities** – Taking the time to think through the analytic questions to be answered will pay dividends for end analysis. Develop your conscious understanding of a situation by probing questions that you have. Decide what can be ignored, and what must be considered.
- **Elicit what is known, unknown, and what is likely to happen** – Your analysis is more credible when you express what you know, and, inevitably, don't know. And certainly, from what you know, you have at least an idea of what is likely to happen. Express that.

#### **IV. THE DYNAMO'S FREE MARKET**

- Your leadership in any specific area will be praised – but never forced
- Express how to make our organization better, and in doing so, lead the execution of your idea
- Remember, this is your organization, and it can go as far as you take it

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

- Express yourself uniquely and precisely
- Overcome superficial obstacles for real rewards
- Next meeting: