PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. FULBRIGHT. Mr. President, the Committee's relation to the short but most interesting series of hearings earlier this year on the subject of the psychological aspects of foreign policy—a subject both the public and the bureaucracy tend to ignore.

Miss Elizabeth Wharton, of the United Press International, wrote a brief but perceptive article on those hearings. The article head rather to the point, in view of its succinct summary of the hearings and the fact that it focuses on some of the fundamental problems with which we are concerned. Miss Wharton suggests that the article be printed in the Congressional Record. The article appeared in the Tampa Tribune-Times of Sunday, July 20, 1969.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES AS TOOL OF DIPLOMACY

(By Elizabeth Wharton)

WASHINGTON—An American is brought up to look at a person with certain distance from a person with whom he is not familiar. An Arab is brought up to look at a man in the eye during conversation. Americans have a certain idea of what is normal in the Arab, and vice versa.

An Arab is taught from childhood that looking a man in the eye during conversation is extremely rude. He also is accustomed to be quite close to a person with whom he is talking. If an American meets an Arab, and neither is aware of the other's cultural conditioning, any conversation between them is likely to produce serious misunderstanding and mutual irritation. The Arab thinks the American is in an uncomfortable position, and the American thinks the Arab is trying to stare him down.

Social scientists, particularly in the so-called behavioral fields of anthropology and psychology, recognize these cultural differences and consider them very important because they can be a cause of friction between governments—and most people—do not.

In an effort to determine what insights social science studies might offer to smooth the path of international relations, Chairman William Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a series of hearings on the subject of "anthropological and psychological aspects of U.S. foreign policy."

Witnesses were Dr. Margaret Mead, anthropologist, writer, and curator for ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York; Dr. Karl Menninger, noted psychiatrist, founder and president of the Menninger Clinic and Menninger Foundation in Kansas; and Dr. Edward T. Hall, author and professor of anthropology at Northwestern University.

All three believe behavioral science could make a significant contribution to the quest for peace in international affairs.

They cited the experience of World War II. When intensive U.S. research on Japanese culture yielded two outstanding successes and many failures.

The first achievement concerned treatment of Japanese prisoners of war. When American military commanders began taking their first prisoners in the Pacific islands, the Japanese not only freely disclosed military secrets but helped the Americans track down installations and ammunition dumps.

"The Americans didn't trust the prisoners, of course, since Americans are conditioned not to give such information to their captors. We told them the prisoners could be trusted. But Japanese had never been conditioned to being taken prisoner," Dr. Hall explained. "Their culture decreed that they be good soldiers even if the good soldiers also meant being good prisoners. We were right, and the information proved very valuable."

The second great success was in persuading the U.S. Government to permit the Japanese to return to the United States after the war—a recommendation made by the behavioral scientists within months after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

If the Emperor had been forced to abdicate, Dr. Mead said, Japanese society would have taken generations, instead of just a few years, to recover from the war.

Government-sponsored behavioral studies taped off the war, and the entire field of social science fell into disuse during what Dr. Menninger called the "rampant knowingness of the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision in 1954."

The experts suggested that a number of national crises since then could have been prevented, or at least ameliorated, if such research were still being done as a guide to government policy. Dr. Mead cited two examples.

The first was the Pueblo Incident. To North Koreans, truth is an elastic concept in which bare facts are less important than the interpretation one places upon them. They knew the Pueblo was off-shore spying on them, and whether the ship was a few miles inside or a few miles outside an invisible line on the water simply didn't have anything to do with it.

But Americans were not fooled, and our instruments proved the ship was a certain number of miles outside the invisible line. The Pueblo was not why the United States agreed to sign a "confession" of invading North Korean territory—and promptly repudiated it—perhaps because the Japanese had never been conditioned to being taken prisoner, Dr. Mead said.

Her second example was the violent disruption which resulted from the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision in 1954. Behavioral scientists had warned in advance, she said, that such a drastic change must be expected.

"To the human mind, anticipated change is frightening, while accomplished change is accepted," she explained. Therefore, she feels the time was right for behavioral scientists which allowed local governments to move "with all deliberate speed" which caused all the trouble.

Hall said the practice of sending American representatives abroad without preparation on the mists of the society to which they were going subjected them to a "culture shock" from which they might never recover enough to do the job they set out to do.

He used time as an example. The United States, he said, is a "monochromatic" culture which takes a long time to adjust to change and in which the people, the industry and the government function on a set schedule. Latin America, on the other hand, is a "polychronic" society in which people set little store by schedules, and consider themselves free to accept appointments to be only an approximation.

"Both time systems work, but they work in different ways," he said. "More is wrong, they do not.

"I have observed a number of Americans... fail in their mission because they never learned to read the local time customs."

At the same time, Hall continued, Americans returning from that country, can feel a certain sense of being tolerated by foreigners, yet others and don't think much of self-criticism either.

"We have to feel we are doing well all the time," he said, "It's a real problem, because it is self-defeating to be compliant."

All three witnesses agreed that consulting behavioral scientists on national policy would give the United States an enormous advantage over the Communist world whose inflexible psychological framework has no room for untested social research.

Fulbright agrees, but says he has not yet decided how to go about trying to convince a U.S. bureaucracy which has a certain inflexibility of its own.

This results from many circumstances prevalent in our economy today, not the least of which is the loss of confidence in the American dollar. Our dollar is also in jeopardy in the world money market if we do not stabilize our economy with a more favorable balance of payments. To improve the balance-of-payments position we must increase our exports, decrease our imports, or improve our dollar flow. Of course it could be a combination of these corrections that could result in a favorable fiscal position. We must convince the other nations of the world of our willingness to get our financial house in order. No one knows whether the economy might break during this critical waiting period while we await the passage of the surtax extension. It has happened before when circumstances did not seem so dire. Because of inflation, we are losing the ability to compete; other countries are winning a greater percentage of world trade. The trend is starting to rapidly increase in their direction.

Whether we talk about steel, motor vehicles, or a vast number of other products including sophisticated electronic equipment, we are losing the battle.

In recent years we have become net importers of iron and steel mill products and the gap is still increasing. We are net importers of paper, yarns, fabrics, and man-made fibers. Our trade position has swung to the deficit side since Canada since 1967, a deficit with Japan since 1964, and a deficit with Germany since 1965.

In a 5-year outlook, published in April of 1969, the U.S. Department of Commerce says this:

"Our balance of payments is under inflationary pressures... is a basic prerequisite for improving the trade balance..."

Millions of jobs are being lost to American workers by our loss of...