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To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy Committee on Improving Intelligence" <baruch@cmu.edu>, "Dr. Richard Atkinson - Chair - NRC/DBASSE" <rcatkinson@ucsd.edu>, "Dr. Kenneth Prewitt" <kp2058@columbia.edu>

From: Lloyd Etheredge <lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net>

Subject: 172. Moving Faster than Governments: A Lagging G-20 System in an Accelerating World? Information Overload Issues

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Colleagues:

We need a new system that moves faster than the speed of governments. Strategic investment in information and analysis architectures, recommended by the National Academy of Sciences, could be part of the solution.

Coping with Acceleration: Anticipating the Downside

One of the urgent implications of behavioral science theory, based on the work of the late Ithiel de Sola Pool, is that the global societal, economic, and political accelerations, via new global communication technologies, must be matched by government capacities.<1> [We already - in building the G-20 crisis system for economic/financial cooperation - are observing the validity of this forecast. And playing emergency catchup in addressing the global problems created by the prior accelerations and linkups in the global financial sector, for which even the US government was unprepared and insufficiently vigilant. Governments also lagged in developing the institutions for information cooperation against the (networking) threats of terrorist organizing and attacks in the US, NATO, and other countries.]

The Obama Administration's vision for a new G-20 global governance system [e.g., # 133, # 135, archived at www.policyscience.net at II. D] is moving in the right direction, but their implementation is not moving quickly enough.

Coping with Acceleration: Supporting the Upside Possibilities

Pool's Acceleration Hypothesis (e.g., # 159) also implies that there will be many opportunities to accelerate international cooperation for upside possibilities, and governments also will be lagging in this area.

Thus: One interesting exercise might be to expand the National Intelligence Council's behavioral science forecasting/rational planning (the Global 2025 system) with a high-end forecast of what future could be possible in 15 years with a maximally-developed G-20 system? We could have a much better world, for most of its citizens, than we - including General Clapper and his staff - currently imagine.

In some highly dramatized political areas, there might be modest change. But in other areas - e.g., international cooperation in global health R&D, via links of electronic medical records and new databases and analysis tools available, online, for researchers, patients, and physicians in all countries, the benefits for billions of people could be spectacular.

Self-Reflective and Planning Capacities

Even within the US government's DNI's (\$75 billion/year) system there probably is information overload at the higher levels, and not enough time to do this kind of thoughtful strategic analysis. Also, a working and up-to-speed global G-20 system needs much of the capacity to be available within the policy processes of all G-20 actors.

This is one of the areas where the independent work of US (+global) social scientists in academic settings (and of our graduates, in thinktanks or government Ministries across the G-20 system) will be a useful supplement to the self-reflective and planning capabilities of the DNI's \$75 billion/year system. This new work does not require spies, and it is not the comparative advantage of spies. But it also requires a comparative advantage of the academic world: self-reflective thinking, and interviews, and collating sources, and scientific alertness to evaluate alternative causal pathways and official claims, etc.

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<!-- These (unpublished) diagnoses are in a 2002 ms., in chapters 3 ("Good News, Mixed Blessings"), 4 and 5. The draft text is online at www.policyscience.net archived at II. A. with a draft book prospectus (Planet Broadband and Democratic Leadership).

Dr. Lloyd S. Etheredge- Fellow, World Academy of Art & Science

Policy Sciences Center

URL: www.policyscience.net

301-365-5241 (v); lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net

lloyd.etheredge@aya.yale.edu (email)

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