Date: Wed, 21 Oct 2009 18:23:24 -0400
To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Director, National Academy Panel on Social Science & Improving Intelligence" <baruch@cmu.edu>

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

Subject: 19. US Security & Selecting Narratives: Yergin on 11 Emerging Economic Crisis Narratives

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Committee Members:

   I have been sending you many messages and ideas. I hope that's okay. You'll be influencing $75 billion/year of government expenditures. We do not get agenda-setting advisory panels for the social sciences, at this level, very often.

From Data to Information to Knowledge to Wisdom
   Re social science advice to the Director of National Intelligence: There is a description of the emerging NSA database in James Bamford's review in the latest New York Review of Books (November 5, 2009 - "Who's in Big Brother's Database?"). There's a new $2 billion facility in the Utah desert with Mitre Corp. projecting storage volume requirements (counting new sensor data) of 10 to the 24th power (Yottabytes) by 2015.

   Thus, I am not sure that there are many new databases that you need to recommend.

   Bamford comments that this may become "America's equivalent of Jorge Luis Borge's 'Library of Babel,' a place where the collection of information is both infinite and at the same time monstrous, where the entire world's knowledge is stored, but not a single word in understood." However if you can get us help, in the public domain, to develop new tools (e.g., content analysis) to recognize and interpret the stories that are being told, some of this databank may prove valuable [for understanding a changing world, rather than just catching possible terrorists] & beyond fueling Hollywood's imagination re DNI's capabilities for the next addition to the Matt

Damon <u>Bourne</u> trilogy.

<u>Selecting Narratives: Social Science Beyond Single-Point Prediction</u>

    I am forwarding an interesting challenge for the DNI and your National Academy of Sciences advisory panel that Yergin, "A Crisis in Search of a Narrative," (attached) has helped to frame in the <u>Financial Times</u> (10/202009). He gives a very brief inventory of eleven emerging global narratives about the world financial crisis.

    Each narrative can probably be tested, confirmed, rejected, combined etc. rapidly from the emerging Yottabyte database - i.e., if you can give scientific advice about how to do it. Selecting across narratives - with the help of new software? - is a leading edge methodological challenge. And the right answer may be a new class of (pluralist world) narratives organizing an integrated complexity of logically incommensurable single/simple narratives drawn from these eleven, or another list.

    The DNI and President Obama may need this evidence-based integrated complexity to get the policy right.

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- I will post reference copies of messages/recommendations on www.policyscience.net.

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