

Date: Mon, 02 Nov 2009 22:28:21 -0500

To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy study on Improving Intelligence"
baruch@cmu.edu

From: Lloyd Etheredge lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net

Subject: Forecasting Blowbacks: The evolution of global surveillance systems

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Members:

Traditionally, the world's spy agencies have operated through small personal networks of individuals with lifetime commitments who have grown to know and trust one another across many years. This has helped to mitigate problems of top-level supervision, especially in these agencies where keeping secrets from authority and deception are part of the professional skills and (sometimes) personal instincts of employees. [Lie detectors are part of the managerial repertoire, but beating lie detectors also is a professional skill.]

A New World of Surveillance, w/ Tens of Thousands of Employees

One of the key challenges for the DNI will be to forecast, and develop data systems to detect quickly, the unintended consequences (e.g., blowbacks) that can be anticipated from the new era of training many thousands of US and foreign operatives in aspects of the new digital age surveillance systems.

An extraordinary number of people are being given the technical knowledge and skills to tap the world's digital information flows; and they also are acquiring knowledge of who to bribe, or blackmail, or deceive in what banks, Internet hubs, etc. The new jobs (with a total now at \$75 billion/year in the US alone) are not just in the US, but also in the intelligence-sharing and surveillance across NATO countries, by Israel, etc. There are professional military schools in China devoted to the development of skills. In other countries with technically advanced skills (India, Russia and Eastern Europe) there also are incentives to penetrate the new NSA systems, etc. And all major intelligence agencies likely are, since the global financial crisis, increasing their penetrations and data vacuuming of digital financial data of significant organizations.

Marketable Information and Skills

One of the potential future career paths of the new generation of employees, hired and trained since 9/11, is to change employers and market their knowledge. This can strengthen the legitimate security services industry. It also brings extraordinary challenges to senior DNI management to anticipate what today's new global surveillance systems may be bringing to the world if they cannot monitor and control the evolution of what they have created, with a much larger N of operatives than any government ever has managed.

Already, by the Carter Administration, the CIA Director, Admiral Stansfield Turner -

an outsider - was famous for telling his Deputy, "We turn these dials and push these levers [i.e., of top-down management] but we don't know what they are connected to. . ."

Interpreting the Silence

From the outside, one of the most interesting aspects of this problem is the loud silence - i.e., we are not hearing a great deal about security penetrations and prosecutions, here and/or in other countries. How do we and/or the DNI interpret the silence?

An Interesting Task for Behavioral Science Forecasting?

This might be an ideal challenge for professional social science, game-theoretic forecasting and independent review of DNI planning. Does the traditional US/UK strategy of hiring key operatives from Ivy League/elite universities increase high-minded management control? Where would be the highest returns, for which outsiders would be willing to pay the most money? (Tapping the databanks of the world's financial data? How much would it be worth to penetrate the US drug enforcement networks?) Where (e.g., the back office operations in Hyderabad?) are the weakest links to acquire corporate financial data? How would a foreign government chess master, with a long term view, be strategizing to tap quietly, and acquire the benefits of the US/NSA capabilities, for his/her government? What new data systems of false information should the DNI be deploying, where, to detect and track predictable penetrations?

LE

Dr. Lloyd S. Etheredge - Director, Government Learning Project
Policy Sciences Center Inc.
127 Wall St., Room 322 - Box 208215
New Haven, CT 06520-8215
URL: www.policyscience.net
301-365-5241 (v); lloyd.etheredge@policyscience.net (email)