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To: "Dr. Baruch Fischhoff - Chair, National Academy of Sciences Study on Social & Behavioral Science and Improving Intelligence for National Security" <baruch@cmu.edu>

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

Subject: US Government-to-World Communication Flows: Emerging properties of complex adaptive systems?

Dear Dr. Fischhoff and Colleagues:

Re global governance and other influence issues: It would be interesting and revealing for the National Intelligence Council to do an historical and cross-agency study of traditional print, voice, graphic/video and digital communication flows between US government postal addresses, telephones, Websites and databases, email addresses, and all non-US government locations abroad. Alongside basic statistics, it also would be useful - if privacy concerns can be met - to sample contents.

A Useful Thought Experiment: What will the Data Show?

At this point, a useful thought experiment is to imagine what the data will show? And what it will mean? Interpreting the results could help the DNI to be self-reflective about the de facto mechanisms of US influence and improve policy/forecasting about unexpected avenues of influence.

Communication flows are a description of a changing world. They also may be an emergent property of a complex evolving system that [independently] alters behavior.

I suspect that broader changes are underway - e.g., in scientific fields, and perhaps for all agencies - than one could infer from textbooks and published social science literature.

Re Theory and Methods

Karl Deutsch's work on Nationalism and Social Communication and evolving political community at the international level (e.g., European political integration) moved the focus of communications research beyond propaganda and mass political movements.

Pool et al.'s Communication Flows: A Census of the United States and Japan (1983) developed the discussion of digital metrics for different types of communications (e.g., comparing print, voice, video). Current research leaders of census/flow work are Roger Bohn (Principal Investigator) and James Short (Research Director) of the UCSD How Much Information? project:
<http://hmi.ucsd.edu/howmuchinfo.php>.

Lloyd Etheredge

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