Chapter 5

Upgrading the Global Political Process

[P]erhaps the most important single change in human consciousness in the last century, and especially in the American consciousness, has been the multiplying of the means and forms of what we call communication.

- Daniel Boorstin[1]

The world we have been living in since Tehran and Potsdam . . . a world of compact powers and contending blocs, the arrangements and rearrangements of macro-alliances - is no more. What there is instead, and how we ought to go about thinking about it, is, however, distinctly less clear. . . . A much more pluralistic pattern of relationships among the world s people seems to be emerging but its form remains vague and irregular, scrappy, ominously indeterminate.

- Clifford Geertz[2]

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[1] Quoted: James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, ed. David Thorburn, *Media and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989) 1.

[2] Clifford Geertz, *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000) 219.

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In a recent book <u>Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a New Diplomacy for the 21st Century</u>, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger presented a *tour d horizon* geopolitical analysis of American policy and the world s future. Implicitly, he discussed how important he expects the Internet to be: He does not discuss it at all. There is only a passing suggestion that it will be used for their own interests (perhaps, like a new kind of telephone) by the wealthy and powerful, who (especially in developing countries) live in the gated communities of the world.[3]

Clearly, there is not yet a consensus that the global Internet is a new source of power that, with a good strategic plan, can benefit the lives of people worldwide more rapidly than all of the messianic conquerors since Alexander the Great, and the hard power of formal governments, relating to each another by diplomatic practices based on the court protocols of the Congress of Vienna, have been able to accomplish.[4]

<u>Hard v. Democratic: An Example</u>
The quotation from the anthropologist Clifford Geertz that opens this chapter can be used to illustrate the important difference

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[3] Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Toward a New Diplomacy for the 21st Century.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001) 230.

[4] Within the US foreign policy Establishment, the most articulate advocate of what he calls soft power is: Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 41-76. Nye s book contains references to his earlier work with Robert Keohane, which introduced the hard/soft dichotomy.

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between the mindsets of hard power <u>Realpolitik</u> and democratic power. To the hard power mindset a changing world with a more pluralistic pattern of relationships . . . [that] remains vague and irregular, scrappy, ominously indeterminate would engender nervous observation by national security bureaucracies and advisers.[5] And probably generate option papers to increase Defense Department and CIA budgets.

However to a democratic politician, chaos and indeterminancy in global politics are not an invitation to write books. They are an extraordinary and compelling invitation to jump-in: Talk to many people. Listen. Begin discussing common visions and next steps. Organize! Run for office!

Rather than continue an abstract argument, here is an example of what I think can be done to engage democratic power and start to change the world:

Several years ago Dr. Ruth Berkelman of the US Center for Disease

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[5] Two fine collections whose titles and contents reflect the conventional uncertainties: Chester A. Crocker, ed., *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996). Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds., *Turbulent Peace: The Challenge of Managing International Conflict* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001). My point is that the right political response, if we understand the potential of democratic power, is easier and accords with the natural instincts of democratically-elected politicians in domestic politics: assume there is an election coming-up, and that you are running for office.

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Control spoke to a graduate seminar at Yale University s School of Public Health about the problem of emerging and reemerging infectious diseases and new US policy initiatives. (These problems include antibiotic resistant strains of disease-causing organisms, and diseases like AIDS that became a global epidemic on four continents before it was detected.) Her presentation was recorded, digitized with audio and slides (along with a transcript) and provided via the Internet to a global audience in health professionals in 140+ countries. Online resources at a companion Web site included copies of the US government s Report and the key scientific papers referenced in her talk.

This new technology permitted Dr. Berkelman to address the troops, so to speak, in 140+ countries with an outline of US initiatives for international cooperation and progress. It was a more efficient use of her time than writing an article for a journal or spending a year jetting-around to different conferences and countries to make the same presentation. And it was more effective than merely issuing an US government report, an event that could go unnoticed in most countries and be a difficult document for health professionals in many countries to obtain, even if they had the hard currency.

The new technology also permitted a global audience of health professionals to hear Dr. Berkelman directly and to judge her competence and commitment as a person. (In many cultures, the judgment of whether a speech by a government official is serious about world-changing commitment or useless rhetoric is shaped by an estimate of the person themselves.)

Following is a proposal for a Global Affairs Channel that builds upon the model of Dr. Berkelman s seminar: After the describing the

vision, I will address questions about this innovation that may be on the readers mind.

I. <u>Proposal</u>

Proposal: A Global Affairs Channel, using Internet technology. It will
      be modeled after our domestic C-SPAN, acquire programming
      of international interest from many sites worldwide and make
      the programs available on desktop PCs in all countries.

    The Channel will be straightforward journalism. The organizers, through a simple application process, will make block grants of global air time to agenda-setting institutions in any country involved in discussions for international progress. Each, in return for having a selection of its conferences or lecture series distributed worldwide without charge, will pay the cost to prepare its own material to a professional standard and submit it in a standard format.

    This opportunity to reach an interested global audience via a high-visibility Channel should be attractive to any organization. Today, when an institution like the Rockefeller Foundation or the Brookings Institution organizes a conference, the audience typically is limited to those who have the time and economic resources to attend physically. And if a foundation <u>Report</u> is issued, there are the familiar anxieties of whether it will receive any press coverage and whether it will sell. And, even if it sells, there is the deeper anxiety about how many policy-influencing people will have the time to read the <u>Report</u>, or even to skim the (required) Executive Summary.

    An organizations block grant also enhances the attraction of any invitation by the organization itself - i.e., the organizations podium is <u>de facto</u> before a global audience.

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   Table 5.1 illustrates the types of initial grants of global air time that might be made to US and Canadian institutions. The grants would be competitive and renewable. The specific speakers and ideas would be the sole responsibility of each sponsoring institution and not subject to prior review by the Channel. In making a block grant, the Channel s Board would agree not to censor programming, but it could add programming (by invitation or their own creation) to assure balance, to respond to international events, or for other purposes.[6]

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   [6] Initial outreach would be important to secure programming from institutions in countries with the greatest cultural distance, who might not readily apply - e.g., China; the Arab Middle East.

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Table 5.1

Global Affairs Channel
Examples of Startup Grants, (US & Canadian Institutions)[7]

- American Association for the Advancement of Science - developing science education resources on the Internet

- American Psychological Association - curriculum development for conflict resolution; colloquia re ethnic dispute resolution

- Amnesty International (US) - annual report and colloquium series re promotion of human rights & ethics

- Annenberg Foundation - learner.org & building online education resources for teachers, K-12

- Brookings Institution - international education access project; selected economic and security issues

- City University of NY (John Jay Center) - Human rights education

- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - Environmental policy; selected reports with Foreign Policy magazine

- Carter Center - project reports

- Coalition for Networked Information - global virtual library

- Council for Excellence in Government - international conferences re improved democratic accountability and performance

- Electronic Frontier Foundation - Internet & regulatory issues

- Gates Foundation - vaccine initiatives for the Third World

- Global Disaster Information Network - planning meeting

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[7] These examples were developed by a working group that I chaired under the auspices of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in the late 1990s. No current commitment of the organizations is implied.

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- Harvard University - Kennedy School (ARCO Forum, international topics); Law School (Human Rights - Distinguished Lecture Series)

- Institute for Victims of Trauma (post-traumatic stress)

- InterAction - Internet-based collaboration of NGOs for development

- International Society for Political Psychology - plenary sessions on current conflicts

- International Studies Association - colloquium series on ethnocentric bias and misperception in international relations.

- MacArthur Foundation - selected project reports

- Markle Foundation - Internet governance issues; unicttaskforce initiative

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology - Center for Educational Computing Initiatives: global colloquium series re foreign language education, with international partners; AI and Media Labs (selected programs); W3 Consortium: report re improving Internet access for the handicapped

- National Committee for US-China Relations (initial grants for redistribution to leading Chinese institutions)

- National Institutes of Health - selections from videocast.nih.gov, incl. women s health, environmental health, alternative medicine

- Oberlin College - Conference re studies of slavery & slave trade

- Princeton University (Center for International Studies) - world public order and policy studies.

- Smithsonian Institution (Holocaust studies; lecture series - Woodrow Wilson Center)

- Swarthmore College - Quaker Middle East dispute resolution conference

- UC Davis - desert agriculture; biotechnology & development

- UC San Diego - Pacific Rim policy conferences

- US Dept of Commerce - pollution-free manufacturing (w/ with Japan and

OECD)

- US Dept. of Energy - renewable energy research colloquia

- US Environmental Protection Agency - research colloquia - global climate change

- University of British Columbia (Liu Center) - international law

- University of Toronto (Center for International Studies) - Middle East studies

- University of Victoria (Centre for Global Studies) - international governance & UN

- VITA (Volunteers in Technical Assistance - US) - strategic planning

- Worldwatch Institute - Annual report; special projects

- Yale University - Divinity School (belief-independent spiritual growth); Forestry & Environmental Studies (lecture series); School of Public Health (tropical & emerging infectious diseases)

Discussion

- The Channel will quickly become the world s most prominent forum to present and discuss opportunities for international cooperation. It will make possible the flow of a new kind of discussion in a world of democracies; and it will help government and NGO professionals, and others with an engaged interest in international cooperation, to be well-informed and to link-up.

- Perhaps the deepest benefit is political: Respect is important, in both domestic and international politics. A Channel initiative, if organized by the US, would convey American respect to institutions in other countries. It would convey extraordinary respect to a policy institute in Moscow, or China, or New Delhi to be invited to have the

views at their podiums conveyed to a global audience.[8]

- Each presentation will be accompanied with information about the Website of the sponsoring organization. Thus, alongside discussion and information, the Channel can serve a quick-response *convening* and *enrolling* function for projects that create democratic power.[9]

- The Channel will extend the potential reach of every speaker and NGO conference to the desktop of every Foreign Ministry in the world. It would be a global resource that any working diplomat, journalist, NGO program officer, or student would consult on any issue.[10]

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[8] Leading US universities (e.g., Harvard, Yale) are investing in international mid-career and Fellows programs to build relationships and global discussions; a Channel would be a natural complement to increase their long-term effectiveness.

[9] Concerning the merits of a convening function as a strategy for American foreign policy, see: Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* 147.

[10] An ability for direct connection with the public discussions of agenda-creating institutions is likely, in more open societies, to assist with early warning of violent conflicts: For thoughtful introductions to a wide literature: Hayward R. Alker, Ted Robert Gurr, and Kumar Rupesinghe, eds., *Journeys through Conflict: Narratives and Lessons. A Study of the Conflict Early Warning Systems Research Project of the International Social Science Council.* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2001).
Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Preventing Deadly Conflict. Executive Summary of the Final Report.* (New York: Carnegie

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- The Channel will establish a greater degree of due process than now is available. A good idea or claim for just treatment can quickly reach a global audience of potential allies. And it will be a great deal less expensive. Today, even for non-profit American institutions who want to reach a domestic audience, the cost already is prohibitive: a full-page display ad in a leading newspaper to express a public policy position (i.e., that zips past, as readers flip the pages) is $75,000+ (Table 5-2), a commercial rate that applies even for well-intentioned, non-profit organizations.

Table 5-2

Cost of a B&W Full-Page Display Ad (Weekday)

The New York Times[11]	$74,000
Wall Street Journal[12]	$167,000
Washington Post[13]	$78,000

Corporation of New York, 1997) 45-47.
David A. Hamburg, *No More Killing Fields: Preventing Deadly Conflict* (New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2002 (in press)).
Michael S. Lund, *Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: U. S. Institute of Peace, 1996).

[11] Source: www.nytadvertising.nytimes.com

[12] Source: www.advertising.wsj.com. The Wall Street Journal does offer a discount rate of $84,000 if the purpose is solely to solicit funds for a humanitarian cause.

[13] Source: www.washingtonpost.com

- The Channel will give audiences a direct link to the discussions of agenda-shaping institutions and individuals in many countries. Rather than have journalists interpose themselves, users will gain a direct and valuable political sense of the personalities and emotional charge that accompany the discussion.

- The Channel can permit desk officers in Foreign Ministries worldwide to monitor an agenda-development process that, due to budget limitations, are not attended or reported by Embassy personnel in the cable traffic that arrives automatically on their desktop.[14] And there may be an added message-sending advantage: Several years ago, when I discussed this idea with a Canadian diplomat, he asked with a smile: If your State Department/USIA starts this, and we participate, does that mean they will listen?

- The Internet itself is a powerful political argument for democracy and freedom. If it is well-run, a strong and exciting Global Affairs Channel could do more to make the case for freedom and democracy than many abstract discussions of political theory.

II. Ten Questions

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[14] The Channel might be especially helpful to have available on the desktops of many other countries (e.g., China) that are more insular or lack the professional resources of the State Department. If we think that China does not understand the Arab Middle East, for example, this would be a worthwhile project to get the best and latest discussions of Middle East politics and policy issues, from many sites internationally, to desktops in China. And for discussions of the Middle East at Chinese universities or institutes to be available worldwide, for comment and dialogue.

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1.) <u>Who should start this?</u>

The Voice of America and/or US Information Agency (now merged into the State Department) would be a good organizer. They own a satellite-based television channel, WorldNet, with worldwide coverage, operating 24 hours/day but with a virtually zero market share in every country, time-slot, and demographic group. The satellite transponders can carry traditional television and also Internet Webcasting.

If the US government is reluctant to play a prominent long-term role, it can act as a convener.[15] It can bring the unused WorldNet satellite resources of the former USIA to the table to get projects underway for an initial three years, during which time it will convene conferences of stakeholders in each of the topic areas. And at the end of the three years, the US government role will phase out. Each of the stakeholder groups will continue a global CSPAN project in their area, or not, depending upon their interests.

At this point, any leading news media organization with a good international reputation (e.g., <u>The New York Times</u>, BBC + Radio Canada, <u>Financial Times</u>) could start the project. A virtual global CSPAN can emerge regionally - in Europe, or the Pacific Rim. Or it could be started in a distributed way - as Yale s School of Public Health demonstrated in its prototype colloquium for issues in international public health.

2.) <u>Will this work?</u>

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[15] Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* 147.

> Still, in this time of continuing and profound transformations, too much remains murky to project much beyond the immediate present. . . All one can conclude with conviction is that in the decades ahead the paths of governance will lead in many directions, some emerging into sunlit clearings and others descending into dense jungles.
>
> - James Rosenau (1997)[16]

A Global Affairs Channel could be a spectacular success in any area where people want to work together. For example, any area of science or health; or any global issue where scientific progress or tools could help. I am doubtful that prolonged and highly-dramatized conflicts (e.g., the Middle East) can be resolved in a public forum, although it may help wider publics to understand the search for options. (The Channel also may be a better tool for organizing and education than persuasion: evidence from early uses of the Internet suggest that people are more motivated to express their own opinion than to listen to other people with different views.)[17]

The Internet may increase democratic responsiveness, but research also suggests that, in the early 21st century, a majority of the

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[16] James N. Rosenau, *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World*, vol. 53, *Cambridge Studies in International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 449.

[17] Anthony G. Wilhelm, *Democracy in the Digital Age: Challenges to Political Life in Cyberspace* (New York: Routledge, 2000) 86-104.

world s peoples may not be cosmopolitans or even strong internationalists. And a majority do not have formal education beyond primary school. The Channel will force us - and, in part, help us - to confront new, practical requirements: a world of <u>Realpolitik</u> monarchs was simpler, less demanding of political/democratic skill, and required less work.[18] The Channel also may initially heighten frustrations by direct contact among many foreigners, with seemingly odd views in this pluralist world, who do not listen. We may find that we are vastly under-investing in our institutions for international agreement, including both the Department of State, and our foundations and other NGOs with international programs. And we may want to become much more serious about efforts to improve education around the world: even one small nuclear weapon, exploded by a pressured Pakistani government in a dispute with

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[18] There have been several interesting attempts to understand the diversity of human consciousness and politics in today s world. The fact that blue jeans and Coca-Cola are ubiquitous may mislead us about the extent of global differences, not just between cultures but along a continuum within many societies that runs from communal worlds of face-to-face relations and spiritualism; to societies that are authority-oriented and tribal; to the most post-modern liberal arts sensibility and cosmopolitan universalism. For a brief comparison drawing from spiritual traditions and efforts to improve civic dialogue in South Africa see: Ken Wilber, *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2000) 108-35. See also Pippa Norris s empirical conclusion that cosmopolitans remain a distinct minority in the world: Pippa Norris, "Cosmopolitan Citizens," in *Governance in a Globalizing World*, ed. Joseph S. Nye and John D. Donahue, *Visions of Governance for the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2000), 173.

India, would produce radioactive fallout over American cities.

I think it also is worth noting James Rosenau's observation (above). The belief that American hard power establishes American control of events is a dangerous delusion; the risk can be exaggerated by media sensationalism that portrays the world as run by a small number of individuals (e.g., American Presidents). A Global Affairs Channel is a step in the right direction, to knit together a better political process.

International Understanding: A Caution

In the early days of the Cold War, Secretary of State Dean Acheson was briefed about a project that became the Voice of America and USIA. Its supporters were passionate that new communication technology would help the world to understand America and this, in turn, would contribute to peace. Acheson leaned back, stroked his moustache, and asked with amusement whether the divorce rate in America [i.e., in the late 1940s) did not call into question the idea that knowing other people better led, inevitably, to better relationships?[19]

Acheson gave his approval, and it proved to be a good decision. However, I want to alert the reader that the Global Affairs Channel is not based on the assumption that better understanding, and peace, will result from better communications: It is based on creating shared visions, stakeholders, and mutual benefits.

3.) Is the technology ready?

It is good enough to begin, even for users with 56K dial-up (who can get good audio and slides), and it will get better.

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[19] Walter Roberts (personal communication)

4.) <u>What languages</u>?

   Programming in any language will be acceptable. Grantees will be encouraged to recognize that the spirit of the project is to make their views known as widely as possible. They will be encouraged to make additional investments to this end (e.g., printed transcripts, summaries in different languages, supplementary files with translations.)

5.) <u>Will critics of US policy be given free global air time</u>?

   Of course. The intent of the channel is to be an honest broker, to reflect, and make accessible, the range of discussions that actually are occurring in the world.

   Official US views can be represented or defended if American diplomats, or others who support the policies, are invited to speak at various conferences and forums. This, it seems to me, will be a healthy discipline for the State Department and the world s Foreign Ministries: In a world of democracies, they should be out in the world, and engaging in public dialogues.

6.) <u>What about hot-button issues</u>? <u>Isn t it inevitable this will be centrist?</u>

   Same answer: if the controversy exists in the world, it should be on the Channel. The inevitably centrist objection will need to be assessed after we see the project underway.

   One safeguard is that global mini-channels also can be organized by groups who feel excluded.

7.) <u>You say this is journalistic. Won t it become political</u>?

   Alone, television does not produce social capital or political action; but it does create new possibilities to make the organizing

easier.[20]

The more visibility the Channel achieves, the greater the political pressures will be. They may defeat it. It will be a professional challenge to the organizers to prevent this from happening.

There also is a political issue that the inclusion of selected NGOs can implicitly advertise who is being excluded: I think that being selective will be wise and that it is better to resist the temptation for a channel to be a 24 x 7 mega-project.

Less will be more: The goal should be to have discussions of international interest that the right (serious and committed) people, *will make time* to engage. It will be better to have a total of 25 hours/week of programming - and in each area, one hour of programming that nobody would miss.

8.) <u>You have used the analogy of CSPAN. I have some great random hits with CSPAN, but I am not sure it really is very useful. For example, I never know what is on.</u>

The use of Internet technology for a Global Affairs Channel would improve upon our domestic CSPAN in three ways: 1.) Programming can be archived and indexed on local servers and retrieved for video-on-demand viewing at a user's convenience; 2.) It will be possible to skim presentations and use time efficiently; 3.) The presentations will

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[20] Paul S. Adler and Seok-Woo Kwon, "Social Capital: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," in *Knowledge and Social Capital: Foundations and Applications*, ed. Eric L. Lesser, *Resources for the Knowledge Based Economy* (Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000).

be linked to Web sites that support discussions with presenters, retrieval of printed texts, linkups of viewers who discover shared interests, etc.

Experimenting with different formats also will be possible, such as a regularly-scheduled feature. For example, there might be a <u>World Health</u> forum every Wednesday that would include a 30-minute round-up of news and focused discussions, by a panel of leading science/health journalists (similar to <u>Washington Week in Review</u>).

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9.) <u>What topics</u>?

The State Department s Reinvention Plan would be a good bipartisan place to start (Table 5-2): several of the topics need to be restated (e.g., the promotion of trade, rather than merely promoting US trade); the prevention of crime may be a topic that has a limited suitability for a public forum. Etc.

Another criteria for selection might be to assess who wants to link-up and learn other people s views? Any science-related area probably would benefit greatly (e.g., Renewable Energy Research); and science components, once underway, might grow and spin-off on their own with independent financing (chapter nine).

Table 5-2
U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS AND STRATEGIC GOALS[21]

National Security:
- Ensure that local and regional instabilities do not threaten the security and well being of the United States or its allies.

- Eliminate the threat to the United States and its allies from weapons of mass destruction or destabilizing conventional arms.

Economic Prosperity:
- Open foreign markets to free the flow of goods, services, and capital.

- Expand U.S. exports to $1 .2 trillion by 2000.

- Increase global economic growth.

- Promote broad-based economic growth in developing and transitional economies.

American Citizens and U.S. Borders:
- Enhance the ability of American citizens to travel and live abroad securely.

- Control how immigrants and nonimmigrants enter and remain in the United States.

Law Enforcement:
- Minimize the impact of international crime on the United States and its citizens.

- Reduce significantly from 1997 levels, the entry of illegal drugs into the United States.

- Reduce international terrorist attacks, especially against the United States and its citizens.

Democracy:
- Increase foreign government adherence to democratic practices and respect for human rights.

Humanitarian Response:
- Prevent or minimize the human costs of conflict and natural disasters.

Global Issues:

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[21] From www.state.gov

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- Secure a sustainable global environment in order to protect the United States and its citizens from the effects of international environmental degradation.

·· Stabilize world population growth.

·· Protect human health and reduce the spread of infectious disease.

10.) <u>How expensive is this</u>?

The programming is free, and it arrives automatically in standard format. The core of the work could be done by 3-4 first-rate professionals: A President and two Deputy Directors (Technology, Programming). A founding Board of Directors would have to do a great deal of work. The key continuing investment would be an advisory process and outside review committees that meet every six months to screen proposals and allocate the block grants across institutions.

If the US government donates unused and under-used capacity on its global (WorldNet) satellite network, the Big Hop global distribution would be free. Or one or more communication carriers might underwrite the distribution as a civic commitment, just as CSPAN has a compelling domestic case to be carried without charge (indeed, it is subsidized) by the US domestic cable industry as a public service. [22]

International cooperation and demand for more coverage may grow. If so, separate channels could spin-off with independent

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[22] Startup and/or authoring grants for technology and initial programming (e.g., $15,000) also might be made available as needed, especially for institutions in developing countries.

financial support. Some could be nonprofit. Others (e.g., science-related) might be organized as limited partnerships and accept advertising on the same basis as leading scientific journals (chapter nine).

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