

HSS Visiting Speaker Program – September 15, 2008. Washington DC



“In the past three to five years, people are beginning to realize that DOE is a cornerstone to the future. What DOE does in terms of energy, science, and national security will impact some of CSIS’s vision of what the world will look like in the year 2025.”

Glenn Podonsky - Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer

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“These dialogs within this Visiting Speaker Program help to energize and focus our senior leaders to understand where we are and more important, where we are headed.

NNSA is trying to take a strategic look at its future as we head from a historic nuclear weapons enterprise to a national security enterprise. We are trying to accomplish both complex-wide transformation as well as looking at the role of our laboratories, all of which require us to be innovative and forward-looking.”

William C. Ostendorff –  
Principal Deputy Administrator.  
National Nuclear Security  
Administration (NNSA)

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“A famous quote from Saint Exupery is ‘...your task is not to foresee the future, but rather to enable it.’

As we think about the position of our country, as we think about the significant changing environment around us, it is incumbent on us to not only fulfill the first condition but to meet both of these challenges.

I believe too few of us have the capacity to meet the first, let alone both of these conditions”

Erik Peterson. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

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“In trying to foresee how the future will unfold, we now have better data, better methodology, and more and better specialized people than ever before to enhance our capacity to look long and to think about the long-range.

The question is to what extent can we together engage to achieve a better, safer, more prosperous, more sustainable environment around us.

The art of leadership is not only in dealing with the immediate and urgent but with the kind of long-range, systemic issues that we all face.”

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“CSIS has identified seven forces, each one of which will have an impact nothing short of revolutionary in terms of how our collective future unfolds. The seven forces are:

1. Population and demographics
2. Strategic resource management
3. Technological innovation
4. Data and information
5. Global economic integration
6. Conflict
7. Challenge of governance

Each one of these drivers of change will have a revolutionary impact. And when we think about all seven forces and how they are interlinked, we may see a perimeter zone of outcomes against which we can weigh a range of policy actions.”

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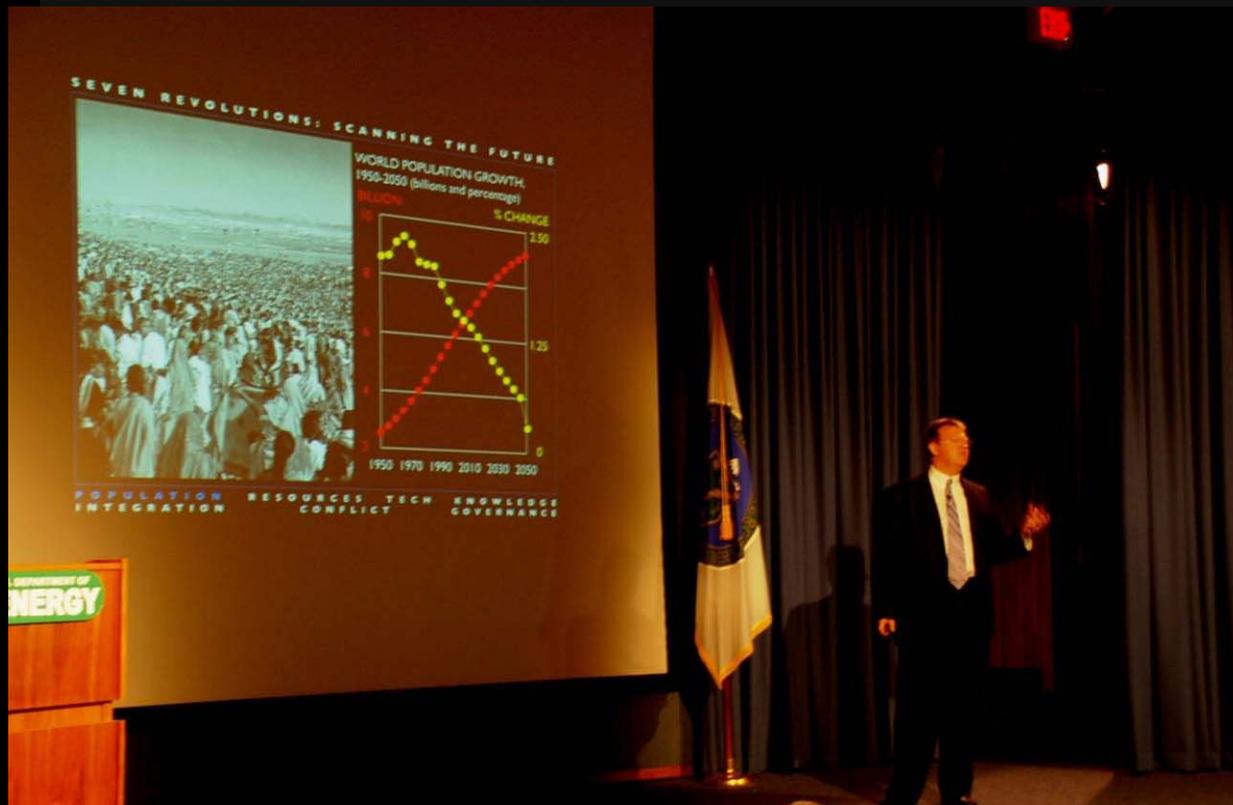


“There are two critical and overarching points that apply to every one of the seven forces:

- 1) aggressive adaptation – to what extent can we adapt aggressively and effectively to an accelerating world of change around us; and,
- 2) lifting our level of consciousness – how are we, day by day, lifting our level of consciousness to respond to this world of ever more profound change.”

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“1. Population - Over the course of many of our lifetimes, the world population tripled, reaching to over 6.7 billion people in 1999. At the current rate of growth, we will have over 8 billion by year 2025.

We are likely to see a high correlation of population growth in those areas and regions of our world least capable of supporting it.

2. Resource Management – We will need to meet the challenges of increasing food, water, and energy production in light of the expected population growth.”

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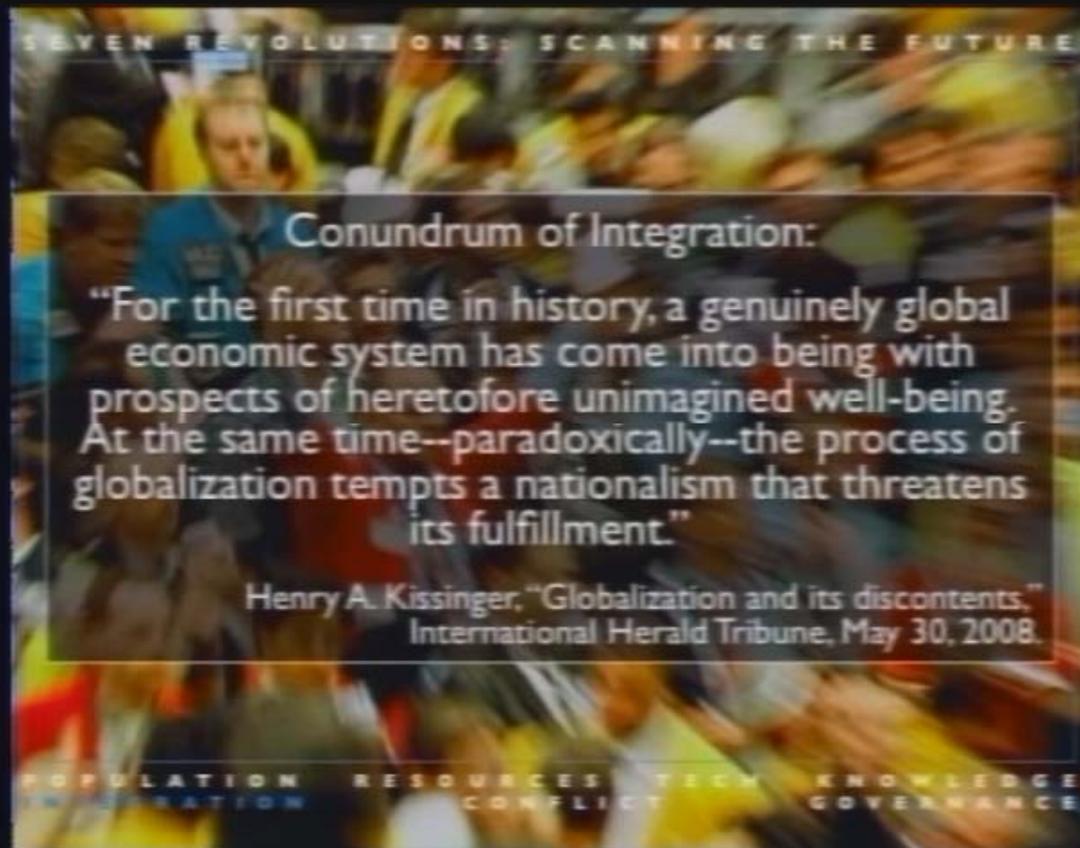
“3. Technological innovation – If you think about all the significant developments over recent years, probably the most appropriate way to deal with this revolution is to look for nodes of technological innovation and then to begin to ask the question, ‘where are the key areas of convergence among them?’

I’d suggest that the four following nodes are probably most critical: computation; robotics; biotech and genomics; and nanotech.

4. Data and Information – According to Tom Friedman, ‘in a plug-and-play, interconnected world, you can innovate without having to emigrate.’ The whole issue of data/information flow changes the fundamental rule of the game.”

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“5. Global economic integration – the ‘Conundrum of Global Economic Integration’ is well described by Henry Kissinger in the quote shown. This is a critical point of departure, especially as we look at the waves of worldwide financial and trade volatility we are experiencing today.

6. Conflicts – Over the course of our lifetime, we have seen conflicts between countries, conflicts within countries, and we have also seen a shifting or vamping up of asymmetric warfare, to include the desire of warring factions to obtain and use weapons of mass destruction.”

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“7. Governance – Nation states have been and will continue to be very important. But as we look forward, we need to also acknowledge the arrival and influence of large corporations and non-governmental organizations. Of the largest 50 economic entities in the world, measured by GDP or sales, nine are corporations and not countries.

According to Henry Kissinger, governments across the world must bridge the ‘huge gap between the sophistication of the dominant economic model, called globalization, and traditional political thinking based on the nation state.’”

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“What I see across a whole range of organizations is an erosion in leadership. I worry that in many cases, leaders are devolving into managers, that strategies are being diluted into mere tactics, that innovation is being sacrificed for reassertion of rigidities, long-term planning falling prey to immediate triage reactions, expediency overwhelming principles, and long-term strategic vision surrendering to management by-the-numbers. We need much more than this.”

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“We need to be thinking about where things are going for the next generation. We, in terms of organizations and in terms of the role of the United States in the world, can carve out competitive advantage based on aggressive, far-sighted adaptation, lifting our level of consciousness across the board, and recognizing where things are going and doing something about it.”

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