Contradictions in brilliant eyes

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With the emergence of an international information policy regime over the last few decades, information policy tools have received more attention per se, multiplied in form, and penetrated a growing variety of realms of activity. Their use has been striking in the defense arena, where 85–95% of arms control agreements are now devoted to the compelled information collection, processing, and flows that have come to be called confidence- and security-building measures.

Beginning as verification techniques, that is, information flows for the purpose of verifying compliance with treaty provisions, they have expanded to include the building of confidence and security in general. (Both types of information flows are to be distinguished from those that occur outside the treaty context, both generalized [surveillance] and specific [intelligence].) Verification techniques are both human and technological. Inspection teams can be along a border or at the portals or perimeters of arms manufacturing plants. Technological information collection may be on the ground or be carried out through aerial or satellite fly-overs. In addition to visual information, thermal, seismic, radiation, and other data may be collected. All types of verification may be continuous, periodic, or on demand. Other types of confidence-building measures range into cultural activities and harmonization of management theory and organizational structure as well as regular flows of trade and commercial information. It is the expressed goal of these agreements to devise such procedures in order to make nations transparent to each other (Borawski, 1988a,b, 1989; Cohen, 1990; Krepon and Umberger, 1988; Tsipis, Hafemeister and Janeway, 1986).

Fascination with the idea of transparency is illustrated in the alluring name “Brilliant Eyes”, given to a proposed system of thousands of smart surveillance satellites. Yet all of the issues familiar to those who study other
types of information policy arise here. Who does the information collection and processing and who gains the value added in both economic and political terms from these processes? Who has access to the information gathered and at what stage of processing? Does the public have a right to know? Who, in fact, is the public? How can the gap between developed and developing nations be bridged?²

The war in Iraq notwithstanding, the growing centrality of information flows to defense theory and practice has led to the "ephemeralization" of defense. Indeed, the contradiction between the war in Iraq and the trend towards ephemeralization is a manifestation of three deep-seated contradictions in our conceptions of the information society. First, the very process of ephemeralization itself stimulates the production of material objects (the "Potemkin Village effect"). Second, our current collective mesmerization by the notion of the "information economy" and by cultural studies' absorption in texts has contributed to a seeming inability to confront the vastly expanded proportion of our economies devoted to very concrete defense concerns. The use of confidence-building measures in international law also contributes to our transition to a post-law society.

Because of the centrality of defense matters to conceptions of geopolitical structures at the nation-state level and beyond and to their economies, an exploration of the development and use of confidence-building measures will illuminate several characteristics of the information age in general.

**History of confidence-building measures**


The suggestion that information flows could also be used to prevent war first arose after World War II. Bernard Baruch suggested a mutual inspection system to the Soviet Union, believing that tensions would be reduced if parties to potential conflicts knew more about each other's activities and intentions, an idea rejected by Stalin as a cover for espionage. This exchange opened several decades of proposals and counter-proposals (Bloed and van Dijk, 1985; Borawski, 1986; Krehbiel, 1989). These continually foundered for political, logistical, and technical reasons.
Problems in the development of confidence-building measures

Political problems
The fear that verification procedures would simply be used to enhance espionage systems continued to play a role on both sides, most often a problem when generating support for negotiating positions. In the US, for example, right-wing congressional leaders such as Jesse Helms cite this issue as central to their resistance to arms control treaties3 (US Cong., 1989).

Technically, verification can be juridical (detecting departure from the text of a treaty), political (providing politically adequate assurance), or military (detecting violations or other adversary actions that can make a significant military difference). Bringing these into convergence is a major consideration (Gallagher, 1990), yet as Gayler (1986) notes, it is characteristic of the verification process that it is almost never positive or determinate. From the game theoretic approach, verification is thus a problem (Brams and Davis, 1987; Dacey, 1987; Isard, 1988; Lebow and Stein, 1989; Nicholson, 1987).

In the end the question of sufficiency is always political. There are widely varying positions on the possibility of acquiring sufficient information both in amount and types of information to actually provide confidence and security. People with the same training and provided with the same information will arrive at radically different conclusions of its interpretation and/or sufficiency.

Assuming that one never knows everything and deception will occur, and rejecting the concept of "total verification", Nixon's notion of adequacy dominated discussions until the Reagan Administration. Information is "adequate" if it is impossible for militarily significant violations of treaty provisions to occur unnoticed. Reagan moved to seeking "effective verification", which is based on the belief that only vigorous and highly intrusive systems capable of uncovering everything can protect American security interests. The retreat from "adequate" to "effective" indicates a decline in the expectation that it is possible for confidence-building measures to work.

Logistical problems
Logistical issues raised various barriers. Development and maintenance of inspection systems, whether human or technological, is expensive and requires elaborate infrastructural and organizational support. Estimates of the total cost of all the apparatuses agreed to give figures called...
"staggering" (SIPRI, 1989). Much of the cost of existing aerial reconnaissance systems is of course impossible to calculate because some people, equipment, and resources are also used for other purposes; research and development programs with other ends have contributed a great deal; and much is hidden because of the "black" (secret) nature of the programs (Burrows, 1986; Dunn, 1989). Disarmament has its costs, too: It takes 280 man-days to reduce one missile launcher to scrap; over 200 design centers have been established in the USSR devoted to the problem of conversion of arms to peaceful uses. In addition to providing a real drain on the economies of western industrialized nations, the sheer expense involved makes it unlikely that developing nations could also become a part of what many have hoped would become global information sharing frameworks.\(^4\)

Cultural and political matters intrude (Jervis, 1976; Korzenny and Ting-Toomey, 1990). It is believed unworkable, for example, to include Israeli observers on a team in Syria. Inspection teams need to combine technical expertise with political savvy and language skills, the latter more easily acquired than the former. In the Central American context, where inspection teams were first created by the peace movements rather than by governments, special psychological, social, and cultural problems arise when volunteers, often of college age and from alien societies, agree to serve as members of border “witness” teams.

A last logistical issue is the need to convince defense establishments of the possibilities that (1) information flows rather than physical weaponry can be useful for defense purposes, (2) their own security needs can be protected under mutual inspection regimes, (3) the use of confidence-building measures appropriately falls under their purview, and (4) their use is in the self-interest of defense departments. Various nations have dealt with this problem in different ways; the US approach was to involve the Department of Defense from the beginning.

**Technical problems**

Finally, there were technical difficulties. Not all of the scientific knowledge and technological development needed to adequately verify a variety of types of arms has been available. Decisions to move forward required a considerable research and development commitment. Each wave of interest has therefore yielded a corresponding flow of money to the private sector, from the 1950s emphasis on high altitude photography that brought contracts to Polaroid (the suggestion that the US government develop aerial photography came from a commission headed by Edward Land, who also
headed Polaroid) through the emphasis on seismology to current concerns about biological and chemical warfare. This relationship is not only important for intellectual history; it also points to the weighted interests of the corporate world in this approach to defense. The power of the "military-industrial complex" has not declined in the information age.

**Forces supporting development of confidence-building measures**

These problem areas, combined, managed to keep discussion of confidence-building measures at the talk level for several decades. In each, however, other developments also were working to alter the circumstances. A fourth type of force—citizen involvement—tipped the balance in favor of the use of these information policy tools in the defense arena in the mid 1980s.

**Political forces**

Gorbachev's moves had an impact on both East and West, shaking loose Cold War habits and encouraging those with fixed views to give new modes of operation a chance. The economic cost of continuing the arms race continued to grow for all parties. Robertson (1990) argues that lack of stability in the new geopolitical situation itself points to an additional need for information flows in order to resolve greater uncertainty. Meanwhile, shifting geopolitical conditions facilitated efforts by transnational corporations and nation-states to harmonize the global economy, the desire to replace defense with economic concerns resonating with the desire for greater information flows. After several years of effort to persuade even Western European nations to accept inclusion of most types of international information flows under the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)^5, rules for international trade in goods developed after World War II, frustrated Americans also began looking to other arenas in which such systems might be established with more success. In defense, they did.

**Logistical forces**

The sense of the logistical feasibility of the use of confidence-building measures shifted over time. A shift in political will encouraged a shift in this domain as well as a justifiable influence, since concerns were at that point highly speculative. Technological development erased a number of logistical concerns that had been linked to technical problems. And it was seen that the costs of using confidence-building measures had to be balanced against the building of the SDI defence system.
Technical forces
As part of the general explosion of development of information collection and processing technologies that characterizes the information age, many technological problems have been resolved. By the 1980s, many sophisticated technologies were even available for commercial use; it was, for example, dissemination of commercial photographs to news agencies that provided the world with its first knowledge of the Chernobyl disaster. Jasani and Sakarta (1987) argue that the increase in capabilities of remote sensing has opened a new potential for international cooperation in verification.

Some fear that it is impossible for negotiations to keep up with the speed of technological development. One type of problem emerges when the most sophisticated technologies are kept outside the realm of arms control talks; the US, for example, consistently refuses to share access to its most advanced encryption systems. In this regard, it is noteworthy that communications, command, control and intelligence systems (C3I) remain beyond the purview of arms control agreements. Another problem is that distinctions among weapons today are often essentially intangible, embedded in software instructions rather than hardware. Such differences are, of course, unverifiable. The spread of technologies to new players is another facet of the problem (Gupta, 1982).

Citizen involvement
Citizen interest in use of any techniques to reduce the arms race continued to grow in response to the economic impact, environmental degradation, pacifist commitments, and fear of total nuclear destruction (Faber, 1982; Wittner, 1988). In the USSR, the connection between environmental hazards and the arms race drove citizens to demand information, and in some cases to establish monitoring systems of their own. In Central America, pacifist groups such as the Quakers established inspection teams several years before the five governments signed treaties including confidence-building measures and relying upon UN teams for inspection purposes.

In the US, private citizens took the ground-breaking move to establish the first mutual nuclear weapons test monitoring systems. In 1986 members of the US-based Natural Resources Defense Council, a non-profit environmental organization, met with private citizen members of the Soviet Academy of Sciences to discuss establishment of teams for mutual seismic monitoring of nuclear weapons testing. Within three months, US scientists
were in place with their equipment in the Soviet Union, though because of barriers raised by the US government, it took two years for the reverse to take place (Schrag, 1989).

The impact of this move was enormous, for it demonstrated that the technical, logistical, and political problems were solvable. Almost immediately, there was an explosion of experimentation with a wide variety of types of verification systems, creativity in conceptualizing possible systems, and research into remaining technical problems. Within a couple of years, literally hundreds of experimental inspections of various kinds were taking place in and between numerous countries. Growth was almost logarithmic, for experience encouraged parties to go further, and others to try (Lavjoie, 1988; Mendelsohn, 1987). While the original context was European, within the negotiating realm of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and related arms control talks, commitment to the ideas and experimentation with inspections soon spread to other regions of the world, including Africa, Central America, and Asia (UN, 1989a, 1989b, 1990).

Confidence-building measures in the 1990s

Verification techniques and concepts

By 1990, the types of information flows in use or considered as confidence-building measures had become articulated to a finer level of detail, multiplied in number, and radically evolved in form. Where earlier requests for information simply asked for numbers of troops and weapons and warnings of military exercises in advance, now treaties specify level of military organization about which data must be provided, include exhaustive definitions of various types of arms, and seek information also about military training and internal organization and procedures. The US has proposed continuous production line monitoring, and seeks access to weapon design information. The use of microchip "tags" for individual weapons has been suggested.

In addition to information about specifically military matters, confidence-building measures now include flows of trade, commercial, and general economic data. There are requests for harmonization of forms and procedures used within plants, and of accounting systems. Exchanges of management theory and training are already underway.

Thirteen different types of inspections are under discussion in strategic
arms limitation talks. Agreements detailing specific protocols can be up to 100 pages, covering such subjects as what equipment will be used, the diplomatic status of verification teams, their responsibilities, and rules for treatment of the media and general access. Laboratory visits have been suggested, and some have argued for full integration of scientists into each others’ research teams.

One of the most striking efforts in the area of confidence-building was a 1990 meeting attended by leaders from most NATO and then-Warsaw Pact nations. For the first time since 1814, they met and exchanged ideas about both security theory and threat perception. This week-long event was so successful that there are now agreements for annual exchanges of military principles. An ad hoc series of joint seminars in areas of mutual concern and annual visits of experts to explain and discuss data were also underway. There were numerous calls for development of a single East-West joint security structure before the Iraqi War became inevitable, internal Soviet problems seemingly unsolvable, and geopolitical optimism overly idealistic.

Agreement has been reached within the CSCE that the concept of “military significance” was to be interpreted in “modern terms”, meaning that cooperation is included and promoted, and that the concept of security-building was of equal importance to the notion of confidence-building. The late 1970s concept of the de-ideologization of the East and West as a confidence-building measure was increasingly important (Indep. Commission, 1982).

The shift in basic understanding of the concept of verification over time shows a marked drift away from the material world. Before World War II, philosophers dealt with the question of “verification” referring to the relationship between language and objects in the “real” world, (Berlin, 1938) continuing the tradition of logical positivism. This meaning of the term did show up in early verification discussions, where the question was inspections in order to verify the data being received – to check the language against its material referents. This notion quickly mutated, within the international negotiating environment, to the question of verifying agreement to treaty provisions against material referents. This shift is in one sense to a more restrictive concept, for it deals only with a sub-class of the general problem. On the other hand, it is broader, for verification now deals not just with specific statements of fact, but with agreement to adhere to certain rules; what is being examined, therefore, is as likely to be structural as concrete. This difference led to the next shift in the meaning of the term, to a functional rather than quantitative or definitional approach to develop-
ment of verification procedures. Finally, with the notion of sharing security theory, threat perceptions, and technical expertise, the question of verification has lifted away from any need for material referents at all, focusing instead on the relatively intangible effects of building confidence and security.

*Shifts in defense theory*

By late 1989 and early 1990 it seemed there had been a genuine shift in defense theory (US Commission, 1989). There were several dimensions to this change: ephemeralization, globalization, and sensitivity to the notion of environmental security.

The increasing use of the variety of types of information collection, processing, and distribution mechanisms for defense purposes was seen as replacement of space and the exchange of physical material (weapons and barriers) with information flows for national security purposes, or ephemeralization. As part of the information age, it came to be believed that increased knowledge would provide confidence in each other’s actions and feelings of security in the domestic and international environments.

The use of confidence-building measures contributed to changes in the nature of the nation-state also stimulated in other state activities by the same use of new information technologies. Geographically, defensive boundaries move to the outer reach of weapons and sensing systems, so that disputes over facilities are simultaneously disagreements over effective state boundaries. Military organizations, like others, are now able to evolve in ways only made possible through the use of sophisticated information collection, storage, switching and processing technologies (Braman, 1989a, b). The US and others, as a consequence, are reviewing their entire military structures. The nature of the state is also affected by the use of confidence-building measures that multiply the types of management, production, and accounting systems that are harmonized. Dyson and Humphreys (1986) analyze the way the drive towards harmonization is shaping the communications revolution in western Europe. Karpf (1989) argues that computerization of the law, which facilitates harmonization, selects from among competing bodies of law. Taylor (1982) argues that development of defense technologies has worked toward integration for some time.

Those involved in defense also began to be sensitive to environmental matters. For environmentalists, a genuine concern conceptually linked the two since security by definition includes the survival and well-being of the
environment (PRIO, 1989). For military managers, “environmental security” is more cynically based on the idea that claims to monitor for environmental purposes could serve as a cover for other types of surveillance. In either case, this idea further affects perceptions of the state, for environmental matters are global, not state-bound, by nature.

Contradictions in the use of confidence-building measures

The Potemkin Village effect

Oddly enough, ephemeralization triggers production of material objects, multiplying both the numbers of types of things, and the numbers of things. Some things are made to elude detection, such as the Stealth bomber. Objects that can deceive include fake installations, weapons or launchers. Direct provision of misinformation through established and accepted lines of communication also perverts information processes based on an assumption of facticity. (US Dept. of State, 1989) Mislabelling of weapons and parts is a common practice. “Reinterpretation” of treaties also offers opportunities (Garthoff, 1987).

Ephemeralization also stimulates activity in the material world by demanding that certain actions be taken. Inter-continental ballistic missiles, (ICBMs) for example, must be brought out into the open and missile silo roofs opened for verification purposes. And of course information collection, storage, processing and distribution equipment must all be produced in an at least tangentially material sense.

Eclipse of the real

During the 1980s several quite different intellectual trends – all products of the information age – focused on the outer face of information to such an extent that material reality all but disappeared. This eclipse of the real is found in the field of cultural studies, in our fascination with the “information economy”, and it is also an aspect of the use of confidence-building measures.

In cultural studies the image is the center of attention. The politics and economics of production, the engineering involved in the building of the
communication infrastructure, the aesthetics of a medium, and the sender are all eclipsed by the face most publicly and deliberately presented.

Mass mesmerization appears to be one consequence of this absorption in the surface, a concept related to but not the same as the classic notion of the ‘narcotizing dysfunction’, one of the first-noted effects of mass communication on society. The narcotizing dysfunction referred to political apathy on the part of the news audience induced by the news-borne suggestion that while there were problems, they were being taken care of. Cultural studies plays a change on this theme by shifting the agent of effective action from them, meaning largely institutional/governmental forces like the police, Congress, and so on, to oneself, arguing that the very act of managing a politicized reading of a text is in itself effective political action. In some contexts it may be, and Umberto Eco (1990) has delineated a rationale for how and when, but as a full-time posture it too often permits the real to disappear.

The study of the economics of information, though it addresses very different questions with quite different theoretical and methodological approaches, has produced much the same effect. As the study of the information economy came into its own during the 1980s, a multitude of studies worked out systems for determining just what aspects of an economy were in the “information,” as opposed to “industrial” and “agricultural” sectors. Most arrived at spectacular percentages of 60–80% for advanced economies, and the understanding that most of the newly industrialized countries (NICs) were succeeding by finding a niche in the information economy. These perceptions lead to a rush to restructure the global economic system in such a way that dominant corporate and national interests could continue to pursue their goals and policies. While in fact the change in the makeup of the economy that came with informatization does present new problems, this absorption with “information” has seemed to obscure the concrete referents and infrastructure for information flow, hiding for example the impact of the defense budget.

Many information industries could be put in other categories, such as weapons or weapon delivery systems. To focus on the informational aspect of these technologies to the exclusion of their other qualities thus allows the real weapons to disappear into what is still all too often a utopian vision of the information society. In the euphoric and somewhat millenarian moments when it was believed that peace and democracy had spread over the world and plans about ways to spend the “peace dividend” were being projected, there was to some degree a sense that in fact defense had been
ephemeralized, and information flows would indeed replace exchanges of weapons in a new, peaceful world.

Presumably the war in Iraq has altered some of this public perception, though not necessarily all: Certainly the US and Iraq were not signatories to a mutual treaty embodying confidence-building measures. Up until quite recently it was believed impossible to verify the development and manufacture of chemical and biological weapons, favoring as a result a military solution to problems involving those types of weapons. And, most cynically, in fact the US had to move great numbers of arms out of Europe as a result of disarmament agreements, and was given permission to destroy arms, many of which were moved to the Iraqi area. In this sense the ultimate consequence of the ephemeralization process was to trigger not just the building of more physical objects, but actual destructive use of the objects produced. With the eclipse of the real, this is hardly noticed.

_Law for the post-law period_

The link between the nation-state and the law is being loosened, as critical decision-making powers move both into the private sector and into the machine. Multiplication of laws and regulations betrays their decreasing effectiveness and implementability. Confidence-building measures are influenced by and contribute to these forces building toward a post-law period.

The argument that law is becoming detached from the nation-state has been suggested theoretically, legally, historically, and sociologically. Theoretically, Cass (1987) claims that the locus of constitutional activity should move from the national to the international level (preferably the trade arena), since it is from international directions that harm now comes to societies. This perspective radically transforms the concept of constitution-making from a positive, community-shaping activity to a negative, community-defending one. (The shifting locus of constitutional activity in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has been trackable within arms control talks as first various Warsaw Pact members, and then Republics of the Soviet Union, sought to negotiate on their own. In July of 1990 the _Arms Control Reporter_ noted that negotiating activity had slowed as a number of people left the Soviet foreign ministry for the Russian one.)

Dezalay (1989) notes the linkage between legal and economic systems, and argues that as today’s economic environment has become internationa-
ized, so has the law. He points to the role of lawyers in structuring economic arrangements and the importance of the job of structuring the rules of structure themselves during a period as characterized by rapid change as this. Ultimately, he argues, lawyers have followed their corporate clients out of the nation-state and into the global arena, reworking the law through an international lens as they moved.

Political will to uphold laws is also critical and here, in quite different societies, we have seen remarkable sociological evidence of a loss of will in recent months. Just two examples: In Great Britain there has been massive civil disobedience as, first, a large percentage of citizens refused to pay the poll tax and, second, shopkeepers decided to stay open on Sunday. In other times, either of these actions would have been taken as revolutionary, while today they are simply events. And in Poland, according to Czynczyk, (1989) what is described by many as widespread moral decay evidenced by the successful underground economy is actually strict adherence to rules governing a different economic system that makes more sense. Working outside the law, in this view, is a response to a mismatch between the legal system and economic, social, and psychological realities; new law is made during deeply respected daily negotiations. It would be interesting to apply the Polish interpretation to the British case. In any event, a lack of will to attend to laws in place is another strand generating our transformation into a post-law period. In its emphasis on a shifting economic environment, it complements the above.

As historian Chandler (1977) seminally argued, the locus of decision-making has moved from the political dimension to the technical, first via technocrats and the automated production line. By extension, today computerization of both law and non-law decisions of all kinds has moved this power from humans to the machine. The question of the constitutionality of this has already risen to the Supreme Court twice during the 1980s (FCC v WNCN and Cotton Dust); a third case, currently at the California district court level, is pressing the question of the constitutionality of using algorithmic decision-making to launch a military action. This, too, suggests we have entered a post-law era, for here it is software rather than the law that most fundamentally determines the structure of society and its functioning.

The use of confidence-building measures encourages internationalization of the law by adding another layer of expectations and working towards global harmonization of a variety of systems such as accounting and management that support the harmonization of the law. The resonance between the defense and trade arenas on the latter multiplies its effective-
ness. The focus on regional and global integration here also encourages shifting perceptions of the nature of the nation-state, moving significant boundaries away from political borders. The emphasis on using information flows rather than behavioral controls as structural forces is also a post-law move.

**Conclusions**

Brilliant Eyes are seductive. The technology is sexy, the notion of ephemeralization of defense appealing on moral grounds, and the support for the process of harmonization of the global economy economically appreciated by many currently dominant players. At this level, the positive attributes of the use of information policy tools as confidence-building measures in the defense arena echo much of what is said in utopian terms about the information society in general. The utopian perspective, however, is only one end of a spectrum of possibilities of what the information society may ultimately bring. Examination here of three contradictions in the use of information flows as the basis of arms control agreements suggest that this extreme of the spectrum may not be the most accurate position.

First, the process of ephemeralization itself stimulates production in the material world, both in terms of types of goods and in absolute numbers, as well as activity. Deception comprises entire industries.

Second, the real has largely been eclipsed by the face of information; information flows that constitute confidence-building measures still refer to real weapons of destruction and organizations devoted to fighting war.

Third, multiplication of law in this arena, with its focus on harmonization of global systems, contributes to our entry into a post-law period. In this there is a striking concordance between information policy tools used in the defense arena, and those being proposed in trade.

The use of information policy tools in the defense arena is an important subject for continued study because of its real-world impact, its importance in setting the terms for international and domestic information policy, and because illumination of parallels between defense and other information policy arenas makes clearer the characteristic shape of these still evolving policy regimes.
Notes

1. To political scientists, a "regime" is an international set of negotiating rules, operational definitions, and modes of argument that is less formal than a body of law, but sufficiently consensual to permit negotiations among nation-states and other parties in specific policy issue areas.

2. Galtung (1982) argues that the failure to resolve tensions between developing and developed nations is the explanation of the inability to reach effective arms control agreements.

3. Much of the detail in this paper on the blow by blow level is drawn from the comprehensive Arms Control Reporter, which started publishing in 1982 but includes historical material as well as a contemporary daily record of arms control activity around the world.

4. One suggestion of a role for developing nations comes from the proposal for a Maxwell-Gorbachev Center at the University of Minnesota that would both do research on confidence-building measures and train people from around the world in their use. It is suggested that people from Third World nations could be trained to participate in inspection teams, since they could not contribute technology nor expertise to a global effort. While this proposal does serve the stated goal, it also smacks of the exploitation of cheap labor and perpetuates the gap by limiting technology and knowledge transfer.

5. Intended to deal only with trade in physical goods, the GATT was created as part of the post-World War II restructuring of the global economy. US insistence on inclusion of international information flows ranging from automated data processing, tourism, advertising, and accountancy and management consultancy services under these agreements is acknowledged by the Office of the US Trade Representative as well as by critics to be public confirmation of the official US position that information flows have only a commodity nature, thus denying the existence or importance of any cultural, social, or political aspects of those flows (Braman, 1990).

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