Notes for a Presentation by Paul Heinbecker
to the Ottawa Global Shapers Hub of the
World Economic Forum

McLuhan or Orwell:
Open Government, Global Governance and Foreign Relations

Rideau Club

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Three messages for three minutes

1. Technology is a powerful enabler—for the citizenry and for governments--both

    The internet, news television, the convergence of print and electronic media, Twitter, open source news generally, affordable travel, etc.,
    all enable the citizenry

    -- me, for example, a seventy-something,--

    to provide advice, criticism and input into foreign policy in a timely way.

    The reverse is also true --

technology <u>allows governments to link with the citizenry</u> as never before, in open policy formation

(But we need to elect a super computer as Prime Minister if we expect all that input to be heard, much less heeded)

<u>And technology enables governments</u> and political parties to <u>target groups of citizens</u> as never before.

Therefore we <u>need to be circumspect</u> on what <u>governments</u> are doing with technology

<u>McLuhan's world has materialized</u>.

But <u>so has Orwell's</u>.

1) In <u>contemporary</u> government,
   a. secrecy is accountability,

   b. subversion is reform,

   c. movement is action,

   d. convictions trump evidence

   e. and communications are policy

   Wikileaks, Lassange, Chelsea Manning, Snowden—all give us <u>insights into what governments can do</u>

   and <u>are doing</u> to monitor people,

the better to <u>protect</u> people?

—or to protect themselves from the people?

Generally speaking, <u>what can be done technically,</u>

<u>will</u> be done <u>operationally</u>

(e.g., Merkel, Brazil),

<u>unless</u> there are engaged, guiding minds and policies capable of injecting <u>judgment</u> into policy development and targetting

and unless there is effective Parliamentary oversight

[Irony—talking about <u>Open Government</u> <u>reminds</u> me of Chou en Lai on European <u>civilization</u>]

> We are having this discussion of openness at a time when <u>message control and "communications"</u> —one way, <u>outward</u>—are <u>imperatives</u> of governance

> <u>Vast</u> communications staffs in <u>every</u> department are <u>orchestrated by PMO-PCO</u> coms staffs to make sure we all get the right message.

2. <u>Governments need citizen engagement</u>, in order to benefit from the individual expertise, collective experience, and refined judgment

> <u>The world is too complicated</u> and <u>events too rapid</u> for effective exclusive <u>inside-the-government</u> policy generation

The <u>population is too educated</u>, <u>too worldly</u> and <u>too informed
to be ignored</u>

Or to <u>want </u>to ignore

<u>But</u>, citizen engagement <u>complements</u> government leadership,
<u>not supplants </u>it

3. <u>Internationally,</u> we need <u>new</u> ideas and <u>new</u> forms of cooperative
<u>governance</u> in order to manage the complexities of accelerating global
integration
    a. Specifically <u>multi-stakeholder governance</u>, including citizen
       engagement
       —to complement <u>not replace</u> state-based institutions like the
       UN, the IMF, NATO, etc.,

    b. to <u>generate ideas</u>, political will, and effective responses to
       mega-issues,
       such as climate change,
       the regulation of international finance,
       the response to humanitarian disasters,
       the development of third world economies,
       the response to organized crime and terrorism, etc.

A tall order when trust is near totally lacking

<u>Conclusion</u>

    The points to take away are:
        i. <u>technology empowers citizens and governments, both</u>;
           embrace it with eyes wide open
        ii. <u>citizen engagement is important</u> to generate ideas and
            political will

iii. <u>governance innovation is needed</u>, nationally and internationally,

      to harness state and citizen capacities and capabilities