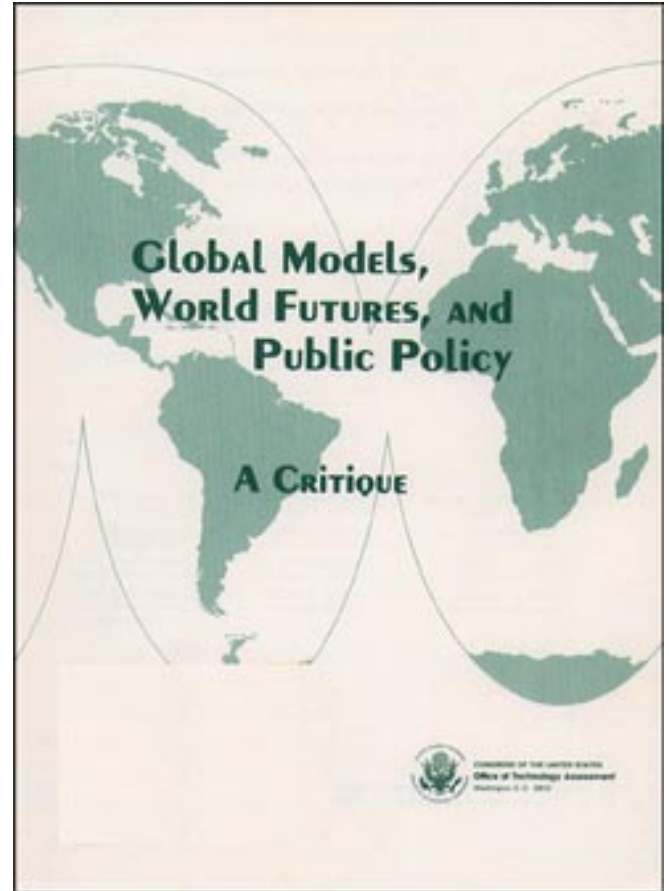


*Global Models, World Futures, and Public
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Foreword

A number of long-range forecasts of international demographic and economic trends have been published over the last decade, many of them based on the findings of global models—computerized mathematical simulations of the world’s physical, economic, and political systems. This report responds to a request by the Technology Assessment Board for an evaluation of the methodologies, findings, and implications of Global 2000 and other global modeling studies.

Computerized models are a useful way of handling a large amount of data at once and of keeping assumptions and calculations self-consistent. In this connection, our study not only reviewed the findings and recommendations of five major global modeling studies, but also examined the underlying assumptions and data bases on which those results are based.

The purpose of this report is neither to confirm nor to disprove the sometimes rosy but more often dire predictions derived from global modeling studies, but rather to examine the present use and potential usefulness of this rapidly developing technology as a powerful tool for long-range strategic analysis and policy development. OTA found significant and growing use of models by a variety of Federal agencies. In addressing the modeling capability of the Government, the report focuses not on whether models should be used—they already are, and have proven themselves valuable over a period of years—but rather on how to improve this capability and make its projections more useful to analysts, planners, decisionmakers, and the broader public.

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