

**“A Case for a New World Information  
and Communication Order”**

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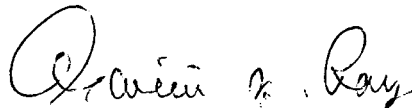
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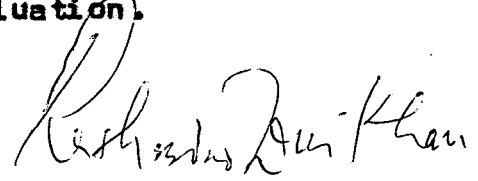
**DECLARATION**

Certified that the dissertation entitled:  
"A CASE FOR A NEW WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICA-  
TION ORDER", submitted by Rajib Dhar Choudhury,  
is in partial fulfilment of twelve credits out of  
a total requirement of twenty-four credits for the  
degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) of this  
University. This dissertation has not been  
submitted for any other degree in this University  
and is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation be  
placed before the examiners for evaluation.



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P R E F A C E



## PREFACE

In keeping with the profundity of ancient Indian philosophy, the seers of yore spoke of the world being a single family — Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, they said. In our own times, however, we are witness to an era in which the world is becoming a 'single family' of an altogether different sort. It is one that accrues largely because of the information-communication revolution. We are living, to use a cliché, in a "global village" run by "global corporations".

The existing information and communication order provides the institutional basis for the information-communication revolution. It has sucked into its vortex the remotest regions of the world and has bent time in its stride.

All is not well, however, with the said order; indeed it is rent with severe crises. Its operations inevitably favours the developed industrialised countries of the world and seriously imperils the polity, economy and society of the developing nations. It is small wonder then that the developing nations want the existing information-communication order to be dismantled. In its place, they seek the establishment of a democratic information-communication order. Hence, the demand for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

The demand has not found favour with all, though, and naturally so. The Western industrialised countries who derive umpteen benefits from the existing information-communication order do not want their "golden goose" to be done away with. They have therefore hit back, accusing the protagonists of NWICO of harbouring ulterior motives.

Apparently, there is a need for critical analysis of the demand. It is felt that a holistic study, charged with an analysis of the whole gamut of the issues involved, can do justice to such an endeavour. This is what this dissertation seeks to do. Thereby, it is hoped, a case can be made for a NWICO.

The dissertation starts with a brief presentation of the problem. Beginning with the information-communication revolution, it traces the origins of the existing information-communication order and then goes on to analyse the crisis and the complaints against it. This is followed by an explanation of what a NWICO is supposed to be, and rounded off by an explication of the methodological issues.

The next chapter examines the inequities of the present information-communication order. It is in this context that the role of the transnational corporations and the massive monopoly of the Western industrialised countries are laid bare. In so doing, a modicum of light has been thrown on the poor position of the developing countries.

The third chapter discusses the hideous dimensions of the ongoing information-communication order — the values it propagates, the dependency structure that it props up and the harm it does to the polity, economy and society of the developing nations.

This is followed by a chapter which analyses the impediments in the establishment of a NWICO and in this context discusses the weaknesses of the developing nations and the counter-offensive launched by the industrialised countries against the demand of the developing nations.

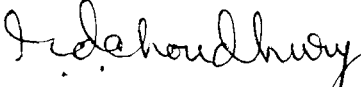
The conclusive section summarises the major findings of this dissertation, presents the perspective that informs it and sets out a blue-print for action, in the form of recommendations.

In the course of my work I have banked upon the help and co-operation rendered to me by several people. My supervisor, Prof. Rashseduddin Khan, brought to bear with me his erudite scholarship and rich experience. Indeed, because of his inspiration and encouragement I have had pleasure in working for this dissertation. His effort was supplemented by that of the faculty members of my Centre who were kind enough to help me whenever I approached them. My task was also made easier by media experts, particularly Shri Nikhil Chakravartty, Shri N.L. Chowla and Shri P.K. Bandyopadhyaya who took time off their busy schedule to help me in various ways. The staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Central Library, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication Library

the Indian Council of World Affairs Library and the American Center Library, helped me very eagerly in collecting relevant data. Mr. B. Thulasidharan contributed his share of help by typing out a couple of drafts of this dissertation in record time. My friends, both at JNU and outside, did their very best for me and even chipped in with unsolicited help. The members of my family were magnanimous in sustaining me during the period of my research with both moral and material support; they, in fact, made my endeavour seem their very own. To all of them I am highly beholden. The errors and misjudgements that remain, if any, however are my own and I alone am responsible for them.

Place: JNU, New Delhi

Dated: 21 JULY 1986

  
( RAJIB DHAR CHOUDHURY )

Chapter-I

PROBLEMATIQUE : ISSUES AND RAMIFICATIONS

## Chapter-I

### PROBLEMATIQUE : ISSUES AND RAMIFICATIONS

( I )

#### The Information and Communication Revolution:

The dialectics of civilizational life has unfolded in our epoch yet another revolution — the pervasive and interlinked information and communication revolution. In its wide sweep, it has given rise to a calculus of life and society and a new matrix of global relations, that is breath-takingly different from that obtaining even at the beginning of this otherwise cataclysmic century. The process, though, started decades back, is still unfolding, and continues to gain momentum.

Scholars and analysts have given various epithets to describe and designate the society we live in. Marshall McLuhan calls it a "global village", with the future, posited on circuit technology, promising to be an "information megalopolis". Zbigniew Brzezinski labels it as a "technetronic" society in which technology,

and electronics shapes a society's culture, psychology, and economy. Daniel Bell among others, speaks of a "post-industrial" society marked by the rise and pre-eminence of the tertiary sector, which is the information sector, over the primary i.e., agricultural and the secondary i.e., industrial sectors. For Fritz Machlup, contemporary society is marked by a "knowledge economy".<sup>1</sup> There are, besides, many others, including the Japanese, who prefer the term "information society". Whatever be the epithet, one thing is clear, they all acknowledge the sweeping technological developments that have catapulted the information and communication system to the centre stage of global developments.

As of now, we have at our disposal technical capability to handle and process information at enormous speed and economically, in terms of a coherent system

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1 For details see Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media (London, 1964); also Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, The Medium is the Massage (Harmondsworth, 1967); Zbigniew Brzezinski, Between Two Ages : America's Role in the Technetronic Era (New York, 1970); Daniel Bell, The Coming of Post-Industrial Society (London, 1974); and Fritz Machlup, The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States (Princeton, 1962).

using signals. Simultaneously, we also witness phenomenal advances in space technology.<sup>2</sup>

The triad of revolution in micro-electronics, computers and telecommunications — utilised for acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of vocal, pictorial, textual and numerical information — are the new celebrities in the field. In the field of computers, we had the first generation computers, based on vacuum tube, in 1950. Eight years later came the second generation of transistorised computers. In 1966 was built the third generation of computers, based on "chips". And in 1973, the fourth generation, based on complex chips — each chip holding an equivalent of more than a thousand vacuum tubes — came into being. Thereafter, the third and the fourth generation of computers have undergone considerable sophistication and miniaturisation.<sup>3</sup> What is more, the costs are

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2. R. Sadananda, "Chips, Computers and Information Technology", Link (New Delhi), 26 January 1984, p.122.

3. W.S. Titus, "Of Pearls and Peanuts", Eastern Economist (New Delhi), vol.73, no.1, 6 July 1979, p.19.



coming down with each passing day. Soon we will herald the fifth generation of computers designed to realise, what is called, "artificial intelligence".

In the telecommunications field we have fiber optics which can carry 20,000,000 bits per second or even higher with broadband carriers. The cost of transmission, thanks to satellite channels, is going down at the rate of 40 per cent every year. The increasing capacities and decreasing costs allow various opportunities for data transmission, graphic transmission, picture transmission, picture telephone, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Silicon based micro-electronics has made communication today all the more easier. We also have robotics, word processors, etc., which are displacing human labour; and videos, cable televisions, etc., which have become 'entertainment gurus'. Simultaneously, the development of software is increasing by leaps and

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4 Sadananda, n.2, p.123.

bounds. Besides, what is significant is that there is a discernible process of convergence and integration of once disparate technologies — for example, between computing technology and data communication facilities. We have even technology for blocking communication through electronic channels. In a way, technology has acquired a self-generating momentum of its own, bending time and space in its stride.<sup>5</sup> Those who toy with the appalling prospects of a nuclear holocaust, maintain that the deciding battles of future wars will be fought not on earth but in space, — the so called 'star wars', based on the control of the communications media and of surveillance by satellite.<sup>6</sup>

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5. According to Sola Pool there have been four communications revolutions so far: the first was the invention of writing some five thousand years ago; the second was the invention of printing 500 years ago; the third, about a century-and-a-half ago, was the symbolization of messages by electro-magnetic force instead of by marks inscribed on a flat sheet; and the fourth, occurring in our own time, is the computer revolution — for the first time, thanks to digital logic, messages may be modified or even created in the machine. (Ithiel de Sola Pool, "The Culture of Electronic Print", Daedalus (Massachusetts), vol.iii, no.4, Fall, 1982, pp.29-30).

6 Anthony E. Smith, "The Information Revolution of the 1990s", The Political Quarterly (London), vol.54, no.2, April-June 1983, p.187.

The import of these developments is therefore striking. As the MacBride Commission Report points out:

These new technologies, use of which is at present mainly concentrated in a few industrialised countries, open paths for a new era in communication. Distance has ceased to be an obstacle, and the possibility exists — if there were a collective will — of a universal communication system linking any point on the planet with any other. The equipment, cumbersome and costly in its early days, has become rapidly cheaper and is by its nature extremely flexible. Electronic communications, for a long time restricted to communication between individuals, are increasingly available for use in collective communication. Conversely, it is feasible to envisage, instead of global systems, a web of communication networks, integrating autonomous or semi-autonomous, decentralized units. The content of messages could be diversified, localized and individualized to a large extent. New techniques exist which make it possible to multiply information centres and to foster exchanges between individuals. Tele-processing, or telematics, and the establishment of links and relays between two or more satellites, are likely to open up almost limitless possibilities of systematic integration.<sup>7</sup>

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7 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow (being the Final Report of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems) (New Delhi, 1982), p.12. In the dissertation the Report is referred to as the MacBride Commission Report for the sake of brevity; it shall be referred thus hereafter.

Today a stage has been reached where information is considered to be a vital resource, at par with energy; indeed it is being called a manifestation of power. In a sense it is the sine qua non of modern life. Every society, in terms of its technological level, utilizes it, in greater or lesser degree. It is estimated that in the industrialised countries of the world (mainly in the OECD countries) about one-third of total current employment is in the information processing sector and, it should be noted that this proportion is increasing day by day.<sup>8</sup>

But the information-communication revolution as such is mostly centered in the developed industrialised countries of the West where it is subjected to the laws of market economy. Incidentally, problems of social allocation, access, commercial privilege, control, privacy, public interest, etc. have become an attendant, though a negative, feature of the present revolution in the field.

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8 H. Krupp, "Economic and Societal Consequences of Informatization", in Barrie T. Stern, ed., Information and Innovation (Contemporary Topics in Information Transfer, vol.I) (Amsterdam, 1982) p.27.

( II )

The Origins of the Existing Information and  
Communication Order:

The institutionalisation of the information and communication revolution is reflected in the present information and communication order, that is being honed to fitness, ever since World War II. However, since an information and communication order has linkages with several dimensions of social life, it would be useful to look at some of the structural aspects. The evolving order should be seen in a holistic perspective, that is, it needs to be related to the dynamics of political and economic life.

The nexus between international communication and international balance of power had been an established format even earlier. In all ages of human history the power that be — political, economic or religious — had to control communications in order to govern more effectively. The entire history of mankind is witness to the fact that "whoever controls communication controls society, whoever is

the master of information flow ensures for himself — for a time — order and stability.”<sup>9</sup>

In the 19th century the North Atlantic Empire systems had been the dominating influences. The news-service cartels of Great Britain, France and Germany divided the world according to their spheres of political and economic influence. Thus, while Reuters of Great Britain dominated the British Empire, Havas of France reached out to the Latin world and French speaking dependencies, and Wolff of Germany penetrated the Scandinavian and East European countries.<sup>10</sup> The process is therefore historical; it is a commentary on the colonial domination and division of the world into 'centres' and 'peripheries'.

The present world order reflects the post-Second World War rules of the game — which saw the

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9 Jean d' Arcy, "The Right to Communicate", Background Paper, no.36 (prepared for the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems) CC-79/WS/128, (Paris, October 1979), p.3.

10. For details, see Anthony Smith, The Geo-Politics of Information : How Western Culture Dominates the World, (London,1980), pp.73-80.

ascendancy of the United States (US) as the leader of the Western world — and finds expression in the global and regional organizations created by the industrialised countries, when the developing countries had, at best, a marginal voice. The passage of four decades since the end of World War II has seen an increase in its sophistication as it unfolded with the active connivance of the transnational corporations.<sup>11</sup>

The transnational dominated world system today, operates through, what Somavia cogently points out as, "an arsenal of diverse but converging instruments".

Chief among these are:

- (i) the political-military-intelligence service dimension (expressed through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, the links between intelligence services, etc.), meant to defend the status-quo;

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11 For a detailed discussion on these aspects see, among others, J.E. Spero, The Politics of International Economic Relations (London, 1982); G. Corea, Need for Change : Towards the New International Economic Order (Oxford, 1980); and H. Radice, ed., International Firms and Modern Imperialism (Harmondsworth, 1975).

- (ii) the economic-industrial-trade dimension (expressed through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (IBRD) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)), so as to create conditions for transnational expansion of capital; and
- (iii) the communications-advertising-culture dimension (expressed through the various mass media), which though a recent invention, is nevertheless significant in that it helps in creating an insatiable need for Western values and life styles.<sup>12</sup>

It is the US that is the main power centre as well as the main beneficiary of the present world order. Its stellar role can be traced to the power relations that grew in the aftermath of World War II. In fact even before the war ended it was clear that the economic power of US would be a force to reckon with

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12 Juan Somavia, "The Transnational Power Structure and International Information, Elements of a Third World Policy for Transnational News Agencies", Development Dialogue (Uppsala), no.2, 1976, pp. 16-17.



in the post-war world. It had escaped the ravages of war — Pearl Harbour, a distant island in the Pacific, was the only territory of the US subjected to a direct experience of a shooting war. Otherwise the mainland US remained outside the arena of the battle fronts. The role of the leader or the Western world was therefore endemic in its steady emergence on the global scene. Besides, the powers that be in the US had learnt from history the use to which the information and communication media could be put for deriving benefits for national pre-eminence on a global scale.

No wonder, therefore, that they sought to institutionalise the doctrine of the 'free flow of information', which in essence meant the 'free flow', from the US, due to the unequal nature of the world situation. And as luck would have it, the situation then was just ripe for the acceptability of such a doctrine. The devastations wrought by Nazism and Fascism had created an abhorrence in the public mind against any sort of control. 'Freedom' thus became

the watchword. Free flow of information therefore, became a desirable objective. Apparently, therefore, the United Nations (UN) and its specialised agency, especially the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), behind whose creation lay, again, the mighty hand of the US, were harnessed to provide legitimacy to the doctrine.<sup>13</sup> There was, besides, the provision of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States that provided the

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13 The important ones in this regard are the following:-Art.19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948) — which says that: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." Resolution 59(1) adopted by the UN General Assembly Session (1946) on 14 December, which declared that "freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and is a touchstone of all the freedoms to which the UN is consecrated", and that freedom "implies the right to gather, transmit and publish news anywhere and everywhere without fetters"; and Art.1 of The Constitution of the UNESCO (1945) which promises that, "The Organization will collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end, recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image."

ideological justification for their crusade.<sup>14</sup>

This crusade was however a facade, a smoke-screen, as the US set about gaining control of the information and communication structure to further its global designs of domination. The crusade came handy in its fight against the North Atlantic control of the news agencies and telecommunications. In an attack, reminiscent of the trenchant criticism made today by the developing countries on the role and influence of the four Western news agencies, Kent Cooper, the ebullient executive-manager of the Associated Press (AP), said:

In precluding the Associated Press from disseminating news abroad, Reuters and Havas, served three purposes: (1) they kept out Associated press competition; (2) they were free to present American news disparagingly to the United States if they presented it

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14 The First Amendment to the American Constitution guarantees freedom of the Press. It states that "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...."

at all; (3) they could present news of their own countries most favourably and without it being contradicted. Their own countries were always glorified. This was done by reporting great advances at home in English and French civilizations, the benefits of which would, of course, be bestowed on the world.<sup>15</sup>

The efforts of the US, however, were not to go in vain.<sup>16</sup> The marvellous technological innovations facilitated the ushering-in of the new era, which not inappropriately is termed the "American Century".

However in the shadow of the US, some countries of the Western industrialized world like Britain,

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15 Kent Cooper, Barriers Down: The Story of News Agency Epoch (New York, 1942), p.43.

16 For details see: Herbert I. Schiller, "The Diplomacy of Cultural Domination and the Free Flow of Information", in Jaswant S. Yadava, ed., Politics of News : Third World Perspective (New Delhi, 1984), pp.1-23; and D.R. Manekar, One Way Free Flow : Neo-Colonialism via News Media (Delhi, 1978), pp.19-22.

France, Germany, etc., in Europe, and Japan in Asia, continued to thrive. We thus have today an information and communication order, that is controlled by the developed industrialised countries of the West under the overarching dominance of the US.

However, notwithstanding the US dominance, the present order has led to the fruition of communications into a mass-phenomenon. For the first time it has really become mass-communication with the constriction of time and space. In a way McLuhan's "Global Village" seems to be a reality. Besides, thanks to the triple processes of necessity, engineered needs and the self-generating momentum of technology, newer and newer inventions are flooding the world. Apparently, we are also witness to a quicker obsolescence of existing technologies. All these have rendered the existing information and communication order both dynamic and complex.

## (III)

The Crisis of the Existing Order and the CriesAgainst It:

The present information and communication order is in crisis. Calls for change are being heard with an ever increasing intensity. A catalogue of complaints have been prepared against it, mainly by the developing countries who are at the receiving end of this skewed-up system. Chief among the complaints are:

- (1) That there is a one-way free flow of information from the 'Centre' to the 'periphery' which creates a wide gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' — as is unavoidable in the given situation of socio-technological imbalance. A natural corollary of freedom in an unequal world is that it breeds more inequality.
- (2) That the 'haves' are in a position to dictate terms to the 'have-nots' — this has created a structure of dependency with widespread economic, political and social ramifications (creating in the process, more havoc in the developing countries).

- (3) That this vertical flow is controlled mainly by the Western transnational corporations whose rules of the game are in favour of their perpetual domination.
- (4) That information is treated as a "commodity", to be bought and sold, and is subjected to the rules of the market — this conflicts seriously with the developing nations' concern that information and communication media be harnessed for the complex task of nation-building, and socio-economic transformation; that is, essentially for developmental purposes.<sup>17</sup>
- (5) That needs do not necessarily determine production — needs are also contrived to accommodate production capacities.

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17 Some media men from the developing world have called for a whole new orientation — they have pleaded for what is popularly known as, 'Development News'. A great exponent of this is Narinder K. Aggarwala. See his article, "What is Development News?", Journal of Communication (Philadelphia), vol.29, no.2, Spring 1979, pp.180-81.

- (6) That there is no check on the Western mass media — they are free to carry on any mischief and misinformation they feel like.
- (7) That the whole information and communication order is a part of, and in turn props up, the inequitous "system" that creates and sustains a structure of neo-colonialism.

This last point bears analysis. As explained, no information and communication order can exist in isolation. The political, economic and social apparatuses coalesce to form a collective whole and this, in toto reflect the value-system of a particular order. Each supplements the other to create a workable whole.

Any attempt therefore at redressing the inequity of the present system has got to attack the collectivity and not only one aspect of it. Today a point has been reached where the collectivity — the political, economic and social apparatuses — are under attack. The attack against each of these aspects however has its own history.



It was the political aspect that received the first attention. The process started with decolonisation but it did not end with that. The decolonised constituted themselves into the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). On the positive side NAM seeks democratisation of international relations and the assertion of national sovereignty by the developing countries. Negatively, it seeks to do away with the rigours of 'power-blocs' and the subordination of national sovereignty of the newly independent countries, to the global hegemony of the neo-colonial leviathans. Today, with more than 100 members, <sup>NAM is</sup> a force to reckon with, admired even by its onetime adversaries. It makes its voice heard through various forums, the NAM and the UN platforms being the two important ones. It has emerged now as a major force, forged by the developing countries, in their fight against neo-colonialism.<sup>18</sup>

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18 For details see: U.S. Bajpai, ed., Non-Alignment: Perspectives and Prospects (New Delhi, 1983); Rasheduddin Khan, ed., Perspectives on Non-Alignment (New Delhi, 1981); K.P. Misra, ed., Non-Alignment: Frontiers and Dynamics (New Delhi, 1982); and Peter Willets, Non-Aligned Movement: The Origins of a Third World Alliance (Bombay, 1978).

The economic aspect was the second area to come under closer scrutiny of the developing nations. The present economic order, based on the post-Second World War Bretton Woods structure, has divided the world into suppliers of raw materials and producers of manufactured goods. But the roots of this inequity lie deeper, in the colonial structure. It is this historical perspective that has unfortunately created umpteen hurdles in the way of the 'South'. Today, this inequity is reflected in the form of cheap exploitation of raw materials and labour of the 'South'. This is not all, the 'South' is also flooded with manufactured goods of the 'North' on the one hand, and faced with walls of protectionism and high tariffs against their measly goods, on the other.

The developing countries, however, have not taken things lying down. Exerting themselves through NAM, the UN, and within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), through the Group of 77, the South has exposed the 'holier than thou' attitude of the North. It delivered home the

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brutal dimensions of the dependency structure — that the share of the developing countries in world trade was less than 17 per cent and of manufactured goods only 8 per cent, while it has two-thirds of the world's population. Apparently in 1974 the demand for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) was formally approved by the UN General Assembly (UNGA). NIEO, till date only an ideal, seeks rejection of the present economic order and the Western development models. It seeks the creation of a democratic interdependent economic order.<sup>19</sup>

The third leg of the dependency structure to come under attack is the information and communication structure. Though there have been protests and accusations against the inequity of the present structure for many years, it was only around the early '70s that the non-aligned countries took the decisive

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19 See, n.11. Also see: North-South : A Programme for Survival (being the Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues) (London, 1980); and a follow-up of that, Common Crisis, North-South : Cooperation for World Recovery, The Brandt Commission 1983 (London, 1983).

steps in projecting and insisting on their rights.<sup>20</sup> This was done in the platforms of the UNGA and the UNESCO. This led to the adoption by the latter in 1972 of a Declaration of Guiding Principles on the use of satellite broadcast by a vote of 55 to 7 with 22 abstentions. It provided for the free flow of satellite broadcast, with a proviso that national sovereignty, in the form of prior permission or agreement with the country to which broadcast is to be beamed, be adhered to.<sup>21</sup> Thereafter, the UNGA voted 100 to 1 (with the United States abstaining), directing the UN Outer Space Committee to formulate guiding principles to govern direct satellite broadcast.

This set in motion a plethora of debates, changes began to be traded and opinions hardened along group lines. This reached its climax in the 19th Session

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20 For a chronological account of the important events in this regard see; Appendix-I.

21 See; The Declaration on Guiding Principles on the Use of Satellite Broadcasting for Free Flow of Information, the Spread of Education and Greater Cultural Exchange (adopted at the Seventeenth Session of the General Conference of UNESCO), (Paris, 1972) (mimeographed).

of the General Conference of the UNESCO, Nairobi, 1976. A deadlock ensued, resulting finally in the establishment, in December 1977, of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, charged with the study, in toto, of the existing information and communication structures.<sup>22</sup> The

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22 The Commission, constituted with Mr. Sean MacBride as its President and 15 other members, representing a cross section of the countries of the world, was asked to conduct its inquiry and discussion along the following lines:

- (a) to study the current situation in the fields of communication and information and to identify problems which call for fresh and concerted action at the national and the international level — it was asked to analyse the state of communication in the world today, particularly, information problems as a whole, taking into account the diverse socio-economic conditions and levels and types of development;
- (b) to pay particular attention to the problems relating to free and balanced flow of information in the world as well as the specific needs of developing countries, keeping in view the decisions of the General conference;
- (c) to analyse communication problems in a holistic perspective by relating it to the urge for the establishment of a new international economic order and the measures needed for the realisation of a "new world information order";
- (d) to define the role which communication might play in making public opinion aware of the major problems besetting the world, so as to help in gradually solving them by concerted action at the national and international levels.

The 20th Session of the UNESCO General Conference further asked the Commission to analyse and prepare "concrete and practical measures leading to the establishment of a more just and effective world information order" (Many Voices, One World: Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.7, pp.42-43)

Commission, popularly known as the MacBride Commission, submitted its Interim Report in 1978<sup>23</sup> and the Final Report in 1980,<sup>24</sup> which brought home the magnitude of the inequity in the existing information and communication order.

Meanwhile, in 1978, the 20th Session of the UNESCO General Conference adopted unanimously a Mass Media Declaration which was a landmark in its history. The Declaration recognised the progressive role the mass media has to play in the development of mankind.<sup>25</sup> The same year (December 1978) another significant event took place — the 33rd Session of the UNGA, meeting at New York, adopted a resolution on the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

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- 23 International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, Interim Report on Communication Problems in Modern Society (Paris, 1978).
- 24 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.7.
- 25 See The Declaration on Fundamental Principles Concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War (adopted at the twentieth session of the General Conference of UNESCO) (Paris, 1979) (mimeographed).

However, it was the submission of the Final Report of the MacBride Commission that served as the basis for a NWICO. Thus it was the in 1980 the 21st General Conference Session of the UNESCO, in Belgrade, passed a resolution for the attainment of a NWICO; thereby formally approving the demand. The Conference also decided upon an International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), particularly in and among the developing countries.<sup>26</sup> To oversee its activity an Inter-Governmental Council, composed of 35 member states elected on a regional basis, was also set up.<sup>27</sup>

There were, besides, three Inter-Governmental conferences on Communication Policies in Latin America,

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26 See Resolutions 4/19 and 4/20 in Records of the General Conference Twenty-first Session Belgrade, 23 September to 28 October 1980, vol.I : Resolutions (Paris,1980).

27 Manjunath Pendakur, "NWICO : An International Power Play Between the Core and the Periphery Countries", in Yadava, n.16, p.48.

Asia and Africa, whereupon it was agreed that "free" flow needed to be tempered with a "balanced" flow of information.<sup>28</sup>

Subsequently, in the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the UNESCO General Conference in December 1982, it passed, amidst others, Resolution 2/03 approving Major Programme III, titled: "Communication in the Service of Man". It is supposed to contribute to the establishment of a more equitable situation in the field of communication and the media, encouraging, inter alia, the growth of the developing countries' capacities, in particular by the strengthening of infrastructure, and the training of personnel.<sup>29</sup>

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28 For detail see: Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies (i) in Latin America and the Caribbean Final Report, San Jose (Costa Rica) 12-21 July 1976; UNESCO, COM/MD/38, (Paris, October 1976); (ii) in Asia and Oceania, Final Report, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) 5 to 14 February 1979, UNESCO/CC/MD/42 (Paris, June 1979); and (iii) in Africa, Yaounde (Cameroon), Final Report, 22-31 July 1980, UNESCO/CC/MD/46, (Paris, January 1981).

29 See Records of the General Conference, Fourth Extraordinary Session; Paris, 23 November to 3 December 1982, vol. I : Resolutions (Paris, 1983).



In its session in 1983, the UNESCO General Conference called for interdependence and the values of solidarity and said that international cooperation "while taking a global vision of problems, should be constantly guided by regard for national development policies...."<sup>30</sup>

The 1985 session of the UNESCO General Conference was held amidst an air of despondency and severe crisis. The scene was set by the withdrawal of the US from the UNESCO in December 1984 and the vehement attacks launched against the Organization by the vested interests who questioned its very existence. The cool headed rationalism of the member-states however retrieved the situation. They were able to adopt the communication programme by consensus. The communication programme calls for a period of stock-taking and for practical action in redressing the inequality in the information-

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30. See Records of the General Conference, Twenty-Second Session, Paris, 25 October to 26 November 1983, vol. I : Resolutions (Paris, 1984), Resolution 17/2.

communication area. It also calls for the continuation of studies on the social and cultural impact of new communication technologies. The Conference adopted Resolution 6/2, calling for the establishment of the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (IIP),.... "aimed at strengthening international co-operation and national efforts devoted to the training of specialists, the development of infrastructures, the definition of national policies, and the better recognition of the role of informatics..."<sup>31</sup>

Also interesting in this regard is the attitude of the vested interests from early on. The strategy of the Western countries, led by the US was at first to vociferously attack the whole demand, but faced with mounting criticisms it relented and tried to hijack the whole movement by deflecting the concern from the establishment of a new order to questions regarding transfer of technology, etc. The whole problem was sought to be relegated to one of technical problems only. However, when the US found that it

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31. See Records of the General Conference, Twenty-Third Session, Sofia, 8 October to 9 November 1985, vol. I : Resolutions (Paris, 1986).

could no longer call the shots, it announced its withdrawal from the UNESCO, and did so in December 1984. Great Britain and Singapore withdrew in 1985, while some more have threatened that they too would quit the world body.

As noted earlier, the NAM has been the main protagonist of a NWICO. Though it had been talking off and on of "information colonialism", it was at the Algiers conference of the non-aligned heads of States and governments in 1973, that it came out with an emphatic denunciation of the existing order. The Conference demanded the reorganization of existing communication channels which are the legacy of the colonial past and which have hampered free, direct and fast communications between them (the developing nations). The Conference also enunciated a set of proposals, called the "Action Programme", exhorting the developing countries to take concerted action in the field of mass communication in order to promote a greater interchange of ideas among themselves.<sup>32</sup>

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32 See Provisions XIII and XIV of the Action Programme, Fourth Non-Aligned Summit, Algeria, September 1973, in, News Agencies Pool of the Non-Aligned Countries : A Perspective (New Delhi, 1983), p.93.

The symposium on communication policies organized by the NAM in Tunis in March 1976 was significant for its deliberations on a new international information order. Thereafter, in July the same year, the ministers of information of the non-aligned countries, meeting in New Delhi, further discussed the issue. They also conceived the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP) as a practical measure to bridge the news gap. This resulted in 1976 in the non-aligned Summit formally approving the constitution of the NANAP.<sup>33</sup> The Pool is not a challenge to the Western news agencies. It is only an attempt of the non-aligned countries to exchange information among their news agencies.<sup>34</sup>

The non-aligned countries also formed a broadcasting organization to promote cooperation in the

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33 Constitution of the Pool-Revised Version approved by New Delhi Coordination Committee Meeting, in, News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries : A Perspective, Ibid., pp.216-21.

34 For details, see: News Agencies Pool of the Non-Aligned Countries : A Perspective, *ibid.*

field. They also undertook measures to train non-aligned personnel in information and communication technology and to develop expertise among them. Significant work in this direction is being done by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (New Delhi), the Yugoslav Institute of Journalism (Belgrade), the Institute of Journalism (Tunis), the Faculty of Information (University of Cairo) and the Centre for Formation of Journalists of the Union of Journalists of Cuba (Havana), which trains personnel of various developing countries in mass communication.

The Colombe Summit of the non-aligned countries was also important for two other reasons:

- (i) it established the integral relationship between the twin demands of NWICO and NIEO; and
- (ii) it set up an Intergovernmental Council of Information Ministers to coordinate the activities of the non-aligned countries in the field of information and communication.

Meeting in Malta in 1982 the Council adopted an action

programme for the '80s. The programme envisaged: strengthening of infrastructure for media in non-aligned countries where they do not exist, or are in a rudimentary form; expansion and deepening of co-operation in information exchange and extension of this co-operation to newer areas, including production of newsprint and text books; and joint production and exchange of films and television and radio programmes.<sup>35</sup>

The non-aligned countries have also been exploring other avenues — like teaming up with the socialist countries, as in New York in June 1984 at the UN Committee on Information, in their attempt at establishing a NWICO (significant work in this direction is being done by the Group of 77 at the UN Committee on Information). Earlier that year, the Conference of the Ministers of Information of the non-aligned countries resolved to take urgent steps in implementing reduction of telecommunication tariffs and achieve a

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35 P. Unnikrishnan, "New World Information and Communication Order", Mainstream, vol.xxii, no.15, December 10, 1983, p.16.

more efficient and shared utilization of telecommunication facilities and networks.<sup>36</sup> Another significant event earlier was the NAMEDIA conference in New Delhi in December 1983. This was a media conference of the non-aligned countries aiming to widen and strengthen the base of freedom of communications and to democratise it.<sup>37</sup>

The goal has thus been set; a NWICO is a sort of beacon light now. As of now, dialogues are still going on as to how it can be realised. The non-aligned countries are mixing rhetoric with praxis, but the task is not easy. Besides there is the reaction of the vested interests who want to thwart its establishment by any means. The coming years will bear testimony as to how far this goal is realisable; failure would spell doom. For, the goal is but a "part of a more general assault on the economy and power of the West".<sup>38</sup>

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36 COMINAC, Jakarta, January 1984, Resolution on Reduction of Communication Tariff, in, Seminar on Improving News Pool Performance (New Delhi, April 1984), Report : Recommendations : Documents, p.36.

37 For details see: NAMEDIA (Media Conference of the Non-Aligned, New Delhi, December 9-12, 1983, Final Reports and Documents (New Delhi, 1984).

38 Smith, n.10, p.173.

## (IV)

The New World Information and Communication  
Order (NWICO):

The term was first used by Hedi Nour, the Tunisian Prime Minister, during the opening of a symposium of non-aligned countries in Tunis in March 1974.<sup>39</sup> There is, however, ambiguity as to what it refers to. An idea can however be had by looking at its possible basis; and this can be done by referring to Resolution 4/19 of the 21st Session of the General Conference of UNESCO, 1980.<sup>40</sup> The said resolution "Considers that:

- (a) This new world information and communication order could be based, among other considerations, on:
- i) elimination of the imbalances and inequalities which characterize the present situation;
  - ii) elimination of the negative effects of certain monopolies, public or private, and excessive concentrations;

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39 Jerzy Dladzki, "Polish Perspectives on the New Information Order", Journal of International Affairs (New York, N.Y.) vol. 35, no. 2, Fall/Winter, 1981/2, p. 157.

40 Resolution 4/19, n. 26.



- iii) removal of the internal and external obstacles to a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas;
- iv) plurality of sources and channels of information;
- v) freedom of the press and information;
- vi) the freedom of journalists and all professionals in the communication media, a freedom inseparable from responsibility;
- vii) the capacity of developing countries to achieve improvement of their own situations, notably by providing their own equipment, by training their personnel, by improving their infrastructures and by making their information and communication media suitable to their needs and aspirations;
- viii) the sincere will of developed countries to help them attain these objectives;
- ix) respect for each people's cultural identity and for the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interests, its aspirations and its social and cultural values;

- x) respect for the right of all peoples to participate in international exchange of information on the basis of equality, justice and mutual benefit;
  - xi) respect for the right of the public, of ethnic and social groups and of individuals to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process;
- (b) this new world information and communication order should be based on the fundamental principles of international law, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) diverse solutions to information and communication problems are required because social, political, cultural and economic problems differ from one country to another and, within a given country, from one group to another...!"

The objective of a NWICO is to, as Somavia puts it: "move forward from a unidirectional to a multi-directional structure; from an ethnocentric to a culturally pluralistic and multi-dimensional

perspective; from the receiver's passivity to an active participation; from the preponderant transnational influence to a multination balance; all of it on the basis of structures that permit true access and generalized social participation in the communication process."<sup>41</sup>

Besides, as Bogdan Osolnik puts it, NWICO has a dual dimension: (i) the international dimension — to see to it that it serves everyone's needs according to general international principles; and (ii) the internal, social dimension — (a) to see to it that all technological progress subserves man's needs, rather than alienate him; and (b) to democratize relations in the domain of information and communication, not only for realization of human rights and development along democratic lines of each nation, but also for its peaceful international cooperation.<sup>42</sup>

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41 Juan Somavia, "International Communications and Third World Participation", Development Dialogue, no. 2, 1977, p.143.

42 Bogdan Osolnik, "The Objectives and Principles of a New International Order in the Field of Information", Review of International Affairs (Belgrade), vol.xxx, no.711, 20 November 1979, p.13.

A NWICO needs to be established — "to ensure the participation of all peoples in life-enhancing knowledge."<sup>43</sup> And the sooner it is established the better.

(V)

The Methodological Issues:

The mandate for a NWICO springs from the realities of the contemporary situation. The change in power equations — exemplified by the loosening of the rigidity of the bloc system of international relations — coupled with the revolutionary technological innovations and the blithe yearnings of the "Wretched of the Earth", have all led to a situation where the existing order cannot continue indefinitely. A change is inevitable. The question is: what direction will it take? This is, as they say it, a million dollar question.

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43; Quoted from the Speech of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India to the UNESCO Meeting in Paris, June 1985, in, N.L. Chowla, "Rejuvenating UNESCO", Hindustan Times (New Delhi) 24 July 1985.

Hypotheses:

The main thrust of this dissertation is to provide a cogent analysis of the existing information and communication order so as to bring out in stark reality as to what exactly has gone wrong. In so doing, it is assumed and believed, that a case for a NWICO can be established. The analysis is sought to be done on the basis of the following hypotheses:

1. that the existing information and communication order has given rise to almost a total monopoly of the Western powers in the field of information and communication;
2. that the said order because of its structural logic reflects the values of the Western capitalist world;
3. that this has created a structure of dependence which has negative effects on the polity, economy and society of the developing nations;
4. that the manifold problems of the developing countries, on the one hand, and the policies of the developed capitalist countries, predicated on the maintenance of the status quo, on the other, impedes the emergence of a NWICO; and

5. that a way out of the quandary would be to mix rhetoric and theoretical considerations with praxis.

These hypotheses when tested and found correct would assuredly provide the rationale for a new order in information and communication.

Methodology:

The project at hand will have a holistic perspective — that is, analysis will be done of the wider social structure since it is believed that neither does an information and communication order exist just by itself, nor can a study, based on a particular aspect, do justice to the topic at hand.

A survey of literature — both the primary and the secondary source material — will be done.<sup>44</sup>

It is imperative to mention here that there is a goal behind such analysis — to search for social deter-

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44 For a format of survey and analysis see: Morten Deutsch and Stuart W. Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York, 1959), pp. 330-42; and, George Gerbner, "On Content Analysis and Critical Research in Mass Communication", in, Lewis Anthony Dexter and David Manning White, eds., People, Society, and Mass Communications (London, 1964), pp. 476-500.

minants and possible consequences of the present information and communication structure. The aim will be to go beyond the apparent and understand the real internal dynamics.

Since truth emerges in the dialectics of debates, the opposing viewpoints will also be looked into. Though it is believed that value free social science is a myth, objectivity will be maintained as far as possible. The aim, in short, will be to present a clear and cogent analysis of the issues at hand. Besides, it needs to be clarified that no delimitation is sought in terms of either space (geographical area) or time (duration).

#### The Semantic Aspect:

Since semantic issues have a great bearing on research, the central terms used here, and to be used hereafter, are sought to be clarified for the sake of coherence.

The words "information" and "communication" are used in the same sense as in the MacBride Commission Report: "Communication as the "process" of exchanging

news, facts, opinions, messages between individuals and people; information as the "product", i.e., news, data, and various other content and outputs of media, cultural activities or industries.<sup>45</sup> In short, information refers to the "message" and communication to the "medium" used for transmission of such message.<sup>46</sup>

In speaking of the "information and communication order" we refer besides news to "the entire print media comprising news agency services, newspapers, magazines and books; radio and television entertainment programmes, the cinema and theatre, and advertising and transborder information data-bank services ... the term ... embraces all kinds of information, carried across in words, signals, digitals, messages and images."<sup>47</sup> A variety of

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45 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.7, Appendix-2, p.283.

46 C.R. Irani, "A Critique : UNESCO Meddling", World Focus (New Delhi) 25, vol.3, no.1, January 1982, p.28.

47 D.R. Mankekar, "India and Third World", Mainstream (New Delhi), vol.xxii, no.15, December 10, 1983, p.20.



medium, including such sophisticated wonders of the modern world — computers, satellites, remote sensing devices (RSD) etc., are all included in it.

The ideal of a new international order in information and communication has, according to Osolnik, clear connotations. It is "new" in the sense that it seeks the replacement of an order that is obsolete as it has failed to serve the needs of a majority of nations. It is "international" because it must have universal applicability both for technological reasons and because of the fact that today's world is an interdependent one. It is not a mere question of technical solutions any more but a question of relations, of benefitting on democratic lines, of modern technology benefitting each and every one. It is not a matter for States or governments only, but a social concern too. "Order" he takes to mean a system of relations which are not accidental or a monopoly of some vested interests, but promoted with certain purpose in mind. This is to be based on common agreements and

decision making and is not to be construed as the imposition of a model. It is a case of equal partners aiming to develop and utilize international communications in accordance with the aims and aspirations aspired to in international and social life.<sup>48</sup> The aim, in short, is to establish a democratic information-communication order so that mankind can live a life of knowledge, peace and interdependence.

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48 Osolnik, n.42, pp.13-14.

Chapter-II

THE MAGNITUDE OF WESTERN MONOPOLY IN THE FIELD  
OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Chapter-IITHE MAGNITUDE OF WESTERN MONOPOLY IN THE FIELD  
OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

(I)

The Setting:

Mark Twain, in his inimitable style, once commented that there were only two sources of light in the world : the Sun in the sky and the Associated Press on the earth.<sup>1</sup> This comment, made about one hundred years ago, might appear somewhat off the mark. It was made at a time when the international information theatre was still not overwhelmed by the US agencies, but was dominated by the three Western agencies; viz., Reuters of Great Britain, Havas of France and Wolff of Germany. They had divided the world into their spheres of influence; each enjoyed almost an exclusive right to collect and disseminate

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1 S. Golyakov, "Crooked Mirror of International Imperialism", New Times (Moscow), no.43, October 1978, p.20.

news in their respective domains. However, Great Britain, because of its preponderant international position was the "Lord" of the scene. The Associated Press of the US was then, at best, a poor cousin of the three news agencies. Twain's aphorism can however be construed to refer to news imperialism which existed even a century ago — a situation that can best be described as "information imperialism", to quote the former Finnish President, Urho Kekkonen.<sup>2</sup>

The terrain today is vastly different — a revolution has changed its contours. What is more remarkable is that the process is still unfolding its "magic" and rendering yesterdays innovations obsolete today. Havas and Wolff have become extinct; their pre-eminent positions have been overtaken by the United Press International (UPI) of the United States and the Agence France-Presse (AFP) of France. In the field of technology, carrier pigeons and telegraph have been replaced by micro-electronics, computers and sophisticated telecommunication systems.

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2 Ibid.

Of particular significance is the emergence of the US as the virtual "Czar" of the information and communication arena since World War II. Mouthing pseudo clichés it has heralded, through the trans-national corporations, the "American Century". The United Kingdom (UK) today occupies, at best, an junior position compared to it. This, as said before, is a reflection of the post-war international power scenario.

Incidentally, today we are in the midst of a situation that Prof. H. Krupp prefers to call as the "informatization of society". It is a phenomenon that has the potential of "embracing the entire globe as it diffuses into all elements of society : technical, econo. and social..."<sup>3</sup>

These developments have helped create an order that is appallingly unjust to a vast number of countries, particularly of the Latin American, Asian and African

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3. H. Krupp, "Economic and Societal consequences of Information", in, Barrie T. Stern, ed., Information and Innovation (Contemporary Topics in Information Transfer, vol.I) (Amsterdam, 1982), p.27.

continents. These three continents, as is well known, accounts for two-thirds of the world's population. We have, what may be called, "casteism", even in the information and communication arena. This apparently leads to imbalances in the existing information and communication order, with telling effects.

The level and forms of imbalance that the MacBride Commission Report speaks of in the arena of news circulation can be applied, in general, to the existing information and communication order per se. This imbalance which has both a qualitative and a quantitative dimension is a complex and varied phenomenon. Imbalance can be between: (a) developed and developing countries as the flow of information is conditioned to the availability or non-availability of adequate infrastructural facilities; (b) nations having different political and socio-economic systems; (c) developed countries belonging to the same political system, particularly between smaller and bigger ones; (d) the developing countries themselves; and (e) the sensational and topical information, and the developmental and indepth

coverage, as for example in the domain of news.<sup>4</sup>

Though there is a difference in details in each of the areas that come under the rubric of information and communication order, inequality in their possession is a commonality that binds them all. It is, however, in the context of the developed vis-a-vis the developing countries that this inequality is confronted as a brutal reality, with all its hideous ramifications.

The structure that gives rise to the dominance of the Western industrialised world has already been discussed. In so doing, an attempt was made to underline the structural aspects that keeps a majority of the nations, particularly the developing ones, in a dependent relationship. It is pertinent at this point to add <sup>a</sup> few more points to complete the picture.

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4 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow (being the Report of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (New Delhi, 1982), p.36.



As it is, most of the developing countries, prior to their independence in the 20th century, were under colonial domination, which extended in India's case, for instance for about 200 years. This ensured a relationship that was grotesque in all its dimensions — political, economic and social. Systematically, these "periphery" nations were depleted, a process that helped the "metropolis" countries to fatten and develop themselves and thereby complete their bourgeois revolutions against existing feudal social orders.<sup>5</sup> De-colonisation did not help matters much — for it meant in many cases only a formal independence. The Bretton-Woods economic structure, the bloc-dominated international political power structure, and the communication and cultural structure, all helped create a scenario that is dubbed as "neo-colonialism". Short in finance, technology and infrastructural facilities, these "Wretched of the Earth" were prescribed in a majority of cases, in the

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5 For details, see among others: Robert I. Rhodes, ed., Imperialism and Underdevelopment: A Reader (New York, 1970) A.G. Frank, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil (New York, 1967); and F. Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (Harmondsworth, 1985).

"first development decade", the Western development model and they took to it like ducks to water.<sup>6</sup> In the field of information and communication, Western models were implanted without caring much as to whether these grafting would suit these nations or not. Once hardware was imported, the software followed and kept on flowing, for these nations had and has, in a majority of cases, no facilities for their own production. Besides, Western exports were, and are, very cheap, compared to local productions. This sorry plight was also accentuated, and is being perpetuated, by the prevalence of Western educated elites in the power circles of the developing nations.

The dependency circle thus come to engulf these countries all round. But the information and communication model, as expected, failed these countries.<sup>7</sup>

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6 The structural aspects have already been discussed earlier in the first Chapter. References may also be made to: Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin, eds., Introduction to the Sociology of "Developing Societies" (London, 1982); Barbara Ward, etc., eds., The Widening Gap : Development in the 1970s (New York, 1971) and S. George, How the Other Half Dies (Harmondsworth, 1978).

7 For an useful discussion see: Krishan Sondhi, Communication, Growth and Public Policy (New Delhi,

They slowly came to realise the over-powering dominance of the Western powers. It is this that sparked off a tumultuous debate in the '70s, which reached its denouement in 1980, when the 21st Session of the General Conference of the UNESCO passed the resolution on the "New World Information and Communication Order".

Apparently, the inequality in the existing information and communication order necessitates a thorough going enquiry. This is important because not only is it the epicentre of the outburst, launched by the developing countries against the Western industrialised countries led by the US, but also because this has serious repercussions in the political, economic and social arena. The scope of the present chapter would thus be to analyse the magnitude of Western monopoly in the field of information and communication. The analysis is sought

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1983), chapters 1 and 2. Also see: Everett M. Rogers, "The Rise and Fall of the Dominant Paradigm", Journal of Communication (Philadelphia), vol.28, no.1, Winter 1978, pp.64-69.

to be done on the basis of a hypothesis which states that: the existing information and communication order has given rise to almost a total monopoly of the Western powers in the field of information and communication.

(II)

The Transnational Domination:

The main agency that perpetuates and accentuates the magnitude of Western monopoly in the existing information and communication order is, what Somavia calls, "the transnational power structure".<sup>8</sup> In fact, communication patterns, at the international level, "closely follow other sectors of economic life, in which the general expansion of transnational corporations in the most vital fields is one of the

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<sup>8</sup> Juan Somavia, "The Transnational Power Structure and International Information, Elements of a Third World Policy for Transnational News Agencies", Development Dialogue (Uppsala), 2, 1976, p.15.

significant recent trends affecting the world market, trade, employment, and even the stability and independence of some countries."<sup>9</sup>

As the MacBride Commission Report notes:

"The phenomena known as 'transnationalization' or 'transnationality' has affected practically the whole field of communication. Indeed, one can speak of a transnational communication phenomenon. Just as in other sectors of the transnational economy, it is possible to identify in the industrial and financial operations of mass communication, centres which control production and services and the peripheral markets to which they are addressed."<sup>10</sup>

The transnational communications structure covers a whole gamut of activities "comprising news agencies, advertising agencies and data banks, and

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9 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.4, p.106.

10 Ibid., pp.106-07.

supplying information retrieval services, radio and television programmes, films, radiophotos, magazines, books, novelettes and comic papers with world-wide circulation. Various components, originating mainly in industrialised world, reinforce each other, stimulating in toto the consumers' desire to attain forms of social organization and life-styles imitative of the industrialized capitalist countries, which, experience has shown, can only be applied in Third World on the basis of high and increasing concentration of income in the hands of a few and of untenable social inequality." Things are conditioned in such a way that the receiving populace consider them "historically inevitable", to be accepted without any hesitation whatsoever.<sup>11</sup>

At this stage the question that necessarily arises is: what do we mean by a transnational agency? One definition which may be accepted, with slight modification, is the one given by the Group of Eminent

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11 Somavia, n.8, p.17.

Persons, set up by the United Nations. According to them a transnational corporation is one which own or control production or service facilities (or operate) outside the countries, in which they are based. Such enterprises are not always incorporated or private. They can also be co-operative or State-owned entities (the words in brackets refer to the modification).<sup>12</sup> The central objective behind transnational operation is their desire to consolidate and expand their capacity to act and exert influence throughout the world.<sup>13</sup> In the developing countries their source of power lies in their ability to control technology, finance-capital and marketing, as well as in the dissemination of ideas, opinions and values.<sup>14</sup> The transnational corporations swear

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12 V. Gauri Shanker, Taming the Giants : Transnational Corporations (New Delhi, 1980), pp.19-29.

13 Somavia, n.8, pp.15-16.

14 Thomas Guback and Tapio Varis, "Transnational Communication and Cultural Industries", Reports and Papers on Mass Communication, no.92, (Paris, 1982), p.5.

by the market and gear everything towards that. Apparently, information is mainly relegated to the status of being mere "commodity", to be bought and sold.

The transnationalization of the communications arena has been "parallel and supportive of internationalizing of capital". As is the rule, "economic expansion is unfailingly associated with political and socio-psychological expansion: that is foreign investment of capital imply social and cultural consequences, and the export of ideology."<sup>15</sup>

The transnationalization in the field has been rapid after the '50s when there was a shift towards manufacturing and related areas such as banking, advertisement and media industries. This process was facilitated by technological innovations in industrial production and international communication. Facilities of air travels, telephones, telex,

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15 Tapio Varis, "Aspects of the Impact of Transnational Corporations on Communication", International Social Science Journal (Paris), vol.XXVIII, no.4, 1976, p.808.



satellites, etc., enabled the establishment of production units in many countries. Besides, a global strategy directed from central headquarters helped in maintaining control over the whole process.<sup>16</sup>

A pertinent point to note is that there are different degrees of transnationalisation in the field, still largely composed of international marketing and distribution operations. The electronics industry, for example, has maximum transnationalisation as compared to others; one reason for this being the "economics of scale". They are therefore found in areas which have cheap labour and markets for export. However, the highly skilled labour and research and innovation are centred in their home countries.<sup>17</sup>

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16 Guback and Varis, n.14, p.5.

17 Ibid., p.50.

Guback and Varie divides their activities into the following categories:<sup>18</sup>

1. those who own or control a foreign media industry, for example, publishing house, television station, film production company, etc.;
2. those who own or control a foreign marketing network, for example, distribution system, offices, etc.; and
3. those who control foreign sales of media products, for example, they are in a dominant position in foreign markets.

A vast majority of the communication trans-nationals hail from the US. Next in the list come the European countries. It is estimated that 34 of the 500 largest non-American companies are directly or indirectly related to communications. These are based in the Federal Republic of Germany (13 companies), UK (7), France (5), Sweden (4), Netherlands (2) and

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18 Ibid., p.7.

Italy (1). Two of these (ITT Europe and Honeywell Bull), though based in Europe, are controlled by US based companies. Rank Zerox is the most profitable among the lot — its profit margin is rated at 18.2 per cent — though the largest is the Dutch Philips, producing hardware.<sup>19</sup>

(III)

The Quantitative and Qualitative Aspects of

Monopoly:

When we speak of imbalance in the existing information and communication order we refer to two of its categories viz., the hardware and the software. Hardware, here, refers to technological equipments like computers, television receivers, parts, transmitters, etc.; raw materials like pulp for making paper, raw films, etc. Software, on the other hand refers to books, film for entertainment, music, etc.<sup>20</sup>

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19 Varis, n.15, p.814.

20 Vijaya Lakshmi, K.P., "The United States and the New Information Order : 1967-1979", (M.Phil.Dissertation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, School of International Studies, New Delhi, 1981), p.25.

Besides, there are two dimensions to it, viz., the quantitative and the qualitative dimension. Each of these bears analysis to unravel their true import.

Besides, there are two dimensions to it, viz., the quantitative and the qualitative dimension. Each of these bears analysis, to unravel their true import.

(A) The Quantitative Dimension:

Though it is impossible to make a precise quantitative assessment of Western transnational control of the information and communication structure, an idea of it can be had from the various studies carried out. Naked statistics show that in the total flow of information between the industrialised part of the world — which has one-third of the world's population — and the developing countries — that have two-thirds of the world's population — <sup>it</sup> is at least 100 times more intense towards the latter than vice versa.<sup>21</sup>

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21 Varis, n.15, p.823.

As for the degree of transnational control, it can be grasped from the fact that nearly 75 per cent of hardware of all systems of communication media of the Western nations is controlled by about 6 corporations of the US, UK, Holland and West Germany.<sup>22</sup>

It is also unfortunate that about 70 per cent of the population of the world is still unable to be adequately informed of events taking place in their own or in other countries.<sup>23</sup>

According to figures culled about five years ago, the US could boast of about 75 per cent of the total world circulation of television programmes, 50 per cent of the cinema films, 60 per cent of records and cassettes, 89 per cent of computerized commercial information, 82 per cent of the production

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22. N.L. Chowla, "The Media : An Insidious Tool", World Focus (New Delhi), vol.5, no.8,56, August 1984, p.25.

23. Dragan Bartolovic, "The Contemporary World, Underdeveloped Countries and Communication: in Favour of a NIIO", Socialist Thought and Practice (Beograd), vol.XIX, no.3, March 1979, p.54.

of electronic parts, 65 per cent of commercial advertisement, and in conjunction with two of its European subsidiaries, 90 per cent of all television news and documentary programmes.<sup>24</sup>

A brief survey of the different components of the existing information and communication order would show that there is appalling imbalance everywhere. In almost all the areas the domination of a few is immense. Based on statistics again, a catalogue of the imbalance in these areas is as follows:

(a) The News Agency Scene: According to Tapio Varis the news agencies represent the "first examples of transnational communication".<sup>25</sup> Since World War II, and as of now, it is the US that is at the top. This is because of its ascendancy in the political and economic field, and the campaigns it carried on to

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24 Altaf Gauhar, "Third World : An Alternative Press", Journal of International Affairs (New York), vol.35, no.2, Fall/Winter 1981/2, p.172.

25 Varis, n.15, p.809.

break the backs of the British led news cartel. The resulting effect has been that since the War and till date, the four sisters — the Associated Press (AP), and the United Press International (UPI) of the US, Reuters of UK and Agence France Presse (AFP) of France, have been dominating the news agency scene. So much so, that 80 per cent of all information, printed or broadcast over radio and television emanates from these "Big Four". They have successfully carved out their respective zones of influence all over Asia, Africa and Latin America.<sup>26</sup> They operate in about 110 countries of the world, including India, transmitting as many as 45 million words a day.<sup>27</sup> This compares unfavourably with the circulation of the Non-Aligned News Agency Pool (NANAP), during the same period, which was only about 40,000 words a day, of which universally usable material in the form of professionally produced news item was a small part.<sup>28</sup>

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26 Chowla, n.22, p.25.

27 A. Raghavan, "Relation with NIEO : Siamese Twins", World Focus, vol.3, no.1, 25, January 1982, p.25.

28 P. Unnikrishnan, "News Pool : Competition Not the Aim", World Focus, ibid., p.22.

Besides, a number of countries in Africa and Asia — 18 in Africa and 4 in Asia — lacked news agencies, even as late as the early '80s.<sup>29</sup> The situation has not improved much since.

Karl Nordenstreng estimates that 67 per cent of news disseminated in the world comes from the US.<sup>30</sup> On the basis of a detailed study of the state of news agencies around the world, Rohan Samarajiva finds that the economies of replication, pricing policies, market control and diversification, perpetuates the monopoly of the "Big Four" news transnationals and prevents new entrants from getting a foothold.<sup>31</sup>

In the dissemination of economic and business news across the world, the control is still in the hands of two organizations : Reuters Economic Service and AP-Dow Jones.<sup>32</sup>

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29 Raghavan, n.27, p.25.

30 Bartolovic, n.23, p. 54.

31 Rohan Samarajiva, "Third World Entry to News Market : Problems and Possible Solutions", Mainstream (New Delhi), vol.XXIII, no.28, 9 March 1985, pp.35-44.

32 Raghavan, n.27, p.25.



Article services of major newspapers are another form of monopoly which the transnationals have. The New York Times news services, for example, distributes to 136 important newspapers throughout the world. And in world's news film agencies, only 3 are important, viz., the British Visnews (owned mainly by Reuters and the British Broadcasting Corporation), the British-American UPI-TN, and the American CBS-News. Their strength lie in their ownership, i.e., they are a part of major news agencies and television companies, with both world-wide news gathering network and technical equipment of news-film production. The developing nations are totally dependent on them for their national television. Moreover, in pictorial foreign news material, more than one-half of Europe's regular news exchange between television companies is news film agency material.<sup>33</sup>

(b) The Electronic Media: In the electronic media, as Chowla points out, revolutionary expansion has been very significant, "During 1950-75 while the percentage increase in the number of copies of daily newspapers was +77, in the number of radio and television receivers the increase was +471 and +3235 respectively.

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33 Varis, n.15, pp.827-28.

As the networks expanded, the increase in transmission hours in radio and television could not be sustained by local software productions. Most of the countries in the underdeveloped regions therefore resorted to importing a great deal of television and radio programmes for their broadcasting stations and much enlarged audiences. The share of imported material particularly in TV programmes is something as much as 90 per cent. This in turn has led to the flooding of international markets with products of Western television. According to an estimate, over 400 million people of Latin America, Africa and Asia watch the American serial "Bonanza" every week ... Another estimate suggests that western television networks sell and distribute abroad transmission material for about 250,000 hours every year and the profit to television networks in the United States alone is about \$ 100 million ... sometimes these programmes are sold at very low prices and ... have the effect of discouraging the national network from investing in their own productions."<sup>34</sup>

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34 Chowla, n.22, pp.25-26.

Coming to the hardware part of it, North America and Europe controlled 75 per cent of sound broadcasting transmitters in '74, while Asia had 10 per cent, Africa 3 per cent, South America 11 per cent and Oceania 1 per cent. As for the distribution of radio receivers, North America and Europe together had 78 per cent in 1976, while Asia had 12 per cent, South America had 6 per cent, Africa 3 per cent and Oceania 1 per cent. In case of television broadcasting transmitters, North America and Europe had 71 per cent, Asia 25 per cent, South America 2 per cent, and Africa and Oceania 1 per cent each, in 1974. Besides, in the distribution of television receivers, North America and Europe had 82 per cent in 1976, Asia 10 per cent, South America 5 per cent, Africa 1 per cent and Oceania 2 per cent.<sup>35</sup>

(c) Radio Frequency, etc.: In the distribution of the radio frequency spectrum between the few developed countries and the many developing ones, the situation has been equally disturbing : the control of the developed countries being 90 per cent of the spectrum.<sup>36</sup> Similar discrepancy arises in the allocation of

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35 Many Voices, One World: Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.4, p.127.

36 N.L. Chowla, "An Overview", World Focus, n.27, pp.3-4.

'parking' slots in the geo-stationary orbit, which is where synchronous satellites are placed in space.<sup>37</sup>

According to the MacBride Commission Report :

"Assignment of radio frequencies inevitably bears a relationship to the number and power of transmitting stations, of which developing countries have a preponderance, but it must also be related to the social and cultural needs of all nations."<sup>38</sup>

(d) Telecommunications: As in other fields, the world development in telecommunication has been very uneven too. The Cable and Wireless Group — incorporated in the United Kingdom — and associated companies are the world's largest international telecommunication operator, with activities covering the whole world.<sup>39</sup>

"There are at present some 400 million telephones in the world, an increase of about 1,000 per cent since 1945 ... Eighty per cent of the world's telephones are

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37. B.G. Verghese, "MacBride Commission : Correcting Imbalances", World Focus, *ibid.*, p.7.

38. Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.4, pp.132-33.

39. Varis, n.15, p.821.

in only ten countries of North America and Europe, for a total population of about 750 million; approximately half of all telephones are in the United States alone, where several cities have more phones than people. The socialist world has 7 per cent of the world's telephones for a population of 1,300 million, and the developing world has 7 per cent for population of 2,000 million."<sup>40</sup>

In the field of telephones and telegraphic equipment there is a keen competition, with Japanese and American firms coming up fast. The competition is keenest between the big three British firms and continental European supplies (L.M. Ericsson in Sweden, ITT and Siemens in the Federal Republic of Germany, and Phillips in the Netherlands).<sup>41</sup>

Satellites: Artificial satellites, launched by a few countries, are a revolutionary facet of modern communications. Today, the satellite systems include communication satellites and associated earth station

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40 Many Voices, One World: Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.4, p.54.

41 Varis, n.15, p.811.

terminals. The global coverage of satellite systems include all kinds of telecommunication services, from international telephony, telex and telegraphy, to data and television transmission and reception.<sup>42</sup>

Herein, the Western Powers, exert monopoly through the Intelsat (the International Satellite System), a communications consortium of the Western bloc. Its present membership, i.e., those who subscribe to its services stand at 109. The 21 year old system, created by the US, provides telephone, telex and TV transmissions to most of the world; it also provides the so-called "hot-line" between Washington and Moscow. There is also a report that the Soviet Union is thinking of joining it.<sup>43</sup> Significantly, in the West, the production of satellites and the operation of communications through such channels are largely in private hands.<sup>44</sup>

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42 Ibid.

43 News item: "USSR Likely to Join Intelsat", Times of India (New Delhi), 15 March 1985.

44 Alcira Argumedo, "The New World Information Order and International Power", Journal of International Affairs, vol.35, no.2, Fall/Winter, 1981/2, p.186.

(e) Films: According to Guback and Varis the film companies were the first transnationals, after news agencies, in the mass media field.<sup>45</sup> A majority of the films shown, are produced by 8 or 9 large US motion picture companies : MCM, Columbia Pictures, Twentieth Century Fox, MCA, and in the case of children, Walt Disney Productions.<sup>46</sup> Sometime back, the Walt Disney Productions claimed that 100 million people watch a Disney film <sup>every</sup> L week and that 800 million people read a book or magazine <sup>every</sup> L week published by their firm.<sup>47</sup>

In many countries imports reach upto 90 per cent of the films on exhibition. As of now, less than 12 production and distribution companies, collectively labelled as the "Hollywood", keep half the cinemas in the non-socialist world supplied with films. Films from Western countries are also widely shown in the socialist countries.<sup>48</sup>

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45 Guback and Varis, n.14, p.5.

46 Argumedo, n.44, p.182.

47 Chowla, n.22, p.26.

48 Varis, n.15, p.823.

The hardware for film production is controlled by a small number of transnational corporations of American, Dutch, West German, Japanese and British origin: Eastman Kodak, Phillips, RCA, Matsushita, CBS, Sony, EMI, Zenith, Grundig and Polaroid.<sup>49</sup>

(f) Video-Cassettes: The video-cassette market is dominated by major corporations linked to the electronics industry, viz., RCA, Phillips, Sony, Hitachi, CBS, MGM, and EMI.<sup>50</sup> Japan alone produces three-quarters of the world's video-cassette recorders.<sup>51</sup>

(g) Record Production: The leading record producer in the world is the US with almost 70 per cent of the world's sales outside socialist countries (equivalent in 1974, to \$ 2,200,000 million). At the end of the '60s, however, it had made well over half of the world's sales.<sup>52</sup>

Out of the \$ 8 billion world market turnover in gramophone records in 1977, about 60 per cent of this

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49 Argumedo, n.44, p.183.

50 Ibid.

51 M. Singh, "Land of the Rising Sales", Sunday Review, Times of India, 20 October 1985.

52 Varis, n.15, p.826.



was in the hands of CBS, EMI, Polygram, Warner Communications, and RCA.<sup>53</sup>

(h) Integrated Circuits: Between 60 to 70 per cent of the world's integrated circuits production is generated in the US where 5 corporations control 80 per cent of the countries national production, alongside largest computer producers, who, owing to their schemes of vertical integration (for example at IBM), use their own production to cover a majority of their requirements.<sup>54</sup>

In general, transnational activity is highest in the electronics arena. These corporations are rapidly advancing foreign sales and activities abroad, ranging from different lines of production to research and services (for example, ITT has affiliates in 67 countries and realises more than one-half of its profits abroad).<sup>55</sup> The industry, as such, is dominated mainly by the US, West Germany, UK, Holland, France and Japan. The production field of the 15 largest enterprises in electronics industry control 75 per cent

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53 Argumedo, n.44, p.183.

54 Ibid., p.185.

55 Varis, n.15, p.814.

of world's communications equipment sales.<sup>56</sup>

(i) Computers: In the case of computers available data show that "developed nations possess over 95 per cent of the world's computer capacity, measured by the value of equipment".<sup>57</sup> The American giant IBM is responsible for 70 per cent of all computer installations in the entire globe. Even in Japan, a nation considered to be a heavy-weight in computer hardware, the IBM has over a quarter of the market. In fact, its power helps explain the extra-ordinary pre-eminence of the US in the information field.<sup>58</sup>

(j) Data Bases: Data bases, considered to be very vital in present day life, also suffer from monopoly control. At present 90 per cent of all the information in the world is held in the data bases of the US.<sup>59</sup> The gravity of this situation can be perceived

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56 Argumedo, n.44, p.185.

57 Many Voices, One World: Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.4, p.129.

58 Anthony Smith, The Geopolitics of Information: How Western Culture Dominates the World (London, 1980), pp.133-34.

59 S.C. Parasher, "New World Information Order", India Quarterly (New Delhi), vol.XXXIX, no.2, April-June 1983, p.181.

from, for example, the fact that all the information needed by Swedish fire departments is kept in a special database in Florida.<sup>60</sup>

(k) The Advertisement Domain: Advertisements have become such an important facet of life that, as of now, advertisement receipts constitute the bulk of media revenues outside the socialist bloc.<sup>61</sup> Coming to the specifics, the Western advertisement field is now dominated by no more than 50 large advertisement companies of transnational character which operate in various countries of the world. In the '70s, the 25 largest advertisement agencies in the world obtained more than 50 per cent of their earnings from abroad.<sup>62</sup> Besides, of the 10 leading advertisement agencies of the world, 7 are wholly American owned, 2 others (International Needham Univas, and SSC & B Inc.) have American interests, while 1 (Dentsu - limited to domestic activity) is a Japanese agency. The concentration in international advertising agencies is

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60 Smith, n.58, p.129.

61 Samarajiwa, n.31, p.39.

62 Argumedo, n.44, pp.183-84.

even more severe than indirect foreign investment. Only 10 major advertisement agencies control more than 80 per cent of all foreign majority-controlled advertisement agencies.<sup>63</sup>

Many authors agree that international advertising is directly linked to marketing needs of expanding global enterprises and maintains or reinforces the originator's values in developing countries, especially where consumption patterns are concerned.<sup>64</sup>

(1) Book Production: In this field, the US and the Soviet Union are important — together they produce every year more than the whole of Africa (i.e., more than 80,000 titles); other major producers are the UK, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Netherlands and Poland. Here, the number of transnationals are not yet very large, and are concerned with technical, scientific and medical publications (though it is believed that they would take over other areas as well).<sup>65</sup> For the British book-transnationals, exports are the main source of income — 37 per cent of all British books are currently exported.<sup>66</sup>

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63 Varis, n.15, p.828.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., p.826.

66 Ibid., p.820.

Besides, there are magazines which have world-wide circulation; Readers Digest for example sells 12 million copies every month in 22 foreign countries.<sup>67</sup>

(B) Qualitative Issues:

The quantitative aspects, though they underscore the pernicious level of monopoly, yet, hide some vital aspects, which only an analysis of the qualitative aspects can explain.

One such feature of monopoly is the acquisition of companies which helps boost transnational activity. In the 70s specially: "Mass media conglomerates... saw new subsidiaries as vehicles to help smooth the high and the low earning periods that occur often in the mass media industries. The hope was that when one media sector's profits where down (say, in consumer magazines), another's (say, business magazines) would be up."<sup>68</sup>

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67 Glen Fisher, American Communication in a Global Society (New Jersey, 1979), p.71.

68 Joseph Turow, "Corporate Planning and Media Culture", in Robert N. Bostrom (ed.) Communication Yearbook 7, (California, 1983), p.435.

The American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) is a good case in point. In 1982, it controlled a television network, 4 radio networks, and several radio and TV stations. It also owned 5 magazine publishing companies, with 43 magazines, ranging from Los Angeles to Info-systems, a motion picture producing firm, a market research firm, a marketing data base company, and a home video — cable, video disc, and video cassette — programming firm.<sup>69</sup>

The transnationals are also good adaptors. The US film industry, for example, appears in different forms and in different names in different European countries. In the Federal Republic of Germany, they operate as independent affiliates, but in Italy and France, they are partners of domestic industries. The penetration of foreign investment is aimed at obtaining access to, or even control of domestic production or services in media markets abroad.<sup>70</sup>

Linkages have also helped much. To take ABC again as an example, it linked up with Westinghouse

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69 Ibid.

70 Varis, n.15, p.822.

to create a Satellite News Channel Operation, with ESPN and Getty Oil for a sports pay cable service, and with Hearst for the ARTS and Daytime Operations.<sup>71</sup> As of now the communication industries are being dominated by conglomerates "with significant stakes, in a range of major media markets giving them an unprecedented degree of potential control over the range and direction of cultural production."<sup>72</sup> Besides, we also have concentration in distribution, of films, for example.<sup>73</sup>

Many conglomerates are pursuing roads currently unpopular with consumers, in the hope that they will bear fruit in the future. Thus, a few book publishers are developing data base products and seriously entering the data publication business.<sup>74</sup> Optimum utilization and economics of scale is what the big conglomerates have advantage over the smaller ones; apparently, therefore, the big fishes eat the small ones.

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71 Turow, n.68, p.435.

72 Graham Murdock, "Large Corporations and the Control of the Communications Industries", in, Michael Gurevitch, etc., eds., Culture, Society and the Media (London, 1983), p.120.

73 Varis, n.15, p.822.

74 Turow, n.68, p.437.

Mass media conglomerates also give rise to what may be called a "chain-reaction". For example, media firms require a flow of ideas and people to help <sup>them</sup> ~~in their~~ work. Thus, we have the rise of the public-relation industries, the advertisement industries and the press associations.<sup>75</sup>

What is also important is that this centralization is total — there is now a greater centralization in decision-making even.<sup>76</sup> A new corporate approach has developed which seeks to use the parent company as a pivot linking various corporate operations philosophically and practically. The idea is to arrange the corporate parts so that they might work for the good of the whole.<sup>77</sup>

An important development has been the under-cover activities of banks, controlling American businesses. In the US, 3 banking institutions — Morgan Guaranty Trust, Chase Manhattan Bank—Chemical Bank N.Y. Trust and the First City National Bank,

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75 Ibid., pp.437-38.

76 Guback and Varis, n.14, p.49.

77 Turow, n.68, pp.435-36.



either owned or controlled most of the transnationals; and this is done under the cover up system of 'nominees' and addresses.<sup>78</sup>

An interesting point that Jeremy Tunstall makes is that the commercial media systems and materials of the American type invariably beat government/public service media in terms of market appeal. The commercial media systems win market success if and when allowed to compete with public services systems; the public service media in such an event, go on the defensive.<sup>79</sup> Citing the case of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Murdock holds that the major media corporations increasingly structure the business environment within which public communication organizations have to operate.<sup>80</sup>

There are besides, inconspicuous channels like cultural exchanges and institutions which lend weighty support to transnational activities.<sup>81</sup>

According to Guback and Varis, the transnationals are

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78 Varis, n.15, p.814.

79 Chowla, n.22, p.26.

80 Murdock, n.72, p.120.

81 Chowla, n.22, p.25.

actively entering the mass education field, particularly with the introduction of new technology. The big electronic companies have educational divisions and are increasingly interested in the traditional mass media. As they observe, the introduction of a new medium usually takes place without much discussion and critical evaluation of its social and cultural impact.<sup>82</sup>

Media corporations are not separate entities by themselves; shareholding and directorial links between media companies are part of an expanding network binding major communications corporations to the other core sectors of the economy.<sup>83</sup>

As Murdock rightly puts it, the effective reach of these corporations are likely to increase further because of their strategic command over new information and video technologies.<sup>84</sup> Increasing monopoly is therefore in the offing.

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82 Guback and Varis, n.14, p.50.

83 Murdock, n.72, p.137.

84 Ibid., p.120.

## (IV)

The Daunting Fact:

The world is thus divided largely into producers and consumers, even in the arena of information and communication. The monopoly status of the Western powers has resulted in a situation where the so-called "consumers", inspite of being in a majority, have to look up to the "producers" at every twist and turn. It is this that has got to be reversed for it entails innumerable consequences which have gone against the interests of the majority.

This monopoly, or "Colonialism in information and communication has been considered by many social scientists as the latest and yet another major trend in empire-building." It is held to be equally damning as the earlier trends like military conquests, a militant Christianity and mercantile colonialism, alongwith the Industrial Revolution. The Western service based economy is a slave of information technology; and since it is the preserve of a few

developed countries, "mercantile colonialism has got replaced by what has been called the electronic colonialism."<sup>85</sup>

It has already been explained as to what it is that has given rise to, and perpetuates, this colonialism of the Western powers. Superiority in areas like finance-capital and technology are very important in this connection. For example, the US spent \$ 49,700,000 in 1979 for publicity and advertising purposes, a sum greater than the total estimated balance of payments deficit of developing countries in 1976.<sup>86</sup> Or for that matter, the gross income of a corporation AT & T in 1979 was \$ 36 billions which surpassed the gross national income of 118 of the 145 member states of the United Nations.<sup>87</sup> As for technological superiority, it has already been explained that the so-called information and communication revolution is centred in the developed world.

To these two factors, Varis would add two other factors : marketing and dissemination of ideas.<sup>88</sup>

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85. Chowla, n.22, p.25.

86 Argumedo, n.44, p.183.

87 Ibid., pp.180-81.

88 Varis, n.15, p.808.

An idea of their marketing can be had from EMI. It is one of the largest record producers in the world (main labels — EMI Records, His Master's Voice, Music for Pleasure, and Capitol in the US); besides, it owns record and music companies in approximately 30 countries. It is active not only in leisure industries (tapes and records, which account for most of its income) but also in film production and exhibition, television and electronics.<sup>89</sup> As for the dissemination of ideas, the hold of the advertising companies, outlined above, explain the predicament.

Ideological justification for their activities is obtained under the guise of the "free flow of information". They quote UN and UNESCO Charters and Declarations, and other documents to vindicate their claims. But rights imply duties, and this they fail to appreciate. They deliberately side-track appeals to the effect that they can best subserve the various UN and UNESCO Charters only by agreeing to co-operate with the developing countries. That

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89 Ibid., p.821.

interdependence, and not dependence, is the need of the hour, is conveniently forgotten by them.

We have, on the other hand, the pitiable condition of the developing countries. As the former Information and Broadcasting Minister of India, Mr. V. Sathé, pointed out: "We are still way behind the norms commended by the UNESCO in the 60s to developing countries that they should attain at least 10 daily newspaper copies, 20 radio-sets and 2 cinema seats per one hundred people. Along with the physical targets of means of information reception, we are faced with the urgent problem of reading and communicating speedily and effectively with the people in remote, rural and tribal areas."<sup>90</sup>

Research and Development (R&D) activity in the developing countries are almost absent. Because of the high research cost in advanced technology, the North is the only main innovator. More than 90 per cent of technicians and scientists work in <sup>the</sup> developed

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90 Speech of Shri Vasant Sathé, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, October 1980, XXI Session of the General Conference of the UNESCO, Belgrade (Mimeographed).

countries and more than 90 per cent of scientific activities are concentrated in research for the rich world.<sup>91</sup> No wonder, therefore, that in an UN Conference on technical co-operation held in Buenos Aires in September 1978, the participants accused the US and other industrially advanced nations of "technological colonialism", aimed at making the developing nations more dependent.<sup>92</sup>

The present world situation in the field of information and communication is thus, highly unequal with the US basking in its unparalleled superiority. A few countries like Japan have advanced and even overtaken in sub-sectors, but even that has been under the "US umbrella". This trend is dangerous as even in the US the possession of technology are not with the people, but with the transnationals "who possess and control the basic foundation of these technologies and are directing them towards military

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91 Argumedo, n.44, p.186.

92 Golyakov, n.1, p.22.

and other forms of world domination pursued through business interests."<sup>93</sup>

All these factors point towards just one conclusion, and that is that there is almost a total monopoly of the Western powers in the field of information and communication.

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93 R. Sedananda, "Chips, Computers and Information Technology : National and International Implications", Link (New Delhi), 26 January 1984, p.123.



Chapter-III

FOR 'THEIR' BENEFIT ONLY : THE IMPLICATIONS OF  
THE DOMINANT-DEPENDENT EQUATION IN THE EXISTING  
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER

Chapter-IIIFOR 'THEIR' BENEFIT ONLY : THE IMPLICATIONS OF  
THE DOMINANT-DEPENDENT EQUATION IN THE EXISTING  
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER

(I)

The Issues:

A more vivid perception of the main thrust of the debate against the existing information and communication order can be had from a careful analysis of the negative effects of the total monopoly of the Western powers in the field of information and communication on the life and culture of the developing countries. Such an analysis would, it is hoped, help both in vindicating the claims in favour of a NWICO, and in answering the critics who carp and cavil against it and tend to explain away the grave crises afflicting the existing order as mere aberrations.

Facts, like the existence of dependence in the existing information and communication order, the values propagated and the detrimental effects on the polity, economy and society of the developing nations,

are no mere rhetoric or slogan. Indeed, all these aspects coalesce to form the objective existential reality. It is in the operationalisation of the existing order that one comes face to face with each of these aspects — truth stares in the face rather in a brutal fashion. Apparent slogans like "information imperialism", "media diplomacy replacing gun-boat diplomacy", "the 20th century version of neo-colonialism", etc., are not mere expressions, but realistic designation of such manifestations.

The "present-day world conditions — political, economic, scientific, technological and military as well as social and cultural — tend to foster the position and influence of certain countries, and to perpetuate the dependence of a large number of other countries". And in the overall scenario, "it has become increasingly clear that the effects of intellectual and cultural dependency are as serious as those of political subjection or economic dependence." In fact, there "can be no genuine, effective independence without the communication resources needed to safeguard it." But, as analysed

in the previous chapter, "in today's world, communication has all too frequently become an exchange between unequal partners, allowing the predominance of the more powerful, the richer and the better equipped."<sup>1</sup> It is this, in coalition with other factors, which feeds the overall dependency structure and props up the inequitous international order.

The significance of the issues involved might seem to be vague, but it can be made vivid if we try to look beyond our nose and relate the information and communication structure to the problems of the day ; nuclear arms race, drought, hunger and poverty, illiteracy and false consciousness, racism, unemployment, economic recession, economic injustices, population explosion, ecological destruction, sexism, rise of conservatism, etc. Towards the solution of all of these the information and communication structure

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1 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow (being the Report of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems) (New Delhi, 1982) p.34.

can play an important role by directing attention, raising consciousness, organising the masses, etc.<sup>2</sup> But the march of history has a different story to tell altogether; the information and communication structure has been harnessed for even thwarting solution to these challenges and perpetuating many of these evils.

And herein we come to the role of the existing information and communication order. The contention here, as presented in the form of a hypothesis, is that: the said order, because of its structural logic, has helped in the dissemination of the values of the consumerism-oriented Western market society, and on the other, has created a structure of dependence which has negative effects on the polity, economy and society of the developing nations.

This chapter is devoted to an analysis of this hypothesis. It may be mentioned here, for the sake of clarity, that this chapter is charged only with an analysis of the effects of the existing information

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp.34-35.

and communication order on the developing countries, and its related aspects — not with its effects in general. This exercise is meant to further the ongoing project, which is an attempt at a cogent appreciation of the demand, led by the developing countries, for a NWICO.

(II)

The Values Catered to by the Existing Information and Communication Order:

Value-neutrality is a concept devoid of normative concerns. By suspending the right of 'discrimination' and 'preference', it tends to equate the good and the bad, the desirable and the undesirable, and in so doing contributes to conformity with the status quo. It overlooks or ignores the equations of everyday existential calculus. For instance can we overlook the fact, and suspend our value judgement on the existing information and communication order, which indeed reflects certain values? Can we be blind to the "attendant distortions and imbalances which reflect in some way the dominant interests of the society from which they emanate"?<sup>3</sup>

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3 Ibid., p.37.

The values catered to by the monopoly Western media has to be looked into in this structural context — in the context of Western polity, economy and society, and its global ramifications. Politically, these countries are defending a crisis ridden capitalist state apparatus, in the guise of liberal democracy, which in terms of power-equation has been dominated by entrenched political oligarchy and elite interest-groups. Economically, they are apologists of the exploitative Bretton Woods economic structure that divides the countries of the world into manufacturers of finished goods and suppliers of raw materials. Socially, these societies seek to uphold the dominant political and economic values of a bourgeois society — no wonder socialisation takes on a very important role, with both formal and informal institutions harnessed for the purpose.

An idea of the values can be had from a look at the media role in each of the 'three' worlds. In the report of the Stockholm Seminar, 1978, which was attended by the representatives of all the "three worlds", three different conceptions of the

role of the media, representing respectively the First, Second, and the Third Worlds, were recorded. The roles were thus defined:<sup>4</sup>

(1) In Western countries they are concerned essentially with the recording of facts, events, and situations in terms of market requirements — a photographic record, as a French news executive put it.

(2) In the Socialist nations the media is concerned first and foremost with the major problems besetting mankind, and with educational and cultural needs.

(3) In the Third World, the media is construed as an instrument of development and therefore, while acting as the watchdog of public interest, it also has to share the burden with the state of the tasks of nation-building and also play the role of educator.

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4 D.R. Mankekar, "India and Third World", Mainstream (New Delhi), vol.XXII, no.15, 10 December 1983, pp.21-22.



Thus it is, that the central values to which the Western media pays obeisance are the dominant capitalist values. These are values that seek to perpetuate and legitimise capitalist practices and build the illusion that the operation of the liberal democratic ideology serve well the interest of all people (despite manifest inequality). This is necessary for smooth bourgeois functioning.

No wonder, these values project an aggressive achievement-oriented individual — brutally competitive and wedded to the realisation of the 'individuised' goals through means, fair and foul. It promises salvation for the individual here and now and portrays society as a hospitable arena in which the only road to success is one of cut-throat competition, drive and thrift. The values of cooperation, compassion, fraternal obligations towards fellow human-beings, of charity of sensitivities and refinement of behaviour and justice, are all portrayed as dysfunctional, impractical and obsolete. There is always the dream of a "pot of gold at the end of a rainbow" held out.

The dominant values so projected seek to serve "individuals" and "groups" in a system that is 'given' and 'unchanging'. In effect they negate the concept of "class" and revolutionary change recasting the parameters of the given society of unequals. Therefore <sup>they</sup> value the liberal slogan of "freedom", without concomitant adherence to "equality", and without caring to realise that freedom in an unequal world leads to more inequality, and social degradation for the "have not" classes.

The values popularised by the Western media promises the 'goodthings' in life and therefore cares for such precepts as 'entertainment', 'sensationalism', 'pornography', 'individual gratification', 'journalism of the exception', etc. It values "consumerism", and believes in the machinations of the market economy and 'acquisitive society'.

These values portray governmental role as designed to mediate the aspirations of various individuals, groups and classes, - portrayed, as it were, as a democratic, neutral agent, overlooking the class-bias of the ruling elite.

For its own ends it values altruism of a particular kind — in the perpetuation of the whiteman's burden, resulting in paternalism. It prefers the 'White' man against the 'Black' or 'coloured', and men against women.

It believes in internationalism, for a "homogenised international market" is an economic necessity. Apparently, ethno-centric solutions of the North Atlantic community are held out as "the model" for universal development and salvation:

It values such morality and ethics as are designed to serve the system — an outwardly god fearing, church going, conformist, bourgeois man. Naturally, therefore, it comes down hard and fast with labels against those who threaten the system. It values the status quo because only this can guarantee safe 'haven' to its axial beliefs and power structure — all talks are confined to issues within the system and not beyond. No wonder, systemic change is looked down upon with contempt and derided, as an unethical adventure of the naive and the wicked, possessed by the diabolical machinations of the 'communist' ghost.

'Piece-meal and fragmented social engineering' is its credo. It believes in the imperative of technological revolution and the refinement of techniques, within the parameters of the given bourgeois system.

It generates various 'myths' that go to uphold the edifice - of what is portrayed as an objective, value-neutral, plural media, 'free' from government control, that seeks to serve the needs and aspirations of the people. Examined more closely these would not bear much scrutiny, but nonetheless these are believed unflinchingly as gospel truths.

Western mediamen continue to harp on the so-called value of "objectivity", an euphemism for the uncritical acceptance of the events, news, projections and formulations given by the dominant media, whose bias is known, as "facts". Quite overlooking the more basic fact that the same events, news, projections, etc., can also be 'seen' and 'portrayed' differently by a different perspective. The situation in South Africa, Namibia, Nicaragua, Vietnam is a case in point. The perception of social reality is based on

'selectivity of facts', the angle of observation based on the existing framework of norms. There are no pure facts. Therefore to be reduced to the position of being just a collector of facts, means nothing. The essential point is interpretation, perception and projection. There is no such thing as abstract objectivity. It is therefore naive to believe that one can safely judge, comment upon and observe other cultures, without any prejudice to "objectivity". That there is manifest "ethno-centrism" in western media is sought to be unabashedly negated.

Another prime Western value shared, in different degrees and with different consequences, is a common belief in the separation of power between the media and government. "The adherence to a privately owned and 'free' press is indeed perhaps the one fully shared self-defining belief of the democratic West. It is an intellectual doctrine but also an economic precept, part and parcel of the notion of laissez-faire."<sup>5</sup>

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5 Anthony Smith, The Geopolitics of Information : How Western Culture Dominates the World (London, 1980), p.14. (Emphasis in the original).

Besides, the 'aspiration' for plural media is meant to guarantee competition, leading apparently to choice, discrimination and reliable knowledge for the masses. That this is a mere facade and an illusion, given the massive monopoly hold of a few transnationals over the whole, is so evident, that to overlook it is an exercise in futility.

The dominant values espoused by the Western mass media is in conformity with the role and purposes of the transnational corporations. Not only do they mobilise capital and technologies and transfer them to the communication market; they also market countless socio-cultural consumer goods which serve as vehicles for the dissemination of an amalgam of ideas, tastes, values and beliefs. They exert a direct influence on the economic production apparatus of the countries in which they operate, and play a significant role in commercializing their culture. They can thus modify the socio-cultural focus of an entire society.<sup>6</sup>

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6. Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.1, p.38.

In fact this power of the transnationals matches, and sometimes, because of financial clout, also outmanoeuvres that of governments. This is channelised through: (a) ownership of media and other communication means, or investment in telecommunication channels; (b) production of software and distribution of various kinds of programmes and contents; (c) advertising and marketing; and (d) various indirect ways of influencing the production of messages.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently, "the idea or vision of the world of the select few who have the political and economic privilege of disseminating ideas and images to the whole world, together with comments thereon..." determine the selection and arrangement of images. These become the very "mechanisms of thought" and since reciprocity is absent, accountability is virtually nil.<sup>8</sup>

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7 Ibid., p.118.

8 Ibid., p.150 (emphasis in the original).

In the market dominated international information and communication system the "content of communication — information or entertainment, or a mixture of the two — is treated as merchandise, marketed and sold in the same way as other commodities." Therefore, the "social service" aspect of "many communication media and vehicles has diminished, just as the quality of a large proportion of information and messages has decreased their values as a social good."<sup>9</sup> This scenario <sup>has been</sup> accentuated by the recent "advances in the field of informatics" which have accelerated the emphasis on information as a commodity through the production and services offered by data processing, data transmission and data retrieval."<sup>10</sup>

The commercial aspect is 'touted' as neces for freedom from governmental control. Some con this responsible for the Western conception of news as only that which sells. The developing n

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9. Ibid., p.152.

10 Ibid., pp.153-54.



however, consider this to be as dangerous as governmental control. The system, they feel, meets someone else's financially stronger demands and therefore news becomes entertaining and sensational.<sup>11</sup>

Of all the components, advertising deserves special mention. Critics have drawn attention to the fact that it is essentially "concerned with exalting the materialistic virtues of consumption by exploiting achievement drives and emulative anxieties, employing tactics of hidden manipulation, playing on emotions, maximizing appeal and minimizing information, trivializing, eliminating objective considerations, contriving illogical situations, and generally reducing men, women and children to the role of irrational consumer."<sup>12</sup> In fact it has become a truism now that in many societies "one of the main functions of advertising is linked to the dominant requirements of the market; to influence people to want and to buy

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11 Glen Fisher, American Communication in a Global Society (New Jersey, 1979), p.66.

12 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.1, p.154.

increasing quantities of a wide range of products. The system depends on this for its survival."<sup>13</sup>

These being the values, it is a small wonder then that the existing information and communication order works against those who are alien to such values and are forced to accept these, both through "hidden persuasion" and "open coercion". And these people constitute the bulk of humanity living in two-thirds of the world's newly liberated countries.

### (III)

#### Information and Communication Dependency

##### Structure:

That the developing countries are at the wrong end of the information and communication structure can be easily perceived if we care to analyse the dependency relationship of these countries to the given structure of dominance of the advanced capitalist countries. Herein, it is pertinent to realise that "communication is not an industry like any other. It

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13 Ibid., p.155.

intimately affects the psychological and social framework within which men and women lead their lives. Hence, the quantitative imbalance is also a qualitative imbalance..." Besides, while "there are aspects of this imbalance in most parts of the world, its effect is most marked in developing countries because of the quality of messages and the difficulty of penetrating into big news markets, as well as because their general communication capability is weak."<sup>14</sup>

Such domination is covert and exploits the situation inside the developing nations. Aided and abetted by the transnationals they seek to have a vice-like grip of the media in these nations. And, as any careful study would show, countries which have a weak base of development of local culture and its autonomy, is bound to fall a victim to Western capitalist influence and control.<sup>15</sup>

"Before World War II, the Third World countries, then under colonial rule, were completely dominated by Western culture. That cultural domination was

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14 Ibid., p.148.

15 D.R. Mankekar, Whose Freedom? Whose Order? A Plea for a New International Information Order by Third World (Delhi, 1981), pp.124-25.

largely maintained through the print media — the imperial news agencies, and books — in an ethos generated by an alien colonial elite ruling the country, supported by a native subordinate counterpart."<sup>16</sup>

But independence did not change their lot. It acquired more dangerous overtones with the structural control of the media in the developing countries. Starting off as initial capital aid for installation of new systems, the parent models were actually thrust upon them. This enabled, for example, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to retain its cultural influence over its ex-colonies and through this, maintain its economic grip.<sup>17</sup>

But hardware does not keep the fire in the media hearth burning — there is the need for software, finances, technical know-how, etc., which only the Western countries and specially, the transnationals can provide. Their offer is lapped up by governments and the elite in developing nations, who, as it were,

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16 Ibid., p.123.

17 Ibid., pp.123-24.

are bombed with fun and frolic, a la Western style.<sup>18</sup>

Concurrently, the developing nations find production costs of local programmes high and face acute technical and managerial problems. The resignation to the situation of dependence is therefore complete and 'moksha' is sought perforce in the Western way of life.

While dependence in hardware is almost total, in software, as well, it is near total. In broadcasting media it is a one way traffic from the developed to the developing countries. The reverse flow is just a mere trickle. And what is more, the flow is mostly controlled by the transnationals, usually American.<sup>19</sup> In fact, critics hold the American broadcasting media to be the most insulated and closed, with imports of software virtually nil.

It is estimated that the total foreign sales of American television programmes are between 100,000 and 200,000 programme hours per year. A third of major American exports go to Latin America.

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18 Ibid., p.128.

19 Ibid., p.123.

East Asia (including Japan, S. Korea and Taiwan) takes another third, while the rest goes to Western Europe. Others who export are UK, France and West Germany.<sup>20</sup>

The same story repeats itself in other fronts as well. Thus, in the computer front we have the American giant IBM which alone installs 70 per cent of the computers in the world and commands 50 per cent of the market.<sup>21</sup>

Besides, it is only the big agencies who can go scouting around the world in coverage of events because of their technological and financial prowess. No wonder then that the developing countries have to depend on them.<sup>22</sup>

Whenever developing countries have sought to create indigenous media they have been vexed by Western competition, either in the form of rival media products or competitive investment in the local media itself.<sup>23</sup> As it is, the economics of scale,

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20 Ibid., pp.128-29.

21 Smith, n.5, pp.133-34.

22 Manekar, n.15, p.132.

23 Smith, n.5, p.48.

distribution of products, supply of inputs, etc., all tend to favour the developed against the developing nations.

The developing countries are also dependent on the developed ones for scientific and technological information; data related to industrial, commercial, banking and trading operations; information on natural resources or climatic conditions, obtained by satellites, and so on. It is mostly monopolised there by governments, large research centres or national and transnational corporations, which can also starve countries of such requisite information. This hampers the developing nations' development plans, deprives them of vital data in many important areas, and often hampers their negotiating situation when dealing with foreign governments or transnational corporations.<sup>24</sup> But if we care to perceive carefully, this is one problem which also stares in the face of some of the developed countries as well. All the information, for example, required by the fire departments of Sweden is kept in a special database in Florida.<sup>25</sup>

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24 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.1, pp.143-44.

25 Smith, n.5, p.129.

The dependency we talk of is also accentuated by the "generation gap". The remarkable technological developments, thanks to the interplay of various factors, has been confined to a few developed nations of the West. Their monopoly threatens menacingly, resulting in an ever-widening schism between the developed and the developing countries. The contrast was aptly and picturesquely put by President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania some years back when he said: "Others are trying to reach the moon. We are trying to reach the villages."<sup>26</sup>

Dependency is also perpetuated not only through overt methods like export of products, copying of model, etc., but also covertly, through "hidden persuasion". Components of mass media, like advertising for example, greatly helps in this. The big fishes in this lake are all American. The demand for these come mostly from big transnationals. As it is favourably positioned in media revenue earnings, it often dictates the content of programmes too.<sup>27</sup>

Another important input into the dependency structure is the English language which enforces

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26 Mankar, n.15, p.2.

27 Ibid., p.124.

28 Smith, n.5, pp.58-59.



a kind of one-way flow, even if both sides are communicating. And since media products are essentially Western produced, Western values and culture are easily imbibed. It spreads values more effectively than it spreads information, and is held to be a more powerful Americanizer than hamburgers, or Coca Cola, or automobiles.<sup>28</sup>

Besides, the educational system existing, as of now, in many developing countries is a poor copy of that obtaining in the Western nations. The books read, especially at the university level, are those which come from the developed West. As in India, for example, this makes Western values, idioms, and symbols obviously appealing to the local people.

There is also the 'elite' factor involved in this. In many developing nations, the 'White Sahib' have been replaced by the 'brown' or 'black' Sahib. These elites, brought up in Western ethos, act as good carriers of Western values.

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28 Smith, n.5, pp.58-59.

Paradoxically, it was the UNESCO which in its earlier days contributed to the information dependence on West by suggesting 'minimum standards' for communication development, as the route to social transformation. Every country was to strive to provide 10 newspapers, 5 radio receivers, and 2 cinema seats for every 100 of its population. No wonder these tools of modernism broke down and the Shah of Iran's fall provides a classic example. Ironically, despite all the superficial efforts for modernisation, "an indigenous traditional information system, Shi'ite Islam, discovered itself intact at the end of a decade or more of vigorous importation of Western culture and on the crest of a wave of oil prosperity. The whole quest for modernization was rejected along with the Shah and the electronic culture, technically advanced though it was, was suddenly seen to have been an excrescence, an imposition, a conflict-bearing overseas culture which appealed to a particular Westward-leaning elite, but which had not and could not penetrate the entire culture."<sup>29</sup>

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29 Ibid., p.59.

Among the developing regions of the world the case of Latin America is the worst, so far as dependence is concerned. For long considered an American backyard it is bombarded by the American media. According to Fernando Reyes Matta, in the field of international information services, for example, it continues to be dependent on the transnational press agencies, particularly UPI and AP, for setting trends of knowledge for the public in the region. There are also continual signs of information inertia in events presentation — certain regions, countries and personalities assume dominant role in generating an information framework for reports on international relations that determines which information on foreign affairs shall be made available to the public everywhere. While the region is flooded with information that is either irrelevant or has little bearing on its future, it is ignorant of its own realities and also of what is happening in other developing regions — specially of Third World struggles for self-reliant development.<sup>30</sup>

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30 Fernando Reyes Matta, "The Information Bedazzlement of Latin America : A Study of World News in the Region", Development Dialogue (Uppsala), 2, 1976, pp.29-30. (Emphasis in the original).

It has now been observed that the transnationals are slowing down on outright ownership of media institutions in developing nations, but seek to retain control through programme sales, technology, professional models, marketing patterns, flow of entertainment material, etc. And because of increase in joint ventures between international and local capital, both private and public, foreign influence has become in many cases more forceful and more acceptable.<sup>31</sup>

All these have an effect on the larger whole - it buttresses the overall dependency of the developing countries on the Western nations and their institutions. Obviously the dependence in the field of information and communication is interlinked to the situation of economic inequality and political subjugation. In fact, the ever-increasing and relentless march of the international system towards an "informatisation of society" is an important input

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31 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.1, p.119.

into Western "technetronic" economy and "global village" polity. Each of the props of the triad are enmeshed in a mosaic that has the overall effect of guaranteeing the superiority and domination of the North over the South, of capitalist neo-colonialism on the emerging aspirations of autonomy of the developing world.

As this chapter develops, the integral links between the three structural props will become clear. It is to vindicate this contention further than an analysis of the effects of the existing information and communication order becomes imperative.

#### (IV)

##### The Malignant Effects:

The tyranny of the existing information and communication structure against the developing countries is accepted almost as a truism. Though the realisation has been late in coming, the problem has now assumed frightening proportions. To start off, it would perhaps be fit to quote the former Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who

while addressing a NAM conference said:<sup>32</sup>

In spite of political sovereignty, most of us who have emerged from a colonial or semi-colonial past continue to have rather unequal cultural and economic relationship with our respective former overlords. They often remain the main source of industrial equipment and technological guidance. The European language we speak itself becomes a conditioning element. Inadequacy of indigenous educational materials make us dependent on the books of these dominant countries, especially at the University stage. We imbibe their prejudices. Even our image of ourselves, not to speak of the view of other countries, tends to conform to theirs. The self-depreciation and inferiority complex of some people of former colonies make them easy prey to infiltration through forms of academic colonialism. This also contributes to the brain drain.

It is through observations like this that the developing countries have gradually come to realise that Western information-communication monopoly has become a sort of "intellectual occupation, leading to

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32 Inaugural Address of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, to the Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Countries on the Press Agencies Pool, New Delhi, July 1976 (Mimeographed).

a systematic undermining of the political gains achieved by the national independent movements of the 1960s and 1970s." It affects "world power in general".<sup>33</sup>

The grievances of the developing countries are both quantitative and qualitative. The harm done to them can be broadly catalogued as under:

Furtherance of Western Strategic Interests: The existing information-communication order helps maintain Western political hegemony that has played havoc with the independence and sovereignty of the developing nations. In fact, information has always played a strategic role in international politics. It is significant that decades back the hawkish American strategist, John Foster Dulles, whose crusade for American domination is well-known, had observed: "If I were to be granted one point of foreign policy

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33 Anthony Smith, "Reflections and Refractions on the Flow of Information", in, Hamza Alvi and Teodor Shanin, eds., Introduction to the Sociology of Developing Societies (London, 1982), p.422.

and no other, I would make it the free flow of information."<sup>34</sup> In simple political paraphrase it implies the right of the US dominated media to influence world public opinion to bring it in tune with the purposes of US foreign policy goals.

The much touted free media has often served the interests of American international diplomacy. According to W. Phillips Davison they have been used to create/generate/change images of different nations. And as Phillip Knightley, in The First Casualty portrays, the American media has not been immune to the rule of news coverage of conflict being determined by the national orientation of the media. Knightley says of their role in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, that they "got on side and went along with the United State Military's view of how the war should be reported."<sup>35</sup>

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34 Quoted in Herbert I. Schiller, "The Diplomacy of Cultural Domination and the Free Flow of Information", in, J.S. Yadava, ed., Politics of News : Third World Perspectives (New Delhi, 1984), p.1.

35 P. Sainath, "One-Way Traffic", in, Robert M. Crunden, ed., Traffic of Ideas Between India and America (Delhi, 1985), pp. 26,30.





In fact, James L. Tyson finds a significant sentiment in official Washington which suggests that international broadcasting if properly administered, can be one of the most cost-effective arms of foreign policy. In fiscal year 1982, for example, the total cost of United States' broadcasting efforts amounted to less than \$ 200 millions, the approximate cost of one B-1 bomber.<sup>36</sup>

It was the American defeat in Vietnam, which perhaps, more than any other single event, has contributed to change the world's image of the cultural power of America, and its recognition as a dominant force in the culture of the new nations. Conversely, it has also made America realize that its 'information presence' is all the more vital to it in validating its hold on global leadership; this in turn has made the receiving nations all the more uneasy.<sup>37</sup>

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36 James L. Tyson, US International Broadcasting and National Security (New York, 1983), p.ix.

37 Smith, n.5, p.58.

In a scathing analysis of the part played by the mass media in the context of American involvement in human rights violation in the developing nations, Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman observe that "the first principle of the free Press is the averting of the eyes from benign or constructive terror (that is sponsored by America)... In sharp contrast, countries that ordinarily evoke minimum Western interest are thrust into the limelight when "enemy" terror and the evils of Communism can be revealed ... Thus, the second principle of the Free Press is the intense of dedicated search for nefarious terror (of the opponents) ... Further devices used in handling nefarious terror ... include stripping away of historical context, fabrication, and myth creation."<sup>38</sup>

They further believe that: "The success of the Free Press in reconstructing imperial ideology since the US withdrawal from Indochina has been spectacular.

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38 Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, After the Cataclysm : Post-War Indochina : The Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology (The Political Economy of Human Rights : vol.II) (Nottingham,1979), p.295,(Words in brackets added).

The shift of the United States from casual agent to concerned bystander — and even to leader in the world struggle for human rights—in the face of its empire of client fascism and long, vicious assault on the peasant societies of Indochina, is a remarkable achievement. The system of brainwashing under freedom, with mass media voluntary self-censorship in accord with the larger interests of the state, has worked brilliantly."<sup>39</sup>

Destabilisation of the Polity of the Developing

Nations: The harm done to the polity of developing nations are many, but the emergence of modern computer and communication technologies pose a new threat to them. This is because communication technologies have become crucial in the Pentagon's command and control structures and in its formulation of war scenarios including nuclear war strategies. As C. Raja Mohan observes, the "Reagan administration, as part of its unprecedented militarization, is strengthening its military bases and communication facilities around the globe. Those countries, which

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp.299-300.

have permitted US to install communication facilities, are integrated through transborder data-flows, into US global military strategy; as a consequence they would also become targets of the rival power, in ... case of a conventional or nuclear war. The new satellite and computer technologies also facilitate detailed surveillance of the nations of the world by collecting, transmitting and processing the intelligence, secured from the numerous spy-satellites orbiting the earth..."<sup>40</sup>

Besides, great political changes in the developing countries, are interpreted in terms of Western criteria. The Iranian changeover, for example, "was reported in terms of its impact upon oil prices, jobs, the balance of world power, almost anything except its attractiveness for Iranians themselves who had endured some decades of a regime which they increasingly disliked." The Shah's oppressive regime

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40 C. Raja Mohan, "Technological Imperatives of the New Information Order", NAMEIA Souvenir (New Delhi, n.d.), p.22.

was construed as a concomitant of the modernisation process and its failures portrayed as unavoidable pitfalls in the march towards change. So much so, that the Shah's ouster came as a big surprise to many in the US. It is events like this which make the developing countries point out that "this systematic failure on the part of the Western information apparatus to comprehend the dynamic of post-colonial history has led to appalling distortions which are (or were) shared by Western diplomacy as well as the Western press. In other words, the West comes to believe its own lies and recirculate them."<sup>41</sup>

Developing nations are also given a briefing of all the "three worlds" by the same source — and fed distorted news, for example, of events like Afghanistan, tailored to suit the political and strategic interests of the Western alliance system. In a well-documented article, Fred Halliday explains how disinformation has been used to fuel the cold war in the case of Afghanistan. As he says: "That there is a terrible war, involving great suffering and loss

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41 Smith, n.33, pp.423-24.

of life, taking place in Afghanistan, no one can deny. But this has not prevented a veritable industry of falsehood, and fiction, from being created. Much of this comes from US and British diplomats in New Delhi and Islamabad. Day after day they brief sympathetic journalists who use stories allegedly coming from within Afghanistan. Casualties of Afghan government and Soviet forces are greatly exaggerated. Incidents that never happened are solemnly documented. A rough rule of thumb would be that at least two-thirds of all the news stories allegedly coming from Afghanistan via these diplomatic channels are rubbish."<sup>42</sup>

The developing countries also have tough time in developing institutional frameworks for nascent political democracy. Acquisition of political independence has taken them decades and centuries and they are now on the perilous and long road of nation-building, in order to foster and promote the spirit of national identity. This necessitates a mental, educational as well as a political revolution, which the developed European countries had experienced

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42 Fred Halliday, "American Disinformation: An Ally in US-Soviet Rivalry", Times of India (New Delhi), 28 September 1985.

earlier when they too had to go through this vital test. And in this context the "threat of sheer cultural swamping by Western information is perhaps a greater threat to sovereignty than was colonialism itself — greater but less tangible, because the pressure for it lies in institutions that no one in the West seems fully to understand, still less to control."<sup>43</sup>

The acute problems of the developing nations require deft handling, empathy and understanding. Sensational journalism can only aggravate matters as had happened in the case of the Biafran rebellion in Nigeria in the late 60s and early 70s. Such journalism contributed to the prolongation of tension, amounting to loss of countless innocent lives and threatened the very body politic of the country.<sup>44</sup>

The mass media also helps paint distorted images of country's political leanings. As Bhabani Senn Gupta observes: "Six American scholars have done

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43 Smith, n.33, p.428.

44 Manekar, n.15, pp.61-62.

serious studies of India's relations with the Soviet Union, and all of them have reached the conclusion that Moscow exercises no palpable influence on this country. Still US officialdom, the mass media community and the common American all see India as a virtual stooge of the USSR."<sup>45</sup>

"The bias inherent in the military-policy-corporate components has two levels of operation. One is the ideological bias — that of the prevailing, dominant ethos — integral to all media. The second is the conscious element of projection and image building" by vested interests.<sup>46</sup>

All these helped distort the Vietnam event, for example. Till the Tet offensive of 1968, the media helped in giving a "very sanitized, 'clean and technological' view of the war." Indeed television coverage that year helped "make the public actually supportive of the war".<sup>47</sup>

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45 Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Thank God for the Communication Gap", in, Robert M. Crunden, ed., n.35, p.13.

46 Sainath, n.35, pp.30-31, (Emphasis in the original).

47 Ibid., p.31, (Emphasis in the original).



It is also pertinent to note that software imports from Western nations have a crucial political significance — in providing key assistance in the maintenance of various ruling cliques by maintaining local social inequalities while boosting the credibility of unrepresentative governments.<sup>48</sup>

In addition, the double-standards adopted by the "prestigious free Western institutions" are well-known, and that of the BBC fresh in Indian minds. It had no qualms in giving coverage in 1984 to the secessionist Jagjit Singh Chauhan, who in the interview cried murder against a democratically elected Indian leader and her family members. The justification given was that it was to uphold the high standards of 'objectivity', though Chauhan commands virtually no following among the Sikhs in India. Later, in 1985, the BBC did not mind giving in to Mrs. Thatcher's request to cancel a television documentary featuring an interview with an alleged

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48 Smith, n.5, pp.65-66.

leader of the outlawed Irish Republic Army (IRA). That subsequently it bowed down to criticisms against its cancellation, does not detract from its appalling double-standards.

Incidentally, sensational reporting has caused anxiety even to the developed nations. So much so that in the wake of the TWA hijacking by Shi'ite militants in June 1985, Mrs. Thatcher, in a speech to the American Bar Association at the Albert Hall, lamented the media role in giving due coverage to "the terrorists", and called for "voluntary code of conduct" for the media. She also proposed to "starve the terrorist and the hijacker of the oxygen of publicity on which they depend."<sup>49</sup>

Canard against 'enemies': The socialist community of nations, because of their support of the causes of the developing nations, and also because of ideological reasons, have over the years attracted much negative

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49 Neal Ascherson, "Grappling with Terrorism : Media role in Retrospect", reproduced in the Newstime (Hyderabad), 31 July 1985.

treatment by the Western media. It is to thwart the fruition of progressive ideas that the Soviet Union and communism have come to be attacked almost obsessively, without interruption. The media is harnessed for this purpose to portray the so-called 'evil nature' of Soviet Union and communism. The pattern of "jerries" or Germans being the bad guys changed with the inclusion of the Federal Republic of Germany in NATO. They were replaced by the 'Ruskies' who have held that adverse enemy role ever since, barring a brief parole, when the bad guy mantle descended upon the "Yellow Peril" or the "Red Chinese". With the US-China equation changing with Nixons visit to Beijing, the Ruskies were once again signed for the Bad Guy role.<sup>50</sup>

The broadcasting media has been very often used for such purpose. On October 1, 1985 a US controlled broadcasting station, Radio Free Afghanistan, began its transmission. This is the fourth such specialised radio station entirely funded by America following the persisting Cold War tactics with the Soviet Union. The others are Radio Free Europe directed at the

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<sup>50</sup> Sainath, n.35, p.40.

East European countries, Radio Liberty directed against the Soviet Union, and Radio Marti, which came into existence in May 1985, and is directed against Cuba. Seldom do people know much about these radio stations, though they know of America's official international short wave radio broadcasting organization — The Voice of America.<sup>51</sup> These are used to carry on relentless campaigns against "communism" by using myths, slanders, disinformation, etc. Incidentally the 'commie-phobia' of the American media reached its nadir during the McCarthy era. It then "bucked under very badly".<sup>52</sup>

American Congressional hearings have also established another dangerous face of the Western media — their close liaison with secret services, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for example. Carl Bernstein includes AP and UPI among the most important media in America who cooperated with the CIA.<sup>53</sup>

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51 Vinset Dikshit, "This is Radio Free Afghanistan", Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 17 October 1985.

52 Sainath, n.35, pp.36 ff.

53 Manekar, n.15, p.67.

In fact, so unabashed has become the practice of some mediamen that Soldier of Fortune, an American magazine, hiked its bounty to \$ 1 million for one of the Soviet-built MI-24 helicopter being used in Nicaragua. According to its publisher Robert K. Brown, the magazine would pay \$ 1 million to the first pilot, crew member or trainer who defects from Nicaragua with one of the gunships.<sup>54</sup>

Use of labels: Labels and slanderous euphemisms are tagged on all those who oppose Western interests. Thus, we have a "Terrorist Qadhafi", a "Leftist Nyrere", a "despotic Khomeini", a "Marxist Sandinista dictatorship in Nicaragua", a "terrorist leader" Arafat, who heads a "hierarchy of terrorist organisations", a "Communist-dominated SWAPO", a "pro-Communist ANC", a "Soviet-installed Kabul regime", a "Communist-inspired Peace Movement in Europe", etc. National-liberation movements are "terrorist-movements" and the Socialist world is represented by the catchword,

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54 News Item: "Steal a Soviet Copter and Earn \$ 1 m.", Hindustan Times, 18 July 1985.

"iron-curtain". For years Jawaharlal Nehru was described as "crypto-communist", a 'woolly socialist', 'a fellow traveller', and Indira Gandhi as 'pro-Moscow'. But the descriptions are different when it comes to Israel, South Africa, and what President Carter called as, 'friendly dictators'. The Zionist Israeli regime, for example is described as "fiercely independent government". While social reconstruction in Vietnam becomes "Marxist strong-arm methods", the Pretoria racist regime's clever stone walling of world condemned apartheid becomes "dynamic reforms away from segregation". Similarly it is "Soviet made, Syrian-managed" MIGs, but when it comes to Israel they simply use Mirages, F-16s and Skyhawks.<sup>55</sup> When the Soviet Union helps Afghanistan in pursuance of its treaty relations, it is "Soviet intervention", but when America supports insurrectionary elements to promote civil war in Afghanistan, it is <sup>in</sup> "defence of human rights". And of course when the US blatantly tramples Grenada, it is "to restore democratic

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55 R. Sainath, "The Eighth Fleet : Transnational Media in and on the Developing Nations", Peace and Solidarity (New Delhi), vol.15, no.11, November 1984, pp.18-19.

institutions", to "quell anarchy and leftist thugs", and to "rebuild representative institutions".

Categorisation into 'Black and White': In Western media parlance strict categories of 'black and white' exists as absolute entities. One is either for them or against them. Thus, during Nehru's trip to the United States in 1949, at the invitation of President Truman, the first question that was asked, on his landing at New York, by an American correspondent was: "Mr. Nehru, are you with us or against us?" Nehru replied non-chalantly: "Why should I be with you or against you? Can't I be neither?" In fact the media was one of the deadliest weapons used in <sup>the</sup> Cold War, and as is evident from several official pronouncements made from Washington, the American government used it consciously and with planned purpose.<sup>56</sup>

Cult of Violence: In print media we have numerous magazines in America that deal with war, violence, combat, terror-techniques, guns, explosive,

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56 D.R. Mankar, "The Role of Media in Non-Aligned Movement", in, M.K. Saini, ed., Aspects on Non-Alignment (New Delhi, 1980), p.78.

"unconventional operations", etc., and have a combined readership that could run into lakhs. These are for and about mercenaries — the innumerable who are or would like to become soldiers of fortune, killers on hire. Most of these mercenaries are veterans of Vietnam, Rhodesia, Indo-China and other bloody wars.<sup>57</sup> And they are used for destabilisation of the developing nations that are not supportive of American policies — the Contras, for example, being used against the legal government of Nicaragua.

Furtherance of the Transnational Interest: The information and communication structure helps prop up the economic edifice of the transnational-dominated Western countries, which is fundamentally exploitative of the developing nations. It does so by responding to their pivotal concerns like defence, space exploration, energy, labour, etc. Electronics has effected a revolution in production and trade of goods including information. The twin bugbears of developed societies — labour and energy — have been

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57 For details: Praful Bidwai, "Murderers by another name", Sunday Review, Times of India, 28 July 1985.



taken care of by computers and other automation to a great degree. This helps them overcome events like the temporary "energy crisis" of the mid-70s. And to this scenario export earnings add its share; no wonder therefore that there is a mad rush for flooding the developing nations.<sup>58</sup> All these developments help thwart the move of the developing nations to break the Western vice like grip on them.

In this, modern electronics play a crucial role, in facilitating the daily operations, decision-making, planning and record keeping of the big transnationals engaged in widespread production, distribution and marketing all over the world. This gives the central management of these corporations unprecedented information for decision-making. Unhindered transborder data flow while helping these corporations, weaken the developing nations. Availability and quality of information is one of the key elements of the power of these big corporations, whose very structure is information dependent. Their ability to appropriate

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58 J.S. Yadava, "Introduction", in self ed., n.34, p.xxviii.

information is possibly as important as their R & D capacity and the control they exercise over markets and technology.<sup>59</sup>

The media also creates a congenial atmosphere for Western economic agencies by conditioning the mind of the people in the developing countries, for their acceptance. Indeed, as D.R. Mankekar puts it, in the 19th century flag followed trade, today trade follows media.<sup>60</sup> The media also helps disseminate "corporate mythology" that is directed, not to arouse, but to lessen concern about social and economic realities — to halt, impede and hopefully reverse, social and economic transformations.<sup>61</sup>

Media Constraints in the Economic Upliftment of the Developing Nations: According to Herbert I. Schiller, the "concentrated control of information by Western monopolies has created enormous difficulties for those seeking economic self-determination and political autonomy... information

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59 Raja Mohan, n.40, p.21.

60 Mankekar, n.4, p.50.

61 Sainath, n.55, p.21.

management for years permitted the dominating centers to ignore or misrepresent the Third World demands for new economic and cultural-informational arrangements."<sup>62</sup>

Further, as S.C. Parasher points out, the Western media orients mind in a way contrary to the values of a country. A struggling economy is faced with rising expectations from a Western style, which it cannot hope to fulfil. This then leads to rising frustrations, and causes destabilisation of the national economy, culture and institutions.<sup>63</sup>

As example of the crass bottom level to which the Western media can stoop in defence of status quo and against developing nations, is to be had in its coverage of the UNCTAD-V meet in Manila in June 1979. As P. Sainath says, "Several issues of crucial importance to the developing nations were for the first time coherently and concretely formulated and raised, many of which led to specific demands

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62 Herbert I. Schiller, "Whose New International Economic and Information Order?", in, Nge Manh-Lan, ed., Unreal Growth : Critical Studies in Asian Development, vol.I, (Delhi, 1984), p. 80.

63 S.C. Parasher, "New World Information Order", India Quarterly (New Delhi), vol. XXXIX, no. 2, April-June 1983, p. 180.

for international economic justice from the West. Days before the meet, the TICs launched a furious campaign of ridicule against UNCTAD-V. Unauthenticated — sometimes purely fabricated — stories appeared, describing how Third World delegates were found asleep at the conference hall because they had indulged in some "fun" with Filipino hospitality girls the previous night ... and ended up labelling the gathering as FUNCTAD-V." No such stories were carried before or during meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, also held in Manila, probably because the duo represented and articulated Western interests.<sup>64</sup>

Distortion of, and in coverage of, the Societies

of the Developing Nations: The developing countries, because of weak standing, have to content with what is given — never for them a say in what they ought to be given. The standard transnational reply till recently was that they could not do anything significant as it was not economically viable. In fact,

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64. Sainath, n.55, p.17.

Keith Fuller, President of AP, unabashedly proclaimed: "Our basic aim is to supply an objective news report for the American-papers that own us. They pay the bills and we are in business to cover the news for them."<sup>65</sup>

An appalling effect of the dependency on trans-nationals has been that there is a communication and knowledge gap between countries of the same region, say between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Because they are fed by the Western agencies they know more about the Western metropolitan countries than about their own neighbours.<sup>66</sup> Information, like trade, follows a north-south direction, thereby curtailing development of exchanges between the developing countries themselves.<sup>67</sup>

A classic case of neglect of one's own regional interest is that of the coverage of the granting of independence to Surinam by the Latin American media.

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65. Mankekar, n.15, p.36.

66 Ibid., p.43.

67 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.1, p.145.

Not a single paper of the continent sent a correspondent to cover the event. On 26 November 1975, not one Latin American paper even carried Surinam's independence story on its front page, and the world famous Brazilian daily, O Estado, which published it in an inside page, reflected the view of American journalism (which originated the material), that Surinam was incapable of governing herself and had racial conflicts looming up.<sup>68</sup>

To come back to advertising media again, it may be mentioned that it "is seen by many as a threat to the cultural identity and self-realization of many developing countries : it brings to many people alien ethical values; it may deviate consumer demands in developing countries to areas which can inhibit development priorities; it affects and can often deform ways of life and life-style."<sup>69</sup> According to Noreene Janus and Rafael Roncagliolo, advertisements constitute a parallel and nonofficial development programme.<sup>70</sup>

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68 Smith, n.5, pp.71-72.

69 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.1, p.111.

70 Noreene Janus and Rafael Roncagliolo, "Advertising, Mass Media and Dependency", Development Dialogue, 1, 1979, p.95.

The importance of countries has also been conditioned by historical, cultural and linguistic patterns. "Many small countries, in spite of their economic strength and cultural level, are largely ...neglected by many information media. Important events and valuable achievements (scientific, economic, cultural) are often unknown, only because they happen in smaller countries or areas which do not attract world attention." The one-way flow is based on links from former colonial periods and surviving economic ties, as well as on cultural and language influences.<sup>71</sup>

A generational gap with the developing countries is also a source of strain. The positing of old and new cultures as a result of the influence of the mass media has deleterious effects. While old values are swamped and destroyed, new ones remain unstable and do not take hold. As Frantz Fanon notes in the African context, "... the impressionability and sensibility of the young African are at the mercy of the various assaults made upon them by the very nature of Western culture. His family very often proves itself incapable

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71 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.1, p.145.

of showing stability and homogeneity when faced with such attacks."<sup>72</sup>

The media have fostered such norms and traditions that their domination are widespread. One comes across, in Asia and Africa, elite populations who fringe the capital and regional centres that have undergone the process of "modernization" and have become indoctrinated to Western cultural ethos. Western mass culture has become "Third World" elite culture, resulting in an alienation from the general mass, presenting appalling cultural problems for them and their children, de-rooting them from ethnic culture, and doling them a peripheral role in the West centred cultural milieu.<sup>73</sup>

In a well documented study of international press agencies, Juan Somavia holds that distortion is a regular feature of international information agencies. This does not necessarily lead to false presentation of events, but also to arbitrary selection and slanted evaluation of reality.

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72 Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (Harmondsworth, 1985), p.158.

73 Smith, n.33, p.2426.



According to Somavia it is variously expressed thus:<sup>74</sup>

1. "Overemphasizing events that have no real importance..."
2. "Putting isolated facts together and presenting them as a whole without this 'whole' ever having existed ('making' news)..."
3. "Misrepresentation by implication, characterized by the presentation of facts in such a way that the implicit conclusions to be drawn from them are favourable to the interests of the transnational system..."
4. "Distortion by 'preconditioning' of events. Facts having a specific dimension are presented in such a way that unfounded fears and misgivings are created, conditioning future action on the part of individuals, companies, societies, groups and governments."

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74 Juan Somavia, "The Transnational Power Structure and International Information: Elements of a Third World Policy for Transnational News Agencies", Development Dialogue, 2, 1976, pp.20-21.

"UPI filed the following dispatch on  
27 February 1974:

New York, February 27, (UPI) —  
A meeting of a number of the main  
bauxite producing countries scheduled  
tentatively for March 5 in Conakry  
(Guinea) has caused understandable concern  
in Washington. Some experts feel that  
the conference could be the first step  
in the establishment of a series of  
international cartels for controlling  
raw materials essential to the industria-  
lized nations which could set the United  
States' economy back more than 40 years.

... this creates the image in industrialized countries  
that the increasing organizational capacity of raw  
material producing countries is a 'threat' to their  
development."

"It is inferred that it is 'legitimate' for  
the industrialized countries to defend themselves  
and to seek by all the means at their disposal to  
obstruct the organizational capacity of the Third  
World. At the same time, the cable warns the count-  
ries... that Washington's concern is 'understandable'  
and that, consequently if they should come to an  
agreement on bauxite, it would be logical that  
reprisals might be forthcoming."

5. "Distortion also by silence, by failure to report on situations that are no longer of interest to the agencies' home countries."

The entertainment industries have also created, generated and perpetuated stereotypes — 'blacks' as violent, Arabs as over-sexed, the "yellow races" as vicious, still others as "primitive", the Soviets as "conspirators" and the rest as "lazy". Stereotypes have a way of taking root; some of these developed in wartime as anti-enemy propaganda, were lapped up by the post-war movies, and soon they became integral parts of the process. Reason and analysis thus came to be substituted for by Pavlovian responses to stereotypes. By constant repetition, they could be internalized by the target audience as self-evident truths.<sup>75</sup>

It is believed that the mass audience of the industrialized world has become conditioned to a view of the non-industrialised world which is in

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75 Sainath, n.35, p.39.

itself exploitative, patronizing and distorted. This audience is so powerful an agent in itself, shaping the international machinery which gathers and shapes information, that its appetite for 'wrong' or ill-judged information about the Third World is self-feeding and self-sustaining. No wonder, when this hampers the economic interests of the developing nations, the institutions that perpetuate such stereotypes should be criticised.<sup>76</sup>

The developing nations are also piqued by the step-motherly attitude displayed in sending few and often non-specialist correspondents and reporters to cover events and happenings. This is also alleged to be a cause of distorted image, held of these countries.

As a result of all these, the other side of the picture is hidden. As a senior official of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Narinder Aggarwala points out, development news is hardly ever given coverage — that, for example, India is self-reliant in food production, is the eighth

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76 Smith, n.5, p.15.

Largest industrial country, etc. The stress is on such populist items as disasters, electoral conflicts, problems of public and social life, etc.<sup>77</sup> The Bulletin issued by the Indian Embassy in Belgrade (dated November 1976), quoted Mohammed Yunus, a special envoy of the then Indian Prime Minister; to the effect that the developing nations have to pay millions and millions of rupees to the Western countries to be told lies about themselves.<sup>78</sup>

Another strange facet is the publication of purely fabricated newstories in bold headlines and given a solus position. Later, under pressure, a denial is issued, which is tucked away inside somewhere and thus remains incognito. This has the dampening effect of spreading false images.

The problem is the otherway round too. As Krishan Sondhi pertinently points out, the developing countries get a wrong impression of the Western

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77 Smith, n.33, pp.425-26.

78 As quoted in Dragan Bartolevic, "The Contemporary World, Underdeveloped Countries and Communication: In Favour of a NIIO", Socialist Thought and Practice (Beograd), vol.XIX, no.3, March 1979, p.57.

world because of the impact of the giant multi-nationals and the glitter of the cinema world. Thus, a person from the developing world is deprived "of two important elements in the developed world:

(i) commonness in terms of the suffering of humanity and (ii) knowledge of idealistic movements in the West which are concerned with such global deprivation."<sup>79</sup>

Intellectual Slavishness: Even in the intellectual arena, in diplomacy and in international relations and even in appraising one's own political system and performance, concepts, models paradigms and tools, crafted mostly in the developed nations have been used by the developing countries. In the field of social science, the effect of behavioural science is pervasive. In international politics, concepts of balance of power, national interest, bi-polarity, systems analysis, etc., are favourite. In political science concern has been developed more for interest groups and pressure groups, rather than Marxist concepts of class-struggle and class conflict. In sociology,

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79 Krishan Sondhi, Problems of Communication in Developing Countries (New Delhi, 1981) p.252.

equilibrium and stasis have become central concerns; and in India 'caste' has become the focal point in sociological analysis.<sup>80</sup>

Problems posed by Scientific Developments: Electronics pose a host of additional problems for the developing countries. The increase in use of modern computers and such technologies for circulating information, makes it more difficult for the developing nations to participate in the intellectual life of the late 20th century. New electronic information services have the effect of hijacking indigenous information for being processed in the United States or by its companies. Transborder data flows, satellite-borne message systems, etc., result in "a giant pipette sucking information out of the weaker societies". Remote sensing technologies, because of skewed possession, enable the possessors to garner all information required of the developing countries, resulting in these countries being rendered vulnerable to the transnationals who wish to exploit their resources. There are, besides, devices like the Satellite Business System (SBS) which threaten the indigenous control of local business.<sup>81</sup>

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80 Sen Gupta, n.45, pp.17-18.

81 Smith, n.33, p.427.

The 'right to privacy' and even the 'right not to know' is threatened by technological revolutions. Computers at AP in New York process 15,000 words a minute. And dealing with these further requires computers.<sup>82</sup> All these can only lead to an informational trussing up of the developing nations.

The new technologies are both multiplying the dangers and as well increasing the number of territories subject to it. As Leonard Marks, former director of the US Information Agency (USIA) observed:

... global electronic networks...will pose realistic questions about information-flow and cultural integrity... These networks will move massive amounts of information through high-speed circuits across national boundaries. Moreover, they will be effectively beyond the reach of the traditional forms of censorship and control. The only way to 'censor' an electronic network moving ... 648 million bits per second is literally to pull the plug. The international extension of electronic mail transmission, data-packet networks and information - bank retrieval systems in future years will have considerably more effect on national cultures than any direct broadcast systems.<sup>83</sup>

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82 Mankekar, n.15, p.31.

83 Quoted in Smith, n.5, p.57.



Developing countries need protection of their intellectual ethos and copyright laws to oversee the flow back of wealth accruing from their products. They also require access to Western information stores which are controlled under copyright laws by the originating countries. Apparently, the laws which are detrimental to their interests are now being challenged by the developing nations, so that they too can thrive in the intellectual arena.<sup>84</sup>

Harm done to Media of the Developing Nations: The structural control, the one-sided flow of hardware and software materials, and attendant features have already been discussed. That the Western agencies possess the opportunity to filter most of the news and give them their version of 'slant' and buffet all this with ethno-centric background-information, has also been dwelt upon. To round off the picture it would perhaps be pertinent to mention a few points in passing.

Paradoxical as it might seem, we have, as Jean d' Arcy puts it, been "conditioned" to accept

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84. Smith, n.33, pp.426-27.

a one-way top-down vertical flow as something both normal and inevitable. This only helps in gearing us to considerations of quantity only—in improving quantitatively the various mass media in the developing countries.<sup>85</sup>

Besides, the dependency on imported models of information and communication structure have led to a periphery-satellite relationship, even within the periphery. Thus it has been found that even national broadcasting disfavours rural populations in many countries. Surveys have pointed out that this is a common phenomenon in almost all components of the mass-media.<sup>86</sup>

It is all these that have led Elihu Katz and George Wedell in their celebrated study of broadcasting in the Third World to demonstrate the need for these countries to evolve their own models rather than attempt in transplanting those of the West. In their study of the establishment of

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85 Jean d' Arcy, "The Right to Communicate", Background Paper, no.36 (prepared for the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems) (Paris, 1979).

86 Many Voices, One World: Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.1, pp.123ff.

television in the 1950s, specially in the developing nations, they discovered a vast array of exaggerated hopes, self-defeating political goals, competition between departments of government and general unpreparedness. Country after country has abandoned these structures which were set up after independence, to house the broadcasting media.<sup>87</sup>

Deflection of the demands of the Developing Countries:

It is a favourite hobby-horse of Western media-men to denounce all developing nations' demand without any fair and critical examination. The reaction to the demand for a NWICO is a clear example of this approach and attitude. They have paraded slogans of "censorship", "propaganda", "governmental control", "denial of freedom", etc., against the evolving concept of NWICO; while the fact is that, NWICO is envisaged precisely to overcome these very impediments. As Mankekar observes, they see 'regulations' only in developing nations, not in theirs. The fact is that even in the United States there is the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Fairness Doctrine, and such similar bodies

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87 Elihu Katz and George Wedell, Broadcasting in the Third World (London, 1978).

in Britain and other parts of Western Europe, established to regulate broadcasting media.<sup>88</sup> They fail to realise that the parameters of the mass media will have to be defined realistically in terms of financial and institutional situations, and in consonance with national and strategic interests.

Further, any attempt at creating alternative institutions, howsoever fledgling, is immediately sought to be strangulated by the established Western vested interests through criticism, and <sup>in</sup> other ways. Thus the news agencies pool of the non-aligned nations has been dubbed as a "handmade" of "tinpot Third World dictatorships". Mort Rosenblum, a former editor of the International Herald Tribune thus said: "many (Third World) leaders use such devices as newspools and development journalism as a convenient means to muzzle criticism and hide their own shortcomings."<sup>89</sup>

Till very recently, it was even sacrilege to say that something was wrong with the existing (dis)order. Of late, however, because of relentless

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88 Mankekar, n.15, p.17.

89 As quoted in Sainath, n.55, p.21.

campaign, even hardened critics, like the Freedom House representative, Leonard R. Sussman for example, have come to acknowledge inequity in the present structure.<sup>90</sup>

In fact, the very questioning of the credentials of the UNESCO by the Western governments and other vested interests reveal their true colour. Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow the UNESCO Chief rightly pointed out, that the maelstrom of controversy surrounding the UN body was deprived of political dimensions because of distorted press coverage. He also drew attention to the personalisation of the whole debate and the wrong attribution of the responsibility for the present dead-end in international relations and multi-lateral cooperation on the developing countries. As he pointed out, a "strategy of rumour" has been used and "facts invented", some by delegates within UNESCO, to focus the debate on personalities, rather than on political dimensions of the agency and its critics.<sup>91</sup>

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90 See for example Leonard R. Sussman, "The March Through the World's Mass Media", Orbis (Philadelphia), Winter 1977, pp. 857-79.

91 News Item: "UNESCO Chief attacks press for distorted reports", Patriot (New Delhi) 17 February 1985.

The total effect then is one of unadulterated stultification of the developing nations' legitimate rights, genuine demands and due dignity. It helps keep the developing nations in bondage, and in thwarting their creativity, cultural innovation and socio-economic dynamism. The issue therefore overflows the bounds of academic research and enters the domain of international policy concerns.

Seen against this background, the clamour of the developing nations for a change in the information-communication order appears totally justified. But then reality does not easily yield to rational solutions. And it is this that makes the whole situation so much more complex, and bewildering.

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Chapter-IV

IMPEDIMENTS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NWICO

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## (I)

The Imbroglia:

The arguments and analysis provided in the preceding three chapters underline the validity of the case for a NWICO. Yet, darkness looms large. While many believe in the necessity of a NWICO — as a sine qua non for real independence and democratisation of international information and communication — the progress towards this direction has received a setback in recent years. A clear sign of this is to be had in the six-week long 23rd Session of the General Conference of the UNESCO in Sofia (Bulgaria), in 1985. Given the virulent attack of the developed West the Session had to perforce give in; it was compelled to hold in abeyance the rhetorical demand for the establishment of a NWICO.

The blistering attack of the Western vested interests has succeeded in impairing the main logic



and thrust of the developing nations. It has been made to appear that the developing nations are out to stifle media freedom and that the UNESCO has aided and abetted this "nefarious design" by acting as a mid-wife. Apparently, the voice of the developing nations has been stifled. Now, therefore, we have demands for piece-meal advancements and not a whole-some and full-fledged proposal for<sup>a</sup> NWICO.

Not only that, vigorous and dramatic efforts have been made from time to time to thwart the very existence of the UNESCO. Consequent on the withdrawal of the US, UK and Singapore, and the continuing threat to do so by a few more obliging surrogates, the UNESCO had to adopt a zero-growth budget for the current year, 1986-87. Together with this, it had to undertake so-called in-house reforms and backtrack on many developmental schemes.

The progress in the direction of a NWICO is also stalled because of the inherent weaknesses of the developing nations — lack of adequate infrastructure, financial constraints, etc. — which, as explained before, are primarily a result of the dynamics

of the interplay of the dominant international political and economic structures.

The present information and communication structure is a product of and has itself extended the historical relationships obtaining between the 'active' and the 'passive' civilizations, between the imperial power and dependent <sup>Empire,</sup> exploiting and the exploited.

The prosperous nations of the North have not come to terms with the fact that they are now being obliged to be themselves 'observed', as the relative political status of the great power blocs is beginning to change. "They are insisting upon their cultural prowess, even where their economic and political power has been diminished, it is this which has suddenly made developing countries aware of how dependent they had been..."<sup>1</sup> and, one might add, are.

There has to be a change, then, towards a new order, that ensures democratisation of international

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Smith, The Geopolitics of Information: How Western Culture Dominates the World (London, 1980), p.175.

information and communication — democracy as understood in the wide sense of the term.

But the dynamics of life and living does not yield to strait-jacket linear solutions. It is therefore difficult to speak of rational and mathematically neat solutions since the problem is not mathematical, but historical. Juan Somavia is perhaps correct when he says that a NWICO is inevitable, that its mandate lies in history; or, as he cogently puts it: "...the world can neither fight nor long resist an idea whose time has come... the time has come for the liberation of the Third World from its internal and external bondages and that intellectual self-reliance will assure the success of that struggle."<sup>2</sup> The situation at present is however bleak. The prospect of a NWICO being established seems to be plagued with problems.

In the ensuing two sections the hypothetical contention that the manifold problems of the developing countries on the one hand, and the policies of the developed countries, predicated on the maintenance of

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2. Juan Somavia, "International Communication and Third World Participation", Development Dialogue (Uppsala) 2, 1977, p.139.

the status quo, on the other, impedes the emergence of a NWICO, would be analysed. This should help explain the impasse.

(II)

The Problems of the Developing Nations:

It is a common attitude of many media pundits to see the problems of the developing countries in a partial manner. This makes their analysis hollow. Unless a holistic perspective informs an analysis it cannot be complete, as well as, objective. This being the credo, the problems that face the developing nations, in the establishment of a NWICO has to be seen in a larger perspective — in the dynamics of political and economic life. It is this holistic perspective again which can explain the counter-offensive of the Western camp cogently.

Informed by such a perspective, the problems of the developing countries can be stated as under:

(I) Structural Problem: The analysis provided in the preceding three chapters explains clearly the

malaise that has been created by structural constraints. An important aspect of this is that decolonisation has not meant severance of ties so far as centre-periphery relationships are concerned. Political ties continue not only with the extension of 'borrowed support' to illegitimate and unsteady 'Third World' regimes, but also through strategic and military tie-ups. Economically the Bretton Woods-GATT international economic regime continues to hold sway over the globe. Based as it is on inequitable economic relations, the developing nations are at the wrong end of the process which ensures their continued dependence on the 'centre' powers. At the cultural and ideological level, the borrowed ideas, media structures and equipments — both hardware and software — and, above all, the transformation of the world into a 'global village', have led to a situation where the developing nations carry the ideas of the developed nations in their head, in many cases. The signal role in this structural linkage is played by the transnational corporations which help in perpetuating the insidious potentialities of a 'global village'.

This gives lie to the argument of those who believe that the problems of the developing nations are fully self-created. The argument in the West that "... if the Third World has no 'good order in news flow', they should blame their rulers, and not the West and the US",<sup>3</sup> is therefore not tenable.

Besides, the replacement of 'White Sahibs' by 'Brown Sahibs', has in many cases led to structural continuity — leading to virtually not much change in policy making, etc. Western orientation and the English language makes them an integral part of the Western camp.

Thus, the bug-bear of structural linkage is no mere rhetoric; it has existential effects, as well. This is also seen in the successful counter-offensive launched by the West against the demand for a NWICO, since it threatens the exploitative status-quo. It is this structural linkage again which explains as to why a continued and continuous struggle needs to be waged on all the three fronts — political, economic and cultural-ideological. Many other problems of the

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3 S.P. Singh, "UNESCO in Crisis", Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 13 June 1985.

developing nations can be seen as resulting from this focal problem.

(II) Social Structure and the Problem of Nation-Building in the Developing Countries: The developing countries have before them the onerous task of nation-building, having gained their independence in the last few decades. This is too short a span in the life of a nation for effective stability and consolidation of nationhood. As it is, most of the developing countries are beset with problems of nation-building -- financial, technological, economic, social and political, etc. Primary services like health facilities, clean drinking water, subsistence wages, education, etc., are eluding many a people in these nations. Added to these is the prevalence of primordial values.

Many nations are, and have been, eking out a critical existence; often their very survival is at stake. More than twenty countries in the sub-Saharan Africa, as of now, are faced with appalling drought situations leading to large scale starvation deaths, running into thousands.

What all these portend for the information and communication sector ought to be clear. Resources being scarce, they cannot obviously be directed towards the information and communication sector. Nor does it get priority attention.

This makes these countries victim of either a lack of information or of being bamboozled by the Western media. Incidentally, we have examples of Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola being available at places where no clean drinking water is available. Apparently, it is a situation of being, "so far from God and so close to the United States".<sup>4</sup>

The problem is compounded as these nations sink deeper in the mire of the Western financial institutions and Western transnationals. This has thrown up for some the essential issue of the survival of the country's sovereignty itself.

(III) Infrastructural Problems: What to talk of matching the West, many developing nations lack basic

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4 Glen Fisher, American Communication in a Global Society (New Jersey, 1979), p.75.



infrastructure in communications. Not to speak of satellites, advanced computers and telecommunications, these countries in some cases even lack basic amenities like news agencies, transmitter sets, etc. Till about 1982, according to Pero Ivacic, about 20 non-aligned countries did not have their own news agencies.<sup>5</sup> The situation has not improved much since.

A cogent analysis provided by the MacBride Commission show that the malaise is very deep in this regard. Some countries, particularly the developing areas lack enough data making it difficult for policy planners to choose between options or quantify infra-structural requirements. Unnecessary experiments and reliance on alien models is, therefore, resorted to. Besides, the high sophistication and capital intensity involved in communication equipments make it well nigh impossible for many countries to undertake selection and production of such equipments. No wonder then that dependence on selected production centres is the rule of the game. Further, equipments being

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5 Pero Ivacic, "Foreword" to News Pool of Non-Aligned Countries : A Perspective (New Delhi, 1983), p.6.

multipurpose — satellites, for example — the effect is felt in other areas too. The pervasive impact of all these deprivation is therefore acute.<sup>6</sup>

(IV) Financial Problems: "Whining about the harm the Western economic and cultural agencies are causing will do us no good: they have got the money and their money speaks their language."<sup>7</sup> This about sums up the dilemma of the developing nations. As it is, in terms of annual per capita GNP, 77 of the de-colonised countries are categorised as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). 6 of these are at the bottom rung with less than \$ 100, while 71 are in the range of \$ 101 to 1000. About 28 have a per capita income between \$ 1001 to 10,000, and only 3 account for a per capita of more than \$ 10,000 per annum. Of the 11 most populous States of the developing world, 6 are categorised as "poorest of the poor", 3 as "poor" and 2 "remain in what might be called the penumbra of misery and hope".<sup>8</sup>

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6 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow (being the Final Report of the International Commission for the Study of Communications Problems) (New Delhi, 1982), pp.213-14.

7 Editorial - "Money Speaks", Patriot (New Delhi), 12 August 1982.

8 Rasheeduddin Khan, "New Global Leviathans", to be published in the World Focus.

Even if other things are perfect — proper socio-political climate, communication goals and policies, etc., — funds for communication development pose a problem. Apparently, many developing countries have no more than a Hobson's choice — i.e., it is between a governmental media or no media at all.<sup>9</sup> This has led to situations in some countries in which unpopular regimes, in order to curb dissent and quell rebellion, have effectively sealed off all avenues available for such activities by curbing the mass media in various ways. This has given the necessary excuse to Western critics to smell rat in the demand for a NWICO by the developing countries.

Coupled with this are the problems of the prohibitive cost of newsprint, high communication tariffs, etc., which pose problem for wider dissemination of news within and among countries. It is to ease this situation that the first ever conference of Information Ministers of the Non-Aligned countries in New Delhi, 1976, deliberated on the issue and

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9 D.R. Mankekar, Whose Freedom? Whose Order? A Plea for a New International Information Order by Third World (Delhi, 1981) p.ix.

called for concession on telecommunication rates.

Incidentally, Rohan Samarajiva, in an incisive study of the news agency scene, points out that the ... "examination of economies of replication, pricing policies, market control and diversification reveals that the world market in news is characterized by significant barriers to entry. Entry under free market conditions would entail large and continuing losses for a considerable, or even indefinite, length of time."<sup>10</sup>

Financial constraints affects the UN even, in disseminating information properly. As Mr. Isusha Ikashi, Assistant Secretary General-in-charge of Information to UN headquarters, disclosed rather revealingly : an information office of a Super Power at the UN headquarters in New York spends ten-fold more on its information services than the entire annual budget of \$ 30 million earmarked for the global information services of the UN.<sup>11</sup>

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11 Rohan Samarajiva, "Third World Entry to News Market : Problems and Possible Solutions", Mainstream (New Delhi), vol.XXIII, no.28, 9 March 1985, p.41.

12 News Item: "New Information Order -- Realities", Patriot, 22 July 1985.

The clout displayed by money is therefore understandable.

(V) Technological Problems: The communication arena is one where sophisticated technology rules the roost. The information and communication revolution that has unfolded a battery of scientific equipments, has thrown the developing nations into an even deeper morass. These nations are starved of technology because of a variety of reasons. As has been documented above, advanced technology remains a monopoly of the rich West. Thus, in the UN Conference on Technical Cooperation in Buenos Aires, 1978, the participants, not without substance, identified the United States and other industrially advanced countries for their "technological colonialism", i.e., to use it for making the developing nations more dependent on them.<sup>12</sup>

Besides, technology is not value-neutral, less so is its use. Dilemma regarding options therefore arises. And considering the volume of information

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12 S. Golyakov, "Crooked Mirror of International Imperialism", New Times (Moscow) 43, October 1978, p.22.

produced, the risk of manipulation increases considerably. This is a problem which affects, not only the developing nations but also the industrialised ones many a time. Coupled with this is the problem of standardization in the manufacture of equipments and materials. This serves as an effective handicap to regional cooperation. Concurrently, the rate and extent of the sometimes sudden changes which most modern technologies bring about, have in cases, acted as a factor of disruption and destabilization in developing countries.<sup>13</sup>

(VI) Unequal Development of Mass Media: Development has followed a lopsided path in many developing countries. In the field of information and communication this has led to a situation where the modicum of facilities that exist are concentrated in urban areas at the cost of the rural areas. Growth, failing to match the increase in population, is arrested and the weaker sections of the society in these countries get a very raw deal. The situation is worsened because of the lack of desirable policy decisions, rampant

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13 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.6, pp.215-16.

administrative inefficiency and lack of resources. Following the pattern in other sectors of the society women continue to get a raw deal — their needs in print or broadcast media are inadequately met.<sup>14</sup>

(VII) Absence of R&D: Research and development hardly exist in many developing nations. A multiplicity of factors — low scientific base, patent laws, financial problems, wrong policies, etc., — preclude any R&D worth the name. The little R&D that exist is repetitive, costly and hardly capable of delivering the goods. No wonder then that the rich 'North' remain the main innovators. More than 90 per cent of the technicians and scientists work for the developed countries and more than 90 per cent of the research activities take place in the rich world.<sup>15</sup> Besides, the developing countries lose the best of their technocrats, scientists and medicos to the developed countries, because of the problem of "brain-drain". Since the latter are able to offer higher incomes and better facilities, than is available in the former, there has been a one-way flow of "brain". According to Mr. K.R. Narayanan, Minister

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14 Ibid., p.123.

15 Alcira Argumedo, "The New World Information Order and International Power", Journal of International Affairs (New York), vol.35, no.2, Fall/Winter, 1981/2, p.186.

of State for External Affairs, India lost \$ 175 million worth "brain" because of migration of intellectuals to other countries of the world.<sup>16</sup>

This explains why the developing nations fail in generating their own novelty and get out of the rut of the hold of Western technology.

(VIII) Lack of Proper Communication Policies: Naive belief in the Western development models have spelled havoc for many<sup>a</sup> developing country so far as their information and communication structure is concerned. The borrowed model has heightened people's expectations and made them pliant tools in the hands of the rulers. The belief in the "trickle-down" theory has led them to disastrous paths. Thus, the "result have been far from what was expected; today it is acknowledged that these theories in developing countries have produced greater benefits for the more advanced sectors of the community than to its more marginal sectors and that the gulf between rich and poor is not decreasing."<sup>17</sup>

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16 News Item: "Need to Stop Brain-Drain<sup>?</sup> Stressed", Indian Express (New Delhi), 24 June 1986.

17 Many Voices, One World : Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow, n.6, pp.204-05.



The institutional and structural framework relating to the role of state in communications, amount of freedom desirable and the role of professionals, etc., also leaves much to be desired. Clear-cut direction is often not perceivable. Often what exists in paper is not translated into practice.

(IX) Professional Training: The phrase : it is ultimately the men who make or mar ideas and policies, applies to the field of information and communication too. Sadly enough professional training is lacking, in a number of developing countries. In many countries of Asia and Africa, according to the MacBride Commission, mass-media studies have been introduced only in the last few years. One ray of hope here is the case of Latin America, where the scene is not so dismal. There, almost all countries have at least one institution which provides such training; and most of them are associated with universities.<sup>18</sup>

(X) Lack of Communications Research: Till lately, communications research has been undertaken in only a few industrialised countries of the world. The

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.231.

developing countries have been lacking in this regard and been therefore dependent on external sources, which very often do not answer their basic needs. A host of problems have prevented the developing countries from undertaking meaningful communications research and the few researchers available, have failed to deliver the goods — they had been trained abroad, which precluded their clear grasp of the domestic requirements. There is also imbalance in the different facets covered by research — a meaningful balance and definition of crucial areas is badly lacking.<sup>19</sup>

(XI) Problems of International Assistance: Faced with the overall economic crisis in recent years — what with recession plaguing many advanced industrialised countries, international assistance has waned. Multilateral assistance is being cut by the advanced industrialised countries — they are resorting more and more to bilateral assistance and tagging on such aid to their perceived strategic and other political considerations.

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19. Ibid., pp.224-25.

In general, aid and assistance is provided on ad hoc basis, and is sporadic and poorly integrated into the overall developmental plans, thereby making a mockery of cooperative efforts. Communications sector is neglected in comparison to other sectors, and anyhow it is not regarded as a priority matter. For example, the loans and credits provided for telecommunications development by the World Bank upto the fiscal year 1978 amounted to approximately 3 per cent of total Bank lending since 1960. Besides, many funding institutions are reticent in supporting general communication projects — such projects are outside the priorities of organisations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, and wholly outside those of regional development banks and the many institutions supplying bilateral assistance.<sup>20</sup>

Further, with the withdrawal of the United States and the United Kingdom from the UNESCO, this important UN agency has been hit hard. The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) therefore falls far short of the burgeoning demand of

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20 Ibid., pp.219-22.

the developing countries. This can be construed as an attempt on the part of some industrialised countries to move away from multilateral cooperation.<sup>21</sup> Such postures portend ill for the developing nations.

(XII) The Problem of the Deepening Effect: Last but not the least is the problem of the deepening effect. According to this logic, dependency leads to more dependency and inequality to more inequality. This is a historical phenomenon which has continued over the years. What Cheryl Payer in her study,<sup>22</sup> of debts making countries more debted, analyses, is applicable to various area of relationships.

It is in this context that talks veering round the proposition of matching the developed West, etc., sometimes seem futile. By the time the developing nations hope to reach upto the present level of the developed countries, the latter would have gone much further ahead. As a result the gap would widen. This is accentuated if one continues to be a victim

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21 Dileep Padgaonkar, "Debate on World Information Order", Times of India (New Delhi), 11 March 1986.

22 Cheryl Payer, Debt Trap: The IMF and the Third World (New York, 1974).

of the dependency structure and does not seek to sever the dependency equation with the 'centre'. The problem facing the developing countries are therefore multi-pronged. What is important is that a running thread of connection should be seen among all these factors.

(III)

The Reaction of the Western World:

Wearing the "holier than thou" mantle the vested interests in the Western world have succeeded in thwarting the progress towards a NWICO. Portraying themselves as the messiahs of innocent virtues, charged with the onerous task of upholding truth and objectivity, they have succeeded in painting the demands of the developing nations in dismal colours. As in a set-piece populist movie, the developing nations have been portrayed as the devious villains out to thwart the highest of time honoured virtues in the field of information and communication. The fact that truth does not come in black and white terms, but in the varying shades of grey, has been lost sight of, thanks to the influence that these vested

interests wield. Their control of the political, economic and social levers of power in the international arena have made their lies, repeated a thousand times, appear as truth.

Though the Western powers have now come to accept that there is at least something wrong with the present information and communication order, there was a time when they strictly denied that the order was undergoing crisis and was rent with severe drawbacks. Their <sup>defence of the</sup> status quo boiled down to the following propagandist assertions. They asserted with self-righteousness.<sup>23</sup>

1. That the existing world information order was buoyant and healthy and needed no change.
2. That the demand for a NWICO was misplaced and was a camouflage on the part of the despots of the developing nations to stifle media freedom, to impose censorship and keep away foreign correspondents from having access to information sources, so that their misdoings never come to light.

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23 Mankar, n.9, pp.85ff.

3. That the attendant slogans of 'cultural self-determination', 'media imperialism' and 'national sovereignty over a country's communications', were meant to be mere facades of an evil design.

4. That the UNESCO, neglecting its nobler objectives, was, on the one hand, acting as a mid-wife to the attempts of the dictators of the developing nations to use the information and communication media for propagandist purposes, and on the other, was seeking to monopolise control over international information and communication. These went against the norms of fairplay and objectivity. For them, the UNESCO seemed to have exceeded its given role under the Charter. It therefore needed to be taught a lesson and the 'freedom of the free world' needed to be guaranteed against UNESCO sponsored encroachment.

5. That the attempt by the developing nations to encourage pluralism in news sources through institutional arrangements like the Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP) was essentially a heinous attempt by dictatorial regimes of the developing world to peddle propaganda.

6. That they were the upholders of the time-honoured highest moral standards of truth, freedom and objectivity, and that no one in the developing nations in his right senses could, and should point an accusing finger at them.

7. That their attempt in picturing the existential truth of the developing nations — political instability, economic backwardness, primordial loyalties and backward values — had made them fall in disfavour in the eyes of those who wanted these very things to be pushed under the carpet.

8. That they were driven by altruistic motives, in furtherance of the 'white-man's burden', to civilise the primitive savages of the developing nations.

9. That the MacBride Commission Report was in league with sinister forces in their grand design, because it provided intellectual justification for such schemes.

But this process of delusion could not persist for too long. The Western world had to perforce give in to the demand of the majority of states, and



concede at least that imbalance and bias did mark the existing information and communication order and that therefore some changes were needed and indeed desirable.

This set in a period of brief honey-moon. They championed themselves now as the true friends of the developing nations — by seeking to do away with ethnocentric and colonial overtones, by giving more coverage to the developing nations, by imparting training to the personnel of the developing nations and by helping in expanding their information and communication structure. The Western strategists also tried to hijack the movement for a new international information-communication order by deflecting the concern from the establishment of a new order to questions of technology transfer. It was made to seem that the onus of the problem lay only in technical shortcomings.

The honeymoon could not have lasted long, and indeed it did not for the problems are too deep and structural to reconcile the opposite positions. They need radical change. Differences thus cropped up more sharply.

To be true to facts, differences had cropped up as early as the 70s, when the inequality of the existing information and communication order began to be gradually unravelled. This was aided and abetted by the change in power relations when the developing nations began to outnumber the Western world by increased membership and a collective voice. But the virulent attack that the UNESCO and the developing nations are facing was to come later, in the 80s.

This roughly coincided with the convening of the 20th General Conference of the UNESCO at Belgrade, 1980. The Western countries wanted to scuttle the attempt of the UNESCO session to decide upon action policies on the MacBride Commission Report and the International Programme for the Development of Communication, which were against their interests.<sup>24</sup>

The vested interests saw an enemy everywhere — in the UNESCO, the developing countries, the MacBride Commission Report, and even in the personality of the Director General of the UNESCO, Mr. Amadeu-Makhtar M'Bow.

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24 Ibid., p.174.

Their objection was to the very idea of governments discussing media problems and considered it to be inconsistent with the basic doctrine of media freedom, whose cornerstone is independence and separation from the government which is assumed to be media's natural adversary. That this was an erroneous view since the UNESCO is anyhow a forum of governmental representatives and has a clear mandate from the UN to concern itself with problems of information, soon became manifest.<sup>25</sup> According to them, the MacBride Commission Report sought to deliver on a platter the control of mass media to the governments of the developing nations.

However, as an editorial in the Columbia Journalist Review (July-August 1980), pointed out, such criticisms "... hardly seem justified by a close reading of the report, which in many cases rejects proposals that might more truly have been causes of alarm in the West... the Commission voted not to endorse a proposed code setting out the rights and responsibilities of journalists, a measure which

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25 Ibid., p.176.

many Western observers feared could be used by governments to put reporters on a short leash ... it recommended against special legislation to protect journalists, noting that such safeguards would invite the dangers entailed in a licensing system since it would require somebody to stipulate who should be entitled to claim such protection... the Commission ... urged all nations to ensure admittance of foreign correspondents and to guarantee their free access to the entire spectrum of opinion within any country" and called "for the abolition of all censorship". It further added that, the "hardline Western view ignores the possibility that the model which has effectively served the communication needs of the industrialised world may be inappropriate for younger nations struggling with illiteracy, social tensions, and extremes of poverty and wealth. Besides, it felt that "... the issues addressed in the (MacBride) Report cannot constructively be resolved by Western insistence on a 'freedom' that, to many Third World nations, may look suspiciously like control."<sup>26</sup>

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26 Ibid., p.179.

As time elapsed and the resolution for the establishment of a NWICO was passed, the vested interests felt threatened. Their crises became more and more sharp. They now directed their ire against the UNESCO since they felt that it was coordinating all the moves against them. Apparently, they sought to strangle it of all life-blood. This is seen from the withdrawal of the United States in 1984, and of Britain and Singapore in 1985, leaving the UNESCO poorer by about 30 per cent of its scarce budget.

The Reagan administration in the United States with its obvious lack of enthusiasm for the forums of multilateral diplomacy, used its might to challenge the UNESCO. An 18 month review of the American position in the international organizations to which it belonged was undertaken by the Assistant Secretary for International Organisation Affairs, Gregory Newell. The five policy priorities underlined in the review were:

- to reassert American leadership in multilateral affairs;
- to implement a policy of zero net growth in organizations' budgets;

- to increase American representation in the secretariats of multilateral agencies;
- to reduce the incidence of expansive conferences;
- to enhance the role of the public sector.

At the conclusion of the review in May 1983, three broad issues were identified as the crux of the problem contributing to the weakening of the organizations, namely : politicisation of the specialised agencies of the UN; a 'statist' approach to the solution of problems and high levels of budgetary growth. As expected, the UNESCO was considered to be the chief villain in this regard.<sup>27</sup>

The gravamen of the charges that the United States has levelled against the UNESCO are:<sup>28</sup>

- That the UNESCO's programmes, basic orientation and budget growth are faulty.

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27 Brian Hocking, "Words and deeds : Why America left UNESCO", The World Today (London) vol.41, no.4, April 1985, p.75.

28 Memorandum presented by William G. Harley, Communications Consultant, United States Department of State, 9 February 1984 (updated in April 1984), reflecting the views of the State Department on what the US Government is thinking and doing about UNESCO. (Emphasis added).

- That it sings an anti-Western tune and is not willing to defend the ideals of free thought and free expression upon which it was founded.
- That it has become 'statist', offers 'collectivist solutions' to world problems and doles out 'ideological polemics'.
- That it has not heeded American efforts in recent years to change this orientation.
- That it rejects sound management principles in favour of self-serving and self-promoting procedures.
- That it continues to harp on the NWICO, which embodies elements harmful to free press and free market. This will help governments to define "responsible" reporting and control what is written about their nations and in their nations.

A cogent analysis of the issues involved herein gives lie to such arguments. As Professor Moonis Raza rightly points out, such arguments betray appalling un-truths. As he elaborates:<sup>29</sup>

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29 Moonis Raza, "UNESCO and the New Barbarians", Peace and Solidarity (New Delhi), vol.15, no.11, November 1984, pp.12ff.

- (1) The charge that NWICO is hostile to press freedom is false. It rather aims at strengthening press freedom by undoing the grip of the trans-nationals on the media in general, and the developing nations in particular.
- (2) The resolutions relating to NWICO were passed by the UNESCO General Conference by consensus of all the 161 member nations, including the United States.
- (3) The activities of the UNESCO under the NWICO programme is meant to strengthen national capabilities and self-reliance in the developing countries and do away with monopoly controls and distortion of national cultures.
- (4) An analysis of, for example, the UNESCO's budgetary estimates of 1984-85, shows that it was equivalent approximately to the cost of three B-52 bombers, or a little more than half the cost of the aircraft-carrier, Nimitz. The proportionate expenditure on the various heads cannot be considered to be a case of over-spending at all. Literacy,



for example, was allotted a sum of one dollar for ever four children that have to be covered.

(5) The accusation that UNESCO spends 80 per cent of its budget on salaries is also wrong. It is close to 50 percent, and this cannot be considered high in the case of intellectual activities that are mostly teacher/researcher bound and wherein hardware plays a very minor role. In fact an American Treasury Department official, in a testimony to the Congress on 14 September 1979, said, "We consider the (UNESCO's) management unique and advanced in comparison to other UN agencies. This efficiency offers the possibility of a growth in the efficiency of US participation in the UNESCO."

(6) The idea that the UNESCO is a sort of an employment agency for the developing nations is again false. Only 39 per cent of the UNESCO positions go to the people of Asia and Africa who comprise 70 per cent of the world's population. On the otherhand, the US and Western Europe which account for only 13.86 per cent of the world's population, have cornered 40 per cent of UNESCO posts.

(7) The charge, that UNESCO promotes a North-South confrontation is also false. The fact that resolutions are passed by consensus, inspite of the fact that the developing nations have an overwhelming majority gives lie to such an assertion.

In fact, even Leonard R. Sussman, who is known for his reservations against NWICO, admits that none of the UNESCO conferences approved resolutions supporting censorship, licensing of journalists, <sup>or</sup> other governmental control of independent news and information media. Yet, Western press representatives see UNESCO differently and that version dominates the data banks of even the best American newspapers. According to him it appears that the United States is using UNESCO to alter, or, failing which, withdraw from the wider UN system.<sup>30</sup>

Many countries had withdrawn from UNESCO at various points of time, but most of them again rejoined it. South Africa quit in 1956 for ever. Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia quit in 1953,

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30 Leonard R. Sussman, "Response", Journal of Communication vol.34, no.4, Autumn 1984, pp.159-61, 162.

alleging that UNESCO was a tool of Cold War. They however returned soon enough next year, in 1954. Portugal quit in 1971 in protest against the UNESCO stand on its colonies and rejoined in 1974 following a revolution that ushered in a democratic rule.<sup>31</sup>

But the American withdrawal from UNESCO and the attacks against it have serious implications. As Mr. M'Bow, the Director General of UNESCO pointed out: "Those who want to use the organisation for their own ends have a tendency to create confusion" — and hence the "massive attack" on UNESCO. What is more, it is not only an attack on UNESCO, but "the totality of the instrument for multilateral cooperation that is at stake." in "certain circles" there is a trend towards bilateralism. Hence it is "the democratic principle" that "is also at stake here... what is happening has ramifications for North-South relations. There are those who, because they pay more, find decisions by majority intolerable."<sup>32</sup>

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31 News Item: "UNESCO May Refer US Move to Court", Times of India, 26 October 1985.

32 News Item: "UNESCO Tides Over Financial Crisis", Times of India, 29 April 1985.

In fact, the Western attack against UNESCO is so tenuous that right thinking peoples and organizations within those countries have pleaded with their governments not to scuttle UNESCO's efforts since it has been doing noble work. For instance, the United States National Commission for UNESCO appointed by the Congress to go into the issues concerning the decision of the United States to withdraw from UNESCO, strongly opposed the withdrawal. It found no ground whatsoever for America severing its ties with UNESCO, though it did want improvements in the Organization. The Commission, in fact, showed clearly that all the American arguments adduced in favour of withdrawal did not bear scrutiny.<sup>33</sup>

The US State Department report submitted to Congress held that UNESCO expenditures that benefitted the US amounted to over 40 per cent of value of American contribution. The bulk of UNESCO's budgetary allocation, according to it go to educational and

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33 United States National Commission for UNESCO, "What are the Issues Concerning the Decision of the United States to withdraw from UNESCO?" 1984 (An advisory forum established by Congress, vide Public Law 565, 1946).

scientific programmes, and the most controversial part of UNESCO's programme in communications accounted for only 8 per cent of the budget.<sup>34</sup>

Besides, many American scientists who have worked for the organisation and related programmes said that the American withdrawal from UNESCO would cause loss of key benefits to American scientists, scholars and cultural groups.<sup>35</sup>

The British withdrawal is particularly galling because it came about after UNESCO set in motion a series of reforms and reduced its budget. Not only the several member nations of UNESCO, but also the members of the Commonwealth and the European Economic Community (EEC), as well as eminent personalities like Joseph Needham, Graham Greene, Peter Ustinov, Yahudi Menhuin, etc., requested Britain not to withdraw from UNESCO. Even the former conservative Prime Minister, Sir Edward Heath asked Britain not to

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34 Majid Tehranian, "Response", Journal of Communication, n.30, p.149.

35 News Item: "US Scientists see Loss in Leaving UNESCO", Times of India, 24 December 1984.

go "back into our hole of a nasty, squalid and petty nationalism..."<sup>36</sup>

Besides, the influential House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee had earlier recommended that if UNESCO carried on extensive reforms in its 1985 General Conference Session, UK should desist from pulling out of the UN body. Pointing out the fallacy of the British argument that it was not getting value for its money, the report held that Britain would lose financially rather than save money. It pointed out that in 1985 it earned £ 9.5 million from UNESCO by way of salaries and consultancy fees, while its contribution was only £ 5 million.<sup>37</sup>

Whatever may be the motives for attack, UNESCO's position is clear. It seeks a "free and balanced flow" of information. It believes that imbalance can be rectified, for example, by equal

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36 N.L. Chowla, "Future of UNESCO in Doubt", Times of India, 30 December 1985.

37 News Item: "House Panel asks UK not to quit UNESCO", by K.N. Malik, Times of India, 27 September 1985.

participation of the developing countries' media in the Western news flow system. This is of course not acceptable to the West. UNESCO has also made it clear that it does not give a clean chit to the developing nations. The Director General, Mr. M'Bow, has often said that the "second half of his battle will be fought in the Third World where, in most cases, the press is held on a tight leash."<sup>38</sup>

It must be said to the credit of UNESCO that it has tried to meet the criticisms, levelled against it, through concrete actions. Coupled with a zero-growth budget for 1986-87, it also decided to "institutionalise a special committee to oversee reforms in the 40 year old world body" — the only world body to do so.<sup>39</sup>

Replying to the American demand for staff reduction, Mr. M'Bow, the UNESCO Director General, pointed out that this would affect the organisation's programmes as most of them were specialists and

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38 Singh, n.3,

39 News Item: "UNESCO Agrees on Reform Mechanism", Times of India, 8 November 1985.

experts and not mere bureaucrats.<sup>40</sup> Yet, UNESCO agreed to do away with 600 out of about 3,000 posts, including professional and general personnel, as a result of the budget freeze, consequent on the pull-out by US and UK.<sup>41</sup>

Despite its crisis, UNESCO is doing its best to live upto its ideals. In spite of the budget reduction, the member-States at the 23rd General Conference of the UNESCO in 1985, reached a consensus on giving priority to programmes that would keep intact the main objectives of the Second Medium Term Plan for 1984-89.<sup>42</sup>

Over 90 per cent of all funds available to the communication sectors from all sources of financing in 1986-87, are earmarked for the development of communication infrastructures and training. Most of the money, representing a sum of more than

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- 40 News Item: "UNESCO Passes Zero Growth Budget", Times of India, 27 October 1985.
- 41 News Item: "UNESCO Panel to Settle Claims with US", by K.N. Malik, Times of India, 20 December 1985.
- 42 News Item: "UNESCO Assured of India's Support", Times of India, 2 January 1986.



\$ 35 million, comes from extra-budgetary funds entrusted to UNESCO by industrialised countries. It includes some \$ 8 million that have been contributed so far to the Special Account of the International Programme for the Development of Communication Projects in the developing world.<sup>43</sup>

All these show that what is apparent is not real. As William Plaff rightly points out, "The controversy which provoked the US government's decision to leave UNESCO at the end of this year is an affair in which the unspoken is vastly more important than what actually is charged and counter-charged."<sup>44</sup>

The former United States Permanent Representative to the UN, Jean Kirkpatrick, gave an inkling of the real intent, when she said that "those who pay the bill don't have the votes and those who have the votes don't pay the bill."<sup>45</sup>

43 Padgaonkar, n.21.

44 William Plaff, "UNESCO Caught in the North-South Cross Fire", International Herald Tribune (Paris), 31 January 1984.

45 T.N. Kaul, "US Threat of Withdrawal from UNESCO", Patriot, 21 February 1984.

The real, though latent, factor in this game is the transnational factor. Since early 70s they were feeling endangered in two ways: as transnationals and as communication organisations, because UNESCO cuts across their area of activity.<sup>46</sup>

In the US more than 60 per cent of manpower and Gross National Product (GNP) is in the information and communication sector. The communication industries can thrive only through export to developing countries. Naturally, they are angry at UNESCO attempt through its communication programmes, to raise capabilities of the developing nations based on self-reliance. The US tried to neutralise UNESCO programmes by insisting on developmental aid on a bilateral basis, instead of through UNESCO, and by wanting to involve American transnationals in such programmes. These moves were firmly resisted by the developing countries, and hence the American anger.<sup>47</sup>

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46 James Szecsko, "Response", Journal of Communication, n.30, p.102.

47 "US and UNESCO : The Other Motive", Mainstream, vol.XXII, no.24, 11 February 1984, p.5.

UNESCO is only a test case in the dangerous drift from multi-lateralism to bi-lateralism.<sup>48</sup> The campaign, though addressed symbolically to an international organisation, is truly aimed at the Non-Aligned Movement.<sup>49</sup> UNESCO has been chosen because of its relative weakness and also because it dared challenge the market values of the vested interests. The resurgent conservatism in the US and Western Europe is allergic to any criticism — it represents an unabashed backward march from several democratic values, cherished in a more liberal era.

In this no-holds barred war against the interests of the developing nations, the vested interests — the Western dominating elites and organisations, have utilised all the resources at their command. Even the much touted 'free press' of the West has <sup>gone</sup> the whole hog with these forces. Without examining rationally the demands of the developing nations, they <sup>have</sup> used their leverage to

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48 Tehranian, n.34, p.148.

49 Enrique Gonzalez Manet, "Response", Journal of Communication, n.30, pp.115-16.

give the developing nations a bad name. An example of this can be had from Mort Rosenblum, who, writing in the International Herald Tribune (25 February, 1980) observed: "The objection (by the Third World) was not simply to inadequate reporting, it was to accurate reporting of embarrassing information. Through UNESCO those who wanted simple press control had found a way to disguise it."<sup>50</sup>

But as Altaf Gauhar rightly points out, "free press", is not the same thing as "free flow of information". "Free Press" is a concept, an ideal. Whereas what Western news agencies mean by "free flow of information" is nothing but a commercial proposition. In the field of trade, the developed 'West' sets up tariff and non-tariff barriers to regulate flow of leather goods, textiles and jute

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<sup>50</sup> Mankar, n.9, p.175.

manufactures from "South". In this case they are not deterred or embarrassed by their commitment to free trade.<sup>51</sup> Why then do these nations carp and cavil against the developing nations when they attempt to insulate themselves from manifest harm to their vital interests?

A rational analysis therefore shows that the Western attack is a cover to maintain the inequitable status-quo in the field of information and communication, which in turn contributes to the maintenance of the dependency structure. Their "holier than thou" pretensions lie unmasked.

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51 Altaf Gauhar, Editorial "Free Press Vs. Free Flow", South (London), no.10, August 1981, pp.6-7.

CONCLUSION : FINDINGS, PERSPECTIVE AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS

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"Even a journey of a thousand mile starts with a single step", so goes an ancient Chinese proverb. The developing nations are now taking the first steps towards the long arduous journey for reaching the destination of NWICO. And as the developing countries take the first steps towards this direction, it is imperative that they get their bearings correct. An attempt is made in this concluding chapter to recapitulate some of the main issues of the debate and suggest some essential guidelines for necessary action.

(I)

Findings:

The need for the establishment of a NWICO stands vindicated. The reasons are not far to seek and can be summarised from the major findings of this dissertation. The following are the major findings:

- (1) The world is witness to an information and communication revolution of cataclysmic proportions. An admixture of developments in the micro-electronic, computronic and telecommunication fields, have bent space and time in their stride. The world stands reduced to a "global village".
- (2) This has heralded a calculus of society in which information plays so vital a role that it is deemed to be a currency of power.
- (3) The information and communication order that exists as of today owes its predominance mainly to the congerly of developments since World War II, resulting in the emergence of US as the leader in the field.
- (4) A few transnational corporations, blessed as they are with massive technological and financial prowess, have cornered most of the benefits accruing from the existing information and communication order. This warrants their calling the shots.



(5) The existing information and communication order has to be seen in the structural context. It is one of the three props of the dominant dependency structure, helping thereby in the continued dependence of the "periphery" nations on the "metropolitan" countries.

(6) The said order is rent with crises because of the built-in inequality — one way free flow, deplorable effects on the developing nations, control exerted by the transnationals, information being treated as a "commodity", etc.

(7) A few countries in the world — like US, UK, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Italy, Japan — through their transnationals, exert almost a total monopoly on the existing information and communication order.

(8) This massive domination has both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect, each subserves the other.

(9) As a result, therefore, the developing nations are, on the one hand, faced with hunger of necessary information and on the other, are slavishly dependent on the monopoly powers. While that in hardware is almost total, the dependency in software is no less alarming.

(10) Besides, the existing inequitable order also reflects the values of the monopoly powers and seeks to convert other nations and cultures to the value-faith of the dominant Western bourgeois countries.

(11) No wonder therefore that the order wreaks havoc on the political, economic and cultural-ideological life of the dependent nations. Not only are the interests of the monopoly nations furthered, but the very sovereignty of the "have-not" nations have become open to question. These have stultified the latter's democratic growth in all the three vital areas — political, economic and cultural-ideological.

(12) Though NWICO aims at redressing all these inequities, yet, its establishment is not easy of realisation. The problems of the developing nations

— structural, infrastructural, financial, social, etc.,  
— and the reaction of the monopoly powers, bent as they are on retaining the exploitative status quo, impedes the emergence of a NWICO.

(II)

Perspective:

All said and done, a NWICO needs to be established for it promises global democratisation of information and communication. It is not a mere goal but a search for betterment, for a free and balanced world of nations and peoples. Apparently, the concept of NWICO does not have a finality of its own in terms of solutions. It is open-ended-open to developments, to changes and improvements.

As is clear by now NWICO is integrally related with the concept of NIED and Non-Alignment. They are not to be seen as mutually exclusive, but indeed re-inforcing, complementary and supportive. The imperatives of structural linkage makes the severance of ties of the developing countries from the dependency

equation in all the three fields — political, economic and cultural-ideological — obligatory. This cannot be done in isolation, i.e., in any one field. As argued in the foregoing chapters, any such attempt would be fruitless since it is the intermeshing of the three apparatus that forms the mosaic of dependency.

The immediate future may not seem promising, yet, a dispassionate analysis of the developments, since the present information and communication order has come under clout, suggests a few guidelines for the future. These suggest the route that can be traversed, and as the journey progresses the necessary changes can be included and the guidelines improved upon.

### (III)

#### Recommendations:

The Christian belief that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness holds true for all those who want to get out of the rut that they are trapped in. It should be action on three fronts — theoretical, praxiological and rhetorical. The

essential ingredients of these should contain the following:

1. The Theoretical Dimension: Theory is a guide to action. This being so, theoretical considerations acquire significant importance. The following theoretical considerations needs to be taken into account:

(a) The import of information in the present day world has got to be grasped and disseminated to all segments of the society. Information is an important currency of modern power; its neglect would spell doom to the gigantic and much delayed process of socio-economic transformation.

(b) Analysis of the information and communication structure ought to be done in a holistic fashion. Atomistic analysis would lead to piece-meal and fragmented social engineering resulting in confusion. Holistic approach would also help explain the frustrating efforts of those who want to retain the status quo in the field of information and communication.

Besides, there is the need for a sound conceptual foundation. Otherwise, the answers reached would fail to meet the bill.

(c) Diversity notwithstanding, an uniform global information and communication policy based on common aims, values and interests needs to be formulated. This will help answer the needs of an interdependent world.

(d) The nations of the world need to formulate their own national policies in keeping with their specific social, cultural and economic environment. The aim of such a policy should be the democratisation of national communications and should involve the various social groups and ensure social participation at all levels. This should help in moving away from foreign models and from patterns of dependency.

(e) Broad-based research at local, regional and international level is required to examine the hitherto unknown areas in order to further interdependence, coordination and optimum utilisation of the various mass-media, etc.

(f) The dependence on North Atlantic-centric idioms and symbols needs to be eschewed and the development of local idioms and symbols encouraged. This would help in preserving the national cultural heritage.

(g) The developing nations have to uphold the lofty ideals of the UNESCO and its parent organization — the UN. Collective action on the part of the developing nations can help sustain these organizations and make them work for universal welfare. Multilateral action in an interdependent world should be the watchword.

(h) Finally, it is important that NWICO be looked upon as being open-ended, a journey towards democratisation in the field of information and communication.

2. The Praxiological Dimension: Praxis is the need of the hour. Immediate action needs to be initiated, among others, at least on the following aspects, viz.:

(a) The developing nations need to give possible priority in national objectives and finance, to their national information and communication media, so as to

develop their own facilities and move away from dependency. All possible sources of finance should be tapped — an efficient and optimum utilisation of communication resources should be aimed at.

(b) The developing nations have to democratise their national information and communication structure wherever possible. Autonomy of mass-media, rights of journalists (both national and international), rights of privacy, pluralism in information sources, should be the watch-words. A voluntary code of conduct, prepared by professional bodies, may however be adopted by the various mass media agencies. All avenues which throttle spread of information — viz., monopoly ownership, financial control, commercial influence, etc., should be curbed. Pluralism and diversity of information should be the aim.

Written communication should be given importance. Production and distribution of books, periodicals and magazines, should be streamlined and made to reach as large an audience as is possible.



Local needs have to be answered through local networks — low cost, small range transmitters, television stations, small presses, etc., can be established. Communication interaction through mass-media needs to be encouraged. Remote and backward areas should be given priority through national radio networks, which should get priority over development of television.

Apparently, mass-media should be used to both educate and entertain. Knowledge of communication systems can be an essential input in the educational structure, so as to prepare students for communication activities.

(c) The attempt should be to make use of both traditional and modern mass-media facilities available. Simultaneously, the requisite infrastructural facilities required for the spread of mass-media needs to be developed — increase in literacy, development of languages, etc.

(d) The developing countries need to take active steps in safeguarding their culture and developing them. Communication means should be used to make

creativity reach out to broad mass of the people.

(e) There has to be a movement from the 'man bites dog' sort of journalism towards progressive, purposeful, development-oriented journalism. The problems at the national, regional and inter-regional level should be highlighted. The mass media should also be harnessed to serve the developmental needs, with the proviso that by so doing their autonomy and impartiality is not compromised.

Crisis and tension situations require careful handling. Nothing should be done to exacerbate tension and violence. At such time the news-men should not be carried away by sensational spot-news, but should be able to develop an empathetic understanding of the larger issues involved. It is also pertinent that the weaker sections of the society — women, minorities, backward, uneducated marginalised groups and strata, etc. — and their problems should be approached with care and due understanding.

The mass-media needs to be on guard against the hazards of espionage and de-stabilizing elements, and must uphold their integrity in such contexts. The

aim should rather be to promote international co-operation by highlighting its desirability. They should focus on higher values like peace, co-existence and disarmament, development, interdependence, tolerance and cooperation for mutual benefit, etc., and thwart the evils of human rights violation, apartheid, denial of freedom, etc.

(f) The developing countries need to collaborate with each other to tap cheaper and increased availability of newsprint and reduction of tariffs, for news transmission, charges for flow of various information materials or use of diverse communication system.

(g) They must also exert themselves to get their due of the finite natural resources — the electromagnetic spectrum, for transmission purposes, and geo-stationary orbit, for parking communication satellites.

(h) The developing countries should also immediately seek legislation prohibiting flow of valuable information across borders through the marvellous technological equipments. They must also take care of copyright laws, patent-laws, etc. It would be

hazardous for the developing nations if adequate prevention is not taken against the flood of developed technology. Even the developed nations take such measures, though they cry hoarse when it comes to the developing nations.

(i) Since mass-media involves technical expertise, the developing countries should establish centres to impart expertise in the various mass-media. The example of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (New Delhi), is a case in point.

There is also a need for a change of mind on the part of the media personnel. It is imperative that those who deal with information should have heightened political awareness — be critical and resist an information model that does not answer one's cultural, political and economic needs.

(j) Research and development should be undertaken by the developing countries. This should not be mere imitative of the West but be novel, geared towards realising their genuine needs and vital interests. Such research should overstep national boundaries and be based on regional and inter-regional cooperation.

(k) Active measures, both at the national and the international level, needs to be initiated against the advertising transnationals. Appropriate advisory and watchdog committees can be formed. The onus should be to move away from the present trend which stresses on sexism, false dreams, sensationalism, artificial needs, etc.

(l) There is also a need to regulate the activities of the transnationals by forcing them to abide by a code of conduct guiding investment pattern, modus operandi of functioning, parameters of functioning, liabilities in case of default or mishap, etc.

(m) Above all, the developing countries should forge alliances at bi-lateral, sub-regional, regional and inter-regional levels, to develop collective self-reliance by way of joint activities — in developing mass-media, technical cooperation, sharing of information, links between professionals, etc.

The call for introduction of Development Press Bulletin Service, for increasing the volume of information exchange among and from the nonaligned countries, as well as for improving the speed of such transmission, is a case in point.

India, for one, can help other developing countries since it has acquired a significant degree of sophistication in the communications field. Co-operative ventures of this sort are the need of the hour.

3. The Rhetorical Dimension: Criticisms notwithstanding, rhetoric has an important role to play in the establishment of NWICO. It is unfortunate that the rhetoric of the developing nations has been stilled because of the aggressive postures and actions of the monopoly powers. Rhetoric however should not be given up — it helps create moral and intellectual pressure in favour of a demand. And if such rhetoric is backed with solid research and cogent logic and arguments, the opponents are forced to acknowledge at least the truth of the argument. For the developing nations rhetoric is an expression of their wretched existential realities and therefore any softening on this score, can weaken their case. Besides, rhetoric need not always lead to antagonism, it can also lead to modus vivendi, if the opponent is made to see the point and act accordingly. Every novel idea has to



pass through a difficult terrain. The developing countries need not despair — the one-time detractors of nonalignment, for instance, now praise it as the most positive process of international aggregation.

As the curtain is rung down, the message appears clear. The existing information and communication order needs to be dismantled. In its place, a democratic NWICO needs to be established. But merely carping and cavilling will not do. The time has come for the developing nations to take concerted action and widen the base of its supporters. Chesterton once spoke of 20 million young women rising to their feet, crying that they would not be dictated to — and promptly taking up the job of stenographers. The developing countries cannot afford to emulate these young women.

It is an open question whether the biblical prophecy of the meek inheriting the earth will ever come true. But in our own time their voice is being heard.

APPENDIX- I



Appendix- I

CHRONOLOGY OF SELECTED EVENTS IN REGARD TO THE NEW  
WORLD INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION ORDER  
IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL FORA

- 1968 - UNESCO sponsored international symposium (Ljubljana, Yugoslavia). Imbalance in the flow of information discussed for the first time.
- 1969 - Meeting of UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in which the debate on direct broadcast satellites (DBS) began.
- (June) UNESCO Meeting of Experts on Mass Communications and Society (Montreal, Canada). First study on the necessity of a "balanced" flow of information presented in the meeting.
- 1970 - (September) 3rd NAM Summit (Lusaka, Zambia). Concern expressed regarding the sovereign rights of nations over their natural resources.
- (October-November) 16th UNESCO General Conference (Paris, France). Delegates from a number of developing countries stressed on the need for a free, two-way flow of information.

- 1971 - Special World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC) on Space Communication. Definition of broadcasting satellite services established; allocation of suitable frequency bands; principle of equal rights in the frequency band for radio space communication services established.
- 1972 - (July) UNESCO meeting of experts on communication policy and planning. Rejected in their final report "cultural imperialism" and "new communications colonialism".
- USSR introduced resolution in UNGA calling for elaboration of principles governing DBS; resolution approved 102:1; UNGA called upon COPUOS to study and formulate principles to govern DBS.
- (October-November) 17th UNESCO General Conference (Paris). USSR called for declaration of principles to govern DBS. Conference mandated the UNESCO Director-General to formulate "fundamental principles governing the use of mass media with a view to strengthen peace and understanding and combating war propaganda, racialism and apartheid" (referred to as "mass media draft declaration").
- 1973 - (May) International Colloquium on the international circulation of TV programmes, organised by the Finnish National UNESCO Committee in co-operation with UNESCO (Tampere, Finland). Expressed concern over the imbalance in the flow of TV programmes.

- (September) 4th NAM Summit (Algiers, Algeria). First reference to "Social and cultural imperialism" through communication. Called for action in the field of mass-communications.
- 1974
- (May) UNGA Extraordinary Session. Adopted resolutions on the establishment of NIEO of which new international information order should be an integral part.
  - (July) UNESCO meeting of experts (Bogota, Colombia). Measures aimed at regaining balance in communication systems demanded.
  - (October-November) 18th UNESCO General Conference (Paris). Resolution submitted for practical action to strengthen and expand communication capabilities in the developing countries to help correct imbalances. "Mass media draft declaration" tabled for further consideration.
  - (November) Conference on communication policies in the Caribbean (Kingston, Jamaica).
  - Special WARC on Maritime Services. First-come/first-serve "principle given no precedence for the first time.
- 1975
- (January) TANJUG begins Non-Aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP) transmission.
  - (June) UNESCO sponsored expert meeting on the development of information exchange in Latin America (Quito, Ecuador). Underlined the necessity of a balanced two-way information flow and recommended promotion of it by means of bi-lateral

and multi-lateral agreements, to stimulate co-operation between the developing countries of Asia and Africa.

- (August) 5th Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Nations (Lima, Peru). Recommended formation of a new international information order with the participation of the UN. Adopted resolution concerning NANAP.

- 1976
- (March) NAM Symposium on Information (Tunis, Tunisia). Final report, entitled, "Emancipation of communication media in the non-aligned countries" recommended series of measures to develop telecommunications infrastructure and promote co-operation and exchange between non-aligned countries in all communication fields, in conformity with efforts to establish a new international information order.
  - (April) Conference on imbalance in Asia (Kandy, Sri Lanka). Concluded: "free flow" helps those with superior information systems.
  - (May) International Seminar on the "role of information in the new international information order", sponsored by the Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies (ILET) and the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation (Mexico city). Called for reformulation of transnational information structure.
  - (July) UNESCO Meeting of Inter-Governmental Experts (Paris). "Mass media draft declaration" approved and placed on agenda of 19th UNESCO

General Conference.

- (July) UNESCO sponsored Inter-Governmental conference on communications policies in Latin America and the Caribbean (San Jose, Costa Rica). For the first time demand for a new international information order voiced at an UNESCO conference. Called for "balanced flow" and regional news agencies.
- (July) NAM Ministerial Conference (New Delhi, India). Coordination Committee formed to improve methods and communication facilities of non-aligned nations.
- (July) 1st Session of NANAP Coordination Committee (New Delhi). New Delhi Declaration adopted. Committee of experts formed to study telecommunication facilities and the possibility of co-operation in the field of satellite and space communication.
- (August) 5th NAM Summit (Colombo, Sri Lanka). Declaration of New Delhi Ministerial Conference endorsed. Formal ratification of NANAP Constitution. Decided to form NAM inter-governmental co-ordinating council for information and a co-ordinating committee for NANAP. Resolution adopted: called for a "new international information order" as vital to "new international economic order". Tunisia delegated to prepare NAM position on the new international information order for the agenda of the 19th UNESCO General Conference.

- (October-November) 19th UNESCO General Conference (Nairobi, Kenya). Called for not only "free" but also "balanced" flow of information. Asked UNESCO Director-General to invite a team of consultants to undertake a study of communication problems in modern society. Support for assistance to NANAP approved. Decision on "mass media draft declaration" deferred.

1977

- (January) 1st meeting of NANAP Co-ordinating Committee (Cairo, Egypt). UNESCO participated as an observer.

- (February-March) 1st Session of Inter-Governmental Coordination Council for Information and Communication of Non-Aligned Countries (Tunis). Stressed on the necessity of reduction of "imbalance" in the circulation of information.

- (April) UNESCO International Colloquium of Journalists (Florence, Italy). Discussion on "free and balanced exchange of information among the advanced and developing countries".

- (May) Meeting of International Committee of Experts on Communication of Non-Aligned Countries (Baghdad, Iraq).

- (October) 1st Conference of Radio and Television Organisations of Non-Aligned Nations (Sarajevo, Yugoslavia). Equal access and equal distribution of technology stressed as prerequisite for balance flow of information.

- (December) 1st meeting of International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (Paris). (16 member non-governmental Commission headed by Sean MacBride). Purpose : to help resolve outstanding "information order" issues.
- 1978
- (April) Coordinating Committee meeting of NANAP (Jakarta, Indonesia). Discussed regional distribution centres, communication training programmes and definition of news to conform to needs of developing countries.
  - (April) Meeting of Inter-Governmental Conference for the Coordination of Information of Non-Aligned Countries (Havana, Cuba). Aim: to organise and disseminate NAM position on the issue.
  - (April) Meeting of representatives of major news agencies and their counterparts from the developing world (Stockholm, Sweden). Discussed infrastructure of news suppliers. Conflict between concepts of "free flow" of information and national sovereignty. Meeting sponsored by UNESCO International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (MacBride Commission).
  - (October-November) 20th UNESCO General Conference (Paris). Interim Report of the MacBride Commission submitted. Mass media declaration adopted. UNESCO Commission on Culture and Communication adopted resolution endorsing the efforts made by Director-General for the establishment of a new and balanced world information and communication order.

- (December) 33rd Session of UNGA adopted resolution on the new world information order.
- 1979
- (February) Inter-Governmental Conference on Communication Policies in Asia and Oceania (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia).
  - (September) 6th NAM Summit (Havana, Cuba). Called for the development of information-communication infrastructure; considered this to be essential precondition for establishment of a new information order and in setting up a multi-dimensional information flow.
  - (September) International Seminar of Journalists and Mass Media Experts, organised by the USSR Commission for UNESCO and the Union of Journalists, Uzbekistan, in collaboration with UNESCO (Tashkent, USSR).
- 1980
- (April) 2nd Consultative Meeting of International and Regional Organisations of Journalists, under UNESCO auspices (Mexico city).
  - (April) Inter-Governmental Conference for Co-operation on Activities, Needs and Programmes for Communication Development (Paris).
  - (June) 4th Meeting of Inter-Governmental Coordination Council for Information of Non-Aligned countries (Baghdad).
  - (July) Inter-Governmental Conference on Communication Policies in Africa (Yaounde, Cameroon). Called for decolonization of information-



communication structures.

- (September-October) 21st UNESCO General Conference (Belgrade, Yugoslavia). Adopted MacBride Commission Report. Passed resolution for attainment of NWICO and set up an International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). Resolution proposed constitution of 35 member Inter-Governmental Council.

1981 - (May) Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Council for Coordination of Information and Mass Media (Georgetown, Guyana).

- (May) Conference of media experts of mostly Western countries, entitled, "Voices of Freedom" conference (Talloires, France). Asserted that press freedom was a "basic human right" and declared their resolve to resist "any encroachment on it."

- (June) 1st Session of the Inter-Governmental Council of IPDC held (Paris).

1982 - (January) 2nd Session of the Inter-Governmental Council of IPDC held (Acapulco, Mexico).

- (November-December) 4th Extraordinary Session of UNESCO's General Conference (Paris). Considered the draft medium-term plan for 1984-89.

1983

- Year proclaimed as World Communications Year by UNGA. Aim: development of communication infrastructures to increase the scope and effectiveness of communications as a force for economic, cultural and social development.
- (March) 7th NAM Summit (New Delhi). Renewed demand for NWICO. Called for greater cooperation among non-aligned countries in the field of information and mass-media by strengthening and expanding the mass-media and information infrastructure in developing countries.
- (October-November) 22nd Session of UNESCO General Conference (Paris). Called for interdependence and international co-operation.
- (December) NAMEDIA, Media Conference of the Non-Aligned (New Delhi). Called upon fellow professionals to intensify efforts towards establishment of an equitable world order of which NIEO and NWICO should be essential counterparts.
- (December) US notified UNESCO of its intention to withdraw from the organisation in December 1984, failing reforms. Complaint levelled against UNESCO programmes and policies, the management of the Organisation by its Director-General, loose budgetary control and over-centralisation of decision making in the hands of the Director-General.

- 1984
- (January) NAM Information Ministers' meeting (Jakarta). Renewed faith in NWICO and UNESCO and called for reduction of communication tariffs.
  - (June) Meeting of UN Committee on Information (New York). Renewed call for establishment of NWICO.
  - (December) US withdrew from UNESCO.
- 1985
- (October-November) 23rd Session of UNESCO General Conference (Sofia, Bulgaria). Dubbed as the "conference of consensus". Communication programme called for a period of stock-taking and practical action to redress in some measures the imbalances in this critical area.
  - (December) UK and Singapore withdrew from UNESCO
- 1986
- (January) 8th Session of Inter-Governmental Coordination Council for Co-operation in Information between Non-Aligned countries (Dakar, Senegal). Called for the strengthening of multi-lateral and bi-lateral co-operation between all kinds of communication media of member countries.
  - (April) A round-table of journalists, researchers and decision-makers from 25 countries (Copenhagen, Denmark). Sponsored by

UN and UNESCO. Stressed on the practical aspects of NWICO.

- (June-July) Meeting of the UN Committee on Information. Adopted recommendation of G-77 countries by 41 to 11 votes for the establishment of NWICO.

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