

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES AND THE NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER

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The big four international news agencies (Associated Press, Reuters, Agence France Presse and United Press International) had a crucial role in the New World Information Order (NWIO) debate since they were accused of being responsible for the imbalance in the international flow of information at the expense of the developing countries. Although the structure and the function of the big international news agencies have greatly changed because of technological developments and diversification in their operations, in addition to news, it is still important to highlight the role of the big four while discussing the validity of the NWIO's proponents. In this article TASS is excluded as one of the big international news agencies since it supported the developing countries in the discussion of NWIO against the West due to some ideological reasons. However, it should be stated that before the U.S.S.R. collapsed it was the biggest news agency in the Eastern Block in terms of news and information control and distribution.

In this article, firstly, I would like to give some information about the historical background of the big international news agencies. Secondly, I want to mention about the emergence of NWIO debate and the discussions between the Third World countries and the Western countries in the international platforms, mainly in UNESCO. Later, I am going to write about alternatif news agencies supported by the developing countries. Next, I want to explain the changes in the

function of the big international news agencies considering the diversification in their operations. Afterwards, I would like to write about the US and Western position in front of the NWIO debate. Finally, I want to discuss the validity of the NWIO's proponents.

The Emergence of the International News Agencies

The oldest European news agencies Reuters, Hawas and Wolff were founded in the mid-nineteenth century and formed a cartel in 1859, dividing the world into three parts for news collection and distribution. The owners of these agencies were the most powerful and wealthy countries (Britain, France and Germany) at that time. The needs of financiers and commercial entrepreneurs to obtain economic news about other financial centers, on the one hand, the requirements of the governments to find information about the developments, mainly political, in foreign countries or from the regions within the vast imperial boundaries, on the other, determined the establishment of the news agencies in these countries. In fact, the agencies appeared among the world's most advanced nations, precisely where the demand for international as well as national news had almost fully matured. Since their imperial interests were different, and due to, partly, the cartel agreement they concentrated their news agency activities in some certain parts of the world.

In the early days, news was collected by keeping under control trade roads in the world (i.e., silk and spices roads). Development of the communication technology of cable and telegraph increased the economic and political importance of the news agencies because of providing information in a short time from very remote areas of the world, which enabled financiers and governments to react quickly. (1, pp. 223-224) After the opening of the Atlantic cable in 1866, Associated Press (AP) entered the cartel and was assigned only to collect news within the United States but obtained access to the news reports of the three European agencies. (2, p. 100)

Relating to the oldest European news agencies, another important development took place at the end of the World War I. Following the defeat of Germany, Reuter and Hawas took over Wolff's share of the cartel and expanded their networks to cover the areas previously controlled by it.

The European agencies sought to protect domestic and imperial markets from external competition by means of the cartel system. Although America came out of World War I as one of the most powerful countries in the world, the cartel continued to treat AP as a junior partner and did not allow it to expand its bureau towards other regions. Americans in the 1920s and 1930s protested against European domination of the news that came to USA via the AP. Although Americans objected to the cartel mainly for cultural and ideological reasons, AP

withdrew from the cartel in the early 1930s because of economic disputes with the other partners. (3, pp. 101-104)

Even by the turn of the century the US newspaper market was the wealthiest in the world, larger enough to support two, even three major agencies, which led to the emergence of the United Press International (UPI). Fierce competition between AP and UPI for the domestic market increased their strength and competitiveness. During the First World War, AP did not operate in South America because of the cartel agreement. This provided a good opportunity for UPI, which collected news about the German communiques and all official news of the war in the region. As a result of the breaking the European cartel's monopoly on that continent, UPI emerged as a big distributor of news abroad. (4, p. 130)

Although UPI and AP entered international markets in the 1920s and 1930s, the dominance of American news agencies in the world did not emerge until post war years. An interesting point is that the economic and political power of the US did not automatically entail the elimination of US previous news dependency. A lengthy process of economic and political development was required. Indeed, the imbalance was overcome after the emergence of the US as an important international power.

The Reaction of Third World Countries to the Big Four International News Agencies

After the Second World War national states flourished all over the world as a result of decolonization. However dependence on big international news agencies (Reuters, Hawas, Associated Press, United Press International and Tass, at that time) continued since Third World news agencies did not have enough financial and other resources which would enable them to make significant contributions to the international flow of news. This de facto situation resulted in complaints by developing countries, in the 1970s, about the direction and coverage of the international news.

It should be useful to discuss that why Americans' complaint and protest against European domination of international news in the 1920s and 1930s recurred by the Third World countries against the five big news agencies in the 1970s about the same reasons. Developing countries claimed that their representation in international news coverage did not reflect the real situation since if there are earthquakes, military coups, epidemic disease and so on, they were likely to take place in, otherwise they are invisible. I think an answer should be given to the question whether the misrepresentation of Third World countries by the news agencies is done on purpose or not. I am going to answer this question in two steps.

First, there are some very clear reasons that it has been done on purpose by developed countries in order to suppress their internal problems (i. e., ideological, economic, racial etc.). Because of these problems, it is obvious that some segments of society are unhappy in developed countries. When these people are always shown unpleasant aspects of third World countries or former socialist countries, they would be likely to agree with formal ideology (represented by state) or, at least, less critical against the established structure of society in their countries. This misrepresentation may bring about visa versa effect on people living in Third World countries since they may think that people in Western countries have almost no problem. Twisting the reality about Third World countries in order to blur the perception of audiences both in developed and developing countries, the news agencies serve the realisation of the international ambitions of developed countries, (i.e., cultural, economic and military domination).

Second, there are also some convincing reasons why the misrepresentation of Third World countries have not been taking place on purpose in the content of international news coverage produced and distributed by the international news agencies. Although news agencies have been operating all over the world, their target audiences and main income resources are in developed countries. That is why they have to take the expectations and taste of the audience into account in domestic markets in developed countries rather than in Third World countries. Another point is that people working for the big international news agencies, like everybody else, observe events in the world from their point of view which is constructed by the society in which they grow up. Therefore, because of the cultural, economic and ideological reasons, journalists choose news according to their priorities which usually relates more to the interests of their countries. By claiming this point I do not want to ignore professional objectivity totally, but it is the case that, whatever the reasons, misrepresentation of Third World countries has been taking place, and journalists have failed to prevent it.

Dependence on the Major International News Agencies

The media belonging to developing countries depend on the major international news agencies not only for general world news, but for news of their own geopolitical regions as well. In addition to this, the big agencies not only supply conventional news and features, but broadcast television material to their clients as well. For instance, UPI and Reuters through their involvements in UPINT and VISNEWS, provide international news films for television. Therefore, the dependency of some developing countries on print and film from the international news agencies is even higher. They just receive news from the major news agencies and distribute it (function only as a distributor). (5, p. 23)

According to latest statistics, governments have shared in about 73 per cent of the total national news agencies around the world (6, p. 24). This ratio implies that there is a high degree of government intervention to national news agencies in Third World countries. Some of these governments, which are undemocratic, do not bother about the function of their national news agencies as distributors since they have to be in agreement with the governments of developing countries, and to approach to issues from their point of view in order to retain power in their countries.

The consequence of this dependency is very diverse at the expense of Third World countries' people. First, one way flow of news from developed to developing countries reinforce the status quo which is a division of the world between high and low status nations. Second, the approach of international news agencies to events in Third World countries delays the solution of the issues since the emphasis of international news is on events rather than on factors leading to and causing problems. Finally, this imbalance in international news flow erodes national identity and sovereignty in developing countries by imposing Western way of living and thinking.

The erosion of cultural identities in developing countries might be seen by developed countries as the disappearance of cultural differences which will lead to make nations closer to each other and improve mutual understanding between them. But as long as there is no really alternative news agency and it is not a free choice for developing countries to receive international news from the major news agencies, people both in developing and developed countries will be in a difficulty to understand each other since they do not know their real situations, sincere feelings and ideas.

The Emergence of NWIO Debate

During the post Second World War years, the developing countries saw their positions steadily worsening in relation to economically advanced countries. It was because of Western domination in the existing system of world trade and economics and the state of balance of power in international relations. This undesirable position for third world countries, a substantial number of which became independent at the end of Second World War, was inherited from the long colonialism period.

United Nations declaration in 1974 noted that it has proven impossible to achieve "an even and balanced development of the international community under the existing economic order. The gap between the developed and developing countries continues to widen in a system which perpetuates inequality." (7). The Third World

countries, in response to this problem, put forward the notion of **New International Economic Order** (NIEO) in order to prevent such inequalities between the developed and developing countries. NIEO, which was conceptualized in the early 1970s, requires Third World countries to act together in international platforms (i.e., UN and UNESCO) to pursue their economic interests.

The 1973 Fourt Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Algiers is considered to be the birthplace of the **New World Information Order** (NWIO). In fact, the very concept of the non-alignment goes back to the Bandung Conference held in 1955 under the initiative of India, Egypt and Yugoslavia. In this conference, the leaders of the non-alignment countries highlighted that most of the news agencies, entertainment programme producers, and information systems in the world were owned and operated by multinational communication corporations whose headquarters were in Western countries. They also realized that international images of Third World countries were formed by a few multinational news agencies all over the world.

The aim of the non-alignment movement was to create an international environment in which they could not only live together in a spirit of mutual cooperation, coexistence and with respect to one another's territorial integrity but also express independent views on any international situation. Since the Bandung Conference, "there has been a rapid growth in the number of non-aligned nations - from 25 in 1961 in Belgrade to 101 in 1976 in New Delhi." (8, p. 23).

Having perceived the imbalance in international flow of information at the expense of the developing countries, the leaders of the Third World conceptualized the NWIO. The main goal of the NWIO was to provide "**balanced**" and "**two-way flow of information**" between the developing and developed countries.

The NWIO is not merely associated with international communication but the whole existing infrastructure of economics and politics in the international community. The NWIO should be seen as an integral part of the NIEO since both of them share one particular aim which is to set up more just and equitable relationships between the developed and the developing countries. As a tactical component of the larger political-economic campaign of the NIEO, NWIO was put forward at the 18th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1974 by non-aligned countries.

NWIO Discussions in UNESCO

The structure of UNESCO membership changed in favour of developing countries during the 1960s and 1970s with the attainment of political independence by a large number of countries. In spite of their economic and technological weakness, compared with the West, the Third World countries used the advantage of majority of developing countries in UNESCO in order to increase their political power in international platforms against the US and the West.

The Third World countries were disagree with the old international economic order (which is still persist) because of a number of reasons. First, the Third World countries realized that international flow of news was dominated by the Western media. For example, in 1987, the amount of news distributed by the major news agencies (AP, UPI, AFP, Reuter and Tass) accounted for as much as 46.5 million words per day. Where as the prominent news agencies supported by the Third World countries (Inter Press Service, Non-Aligned News Agency Poll, Pan African News Agency, Carrabian News Agency and the Gulf News Agency) distributed only 263.000 words per day (9, p.291).

Second, the one directional nature of international news flow from Western countries (centre) to developing countries (periphery) caused the objection of Third World countries. For example, according to the analysis of Third World news coverage of fourteen Asian newspapers in 1977, more than three-quarters of all non-local Third World news come from the big four world news agencies (10, p. 23).

Third, developing countries claimed that their representation in the coverage of Western media was biased and did not reflect the real situation in which developing countries live since they were only taken into the coverage of the media if there were natural disasters, military coups etc., in these countries.

Finally, the Third World countries underlined that the technological advance of West in communication industry perpetuated their dominance in international communications at the expense of developing countries mainly because of the satellites and their applications, such as direct broadcasting, computer-related transmission, and so on.

The resolution of information adopted at the 1976 Summit Conference in Colombo explicitly express (by emphasising the importance of historical development) the approach of the Third World countries to the NWIO:

“...the vast and even growing gap between communication capacities in Non-aligned countries and in the advanced countries which is a legacy of their colonial past. This has created a situation of dependence and domination in which the majority of countries are reduced to passive recipients of biased, inadequate and distorted information... The emancipation and development of national information

media is an integral part of the over-all struggle for political, economic and social independence for a large majority of the peoples of the world who should not be denied the right to inform and to be informed objectively and correctly." (11).

Alternative News Agencies

As a reaction to the big four international news agencies, a number of alternative news agencies, such as Non-aligned News Agencies Pool (NANAP), Caribbean News Agency (CANA), Inter Press Service (IPS) and so on, have been established to help compensate for perceived shortcomings in the existing system of international news supply for developing countries (12).

According to the statute of the IPS Cooperative Society, the objective of IPS is "to serve, through truthful information, the cause of social justice, peace and understanding among people, especially between industrialized countries and the developing countries" (13). IPS has shown remarkable success in supplying international news to Third World countries because of its different approach to the problems or needs of developing countries. Its coverage contains developmental issues, such as trade agreements and industrial and agricultural products, as well as placing some emphasis on news concerning health, housing, education and other cultural items. In contrast to the major news agencies, IPS gives very little place to sport events, natural disasters, except in terms of disaster relief.

According to a comment, "IPS could become a significant competitor, perhaps replacing Western agencies in some Third World markets" (14). Of course, the concern of Western news agencies are not only economic but also ideological since their influence on developing countries has various implications. If the approach of IPS to international news coverage is the remedy of success in developing countries, for what reasons have the major news agencies not applied the same approach in order to be popular in developing countries?

The main feature of the IPS is that it does not provide alternative service but alternative information. So far international news agencies have been reluctant to cover "alternative" kinds of information, as IPS does. The main reason for this is that the media services have been the backbone of news agency business and, therefore, they have had to take their target audiences and major income resources in Western countries into account.

Changes in the Function of the Big International News Agencies

In the early years, news agencies strived to retain clients and restrict competition by news-exchange and cartel practice, by which means they at least secured their

affluent domestic market. But the breakdown of the cartel system hastened the necessity for diversification in their services (i.e., economic services, advertising etc.) since the economic importance of conventional news decreased and they had to compete for revenue with other news agencies. The major American news agencies did not give priority to expand their economic services because there were plenty of newspaper in domestic market.

Although once upon a time media services used to be essential function of international news agencies, today it is a very negligible part because of increasing importance of economic services as an income resource. For instance, income from media services (collecting and distributing conventional news) accounted for only 5 per cent of Reuters' revenue in 1984, although its staff and bureaus expanded 20 per cent in last five years. In this business they are using sophisticated communication technology, such as computers, satellites, data bases and so on. Today Reuters is the world's biggest electronic publisher and specializes in delivering a wide range of computerized financial data from markets world-wide, which get distributed to subscribers through some 90,000 video terminals and teleprinters. (15, pp. 325-327)

Alleyne and Wagner examined the state of the big five's diversification efforts (16, pp. 40-50): Reuters opened its Stockmaster service in 1964 which still provides financial data across the world. In 1973 Reuter Monitor was established as a financial information service which gives subscribers access via their own computer terminals to a database of news and price information. Reuter Monitor Dealing Service was set up in 1981 which still gives dealers the ability to contact in seconds via their Reuter Monitor terminals. Reuter bought UPI's newsphoto business outside the U.S. in 1985 and took over the controlling interest in Visnews, the world's largest television news agency.

Associated Press has a variety of information services. These include AP-Dow Jones, a specialized financial and economic service; an Educational Services Division that made educational films; and AP's Book Division, publishing books relating to current events. AP also diversified into satellite and technological services with its commercial SAT-NET and SCAN technology unit.

Agence France Presse set up its data bank AGORA in the early 1980s and started its AUDIO radio service in 1984. AFP's satellite broadcasting service POLYCOM was established in 1986. Another division providing business and economic news AFX was set up as a joint venture with the British company Extel Financial.

State owned company TASS launched a program of diversification and technical

upgrading by the effects of Perestorika following the first half of the 1980s. TASS successfully launched a new magazine, Echo of the Planet, in 1988. The Information Telegraph Agency of Russia (ITAR) was set up in 1992 by merging TASS and PIA-Novosti (an information agency). However, the TASS logo will remain in its news reports, as in "ITAR-TASS", because of its worldwide recognizability.

United Press International had some difficulties at investing in new technologies throughout the 1980s because of its poor financial performance and instability in its management. As an inevitable consequence of these developments UPI lost many U.S. newspapers as clients (the figure was over 800 in 1982 but it declined fewer than 200 in 1989) and laid off well over 450 employees.

As it is explained above, it is apparent that the role of international news agencies has dramatically changed from news distribution to financial data distribution. I think the major factor which has required news agencies to change is market demand. This major shift in the functions of international news agencies from news distribution to economic services will have a number of consequences for Third World countries.

First, from now on international news agencies will be able to afford to give the true picture of Third World countries in their news coverage since the economic importance of conventional news distribution has sharply decreased, which may put an end to the discussion of imbalance news flow from developed to developing countries. If such a change takes place, it would neither be as a result of genuine concern for some fairness to the Third World countries nor any kind of pressure by developing countries. But it obeys commercial logic since market demand constitutes the main reason of the change in the operation of international news agencies.

Second, the specialisation of international news agencies in economic services will strengthen the domination of these agencies in the world because of economic power. Having this position, international news agencies may use the power either to reinforce their domination in conventional news distribution or to loosen it, which depends on political and international developments in the world. However, it is certain that the consequences of the specialisation in economic services will be far more effective in terms of the subordination of Third World countries since it leads to gathering of economic information in developed countries. It is obvious that the most crucial information will be the most expensive one, which can only be afforded by the multinational companies and governments of developed countries. This kind of important economic information provides a great deal of advantage to the representatives of developed countries and international companies

during the negotiations of economic issues with Third World countries.

Finally, development in the operations of international news agencies will have a serious effect on the behaviour and structure of many Third World countries. Although it is economically difficult for Third World news agencies to catch the major international agencies in the race of offering economic services, since these agencies have the economic power and powerful communication technologies of computer networks, databases and satellites, they have to find a way of joining the race in order to survive.

The US and the Western Position

Since the early days of the UNESCO (1945) the “**free flow of information**”, which took part in the institution’s charter by the endeavours of the US as an indispensable element of democracy and liberalism in the world:

“The organization will collaborate in the world of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of people 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.” (17).

In fact, the policy of the US government after the Second World War is “to do everything within its power along political and democratic lines to help break down the artificial barriers to the expansion of private American news agencies, magazines, motion pictures, and other media of communications throughout the world.” (18)

It might be discussed that the US policy of “free flow” in relation to the communication matters can only serve to compound the Western domination in international news flow since the US and other developed countries have the most developed institutions and facilities in communication sector (i.e., news agencies, satellites, etc) to control not only the content and volume but also the direction of “information flow” in the world. In terms of news and news coverage, the overwhelming majority of world news flows from the developed to the developing countries, and is generated by the four large international news agencies - AP, UPI, AFP and Reuters. As Herbert Schiller has suggested, the policy of a free flow of information was “one of the very few indispensable prerequisites for the imperial ascendancy of the US.” (19)

It was not until 1978 UNESCO General Conference in Geneva that the Western block paid any attention neither to the need for a constructive approach to the problem of imbalance nor for improving communications infrastructure of the developing countries. When the West essentially accepted the free flow of

information, in this conference, the US proposed to enlarge Third World communication capabilities, by training programmes for journalists from the developing countries and upgrading of communication infrastructure of developing countries, according to a project under the supervision of the UNESCO.

Although these kinds of projects are desirable for the Third World countries, I would like to argue the implications of these kinds of initiatives. First of all, American capitalism needs to expand its markets in developing countries by improving the Third World countries' communication infrastructure, which makes easier the trade connections between them. Considering the fact that the US sells more goods to developing countries than to West and Japan combined, the importance of this initiative for the US becomes obvious. Second, the US gets the highest profit from communications investment in developing countries since it has the latest technology and the strongest companies operating in communication industry (i.e., IBM, ITT etc). This superiority of the US also determines the extent of the technological improvement in developing countries. Finally, the improvement of communication infrastructure in the Third World countries is desirable by the US since, as a superpower, it needs to know the latest developments (i.e., government changes, the political activities of different groups, etc.) in those countries.

As it is clear today, these kinds of projects (bilateral or multilateral) have failed to solve the main issues of **“balanced”** and **“one-way-flow of information.”** On the contrary, the West (mainly the US) initiatives emphasising financial pledges and the transfer of technology to build Third World communication systems merely reinforced the status quo and dependency.

Although there seems to be a consensus on the surface in 1978, the attitude of US changed in early 1980s and she withdrew from the UNESCO in December 1984. Roach blames “the anti-NWIO coalition of the press, the government, the private-sector interest groups and the academy in the US for her withdrawal.” (20)

Schiller's (1984) comment on the US withdrawal from the UNESCO is that:

“The US decision to withdraw from UNESCO represents at the best the will of a tiny but extremely influential American interest groups, comprising part of the transnational corporate sector, the giant conglomerate media companies, and the domination-minded unilateralists now occupying the nation's executive offices.” (21)

According to Mowlana, reasons for the withdrawal of US from the UNESCO are the following: First, the US had lost its long-time influence in UNESCO, particularly during the last several years before 1984, when the Third World

members of the organization became the majority. Second, the US saw the current issues under debate in UNESCO in terms of geopolitical rivalries, and “anti-Western” propaganda. Third, the US was unhappy with UNESCO’s involvement of human rights, peace and disarmament issues. Fourth, the US viewed the debate over a NWIO as yet another effort to limit the “**free flow of information**” by the Third World and socialist countries. Finally, the US accused UNESCO for its poor management and politicisation and adopting misguided policies. (22)

How Valid were the Arguments of NWIO’s Proponents?

I would like to argue the validity of the NWIO’s proponents by examining the concepts of the “**free flow**”, “**biased**” and “**one way**” flow of information concepts in order.

First, the Third World countries strongly resisted the Western (mainly the US) policy of “**free flow of information**” because they claimed that this policy only serves to reinforce the cultural and economic domination of the West all over the world. I think this idea is not quite true since the millions of people in developing countries are living under anti-democratic governments or governed by elite classes. On the contrary, it can be truly claimed that these anti-democratic governments and ruling elites are afraid of their own people who can revolt against their rulers when they are informed by different sources, such as from alternative sources in the country, from foreign sources and so on. Today in many Third World countries either the majority of national media are owned by the governments or there are restrictions on them. People in those countries are only allowed to know what their governments want them to know. Some of the governments, or ruling classes, in those countries are in collaboration with the multinational companies and Western governments in order to retain their power. That is why they are afraid of their own people to know realities and they require anti-democratic regimes to survive.

In my opinion, it should be the right of people to be informed by all means whether they live in the developed and developing countries. As long as the governments of third world countries fail to have democratic regimes, they would be in a difficulty to get support not only from the people in Western countries but also in Third World countries in the NWIO debate.

I would like to add an opposite view to the discussion of “free flow”. The conflict between the West and the Third World countries in communication field was inevitable since the primary aim of the Western media is to maximize its profit by exploiting every opportunity, where as the media in the developing countries are suppose to fulfil some national goals, such as the creation of national integrity,

widening education throughout the country, and so on. Therefore, I do not think it is right for the West to apply "free flow" of information (by Direct Broadcasting Satellites, for example) by ignoring the very legitimate right of national sovereignty of the Third World countries since national governments are usually the only body in the developing countries which can serve to the best interests of their people by deciding to the priorities for rapid national development.

Second, the Third World countries criticised the transnational news agencies, because of the "**biased**" coverage, by claiming that the news agencies did not cover the positive developments in developing countries on purpose. Hitherto, it has been necessary for them to take into account the expectations of their target audiences, who are in the Western countries, while organizing their news coverage. But today news selling constitutes very negligible part of news agency business since the major news agencies get substantial amount of their revenue from economic services. For example, income from media services accounted for only 5 percent of Reuter's revenue in 1984. Therefore, the news agencies can afford to cover positive developments in the developing countries as their leaders like. If it happens, would it be the end of the NWIO struggle? I do not think that it would be the end of this discussion since the struggle against the old information order is only an aspect of the struggle against political and economical neo-colonialism.

Finally, the "**one way flow of information**" from the developed to developing countries constituted the another important discussion point in the NWIO debate. It can be claimed that dependence of the Third World countries on the four big news agencies is ever increasing since these agencies have been involved in producing television programmes. For example, UPI and Reuters, through their involvements in UPINT and VISNEWS, provide international news film for television. Because of the economic, technological and historical reasons, Third World countries have almost nothing to resist the information flow (news, television programmes, economic data flow, etc.) from the West but can only rely on government restrictions. In fact, even the West European countries are in a difficulty to compete with the American television programme producers and, therefore, not only as individual countries but also within the European Community they are applying some restrictions in order to both avoid American cultural domination through broadcasting materials and to prevent their domestic markets for their own national producers.

In this context, the situation is becoming harder for the Third World countries to protect their cultural identities. In this respect, the recommendation of the NWIO, such as constructing national and regional networks of news collection and dissemination, following coherent and unified national information policies to resist cultural domination of the West are quite reasonable demands of the Third

World countries. I think, the developing countries rightfully put the issue of the imbalance and one-sidedness in information flow into the NWIO struggle.

Conclusion

During the course of the century the main function of international news agencies has dramatically changed from conventional news distribution to financial data distribution because of market demand. However, it does not mean that they are likely to leave conventional news distribution to "alternative" news agencies because the structure and operation of the major news agencies are suitable to carry on both media services and economic services at the same time.

Although there are some claims that the proportion of news dealing with conflict and crisis declined, for instance, according to the content analysis of AP and UPI in 1983 carried out by Kirad and Weaver, the complaints of Third World countries about misrepresentation and one way flow of information has been continuing (23, pp. 31-47). I think, as long as it does not fit to an economic logic, international news agencies will not change their news policies towards developing countries.

Although few alternative news agencies have shown some progress in international area, their long term success is subject to the competition of major international news agencies. For news agencies in developing countries it is necessary to diversify their services and to join the technological race in order to be economically self sufficient. Otherwise, it will not continue for too long to survive on one form of subsidy or the other. But it is the fact that the majority of news agencies in developing countries will not be able to take part in this race because of their economic and technological weakness.

Under the light of international news agencies discussion, the New World Information Order should be seen as an attack against the West launched by the Third World countries to put an end to the political and economic legacy of neo-colonialism, although it seemed to merely cover the communications matters.

By putting forward the NWIO, the Third World countries seized significant political power in the international platforms which is one of the major reasons why the US withdrew from the UNESCO. However, since the Third World countries are lack of economic and technological competence compared with the West, their success in the international politic became ineffective to change old information order which is still persist. The present system of news flow serves to maintain the status quo in international relations.

The contradiction in the West argument of "free flow" should be noted as it is claiming to inform people in order to promote democracy all over the world (especially in developing countries), yet it commits something undemocratic by ignoring national sovereignty of the developing countries since it is the very legitimate right of the governments (or people) to decide what should be done in their own countries. As the advanced technology (satelite broadcasting, for instance) makes national frontiers less impermeable than before, and the US dominance both interms of communication techonology and television programme exportation is increasing, the arguments of the NWIO are more valid than ever before.

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