

SALZBURG

2003

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IPI CONGRESS REPORT

IPI WORLD CONGRESS & 52nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY





IPI Congress Report

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SATURDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER

Residenz Palace

OPENING CEREMONY

Residenz Palace

Chairperson

Wolfgang Vyslozil

Managing Director, Austria Press Agency (APA)
Vienna

WELCOME STATEMENTS

Jorge E. Fascetto

Chairman of IPI; and Chairman of the Board
Diario El Día, La Plata, Buenos Aires

Wilfred D. Kiboro

Chairman, IPI Kenya Host Committee
and Group Chief Executive, Nation Media Group
Ltd, Nairobi

Johann P. Fritz

Director of IPI

SPEAKERS

Heinz Schaden

Mayor of the City of Salzburg

Wolfgang Schüssel

Federal Chancellor of Austria

DINNER AT THE RESIDENZ PALACE

SUNDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER

Salzburg Congress Centre

SESSION I

*“Pluralism, Democracy and the
Clash of Civilisations”*

Chairperson

Gudrun Harrer

Foreign Editor, Der Standard, Vienna

Keynote Speaker

Benita Ferrero-Waldner

Austrian Foreign Minister, Vienna

PANELISTS

Hasan Cemal

Columnist, Milliyet, Istanbul

Bart Dijkstra

Director, Communications Assistance Foundation
(CAF/SCO), Hilversum, The Netherlands

Anthony Heard

Former Editor, The Cape Times, Cape Town;
and Special Adviser in the Presidency, South Africa

Bernard Margueritte

President, International Communications
Forum, Warsaw

Mogens Schmidt

Director, Division of Freedom of Expression,
Democracy and Peace, UNESCO, Paris

SESSION II

*“Analysing the World Summit
on the Information Society”*

Chairperson

Ilse Brandner-Radinger

Secretary General, Presseclub Concordia, Vienna

Opening Statement

James Ottaway

Chairman, World Press Freedom Committee;
Senior Vice President, Dow Jones & Co.,
New York, NY

DISCUSSANTS

Raymond Louw

Editor and Publisher, Southern Africa Report,
Johannesburg

Alain Modoux

Senior Adviser to UNESCO for the WSIS, Geneva

LUNCH AT THE SHERATON HOTEL

SESSION III

“SARS and the Media”

Chairperson

Alfred Payrleitner

Columnist, Kurier, Vienna

Keynote Speaker

Maria Cheng

Spokesperson, Communicable Diseases Section,
World Health Organisation (WHO), Geneva

PANELISTS

Kavi Chongkittavorn

Assistant Group Editor, Nation Multimedia Group,
Bangkok

Simon K.C. Li

Assistant Managing Editor, Los Angeles Times,
Los Angeles, CA

Bo Maltesen

Editor-in-Chief, Politiken, Copenhagen

Russell Mills

Dean, School of Media and Design, Algonquin
College, Ottawa; and former Publisher, Ottawa
Citizen, Ottawa

PRESENTATION OF THE “FREE MEDIA PIONEER 2003” AWARD

awarded to the Media Council of Tanzania

Jenerali Ulimwengu

Vice President, Media Council of Tanzania,
Dar Es Salaam

DINNER AT THE STIEGL BREWERY

MONDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER

Salzburg Congress Centre

SESSION IV

*“Media in War Zones
and Regions of Conflict”*

Chairperson

Christian Rainer

Editor-in-Chief, profil, Vienna

PANELISTS

Jonathan Baker

World News Editor, BBC, London

Hanoch Marmari

Editor-in-Chief, Ha'aretz, Tel Aviv

Reese Schonfeld

Co-Founder and former President, CNN, Atlanta

Victor de la Serna

Deputy Editor, El Mundo, Madrid

SESSION V

*“The International
News Safety Institute”*

Chairperson

Claus Reitan

Editor-in-Chief, Tiroler Tageszeitung, Innsbruck

Speaker

Rodney Pinder

Director, International News Safety Institute (INSI),
Brussels

LUNCH AT THE SHERATON HOTEL

IPI GENERAL ASSEMBLY

for IPI Members only

TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER

Salzburg Congress Centre

SESSION VI

*“Media Self-Regulation:
A Press Freedom Issue”*

Chairperson

Hubert Feichtlbauer

Former Chairman, Austrian Press Council

PANELISTS

Robert Pinker

Privacy Commissioner and former Acting Chairman,
Press Complaints Commission, London

Keith Spicer

Director, Institute for Media, Peace & Security,
University for Peace, Paris;
and former Chairman, Canadian Radio-Television
and Telecommunications Commission, Ottawa

Joerg Steinbach

Chairman, Complaints Commission,
German Press Council, Bonn

Jenerali Ulimwengu

Vice President, Media Council of Tanzania,
Dar Es Salaam

Andreas Unterberger

Editor-in-Chief, Die Presse, Vienna

DINNER AT ST. PETER'S ABBEY

SESSION VII

“The Transatlantic Rift”

Chairperson

Eugen Freund

Special Correspondent, Austrian Broadcasting
Corporation (ORF), Vienna

Introductory Remarks

Sir Peter Ustinov

PANELISTS

Franziska Augstein

Editor, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

Gilbert Grellet

Director, External Relations, Agence France Presse
(AFP), Paris

Daniel Hamilton

Director, Center for Transatlantic Relations,
Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International
Studies, Johns Hopkins University,
Washington, DC; and former U.S. Deputy Assistant
Secretary of State for European Affairs

Stuart Loory

Editor, IPI Global Journalist; and Lee Hills Chair
in Free Press Studies, University of Missouri School
of Journalism, Columbia, MO

Peter Preston

Director, Guardian Foundation, London

SESSION VIII

“The Oslo Accords – 10 Years On”

Chairperson

Viktor Hermann

Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Foreign Editor,
Salzburger Nachrichten, Salzburg

Speaker

Yossi Beilin

Former Justice Minister and former
Deputy Foreign Minister of Israel

Farewell Remarks

Gerfried Sperl

Chairman, IPI Austrian National Committee;
and Editor-in-Chief, Der Standard, Vienna

FAREWELL LUNCH AT THE SHERATON HOTEL



From Nairobi to Salzburg and back

Michael Kudlak

Congress Coordinator & Editor, IPI Congress Report

The first warning came on 28 November 2002. A car bomb attack on an Israeli-owned hotel in the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa killed three Israelis and 12 Kenyans. On the same day, two surface-to-air missiles narrowly missed an Israeli passenger jet taking off from Mombasa airport.

In May 2003, only weeks before the IPI World Congress was scheduled to begin in Nairobi on 1 June, carefully coordinated suicide bombings were launched within days against foreign targets in Saudi Arabia and Morocco. Suicide bombers attacked expatriate housing compounds in Riyadh on 12 May, killing 35 people, including nine Americans. On 16 May, at least five blasts in Casablanca killed 45 people and left at least 100 others injured. The suicide bomb attacks were aimed at a Jewish community centre, a Spanish restaurant, a five-star international hotel and the Belgian consulate.

The final blow came when British Airways, among other airlines, suspended indefinitely all flights to and from Kenya after the U.S. and British governments issued travel advisories warning their nationals not to travel to Kenya because of the threat of “imminent” terrorist attacks on foreigners and commercial aircraft.

Over the next few days, the IPI Vienna Secretariat received dozens of emails and telephone calls from anxious IPI members. Many said they were reluctant to travel to Kenya with their spouses or family members. Others told us that their flights had been cancelled and they were unable to make alternative travel arrangements at this late stage.

After consulting with the IPI Executive Board and the Kenya Host Committee, the Secretariat officially announced in a 19 May

press release the decision to cancel the Nairobi congress. Although an unjust blow to the people of Kenya in general and the Kenyan organising committee in particular, “IPI believed that it was only prudent not to go ahead with the meeting in Nairobi.” At the same time, IPI expressed the hope that it would be able to hold a future congress in Kenya in the near future.

This left the Secretariat with the option of either cancelling the 2003 IPI World Congress altogether or finding an attractive alternative venue and putting together a full and compelling programme in just a few months. After exploring a range of possible venues, it was decided to hold the congress in Salzburg, Austria, just 269 kilometres west of Vienna.

Over the summer, the Secretariat set about looking for sponsors and recruiting prominent politicians, experts and media representatives to take part in panel sessions ranging from “The Clash of Civilisations” and “The Transatlantic Rift” to “SARS and the Media” and “The World Summit on the Information Society”.

Despite severe time constraints, the IPI World Congress was opened on 13 September at the Residenz Palace, the former official residence of Salzburg’s prince-archbishops. Opening speeches by the Mayor of the City of Salzburg, Heinz Schaden, and the Federal Chancellor of Austria, Wolfgang Schüssel, were followed by an impassioned appeal by Wilfred Kiboro, the Chairman of the IPI Kenya Host Committee. “We feel let down by the attitude of the U.S. and British governments in the issuance of those travel advisories. We seem to have given in to the terrorists and let them win the war,” he said. “We hope that you will give us the opportunity to wish you a warm Kenyan welcome at an IPI congress in Nairobi in the near future.”

In the first session “Pluralism, Democracy and the Clash of Civilisations”, a highly qual-

ified panel of experts, including Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, discussed, among other things, the role of the media in consolidating pluralism and democracy around the world.

Panelists in the next session, “Analysing the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)”, discussed the serious threats to press freedom and the free flow of information on the Internet posed by the UN-sponsored WSIS, to be held in Geneva and Tunis in December 2003 and November 2005, respectively.

In the session, “SARS and the Media”, panelists discussed the role of the media, as well as China’s culture of silence, in the recent spread of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Two related sessions, “Media in War Zones and Regions of Conflict” and “The International News Safety Institute (INSI)”, analysed the grave dangers facing journalists in so many parts of the world, including Iraq, where news organisations had in place both journalists “embedded” with U.S. and British troops and non-embedded or “unilateral” reporters who operated under very different circumstances. The desperate need for promoting good practice in the provision of safety training for journalists was stressed, and Rodney Pinder, the director of INSI, introduced the new global safety network – a joint initiative by IPI and the International Federation of Journalists – to the IPI membership.

After the session on “Media Self-Regulation”, in which panelists discussed the role of self-regulatory media bodies as possible bulwarks of press freedom, the congress ended with two political sessions.

The strained relationship between the United States and Europe, exacerbated by the Iraq conflict, was the topic of the session “The Transatlantic Rift”, in which the UN Goodwill

Ambassador, actor, author and raconteur Sir Peter Ustinov opened the discussion with his usual witty and thought-provoking remarks.

In the session, “The Oslo Accords – 10 Years On”, former Israeli justice minister Yossi Beilin presented – exactly ten years after the historical signing of the Declaration of Principles by Israel and the PLO in Oslo, Norway – a very personal evaluation of the Middle East peace process.

Two and a half months after the Salzburg congress, Beilin, together with former Palestinian information minister Yasser Abed Rabbo – who was forced to decline his participation in Salzburg after the collapse of the Palestinian government on 6 September – would launch an alternative, unofficial peace plan for the Middle East, known as the Geneva Initiative, at a ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland, on 1 December. Although rejected by the Israeli government and the Palestinian Legislative Council, many see the symbolic accord as a promising foundation for peace that will advance dialogue between the two sides.

Dialogue was also the focus of a meeting organised in conjunction with the Salzburg congress by the IPI affiliate, the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO). As was the case in Ljubljana in 2002, SEEMO held one of its “Dialogue Meetings”, thereby continuing IPI’s long tradition of organising bilateral meetings intended to achieve understanding among journalists, and so among peoples. This time, the meeting was held between editors and leading journalists from Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Vojvodina, Serbia.

In the end, the Salzburg congress proved to be a great success, with much praise coming from the delegates. During the four-day event, the lively and engaged response from the participants was reflected in full halls and the exceptionally wide media coverage. However, it was not just the panel sessions that proved to be popular. As in previous years, the IPI World Congress provided a valuable meeting place where delegates could exchange information, make new contacts and meet old friends.

The 2004 IPI World Congress will take place in Warsaw, Poland, from 15-18 May. And everyone attending the Salzburg congress agreed that in 2005 IPI should convene in Kenya in order to express solidarity with our African colleagues and demonstrate that IPI will “not give in to terrorists.” ■



Photo: Tourismus Salzburg GmbH

OPENING CEREMONY

Residenz Palace



Chairperson

Wolfgang Vyslozil

Managing Director, Austria Press Agency (APA), Vienna

Welcome Statements

Jorge E. Fascetto

Chairman of IPI; Chairman of the Board, Diario El Día, La Plata, Buenos Aires

Wilfred D. Kiboro

Chairman, IPI Kenya Host Committee; Group Chief Executive, Nation Media Group Ltd, Nairobi

Johann P. Fritz

Director of IPI

Speakers

Heinz Schaden

Mayor of the City of Salzburg

Wolfgang Schüssel

Federal Chancellor of Austria



A Decline in Press Freedom

Heinz Schaden

Mayor of the City of Salzburg

Ladies and Gentlemen, your organisation stands for the promotion and defence of press freedom, and you meet here in Salzburg at a time when the degree of press freedom is, unfortunately, lower than in the years before.

The New York-based Freedom House reported that only 20 per cent of the world's 6.2 billion people live under free press conditions; in 47 countries, particularly in the so called democracies in transition, there are only partly free conditions; and in 68 countries there is no freedom of expression at all.

Between 2001 and 2003, there was a serious decline in freedom as countries representing over 100 million people slipped from the free press category to partly free.

You are all quite aware of the fact that this is a consequence of the so-called "global war against terrorism". Under the pretext of increased security concerns, restrictions of civil liberties have occurred in many countries, including the Western democracies. It is the task of organisations and institutions like IPI to monitor carefully and to protest vehemently if further deterioration of democratic standards should occur. The media must also be watchdogs in this respect. ■

Working Together

Jorge E. Fascetto

Chairman of IPI; Chairman of the Board
 Diario El Día, La Plata, Argentina



If somebody had told me earlier in the summer that I would be addressing an IPI World Congress in September, I would never have believed it!

In the three short months since we were sadly forced to cancel the Kenyan Congress, IPI has been able to find a new venue and create a new Congress.

I believe that this is due to the IPI Secretariat, who, without the assistance of a Host Committee, have made this Congress possible. I would like to thank them for their hard work. Without them there would have been no IPI World Congress in Salzburg.

Since its foundation, almost 60 years ago, IPI has been struggling to defend and promote press freedom wherever it is threatened.

Personally I feel deeply identified with IPI, beyond my position as chairman of the organisation. I cannot forget what IPI meant for our newspaper, El Día of Argentina, during the difficult times of [President Juan Domingo] Perón's dictatorship when, in 1951, after grave financial pressures, extortion and threats, the newspaper was confiscated. It was only seven years later that our newspaper was legally returned to its legitimate owners, thanks to strong international pressure, in which IPI played a significant role.

Between 1960 and 1961, IPI, through its publication, IPI Report, strongly denounced the dispossession suffered by El Día, which largely influenced the liberation of our newspaper.

Incidents of this kind mark the history of our society. How many newspapers in countries ruled by authoritarian regimes have recovered their right to be independent? How many journalists jailed for expressing their opinion have been freed and how many of them have had their lives saved thanks to IPI's permanent and courageous fight for freedom of expression?

Last year, IPI was in Venezuela on a joint-mission with the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) in order to study the situation of the Venezuelan press, which is going through one of the most difficult periods in its history.

Wilfred Kiboro of the Nation Media Group and Mitja Mersol of Delo, both members of IPI from outside the American continent, formed part of this mission and contributed to a great degree to its success.

This made us realise how important it would be for IPI and IAPA, two of the most significant organisations defending freedom of expression, to work closer together in initiatives aimed at protecting this fundamental human right.

Before the joint mission to Venezuela, IPI actively participated in 1994 in the free speech

conference in Mexico City that resulted in the Chapultepec Declaration, IAPA's main document on press freedom in the Western Hemisphere. During IAPA's Assembly in Chicago next October, the Boards of both organisations will meet for the first time and I have no doubt they will propose measures which will be important for the future of both IPI and IAPA, and will surely help towards the development of a free and independent press.

Last year, IPI was in Venezuela on a joint-mission with the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) in order to study the situation of the Venezuelan press, which is going through one of the most difficult periods in its history

Let us hope both organisations will someday be able to fulfil their only unfulfilled dream, which is to eradicate forever every method used by dictatorships or pseudodemocracies to hinder the full exercise of press freedom. ■

Giving in to the Terrorists

Wilfred D. Kiboro

Chairman, IPI Kenya Host Committee;
Group Chief Executive, Nation Media
Group Ltd, Nairobi



On behalf of the Kenyan IPI Host Committee in particular, and on behalf of the Kenyan public in general, may I express my deep disappointment that I am not addressing this gathering in our wonderful city of Nairobi, but rather in Salzburg, Austria.

Of course this is not to say that I am not happy to be here, but just to explain that I am saddened by what transpired to bring this Congress here today.

As chairman of the IPI Kenya Host Committee and despite our being a country with meagre resources, we all looked forward to hosting this Congress in Kenya and had been in preparations for over two years.

Unfortunately, that came to nought after the United States and Britain issued some travel advisories followed thereafter by the banning of British Airways flights to Kenya. This led to the cancellation of the Congress just three weeks from its scheduled dates.

Our own perspective is that terrorism is a global phenomenon and we feel let down by the attitude of the U.S. and British govern-

ments in the issuance of those travel advisories. We seem to have given in to the terrorists and let them win the war.

We all know that terrorists aim to disrupt our lives and strike fear in people all over the world and by these cowardly actions we let them get the upper hand.

As journalists, our role is to be at the forefront of fighting against such matters. Did we, in our cancellation of the Kenya Congress, show that the media will not go to areas of conflict? As much as we know that we have to take due care, we feel that this was too punitive.

Ladies and Gentlemen, if travel advisories suggest that some countries are too unsafe to go to, then we see hypocrisy in the action taken by the U.S. and Britain against Kenya as they do not issue any travel advisories to their citizens against travelling to destinations such as some cities in Israel, including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Their citizens can still freely travel to these areas where there are almost constant daily conflicts.

We see no justification in the travel bans that were imposed on Kenya as we cannot be

convinced that Kenya is more unsafe than many other conflict areas of the world.

As we speak, Kenya is gearing up to host over 8,000 delegates to the 13th International Conference on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Africa (ICASA) in Nairobi from 21-26 September.

We seem to have given in to the terrorists and let them win the war

I am gratified that my good friend Philip Mathew from India did not cancel his trip to Kenya despite the cancellation of the IPI Congress and together with his family had a wonderful time not only in Kenya but in our neighbouring country, Tanzania, as well. I am sure if you gave Philip an opportunity, he would share with you his wonderful memories and image of our peaceful nation.

May I conclude by inviting you all once again and hope that you will give us the opportunity to wish you a warm Kenyan welcome at a Congress in Nairobi in the near future.

Strange Things Are Happening Nowadays

Johann P. Fritz
Director of IPI



Friday, 13 June 2003, was our first deadline for the decision on holding the IPI World Congress in Salzburg. However, as the financial situation was not yet cleared, we had to continue negotiating for another week. We finally mailed out the official announcement on 20 June, after reaching the following evaluation of the situation:

- With Salzburg, we had found an attractive location, and a safe one – an important element during times like these.
- We had managed to organise an interesting programme. Once again, many thanks to all speakers and panelists, who reacted so spontaneously to our requests.
- There were still not enough sponsors in order to bring this conference close to the break-even point. However, if we waited longer, we would lose additional potential participants, since in most countries the peak season of holidays was about to begin and mailings to our network of members in over 120 countries take up to three weeks, even when sent by special delivery.

- In addition, we had to accept that the given dates were impossible for certain groups, like the Norwegians, because of elections, or the Swedes, because of their referendum on the EURO, or for academics, who have to prepare the start of their new courses. Our Turkish IPI Committee had organised, for the same weekend, an international event for ombudsmen and members of press councils, and the Russians will have, just a few days after Salzburg, an important All-Russian media conference in Baku.

Strange things are also happening within the various preparatory committees of the UN-sponsored World Summit on the Information Society.

- Moreover, we were reminded that the U.S. government had issued an Orange Alert warning in connection with the anniversary of September 11 and that this coincided with the period of travelling to Salzburg.

- Finally, the Salzburg dates conflicted with our own programme of events, since the World Congress is only one of at least ten

conferences or seminars which IPI organises every year, and just two days after Salzburg we would be holding, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, a major event in Bucharest with directors and editors from over 50 public service broadcasting organisations in Eastern and Western Europe.

Have the United Nations – the dream of an international system based on permanent rules, reliable procedure and equally distributed power – been nothing but another post-Cold War bubble?

Thus, instead of having the usual 300-500 participants for the IPI World Congress, or even 700 at such attractive spots like Moscow in 1998, we hoped to get about 200-250 participants – a rather good guess, as it turned out.

For the programme, we planned the discussion of some timely topics, for example Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS.

Because of the culture of secrecy in China, effective counter-measures could not be taken in due time and this epidemic produced hundreds of victims and devastating economic effects in certain regions. On the other hand, the English-language China Daily reported that by May of this year, Western democracies had donated approximately US\$ 31 million. Humanitarian aid is one thing, but rewarding a political regime that caused global problems and effectively blocked the WHO's intention to help fight SARS in Taiwan is another.

Well, strange things are happening nowadays!

We then decided to discuss the "Transatlantic Rift", a crisis between Europe and the United States due to some basic foreign policy differences, but also to a lot of cheap posturing, bitterness and mud slinging on both sides. Much of this is a misconception.

The Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who is here tonight, recently stressed in an interview not only the common system of values, but also the many other fields of common interests, in particular economic interests. Did you know that the European Union is the biggest investor in the United States and that 45 per cent of all U.S. investments are in countries of the EU? But above all, the exchange of goods between the U.S. and Europe amounts to over a billion EURO per day! So, one would think that rebuilding this strained relationship would certainly have priority. On the contrary, the conflict lingers on.

Yes, strange things are happening nowadays!

The global situation could presently be described as a "Clash of Civilisations".

The Spanish paper El País commented, "One essential element should by now be imprinted on the collective subconscious. Washington can dictate its law wherever and whenever it wants. At any time the U.S. would be able to deploy anywhere in the world a force impressive not for its size but for its destructive power, its technological superiority and its aggressiveness." And an editorial in the Egyptian weekly, Al-Ahram, mentioned, "The American view of the world is still 'embedded' in the Reagan administration's definition of allies and rogue states. After September 11, this was enhanced by the doctrine of 'If you are not with us, you are against us'."

So we have to ask ourselves: Will America rise up as the world's judge and policeman in the 21st century? Have the United Nations – the dream of an international system based on permanent rules, reliable procedure and equally distributed power – been nothing but another post-Cold War bubble?

As I said before, strange things are happening nowadays!

In terms of sheer numbers, the war in Iraq was perhaps the best-covered conflict in history. Over six hundred journalists were embedded with coalition forces and several hundred independent or "unilateral" reporters roamed Iraq and surrounding countries; their experiences in covering the war differed vastly.

*Strange things are also
happening within the various
preparatory committees of the
UN-sponsored World Summit
on the Information Society*

Charlie Brennan of the Rocky Mountain News in Denver reported that most embedded journalists found very quickly that "... assessing a war from the bottom of a ditch, while under threat of imminent attack, was as fruitful as imagining a completed puzzle by studying a single piece. Unilaterals, or non-embedded journalists, believed that they would be in positions to cover the war on a much broader scale. They were right, although some of them paid the ultimate price for that coverage."

And the situation of about 150-250 journalists who stayed in Baghdad was best described by Robert Collier, a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle, who wrote, "Waiting in Baghdad's Palestine Hotel for American missiles and bombs to come raining down on the city was an act of extreme faith in American military technology. Aim accurately, please."

With regard to the other hotspot in the Middle East, IPI was of course reminded that the Oslo breakthrough in the peace negotiations happened exactly 10 years ago. We had dedicated several seminars and even our 1996 World Congress to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Now came the "road map" and some experts, like Henry Siegman, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, argue that this plan, like the many initiatives

preceding it, never even got off the ground. A hopeless situation? Yes, because strange things are unfortunately happening nowadays!

And strange things are also happening within the various preparatory committees of the UN-sponsored World Summit on the Information Society.

Jim Ottaway, the chairman of the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC), is trying to coordinate the efforts of the international media organisations, since until now the organisers have essentially ignored the importance of press freedom for the future of new technologies.

Finally, we had to put the issue of "Media Self-Regulation" on the agenda. Several press councils in Europe, including the Austrian Press Council, had been facing difficulties. In the UK, a sub-committee of the House of Commons threatened to diminish the role of the Press Complaints Commission. And Peter Beattie, the Premier of Queensland, referred to the Australian Press Council as a "toothless tiger" that was slow to act and irrelevant. He raised the issue of media concentration, in particular in communities in which there is insufficient competition. In an age of budget-conscious demographic-driven media organisations, he said, a near monopoly is not a free press, at least in the traditional political sense of the term. It remains free from government censorship, but there is no mechanism left to expose and correct bias within the media. "Can democracy flourish amid the lack of competition within the media, or is there a risk that the media will demand accountability of others, but itself stay above scrutiny," he asked.

Well, despite the existence of media watch groups, ombudsmen and press councils, the old question is back again in the political arena: Who guards the guardians?

As I said before, strange things are happening nowadays!

Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope you will enjoy the proceedings of our conference and that these "strange things" will result in discussions that turn the Salzburg IPI World Congress into an interesting and memorable event. ■



**Wolfgang
Schüssel**
Federal Chancellor
of Austria

Information and Insecurity

I am happy to welcome you here in Salzburg and from experience I can tell you that you could not have chosen a better place. Salzburg is European history. Salzburg is also music yet to be written. It is a place where new visions and worlds evolve – in music, in theatre, in architecture and painting. Therefore Salzburg is an ideal place to think about connections and interdependencies that affect us all.

For this reason, every summer I invite personalities from the arts, economy and politics. We share our thoughts on various issues; this year we discussed the phenomenon of “Insecurity in an Uncertain World”.

The recent events bitterly demonstrate that the issue of insecurity and “Angst” is present in our everyday lives. Three days ago, Swe-

den’s foreign minister Anna Lindh was murdered in a department store in the afternoon. The world mourns the loss of this bright and high-minded woman who represented a very likeable and warm Europe. Nobody knows the motive of the killer. Actually, it is almost impossible to imagine why anybody should have thought about doing Anna Lindh any harm.

Half a year ago, on 12 March 2003, the Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic was shot. On 6 May 2002, a fanatic killed the right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn in Hilversum in the Netherlands. The first reaction always is to demand tighter security measures for politicians. However, this does not touch the heart of the problem. Politicians have become the incarnation of strong emotional

feelings like hope or hatred; they are projection screens for almost messianic expectations. Combined with the excitement that is always present in times of a campaign, these emotions can become an explosive mixture. Extreme feelings lead to extremes – in the worst case to a tragedy like the one we saw three days ago. The IPI Congress is a perfect forum to think about this development that poses a threat to every open democracy.

On the surface, it may seem that information and insecurity are contradictory, that information is a cure for insecurity. Actually, I have the impression that we are living in a media world where things are turned upside down, where information can be the cause for insecurity.

Apart from the questions of security and bodyguards, we recognise a broad feeling of insecurity and uncertainty throughout the world. Ask a New Yorker about safety and he will think of 9/11. Ask a German worker and he might tell you about his fear of losing his job. Ask somebody from an Arab country and he will give you his perception of Iraq, Iran and the Middle East conflict.

The question of insecurity and uncertainty is also extremely relevant for the media. We all live in a global news village. Everyday we are almost overwhelmed by news from all over the world, be it a bomb explosion in Iraq, be it a natural disaster somewhere in Europe, be it a political discussion in our own country about reforms or government initiatives. What the media coverage usually has in common is a negative tone, an almost pessimistic view of the world that is actually confirmed by the “triple C” of today’s news – crises, conflicts and catastrophes – that make it to the headlines.

On the surface, it may seem that information and insecurity are contradictory, that information is a cure for insecurity.

Actually, I have the impression that we are living in a media world where things are turned upside down, where information can be the cause for insecurity

Public attention is the currency of our modern societies. But more news does not necessarily mean that our citizens are better informed. Surveys and polls on certain issues usually show a lack of understanding of what is really going on. We should take that seriously, as politicians and as media people. It cannot be in our interest that our society feels insecure; we all share the vision of independent and self-confident citizens who make up their minds and decide freely within the democratic rules.

Supposedly every journalist has heard about the “Kiss” principle during his career, meaning the effort to “keep it short and simple”. Today a 60-second-story on TV is already the long version of the usual news flash, forcing the reporter to tell his story in a couple of words. Even more difficult, this story has to be produced under extreme time con-

straints, as the competition among the various media is tougher than ever. Who has the story first is the challenge of all journalists.

On the other hand, we all deal with complex issues that often cannot be easily explained. Think of pension reform or health care. Our system in Austria has been changed so many times that only experts can actually understand what the consequences would be if we changed this or that part of it. The problem is rather clear. We fortunately live longer, have more and more sophisticated medical means but less children and therefore less people financing the growing costs for our pension and health care system. But there are no easy and simple answers for these problems.

Politics and the media have created a ritual that the German president Roman Herzog has described like this:

In the beginning there is an initiative that will hurt at least one interest group. The media reports a “collective outrage”. During the next hours and days alternative proposals, events, even demonstrations, collections of signatures for or against several proposals, polls, etc., create a complete chaos. Nobody knows anymore what is really on the table. The citizens react with confusion and frustration. In the end, the problem is often postponed. No consensus is possible, the status quo remains untouched. Everybody waits for the next proposal.

Sometimes we seem trapped in this vicious circle. I am ready to admit that politicians including myself can always do a better job in communicating the reforms and why they are necessary. It is the job of the media to question proposals and to check the consequences. However, on both sides of the table we should always try to get back to substance and solutions.

We should take that broad feeling of insecurity seriously, because “Angst” blocks creativity and innovation. In Austria, we tend to describe first why something cannot work before we even start to develop a new idea. You cannot be innovative without taking risks. This is as true for the economy as it is for politics.

Take Europe for example. For the first time in history the continent is re-united in peace and without the hegemony of any country. A dream is to come true within a few couple of months. We did not exactly know what the risks of enlargement were in the beginning;

however, we have always seen the chances of a re-united Europe. Austria is benefiting a lot from being back in the heart of Europe. Now the next phase begins. Nobody knows exactly how the “new” Europe with 25 members and more will work and what dynamics will evolve out of that new constellation. I strongly believe that it will be something new, that you cannot compare it to the European Union we got used to in the last decades.

I am convinced that the media will use all its creativity and competence to achieve the high goal of turning an information society into an informed society

Therefore, we have to get rid of some old patterns of thinking and develop a clearer view of what we want of Europe and what policies it should stand for. We have to discuss the frontiers and means of the European Union openly. This is not a hypothetical discussion. It means to deal with questions like: What does a European foreign policy look like? How can we achieve a sound balance between European and national policies?

Next month the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) will start in Rome to discuss the European constitution. I very much welcome the draft that has been written by the members of the convention. It is a solid basis for the IGC but there is always room for improvement. Europe has always been a work in progress, but we owe it to our citizens that we define the guidelines that give them security.

What we need is the courage of the former seafarers. We need to inject microbes of confidence. The challenges are out there – for politicians as well as for journalists. I am absolutely confident that we can tackle the problems. In Austria we have shown that we can move in the right direction and that the citizens accept reasonable reforms. And I am convinced that the media will use all its creativity and competence to achieve the high goal of turning an information society into an informed society.

I wish you fruitful and encouraging discussions during your congress. ■



SESSION I

Salzburg Congress Centre

*“Pluralism,
Democracy
and the Clash
of Civilisations”*



Chairperson

Gudrun Harrer

Foreign Editor, Der Standard, Vienna

Keynote Speaker

Benita Ferrero-Waldner

Austrian Foreign Minister, Vienna

Panelists

Hasan Cemal

Columnist, Milliyet, Istanbul

Bart Dijkstra

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Former Editor, The Cape Times, Cape Town;
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Bernard Margueritte

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Mogens Schmidt

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Democracy and Peace, UNESCO, Paris



Opting for Pluralism

Benita Ferrero-Waldner

Austrian Foreign Minister, Vienna

When we think about the concepts that have shaped the world we live in during the past-half century, even within the past decade, there are many keywords that come to our mind. “Globalisation”, which has many meanings, both positive and negative, may be one of the most decisive concepts of all of these new concepts, because this term signifies the fact that we have to learn to look at political and economic questions in a way that includes all of their global consequences. Globalisation has made all of us more acutely aware

of the ways in which our currencies, our economies, our political fortunes, our attempts at waging war and our attempts at building peace are, in the end, all inter-linked. It is not possible to “go it alone” in the kind of world we live in, since there is no such thing as being “alone”.

Along with the globalisation of world systems, we also have been confronted with an increased movement of people, as refugees and as economic and political migrants. The demography of our world has changed and our way of looking at the world of religious, cultural and ethnic difference must now also begin to catch up with those changes.

It is precisely the interpenetration and proximity of great civilisations and cultures that will be the hallmark of the 21st century. The map of the world cannot be colour-coded as to its Christian, Muslim, Hindu identity, but each part of the world is marbled with the colours and the textures of the whole. People of different religious traditions live together all over the world – as majorities in one place and as minorities in others.

Democracy is virtually the only political model with global appeal, no matter how different the cultural background of people may be

Since the publication ten years ago of Samuel P. Huntington's "The Clash of Civilisations" claiming that world politics in the post Cold War era is mainly comprehensible from a perspective of a "clash of civilisations", it has become customary when discussing world politics to refer to this theory. Huntington, as you know, basically concludes that world politics from here onwards will be increasingly characterised by clashes along the civilisational fault lines separating them.

He says, "In the emerging world, the relations between states and groups from different civilisations will not be close and will often be antagonistic. Yet, some intercivilisational relations are more conflict-prone than others. At the micro level, the most violent fault lines are between Islam and its Orthodox, Hindu, African, and Western Christian neighbours. At the macro level, the dominant division is between 'the West and the rest', with the most dominant conflict occurring between Muslim and Asian societies on the one hand and the West on the other. The dangerous clashes of the future are likely to arise from the interaction of Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic assertiveness."

Despite Huntington's claim of a clash of civilisations between the "West and the rest", the World Values Survey, a worldwide investigation of socio-cultural and political change, based at the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan, reveals that, at this point in history, democracy has an overwhelmingly positive image throughout the world. In country after country, a clear majority of the population describes having "a democratic political system" as either "good" or

"very good". Democracy is virtually the only political model with global appeal, no matter how different the cultural background of people may be.

Yet Huntington is correct when he argues that cultural differences have taken on a new importance, forming possible fault lines for future conflict. Although almost the entire world pays lip service to democracy, there is still no global consensus on fundamental values – such as social tolerance, gender equality, freedom of speech, and interpersonal trust – that are crucial to democracy.

Not surprisingly, at the point of contact of two or more civilisations, there are bound to be some frictions emanating from different values. We all have our own personal experiences with private "clashes" – arguments with our neighbours, the missed party/concert because of parental forbiddance, etc. The main point is how we deal with these differences. I think, basically, there are three ways of handling "difference":

"Although almost the entire world pays lip service to democracy, there is still no global consensus on fundamental values – such as social tolerance, gender equality, freedom of speech, and interpersonal trust – that are crucial to democracy."

1) Exclusivism, which requires the exclusion of those who are different and demands that those who are different go home: What is foreign should leave.

2) Assimilation or Inclusivism, where differences dissolve into a melting pot, like in the United States of America, adding their flavours but losing their forms: People are welcome to come and to be like "us".

3) Pluralism, where a group or community is shaped by the encounter of the many, the engagement of the many, a "cultural pluralism", where one has a right to be different, not just in dress and public presentation, but also in religion and creed, united only by participation in the common covenants of citizenship.

What we have to opt and work for is pluralism – pluralism not as an ideology, but rather as a dynamic process through which we

engage with one another in and through our very deepest differences. "Pluralism", which regards "otherness" not as a threat but indeed as an enrichment, not as something to be afraid of but as a chance to cooperate. Pluralism is not given, but must be created. It requires participation and also an active attempt to understand each other. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take, criticism and self-criticism. It is the language of dialogue that we will need to develop further, and this also addresses the media.

This dialogue has not only to take place between religions and cultures but also within religions, within societies and within cultures. In this dialogue, we should not disregard the potential inherent in our religious or ethnic minorities if they are encouraged to take part in these discussions as bridges rather than outsiders. The Christian minorities and the Jewish minorities in the Islamic countries should be such bridges and the other way around.

Muslims living in Europe, for example, can better explain to us what Islam is all about and to their Islamic brethren what Western civilisation is all about.

Austria has a longstanding record in the organisation of a dialogue between cultures and civilisations and has acquired some tangible, political know-how. Based on the conviction that the dialogue between cultures and civilisations has to include the media in order to reach out to the general public and to all actors in the civil society, I myself have taken up this subject and organised last year, in the Euro-Mediterranean context, an international seminar on the role of the media in the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations. Another such seminar will take place on my initiative in November in Vienna where we again should discuss realistic chances for "ethical conduct" in a globalised media world.

I am truly looking forward to co-hosting this seminar, which will be entitled "Cultural Diversity: The Quest for Common Moral Ground and the Public Role of the Media", together with the Jordanian Minister for Social Affairs, Rwanda Al-Mariah.

All political and religious efforts to promote such a dialogue between cultures and civilisations must reach out to the public at large. The task we as governments, religious leaders, teachers, writers and journalists share is to give people a fair chance to understand and to appreciate different cultures and civilisations. In order to involve our civic societies in this dialogue, we need the media, the writers, the poets, and the thinkers to help transmit this message of understanding.

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The media, as we are all aware, are among the most powerful creators and transmitters of cultural images today. This places you in a very special position. We of course do understand that most media are also businesses and therefore have to follow certain rules of the market. Only the media that sell their product will survive economically and will therefore also have an impact on public opinion. But we also recognise that there is an ethical responsibility for intellectual honesty, for truth and for sensitivity to transport valid images and messages that are not purposefully biased and prejudiced.

In an age of globalisation, we may very well feel the threat that all our deeds and actions have global consequences, but at the same time I also ask all of us also to realise that there is a second side to the coin, namely that our positive efforts towards a just dialogue will have a global impact. ■

The Turkish

Hasan Cemal

Columnist, Milliyet, Istanbul

I will talk about the Turkish model, or Turkey as a model, and that there can be democracy and pluralism in a Muslim country.

One of the battles currently being fought in Washington over Iraq is ideological. The two sides in this battle are the so-called neo-cons – the neo-conservatives – and the neo-liberals. The question over which much ink has been spilled and much more is likely to follow: How can the Arab world, Arab societies, modernise? How can they become more democratic? This is an important question. Many people assume that as the Arab world becomes more democratic, the context which breeds terrorism will gradually dissipate and the Middle East will finally reach a degree of stability as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is resolved.

The neo-cons believe that democracy should be installed with the help of American might, if need be. The examples of Germany and Japan in the wake of World War II are constantly brought forth to support this line of thinking. The neo-liberals do not object to the war against Iraq, but they do not favour the use of outside force to modernise and democratise the country or the region. I will not dwell on Iraq, where I spent two weeks as a journalist at the end of April, nor will I talk about the German or the Japanese models. I wish to reflect upon the Turkish example, which may shed some light on our topic today.

Turkey's population is 99 per cent Muslim. It is a country that has undergone a systematic revolution from above for the past 200 years to modernise. At the beginning of the 20th Century, we saw the first and brief

Ottoman Turkish encounter with a constitutional monarchy, a parliament, and political parties. In 1923, a republican order that would become secular was established. In 1945, just after World War II, multi-party politics were introduced for good after two previous failed attempts. The impetus for these steps towards modernisation was not imposed by outside factors, but they were instrumental, at least indirectly, in prompting the change.

Indeed, outside factors do play a part in some critical turning points. The Ottoman reformation that extends throughout the entire 19th Century and the transition to multi-party rule owe a lot to the challenge of external development. Since the early 1980s, and even today, outside factors such as the Copenhagen criteria of the European Union have been a guiding light for democratic reforms. Still, the republican revolution from above, coming on the heels of earlier Ottoman reforms, managed to force feed to a largely rural Muslim society a civilisation model based on the European model.

What did the Ottoman founding fathers of the Turkish Republic do? They held Islam partly responsible for the decline and fall of the Empire. Islam for them was the old world. It had to be repressed, replaced, and made irrelevant in public life and politics. They wanted to build a centralised nation state and wanted to avoid separatism at all cost. To that end, they borrowed the Swiss civil code; that was a real revolution. They borrowed the German trade laws, the Italian criminal law and adopted French secularism. They borrowed and adopted the French centralised administrative structure in a new Republic of Turkey. To break away from the imperial Islamic past, both mentally and

Model

symbolically, they replaced the Arab alphabet with the Latin one, threw away the fez and the veil, and began to sport Western hats and Western outfits. They founded conservatories engaged in the composition of Western music. At times they went too far, like when they banned classical Turkish music on the radio. They tried to render Islam – a religion that claims to encompass all aspects of life, including politics – a matter of individual faith. They argued forcefully that religious belief was to remain strictly between the individual and God. As they suppressed any religious manifestations in politics, they institutionalised the state's control of religion and religious practices. At times, they went wild and banned the construction of new mosques.

The impetus for these steps towards modernisation was not imposed by outside factors, but they were instrumental, at least indirectly, in prompting the change

This was the first stage of modernisation from above in Turkey, a Muslim country.

The second stage came in 1945 with the advent of multi-party politics and the electoral transfer of power in 1950 as the result of free and fair elections.

The third stage consisted of economic liberalisation, launched in 1980.

The fourth stage addressed the need to fortify the country's democratic institutions and deepen its democratisation, to do away with, once and for all, interruptions caused by military interventions.

At that stage, the European Union membership process provided the framework.



Turkey had an association agreement, dated 1963, with the EU. Since 1995, the year a customs union agreement was finalised, a gradual progression in democratisation took place. The pace intensified after the 1999 Helsinki Summit, when the EU invited Turkey to become a candidate for membership. Last August, the seventh and for the moment final reform package was enacted that transformed the civil and military balance in the country.

One cannot really underestimate the significance of these reforms, especially the last one about the civil and military balance. In the 200 years of forced modernisation that I tried to outline, the Turkish military played a pioneering role. As the protector or custodian of Turkey's modernisation, it also saw fit to intervene and interrupt in the democracy process several times over the past 50 years. Actually, the very success of the modernisation drive made the military's continuing role as the guardian of the Republic redundant. The economic liberalisation of the 1980s and the opening up of Turkey to the currents of globalisation created the circumstances for the society at large to own up to the modernisation project that once had to be dictated from above. I call this phenomenon the secularisation of society, the development of civil socie-

ty, or the maturation of Turkey's own liberal democratisation.

This is a rough summary of the Turkish model. It is also a model that proves the compatibility of Islam in democracy. I would argue that this is a chance to avoid a so-called clash of civilisations. In this context, it is imperative that the Turkish candidacy, declared by the EU in 1999, is allowed to arrive at its terminus, i.e., EU membership.

It is heartening, therefore, that Günther Verheugen, the EU Commissioner in charge of enlargement, said, "Even if, like me, you do not subscribe to Huntington's idea of the clash of civilisations, the risk that the 21st Century might see far-ranging conflict between the Western democracies and the Islamic world cannot be wholly excluded. In such a situation, it has to be an advantage to have on our side an important country like Turkey, which proves that democracy and the rule of law are perfectly compatible with Islam."

Even more heartening was what Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign Minister, said on the occasion of the Turkish Prime Minister's visit to Germany at the beginning of September: "Turkey will become a member of the EU as a modern Muslim country and thus become an example for all other Muslim countries in its region and beyond." ■

Anthony Heard

Former Editor, The Cape Times, Cape Town;
Special Adviser in the Presidency, South Africa



Looking at the South African Experience

I have just been dipping into Samuel Huntington again and it makes quite scary reading these days because, since he wrote it in 1993, the world has taken quite a lurch towards what some of his supporters might suggest is a direction that confirms his basic thesis, i.e., ideology and economics will not be the cause of future wars but, in fact, culture and civilisations. What we have seen in the last couple of years is cause for very profound thought about Huntington. But it can be very encouraging to briefly look at the South African experience which, I think, offers an interesting, countervailing force to the theories of Samuel Huntington.

I spent all my professional life working as a journalist in South Africa, except most recently as an adviser in the Mbeki government, so I saw a country hurtling from one disaster to another – Sharpeville, Soweto, you name it – and from one ideological disaster to another in terms of the attempts by the ruling minority to make what they were doing sound less repressive. Funny enough, one of the turning points, I think, was in the early 1980s when the then South African government of P. W. Botha came up with a new constitutional arrangement called The Tricameral Parliament. It was essentially a move, which was put to the white voters, for a vote that would have given some measure of rights to non-African minorities like the Indian and Coloured people. They would have then worked in a tricameral relationship with a white house, excluding all black South Africans, the majority of the population, because of the basic thesis that there

could be no community of interest between black Africans and white South Africans. In fact there were quite a few people who might prefer to forget about it now, particularly in the media, who supported this as a first step in the right direction.

It can be very encouraging to briefly look at the South African experience which, I think, offers an interesting, countervailing force to the theories of Samuel Huntington

We had this tricameral nonsense for a while and then the forces built up that we all know about and the white establishment released Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990. And we rubbed our eyes, and we are still rubbing our eyes, when we found that we were a free, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist country in Africa. I can say, having lived through all of that, it is quite mind-boggling, which is a term that Archbishop Desmond Tutu would always use, and of course he also used the term Rainbow Nation. We have a long way to go in South Africa to be able to make that enduring claim, and there are still a lot of unhappy feelings beneath the surface in terms of remaining racism. If you listen to the talk radio in South Africa, you will see what I mean, in terms of attitudes that are wrong. But the thrust of South Africa's experience in

the last nine years has been totally against the trend of the theories of Huntington.

We are faced with enormous problems on the employment front, on issues to do with crime, issues to do with neighbouring countries and our role in Africa and the world. But as we celebrate our tenth year of democracy next year, which will be a very big party, we feel emboldened and encouraged to move along that road of total non-racial democracy. And it is perhaps something from which a world facing such terrible new tensions can gain some encouragement. It is certainly something that I never expected to see in my whole lifetime and it is something that I saw happening in 1990 with that quite remarkable figure who walked out of prison in the Cape Wine Lands on a summer's day. Someone whom South Africans had never been able to see, let alone quote. And now we live in a society which, I think, can only encourage the world to seek those sort of answers and I suggest that the main ingredient is not ideology, economics and other factors like that, but leadership. When one looks at Africa today and one sees the improvements in Africa today, one sees a new and realistic and resolute leadership emerging which is taking that continent into a different mode and a very encouraging one for us in South Africa, including those in South Africa who so vociferously supported the previous regime, many of whom now are tremendous allies in the cause of democracy and freedoms in that country. ■

Bernard Margueritte

President, International Communications Forum,
Warsaw



The Tasks of the Media

I have one single question for you this morning. Should we –the people of the media gathered here today – feel happy? Of course, we should be happy to be here in Austria, a country that was and remains an example of what culture and civilisation should be. And yes, we should be happy to be in the lovely city of Salzburg. But should we be happy as media people? Should we be proud of what we are doing? Or should we rather ask why, according to all surveys worldwide, only 17-18 per cent of the people say they respect journalists (we are just above politicians and second-hand car dealers)?

Is it not time to ask what our mission is supposed to be? We have two main tasks: to give our public everything they need to know (and not only everything they want to know), so that the people know what is happening, why it is happening, and so that they can make up their own minds. Hubert Beuve-Méry, the founder of Le Monde, said this is the only way for the people to be citizens and the only way for us to live in a true democracy.

Our second task is to report about far away countries, to bring closer to our audience the civilisation, the culture, the problems, the fears, the dreams of those far away people, so that we can all move from understanding to mutual understanding.

But we have failed to do so. Look at what happened in the United States after 9/11. We had many remarkable articles in the best newspapers. People were wondering why it is that so many millions around the world hate us Americans? Are we not as great as we

thought? And they started to give answers: maybe it is because by building army bases near the holy Mecca, we offended many people. Maybe it is because by promoting all around the world a culture people do not like, we offended people. Maybe it is because by proposing as the only valid solution a unique version of globalisation, we offended people, etc. But they should have known earlier! And the reason they did not know was because the media did not fulfil their mission and were not informing about the reactions and the feelings of people around the world.

Now we have a paradoxical situation. We have globalisation, but we know less and less about each other!

Speaking about globalisation, the media are both affected by globalisation and also affecting it. We are witnessing a concentration of media power in a few big groups, acting worldwide. At the same time, those corporations have a tendency to sell to the world this unique version of globalisation. It is therefore about time to see how the media can better react to globalisation and have a positive impact on it.

The first result of the concentration of a few media groups is that it is becoming more and more difficult to respect and promote the local identity, be it of a town, a country or a culture. As we have "fast food", always the same, we also have "fast news", the same kind

of information, presented in the same way worldwide. This has wide reaching consequences: one of the main missions of the media is forgotten. We in the media ought to be "media-tors", go-betweens. As I said, one of our most important and exhilarating tasks is to report about far away people. Now we have a paradoxical situation. We have globalisation, but we know less and less about each other!

Last year I took part in a conference in Lebanon about world media and Arab culture and we discovered that in the world media there is really very little about Arab culture. We know also very little about Jewish culture. The average French citizen knows almost nothing about the United States or the way of life of the farmer in the Middle West, and vice versa. It is my contention that if there is so much hatred and violence in the world, it is among other things because the media are not fulfilling their role. Hatred often comes from a lack of knowledge of others.

But, at a smaller level, people feel frustrated that the media are less and less addressing their concerns at home, that the media are becoming impersonal. Not only do Europeans or Arabs feel that the world's media are not respecting their culture. This is happening even within countries, including the United States. When the International Communications Forum held a conference in Denver two years ago, our friends there were complaining that because most of the Denver media are owned by corporations with headquarters in Los Angeles or New York, it is more difficult to find articles or programmes with topics

that respect the local identity, that are specific to the Denver area.

In *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Ignacio Ramonet has shown how the industrial giants from the electricity, telecommunications, water or armament sectors are buying into the media. America Online controls Netscape, Time, Warner Bros. and CNN; Bill Gates is the king of software but also of press photography through his agency Corbis; Rupert Murdoch owns a variety of British and American papers, including *The Times*, *The Sun*, *The New York Post*, the satellite network BskyB, and also a major film production company, 20th Century Fox. Some are trying in Europe to follow that model. Bertelsmann has a lot of papers, radio and TV; the same is true with Silvio Berlusconi in Italy. In France our two biggest groups are controlled by Serge Dassault and Jean-Luc Lagardère, both involved in the armament industry.

Ramonet writes, "This concentration is a danger for pluralism, for the press and for democracy. Moreover, it puts the emphasis on profits, instead of quality." He continues, "One of our most precious human rights is the right to communicate thoughts and opinions freely. In democratic societies freedom of speech is guaranteed, but goes hand in hand with the right to be well-informed, a right now threatened by the increasing concentration of the media and the merging of former-

ly independent newspapers within larger power groups. Are we going to stand and watch as the freedom of the press is taken from us? And can we really accept a situation in which information is reduced to the status of a commodity?"

Interestingly, at the same time, Paul Krugman is addressing the same concerns in *The New York Times*. He says that in the U.S. you get your news from what he calls "AOLTime-WarnerGeneralElectricDisneyWestinghouse-NewsCorp." He adds, "The handful of organisations that supply most people with their news have major commercial interests that inevitably tempt them to slant their coverage, and more generally to be deferential to the ruling party". One recent example is the fact that the 100,000 people anti-war demonstration in Washington before the invasion of Iraq "was almost ignored by some key media outlets." Klugman concludes: "For the time being, blatant media bias is still limited by old rules and norms of behaviour. But soon the rules will be abolished and the norms are eroding before our eyes. Do the conflicts of interest of our highly concentrated media constitute a threat to democracy? I've reported; you decide."

As John Paul II said, we are observing, "the intrusive, even invasive, character of the logic of the market, which reduces more and more the area available to the human commu-

nity for voluntary and public action at every level." Furthermore, warns the Pope, "globalisation must not be a new version of colonialism. It must respect the diversity of cultures which, within the universal harmony of peoples, are life's interpretive keys."

Why are the world media addressing only marginally these urgent concerns? Is it not our mission to do so? Instead of promoting an inhuman version of globalisation, should not the media exert their influence by trying to shape globalisation? In which direction? The answer is easy: toward a globalisation of solidarity, of respect for the human person and, yes, a globalisation of love. The media can and should play a prominent role in the fight to build a better world, a more human world. But for that we have to get back our dignity, our dignity as media people and human beings. And we need to find again the sense of our mission.

This should be one of the main tasks of the media at the beginning of the new century. I am sure that in this battle, we, the people of the IPI and the people of the International Communications Forum, will be together. Yes, we are in the media and we have to change our vision and look in the same direction as the people of good will on this planet. At stake is our own credibility, as media people and as human beings, and at stake is the future of our societies and our world. ■

The Pivotal Role of the Media

Mogens Schmidt

Director, Division of Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace, UNESCO

Like all the other speakers, I have a bit of a problem with Samuel Huntington's concept of the clash of civilisations. It is a very reductive concept. It is a concept that risks taking away some of the underlying root causes and determinants of these conflicts that actually exist. And it might tend to make us forget some of those conflicts that cannot be easily fitted into a "culture against culture" prism.

I think that these concepts sometimes lead to a kind of fatalism, becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy putting us in a situation where it looks as if there is no room anymore for reasoning, for dialogue and for reconciliation, all of which are absolutely imperative right now.

I also think the media has developed what I would call a culture of clashes. The media are focusing enormously on the conflicts and not always bringing enough information and context to really understand them. I would like to see the media return to a culture of professionalism, of high professional standards, and I will come back to that a little bit later.

It is true, as Johann Fritz was saying yesterday, that there are strange things happening in the world. It is also true that it is easy to get frustrated, impatient and misanthropic when we look at the world and this is very easy for someone representing the UN system. I am not just talking about the fatal bomb attack in Baghdad and what it has done to the concepts, and the self-concepts, of the UN. I am also thinking of the role that there still is for a truly international organisation in this world. There is a huge need, not just to bridge the gap between those who have and those who do not have. I am not sure that is enough for

that will leave the gap there. We have to fill that gap. That is why the negotiations going on right now in Cancun, Mexico, are maybe the most important of all these things that are happening at the moment on the global scene.

Another tendency which I think is a cause for concern right now is the tendency to increased unilateralism, to regard the UN system a bit as a humanitarian area. To leave it as a decisive force giving leadership to development in the world.

Johann Fritz was saying yesterday that one sometimes fear that the UN system will prove to have been nothing but a bubble in post-war Western democracies. I really hope that history will prove him wrong, but of course that suspicion might occur when you look at nations putting aside fundamental general principles as laid down, for example, in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Just to take a small example, without even going into the big wars, next week, in Geneva, there will be a conference on the information society where all the member states involved will make a declaration on how the information society should be installed. Still, just 24 hours before it goes off, many media organisations and UNESCO are fighting to make clear that a reference to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration, the one guaranteeing freedom of expression and freedom of information, should be included. Countries say they do not care too much about these universal principles. There is right now a tendency to go away from accepting international standards and fall back on national laws and policies.

I do believe, however, that there are a lot of good examples, that the world is moving in the right direction, that we are developing democracy and, as part of democracy, free and pluralistic media. There are many examples. I am not saying that they are perfect, I am not saying that it is going fast. It takes time. Paddy

Ashcroft said recently in an interview in the Financial Times that it will take many more years before there is rule of law and true democracy in Kosovo. But apart from that corner of Europe, look what has happened in the Baltic countries, in Central and Eastern Europe. These countries have gone from oppression to democracy. Look to what has happened in Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia. There are still huge problems but there is also a vibrant, free professional press exposing all the violations against democracy that take place there. Look at South Africa. Look at countries like Mozambique or Benin. I think it is true that despite the despair that we see in West Africa and Central Africa, there is a new leadership coming up that will take these countries forward.

The media can provide information, context and knowledge that will enable the citizens to get from war or conflict to peace

In this whole process, the media plays a pivotal role. Benita Ferrero-Waldner said that freedom of expression is the oxygen of democracy and she is right. We all sometimes get tired of saying it, but it is true. There is no true democracy without freedom of expression. We can also see that terrorism thrives in countries where there is no freedom of expression. And the media must play its role in a professional way. Whenever there is a conflict in a country, a war or a transitional phase, which always creates huge problems, the media will be negatively influenced by that. There will be problems, there will be restrictions. The safety of journalists will be in danger. But even in that situation, the media can



choose to play a negative or not so negative role. Media can choose to convey stereotypes, to incite and to deepen the opposition in the society. They can also develop "hate speech". But the media can also try to enhance the understanding of why a conflict has arisen. I am not saying that it is the media's responsibility to be a peace broker. It is not. But the media can provide information, context and knowledge that will enable the citizens to get from war or conflict to peace.

Of course, there are some basic conditions that have to exist for media to fulfil this role: rule of law, media legislation, all that is necessary to ensure independent and pluralistic media. But media themselves also have a huge responsibility when it comes to the quality of what they are doing, the way they exercise their profession, and it comes back to three simple things. It comes back to training, a lot of training. It comes back to research. And then it comes back to dialogue, dialogue among the professional organisations, among journalists themselves.

There is a big role for organisations like my own, like UNESCO, but also for media organisations like the International Press Institute, to expose violations of freedom of expression, to protest, to give assistance, to ensure that there is dialogue, to set up exchange programmes, etc., when it comes to the development of media. ■



Challenging their Leaders

Bart Dijkstra

Director, Communications Assistance Foundation (CAF), Hilversum, The Netherlands

I am the director of the Communications Assistance Foundation (CAF), which was founded by the Dutch Association of Journalists, the Dutch Society of Editors-in-Chief and the Dutch Newspaper Association.

These organisations founded CAF to fulfil its mission, which is the following: promoting maximum access to independent news, knowledge and information in the developing world by optimising the pluralism, quality and availability of the journalistic sources.

We work in some 28 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia with multiple projects in some countries. Because media in many countries are interwoven with the political system and play a role in social processes, the provision of support to the media is often delicate and demands a fundamental knowledge of local circumstances. This is the reason why CAF does not implement media projects. We keep to financing, organising, advising, networking and sometimes an initiating role.

CAF supports independent media organisations in the three continents by:

- bringing about independent and pluralistic media,
- advancing balanced and reliable journalistic reporting, and
- making the media accessible in faraway areas.

Our financial base comes from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other sources. Our annual budget for project funding is about 2.5 million Euros.

In spite of what is written in the small print of this morning's session – "there has been no significant breakthrough in the consolidation of pluralism and democracy in these countries" – we at CAF get applications for projects from journalists in countries

where this may be the present situation, but this situation is not accepted by them as a fact that will never change. Of this I will give you three examples:

1) Upon the request of a number of journalists from Arab countries we plan to start a taskforce, which will identify projects for media support in countries such as Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. In a number of Arab countries there are (sometimes informal) organisations of journalists who try to escape from the oppressive media climate and who try to realise change. We at CAF believe that, based on our mission, we should support local media organisations and institutions. Thus foreign support is indeed supporting and opens windows of opportunity as seen by journalists themselves.

2) The youth are the future of a country. In Africa, Latin America, and in Asia some 40 to 50 per cent of the population consists of people under the age of 21. But news is hardly ever aimed at them. Journalists write newspapers for grown-ups and television news programmes are for adults. This in spite of the fact that children are nearly always affected by what the news is about. In discussions with Afghan Radio & Television, the South African Broadcasting Corporation and Surinam Television, we will in 2004 enable the making of news programmes for children in the age group between 8 and 14. In South Africa the items will be produced on a weekly based TV news magazine for children and linked with a newspaper for youngsters, which is distributed in schools throughout South Africa.

3) In Indonesia, on the Moluccan Islands, there has been bitter fighting between the Christian and Muslim populations. Thousands have been killed and hundreds of thou-

sands have fled, are missing or dispossessed. Houses, churches and mosques are looted and burned down. In the beginning, the local media were biased in their reporting. Christian journalists chose to inform the public from the Christian perspective and Muslim journalists from their perspective. After years of conflict, journalists from Ambon approached CAF with the request to support the Maluku Media Centre, which is located on the very border between the Christian and Muslim parts of the island. This centre is meant as a meeting point for all journalists on the island, where courses are given and workshops are offered. The concept behind the Maluku Media Centre is that of "Peace Journalism": journalistic responsibility is more than just reporting the so-called facts; journalists can also have an active role in conflict prevention and peace building.

From these examples of what we at CAF support, I hope I made it clear that we are in contact with journalists all over the world who, even when a breakthrough seems far away, as for instance in Zimbabwe or Cuba, will never give up and will try to get those basic principles of democracy and freedom of the press also working in their country. These are Zimbabwean, Cuban, Egyptian, Indonesian or Afghan journalists who say to CAF they challenge those leaders in their countries who claim democracy is not suitable, freedom of the press is not for their people. They challenge the leaders who say civil society is foreign to their people. These journalists believe that people in their countries with access to independent information (old and young) are better equipped to make choices. And people whose voices can be heard through the media are able to fully participate in society and fight poverty and oppression. ■

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SESSION II

Salzburg Congress Centre

“Analysing the World Summit on the Information Society”



Chairperson

Ilse Brandner-Radinger

Secretary General, Presseclub Concordia, Vienna

Opening Statement

James Ottaway

Chairman, World Press Freedom Committee; Senior Vice President, Dow Jones & Co., New York, NY

Discussants

Raymond Louw

Editor and Publisher, Southern Africa Report, Johannesburg

Alain Modoux

Senior Adviser to UNESCO for the WSIS, Geneva



Regulating the Internet: New Challenges to Press Freedom

James Ottaway

Chairman, World Press Freedom Committee; Senior Vice President, Dow Jones & Co., New York, NY

I will speak briefly about many issues at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that concern us at the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC) and that my fellow panel members and I believe should concern you. We have worked hard to oppose new challenges to press freedom and the free flow of information on the Internet during the Preparatory Conferences leading up to the WSIS in Geneva, which will be held from 10-12 December 2003.

At the Bucharest European Regional Preparatory Conference, 7-9 November 2002, Yashio Utsumi, Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), stated his three goals for the WSIS:

1. To raise awareness among political leaders, at the highest level, on the implications of the Information Society and the new challenges it will bring.
2. To tackle the injustice of the “digital divide”.
3. To develop new legal and policy frameworks appropriate to cyberspace.

The first two goals are legitimate issues for international action and debate. We are most concerned about the third goal, about any

United Nations or other international organisation declaring its intention “to develop new legal and policy frameworks for the Internet.” It is not within the mandate of the ITU to create new regulations and policies for content of the Internet or the “Information Society”. The ITU was set up to create international consensus on telecommunication standards and broadcasting frequency allocations, not information content and policy.

Bluntly put, the WSIS is an ITU power play for ideological influence and international regulatory power within the UN system, where the major issues of content on the Internet, regulation of the Internet, economic and social development addressing ignorance, poverty and the “digital divide” should be debated in more appropriate UN forums at UNESCO in Paris or the UN Information Committee in New York.

But even if the WSIS were sponsored by UNESCO or the UN Information Committee, anyone interested in their own press freedoms, and the free flow of news and information for every citizen of the world, must be very worried and sceptical when 185 United Nations gather to talk about “The Information Society”. That is because of the fundamental fact that a clear majority of nations (nearly 60 per cent in the latest Freedom House report on the status of press freedom worldwide) do not allow a free press.

Anyone interested in their own press freedoms, and the free flow of news and information for every citizen of the world, must be very worried and sceptical when 185 United Nations gather to talk about “The Information Society”

We are very concerned that a world summit like the WSIS, where countries which control and censor their media to varying degrees are in the majority, will produce a Declaration of Principles and an Action Plan that will condone and encourage controls on Internet news and ideas that will legitimise even more restriction and censorship of the Internet than those unfortunately already in place in a growing number of countries.

The WSIS agenda goes far beyond the technical issues of telecommunication that the ITU has addressed in the past. The draft Declaration and Action Plan, totalling thousands of words, nowhere mentions the basic human right of “press freedom”. It deliberately avoids clear and unqualified restatement of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, while calling for an unnecessary new “Right to Communicate”, which was thoroughly exposed and discredited during the 1970s and 80s UNESCO debate and defeat of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

In a critique of evolving WSIS draft statements, Rony Koven, WPFC representative in Paris since 1981, and Chairman of the WSIS Media Caucus trying to state the free press position at the first PrepCom meetings, wrote:

“The latest draft of the final declaration for WSIS refused to refer to Article 19 by name or to quote it as the international standard for free speech and press freedom. Instead, it twice referred to a ‘Right to Communicate’, which was a term used during the NWICO debate to designate a collective right of groups and governments, supplanting the Article 19 concepts of free speech and press freedom as individual human rights.

“The latest WSIS draft makes enjoyment of free speech and free press subordinate to national sovereignty and subject to national laws. Such ideas contradict the basic right embodied in the UNESCO Constitution to a ‘free flow of information’ that Article 19 stipulates should be for ‘everyone’ and ‘through any media and regardless of frontiers’.

“Furthermore, the latest draft is peppered with NWICO-era code word concepts such as ‘responsibility’ or ‘accountability’ of the press. ‘Responsible’ or ‘accountable’ to whom? To governments? And who defines these responsibilities?”

Rony Koven has publicly stated major concerns of the WPFC and the nine major groups in the Coordinating Committee of Press Freedom Organisations, which issued the Vienna

Statement of 21 November 2002, with its 16 points of concern about dangers to press freedom at the WSIS in Geneva.

In his article entitled, “World Summit Preparations Hark Back to Global Censorship Campaigns”, Rony Koven wrote:

“Unprecedentedly, the summit is to be held in two places – in Geneva this December, and again two years later, in Tunis, in November 2005.

“We are very concerned that a world summit like the WSIS, where countries which control and censor their media to varying degrees are in the majority, will produce a Declaration of Principles and an Action Plan that will condone and encourage controls on Internet news and ideas.”

“Tunis hardly seems to be the ideal place for a summit on the future of communication. The government keeps a tight lid on attempts to assert press freedom. Zouhair Yahyaoui, the young editor of an Internet magazine, *Tunezine*, has been serving a two-year prison sentence since mid-2002 for reporting on how the Tunisian government prevents expressions of independence by Tunisian judges.

“The whole drive for a NWICO started in the early 1980s with the Tunisian Information Minister of the time, Mustafa Masmoudi. And – surprise! – here he is along with other veterans of the NWICO campaign, taking part in the WSIS preparatory conferences as head of his own Association Tunisienne de la Communication. He has spoken out against a movement among NGOs to protest holding a second WSIS in Tunis.

“Another prominent veteran is Professor Cees Hamelink, a Dutch professor of communications, who has been the leading champion over the years of the ‘Right to Communicate’ – a code term for, among other restrictions on press freedom, instituting a collective right of

groups and governments to take over space and time in other people's print and broadcast news outlets.

"These and other still-active NWICO veterans have found enthusiastic younger disciples in a group called CRIS (Communications Rights in the Information Society Campaign), headed by Sean O. Siochru. CRIS has done a sterling job to bend the Geneva-based ITU, the chief organisers of WSIS, to its will.

"Yoshio Utsumi, Secretary General of the ITU, regularly calls for adoption of a 'Right to Communicate'. He goes beyond that to call for detailed international regulation of the Internet, apparently in search of a new role for ITU, as deregulation worldwide makes it growingly irrelevant. Utsumi opened a European regional preparatory conference for WSIS by saying that 'cyberspace is a new land without frontiers and without a government yet.' A 'new global government' is needed to police and control crime, security, taxation and privacy in cyberspace, he said. It is generally understood that the reason Utsumi decided to organise a second WSIS in Tunis was that the Arab League voting bloc threatened to oppose his re-election last fall if he did not do so.

*How can a World Summit
on the Information Society be
taken seriously if it does
not call out, loud and clear,
for freedom of the press and
freedom of information and
opinion for all people,
in all nations, in all media,
including the Internet?*

"In the latest of a number of successive versions of a final Declaration for the Geneva WSIS, the governmental drafters gutted references to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Mainstream news media organisations have been arguing that that pledge by UN members in 1948 has become international customary law, that it constitutes the only 'Right to Communicate' that is needed, and that WSIS should press for it finally to be implemented, both in cyberspace and for traditional broadcast and press news media, by the more than half of UN member states that

regularly violate its provisions. But, refusing to cite Article 19 by name, drafters at the latest WSIS 'intersession' preparatory gathering at UNESCO headquarters in Paris this July gutted it, scattering its dismembered provisions throughout the text and saying that they should be enforced 'in accordance with the legal system of each country'.

"This amounted to adoption of China's position. China holds that its sovereignty needs to be protected against the Internet by creating a Chinese 'Intranet', a nationally controlled Internet that communicates with the outside world only via state-controlled Internet Service Providers serving as choke points for access. Some 10,000 monitors are reported to watch Chinese Intranet traffic to see that nothing dangerous circulates. Various features of China's cyberspace censorship regime have also been adopted by Cuba, Burma, Egypt, Russia, Singapore, Vietnam and other nations.

"Despite opposition from mainstream journalists' groups and from a working group session in which Western officials said they wanted no new rights, the 'Right to Communicate' did appear twice in the latest WSIS text, along with a number of other NWICO-style code words like 'moral values', 'sovereignty', 'truth', 'human dignity', 'responsibility', and 'accountability'. Defined by whom, we always ask."

What can all of us in the press freedom community do to mitigate the damage to world press freedom that seems likely to occur at the WSIS in Geneva this December?

I suggest that we all adopt and urge others to support the Statement of Vienna's principles of press freedom on the Internet. The key positions for us all to support in our public statements and personal lobbying at the remaining PrepComs and at the WSIS in Geneva are:

1. Restatement of the full text of Article 19, and a clear call for all nations to actually implement its freedoms of speech and the press.
2. That the WSIS Declaration of Principles make a clear statement of unqualified support for press freedom on the Internet.
3. That press freedom should be guaranteed on the Internet or any new communication system.
4. That delegates working on WSIS Declarations and Action Plans reject any proposals or language that can lead to restrictions on

news content, or the independence of media operations.

5. That statements on any other subjects that could justify restrictions of news on the Internet make clear that no such restriction is intended.

6. That all defenders of press freedom, and nations that guarantee it, should speak out and vote against a second, redundant, WSIS in Tunisia in 2005.

To put it simply, how can a World Summit on the Information Society be taken seriously if it does not call out, loud and clear, for freedom of the press and freedom of information and opinion for all people, in all nations, in all media, including the Internet? ■

Alain ModouxSenior Adviser to UNESCO
for the WSIS, Geneva

A State of Emergency



After the statement made by my friend, Jim Ottaway, I hope you understand that the situation is really very alarming. We are in a state of emergency in terms of press freedom. Let us be clear about that. We have to move before it is too late. So my presentation will focus on what we have to do.

I have several short points to make.

My first point is to say that because the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is being organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), there has been a terrible misunderstanding. People heard the word “telecommunications” and thought this would be a summit on technology, but this summit is not only on technology, it is on everything.

My second remark is to say that today we live in a global world. New technologies are touching upon every activity of any person, society, government, etc. In fact, this summit is global; it touches upon technologies but also on content. What is important is not the camera, not the printing house, it is the message you want to deliver – what you write in your newspapers or show in your television programmes – and this element was not taken into consideration by the ITU when they started. Today, thanks to UNESCO, content is part of it, but it is a bit late. A lot has been done and content lags behind.

My third point concerns the participants. Because it is organized by the ITU, most of the participants are telecom specialists. Of course, these people are very good for Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs), but they do not know anything about

the other aspects of the Information Society. This is a very important element in the analysis; it will have very important consequences for the future.

My fourth remark concerns the global participation; it is not only an intergovernmental meeting; it is a meeting with different stakeholders, in particular – apart from governments and intergovernmental organisations – the civil society and the private sector. And so it is a multi-stakeholder meeting.

This being said, even though it is a multi-stakeholder meeting, some governmental representatives made attempts to limit the participation of other stakeholders. This attitude was crystallized in the rules of procedure where you see that only governments will make the decisions and the others are just observers. Fortunately, the reaction from the civil society, in particular, and also the private sector and a certain number of so-called industrialised countries changed the situation. And I can say today, at least, this is something good, even though the result is very weak for the time being. At least we can say today that the other stakeholders are present in the discussion, but not in the drafting of the text. That is another element that is very important for the discussion. The text is the text of governments.

My sixth remark is to say that we can now say, thanks to the pressure exerted by the civil society, the private sector and a certain number of governments, in particular the host country, Switzerland, that there is a more flexible and open attitude. But let us bear in mind that even though things have changed a little,

at the very beginning governments said that it is a technological conference and that human rights have nothing to do with the Information Society.

My seventh remark is to say that a certain number of representatives from non-democratic countries have taken advantage of the lack of knowledge and experience of their colleagues – most of whom are specialised in the new technologies – in an attempt to downgrade the importance of the media and to reintroduce the concepts of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) – concepts such as the ‘right to communicate’, or worse, particularly Article 51, in which freedom of expression is subordinated to national legislation.

So this is the situation today. This trend, unfortunately, is also greatly facilitated by the division existing among the media, in particular between the so-called mainstream media and small, community-based media in Africa and elsewhere, who are often the only alternative to government-controlled media. This is regrettable. We must work toward bridging these two groups, because there is no possibility to change the situation if the media are divided. A united front is a necessity.

My conclusion is to say that the situation is even more alarming than it was 20 years ago when NWICO was being debated. Why? Because, at that time in the 1970s and 80s, you at least had a group of important, powerful, democratic nations fighting openly for freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of the press. But today the situation is totally different. At the governmental level I

would say that freedom of expression is supported in a very weak way. Governments in the West seem to have other priorities, in particular the so-called security issue. So it opens the way to those who for many decades have been trying to impose a new vision of the world regarding freedom of expression.

It is killing freedom to say that freedom of expression should be subordinated to national legislation

So we have to act. The last chance is next week. It is not in October, it is not in November and it is certainly not in December. In December the meal is cooked, it is served. The texts are ready and the heads of state and the chiefs of government put their signature on paper; nothing will be changed.

The first thing to do, I think, is to try to secure a real debate on freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Switzerland is insisting on having a working group on media. According to what I have heard, it seems that this idea is acceptable, but you never know. We are going to have a working group so we can redraft this famous Article 51. And who is going to participate in the working group? I can tell you that it will not be the media people speaking on the media. It will be governmental people so you had better go to your governments or write in your newspapers what you want to have in the articles. That is very important. It is the last minute to focus in your media on this dramatic situation and inform your readers, listeners, and viewers about your opinion. I am sure that this contribution will have an impact on governments and they will think twice before supporting things that are dangerous. It is killing freedom to say that freedom of expression should be subordinated to national legislation.

To conclude, I will refer to what Madame Ferrero-Waldner said this morning: "Freedom of the press is the oxygen of democracy." I would add, without freedom of expression there is no Information Society possible. ■



Raymond Louw

Editor and Publisher, Southern Africa Report,
Johannesburg

In concept, WSIS is a good thing. Broadly, it is trying to extend information technology throughout the globe to increase communication between the developed world and the under-developed world, to increase the availability of information to the developing nations and to people who have little concept of information transfer apart from their age-old methods and to whom information technology is some form of magic.

There are some people with a passionate interest in the improvement of people's lifestyles through this global enterprise, but there are others with agendas of their own which pay lip service to these concepts but which have hidden agendas to further a variety of objectives such as suspect ideologies, political agendas, technical and personal desires, and so on.

Jim Ottaway has focussed on one aspect, the surreptitious re-introduction on the world stage of the discredited New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), the information manipulation strategy designed to further the interests of venal, corrupt, incompetent governments wanting to cloak their criminal activities and keep out prying eyes.

He has given a few examples of how it lies in the words used in the documentation that flows from these conferences. I have several more examples and it is important for IPI and

its membership to take note of them because they can affect the business we are in if allowed to become international standards and are adopted by countries.

- One of these is a requirement to "respect national characteristics and concepts".

- Another is a requirement that there should be "appropriate content" on information systems.

- The Information Society "must serve the interests of all nations in a manner that secures the fair, balanced and harmonious development of all people".

- Governments must strengthen co-operation with the private sector to prevent the use of information resources and technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes and develop a rapid action organisation to deal with security violations.

- Cyberspace must be subject to universally held ethical values and must be subject to values such as truth.

- There must be due regard to rights and obligations of stakeholders in such areas as "privacy".

Alain Modoux referred to Section 51. Let me read the clause: "The existence of free and independent communication media, in accordance with the legal system of each country, is an essential requirement for freedom of expression and a guarantee of the plurality of information."

One of the important facets of "summit" conferences deciding international standards

It's all in the Terminology

and value systems for all of us is that the decisions are being taken by government representatives, officials whose major concern is to protect the interests of their respective governments, and only after that to give some attention to principles that may be of value to some of their constituents.

The media is a constituent, a stakeholder, and a highly important one at that. It represents the broad public, but it is given no special say in the fashioning of concepts such as WSIS

The media is a constituent, a stakeholder, and a highly important one at that. It represents the broad public, but it is given no special say in the fashioning of concepts such as WSIS and all the other world summits which have an effect on the public at large and the media in particular.

I have been appalled – at the three summits I have attended – at the conduct of these officials who show a remarkable ignorance about the role of the media. The media is not some special group with some extra-special powers. It is merely a representative of the public at large. When we talk of media freedom, we are really talking about the freedom of people.

But at WSIS, the media is expected only to report the lofty statements of the civil servants and not have any direct input on how the media sees issues. We constantly have people and organisations trying to impose roles for the media.

I am appalled at the manner in which the IT concept is viewed from every other aspect except the main one, which appears always to be ignored. That is the concept of media and freedom of expression principles contained in Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of

Human Rights being applied.

Let me illustrate this. When I was in Bamako at the African regional preparatory meeting for WSIS last year, I attended a session to which I thought I could make a contribution. I suggested that the previous speaker who was talking about the Information Society providing a conduit for African languages to be propagated had a point. Obviously, using the information channels to enable people to hear and exercise their languages was a good thing.

But, I said, surely the main principle that we should be concerned about was to ensure that the Information Society adopted the principles of Article 19 and that it should enable maximum access for the gathering of information and maximum ability to disseminate it and that the overriding principle should be freedom of expression. The chairman, a French-speaking diplomat from Mali, listened carefully and then observed, “Your intervention has opened a new aspect.” I must say I was somewhat thrown by the remark, which was followed by a comment by a SA government representative that she hoped that freedom of expression did not provide a license to libel the president of South Africa.

This is a wake-up call to the media to become aware of how shackles are being fashioned to hobble us in the use of communications

What I found remarkable about the chairman's comment was that a media sub-committee had earlier sat for a couple of days working out what contribution it should make to the statement emerging from that African summit. This occurred before I got there but in searching all the documentation relating to this committee's work, I found no reference whatsoever to media freedom or freedom of expression.

I was pleased to see that there was a reference to press freedom in the final statement. It reads, “Every citizen should be guaranteed freedom of expression and protected access to information in the global public domain as part of their inalienable right to freely accessing the information constituting the heritage of mankind which is disseminated on all support systems including new multimedia support systems.” This is by no means ideal, but it does make a reference to freedom of expression.

The other day I asked South Africa's representative at the Prepcom 3 meeting that starts tomorrow in Geneva to outline the first five priorities for the Information Society as she saw it:

- 1) Information & Communication Technology (ICT) for good governance
- 2) ICT for democracy
- 3) Open software for developing countries to use and create knowledge
- 4) Promoting gender and youth
- 5) Confidence, security of the Internet and guard against ICTs being used for warfare

She also mentioned the need for Internet governance.

Though good governance and democracy may imply freedom of expression and the principles of Article 19 being applicable, it should be noted that in taking her remarks as a whole, the idea of freedom of expression is not uppermost in her mind. She reflects the thinking of government delegates to such conferences.

It is valuable that this subject has been raised at this conference of editors and journalists because I believe we have got to do something about this. This is a wake-up call to the media to become aware of how shackles are being fashioned to hobble us in the use of communications and how governments are trying to extend control over the means of communication. ■

SESSION III

Salzburg Congress Centre

“SARS and the Media”



Chairperson

Alfred Payrleitner

Columnist, Kurier, Vienna

Keynote Speaker

Maria Cheng

Spokesperson, Communicable Diseases
Section, World Health Organisation (WHO),
Geneva

Panelists

Kavi Chongkittavorn

Assistant Group Editor,
Nation Multimedia Group, Bangkok

Simon K.C. Li

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The Press and Public Health

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Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was the first new disease to emerge this century. When it was initially recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in February 2003 it was identified as a highly contagious disease, one that was capable even of infecting experts on contagious diseases. This new disease had no effective treatment. While traditional outbreak techniques, including contact tracing, isolation, and travel restrictions, helped to control acknowledged outbreaks, one place, China, denied the presence of this disease. But as we now know

China had seeded directly or indirectly all other outbreaks.

We quickly realised that unless the situation in China changed we would perpetually be fighting outbreaks wherever they erupted. China did change and it was the turning point in the battle against SARS. Several factors helped bring about this change. One of the most important factors was the press, particularly the foreign press reporting from China. It was they that broke the news to the world, often to us, and sometimes I suspect to the Chinese government hierarchy, of a vast epidemic that had been hidden by lower officials who shuttled patients between hospitals and silenced healthcare workers. WHO and the rest of the world owe these reporters enor-

mous thanks. They did a stunning job often working under circumstances that exposed them both to disease and to sanctions.

This episode highlights the necessity of a free press operating even in countries that are not entirely free themselves. It might be argued that China's initial cover-up of SARS was engendered by what some would characterise as the Chinese culture of silence. To draw attention to a problem with no obvious solution, as was the case with SARS, would be unwelcome in any country, but was particularly so in one governed by a Communist regime that purports to be all knowing. China's history has long been marked by striking incidents of misguided leadership where the effort to save face has often come at the expense of its unknowing citizenry. The case of SARS might have been no different had it not been for the combined efforts of WHO and the press. In an extraordinary turn, the foreign press in China became an informal yet remarkably effective health surveillance system. Reporters took to systematically visiting and calling hospitals to get for themselves the number of SARS patients – numbers that frequently differed significantly from official government figures. This information was passed in turn to WHO and was generally found to be accurate and warranting further investigation.

The unrelenting pressure journalists working in China exerted on the Chinese government was instrumental in forcing that nation's unprecedented admittance that it had indeed engineered a vast cover-up conspiracy. Nowhere was the significance of this admission more evident than in the political consequences. In another remarkable reversal in mid-April, China's leaders finally came clean on the extent of SARS in their country, promising swift action, greater transparency and co-operation with WHO. To illustrate the sincerity of their intentions, the Beijing mayor and health minister, both of whom had downplayed the disease's impact in China, were sacked. The press reported that WHO had brought China to its knees. Maybe so, but this never would have happened without those very reporters themselves.

The work of the WHO is protecting and improving public health. We deal with large populations, vast immunisation programmes, clean water campaigns and global efforts to eradicate entire diseases. Medicine deals with

individuals and a component of medicine is patient education. Public health deals with entire populations. Still, education is critical and much of what we do is done through the press. So public health has a long history of dealing with the press because we see the press as the essence of the public. Arguably, public health and the press never worked closer together than during SARS.

Communicating with the press about SARS had many challenges. Initially and for many weeks we were dealing with a disease about which we knew almost nothing. We had few tools to control the outbreak and those tools could seem widely inappropriate, hampering economies while appearing to do little to stop the spread of the disease. Politicians, especially in Canada, reacted angrily, attacking WHO's methods and intentions. Politicians in China felt victimised, accusing WHO of applying discriminatory policies.

It was a very good story – economies teetered, political careers wobbled, and a dangerous new infectious disease struck here and there like lightning – and it would have been an even bigger story had much of the world media not been diverted to the looming and then actual war in Iraq. Demands from the press were enormous and unrelenting. Every day, for weeks, WHO communications people and technical staff would speak to the media from around the world. But this was not just a matter of responding to the press.

We were communicating to the world through the press. Through it all, we relied on very simple guidelines. We would tell what we knew, even if we did not know much, as soon as we knew it. And we would be as accessible and transparent as we were asking all our member states to be.

While we had simple guidelines we often had complex messages. For example, when we talked about the risk of SARS, we repeatedly said, "While the risk to any single individual is extremely low, the threat to hospitals and the public health structure is high." Then we began seeing lots of photographs of people wearing masks. WHO not only thought individuals wearing masks was ineffective, but

that it threatened to deplete stockpiles of masks needed by healthcare workers. Did this mask-wearing mean that our message was not getting across or that the press was somehow hyping the risk? We spent a lot of time thinking about this. We discovered that our message was in fact getting through, but, as our experts told us, in the face of a threat people need to be able to do something tangible to minimise their risk. Once we understood this, we began discussing the importance of hand washing rather than mask-wearing to control communicable diseases.

We were also aware that people at a great distance from the outbreak sites had a perception that their risks were extraordinarily high. We received thousands of inquiries a day from people around the world who were at absolutely no risk. This perception of personal risk at a distance is known to risk communicators as vicarious risk perception. It is the hardest to control and it may have had the biggest economic impact as people cancelled vacations to

"The unrelenting pressure journalists working in China exerted on the Chinese government was instrumental in forcing that nation's unprecedented admittance that it had indeed engineered a vast 'cover-up conspiracy.'"

places like Thailand, which had never had a SARS outbreak. Was this a problem in reporting? We do not think so.

Indeed there were examples of bad reporting. Some stories were indeed hysterical, but these were stories done early in the outbreak when in fact we had no idea what was going on or how bad it would ultimately get. Probably the worst example of poor reporting came from a British crew who visited us for more than two weeks in Geneva. They arrived with something like a script near at hand and nudged and pushed our technical people in front of the camera until they got close enough to the lines they had written back in England.

Some of the best reporting, outside of the foreign press in Beijing, came from Hong Kong. They did everything that can be asked of a free press. The information that they conveyed to their audiences was generally scientifically accurate. At the same time, they were critical of hospitals and healthcare authorities who seemed to be doing less than they should. This balance of reliable information and public scrutiny is the best that any society can hope for from its press.

The Canadian press by contrast reacted largely with hostility to WHO's issuing of a travel recommendation for Toronto. Its criticism was directed more towards WHO, rather than the Canadian health-care system or politicians.

During SARS, the world's press did an outstanding job and occasionally their work was critical. Beyond the political and social restrictions they were operating under, any excesses or lapses from the press were very likely reflections of WHO's own confusion or anxieties. Public health is ultimately about the public. We see the press as the distilled essence of the public. Reporters' questions are the questions many people want to ask and when WHO answers we need to remember that we are not speaking into the camera or at a snarling, unhappy reporter. We are talking directly or as directly as we can to the people we most care about – the worried, the sick, those at risk and those working on the frontlines. We struggle through the unknown and often frightening future of SARS together by being open and candid and I think both the press and public health now have a stronger relationship to confront the next global outbreak. ■



Kavi Chongkittavorn

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Nation Multimedia Group, Bangkok

Although I am not an expert on SARS, I hope to give you an idea of the SARS experience in Thailand.

SARS began in Guangdong, southern China, in November 2002 and in late February 2003 spread to 25 countries in Asia, North America and Europe. According to the WHO's latest tally, about 8,200 people have the disease worldwide, and there have been 783 deaths.

China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore were the worst hit (349 deaths in China, 299 in Hong Kong, 84 in Taiwan, 55 in Singapore). The estimated economic loss was nearly US\$ 50 billion for the region, and US\$ 150 billion worldwide.

During SARS, China failed to provide timely information about the spread of SARS, waiting four months before it sought help from WHO. China finally came clean on 20 April, admitting that it had been under-reporting its SARS figures.

Tales of the cover-up:

- On 3 April, Health Minister Zhang Wenkang reported 12 cases.

- 23 April, China reported 2,305 cases and 106 deaths.

- The first SARS case in Hong Kong was in mid-February, but schools were not closed until 27 March after 1,080 people were put under quarantine.

What was South East Asia's reaction?

Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand banned Chinese tourists. China retaliated by banning their tourists. Quarantines were introduced at the airports for tourists from infected countries. Leaders from SARS-affected countries met in Bangkok in late April 2003. Thousands of tours to and from Asia were cancelled. Singapore tried to develop a quick SARS test kit.

Singapore proved to be the "Master of the SARS crisis", a shining example of how to respond to a crisis like the SARS outbreak. On 27 March, it was the first country in the world to close all schools. There was a strict quarantine on 861 people who had been exposed to SARS victims by installing closed-circuit cameras in their homes. Those who violated the quarantine orders were tagged electronically.

After global criticism, China sacked health minister Zhang Wenkang and Beijing mayor Meng Xuenong. China ordered health officials to improve reporting on SARS; changed the definition of patients with SARS; closed down schools and universities in Beijing; and increased the supply of medical equipment and drugs to rural areas.

A Thai View

Lessons can be drawn from Canada. On 23 April, WHO issued an advisory against unnecessary travel to Toronto, sparking a storm of angry protest from Canadian officials. Seven days later, the WHO lifted the travel advisory as no new cases had been reported for 20 days. Health officials began to relax some of the SARS preventive measures, such as the use of gloves and gowns. Then, less than two weeks later, a second outbreak surfaced and Toronto went back on the list of SARS-hit places.

With regard to the role of the media in our part of the world, I think we have done a pretty good job, providing accurate, timely and transparent information; preventing panic; and educating the public

Thailand being Thailand, where tourism is very important, our government offered all kinds of incentives. Any tourist who contacts SARS in Thailand gets one million baht, or € 46,000. Any tourist who dies gets two million baht, or € 92,000. Reduced hotel packages were offered. There were sales in all the

major department stores, shopping centres and massage parlours.

Of course, whacky things happened in many countries because of the uncertainty over SARS.

On 1 April, a 14-year-old Hong Kong boy posted a false report on the Internet saying Hong Kong had been declared an infected port, setting off a wave of panic buying in the territory.

Singapore sentenced a 50-year-old man to six months in prison for disobeying a SARS quarantine order.

SARS-related questions included:

“If someone with SARS uses a public phone, what are my chances of getting the virus?”

“If a person with SARS uses a steam room or sauna, will the heat be enough to kill the virus, or could I be infected if I use it after he does?”

“Is it true that women are more vulnerable to SARS than men because their lungs are weaker?”

“Can SARS be passed through sexual intercourse?”

With regard to SARS causalities, I would like to put things into perspective.

Anywhere from 15,000 to 25,000 mainly elderly people died of heat-related conditions this summer in Europe.

SARS killed 916 persons out of 8,422 cases worldwide.

Each year, 250,000 to half a million deaths are reported worldwide from among three to five million cases of severe illness.

With regard to the role of the media in our part of the world, I think we have done a pretty good job, providing accurate, timely and transparent information; preventing panic; and educating the public.

Finally, lessons for all of us include:

- Bad news, SARS or otherwise, travels far and fast.
- Lack of information on a new disease causes anxiety/uncertainty.
- Casualties dominated the media, not knowledge of SARS, leading to an exaggerated perception of the disease.

And the most important lesson of all: “Just don’t lie!” ■

Simon K.C. LiAssistant Managing Editor,
Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles, CA

SARS Coverage in America



Johann Fritz said yesterday that strange things are happening in the world. I am from California and we in California have our own kind of SARS epidemic going on, Severe Acute Recall Syndrome, which is an epidemic that our host nation, Austria, has more than a usual interest in because of the prospect that a native son could end up running the world's fifth largest economy, and this despite the fact that his best known quotation is not in English, or German, but in Spanish: "Hasta la vista, Baby".

Perhaps as an example of how the U.S. can attract world attention in strange ways, everybody feels that sooner or later in some way they are going to have a piece of connection to the United States. Yet we in the United States are often criticised for the very reverse, that we are insular and we have little or no interest in what happens in the rest of the world. I am happy to say that with SARS this was, generally speaking, an exception, but one of the lessons of the coverage of SARS is that, if you are going to have a serious epidemic globally, try to avoid having it at a time when the United States is preparing to go to war. Quite seriously, this meant that a major global story was not given the same attention that it otherwise would have gotten from the American media.

Serious American media did a pretty good job, but in many parts of the country I feel that the predominant image and coverage of SARS was simplistic and lacking in context. The image of people wearing face masks probably added to an unnecessary alarm about the dangers posed by this disease and in fact nobody in authority ever said that face masks were any good in preventing the spread of this disease.

The reality is that many American media companies, mine included, had moved reporters, cameras and other assets to the Middle East and were busy covering the debate that

led to the war and, after the war started, the progress of the war itself. March of course was about the height of the epidemic. This did not mean necessarily that the epidemic did not get covered. There were plenty of stories in my paper and others but it did mean that they had a hard time breaking page one. And if they had a hard time breaking page one, a lot of the context might not have been noticed, the context covered in better stories. The result, unfortunately, was some level of exaggeration and hysteria in the United States, and alarm from a country that had relatively few cases. I understand that the number was less than 50.

Serious American media did a pretty good job, but in many parts of the country I feel that the predominant image and coverage of SARS was simplistic and lacking in context

With so few cases and no fatalities, and so many assets away in the Middle East, I think we did not do the best job. As a result, there were such incidents as a plane from Asia, on which one passenger got ill, landing in California and being quarantined for many hours. We had the University of California, Berkeley, telling Asian applicants, who had been invited to interviews, not to come. We had people cancelling vacations to Asia. Even some of my relatives, who had paid for a cruise, cancelled the cruise because they were told that other passengers would be alarmed at their presence. So there was some of this low-level exaggeration and hysteria.

America being America and having this fixation with the issue of race, there was also a strange debate that cropped up in media cov-

erage in America. Does the identification of SARS with Asia unnecessarily stereotype Asians in America and around the world and therefore should the media have been more careful in identifying the problem with Asia? In fact, this sort of extreme situation was exemplified by one Asian group jumping on the back of a Canadian health officer who, explaining the second outbreak in Toronto, said that the health authorities had erected what they thought was a fence to prevent SARS from coming back into the country and yet there was a chink in the fence. And some Asian-American group jumped on this poor man for using that expression. That is the sort of peculiarly American nervousness about the issue of race. At the same time, there is a real issue here. Both Time and Newsweek, when they chose to put SARS on their covers, used white or Caucasian models and that raised questions of whether it was more important to be sensitive to a minority group and its concerns about being stereotyped or was it more important to reflect reality? And indeed the reality was that SARS affected Asia and Asians much more than it did Caucasians.

I think it is fair to say that there are two major story lines that came out of coverage of SARS. One of course is the issue of China's cover-up and secrecy and I think built into that was an unspoken context that this is a Communist regime with a long, deplorable tradition of secrecy, of covering up some terrible disasters in its own country. But as somebody commented this morning, we journalists seek context and I think it is important to put some of that in context, not to excuse what happened in China or what the Chinese did, but to put it in context. In the 1980s and 90s there were cases both in France and Japan of government officials eventually brought to trial for having covered up the fact that HIV-tainted blood donations were given to



haemophiliacs. In France, it resulted in the trial of the former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius, who was subsequently acquitted, but nonetheless others were convicted.

The British Government in the year 2000 issued a 4,000-page report accusing the government of the last ten years of having followed a policy of what they called “a policy of sedation” on the issue of whether BSE, or “Mad Cow disease”, could be transmitted from animals to humans. And long after the government was pretty sure that this could happen, civil servants and politicians were still down-playing that possibility, so much so that there was that bizarre incident with the agriculture minister feeding his four-year-old daughter hamburger on television as proof that British beef was safe.

Most recently, a couple of weeks ago, the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States was accused by its own inspector-general of having issued news releases repeatedly after 9/11 that the air around Ground Zero was safe, when in fact it contained unsafe levels of asbestos, PCBs, lead, mercury, benzene, etc. Yet people toiled in that Ground Zero cleaning it up; people moved back into apartments covered in dust and these news releases were actually toned down by the White House’s Council on Environment, which coordinates environmental policy in the administration. They denied that they lied; they just said they did not want to scare people. So sometimes there are economic reasons, sometimes there are genuine concerns about panicking the public, but the truth is when it comes to health issues governments in London, Paris and Tokyo are not that different from the government in Beijing. ■

Helping Limit SARS

Bo Maltesen

Editor-in-Chief, Politiken, Copenhagen

I am going to talk about a story that I regret and another story that I do not regret.

In the spring of this year my newspaper, Politiken, ran a story about a nutrition product that – according to a press release by a Swedish consumer organisation – possibly contained cancer-causing substances. The story came in late one evening. Our reporter managed to get one or two comments about it and we ran the story next morning.

As is always the case with this kind of story, radio, television and news agencies took it up and by noon that day almost everybody in Denmark knew that this product was potentially dangerous. But only one hour later, both the Danish and Swedish authorities announced that there was nothing to fear; it was a false alarm. Some weeks later the laboratory behind the findings had to confess that they had made a major mistake. The tests they had conducted were contaminated from other sources.

We and all other media created such a global awareness of SARS that the global community had to cooperate quickly in order to identify the SARS virus

That is a story I regret. We did not do our job well as professionals. We relied on a press release and did not take the time to research the story in depth, even though we knew that this was a story that would upset people – and it did. I regret our behaviour in this case; we

should have investigated more, and probably not run the story, which caused anxiety among a lot of people.

I do not regret what Politiken did when we reported on SARS. When we first started reporting on SARS – and the headlines were not yet big although they were to get big soon – we knew for a fact that a new unknown mysterious disease had taken its first lives. We knew for a fact that this disease had a high mortality rate; that there was no medical weapon against it; that it showed up in a part of the world where some Danes live and work or travel to as tourists.

We did not know for a fact whether this was the tip of the iceberg, or the iceberg itself. Should we have wasted weeks or months until we had seen all the consequences of SARS and then start reporting? Of course not. I hope no one thinks we should have done so. Yes, we created fear among our readers. We ran stories about possible SARS victims among those people coming home to Denmark from the Far East. In fact we had to deal with this within our own paper because one of our journalists came home from China and her colleagues were very anxious about what she might bring home with her. We did not know what to do except to ask her to stay home for two or three days to find out if she had a high fever. Luckily, she had no fever but it shows that even at the paper we had trouble dealing with SARS because of the uncertainty surrounding the disease.

We and all other media created such a global awareness of SARS that the global community had to cooperate quickly in order to identify the SARS virus. They succeeded within months. Media exposure on SARS helped

make it possible for the authorities to very quickly isolate the victims in order to stop SARS before it turned out to be a possible disaster.

In the old days, an incident like SARS would have developed into a world catastrophe – just think of the Spanish Flu – because news spread only slowly. You had no mass media and you could not protect yourself before these things happened to you in person. But with today's media situation, including of course the Internet, you can achieve quick results if you want to do that. The media plays a role here. Of course, you can be wrong and you can cause false fear like in the case of the nutrition story that I mentioned earlier. But in the case of SARS we reported the facts available at the time. Our problem here was the silence and denial of the Chinese government. But of course that should not prevent us from reporting.

One could argue that the harm done to the Asian economy because of the media storm over SARS was out of proportion, with some 900 deaths among 9,000 sick patients, but it is always very easy afterwards to say you should have done this and not that. We in the media had to react immediately and on this occasion it is my opinion that the media – despite some mistakes – helped reduce SARS to what I hope is a very short chapter in the big book of catastrophes.

Could we, or should we have reacted differently? I would say no. So this is a story I do not regret. ■



Russell Mills

Dean, School of Media and Design,
Algonquin College, Ottawa

By the time SARS had run its course, more than 250 Canadians had contracted the disease and 44 had died, almost all in the Toronto area. SARS shook the confidence of Canadians in their healthcare system partly because Canada was the only country outside Asia that was so seriously affected.

Canadians are accustomed to sharing healthcare problems and just about everything else with the United States, but this time our large southern neighbour escaped almost totally unharmed and this was puzzling to most Canadians. The disease had a serious short-term impact on the economy as travel to the country was sharply curtailed. Conventions were cancelled. Concerts were cancelled, including one by the Dixie Chicks, who had risked the wrath of all of America because they criticised the war in Iraq. Visiting sports teams were warned to stay in the middle of the field or court and not get too close to the Toronto fans. The Prime Minister was dispatched to eat Chinese food in a Chinese restaurant because the panic had fallen disproportionately on the Asian population. More recently he was sent out to eat a hamburger when Mad Cow Disease hit Canada, too.

Confidence in Canada did not recover until July when a group of haggard-looking, 60-year-old men performed at a large concert in Toronto to show that the city was now safe for older people. These were the Rolling Stones and they appeared as part of an extensive government public relations campaign signalling that Toronto and Canada were back to normal and open for business.

Now I must say that I had the good fortune to be a Nieman Fellow at Harvard last year, so I was not in Canada for most of the SARS crisis. I tried to keep up through the coverage in the New York Times, which was quite good, and through various Canadian websites. Back in Canada, I talked to a lot of editors and reporters who were covering it and their general conclusion is, with a few lapses which I will outline here, both the public authorities and the news media performed well during the crisis. Information was generally released quickly by the authorities and disseminated accurately and responsibly by the media. The general public in Canada and particularly in the Toronto area was almost always well informed about developments of SARS and they took appropriate actions, which may have helped to limit the spread of the disease.

The story was initially covered as a mystery disease from Hong Kong before its real

The SARS Crisis and the Canadian Media

impact was known and it took a week or so before the Canadian media realised the seriousness of it. Initially information about SARS was released by municipal health officials and this caused a few problems until the Ontario government took over responsibility for communicating. In Canada, healthcare is a provincial responsibility and these people held press conferences virtually every day, sometimes more than once a day, to release information as soon as they had it. In the opinion of the journalists I spoke to, these health officials were candid, professional and invariably helpful. Most of what the media learned about SARS came from them and there was rarely a delay in releasing information. There was a feeling, however, amongst journalists that there was a struggle going on behind the scenes between politicians who wanted to hold some things back and public health officials who wanted to get it out. Fortunately, the healthcare officials seemed to win these battles nearly all the time.

Concerns about confidentiality and privacy caused a few problems. In the early days before the province took over the information, some municipalities would not release information to others, citing patient confidentiality, and it was not until the province took over that these barriers were broken down. Health authorities and the media also wrestled with privacy issues and sometimes reached the same conclusions. One case involved a nurse who came down with SARS symptoms after treating SARS patients. Health authorities were alarmed when they learned that she had been commuting to her

hospital job every day in a crowded train. Instead of releasing her name and photograph to alert people who might have been sitting near her, they decided to release a general description and no indication to where she had been sitting. Although the media quickly learned her true identity they reached an identical conclusion and did not release her exact identity but just a general description. That was a similar decision on how to balance privacy against public information.

SARS dominated coverage in the Canadian media and quickly replaced the Iraq war as the main subject, particularly in the Toronto area, but there were few complaints about sensationalism or excessive coverage

In late April, the World Health Organisation (WHO) issued a travel advisory adding Toronto to a list of places like China and Hong Kong where non-essential travel was discouraged. Since the peak of the crisis had passed and SARS seemed largely under control, Canadian officials were furious. Maria Cheng characterised the attitude of the Canadian media at that time as hostile and I think that is an accurate description. Some of the Canadian journalists that I spoke to think they were wrong at that time because the focus of the coverage did switch from covering SARS to covering the WHO's travel advisory, probably to an excessive extent.

After a week, WHO amended its travel advisory and took Toronto off its list and it appeared to some that they had bowed to the significant pressure coming from Canada. In fact, it now it appears that the advisory was right because SARS did make a comeback a couple of weeks later, infecting more people and killing several more within the healthcare system. That is one thing that some of the journalists I spoke to regret.

SARS dominated coverage in the Canadian media and quickly replaced the Iraq war as the main subject, particularly in the Toronto area, but there were few complaints about sensationalism or excessive coverage. Even the business community seemed to realise that this was a serious crisis. Although they were extremely upset about the loss of economic activity in the Toronto area they did not blame the news media for that.

One other failing I think we might cite, although I do not think the final word has been written on this; there are still outstanding questions that no one has dealt with. An infectious person arrived in Vancouver just about the same time as the first person brought the disease to Toronto, yet the disease did not break out of the healthcare system in Vancouver. There are questions as to whether the right tests were used, whether the disease was defined properly and whether the use of the hospitals was appropriate in terms of containing the disease.

So I think the conclusion is that the Canadian news media did a good job in getting information out during the crisis, but there is still more work to be done. ■



2003 IPI Free Media Pioneer

AWARDED TO THE MEDIA COUNCIL OF TANZANIA (MCT), DAR ES SALAAM



Johann P. Fritz Director of IPI

This year, the International Press Institute and the Freedom Forum have decided to honour the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), one of the few independent media councils in Africa, with the 2003 Free Media Pioneer Award.

Founded in June 1995 by media owners, editors and leading journalists, the MCT was not allowed to operate until 22 May 1997, when it was finally registered by the government of Tanzania. The MCT was borne out of the realisation that Tanzania's vibrant media should develop their own self-regulatory code of practice rather than wait for government intervention through existing laws, many of them dating back to colonial rule.

The MCT's declared aim is to "help create an environment in which democracy, free speech and basic rights will finally predominate" by "promoting freedom of the media and ensuring the highest professional standards of accountability" in Tanzania, East Africa, and beyond.

To this end, the MCT, which comprises academics, business representatives and prominent citizens chosen by journalists, has dedicated itself to ensuring that Tanzania's media follow the letter and the spirit of a code of practice drafted and adopted by the media industry itself. It has been a driving force in calling for the repeal of repressive media laws and in working toward the establishment of further independent media councils in the region. ■

Jenerali Ulimwengu

Vice President, Media Council of Tanzania,
Dar es Salaam

When, approximately a decade ago, we took the first ginger steps toward the establishment of what is today known as the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), we were essentially responding to a plan by our government to set up a government-sponsored, statutory regulatory body to oversee the media in the country.

As most of you may recall, this was a period of a particular effervescence in the world generally, a period when a certain erstwhile order in certain parts of the world was crumbling very fast, paving the way for new thinking that was opening up democratic spaces hitherto unknown to the peoples of many countries in Eastern Europe and Africa. New vistas were opening up with blinding speed, and there was an unmistakable sense of perplexity on the part of our African governments who were not quite sure whether to stem the tide or swim with it.

This tended to breed a schizophrenic stance that paid lip service to democratisation and the establishment of multiparty politics, while at the same time attempting to deny this democratisation any substance by, say, making it difficult for the nascent free media to operate and flourish. Hence the move by the government to introduce in Parliament a draft law designed to set up a government ordained council which would regulate the press using statutory powers akin to those wielded by the law courts.

We of the media fraternity recognised the danger inherent in this move, which was going to have the effect of taking with the left hand what was given by the right hand, and we protested vigorously. Our protest was supported by other members of the civil society, who also saw the sly machinations that were being trotted out to emasculate a potent force that was fast making its presence felt.

For this was a time when, almost overnight, a virtual revolution took place in Tanzanian media, and when, from a media landscape dominated by the ruling party and its government, we now had new media outlets setting up shop virtually everyday.

Needless to say, this was worrisome to a government that dreaded and distrusted these newfound voices, and the bill was an attempt to snuff out the fledgling media before it

became too powerful. This was defeated at the hands of civil society and donor pressure, and the government eventually, and reluctantly, withdrew the bill.

We took the opportunity to move fast to establish a non-governmental council, and various stakeholders got together and adopted a constitution and elected a board comprising individuals from the media fraternity as well as prominent members of the society at large.



Still, although this process was completed by 1995, the government withheld the Council's registration for two years, until 1997. Nevertheless the Council went to work with gusto, listening to public petitions against alleged misconduct by the media, the emphasis being placed on arbitration and reconciliation rather than courtroom adjudication, all the while seeking to teach and counsel rather than to penalise and award damages.

At the same time the Council undertook to support the establishment and development of regional press clubs with a view to building capacity at grassroots level and to train media practitioners all over the country professionally and ethically. A code of conduct was adopted and distributed widely and it is today taken as the yardstick to guide all media practitioners in their work.

As a result of this work of five years it has been gratifying to note that we have estimated a compliance rate of over 90 per cent, compared to a 60 per cent compliance rate with court decisions. This high rate of compliance is informed by the fact that the Constitution of the MCT and its Code of Ethics were established by the media practitioners themselves, who feel

duty-bound to honour them voluntarily.

It is safe to say that we have achieved something. Tanzania today boasts dozens of publications, scores of radio and television stations and this makes for variety and plurality of views. The MCT has so far won the trust of the public and compliance rates are impressive. But nothing in all this is irreversible. How many times have we witnessed former champions of democracy turning into the most rabid destroyers of their peoples' freedoms, imprisoning journalists, killing them even, banning their publications, closing down their broadcasting stations, bombing their printing shops?

We still have in our statute books pieces of draconian legislation which are fundamentally inimical to a healthy media practice, because they seriously curtail media freedom and freedom of expression generally and impose stiff criminal penalties to offences which should be left in the realm of civil action.

Tanzanian media stakeholders have recently undertaken a concerted media law reform campaign aimed at effecting the repeal of a number of obnoxious laws that impinge on the freedom of expression and put into place a freedom of information act with a view to making public officials more accessible, transparent and accountable.

We know we must endeavour to make our council more self-sustaining, maintain and strengthen leadership and insist on the inculcation of the highest ethical standards among our media practitioners.

An ethical, responsible and highly professional media must be built and nurtured painstakingly, and this means the rooting out of all the bad weeds which, through questionable professional standards, shoddy reporting and incendiary editorialising, bring the media into disrepute. But this job cannot be done by government, for we do not know where government acquired the requisite expertise to do it. ■

SESSION IV

Salzburg Congress Centre

“Media in War Zones and Regions of Conflict”



Chairperson

Christian Rainer

Editor-in-Chief, profil, Vienna

Panelists

Jonathan Baker

World News Editor, BBC, London

Hanoch Marmari

Editor-in-Chief, Ha'aretz, Tel Aviv

Reese Schonfeld

Co-Founder and former President, CNN, Atlanta

Victor de la Serna

Deputy Editor, El Mundo, Madrid



Brothers in Arms?

Reese Schonfeld

Co-Founder and former President, CNN, Atlanta

There have been many claims that the U.S. deliberately targeted U.S. forces, deliberately targeted certain parts of the press corps, particularly Al Jazeera. Whether or not the U.S. attacks on the Hotel Palestine were innocent or were actually purposeful, I leave to someone else to find out. I am not so naive to believe that there could not have been a colonel or a captain somewhere who wanted to shell the Hotel Palestine deliberately and attack the journalists. At the same time, I believe and I hope it to be true that no one higher than that in the U.S. military ever told anyone to attack the Hotel Palestine.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the British in the first Gulf War. When Sandy Gall, an ITN correspondent, broke away from the rest of the press corps he was – probably thanks to the cooperation of the British government – able to roll right in with the first forces into Iraq, with the British forces, and he got the best pictures and the best stories of the war because he was there. It was just a terrific piece of journalism.

As you know, the rest of the journalists were still sitting in Saudi Arabia waiting for

reports and I guess embedding journalists is better than that, it gives them more access. Aside from that, it's a disaster. When you embed journalists, when they travel with soldiers, they become soldiers, they think like soldiers, they are brothers in arms almost. As one journalist said, "I feel a hell of a lot more comfortable being surrounded by soldiers pointing their guns away from me than having soldiers point their guns at me."

Perhaps in this kind of war there is no other way to go. I don't like it. After travelling with people for days on end and becoming involved in a cause together, who would not begin to sympathise with those people with whom one travels? But at the same time, somebody at headquarters, an anchor man, someone should be reminding people that these reporters have probably been co-opted, that they have become a part of the people that they are travelling with and their reports reflect that.

It is probably inevitable that these kinds of things happen in a fluid war. Wars have changed. In the First and Second World Wars you had fronts. Reporters could stay behind a front, move up to it, choose what point they wanted to go to, look for different stories and then come back to safety. In this kind of a war

“Embedding as a means of war coverage was extremely useful to us if we understand the difficulties and the implications of it, and we are clear to our audiences about them. But it was not truly tried and tested and many of the questions that were asked about it beforehand therefore remain unanswered.”

Jonathan Baker

you cannot do that and as a result you depend on the people you are travelling with for safety. So you get stuck, you are embedded. As we all know, the number of independent reporters who died was greater, much greater, than the number of embedded reporters and I think that is the reality of modern journalism and we are stuck with it. Sometimes I am glad that I no longer run CNN. I would not know what to do – risk peoples’ lives, or take the easy way out.

Finally, at a recent conference in Brussels, I defended the war in Iraq. I believe Oswald Spengler, that we are in a clash of civilisations. I believe that the West must face up to it. Battles must be fought and that is the unpleasant reality.

I think the U.S. took on a heroic burden when they went into that battle. I am very disappointed that the United Nations did not support it. I am very disappointed that the rest of Europe, the cradle of Western civilisation – a hundred years ago it was Germany that produced Oswald Spengler who predicted all this so well – ran away from that hard duty, saying they could not do anything about it and leaving it to someone else.

At the end of my talk in Brussels, I called the war a triumph. I stand by that. However, I must add an adjective. It is now a hollow triumph and for that I am very sorry. I am sorry that my government has not been able to do a better job of turning that triumph into a triumph for everyone who lives in Israel and for everyone who lives in the West. But that is the situation. Great civilisations rise to confront grave situations, not run away from them. ■

Journalists in Zones of Civil Conflict

Victor de la Serna

Deputy Editor, El Mundo, Madrid

If I am here today, it is probably because my newspaper holds an unenviable record right now. In the past three years, we have lost three journalists in zones of war or conflict under very different circumstances. A young embedded journalist was killed in Iraq last spring. A veteran journalist who had covered Chechnya and the first Gulf War was killed in 2002 while covering Afghanistan as an independent journalist not involved with any military mission. And an important political columnist who had very strong views against the actions of Basque terrorists and the current Basque regional government was killed in his own town in the Basque territory by Basque terrorists. Different circumstances, but all of them died, and if I had been on the second panel today, on news safety, I would have had a very sceptical, cynical or jaundiced attitude about this, saying that there is no safety. How do these circumstances, extremely difficult ones, condition the way we function and the way we report as journalists. That is more the subject right now.

Julio Anguita Parrado was only 32 and it was the first war he was covering. Ironically, he was not killed while following the U.S. tanks in that dash into central Baghdad, three days before the end of the war, which was car-

ried out basically for media purposes, to counteract Iraqi propaganda and show that the forces were able to get into Baghdad. He was left behind with a German reporter because they were advised not to follow; their flak jackets were not up to the strength that was recommended and they thought there was going to be a lot of heavy fire against them. So they stayed behind and they were killed by an Iraqi missile while staying behind and not participating in this dash, which we all saw on television. By the way, none of the journalists that participated were hurt at all. So it was an ironic situation. A sad irony for us, of course, because it was the third one of our colleagues that we had lost in tragic circumstances. You could feel the weight of sorrow and incomprehension in the newsroom as we heard the news report that he might be dead and then when it was confirmed. Of course, we debated this, we had meetings, our editor-in-chief wondered a lot if we should stop sending correspondents into conflicts. What could we do? There seemed to be some sort of terrible jinx against us out there.

Of course, we have not stopped. We have a person in Baghdad right this minute and under very dangerous circumstances as we all know. Whatever the risk environment, in every separate conflict responsible media will not give up their duty to report from them. If they

can afford it financially, some will say someone else should cover it for us, some news agency. However, if fewer and fewer people go to conflicts we will get a narrower and narrower view. Therefore the point is moot for us.

The point of whether or not it is good to have embedded journalists is also moot for us. We need both embedded and non-embedded journalists. We complained loudly in the first Gulf War that journalists were not allowed near the front, near the action, and that it gave us a restricted view. We fully understood – and our reporter who was killed understood – that he would be extremely limited by the fact that he was submitted to American censorship, which of course was never really applied except that the journalists knew not to indicate exactly where they were at every moment. We knew that if we had one embedded person and three persons outside reporting independently that we could get a much more comprehensible, understandable jigsaw puzzle in place. Therefore we did it and we have done it again and we are just praying that this incredible round of bad luck against us will end.

But there is a case that for me probably is a greater cause for concern than the conditions under which we report on wars. Even though these are less spectacular situations, it is those zones in the world where there is a latent and sometimes apparent and permanent civil conflict, which many times entails constant terrorist action. I am thinking of places in the world like Colombia and some of the former Soviet Republics in which journalists are submitted to incredible pressure and that is indeed affecting their performance.

There is at least one such zone in Western Europe that no one ever thinks about and that zone is in Spain. One of the three colleagues we lost was writing from that part of Spain and he was killed. Besides that tragic end, the whole situation of journalists in such zones for me is really something that we should look into. The pressures that they are subjected to, the self-censorship, the fear, are constant of course when terrorists are operating, but they are compounded when the local administration, as is the case in the Basque country, has the same political aims as the terrorists. Even if they do not openly espouse violence, they have the same basic aims, secession and independence from Spain, which they have difficulty getting through democratic means.



Spanish regions have more powers, for instance, than the German Länder. They have their police, their parliament, they levy taxes, they run hospitals, education; anything but foreign relations is theirs. The current Basque administration has run the Basque Country for over 20 years and despite that fact they are still acting as a very partisan administration, constantly denouncing and attacking those few journalists who are still working in that area where terrorism is rampant and people killed in terrorist actions every year.

The spokesman of the Basque Nationalist Party in power in the Basque country will refer to journalists as the modern media version of Franco's occupying army. Those types of statements not only put great pressure on the journalists, who sometimes opt to just pack their bags and live in Madrid or Barcelona, or if they stay are cowed into writing less, reporting less and less. José Luis López de la Calle was denounced and criticised by those people who play lip service to press freedom and he went

out one morning to buy a loaf of bread and the day's newspapers, and when he returned home they were waiting for him at the entrance of his apartment building; they shot him in the head and left him in a puddle of blood surrounded by all the newspapers which was a pretty sad and symbolic image.

Then the Basque government will come and condemn these attacks on freedom of the press, but these people have put journalists in the sites of terrorists and I think that is unacceptable. I think we should not accept that administrations and governments in democratic countries, in countries of the West, behave in this way. There is too much hypocritical looking-elsewhere, saying it's worse in Belarus, Russia, or Colombia. It may be worse by the numbers, but not by the very essence of administrations pressuring journalists in zones of conflict, in zones where their lives are at risk, and this should be denounced. ■

Some Embedded Truths



Hanoch Marmari

Editor-in-Chief, Ha'aretz, Tel Aviv

Our senior commentator on the Middle East, Zvi Barel, recently set out on a trip to Kurdish northern Iraq and considered entering Iraq itself. We warned him against this, because we, like our readers, prefer a cautious commentator and a living colleague.

This might be contrary to the spirit of journalism and the personal courage that are expected of a reporter, but before Barel set out on his mission I asked him to promise that he would refrain from any hasty attempt to enter Iraqi territory. As it happened, Barel could not resist the temptation and went into Iraq with the help of friends and an Israeli passport in his pocket. The only protection he had was the fluent Arabic that he speaks.

Barel sent us excellent material, but we lost sleep the entire ten days he spent in Iraq. Each time he sent another report I wondered what would happen if he were to disappear, as we would have no way to help him.

In order to survive and to work, Barel had to dissemble. His fluency enabled him to be thought of as a visitor from elsewhere in the Arab world. Without that, he could not have met with people in the Iraqi establishment, nor spoken to ordinary Iraqis, nor have had a heart to heart talk with an Iraqi engineer who shared a taxi with him from Baghdad to the Jordanian border and is a fan of Al Qaeda. We were very pleased with all this material, but whenever he managed to get in touch with us we begged him to get out of there as soon as possible.

Is it allowable to dissimulate for purposes of a journalistic assignment? We believe that it is never, ever allowable to lie to readers. Sometimes, in exceptional cases and in order to keep safe and obtain access to valuable information, it is necessary to stray in the field a certain distance from the truth. This is the advantage and the disadvantage in a one-time assignment. The reporter's shadowy work achieves a fleeting moment of journalistic insight, because he has no need to maintain a

long-term and transparent relationship with the subjects of his reporting.

More than a dozen representatives of Israeli newspapers have worked in Iraq since March, most of them during the war itself. All the Israeli journalists who covered Iraq were in double jeopardy, as journalists and as Israelis. They all had dual citizenship, and were present in the theatre under some kind of cover, usually as purported reporters for American newspapers.

This disrupted the regular and reasonable management of the newsroom. Instead of the most suitable and knowledgeable reporter going on an assignment, the reporter with a second passport and good cover story went. There were cases of adventurers and travel writers coming along and offering themselves to newspapers. Thus, at the start of the fighting anyone who managed to get out to the field and sent material had his story published prominently under the by-line, "Our special correspondent in Iraq."

We at Ha'aretz refused to get dragged into this. On the eve of the war the Pentagon gave us an "embedding" slot. We gave the assignment to a Ha'aretz reporter who has a German passport. The man went to a Kuwaiti embassy and asked for a visa. The Kuwaitis asked him which newspaper he represented and he replied truthfully. He was refused, as was everyone who asked for an entry permit to U.S. military headquarters in Kuwait City on behalf of an Israeli newspaper. The Israeli media learned once again that without faking, there is no access.

We approached a number of foreign correspondents and asked them to send us material too. They explained in embarrassment that if they were published in an Israeli newspaper it would harm their freedom of action and perhaps even their safety. At Ha'aretz we decided not to commission fly-by-night reporters, like some of our competitors did. Having no alternative – we relied on dispatches from the international press.

It is not that we do not take risks. Quite a few Ha'aretz reporters and photographers go in and out of the Palestinian territories, often facing real danger. The newspaper has a bulletproof car for these assignments, but it can never supply full protection for the hundreds of movements every month of our reporters in the territories.

The war in Iraq was an important test laboratory for the surreal journalistic reality in our region. I take the liberty of making two observations on Iraq, linking them to the coverage of our own conflict.

First, the demand for maximum access to hostility zones for reporters imposes maximum responsibility on editors.

Editors must consider carefully their demand for total access, because there is a contradiction between demanding total access to areas where fighting is going on and at the same time protesting that the lives of journalists are at risk.

Here is a case that demonstrates this point. In October 2001, after an Israeli government minister was assassinated by Palestinians, a large military force encircled the small village of Beit Reema near Ramallah and went in to arrest a number of suspects. By order of the regional command, the area was sealed off entirely, including to journalists. The village was closed for 25 hours, during which time the soldiers arrested 50 people. Of these, 39

were released after questioning and the remaining 11 were taken into custody. In sporadic exchanges of fire during the night, five Palestinian policemen were killed. They had not laid down their arms as they had been called upon to do. This was indeed a crude and costly operation.

During the hours the village was closed, rumours spread about a massacre of its inhabitants. The IDF claimed that had it opened the area to journalists, it would have posed a real danger to their lives. IPI sent a letter of protest to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon: "The latest violation of press freedom appears to be part of a concerted effort by the IDF to control what is being reported about the resumption of armed hostilities in the region."

Editors must consider carefully their demand for total access, because there is a contradiction between demanding total access to areas where fighting is going on and at the same time protesting that the lives of journalists are at risk

In principle, this is a justified protest. Anyone who closes off an area is damaging freedom of the press. On the other hand, editors and journalists who insist on free movement in a battle zone must take responsibility for the fatal results of their decisions. But by the same token, the need to ensure the journalist's safety in the chaotic arena of battle, which IPI also demands of governments and fighting organisations, directly contradicts the demand for absolute freedom of movement.

In fact, the moment the military force left the village, the press went in and sent out independent, full stories and descriptions of the operation and its results, with a one-day delay. No journalist was hurt. But imagine the volume of protests had the area not been closed and had reporters been found among the dead.

Secondly, access to the area of conflict is an asset, and it has a price tag.

Armies, even those of democracies, always prefer a battlefield without journalists running freely over it. Take the U.S. army in the first Gulf War or the British in the Falklands. The embedding in the recent war in Iraq was a clever way of organising journalists to stay

behind the fighters rather than move around as free agents in the field. But sometimes even the definition of the field is difficult.

In the West Bank and Gaza, for example, one can find several layers on the same field, and each requires a different mode of access. True, the Israeli army controls the roads and soldiers at roadblocks can create difficulties for travelling press. But at the scenes of confrontation between soldiers and armed civilians the advantage is often held by stringers who are part of the local population. A foreign reporter will be in a better position if he or she enjoys the hospitality of local people. The package deal that includes a guide and an interpreter also includes sympathetic coverage that flows from the situation. Is that not a form of embedding, too? The obvious result is that the soldiers are observed from the distance, perhaps as cruel or indifferent killing machines, while the locals – the people and their cause – will be in intimate contact with the reporter.

Those who control the field are often willing to sell access to it. The press sometimes has to buy access and the question is at what price? How can one ensure that deals are not cut over the heads of the reading public?

When a reporter accepts the sponsorship of one of the sides in a conflict, a sponsorship that affords the advantage of access, he is prone to recompense the sponsors by promoting their interests. This can happen actively and openly or passively, if the reporter refrains from covering embarrassing matters. The passive case is worse, because the readers and the viewers are not aware of it. The more the reporter is dependent on the controlling element – a regime, an army, a local leadership – for access and writing, the more this influences and even slants his coverage.

Only after Saddam Hussein's regime was toppled did CNN chief news executive Eason Jordan allow himself to describe the terrible price the network had paid for the Iraqi agreement that CNN keep working in the country. Jordan wrote, "Over the last dozen years I made 13 trips to Baghdad to lobby the government to keep CNN's Baghdad bureau open and to arrange interviews with Iraqi leaders. Each time I visited, I became more distressed by what I saw and heard – awful things that could not be reported because doing so would have jeopardised the lives of Iraqis, particularly those on our Baghdad staff."

Ethan Bronner, a former Middle East correspondent for the New York Times, defended Jordan from a flood of criticism: “Anyone who has reported from totalitarian states knows that it is one of the most challenging tasks a journalist faces, involving daily calculations over access, honesty, freedom of movement and fear of reprisal.”

Israel is a paradise for foreign correspondents. Distances are short and the access is usually easy. The drive from the scene of conflict anywhere in the territories to the prestigious and serene American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem takes in average less than an hour. There are 350 foreign news and media organisations working in Israel, with 800 permanent foreign news people and 2,000 Israeli and Palestinian staffers. Annually there are 2,000 to 3,000 accredited visiting journalists. Israel is one of the largest foreign press sites after Washington and Moscow.

Even taking account of all the bureaucratic obstacles that the government poses for the foreign press, the foreign journalists are not harassed. They expect from Israel, as a democratic and open society, maximal and unconditional openness and minimal interference in their work. When the Israeli Government Press Office piled difficulties on them, there was a justified outcry that could never have been heard on the Palestinian side or in even the most moderate Arab state.

There is no reciprocity between Israel’s attitude towards journalists from Arab countries and their countries’ attitudes towards Israeli journalists. The Arab satellite networks operate in Israel with wide-ranging freedom, but an Israeli journalist cannot be posted as a permanent correspondent in Egypt or Jordan even though there are peace agreements between us.

In any case, it cannot be said that the State of Israel collects any favours or affection because it is a hostel for the journalists of the world. The embedding approach is not applied by Israel in order to present its interests in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is simply because the IDF does not have and cannot have a monopoly on access to the field.

So my point is that embedding has always existed, even before the invention of this special term for this special context. And while in the Iraq War the press was dependent on the services of the U.S. military, in the Palestinian territories the press is dependent for access on local people, who provide vital

services to the press. For that matter even Ha’aretz reporters need these services in order to report on Palestinian stories. The questions we often ask ourselves when we run stories on the Palestinians is whether we go too far in practising an accommodating kind of journalism, by printing versions of stories that we can never fully verify.

Attaching a reporter to a fighting team may result in the fighters being depicted from the human angle, with all their anxieties and their worries. But the other side of the conflict, the civilian side, to which access is low from the outset because of the barriers of language and discourse, remains far from the heart and thoughts of the viewer.

Brian MacQuarrie, a Boston Globe correspondent embedded with 630 artillery soldiers for three weeks of fighting all the way from Kuwait to Baghdad, wrote, under the title: “Brotherhood Bred in Combat”:

“I had not sacrificed for as long as these troops, had not left my loved ones for as long, was not expected to expose myself to the deadly risk that is the job description of a combat soldier, and I could come and go as I pleased in pursuit of a daily story. But they accepted me in their ranks as one more soldier who got dirty as they did, albeit with a very different mission. ‘You’re now one of the band of brothers. You know that, don’t you?’”

When a reporter accepts the sponsorship of one of the sides in a conflict, a sponsorship that affords the advantage of access, he is prone to recompense the sponsors by promoting their interests

Still, over these past three years of exhausting military activity, the world press did not pay much attention to the human angle of Israelis serving as soldiers, both conscripts and reservists, in this violent urban conflict, and the complexities they face. This is not a complaint, just an observation. In the ugly war being waged in our region, where soldiers are fighting terrorism in urban areas, where you can never be quick enough in guessing who is the enemy and who is just an innocent civilian, you never find in the foreign press such lines as those quoted by Mr. MacQuarrie from

an American lieutenant trying to conclude his contribution to the events: “They won’t remember us for what we did in the war. They’ll remember us for shooting a civilian who doesn’t stop at a checkpoint.”

Foreign press coverage tends to be nervous, impatient and superficial, as are today’s readers, providing a kind of fast-food journalism. There is a recipe for stories from remote and violent places. They should be crunchy and spicy – that is short, thrilling, touching, moving, very simple, emotional and wrapped up with a quick moral lesson.

We know all about it because we see ourselves in the mirror. We are objects of foreign press coverage in Israel; we are the foreign press in covering Iraq; and we play both roles in the Palestinian territories. ■

The Embedding Process

Jonathan Baker

World News Editor, BBC, London

I thought that I might concentrate my comments more on the embedding process and the war coverage because I was very closely involved with the evolution on what turned into the British embed system and I was the point of contact of the BBC with the Pentagon and the operation of their programme. The BBC had about 40 journalists embedded with the Americans and the British during the war and I think embedding is one of the key issues that emerges from the war which we need to reflect on and examine as we move forward.

Perhaps I can just briefly comment on the other two. One has already been mentioned, the safety issue, and I do not want to encroach too much on the next session, but the fact that one journalist was killed for every ten members of the coalition forces is I think an extraordinary statistic. It raises very important questions about the role of safety considerations in our deployment, what we do in the future, what we ask people to do, and how we train and equip them to do it.

The third issue after embedding and safety is technology. I speak here as a broadcast journalist and not a print journalist. Every conflict in the last ten or 15 years has also signalled some sort of milestone in technological advance and the way in which we tell our stories and bring our material back. Most recently in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq we saw the use of satellite phones, then video phones. A feature of this last conflict for us was the store and forward system which means that you can send video from almost anywhere, although very slowly and laboriously. The way ahead I think is signalled by the evolution of new, lightweight and generally portable satellite dishes. That I think is not very far off and when it does happen we then will have real-time war coverage.

These three issues I think overlap and interweave because if technology makes it possible to get your material back quickly

from somewhere, clearly you are inclined at least to take more risks and to send people further forward and expose them to even more danger. In fact the more I reflect on the Iraq conflict and what it was like going through it as a manager of 300 or 400 people in the Gulf, the more convinced I am that the key decision we made at the BBC during the campaign or just before the campaign was to remain in Baghdad throughout.

News organisations were pretty divided about it. The temptations to leave were extremely great. In the first case you are operating under censorship and therefore to some extent what you are reporting is devalued or at least compromised in some way. You are operating in what is going to be an enemy capital – for an American or British journalist at least – and some American organisations took the view that, quite apart from the dangers involved, it would also be unpatriotic.

In coverage terms we wanted to build as wide and as total a picture as we could, so our war coverage came from our embedded correspondents, our unilateral or independent teams, from military briefings, from expertise and sources within America, the United Kingdom and the Middle East.

And then there were the physical dangers. Both the British and the Americans issued a series of very direct and stark warnings to media organisations. I heard it first hand from a very senior official in the Pentagon that Baghdad would not be a safe place to be. The Ministry of Information, where all journalists had to work at that time, would be a legitimate target and we would be well advised not to stay there.

There was the further prospect that in the wake of an invasion journalists could be held as human shields. There could be street fight-

ing in which we could be caught up. Or we could be caught up in a popular backlash of people seeing us as somehow the representatives of an invading country.

This was a really tough decision. A lot of the big American networks, except for CNN, decided to go. All the major British broadcasters decided to stay and many other print and other broadcasters stayed as well. We all moved into what we perceived to be a safer hotel and we all stayed together reasoning that the Americans would not deliberately bomb a hotel that they knew was full of journalists. But, as we know, this hotel did come under attack from a tank round, so nothing was guaranteed and the warnings about our safety were repeated throughout the conflict.

This decision I think brings all the big safety questions into very sharp focus – security of your people against the demands of a story. It is still as dangerous and volatile in Baghdad today, perhaps even more so than it was three or four months ago. I have about 20 people in Baghdad at the moment and we are reviewing their situation and the circumstances under which they are working on a daily basis. It is very frightening.

In coverage terms we wanted to build as wide and as total a picture as we could, so our war coverage came from our embedded correspondents, our unilateral or independent teams, from military briefings, from expertise and sources within America, the United Kingdom and the Middle East. Had we not been in Baghdad, I think that coverage would have been very seriously diminished and indeed distorted to some extent. There would have been greater emphasis on the military campaign and no chance really to see the effect of it on the city. The decision to stay looks pretty obvious now since none of the awful things that could have happened did happen, at least to the journalists in Baghdad, but it was an agonizingly difficult decision at the time.

To return to the subject of the embed, we have always had, or certainly for more than 100 years, embedded journalists of one sort or

another. From the Crimean war onwards, the military and the press have worked together in some way or another on coverage of a war. But I think that there were some very substantial differences this time.

The first thing was the sheer scale of it. The Americans embedded several hundred journalists and the British embedded almost a hundred. This was to be the primary tool of war reporting as far as the military was concerned.

The second thing was the access. We got greater access than our journalists had ever done before. Our journalists got closer to the front line and were involved in the action more than ever before.

Thirdly, our coverage was more timely. We were able to get the material back much more quickly than we had done before, partly because of the technological advances that I mentioned previously and partly because the Americans realised that this had been one of the disadvantages of the previous Gulf War. The material was not getting back quick enough to counter the propaganda reverses that they were suffering at the hands of Saddam Hussein in the previous campaign.

The rules that the military imposed upon us for embeds were that we should not report any details of our positions or anything that might give away our position to the enemy, and we should not give away any details of military plans. These were the two restrictions and we regarded those as not unreasonable and they for the most part stuck by it. There was little or no attempt at censorship in the experience of the BBC journalists and I have debriefed nearly all of them pretty thoroughly.

Clearly we would all have concerns about the embed system as a philosophy. People were worried that the military would only allow us to see what they wanted us to see; that they would only make it possible for us to report those things that they wanted reported; that because we were living with the troops we would become soldiers in everything but name and this would inevitably skew our coverage; that our reporters would get too excited about the whole business of a mili-



tary campaign, a phenomenon we know as “boys and toys” and that they would forget in their coverage that a very large body of opinion, in the UK at least, was bitterly opposed to the war in the first place; and finally, that they could give only a micro image of what was happening, reporting only a very small portion of the theatre and not giving any kind of overall picture.

I think these were all perfectly legitimate concerns and I shared a lot of them. We went into the embed process, therefore, determined to do what we could to counter those concerns and to neutralise them as far as possible.

The first important principle was to be clear that the embedded correspondents were only one element of our coverage. We were not relying on them to carry the whole burden of our war reporting. So the embeds are only part of your coverage, not only of the battle itself but also of the whole war. And if you see it in those terms you can regard it as a very useful adjunct to what you are doing.

We did everything we could to discuss with our correspondents the danger, the concerns, the traps that they might fall into. The BBC reporters were instructed that they were not to dress as soldiers; some correspondents from other agencies did. We used our own blue helmets and blue flack jackets. They were not to talk about the British military, as “us”, “our side”, etc. They were to confine themselves to factual or neutral terminology and they were to guard against anything that they might

regard as manipulative or attempt at censorship. Most importantly they were told not to speculate. They were to report only what they had seen or knew for a fact because they would only know what they saw in their own little patch. They were not to be drawn into endless speculation about the overall strategy or what was happening elsewhere on the battlefield.

The fourth element of the BBC approach was to be candid with the audiences about who these people were and the circumstances under which they were operating. All our reports from embedded correspondents were preceded with the “health warning” that they were with the military and were not allowed to give away details of their positions or military plans.

I mentioned that the embeds were only going to give you one part of the picture. We had hoped that the other part of the big picture, the strategic overview, would be provided by the military briefings set up in that huge Hollywood-style set and hanger in Doha. In fact, those briefings were woefully inadequate; very little was said on the record, not much more off the record and it was very difficult to pull together all the amazing images and reports we were getting into some sort of comprehensive and coherent picture.

I have had a number of theories advanced for this. One of these is that the Americans very cynically thought that if they provided a huge mass of pictures and battlefield reporting

then that would do. A lot of networks and correspondents would not care too much about what they were seeing, and frankly all they were interested in was a propaganda war and those pictures of American doughboys liberating the oppressed peoples of Iraq.

A second theory was that Donald Rumsfeld wished to control very much the flow of information himself from his briefings at the Pentagon and therefore the operation in Doha was to some extent emasculated.

A final theory, which I myself ascribe to, is that they simply did not foresee what it would be like. They were not ready for the fact that all these images were being seen by audiences at the same time that they were being seen by military strategists and they were either unwilling to keep up or simply could not keep up with the flow of information.

Oddly, that tended to drive us back to local sources, which we already knew were to be questioned, because people only knew their little part. Because of the inadequacy of what we were getting in Doha, it became an assumption that what you were getting from the ground was likely to be more authentic, for this is what people were seeing with their own eyes, and so we had the phenomenon of the over reporting of the insurrection inside Basra and the over reporting of the column of Iraqi armour supposedly seen heading out of the city a couple of days later. So the fact that the briefings were so poor I think actually led to some poor reporting, although embedded correspondents also acted as correctors on some occasions.

But I think the concept of embedding, even given that inadequacy of the briefing, which should have been the other half of the equation, is still valid. I think most of us assume that embedding in some form or another, whether we like it or not, is here to stay. It cannot be denied that the embed system gave us more intimate, powerful, graphic and timely images of war from the front line than any of us had ever seen before. This is a reversal of what we had in the past. We all remember the formal daily briefings at NATO during the Kosovo conflict, for example, where we were given the military view and we have very little first hand information from the front to substantiate it. Here in Iraq we had exactly the opposite. We had an enormous

volume of material coming back from lots of different points on the front lines, but a complete lack of analysis to explain to us and the audiences what was going on. A rather strange reversal, I think.

So as we move forward I think it incumbent upon us to try to resolve some of these ethical and practical issues and to engage the military in the debate if we can.

All our reports from embedded correspondents were preceded with the "health warning" that they were with the military and were not allowed to give away details of their positions or military plans

There is one major caveat that must be stated about the embedding process. Do not forget that this was an enormously successful military campaign. The country was invaded within a couple of weeks. There were no substantial checks to the advance. There were no really heavy military casualties. So to that extent embedding was never really put to the test. What if things had been different? What if there had been a major setback to the campaign or greater losses or street fighting? The relationship on the ground then between the embedded journalists and the people with whom they were embedded, I suggest, would have been different.

How would journalists feel reporting military defeats and setbacks among the people who were suffering them? How would the soldiers have felt about them in those circumstances? I think that our embedded journalists would have found life much more difficult. Would we have had the same amount of access in these circumstances, the same degree of trust and the same pretty light-handed view on censorship? I do not think so. I think we would have been having a very different discussion here this morning.

So embedding as a means of war coverage was extremely useful to us if we understand the difficulties and the implications of it, and we are clear to our audiences about them. But it was not truly tried and tested and many of the questions that were asked about it beforehand therefore remain unanswered. ■



Reuters journalist Mazen Dana, killed in Iraq on 17 August 2003.
(AP Photo / Nayef Hashlamoun, HO)

SESSION V

Salzburg Congress Centre

“The International News Safety Institute”



Chairperson

Claus Reitan

Editor-in-Chief, Tiroler Tageszeitung, Innsbruck

Speaker

Rodney Pinder

Director, International News Safety Institute (INSI), Brussels



Creating a Culture of Safety in Media

Rodney Pinder

Director, International News Safety Institute (INSI), Brussels

In a gloomy mood, Robert Kennedy occasionally would quote the ancient Chinese curse, “May you live in interesting times.”

Dull times are uneventful, unchallenging and, above all, safe. Interesting times are full of exciting events – hazardous, threatening, even dangerous. Interesting times of course are meat and drink for us in the news business. But in recent years we have seen far too much of the dark meaning of the Chinese curse. Interesting times have become increasingly deadly for journalists. We discussed this in Ljubljana and agreed something had to be done.

I am now reporting back on the result of the groundbreaking IPI initiative – the forma-

tion of the International News Safety Institute (INSI) – together with an update on the sad events since then.

The Iraq conflict is one of the bloodiest in history for reporters. A camera operator in the Occupied West Bank now enjoys one of the most dangerous jobs on earth. A journalist in Colombia today almost qualifies as an endangered species. In trouble spots around the globe, hundreds of reporters and editors daily face persecution, intimidation, torture and even death.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) counts more than 1,200 journalists and support staff killed in the line of duty in the past ten years. That is about three times as many as international humanitarian workers whose dangerous conditions attracted considerable attention after the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad.

Journalists are being killed because someone did not like what they wrote or said, because someone did not like reporters, or simply because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. And the situation is deteriorating, in part we believe because so few people have been held to account for attacking members of the news media, and in part because the old rules that used to govern conflict, in which reporters were largely accepted as impartial observers, have gone by the board.

Into this situation comes INSI, dedicated to safeguarding journalists' lives. It was the brainchild of IPI and IFJ. The initiative was backed last November by a conference of 100 media organisations, press freedom groups and humanitarian campaigners, all deeply concerned by the mounting death toll in the world news community.

The Brussels-based institute, led and managed by media professionals, aims to help create a culture of safety in media in all corners of the world. It recognises of course that brave reporting in the teeth of adversity is vital to free societies everywhere and never can be completely safe. Intrepid reporters, willing to risk their lives to expose wrongdoing and misery, are vital to free societies everywhere. Their initiative cannot – must not – be snuffed out by some overbearing “nannyism”.

However, there are many things concerned employers and working journalists, as well as governments and security forces, can and should do to manage risk and maintain high quality reporting.

To comprehend why INSI was deemed so necessary by so many of us there has to be an understanding of the grave danger facing journalists in so many parts of the world. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) says 76 per cent of journalists who have died in the past decade were murdered – targeted in direct reprisal for their work. Ninety per cent of the dead were not international correspondents parachuted into war, but ordinary journalists trying to pursue their daily work at home, in their own countries. Most disturbingly, in 94 per cent of the murders no one has been brought to justice. Many experts believe this lack of accountability has given a sharp upward twist to the spiral of journalist persecution. Killing a reporter has become a relatively risk-free activity.

Another twist to the vicious spiral has come from a widespread disregard of the old

“rules” that used to help protect journalists in conflicts. In the old days when wars had distinct sides and were played largely to conflict conventions, reporters were mostly seen as impartial and unbiased. In today's often swirling and confused conflicts, there are no set rules. Reporters are seen as belonging to one side or another. Israeli soldiers and officials seem unable to comprehend that a Palestinian cameraman can be as honest a reporter as an

Health is important. A journalist must be physically fit and mentally robust not only to endure the extreme stress of modern combat, but the physical torture of sitting cramped up, knees to chin, in the back of an armoured personnel carrier (APC) for hours at a stretch.

Embedded journalists were by and large safer than non-embeds, or unilaterals. They had a measure of safety provided by being protected by the most powerful side. But

“Until now there has been virtually no intra-industry coordination of safety policies. Although foreign correspondents often swap advice informally, no organisation existed for editors around the world to share safety information efficiently. INSI is the one-stop shop for all news media workers, editors and executives.”

Israeli. An Islamic fanatic can regard Western journalists as being on the side of a global war on Islam. An anti-globalisation rioter sees a photographer as an arm of hated capitalism. An American military media officer cannot accept that an Arab TV station can be unbiased. At the very least those committed elements do not care very much whether a reporter lives or dies on the bigger battlefield. At the most extreme end, the reporter is a target for their anger.

INSI has recorded 20 journalists and their support staff dead in the Iraq conflict, plus two missing and believed killed. Analysis breaks this down to 12, or 14 if the missing are counted, claimed by acts of war. Five were killed by American fire, two by the Iraqi military, one by Iraqi or U.S. fire – it is unclear which side delivered the fatal blow – and four by unidentified anti-Coalition elements. Evidence suggests the two missing ITN crew, Fred Nerac and Hussein Osman, were in Iraqi hands when they disappeared. Of eight who died from other causes, five were in road accidents, two succumbed to health-related afflictions and one stepped on a mine.

Many critical safety issues have arisen from the Iraq conflict and need to be addressed by journalists and assigning editors.

some wore uniforms. Did that make them safer by blending into the crowd around them or make them targets by appearing to be soldiers? Unilaterals had more freedom to report all sides. But they were “owned” by neither. Did that make them no one's responsibility? Chillingly, Coalition media managers had made clear that the safety of unilaterals would not be guaranteed.

INSI wrote an open letter to both sides before the war began appealing to them to respect journalists' neutrality and to avoid targeting civilian buildings where journalists might gather. Yet journalists were killed when American forces fired on the Palestine Hotel, well known as the Baghdad base for most of the international media.

INSI and other organisations also are examining the Geneva Conventions to see if they might be strengthened to provide particular protection for journalists in war zones. At the moment the journalist enjoys no more safeguards than any civilian. The issue is controversial. Should a journalist be enshrined in international law as a more valuable person than other civilians? What about the aid workers and UN officials I mentioned earlier?

Some, like me, argue that journalists are a special case. They place themselves deliberately

ly in harm's way in order to keep the world informed. If they did not do so, the flow of information that is the oxygen of free societies would be cut off. After all, that is precisely why journalists are targeted by elements who want the rest of us kept in the dark. And special protection for journalists surely need not come at the expense of humanitarian workers or other worthy workers.

Conflict reporting of course can never be completely safe. But the danger can be reduced. Far too often, journalists still head out towards trouble, whether war or violent protest, without the most basic preparation. They charge into situations about which they know little, without proper safety equipment or health awareness, when a little homework could make a huge difference to their safe return.

Many were appalled at the spectacle of hundreds of foreign journalists arriving in the Iraq war zone effectively naked. Malaysian journalists told me they did not even have gas masks when most experts were predicting chemical or biological warfare. One Japanese correspondent politely inquired of a Western reporter the purpose of the sandbags around his workspace. Few were protected by proper insurance, if they had any at all. One reporter told me that if he had been killed the insurance money would have gone to his employer.

Only a handful of major networks and newspapers sent experienced staff that had been trained to cope with hostile environments and were adequately equipped with helmets, respirators, flak jackets, even armoured cars. Not all news organisations of course can individually afford the safety nets deployed by the global giants. And even the big organisations are being stretched by their seemingly endless commitments to training and protection. This is where INSI comes into the picture.

Until now there has been virtually no intra-industry coordination of safety policies. Although foreign correspondents often swap advice informally, no organisation existed for editors around the world to share safety information efficiently. INSI is the one-stop shop for all news media workers, editors and executives. We serve as the global safety network, establishing safety standards, funding safety training for those unable to afford it, lobbying governments and news organisations to provide greater safety protection, and serving as a safety information hub.

In a comprehensive paper on safeguarding foreign journalists drawn up for the Newspaper Association of America, Beth Howe of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard outlined the industry's need:

"The risks of death, injury and mental trauma faced by overseas journalists and freelancers have ethical, financial and legal implications for their employers. Managers can reduce these undue risks significantly by providing their journalists with the proper training, equipment and safety guidance.

"Editors and publishers must actively promote safe behaviour by monitoring the situation in the countries from where their staff is reporting, mandating training and modified behaviour for those journalists travelling to unstable or risk countries and providing staff with and requiring the use of safety equipment. Failure to do so may result in not only the tragedy of losing someone in the field but may also expose newspapers to potential legal action by the families of those killed on the job."

Indeed, neglect can be costly. In 2001, the family of reporter Larry Lee sued his employer, the financial news wire BridgeNews, claiming its negligence had led to his death in Guatemala. They alleged the company had failed to provide adequate training and protection for its employee. The suit was settled out of court in favour of the family. Experts in journalist safety believe further suits will follow, not only in cases involving the death of a reporter but also in situations where journalists suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

In this climate of greater danger to journalists, wider safety awareness and increasing litigiousness, INSI provides practical help. We have published a 10-point safety code, which urges news organisations to consider safety first before competitive advantage. It calls for all media staff to be given appropriate hostile environment and risk awareness training as well as protective health and safety equipment such as medical packs, helmets, respirators and flak jackets. It calls for adequate insurance for staff and freelancers, counselling for journalists traumatised by the horrors of conflict and freedom for any media worker to refuse an assignment to a danger zone without career penalty.

Journalists themselves must contribute to the new safety ethic. They are urged to behave responsibly and not recklessly endanger themselves and their colleagues. They are reminded that journalists are neutral observers and should

not carry firearms in the course of their work.

INSI urges employers not only to provide physical protection but also "armour for the mind": free counselling for journalists who witness war's horrors. The heavy-drinking, volatile, morally-challenged war correspondent is an international cliché, but there is no divine law that says people who cover conflicts have some inbuilt urge to abuse drink or drugs or unleash their demons on their loved ones. A recent study of 150 war journalists has established that conflict reporters have significantly more psychiatric problems than journalists who have never been in danger. The rates of PTSD in war reporters were found to be remarkably similar to soldiers who had faced combat, and higher than police. Yet while soldiers and police routinely receive extensive training to deal with violence, conflict reporters as a rule do not.

Modern competitive pressures – especially among 24-hour news channels – fuelled by technological advances that permit live battlefield reporting, are feared to be driving many journalists to take more risks. Successful war reporting can enhance a career like little else. But more journalists and bosses are coming around to the view that no story is worth a life. Dead journalists, after all, do not tell tales.

The newspaper industry in general, and the American press in particular, has lagged behind broadcasters in waking up to the safety issues. Chris Cramer of CNN is INSI's Honorary President and a determined campaigner for our cause. He says the American news industry is in the dark ages when it comes to safety, despite the death of Daniel Pearl and statistics showing the job of foreign journalist as one of the most dangerous in the United States.

INSI's purpose is to help industry address these issues in effective and practical ways. It is not a reactive advocacy grouping, but a proactive organisation that aims to help try to prevent the event that leads to a clamour of protest and condemnation.

Since Ljubljana, INSI has launched formally. We have an interim advisory board, including founder members IPI and IFJ. We have already organised a couple of joint safety training projects for needy journalists with the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the Reuters Foundation. We have secured the backing of major security companies for a greater effort to bring training to journalists

most in need but with the least access. We have secured the financial support of leading news organisations such as the BBC, Reuters, CNN, ABC News, Al Jazeera, the Guardian, and others. We have begun work on a website which will serve as a global safety information and assistance hub. We have our first AGM this coming November to formalise everything.

Of course, to fulfil our global mission and live up to the promise of Ljubljana we need wholehearted and consistent industry commitment. We are not commercial. We are a not-for-profit registered charity, run by professional journalists for professional journalists. We need money to run the website, for safety training courses for those in need and unable to afford their own, and for a small administration staff.

We have a sliding scale of subscription descending from only € 5,000 for global news organisations to really small amounts for national news companies and journalist groupings. For this, members get timely information on danger spots, the latest safety equipment and training, and other matters affecting the way we work under threat – critical matters that otherwise would take up much time and effort by a concerned news organisation acting for itself. Provision of proper safety where-withal – training, equipment, information – is proving to be a huge financial burden for caring companies. INSI can help with that by spreading the load – acting as a central industry resource, monitoring developments, providing up to the minute guidance and eliminating duplication.

But most importantly, INSI members join a global news community dedicated to the safety of fellow journalists everywhere. We need to spread this global safety ethic from a few organisations at the top of the world news pyramid to hundreds at the base.

So my appeal to you is to help yourselves and those less able, to say enough is enough, it is time to reduce journalist casualties. Do something about it by signing up your organisation as an INSI founder member.

Calling on governments to do their bit, UNESCO on World Press Freedom Day last May – the day INSI was launched – said, “The debt we collectively incur when journalists suffer on our behalf must be repaid in practical ways.” That is what the International News Safety Institute is about. But only with your help. ■



SESSION VI

Salzburg Congress Centre

“Media Self-Regulation: A Press Freedom Issue”



Chairperson

Hubert Feichtlbauer

Former Chairman, Austrian Press Council

Panelists

Robert Pinker

Privacy Commissioner and former Acting Chairman, Press Complaints Commission, London

Keith Spicer

Director, Institute for Media, Peace & Security, University for Peace, Paris; former Chairman, Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, Ottawa

Joerg Steinbach

Chairman, Complaints Commission, German Press Council, Bonn

Jenerali Ulimwengu

Vice President, Media Council of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam

Andreas Unterberger

Editor-in-Chief, Die Presse, Vienna



The British Example

Robert Pinker

Privacy Commissioner and former Acting Chairman, Press Complaints Commission, London

I am going to talk about the work of the British Press Complaints Commission (PCC), noting as I do so that there is no universal blueprint. There are many different kinds of councils and a great majority of them work well.

The PCC was established in 1991 and it currently consists of 16 members, the majority of them laypersons working under an independent chairman. We are a self-regulatory body in the sense that we are entirely independent of both the industry, which provides funds, and the government. We deal with complaints falling within the remit of the industry's Code of Practice. This code is kept under continuous review by a small committee made up of working editors. We are a self-regulatory body, which does not impose fines

or require payments of financial compensation. When a complaint is upheld, the offending newspaper or periodical must and does publish the commission's critical adjudication with due prominence.

What is the case for a self-regulatory system? Press self-regulation serves two main purposes. It protects press freedom and it protects citizens from abuses of those freedoms by the press. Freedom of expression and privacy are both fundamental human rights, but they can seldom if ever be treated as absolute rights because they so frequently come into conflict with each other. In seeking to reconcile these conflicts, regulatory bodies must give due consideration to the claims of the public interest as well, although the nature of these claims varies according to who is advancing them. We as a commission have to interpret and apply this concept and so for their part do editors. Of course, there are from time to time

“Media self-regulation is the topic of this afternoon’s discussion. It will be based on certain assumptions and some questions that arise from these: 1. Humans err. Media are operated by humans. Therefore media errs, too. How do they and media consumers cope with this situation? 2. Media like to consider themselves as watchdogs of public life and society. Watchdogs bite. Who bites the media? 3. In many countries the solution is the establishment of self-regulatory institutions such as press councils or media councils. Are they all they are promised to be? Are they really bulwarks of press freedom? Are they protection for readers, viewers and the media alike? Are they instruments for guaranteeing credibility? 4. Humans differ. So do countries. So do regions and civilisations. Should media councils differ too or is there one model for all media in the whole world? 5. We can all learn from each other. What can we learn from different experiences with different media councils?”

Hubert Feichtlbauer

disagreements that arise. But the fact that such conflicts do arise explains why some form of press regulation is necessary. The dilemma we face is not one of choosing between regulation and no regulation at all, but choosing between two different kinds of regulation, the statutory or the self-regularity options.

With regard to the press, two powerful arguments can be advanced in defence of self-regulation. First, as we already noted and know, a free press is one of the fundamental institutional characteristics of a free society. Newspapers and periodicals are public watchdogs. They scrutinise those who exercise power and consequently they must be kept free from government control. But media freedom is never absolute in any country. It is subject to many legal restraints, which in the United Kingdom include laws of defamation, data protection and so on. And in the absence of an effective, self-regulatory system it is more likely than not that these types of legal restraints on freedom of expression would extend rather than contract. But if the state were to become continuously involved in regulating the day-to-day conduct of news gathering and publication in ways that went beyond these formal legal restraints such regulation would eventually become synonymous with statutory censorship of the printed word.

Secondly, the case for self-regulation rests on the premise that in complex, democratic societies self-imposed rule will carry a moral authority and consequently work with greater effectiveness than externally imposed legal rules. Self-regulation at its best works well

because it is accessible to everyone, rich and poor alike. It is fast and flexible in its conduct of business and with the appropriate institutional safeguards it operates independently of all special interests at no cost to either the taxpayer or the complainant.

But the business of self-regulation is a highly practical activity. Regulators, like editors, have to apply general principles, which often conflict with each other, and they apply them to specific cases as they arise in everyday life. The code of practice, which the commission administers, provides the general framework within which these principles can be put into practice, and the British system is based on a clear-cut but complementary division of responsibilities between the industry and the press and the PCC. The code belongs to the industry, which is responsible for upholding its requirements and keeping it up to date. The commission is responsible for administering and enforcing the code.

A self-regulatory system creates a level playing field for all the players, who voluntarily subscribe to the same code of practice. In the case of the UK, that is how we started. The industry was asked to write its own code and therefore it could never thereafter turn around and say that this code was an alien document imposed upon it by people who had no idea of what the realities of producing the news are.

I will add one point to demonstrate the effectiveness of a self-regulatory system. In recent years, the commission has developed two complementary procedures for the resolution of complaints. Some are resolved by the means

of informal conciliation between the complainant, the newspaper and ourselves. Others go all the way to a formal adjudication and some newspapers actually have their own in-house ombudsman, or reader’s editor. Cases that go all the way to adjudication do so either because there are prima facie grounds for believing that the breach is potentially so serious that an informal apology, a published letter or a voluntary correction would not be a sufficient remedy or because the editors are convinced that they have not breached a code and that a formal adjudication will vindicate them.

The extent to which we can rely on such voluntary compliance and correction explains in large part why it takes us on an average only 32 working days to conclude a complaint from the date of its reception to the date of its dispatch. Over 60 per cent of our complaints are so resolved.

The code sets out not only the principles which editors voluntarily agree to abide by, but also the exceptions which might be pleaded on the part of an editor who might seem to breach the code but do so in what is termed the public interest. An editor might for example argue that it was necessary to invade somebody’s privacy because there was a public interest to be served by investigating and publishing a particular story. That public interest is set out in the code. It includes three key issues: detecting or exposing crime or serious misdemeanour; protecting public health and safety; and sometimes more controversially, preventing the public from being misled from some statement or action of an individual or an organisation. ■

Relativism, the Role of Culture and a Canadian Case Study



Keith Spicer

Director, Institute for Media, Peace & Security, University for Peace, Paris; former Chairman, Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, Ottawa

I would like to emphasise the relativism of freedom in any society; secondly, the role of culture; then give you an example of a case study in which we dealt with television violence in Canada. This case will probably horrify you because it does not sound as if we were in favour of free speech. But we really were. The issue was whether toy companies would censor what small children watched, or whether parents would.

First of all, I think we all agree that freedom is not unlimited. It is relative to each nation's culture. If you look at the United States, you might put great stock in its First Amendment. But I think you will find lots of exceptions. I would argue that every society has its blank spots, and maybe even its hypocrisies. For example, I am thinking of Howard Stern, the shock-radio man who was fined five million dollars by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United States. In my humble country, Canada, which is basically regarded as semi-communistic by lots of Americans, we have never fined anybody a nickel for saying anything on the radio. We have had people similar to Howard Stern, but we did sneakier things with them. We shortened the broadcasting licence, we forced owners to spend money in testifying; but we never fined them. We never took them off the air; we never threatened to do that. I just throw that in to underline that freedom, even in a country like the United States, is relative – and I think it is in other countries.

Take any society in the world and you will find different definitions of freedom. Montes-

quieu, in his *Lettres Persanes*, argued that the people in Persia defined freedom as the right to wear a long beard. Indeed that might still be so in some societies today. In some countries, sex is a big problem. Violence is a big problem in Canada. We do not tolerate that very readily; we like to see ourselves as the peaceful kingdom, just as Sweden used to. I think you can look at any society in the world and find that freedom is not absolute. It is relative to something.

With regard to the role of culture in settling disputes about alleged censorship, in my country we have a consensual approach to things, a non-legalistic one. I think the best metaphor for Canadians is a group of Indians sitting around a campfire, talking a question to death. Talking until everybody falls asleep is called consensus. We do not like hard, sharply defined issues; we do not go to lawyers for many things. In the case of television violence, what we did was, I think, rather unorthodox, but it worked. It probably does not work in theory, but it worked in practice.

What did we do? There was a horrific massacre of 14 young women at the École Polytechnic in Montreal. Such an event would shock any society, but in Canada, the so-called peaceful kingdom, it was traumatic. As broadcasting regulators, we decided that we would do whatever we could to prevent such horrors, but without regulating. We would undertake a multi-year system of educating the industry and the public, using the medical evidence of the damage caused to children 12 years and younger by a relentless diet of television violence. We used mostly American medical research to do this. We made reforms in Canada that could not happen in the United States because of an absolutist obsession with the First Amendment. We worked with U.S. legislators –

Senator Joe Lieberman, Senator Fritz Hollings – and we talked with people in Hollywood.

The FCC simply did not see a violence problem. When I spoke to my opposite number there he said, “What violence problem?”, and I mentioned the incontrovertible medical evidence about hurting children. Then I said, “Well, what bothers you?”, and he said, “Indecency.” This time, I did not know what he was talking about. I guess he meant sex and foul language. We are not really upset by sex in Canada. The weather is too cold; we have to do something to keep warm!

So there is an issue about how each country deals with social and cultural issues. It is impossible to define a common regulatory or self-regulatory system for the world. Content regulation has to be at arm's length from any government agency, and adapted to each country's vision of society.

In response to the question on the agenda, is self-regulation a free-speech issue? Of course it is. But free speech is not the only issue. It has to be situated in the context of society – against health problems, public safety or security problems, and other freedoms a society holds important.

Perhaps we can all agree on the principle of ambiguity. I would argue that the role of a newspaper or other media outlet is to stand for the principle of free speech. All is in the diagnosis. I certainly defend freedom of speech, but I do not think I could define in the abstract, and for all possible cases, where the frontiers are.

Every profession has its hypocrisies. If you are going to be honest as a journalist, you have to say you are going to explore the frontiers of freedom every day. And you have to recognise, with a little humility, that these may change every day, in different ways, in any given society. ■



Joerg Steinbach

Chairman, Complaints Commission,
German Press Council, Bonn

New Tasks

Two years ago the new Federal Data Protection Act was adopted and the German Press Council was given the task of monitoring the protection of personal data in editorial offices. Our new task is to support the editorial offices of newspapers and magazines in securing personal data that has been researched, processed or archived there. We will also monitor the implementation of the statutory tasks. This is what the legislature wants.

The process was started by a European Union directive from 1995. Its transposition into German law was a task for the Federal Government and ended up in an amendment to the Federal Data Protection Act. Two demands had to be brought together. The right of every citizen to data protection and freedom of the press as guaranteed in the basic law.

In order to be able to perform their tasks derived from the basic law, journalists must collect, save, and use personal data, including especially sensitive data. They must be able to do this work free of intervention from the state. That is why traditionally there was the so-called "privilege of the press". Initially, the Federal Ministry of the Interior wanted to greatly limit this privilege. Data protection commissioners under state supervision were to monitor journalists' research and editorial work. Wide-ranging obligations to pay damages would have hampered journalistic research and would have entailed the reversal of the burden of proof to the detriment of the editorial offices concerned.

The German Press Council was up in arms. Above all, it felt that the protection of sources was no longer guaranteed and consequently the job of the press was restricted. The Press Council condemned the plans of the Federal Minister of the Interior, Otto Schily, as "censorship by the backdoor" and thus met with a great response in the media. This led to the cur-

rent regulation according to which the Press Council controls implementation of the new data protection regulations in editorial offices. This means that the press retains a special position. What is most important is that no state supervision was set up for the field of data processing in the journalistic editorial sector.

The German Press Council was brought in as a self-regulation body: "The contents of this self-regulation shall be codes of conduct and recommendations, regular reporting on editorial data protection and the creation of a complaints procedure which opens up the opportunity of internal press monitoring of the handling of personal data for the party concerned."

Just like the general complaints committee, the complaints committee for editorial data protection is made up of equal numbers of journalists and publishers, and complaints are also assessed on the basis of the press code

The first measure that the German Press Council took was to supplement the press code and the guidelines by several passages. This defined the right to informational self-determination. This right, a manifestation of the general right to privacy, is the material heart of data protection legislation and is designed to protect the individual's rights from being impaired due to the handling of personal data. At the same time, it means that the individual decides on the surrendering and use of his or her data.

Recently the Press Council has been recommending that editors no longer print addresses when publishing readers' letters. If an article leads to the publication of corrections, with-

drawals, counter-representations or reprimands by the German Press Council, these reactions must be added to the saved or archived data. If a person's right to privacy is impaired by a press publication, the editorial office is required upon request to give the affected party information about the personal data that has been saved if they were the basis of the reporting.

Another example: According to the recommendations of the Press Council, personal data collected as an infringement of the press code should be blocked or deleted. Furthermore, the Press Council has set up a second committee that specifically deals with complaints concerning data protection legislation. This committee was constituted in March 2002 and has already decided on several cases. In one case, a newspaper had reported on the complaint of a newspaper seller and in the process printed an extract from an official letter. Although the addressee's name had been blacked out, the name, position, office address and telephone number of the civil servant who had signed the letter and was not even the subject of the report could be read. This is an example of the careless handling of personal data and a violation of the press code as the members of the complaints committee found. They expressed disapproval.

With this procedure the German Press Council is continuing its long established, self-regulation practice in data protection in the journalistic and editorial sector. Just like the general complaints committee, the complaints committee for editorial data protection is made up of equal numbers of journalists and publishers, and complaints are also assessed on the basis of the press code. The measures can take the form of a comment, disapproval or a reprimand. A reprimand must be published by the organ of the press concerned in accordance with the voluntary commitment.

Within the context of a voluntary commitment campaign, the Press Council asked the publishers to participate. The publishers should declare the support for the extended press code and the principles of editorial data protection contained therein. The publishing houses organised in the Federal Association of Newspaper Publishers and the Association of German Magazine Publishers were contacted first. The other publishing houses were also asked to submit their declaration.

A sector-wide declaration of voluntary commitment is thus in a way the nationwide mandate for the Press Council. It is of key importance for the legislative recognition of this model of internal-press self-regulation. In the wake of a forthcoming amendment to the Federal Data Protection Act, in particular, politicians will keep a watchful eye on it. Within the context of the first contacts with the publishing houses it can be seen that the field of data protection in editorial offices has sometimes not even been considered. Some of the editorial offices have no idea of what will be coming their way soon and what they should and have to do. The Press Council is therefore increasingly in demand for support.

But not much will be changing in comparison to the previous situation. The regulations in the Federal Data Protection Act, which will also apply in press enterprises, are not really new at all. Both data secrecy and technical and organisational precautions had to be considered even before the amendment of the Federal Data Protection Act. But what is new is the intensity with which the legislature will monitor compliance with data protection in the future and the main new feature is that the legislature will transfer the task of guaranteeing compliance with data protection in journalism and editorial work to a voluntary self-regulation body. Within the editorial offices, no state or company data protection commissioner will monitor data collection, processing or use. However, the editorial offices are now called upon to take measures for data security themselves if they have not already done so. Depending on the editorial office concerned, the security concept can vary. The setting up of access control to the editorial rooms, triggered by a chip card, and the installation of electronic firewalls and PCs are just two examples. The German Press Council will provide help in this matter. ■

The African

Jenerali Ulimwengu

Vice President, Media Council of Tanzania,
Dar es Salaam

Africa presents a particular case of press regulation that needs to be studied. This is basically because we are still struggling to emerge from a certain situation that is really inimical to good journalism. Even as we look at what has happened over the past ten years or so, the so-called democratisation, we realise that it is still fragile, delicate and weak. The people yearn for freedom. They may not be sophisticated, but they do feel when they are being hemmed in by an overweening, ruling class that can neither provide the food and shelter and clothing that the people need, nor the space for the people to say that they are not getting the food and shelter and clothing that they need.

What we have achieved is not irreversible. We have to stay vigilant, but always strike a very tenuous balance between freedom in the media and the responsibility that the media have

The leadership or the ruling cliques in Africa are determined to hold on to power no matter what. One way that they can do this is by making sure that the press does not work properly; that media cannot voice the discontent of the people. Therefore, the tendency to want to muzzle the press by whatever means available is very much in evidence.

The formation of the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) was a reaction to an at-

tempt by government to impose a statutory body to regulate the press. We recognised very fast the dangers inherent in such a move, because we thought it was another move to strengthen the hand of government clamping down on press freedom. One would have thought at the time that this move by the government was completely unnecessary because of the way that our work is regulated in Tanzania already.

The government can get at you as a press practitioner through the following means:

1. There is a penal code, the criminal code that governs everybody. Issues like defamation, libel, sedition, obscenity, you name it, all are contained in the penal code. So even libel is criminalised when you would have thought this belongs in the private domain and that whoever feels that he has been defamed should have recourse to a court of law in a civil suit.

2. Then you have the Newspaper Act of 1976 which is another instance of criminalising press activity, because you can be sent to jail for defaming a leader or a member of the public.

3. Then you have the National Security Act, where so many things cannot be said or written that may, in one way or another, hurt National Security.

4. The Official Secrets Act can also send you to jail.

On top of that, the government still wanted to have a statutory council, which could impose sanctions and maybe send people to jail because they had wronged the provisions of the Press Council Act, which was fortunately refused.

After rejecting the government proposed deal for the establishment of the Press Council, we realised that it was imperative for us

Context

to move very fast to establish our own non-statutory media council, which we did. Stakeholders got together to form this council and in order to make it more effective decided to ask prominent, well-respected members of the public to come and join us in doing this work. The delicate situation we are placed in dictates that a lot of what we do has an input from the public. This why it is difficult to regulate the media in the way that you regulate medical doctors, or lawyers or engineers. No lawyer usually invites an outside person, a non-legal person, to come and do legal work for him. But we have to provide a space for the general public to voice their opinions through our newspapers or through our radio and television stations. So the public becomes a very important player in the work that we do as journalists and thus it is important for them help us do our work.

As Prof. Pinker said, it is not a choice between having some regulation and not having any regulation at all. It is an question of what kind of regulation do you want to have so that you can find a judicious means between these two horns of the dilemma. One is the freedom of the press that we all crave, that we all campaign for and advocate, and the other is the responsibility first to ourselves and to the public that we are supposed to be serving. If we do not do it ourselves, then in the African context you can be sure that the government will step in. The governments in all African states, except for a few, are already doing this. What we have achieved is not irreversible. We have to stay vigilant, but always strike a very tenuous balance between freedom in the media and the responsibility that the media have.

The ultimate tragedy would be that there is some laissez-faire type of situation, which allows us to do anything that we want to do,

to publish whatever we want to publish, to malign whoever we want to malign, to an extent that there is a backlash from the public, which feels really insulted by what we write and broadcast and asks the government to intervene and to teach us a few lessons. This would be something that the government has been waiting for. So we have to move before this happens, to always be on top of the situation, to make sure that whatever we do is appreciated and whoever amongst ourselves wrongs, shames and abuses the profession is named and shamed. It is always going to be a very delicate task. We have to approach it with the humility it deserves. Some of the African nations have already examined this situation and have taken measures and formed various organisations and they are in various degrees of development. I think that with a little bit of luck, we shall succeed. ■



Andreas Unterberger

Editor-in-Chief, Die Presse, Vienna



Points of Dissatisfaction

I agree of course with the good intention of having some form of self-regulation for journalists, because it is obviously a ground rule of any liberal society to have as little interference of the state as possible in any kind of activity. But good intentions do not always bring good results. The purpose of such self-regulated bodies is obviously to have fast reactions to any misbehaviour of journalists. That is definitely a good aspect of such a council. The purpose is also to have a lot of journalistic experience involved in the procedures. That is also a very positive aspect. Another purpose is to find solutions without any clear, defined law. Well that can be good, but it can also be a bad aspect of such councils. *Nullum crimen sine lege*, no crime without a law, is a good principle for any court-like procedure, and the fact that press councils are a kind of court-like procedure is quite obvious.

But I have also some other points of dissatisfaction, especially with the Austrian way of handling the press council. That dissatisfaction has led to the withdrawal of my paper from the activities of the Austrian Press Council. As some of you might know, when we did decide to give the Council a second chance, the Council had stopped operating completely due to internal conflicts, which I will discuss later.

For me, and this issue was not mentioned by any of my fellow panelists, a big problem is that the Austrian Press Council only deals with the printed press, although we are in competition with television, radio, the Internet, perhaps also the book market. Can such a council only look at the products of the printed press, or is it not necessary to have a more comprehensive look at

all the other media that do, as I said, compete with us, that can also violate the same values, the same human beings, as the printed press? Of course, there are some regulations, but they are different regulations and it is always much easier to complain against a newspaper, and the procedures in the Press Council are much easier than any of the procedures for the other mentioned media.

Another complaint that I have in the way that the Austrian Press Council was handled is a kind of amateurism that I found there. I think if it wants to be taken serious, it must pursue certain clear, defined rules of procedures. For example, a paper and a defendant must get a clear accusation before the meeting of the Council. Simply to write, "By these articles you have violated the principles of journalistic work," is not enough if you are not informed how you violated these articles. It reminds me of Franz Kafka, the Central European author, who described a similar procedure in his famous book, "The Trial".

Of course, there must also be a clear verdict at the end of the trial if no compromise is found. I certainly subscribe to what was said at the beginning, that a compromise between the media and the person or persons who feel violated by an article is best. But if that is not found then I think we have the clear right for a written statement of what we have done wrong, how it was done, and what rule was violated.

I think it is also necessary to have one lawyer in the panel so at least primitive rules of fair trial are observed.

Finally, I see such a body completely misplaced under the control of the so-called social partners, as they are known in Austria, the

unions, the publishing houses, the association of the publishing houses. These institutions, which have the power in Austria to appoint staff to the panels, the juries, that decide in each case, are not the very best source for staff. They are politicised and they have very special interests that are completely different to the real purpose of such a body.

Perhaps it is not my duty here to make proposals, but I really think that it would be much better if a group of retired journalists, or retired editors-in-chief like Hubert Feichtlbauer, sit together and vote once a year on the panels for the next year. This is just an idea and there are other models possible, but I also think that freedom of journalists should also include freedom from the unions and freedom from the publishing houses.

This independent body I am dreaming of could also develop new recommendations for the behaviour of the media, since new problems, new possible ways of misbehaviour, are always developing. For example, I find it necessary to define rules for the clear separation of commercial and journalistic content. It could and should also deal with the rules of information from public institutions, which do too much overprotecting of data. This body should also develop codes for taking or, sometimes stealing, quotes and information from other media. It could and should discuss the problems of obstructing criminal procedures. In Sweden, during the past days, we saw a discussion about media doing that.

So I think there is a broad and large field of activities for such a council, but I think that it must be professional in its work and not an amateurish council. ■



SESSION VII

Salzburg Congress Centre

"The Transatlantic Rift"



Chairperson

Eugen Freund

Special Correspondent, Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF), Vienna

Introductory Remarks

Sir Peter Ustinov

Panelists

Franziska Augstein

Editor, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich

Gilbert Grellet

Director, External Relations, Agence France Presse (AFP), Paris

Daniel Hamilton

Director, Center for Transatlantic Relations, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC; and former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs

Stuart Loory

Editor, IPI Global Journalist; and Lee Hills Chair in Free Press Studies, University of Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, MO

Peter Preston

Director, Guardian Foundation, London



What's New?

I recently bought a copy of Foreign Affairs at the airport and the whole issue deals with what we are discussing this morning. Ronald D. Asmus writes in his opening paragraph, "One of the most striking consequences of the Bush administration's foreign policy tenure has been the collapse of the Atlantic alliance. Long considered America's most important alliance and a benchmark by which a president's foreign policy skill is measured, the U.S.-European relationship has been shaken to its foundations over a series of disputes that culminated in the U.S.-led war in Iraq."

Of course, Asmus was not the first, and he is certainly not going to be the last, to have these kinds of observations.

Robert Kagan, in his book, "Of Paradise and Power", an expanded version of an essay originally published as "Power and Weakness" in Policy Review, coined the wonderful term, "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus."

Stanley Hoffmann wrote in The New York Review of Books, "Less than two and a half

Eugen Freund

Special Correspondent, Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF), Vienna

years after it came to power, the Bush administration, elected by fewer than half of the voters, has an impressive but depressing record."

I also heartedly recommend Clyde Prestowitz's book, "Rogue Nation", to all who want to know why the U.S. has become so hated by so many.

To put this all into historical – and I stress historical, not hysterical – perspective, I want to quote from an issue of the International Herald Tribune. It reads, "The disarray has been strikingly evident in the past seven months in clashes over Middle East policy and the response to Iran and Afghanistan. While all profess a desire to strengthen unity, the United States and its allies seem to have drifted farther apart than at any time since World War II."

The German weekly, Die Zeit, writes, "Hardly a week passes in which the foreign policy interests of the United States do not collide with those of the Europeans."

"Many of the frictions we see derive not from the fact that our societies are drifting apart, but in fact because our societies are smashing into each other."

Daniel Hamilton



Sir Peter Ustinov

A Temporary Thing

In case you want to rush to the nearest newsstand to get these issues of *Die Zeit* and the *Herald Tribune*, do not bother. They appeared in June 1980.

So what's new? Is it really, like many political observers from both sides expect, the beginning of an end of an era, or are we just witnessing the low tide of something that eventually will be repaired? How much do personalities have to do with all these misunderstandings and the rift in the transatlantic alliance? When I say personalities, I could easily be more precise and pinpoint it to one single name, George W. Bush. Are our present tensions just the consequence of the end of the Cold War? How much has the war in Iraq put additional strains on relations? Is the U.S. trying to insert a wedge between the so-called old and new Europe? If so, why? These are but a few of the questions that I hope we will address this morning. I trust that this very distinguished panel will be more than capable of answering at least some of them. ■

Before I say anything, I want to make one thing clear, as John Major used to say and then muddled the waters after that, and that is that anything I say must not be interpreted as being anti-American or anti-anything. I always live in hopes that there will not be any antis and for a democracy it is very difficult to be anti all the time, because conditions change. I wrote recently in an Austrian newspaper that if the American public is satisfied with George W. Bush it means only one thing, that Bill Clinton was a man of quite unnecessary brilliance.

I think the situation now is not as terrible as people imagine; they boost it a great deal but we are still all eager to overlook the fact that recently French camembert has been thrown into the ashcan and French wine down the toilet, which are infantile reactions and unworthy perhaps of thinking people. I remember that already in 1983 when the Korean airliner crashed, I could not get a Bloody Mary in New York served with Soviet vodka. "We don't have none." Well, I did not have my Bloody Mary, that's all.

I went out. There is always that possibility.

The founding fathers of America must be slowly turning in their graves with the present events, because America was, after the shock of World War II, eager to rebuild the League of Nations into something rather different. She set an example with Bretton Woods, and her wisdom, especially with things like the Marshall Plan, are extraordinary. In her own short history, she made her mark on the world in no uncertain fashion and has been on the whole helpful.

A yardstick for common men like myself is that the man in the streets in the United States is far nicer than the size and the power of the country would lead you to expect. In other words, they are much nicer than the English or the French or the Russians were when they were at the height of their powers. And that speaks a great deal for them in any case, and they are also resilient and open to new ideas.

But when George Bush came into power after the terrible shock of 9/11, he suddenly said, "Anyone who is not for us is against

us,” with a kind of hermitic conviction which boded ill because nobody can say that in the modern world. There are far too many nuances and life is far too interesting to say that. You cannot put everybody against you because they are not for you. That is an absurdity. Then it was followed almost immediately by a declaration of war on terrorism, which I maintain is nonsense because war and terrorism are intrinsically the same things, except that terrorism is the war of the dispossessed and war is the terrorism of the powerful.

War and terrorism are intrinsically the same things, except that terrorism is the war of the dispossessed and war is the terrorism of the powerful

In the invasion of Iraq, it started out with an air attack, which had the soubriquet “Shock and Awe”. I suppose it was intended to hit only the bad guys and then it was expected that the good guys would come out with flowers to welcome the invader. I do not know how anybody with any experience in the world could have had such expectations. I am amazed that it happened. The confusion which reigns in Iraq today is indicative of the fact that they prepared themselves for war in the most efficient kind of way but made no provisions for what happened afterwards. They said they could not know what was going to happen.

Well of course, if you are going to take an initiative of that kind you have got to know what is going to happen. You have got to have some inkling of what is going to happen. Unfortunately, they did not and they still have not, and now they are asking for the help of the United Nations after a very disgraceful performance in the UN. Disgraceful because it went against any concept of democracy which they hold so dear. They could never have won the vote in the Security Council. The French were against it. The Russians, whom everyone thought would need the Americans too badly at this moment, were absolutely steadfast. Eventually the Chinese also came in and they are the three votes that count. There were only two against them, the United States and Great Britain, and they tried every manoeuvre in the United Nations

to push their ideas through. In fact, George Bush said that if they do not accede to our demands the United Nations is going to go back to the League of Nations and be ineffectual for the rest of its existence. This is absolutely untrue because the United Nations with all its agencies, which are the only agencies of their kind in the world, are a guarantee and headed by an extraordinary, wise African.

When you first look at Kofi Annan, he looks like a lamb on the way to the slaughter. And one thought to oneself, “Oh God, Mrs. Albright has her patsy who is going to do exactly what he’s told,” and he turned out to be the exact opposite. He spoke as mildly as ever, but what he said was trenchant very often and as far as he could go without being dangerous to everybody. He is an extraordinary man. I saw him in Basel at a congress in which he was supposed not to turn up. I was warned not to go by UNICEF because he would not be there. He was there and at the final concert he played the drums with the African delegation. It was one of the most heart-warming things that I have ever seen because he has the gift of making contact and being human and that is terribly important in this world.

Now of course, I do not know what is going to happen. I do not see why Europe should help the United States in its perplexity after so many wrong decisions in trying to get it out of this mess, especially after the destruction of the UN mission by terrorists who mistook the United Nations for something else. Let us help in other ways, but not that. The Security Council cannot condone the extraordinary lapse of judgement that occurred in the United States at this moment.

Mind you, this is a temporary thing. I think the Americans have a gift of scaring the world because they are so strong. McCarthy already scared the world and it did not come off. With George Bush it did come off for a while, but I am absolutely convinced that every time I call and talk to somebody in America they are all absolutely horrified by things that go on.

So America is an enormous democracy, a free-thinking place, a place which is so large that sometimes it is a little bit difficult to understand, especially when an election of a nation of 280 million people is finally decided by my nine old men. This is not what you are led

to expect by the Constitution. I must say in my defence that I love America. I work there often, but having worked there, many Americans looked at me with slight suspicion and said, “Peter, you worked here so often why aren’t you a citizen?” I answered quite honestly, “I cannot swear allegiance to a flag unless I know who is holding it.” And this seems to me primordial. If it is Senator McCarthy holding it, there is no chance I would ever be a citizen, or George Bush. So the trouble is one has to wait for the next election and you cannot be consistent. America, having no possibility for obvious reasons of being patriotic on an ethnic ground, thank God, has to take a piece of cloth as a symbol, which it does with a great veracity and all its politicians wear little American flags in their buttonholes. I’m dying to buy a few other flags to put in my buttonhole when I go back to let them see that there are other possibilities.

The confusion which reigns in Iraq today is indicative of the fact that they prepared themselves for war in the most efficient kind of way but made no provisions for what happened afterwards

People often ask me, especially in America, “What are your roots?” They are always in search of roots, because they are so recent. My roots are, I hope, in civilised behaviour and more than that I do not ask for, because I think that this is the future. I think war as a method of settling differences is out of date. We have seen that it is not only costly but it is ugly and it is a thing from the past. With football around and the World Cup and the Olympic Games, who needs war? It makes the same appeal to human nature as war does even if there are some misguided people who kill each other in the tribunals. You cannot expect a transition from one method of warfare to another without a few casualties. That is a statement worthy of Mr. Rumsfeld.

On that happy note, I am sure that things will regulate themselves because the rift is not as great as people think and it will not be permanent. Of that I am absolutely sure. ■



Daniel Hamilton

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Drifting Apart or Smashing into Each Other?

I lived in Berlin during most of the 1980s and when the Berlin Wall came down I worked with Ted Koppel and ABC News Nightline to start a series on what was crumbling in Eastern Europe, starting with East Berlin. We worked on this for a number of months and finally ABC said, "We can't run this series." We were flabbergasted and we asked, "Why can't you run it? This is history; this is huge." And they said, "Well, because the ratings are going down with all this stuff about walls coming down." When they looked at their viewers the answer was they had no context to understand what it meant that the Berlin Wall had fallen and that Communism in Eastern Europe had crumbled. The ratings for news in United States actually went down in those months, not up. And so it led to cancellations of news programming on an amazing historical event. I think it is just one lesson to me about the importance of context in how one views the news and certain issues.

I think Eugen Freund's retrospective press analysis is helpful in that as well, because the headline today is more like the kind of headline you read when you leave the supermarket, "Can this Marriage be Saved?" And I think it is important because Iraq, while certainly the impetus for a lot of transatlantic crisis, does not really explain the depth of emotion and

the range of caricatures that one is experiencing across the Atlantic. In my mind, the debate about Iraq was less about Iraq per se, although it is important, and more about what our actions and expressions on Iraq on both sides of the Atlantic are saying to each other about our future behaviour toward each other and perhaps some fears about what Iraq might say about our future behaviour.

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In that type of debate, caricatures and simple political cartooning of the other side becomes important because one's perception of one's partner is a reflection of course of one's self-perception. One analyses and looks at the world from where one is in one's own worldview. So I step back a bit and in fact come back to some framing events that I think are influencing the way Europeans and Americans look at the world and look at each other.

In my mind, 9 November 1989 still re-

mains for many Europeans the framing event, the way in which many Europeans tend to look at not only at themselves but at the rest of the world. It was an amazing event, the collapse of an old order, the beginning of something new. There were a lot of fears associated with that transition, but when one looks at it today one sees the potential of something amazingly positive. The earthquakes that are still rumbling this continent from the East are still shaking and have the potential of transforming Europe and really creating a continent that is whole and free and at peace with itself for the first time in its history. It is an amazingly positive possibility. It is, of course, a possibility to which many Americans have contributed for decades, and to which many Americans continue to participate and to advance.

The expansion and the deepening of Europe is an overwhelming agenda. It is an overwhelming perspective. When one comes to Europe and lives here one sees how totally overwhelming it is. All the headlines are mainly about that project and that focus. And I think for most Americans, despite the failing context, that project was also our project until 11 September 2001. On that day I would argue that for many Americans 9 November became a bookend to an era of transition. It was important, but no longer "the project".

The way many Americans, beyond the Bush administration, think of this world is simply something very different today.

We are having a fundamental debate in United States about the future direction of American foreign policy. It is equivalent to the debate one had in the late 1940s when after World War II we had for a number of years a fairly open-ended debate about the U.S. role in the world. I would suggest that our debate is just as fundamental today. When one has a fundamental debate one asks very open-ended fundamental questions. That is why some of these questions are irritating to Europeans, for example when one asks, "What's Europe worth today to us?" That is a very irritating question, of course, when one thinks that Europe is worth quite a bit, thank you, or that the partnership has endured for decades. But that is the type of debate we are having.

At that point, the issue of containment of the Soviet Union became a sort of organising principle for U.S. foreign policy. Today the question is whether the threat of terrorism joined with weapons of mass destruction becomes somewhat of a principle organising the way we go about our business in the world. It is an open debate. As Sir Peter said, there are many things that are quite open about the United States and I think that this debate is still open. But I think it is important to understand the fact that we are having this debate right now. It is a very fluid process. At the same time, Europe is in fluid transition. The divisions last spring were as much divisions within Europe as between a Europe and an America and I think that it is very important to understand that point.

But 9 November says to us hope, new horizons, new possibilities. The possibility of eternal peace on the European continent. 11 September says to us tragedy, the end of illusions, new dangers. 9 November says to us the worst is over. 11 September says to us the worst may still be to come. So, if you look at the world through one or the other perspective your debate is simply different. Even if you talk about the same issues, you are talking about it through a somewhat different perspective. I think that is the important context of which to understand these debates that go beyond a particular administration.

One can certainly argue that the administration has spun 11 September and is advancing

a certain political agenda. I would argue that, but I do not think that is my point or my purpose here today. The media reporting on it is quite striking. I was living in Austria last spring and it was as though we were experiencing two different events, two different worlds – the reporting in the spring on the Iraq crisis, here and in the United States. I think for me the most symbolic difference came on one day in which the headline all through Europe was the meeting of EU leaders in Athens to seal the enlargement of Europe. The headline all through the United States that day was the meeting of U.S. commanders in the Abu Ghraib palace after they had just entered Baghdad and were deciding what to do with Iraq. The news could not have been more different as the headline and the main theme of society.

The danger that we have in this debate is that we use the other as a very easy and lazy temptation; we use the other as the instrument with which to either bash one's domestic opponents or advance a certain political agenda. I see that happening all the time.

The danger that we have in this debate is that we use the other as a very easy and lazy temptation; we use the other as the instrument with which to either bash one's domestic opponents or advance a certain political agenda

It seems to me our challenge is to resist that temptation and to try to reconcile a bit the perspective of 9 November, which I do think is a tremendously positive one, with the challenges that are posed by what 11 September has come to mean. And as we do that, I would simply suggest that we keep track of some basic fundamentals here about the relationship between Europeans and Americans. When you have open debates you are not quite sure where your coordinates are anymore and in connection with the end of the Cold War many Americans and I think many Europeans asked why is this relationship important anymore? Why can't we just do our own thing? Why is it so distinctive? It was clear during the Cold War; it is not so clear today.

I would just put forward a few simple reasons why I think it still is distinctive. One is

simply that this relationship still remains the decisive relationship for our planet. When Europeans and Americans agree on any topic they are almost always the core of any global effort that achieves any type of progress. And when Europeans and Americans disagree on any topic, we are the global break. We stop everything. I do not think one can say that about any other relationship that Europeans have with any other partner and I do not believe Americans can say that about any other relationship either. So we are still decisive partners. The question is whether we are going to use that partnership to advance things or whether we are going to spend our time confronting each other rather than dealing with our challenges.

I think the second element that is important is that the focus of our relationship has shifted. For 60 years, transatlantic relations were about stabilising Europe. It was about stability on the European continent and the measuring stick of the health of our relationship was how many troops were based in Germany or on the European continent. I would argue that that is gone. If you were to ask most Americans, in good American English, they would say, "Europe is fixed." That is how they would express it. It is not fixed, but that is a prevalent view. The strategic focus of our relationship is not the stability of Europe, it is whether Europeans and Americans are prepared to deal with a whole range of broader global issues that neither partner is going to deal with on its own. It is an open question, but I think that is where all the dangers are, all the frictions in the relationship and all the possibilities. But you have to think of the relationship in a new way. It is about all these other challenges today and less about stability in Europe.

The last piece that I would argue is how we talk about globalisation, because it is an easy term that falls off the lips. Usually the reporting is about its impact beyond the transatlantic community. It is how it is affecting nations in Africa, in Asia and so on. If you look at any objective standard of interaction between continents, which after all is what globalisation is, what you see is that globalisation is happening fastest, deepest, cheapest and reaching deeper into our societies across the Atlantic than between any other continents. It is not an even process and it is happening first across the Atlantic, which means

many of the frictions we see derive not from the fact that our societies are drifting apart, but in fact because our societies are smashing into each other. Our citizens are interacting more with each other today than ever before in our history. More Americans and Europeans interact today; our economies are increasingly intertwined.

Here again, I think the reporting is a bit shallow because we tend to measure our economic engagement by trade flows. And if you look at that, it looks as though Americans and Europeans do not have as much to do with each other. But investment flows today drive trade and investment drives transatlantic commerce, and if you put trade and investment together then the transatlantic economy is still the dominant force in the global economy. There is no other trend happening that contradicts that.

American companies invested as much in the last decade abroad as in the previous four decades combined and Europeans invested as much in the United States in the last decade as they ever had before. There is more European investment in Texas than all the American investment in Japan. We talk about China's rise and of course China will change the world, but over the last ten years or so, American companies invested eight times as much in The Netherlands than they did in China and twice as much in The Netherlands than they did in Mexico. We talk about Germany as a classic trading nation; if you look at German-American trade it is not very large, but if you add investment it is overwhelming. The German investment stake in the United States is five times what its trade stake is with the United States. That seems not to be much reported.

My only point here is that many of the frictions we have – food, competition policy, all the kinds of issues that we talk about – are frictions because we are running into each other and our mechanisms are not equipped for this new era of transatlantic governance. I think that is a new realm that we have to look at.

Yes, there is some bad news. Yes, there is an administration trying to spin the issue. Yes, we have some problems, but there are a lot of countervailing trends here that are deeper and that cloud the water a bit. In the end the question is, are we going to confront these issues together or are we going to stop each other? I think that is the alternative. Going it alone on either side is not going to be a solution. ■

The Role of the Media in the Transatlantic Rift



Gilbert Grellet

Director, External Relations,
Agence France Presse (AFP), Paris

I would like to discuss the role played by the media in this so-called transatlantic rift. I think the media played quite an important and I would say negative role and I think there should be a discussion on that.

First, let me tell you that in my mind it is not only a transatlantic rift, but what I might call a trans-channel rift. The biggest abuse against Europe and France, especially, came from the British media, particularly from the tabloids but also some so-called quality papers like The Telegraph or The Times. We had those infantile reactions, as Sir Peter mentioned, but also very strong campaigns by The Sun, calling Jacques Chi-

rac a worm and even printing a paper in French and distributing it in Paris.

Of course, this is nothing new and there has always been this tension between France and England. In the middle of all this mess in April a friend of mine called me from London and he said, "Okay, it's terrible, but it's nothing new," and he reminded me of an episode of "Yes, Prime Minister", a famous series in England in the 1970s and the 80s. In one of the episodes, a young civil servant is ranting about the Soviet Union, because they have done something against Europe, and he says to his boss, "What should we do against these Russian enemies?" And his boss responds, "Bernard, never forget this, the Russians are adversaries, the enemies are the French."

This is something that is really ingrained in the British mind. So we had this abuse during the entire Iraq war. I must say though, in the end, there were no calls for boycotts or what you call infantile reactions, pouring down wine and things like that, in England. There is the fact, of course, that the British public was also against the war and you still have quality papers and the BBC in England for which we still have high regard.

On the other hand, what happened in the U.S. was really terrible. I was a correspondent in New York and Washington for eight years and I have a very high regard for the American media. My favourite reading in the U.S. is the Columbia Journalism Review and I think the American media has set standards for reporting and journalism around the world.

The media have played a big role in fuelling the rift between the U.S. and Europe, in particular France

But we were really disappointed in France to see the evolution of patriotic coverage in the U.S. media. It started with the Gulf War and then it became even more blatant after 9/11 and during the Iraq War. We thought this was a big change in the way the media was reporting and following its own standards. The criticism against this came from within the U.S., not just France, or England or Germany. I quote a journalism professor at the Missouri School of Journalism, Geneva Overholser, who said, "The fact that the television networks have overstepped their mark goes right at the heart of our credibility. If we think that the press is supposed to be fair and balanced then does that cease to be true during wartime?"

Then there is an editorial in the New York Times saying the network news shows are not covering the war, they are promoting it. And finally a comment from an analyst at Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), a national media watchdog: "Many in the media in the United States are confusing their awakening patriotism with their journalistic duty."

This is a big disappointment for us in France, because the French media has always been accused of being too close to the government and confusing reporting and commentary.

The media have played a big role in fuelling the rift between the U.S. and Europe, in particular France. True, there were some hard comments made against France by Paul Wolfowitz or Donald Rumsfeld or Richard Perle, but I think that the comments and actions taken by the U.S. media were even worse. Some of them even called for a boycott of French products and this is really, as we have said, infantile and ridiculous. We were made the scapegoats. The attacks were never as strong against Russia or China.

When I talked about that to some friends on the U.S. East Coast, they said, "Don't worry, it's just a Washington or New York reaction and it's not true that all Americans hate the French." However, it is true. I have an example from this morning, when I was watching CNN. There was a story about the recall in California. A Republican Senator, a candidate, who was really mad about the decision of the court to delay the recall, said, "This is preposterous! This is totally un-American! This is French!" He used that word. I was taken aback. It is true that he laughed, as though he did not really believe what he was saying, but he used that word. That means that now, even in California, the word "French" is associated with un-American.

In France, we do not really understand this change and we discussed it a few weeks ago at the French-American Press Club in Paris. We posed the question to Richard Reeves, a renowned American columnist who was there to talk about it. I asked him why the American media has changed in the way it covers wars and become so aggressive against European countries. He answered that there may be different reasons, but one of the reasons is that in the past ten years the owners have taken back the power from the journalists and the owners have a more conservative agenda. That means that there is a general tendency to support the U.S. administration and bring about this kind of abuse.

My last remark will be this. At the beginning of this conference two days ago, we talked about how journalists should not just be reporters of facts but should also try to promote peace and rapprochement between people. I really have the impression that in the United Kingdom, but mostly in the United States, the media does not promote that any more; instead it promotes division. ■



Stuart Loory

Editor, IPI Global Journalist; and Lee Hills Chair in Free Press Studies, University of Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, MO

I find myself in a strange role, because I was prepared to be a critic of the way the American news business has been handling things recently, particularly during the Iraq war, but I now find that I have to cast myself in defence of the American media. Not all of the media, but some of the media.

I would like to remind us all that we speak of the media as if it is a monolith, as if media, a plural word, is actually a singular word and a word that encompasses everybody, but it does not. I think that there are a lot of failings in the American media, but there are also a lot of good things about the American media. I think that the American media have not been unilateral in their coverage of the war and in their approach to whether or not they should adopt a patriotic attitude about what is going on, or in their approach to how the Bush administration is dealing with the rest of the world.

Gilbert Grellet quotes Dick Reeves, an old friend of mine from the New York Herald Tribune, as saying that the problem is that the news business has changed from one that was reporter-directed in the 1960s and 70s to one that is owner-directed in the 21st century. Owners have always controlled newspapers and owners have always been dominant in determining what editorial positions a newspaper is going to take. Newspapers depend on good reporters to ferret out information and present it in their news columns. There are some newspapers that do that very well. The New

The U.S. Media and the Transatlantic Rift

York Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Los Angeles Times, The Dallas Morning News and many others around the country are doing a good, critical job in how they cover the news. Not all of it, certainly, is favourable to the present administration.

On the other hand, there are some newspapers that take editorial positions that many of us in this room would not agree with, although there are other papers that take editorial positions that are very critical about what is happening in the United States. I would say that there are probably more now than there were during the early years of the Vietnam War.

Having said all that, I would like to come to the question of how the media cover what we call the Transatlantic Rift. This rift that we are now talking about as a post 9/11 story is a story that has been going on for decades. It comes and goes and it is reported as a daily story. First in the 1980s, then in the 90s, and now once again. The problem is that the news business, not only in the United States but also around the world, does not cover a story deeply and incisively and regularly. We cover events; we do not cover trends. We cover conflict; we do not cover intellectual debate.

Dan Hamilton said that there is a debate going on now within the United States over foreign policy. I think that is certainly so, but I think the manner in which the public is informed of that debate is just not adequate in our news business. Dan talks about how, when he did some work for ABC many years ago, he could not cover the conflict within the Eastern European countries and the breakdown of Communism at the time. Not every news organisation treated the news that way. There

was a time when CNN was a reporter's organisation and not an owner's organisation. There was one reporter, and I hate to say it was me, who was given the authority to carry out a story that he wanted to do on the lifting of the Iron Curtain in the 1980s. It was in 1986, when the trends were set in place that led to the breakdown of the Wall in 1989. CNN allowed me to do a 30-part series – 30 parts! That was at a time when CNN was a monopoly in the 24-hour news business.

I mention that only to show that there are differences in the news business, from organisation to organisation, from reporter to reporter, from time to time. That is something that I think is being ignored now as the American news business is being so heavily criticised for the manner in which it is covering things at the present time.

This rift that we are now talking about as a post 9/11 story is a story that has been going on for decades

There is one other thing that I would like to say and that is that the American news business is generally criticised for not being interested in international news. As Dan pointed out, editors and producers feel that they know as a matter of fact that when they feature international stories, ratings and readership go way down. I once heard an editor of Time magazine say that when they put an international story on the cover they could count on the newsstand sales drop that was going to take place, whereas if they put a story

about how to handle your health on the cover, the newsstand sales were going to go up. Or if they put Arnold Schwarzenegger on the cover, the newsstand sales were going to go way up.

My own feeling is that this is not a problem with the American public. The American public wants to know what is happening around the world. The problem is that the news business is not doing the story well enough. We are not doing it with enough attention to detail and we are not doing it with enough attention to presentation, good writing, good video, whatever it is that is necessary in a particular outlet or another.

The other point that I want to make is that, as I travel around the world, I notice that news organisations everywhere are, as Peter Preston put it, growing inward. If you live in London, as we did for several months, what you find is that the great newspapers of London feature crime, unsafe streets, feature stories of a local nature, and celebrities, David Beckham being the best example. As we go from country to country, we see that it is generally the local news that is considered to be important. Some newspapers are different and of course that is to be applauded.

What I am saying is that we in the news business, wherever we are, have to spend more time thinking about trends – thinking about the future, rather than today or the past – and how we are going to report possibilities for the future and report the debate that is going on about what is going to happen in the future. If we can educate ourselves on how to do that job better, we will do a better job of making sure that the policy makers of the future do their jobs better. ■

Franziska Augstein

Editor, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich



Opposing the United States

In the aftermath of the decision to invade Iraq, strange alliances could be discovered. For example, in Berlin – the biggest Turkish city outside Turkey – Germans and Turks, who usually have a strange relationship, all of a sudden found themselves pulling on the same end of the rope and actually even proud of each other. The Turks were proud of the Germans because they refused to partake in the Iraq war, and the Germans were proud of the Turks because their parliament had refused to allow the Americans to open up a second front.

Now I would like to say a few words on the role of the German government. Peter Preston mentioned – and he is quite right – that had it been a Christian Democrat who was the head of the government the outcome might have been different. Had it been another Social Democrat the outcome might also have been different, but Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who was not brought up as part of the establishment, can be somewhat of a maverick sometimes.

Now, interestingly, there were two reproaches made when Schröder decided not to take part in the war and not to send German troops. First of all, that he had done so only in order to win the elections. This is not true, because although the election campaign took place in the summer of 2002 he had already declared the winter before that he was not willing to take part. The problem is that he is not as good

at spin-doctoring as others. He had told a few members of the press, but those colleagues were not able to divulge the message. When, in the summer, Schröder ruled out participation in military action on Iraq, his critics said, “Ah, you only say that now because of the recent polls and you feel the people are against the war.” This is entirely untrue, because he had always been against it.

In the minds of many people, Schröder should have opposed the wishes of the people, like José Maria Aznar did in Spain

Interestingly, this criticism should not have been levelled at all, because here you had a head of government who actually executed the kind of politics that the people wanted. And all of a sudden this was not right. In the minds of many people, Schröder should have opposed the wishes of the people, like José Maria Aznar did in Spain.

Another criticism was that this was not the done thing. One does not oppose the United States because it is politically not prudent. It is not prudent, because we have never done it before and because the United States is so powerful. The very fabric of German-American relations and Germany's relations with the

world resides in the fact that the Germans are on the side of the United States. If you have any criticism, you have to do it in a low voice so that no one can hear it, and certainly not the United States.

You encounter this attitude everywhere. There are many Germans who think so, including some of the best German experts on foreign policy. Last week, I saw David Owen in Britain who very strongly supported the same view, calling French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin a loose cannon and saying he did not know why Schröder lost his mind.

Whether it is just dumb and courageous or whether there is a point in departing for once from the United States in what they pursue in terms of politics is, ultimately, a question of power. The moment anybody believes there is a chance for a European foreign policy it might make sense to let it be known that there are opinions other than American opinions. If there is no such chance, we can leave politics to the diplomats. ■

Peter Preston

Director, Guardian Foundation, London

A Degree of Perspective



Times of war place quite unfamiliar burdens on journalists. There is a huge difference between reporting wars in which your own country is not involved and reporting a war which grips your readership because their sons and daughters are doing the fighting.

Remembering the Falklands, as well as the Gulf, once your own troops are underway, once your own citizens are being killed in huge numbers, then the imperatives upon an editor change. Somehow it is more difficult. Somehow you have to mute things. Sometimes you have to argue things through more carefully. I think that is one of the great media lessons about the aftermath of 9/11.

Some American coverage, naturally enough, had taken care and caution too far. How could you argue otherwise when more than 60 per cent of the American public still believed that Saddam Hussein was a close ally of Al Qaeda? That was not a good job of informing the public. But nevertheless, if you are looking at the European media, then I would make pretty much the same comment about the French. I do not think that the French debate about Iraq in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and so forth, was as full and frank and as it should have been.

In Britain, we found ourselves in our usual role. On the one hand, we are sort of European. On the other, our biggest newspapers are owned by Americans, Canadians, or Australian-

ans, or a combination of the three, and we are struggling to find our particular sense of balance. In terms of the transatlantic rift and the relationship, too, we are having real difficulties. We do not know how to repair our bridges with Europe. And that swirls immediately into the Euro debate, the world's most tedious British newspaper story of all time.

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The panel's chairman asked, "What about the Hutton inquiry?" What indeed? At the moment, it is about something that a BBC reporter said at six o'clock in the morning, when nobody apart from Alastair Campbell was listening, and changed slightly at 7:20 when he did a second broadcast. Were the words he used generally right, intrinsically right, or absolutely right? Does it matter that a claim about 45-minute delay in delivery of

weapons of mass destruction was not true, that the intelligence was wrong or that the people producing the intelligence genuinely believed that it was right at the time or not? Now this, again, is the worst of all media stories. This is dancing on the head of a pin, but it is also indicative.

The wider British debate was looking totally inwards. The good news, though, was that it was gradually calming down. When we wake up in the morning then we shall also find, in large measure, a degree of perspective about the transatlantic rift, about things that happen in the short term and things that happen in the longer term, and we shall be asking ourselves some of the questions that Dan Hamilton was asking about our relationship which seem to me absolutely right and sensible. The media too needs to take a cold bath and come back later.

SESSION VIII

Salzburg Congress Centre

“The Oslo Accords – 10 Years On”

Chairperson

Viktor Hermann

Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Foreign Editor,
Salzburger Nachrichten, Salzburg

Speaker

Yossi Beilin

former Justice Minister and former Deputy
Foreign Minister of Israel



Signs of Progress and Terrible Backlashes

Viktor Hermann

Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Foreign Editor,
Salzburger Nachrichten, Salzburg

When Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat shook hands in Washington when the Oslo agreement was signed ten years ago, many of us thought to be eyewitnesses of a complete turn in the history of the Middle East. For eight months Israelis and Palestinians had secretly negotiated an historic agreement that, at the time, was hailed as a step towards peace, a major breakthrough, which would give this conflict-ridden piece of land a turn for the better.

What has come from it? Hope and deception. Signs of progress and terrible backlashes. The Second Intifada and the Road Map to

peace that has international backing. Suicide bombings, military action and the plan to build a wall between Israelis and Palestinians.

This session will present a comprehensive evaluation of the Middle East peace process, including an analysis of the Road Map. Who would be better equipped to speak about this topic than one of the principle architects of the 1993 Oslo Accords, Yossi Beilin, the former justice minister and former deputy foreign minister of Israel?

There were plans to have a Palestinian speaker on the panel as well, but very shortly before our event Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo had to send an e-mail saying that due to recent events he could not attend the Salzburg congress and could not appoint another person to sit here for him. ■

“In the five years after the interim agreement, there was not even one meeting on the permanent solution between the two sides. We did not want it and the Palestinians did not push for it. Why? Because everyone knew that the permanent solution is the moment of truth. Then you have to solve Jerusalem, the refugees, and all those issues.”

Yossi Beilin

A Coalition of Sanity

Yossi Beilin

Former Justice Minister and former
Deputy Foreign Minister of Israel



Now, on the tenth anniversary of the Oslo agreement, when people ask me the “trip-le-W question” – What went wrong? – I am still trying to understand it, first of all for myself, and then in able to give answers to the interviewers.

I tend to think that the answer should resemble the old joke about the young son of the lawyer who finished school and rushed to solve the major case in his father’s office. He goes to his father and says, “Father, I solved the case.” And his father says to him, “You idiot, we have earned our living for 30 years on this case.”

We went there. We talked to the right people. We referred to the right issues. We believed that it was possible to find a solution in five years, and we found a world that was not so enthusiastic about it. So many people got used to our conflict. So many people were involved with it. There are organisations and salaries and people who interpret the conflict, suggest solutions, write doctoral dissertations. There is a huge organisation, UNWRA, the UN relief agency, which is a very important organisation, but you have so many people working for it. Imagine if, in one day, it is all solved. People were not prepared for it, neither psychologically nor economically, and for many other reasons.

Of course, one can give many reasons. One can say that the agreement itself was not good enough, which I am sure is right, because I do not know of any agreement that is good enough. Others may say that over the years people torpedoed it, which I believe is

the right answer. But then one has to ask the question, “Why?”

It was so obvious. For so many years we all knew that the only solution to the conflict is two states for the two peoples. So many of us, in Israel, on the Palestinian side, around the world, knew this. It was not a revelation. We did not get up one day and say, “Now we have a solution.” But we could not invent our counterparts. All the efforts to do it artificially, to talk to the people who nominated themselves during the past 30-odd years, were totally futile. The only counterpart was apparently an unshaven person who led a very problematic organisation, but who represented the Palestinian people. For a long time we rejected the notion that we would have to talk to such people, and history repeats itself now when some of us say, “You see, we told you. He’s not a nice person; we cannot talk to him.” We are searching for a nice enemy. We cannot accept just anybody as our enemy.

*We believed that it was possible
to find a solution in five years,
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so enthusiastic about it*

If you analyse the agreement itself, the idea was very simple. We followed the footsteps of Menachem Begin, the former prime minister, who made an agreement in 1978, which is known as the Camp David Agreement. In the agreement, there is a very long chapter referring to the solution of the Palestinian prob-

lem. It speaks of the Palestinians achieving autonomy within a framework of five years. After two years, there would be negotiations between the two parties over a permanent solution, and at the end of the five years there would be a final settlement. This was the idea in 1978. The only problem was that there was no partner. The agreement was between Israel and Egypt about the Palestinians.

Then there was the Madrid Conference in 1991, which followed the footsteps of Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat. Now there was a partner, although a very artificial one, and this was the Palestinian-Jordanian Delegation of ‘91. This artificial structure was formed so that the Israeli government of Yitzhak Shamir would not have to talk directly with their real counterpart. The leaders of the Palestinian part of this artificial joint delegation told us, “We cannot strike a deal. If you don’t talk to the PLO, there won’t be a deal.”

That is why, when I began the process, people on my behalf went to talk to Abu Ala (Ahmed Qurei), who apparently will now be the future prime minister. That was the first time in which Israeli officials, directly or indirectly, talked to the PLO after abolishing the stupid law that prevented us legally from talking to them. The idea was a very modest one: to try to solve the impediments, the obstacles, between the two delegations.

In Madrid, there was a decision to have bilateral negotiations in Washington. These negotiations took place between Israel and Syria, Israel and Lebanon, Israel and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The talks between

Israel and Jordan-Palestine were immediately frozen because they could not agree on anything. The idea was to take the obstacles, solve them somewhere else, and then eventually tell the heads of the two delegations, "You have orders from your governments to solve it in this way or another and eventually sign the agreement." This was the idea.

Now what was unique about Oslo? There were two things. One was the partner. In Oslo, for the first time, there was this mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO. This was the revolution of Oslo.

The second thing was that we suggested to hand over to the Palestinian Authority, which was still in diapers, the area of Gaza and Jericho so that the Palestinian Authority would be established even before the elections to the Legislative Council and before the official establishment of this authority.

For so many years we all knew that the only solution to the conflict is two states for the two peoples

These were the two ideas of Oslo. Eventually, because of the mutual recognition and because of the interest of the world in this agreement, it became a big story. As a result of it, people on both sides understood that they were on the verge of giving up their dreams.

On the Palestinian side, the Islamic movements understood that if they did nothing the whole idea of an Islamic state in the Middle East would disappear, because a Jewish state would not only be there but would be also recognised by the Arab world and the Palestinians.

On the Israeli side, the settlers and the extremist right understood that if we recognised a Palestinian state on part of the west side of the Jordan River, Israel would lose its claim over this area. Ever since 1948 and the establishment of Israel, Menachem Begin's Herut Party had made it a major platform issue to claim the unconquered areas of the West Bank in Gaza. This was their platform for every election campaign. In 1967, Israel was able to occupy these territories, which they had dreamt about for so long, so their claim now became to annex it. If Israel were to give up these areas, or officially recognise the Palestinian State, this would end the *raison d'être* of the right in Israel, from Begin, to Netanyahu, from Shamir to Sharon.

So the extremists on both sides were on the verge of losing their dream. It was not a joke. It was not a technical or political or economic issue which is reversible. This was irreversible in their view and they won, although not in the long run I hope. We were too silent. We felt that we held the power. We had a government with all the Yossi Beilins of the world; we did not need to do anything else. You could not have had a more dovish government in Israel than under Rabin or Barak. So the left was happy and not fighting.

The same happened on the Palestinian side. The Fatah became established, built its own power, its own machinery. Opposite them were the Islamic Jihad and the Hamas. Of course, I am not comparing the Islamic Jihad and Hamas to the right in Israel, because after all here we are talking about people who are using terror and on the other side it is only the margins, although some of them do use terror. But for both of them it was a very difficult situation and that is why I believe it was easier for them to fight. They fought for a big cause. We felt that we had already achieved our cause and with the democratic tools of Israel it would not be a big deal to defend it.

Now, the first terrorist event happened on 25 February 1994 and that was the biggest surprise for all of us because it was a Jew – a settler, an officer, a religious person – and he killed 29 Muslims in a Hebron mosque. This was the beginning of the vicious circle. After the 40-day period of Islamic mourning, there came the first suicide attack. Since then, the story is well known.

When Yitzhak Rabin was killed by an Israeli, the spirit went out of many of us. We were so sad. We could not apprehend it; we could not expect it. It is not that we waited for his orders. We informed him about the Oslo process. It was not his initiative, but he was the one who took it upon himself. Without him it was impossible to have it and when he was killed it was like a kind of shelter had been bombed. That was the watershed. On 4 November 1995 we lost Rabin and we lost much of the peace process.

When Benjamin Netanyahu became prime minister, his main aim was to prevent the implementation of the permanent solution because he understood that the permanent solution between us and the Palestinians would be the end of the vision and ideology of people like himself. He could not commit political

suicide. So when we had to finish the job, which was on 4 May 1999, the end of the five years after the Gaza and Jericho Agreement, he did whatever possible in order to ensure that nothing would happen. That is not so difficult. It is much more difficult to do things. To assure that nothing happens is possible. So on 4 May 1999 nothing happened and we lost the trust of many on the Palestinian side who had expected us to implement the agreement.

In the five years after the interim agreement, there was not even one meeting on the permanent solution between the two sides. We did not want it and the Palestinians did not push for it. Why? Because everyone knew that the permanent solution is the moment of truth. Then you have to solve Jerusalem, the refugees, and all those issues. Now everyone knows that once you solve all these things you have to compromise and your constituency will perceive your decisions as selling your people down the river, whatever you do. We know the solution by now. The Clinton plan is the solution. The Bush vision is the solution. All those things are there, but it means that you have to go home and say, "My dear refugees, you can't go home," or "My dear Jerusalemites, you are now being divided." It is very difficult for leaders to do that.

When Benjamin Netanyahu became prime minister, his main aim was to prevent the implementation of the permanent solution because he understood that the permanent solution between us and the Palestinians would be the end of the vision and ideology of people like himself. He could not commit political suicide

The visit of Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount was a trigger. It determined the date of the beginning of the Intifada, but not the Intifada itself. As for Arafat, I do not think that he initiated the Intifada, but he was foolish enough to ride on this wave and to become a victim again, something which he is used to.

I believe that the only way we can achieve peace is to establish a coalition of sanity, a coalition of people on both sides who care for peace, who understand what it means if we

continue like this, not only with regard to the violence, the risks we are taking, and the economic price we are paying, but also with regard to national interests. For example, for us it is important to ensure that Israel remains a Jewish state and a democratic state, but if there is no Jewish majority in Israel then the whole Zionist dream is over. For many in the world this is not important, but for people like myself, it is very important. If my country becomes a country that is trying to impose the Zionist dream on a majority of Arabs then it is not a democratic state and I am not interested in such a state.

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Now in order to ensure the implementation of the Zionist dream we must have a Palestinian state and this Palestinian state must be a viable state.

The interests of Yasser Abed Rabbo – who could not appear here – and my interests are not the same but there is a meeting point, a very serious meeting point, where we understand that his interests and my interests have a common denominator. This is why both of us have been working on a project over the past two and a half years and are trying to suggest a permanent solution which says, “Hey, it is not simple, but we can work on it. We can live with it. We are willing to pay the price and get something which is more precious than the price that we are paying.”

I regret that Abed Rabbo could not come and I presume that he was not allowed to come. I hope that there will be a chance for both of us to meet with you and others and to expose to you our work which hopefully will become a kind of reference point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And maybe it will convince some of the people, who believe in peace but suspect it will not happen in their lifetime, that it is indeed still doable. ■



Farewell Remarks

Gerfried Sperl

Chairman, IPI Austrian National Committee;
Editor-in-Chief, Der Standard, Vienna

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, we had a great conference. We heard brilliant speakers and moving speakers, like Yossi Beilin just now. We had the opportunity to hear Sir Peter Ustinov, who asked, “Who needs war?” I thank you very much Sir Peter, not only for this question, but also for your statements during the conference.

Publishers, editors and media representatives from 45 countries attended this conference. Therefore, this is a opportunity to thank Johann Fritz and his team for organising such an amazing meeting in such a short time in such a charming city as Salzburg. And let me say another thing. It is the result of the daily work of the Vienna office of IPI, the result of many smaller meetings and conferences, that IPI is in the position to attract such prominent speakers and influential experts.

That is the background behind the forthcoming Bucharest conference on public service broadcasting, which will host the heads of almost all the public broadcasting organisations in Central and Eastern Europe. This is extremely important in a situation where the enlargement of the European Union is being implemented, and where the media and its influence on public positions and public discussions is so important for the process of political developments.

Ladies and gentlemen, this conference took place in the time of a growing clash between two perceptions of journalism. Until now, it was commonly believed that the press is different from other businesses. It has unique responsibilities to serve the public interest and, as Daniel Hamilton pointed out, to create the context in which news can be better understood. Since several years, however, the position has gained ground that the news business is basically the same as any other business. The owners have taken power from the journalists in recent years, not only in the United States but almost everywhere, at least in the West. Gilbert Grellet pointed out this argument and I think that we have to think about it.

In addition to that, the perception of the Western state, its liberal shape, has become endangered since 9/11. More and more governments are trying to curb the press and to establish a state of the winners against the losers, against the dissidents, and against the poor. I think that IPI, which dedicates its work not only to the defence of freedom of the press but also to the enlargement of this democratic quality, should work on strategies how to ensure the basic functions of journalism in a pluralistic society.

As chairman of the National Committee of Austria, I thank you for coming to Austria and to Salzburg in particular. I wish you pleasant days and safe flights home. We will see each other next year in Warsaw. ■

Resolutions adopted by the 52nd IPI General

RESOLUTION ON WSIS

Meeting at its Annual General Assembly on 15 September 2003 in Salzburg, Austria, the IPI membership unanimously passed a resolution stating that Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press must be central to any conception of an information society.

The guiding principle on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the News Media at the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society ("WSIS") should be Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

This principle, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, has come to be recognized as international customary law. But that law is unfortunately not respected by a large number of governments.

The International Press Institute is deeply concerned that the draft texts being negotiated for the WSIS do not recognize the importance of implementing Article 19. Instead, they refer to highly troubling and discredited concepts such as "Right to Communicate" and "responsibility" and "accountability" of news media. History has shown that, at best, these are dangerously vague and overly broad; at worst, they legitimize direct threats to freedom of the press.

Article 19 needs to be implemented, for the traditional media as well as for media using such new information technologies as Internet and Direct Satellite Broadcasting.

Security and other considerations should not be allowed to compromise Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the News Media.

Traditional news media, such as broadcasting and print press, will continue to play an important part in the Information Society, and news media using the new Information and Communication Technologies should strengthen this role.

WSIS should also affirm that state-controlled media should be transformed into edi-

torially independent public service organizations or independent private outlets.

Furthermore, It is hard to understand how a world summit devoted to advancing the free flow of information could consider holding its second meeting in 2005 in Tunisia, a country that violates its free speech and press freedom commitments by censoring its press and jailing journalists who issue critical reports.

WSIS should suspend its plans to meet in Tunis until the Tunisian government has shown that it honours freedom of the press.

RESOLUTION ON SOUTH KOREA

Meeting at its Annual General Meeting on 15 September 2003 in Salzburg, Austria, the IPI membership unanimously passed a resolution condemning continuing attempts by South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun to intimidate and harass major independent newspapers.

For example, speaking at a conference to evaluate the government's progress in office and attended by more than 130 cabinet ministers, vice ministers and other staff, Roh accused the media of "trampling on government officials" and said he would not tolerate "the tyranny of the privileged media."

Roh later called for the strict policing of alleged unfair business practices within the newspaper industry, claimed the government had a right to sue the media through the courts, and hinted at the need for an ombudsman to oversee the media's activities.

The president's attack on the media came only days after newspapers had exposed the alleged corruption of his personal secretary, Yang Gil-Seung. After fighting to retain the beleaguered secretary Roh was eventually forced to accept his resignation.

One day after the angry statements of Roh, the Fair Trade Commission (FTC) announced that it would investigate 200 newspaper distribution centres and more than 2,000 readers nationwide for 40 days to check for evidence of unfair trading. An FTC spokesperson said the timing of the announcement was unrelated to the president's remarks.

IPI is deeply troubled by the situation in South Korea. Rather than upholding the media's right of independence, the present government appears set on a course of confrontation with selected media. Indeed, the speed with which the FTC investigation was launched, coming so soon after Roh's speech, shows that the full power of the government is once again being mobilized against some print media.

With its close similarities to the previous administration's tax investigations of the newspapers, the FTC's investigation is evidence that attacks on the media are seen by government as the best means of diverting the Korean public's attention away from more important issues. Moreover, the threat to use the courts is an attempt to stifle the critical major newspapers, although it is a firm principle of international law that officials must accept greater scrutiny than private persons.

The membership of IPI calls on President Roh-Moo-hyun to respect journalists' right to report freely and to refrain from using the institutions of government as the instruments of media harassment and intimidation.

RESOLUTION ON THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Meeting at its Annual General Meeting on 15 September 2003 in Salzburg, Austria, the IPI membership unanimously passed a resolution criticising the decision of the committee on non-governmental organisations ("the committee") under the United Nations Economic and Social Council ("ECOSOC") to suspend Reporters Without Borders ("RSF") for one year.

The decision to revoke the press freedom organisation's consultative status at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights came after RSF vigorously protested Libya assuming the chair of the 54-member organisation. At a meeting on 24 July 2003, 27 countries voted in favour of RSF's suspension, 23 voted against and four abstained. Furthermore, those countries that sought RSF's suspension have threatened to prolong it.

Assembly on Monday, 15 September 2003

The committee ignored Part IV, Section 56 of the ECOSOC Statute, which states that non-governmental organisations shall have an opportunity to respond to committee recommendations.

By choosing to act in this manner, the committee has committed a material breach of its own procedures, blithely set aside the rules of natural justice and undermined one of the fundamental principles of Article 10 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states “everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal...”

The failure to follow this procedure has grave consequences for not only the reputation of the Commission on Human Rights but also the United Nations as a whole. Given the appalling human rights record of Cuba and Libya, who originally complained of RSF’s actions, IPI is worried that the Commission on Human Rights is in danger of adopting the same attitudes and tactics toward those who have a legitimate right to show dissent and express themselves.

This viewpoint is further reinforced when the rights records of those countries voting for RSF’s suspension are examined. Of the 27 countries who voted in favour, several are viewed as some of the world’s most repressive regimes by Freedom House, while the Russian Federation and Zimbabwe are on the IPI Watch List of countries where press freedom is regressing.

If the present situation is allowed to continue, the rightful position of the United Nations as the world’s premier human rights body is in danger of being tarnished. Were that day to come about, those countries that have shown their persistent disdain for human rights will have won an invaluable victory.

The membership of IPI therefore calls upon the committee to rescind the original decision against RSF and return to the organisation its consultative status. In addition, the United Nations must review the present situation in the Commission on Human Rights and formulate new rules to prevent the usurpation of human rights by a broad alliance of repressive regimes.

Finally, the IPI membership asks the Secretary-General of the United Nations to remind the countries on the Commission on Human Rights of the right of everyone to “hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers,” as stated in Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

RESOLUTION ON ZIMBABWE

Members of the International Press Institute (IPI) at their annual general assembly in Salzburg, Austria, on September 15, reacted with shock to the news of the closure at gunpoint by the Zimbabwe government of the daily, the Daily News. They unanimously condemned the action of armed police, which they said was an attempt by the government to stifle the lone daily critical voice in the media.

The closure followed the refusal of the Zimbabwe Supreme Court to hear the newspaper’s urgent challenge – lodged late last year – of the constitutionality of a repressive media law. Not only does the Daily News, the most vocal opponent of government policies, regard the law as unconstitutional but so do international media and legal experts.

The law in question is a part of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which requires news organizations and journalists to register with the government-appointed Media and Information Commission before they are allowed to practice journalism.

IPI members were equally critical of the court’s refusal to consider the constitutionality issue instead declaring that the paper was operating in “defiance of the law” because it had not registered.

On 12 September armed police forced their way into the paper’s offices and shepherded the staff out of the building, telling them that they were working illegally in the building and that the paper would not be allowed to appear on the streets.

IPI also fears that in the wake of the action against the Daily News, the authorities will now crack down on journalists who have not registered.

IPI believes that the newspaper, having now been forced to register, may be compromised in continuing its constitutional challenge.

IPI calls on the government to withdraw its police and allow the newspaper to continue publishing and to scrap all repressive media legislation.

RESOLUTION ON ANTI-TERRORISM LAWS

The International Press Institute (IPI) annual general assembly in Salzburg, Austria, on 15 September expressed alarm at the global proliferation of anti-terrorist legislation, which has made deep inroads into freedom of expression and media freedom.

While IPI shares the concerns of the United Nations and its member states about the rise of terrorism and the need to combat it, it believes that many countries have reverted, or are on the point of reverting, to unacceptable repression of the media and freedom of expression as part of the international campaign against terrorism.

At best this may be an unintended consequence of this legislation; at worst it is an insidious attempt to introduce controls on the media under the guise of fighting terrorism.

According to the New York-based Freedom House countries with populations totalling 100 million or more have been downgraded from “free” to “partially free” as a result of such legislation.

There can be no justification for causing a decrease in the flow of information or curbing the freedom of the media in the so-called interest of fighting terrorism.

IPI believes that the maximum transparency about terrorism is the best way of combating this evil and calls on governments tasked with the onerous task of combating it, to ensure that they do not curb the media in its role of gathering and publishing the news in the public interest. ■