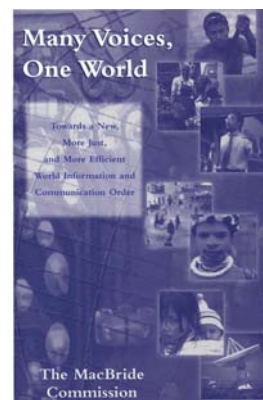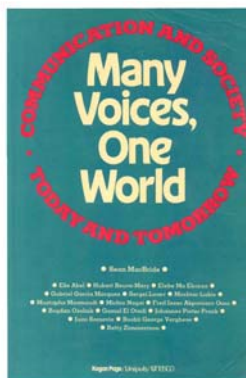# MacBride Report as a Culmination of NWICO

by Kaarle Nordenstreng (http://www.uta.fi/jour/english/contact/nordenstreng_eng.html)

I am pleased to be here in Grenoble where the grand fountain of Notre Dame displays not only the three words *liberté*, *egalité* and *fraternité* but also *justice*. As an advocate of democracy and media law I am pleased to speak under this banner. Moreover, after working a lot with African colleagues and even living a couple of years in Tanzania, it is a special pleasure for me to share with you an African platform.

The MacBride Report with the title *Many Voices, One World* (MacBride & al., 1980) was published 30 years ago in 1980, and it immediately became a classic in international media studies. But soon its profile began to decline, mainly because its main sponsor UNESCO turned its attention to other topics and let it go out of print. Yet in 2004 the book was reprinted by a prominent American publisher as a manifestation of the fact that the Report is not forgotten in the new millennium and that there is a continuing need for it at least for use in university courses.

As I wrote in the article published in 2005 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary (Nordenstreng 2005), for me the MacBride Report stands as a milestone of history. In my view it was not primarily a scientific exercise of discovering the state of communication in the world but first and foremost a political exercise in taking stock of the socio-economic forces in the world at that time. I see the Report in the context of what is known as the "global media debate" (Gerbner & al., 1993). Actually the debate got at times so political and high profile that it is justified to call it "great media debate". The debate was simultaneously on several topics, including the worldwide imbalance of media facilities and flows as well as on the lack of accuracy and fairness in international news reporting, particularly concerning the developing countries in the Western media. The concept of a New World Information and Communication Order, NWICO, became the most central and controversial element in this debate, which is why it serves as the context within which we look at the MacBride Report.

But first there is a bigger context of history.

HISTORY

The roots of the debate reviewed here can be traced as far back as the pre-war League of Nations (Nordenstreng, 1993a, p. 65). Most of the so-called "international instruments" by which the international community has expressed its political and legal orientation with regard to the media can be listed as elements of NWICO. Tens of such pieces of international law existed by the late 1970s, including 44 standard-setting instruments with more or less direct reference to the performance of the mass media (Nordenstreng, 1984, pp. 154-161).

Given such a heritage, it can be argued that little in NWICO was in fact new; its essence was made up of old ideas and established principles which were just brought together under a new umbrella. For example, the problem of global imbalance of information structures was recognized by the United Nations (UN) long before any great debate on NWICO. The UN's Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC, addressed the problem as early as 1961. One year later, the UN General Assembly expressed its concern over the fact that "70 percent of the population of the world lack adequate information facilities and are thus denied effective enjoyment of the right to information", and invited the governments of developed countries "to cooperate with less developed countries in connection with this program for the development of independent national information media, with due regard for the culture of each country". Moreover, as early as 1952 a UN General Assembly resolution considered that "it is essential for a proper development of public opinion in under-developed countries that independent domestic information enterprises should be given facilities and assistance in order that they may be enabled to contribute to the spread of information, to the development of national culture and to international understanding", and continued that "the time has arrived for the elaboration of a concrete program and plan of action in this respect" (Nordenstreng, 1984, p. 4).

It is ironic that it took nearly thirty years before the UN system, through UNESCO, reacted to this appeal by mobilizing a major international programme for the development of communication. Why did it take so long before major action was taken on a problem that had been recognized for decades? The key to this question lies in the gradual but fundamental change in the relations of social, economic, and political forces in the world, beginning with the establishment of the socialist countries and ending with the process of decolonization, which created the developing countries. In this situation the capitalist countries of the West had gone on the defensive, faced with an overall challenge that was articulated in demands for a new order – in the field of international communications as well as in the world economy. Thus, NWICO became an issue not so much because of the emergence of some drastically new phenomena such as communications technology, but fundamentally because a sufficiently strong coalition of social forces had accumulated to enforce a new order – at least as a political programme, even if not as an immediate reality.

In a historical perspective, NWICO also means the revival of political projects which had been introduced at the second session of the UN General Assembly in 1947 and at the UN Conference on Freedom of Information held in Geneva in 1948, but which were then paralyzed by the Cold War. Before the early 1950s the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC had considered such questions as freedom of information and standards for professional conduct, including an international code of ethics for journalists – all highly political items. However, the international politics of the time did not allow for their elaboration, and the ECOSOC Sub-commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press in the early 1950s failed to reach agreement on anything of major significance. This period brought about only three instruments relevant to the present discussion: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention and the Convention on the International Right of Correction.

A signal for new political momentum was the Outer Space Treaty, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966, with a preambular reference to the UN Resolution 110 (II) condemning war propaganda. In 1972 the General Assembly passed a resolution that formally started the preparation of legal principles governing the use of satellites for direct television broadcasting. In the same year, the General Conference of UNESCO issued the Declaration of Guiding Principles on the Use of Satellite Broadcasting for the Free Flow of Information, the Spread of Education and Greater Cultural Exchange. Both the UN resolution and the UNESCO declaration made a point of national sovereignty suggesting that prior consent by the receiving country (through its government) was a precondition for such new form of international communication. This naturally caused alarm among the advocates of the 'free flow' doctrine, leading to a controversy that continued for a long time.

Issues of space communication were not the only challenges to the old information order. Decolonization became recognized in the 1960s, not only as an independence movement in the Third World but also as a set of principles in international relations – ultimately leading to the Declaration on the New International Economic Order (NIEO) by the UN General Assembly on 1 May 1974, followed by the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States by the same supreme body of the international community on 12 December 1974.

Parallel to this development, the concept of human rights was evolving, from the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights to a more definite set of principles codified as part and parcel of international law in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These Covenants, adopted in 1966, had a direct bearing upon information and communication – in a manner quite far from the simple 'free flow' doctrine. The same applies to regional conventions on human rights adopted in Western Europe as early as 1950, in the Americas in 1969 and in Africa in 1981.

Apart from a progressive codification of human rights at large, the particular aspects of racialism and apartheid got their specific International Conventions (in 1965 and 1973), which contain articles with specific reference to mass communication. Other instruments again introduced a link between peace and international understanding, on the one hand, and the content of education, culture and communication, on the other.

Consequently, the international context of information was quite politicized by the middle of the 1970s, and the foundations of NWICO were there already before it took the shape of a concept and a movement. It is these historical roots that help to understand why NWICO turned out to be a phenomenon of such importance and perseverance.

Forces

An overview of history such as given above makes it obvious that the main political force behind NWICO was the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) representing the developing countries of the "South" or the "Third World". Next to that were the socialist countries of the "East" ("Second World"). Together these two constituted a kind of strategic alliance, which was not based on any official agreement but still often proved out to be a delicate reality.

This "natural alliance" challenged the third main party in the geopolitical arena, the "West" ("First World"). To be precise, it was right-wing political forces in the West that were on the defensive and hostile, mainly on anti-communist grounds. At the same time, liberal and leftist forces in the West were mostly sympathetic towards the tide in history which could be seen behind NWICO. As a matter of fact, we can list liberal and radical West – at least its intellectual elements – as the third

force in support of NWICO after the South and East. At that time it was quite fashionable for media scholars to rally behind NWICO.

On the other hand, none of the three forces behind NWICO was simple and united. NAM had internal frictions, with some of its members even at war (for example Uganda and Tanzania, later Iran and Iraq). Socialist East was divided not only between the USSR and China but also among its European group (Romania as the most deviant case) – not to speak of the dissidents in each country that stood against the whole system. And supporters in the West were based in political groupings many of which (notably communists and social democrats) were rather enemies than allies. Especially orthodox East Europeans were often suspicious of the other two parties, as they were afraid of eroding the Marxist-Leninist ideology through ideas such as interdependence (one of the NAM principles). Actually, NWICO's main support in the socialist East was among its reformist and 'liberal' elements – those who later promoted "glasnost".

Accordingly, it was a capricious gallery of forces rather than a solid coalition. All the same it was a reality – a reality widely recognized at the time of the Fourth NAM Summit in Algiers in 1973. It was there that 75 developing countries (majority of UN membership) declared that "the activities of imperialism are not confined solely to the political and economic fields, but also cover the cultural and social fields" and demanded "concerted action in the fields of mass communication" (Nordenstreng, 1984, p. 9).

Indeed, if one has to choose a particular year, and a particular occasion, to signalize the shift of geopolitical balance of forces to the side of the developing world, it would be 1973 and the NAM Summit in Algiers. What followed during the next three years until the Colombo Summit, including the articulation of NWICO, was politically preset already in 1973.

Ideas

As far as the history of ideas is concerned, a central intellectual ingredient was the concept of freedom – how the value-loaded idea of press freedom was suddenly brought under a critical light. The address by Finland's President Kekkonen's at the UNESCO symposium on TV programme flow was a typical case of freedom being problematicized or deconstructed (Nordenstreng & Varis, 1974). Powerful input to a critical look came from Herbert Schiller's account of the genesis of the American free flow doctrine as an instrument of cultural domination (Schiller, 1976). A sharp look at the same issue from the South was provided by a veteran journalist in India, D.R. Mankekar in his books *One-Way Free Flow* (1978) and *Whose Freedom? Whose Order?* (1981).

Parallel to questioning the traditional bourgeois notion of freedom, a new concept was introduced by a liberal French media expert, Jean D'Arcy: the Right to Communicate (Harms & Richstad, 1977; Fischer & Harms, 1983). It was an attempt to meet the intellectual and political challenge of the time, with a Western human rights bias. However, it met only lukewarm reception in Western political circles, except in countries such as Sweden which introduced the Right to Communicate into UNESCO's programme in 1974. Instead, it met increasing support in the developing world where it was welcomed as a new collective right defending cultural sovereignty. In fact for some time it served as a serious candidate for the leading intellectual idea in global media debate, but it never succeeded in reaching the same momentum as NWICO.

Obviously the Right to Communicate was bound to remain secondary to NWICO, because the latter was more clearly a Third World concept – a logical extension of the New International Economic

Order (NIEO). Both NIEO and NWICO had a politically powerful common denominator: the idea of self-reliance (Pavlic & Hamelink, 1985).

Because NWICO was from the beginning quite political by its nature, one easily overlooks what is perhaps the most essential in this concept: it simply locates the mass media within the framework of international law. As a matter of fact, the very concept of order was already included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 28: "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized."

Therefore, an essential part of the NWICO substance is composed of relevant instruments of international law. The first inventory of international law relating to the mass media – both their freedoms and responsibilities – was done by Hilding Eek (Swedish Emeritus Professor of International Law) for the 1975 UNESCO meeting of experts to prepare the Mass Media Declaration. That report served as an eye-opener for many teachers and students of international communication, who were usually poorly read in international law. The present author was one of them and collaborated with Eek to edit it into a chapter in the reader *National Sovereignty and International Communication* (Eek, 1979). This reader (Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1979) included a whole part under the title "International Law: Codification of Fundamental Principles", with other chapters by respected American authorities showing that the media and their freedom is indeed governed by a well established framework of international law. It was typical, then, that there was need for a sourcebook with full text of relevant international instruments (Nordenstreng & al., 1986). Later, Hamelink (1994) followed the same inventory approach.

The actors in the NWICO debate were not only governmental bodies and academic experts, but also non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played an important role. The most significant NGO in NWICO matters was a loose coalition of international and regional organizations of working journalists (excluding editors and publishers), which was formed under the auspices of UNESCO in 1978 and remained active until 1990 (Nordenstreng & Topuz, 1989; Nordenstreng, 1995).

This "Consultative Club" gave first the "Mexico Declaration" in 1980 and then in 1983 issued the "International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism" reflecting the opinions of the majority of organized journalists in the world. Both of these documents shared the NWICO approach, and the 1983 Principles even spelled out one – the last out of 10 principles – under the title "Promotion of a New World Information and Communication Order":

> The journalist operates in the contemporary world within the framework of a movement towards new international relations in general and a new information order in particular. This new order, understood as an integral part of the New International Economic Order, is aimed at the decolonization and democratization of the field of information and communication, both nationally and internationally, on the basis of peaceful coexistence among peoples and with full respect for their cultural identity. The journalist has a special obligation to promote the process of democratization of international relations in the field of information, in particular by safeguarding and fostering peaceful and friendly relations among States and peoples.

The concept of NWICO was compressed here to three sentences only, but they pretty well cover its essence. And it is worth noting that the speaker here are the non-governmental professionals (through their representative organizations) who in many respects were more outspoken and uncompromising than respective governmental bodies such as UNESCO had been. In fact, the NWICO concept articulated in these professional principles was practically identical with the NAM

version of the concept, although most of the Consultative Club members came from outside the NAM circle. This shows how pervasive and timely the concept was, at least until the early 1980s.
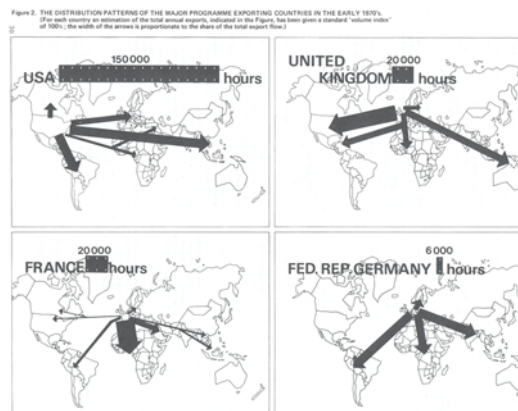
STAGES

Here we come to the historical moment which gave rise to the MacBride Report. It begins in the 1970s and continues to the new millennium. With a closer look, as many as four different, although partly overlapping stages can be discerned in the development of the global relation of forces – in the field of communication policies as well as in the grand designs of world political strategies – between the early 1970s and the late 1980s, when the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War opened a new chapter in history. That began in the 1990s and continued beyond the turn of the millennium as the fifth stage.

The first stage, occupying the early 1970s until 1976, was dominated by an offensive on the part of developing countries against the industrialized West, with East-West relations undergoing a calm process of détente. The second stage might be characterized as a Western counterattack of a self-defensive nature, which peaked around 1976-77. The third strategic situation emerged soon after the second and was highlighted on a number of occasions in 1978-80, including the adoption of the Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO and the publication of the MacBride Report. It can be described as a stage of tactical maneuvering in a spirit of compromise, or truce. The fourth stage followed soon after 1980 when Western countries took once more a course of confrontation, with corporate leadership. The fifth stage was finally reached in the 1990s with globalization as a central theme.

The following review is based on my earlier works on the topic, notably *The Mass Media Declaration of UNESCO* (Nordenstreng, 1984, Chapter 1: "The Context: A Movement Towards a New International Information Order") and the *Sourcebook* (Nordenstreng & al., 1986, "The Rise and Life of the Concept"). My latest contribution on the topic is a chapter in forthcoming *Handbook on Global Media and Communication Policy* (Nordenstreng, 2011) – written parallel to this conference. All quotes in the subsequent passages can be found in these sources.

Stage One 1970-76: Decolonization offensive

- idea of information imperialism
- concept of New International Information Order
- concept of Right to Communicate
- preparation of UNESCO declaration on the use of mass media for peace etc.
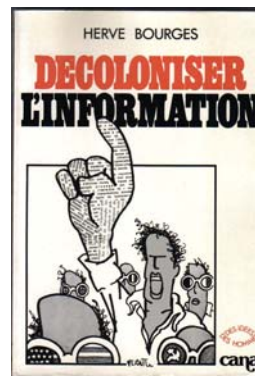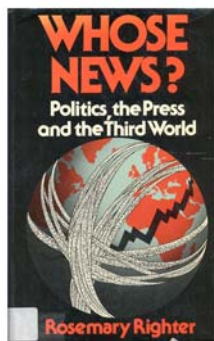- research such as *Television Traffic – A One-way Street?*

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By the early 1970s, the developing countries had accumulated a great deal of political power and economic potential, with the assistance of such organizations as NAM and OPEC. All this created a new relation of forces in the world arena, already under pressure from the socialist part of the world, leading to such manifestations as the oil crisis and the UN declaration on NIEO – all of which worked against the vested interests of the Western world order. Another corollary to this offensive of the 'underdog' against the West was a polarization of the Arab-Israeli conflict, reflected, not only in a war between the parties, but also in the UN resolution by which the majority of the international community defined Zionism as a form of racism.

In this situation, it appeared that a new chapter in world history was in the making, and it was not by chance that the phrase "new order" became popular. After all, it implies a radical analysis of the world; the concept of order points at a global structure not far from Lenin's theory of imperialism. It suggested a radical program to change the world; the notion of new may well be interpreted as a call for war against the "old order". Consequently, the basic pattern was that the West was on the defensive and the developing countries, supported by the socialist countries, were on the offensive.

As a political programme and an intellectual concept, decolonization was well established by the early seventies. But before 1973, the idea of decolonization was not applied in an articulated and authoritative manner to the sphere of information and culture. This occurred systematically in NAM platforms during 1976: first in a symposium on information in Tunis (March), then in a conference of information ministers in New Delhi (July) and finally in the Summit in Colombo (August).

Stage Two 1976-78: Western counterattack

- founding of World Press Freedom Committee
- delaying Mass Media Declaration at UNESCO General Conference in Nairobi
- proposal for Marshall Plan of Telecommunication
- setting up International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems under chairmanship of Sean MacBride
- academic and professional books

This time a counterattack was mobilized in the West with the aid of old and new mass media lobbies and the publicity provided by the international news agencies and the commercial media themselves. Targets of attack were NANAP and other manifestations of the information struggle in the South. This mobilization of reaction got also at UNESCO. First, a campaign was mobilized against the Intergovernmental Conference on Communication Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized in San José, (Costa Rica) in July 1976. Later, in October-November 1976, attention was concentrated on the General Conference of UNESCO in Nairobi (Kenya) where,

according to Western media coverage, the life or death of press freedom was to be determined by a draft of the Mass of Media Declaration.

The seriousness of this counteroffensive in the mass media field is indicated by the fact that it was not only a campaign waged through daily and weekly press coverage but strongly supported by committed lobby organizations such as the International Press Institute (IPI) and the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA). Furthermore, more or less academic studies and books began to appear in support of this counteroffensive; perhaps the best known is *Whose News?* by Rosemary Righter (1978). However, these conservative voices by no means dominated the community of communication research; the bulk of scholars in the field either remained uncommitted (and quite ignorant of the issues involved) or went along with the academic reorientation towards progressive perspectives. An example of the latter category is *Decoloniser l'information* by Herve Bourges (1978) – written with the assistance of Bertrand Cabedoche (curiously not mentioned in the book).

This counteroffensive from the West, like the previous strategic stage when the Western powers were generally on the defensive, was by no means a matter of communication politics only, but fundamentally a question of overall international politics. At this stage, the dominant Western line also became harder in a number of other issues, where its interests were at stake – from world economy (UNCTAD and so-called North-South dialogue) to ideology (East-West relations). In particular, the Soviet-American relations deteriorated from the relaxed state of détente that had dominated the first half of the 1970s.

At this time, around 1976-1977, the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations began to prepare special reports and organize hearings on the topic. To be precise, these activities were no longer typical manifestations of the second stage of a counterattack. While certainly motivated by the same fundamental interests, they advocated a new and more flexible approach – a strategy of selective accommodation to, and active partnership with, the forces confronting the West. Especially outspoken in this respect is the Kroloff & Cohen Report, which begins by observing: "Whether we like it or not, there will be a 'New World Information Order'", and continues:

> Worldwide the "New World Information Order" could be good or bad. As the situation now stands, the United States has more to lose than any other nation as the "Order" becomes a fact. It should be noted, however, that the United States need not be a loser if appropriate actions are taken.

Indeed, the third stage of strategic designs of the 1970s was shaped very soon after the second one, but for some time it was largely masked by the loud propaganda of the second stage. In fact, before and during the General Conference of UNESCO in Nairobi in 1976 – while the Western press and private broadcasting interests kept campaigning against UNESCO – Western diplomats were busy suggesting deals to the developing countries. The political purpose was to play down the draft Mass Media Declaration, which by that time had become a symbol for a consideration of the principles and contents of the mass media within an anti-Western context. To this effect, leading Western governments offered material help for the mass media infrastructures in the developing countries.
By and large, the new strategy followed the old formula: "If you cannot beat them, join them!" Also, the formula of "divide and rule" was employed in response to the fact that it had been precisely the united front of the developing countries, backed by the socialist countries, which had brought about the political defeats for the West during the first stage.

It was such a situation of conflicting political strategies that led to the establishment of the MacBride Commission – an international commission to study the global problems of communication. It was a clever tactical move by UNESCO's then Director-General Amadou-

Mahtar M'Bow to set up a "reflexion group of wise men" as a way to avoid a political crisis which had accumulated at the General Conference in Nairobi due to mounting disagreements about UNESCO's competence to determine normative standards for the media.

The strategic situation of 1976 was further elaborated by the time of the next UNESCO General Conference in Paris in 1978. An outspoken statement of this strategy was given by the head of the U.S. delegation, Ambassador John E. Reinhardt (an African-American), who in his address contrasted "restrictive declarations" against "positive cooperation" and made a call for "a more effective program of action", including "American assistance, both public and private, to suitably identified regional centers of professional education and training in broadcasting and journalism in the developing world", as well as "a major effort to apply the benefits of advanced communications technology, specifically communications satellites, to economic and social needs in the rural areas of developing nations". There was little new in this programme, but its launching at UNESCO as a kind of political demonstration gave rise to the concept of "Marshall Plan of Telecommunications", muted by those developing world representatives who were not quite convinced of the sincerity of the U.S. intentions.

Obviously the U.S. 'carrot' was designed to play down – if not bury – the Mass Media Declaration, as well as other 'political' manifestations of the new order. However, the fact that the Declaration was finally adopted, by the same 1978 General Conference where the "Marshall Plan" was launched, shows that the Western strategy did not quite succeed. It did not stop the developing countries, with the help of socialist countries, from pushing "restrictive declarations". It helped the Western side only as a leverage in the bargaining process over the formulations of the Declaration. The U.S. delegates, accompanied by representatives of Australia and France, joined some outstanding advocates of the developing countries (notably from moderate Sri Lanka, Tunisia, and Venezuela) in order to find a compromise between the "Marshall Plan" project and another idea put forward by the developing countries to set up a special fund at UNESCO for helping these countries in the development of their media infrastructures. The compromise reached was not far from the U.S. approach, whereby the new order is reduced to a relatively simple transfer of know-how and technology from the 'information rich' to the 'information poor', within an overall 'free flow' context. This led two years later to the establishment of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

At this period of accommodation, the United States did not deploy its 'stick' by threatening to withdraw from UNESCO as it had done two years before in Nairobi. Instead, it went to another compromise adopted by consensus at the same 1978 General Conference, concerning the MacBride Commission. This resolution appreciated the interim report prepared by the Commission and invited, among other things, the members of the Commission "to address themselves, in the course of preparing their final report, to the analysis and proposal of concrete and practical measures leading to the establishment of a more just and effective world information order". Although this resolution did not contain explicit 'free flow' references, it obviously met the Western interest in alluring the developing countries to turn attention away from fundamental principles and content considerations (such as the Mass Media Declaration) to practical cooperation (such as the "Marshall Plan").
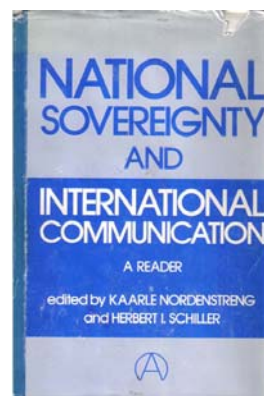
In this situation, it goes without saying that, when the developing countries were eager to seek for consensus, it did not mean that they simply would have sold short their principles and subscribed to a U.S.-designed position. On the other hand, neither did they turn down a historical opportunity to obtain material support for the setting-up and maintenance of their media infrastructures – if not yet in terms of open checks, at least in authoritative promises. As Bogdan Osolnik, who was a

Yugoslavian delegate to the 1978 General Conference, put it, those advocating the new order "feel that various types of assistance are not enough and that what is needed is a fundamental restructuring of relationships, the elimination of all forms of inequality and foreign domination through the powerful media of contemporary communications".

In brief, the bottom line in creating the MacBride Commission was a manoeuvre to play down an anti-imperialist momentum in the NAM and to neutralize the attempts to let the UN system set standards to the mass media. For the political West this momentum presented a serious threat as the political South was empathically supported by the Soviet-led political East.

Stage Three 1978-80: Truce – progress through compromise

- adoption of the Mass Media Declaration
- the MacBride Commission and its Report
- establishment of the International Programme for the Development of Communication
- establishment of UN Committee on Information
- consensus of the New World Information and Communication Order
- journalist organisations as Consultative Club
- academic and professional books

Although the positions were divided, a compromise was reached in Paris in late 1978, notably through the adoption of the Mass media Declaration by consensus (UNESCO, 1978). This provided a framework for dialogue and even further agreements between the parties concerned. The first time the 1978 outcome of the UNESCO consensus was put to a diplomatic test was the adoption of a resolution on questions of information at the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, only three weeks after the compromise was sealed at UNESCO. The political significance of Resolution 33/115, adopted by consensus, was that the Paris formula was now endorsed by the highest authority of the international community. Under the title "International Relations in the Sphere of Information and Mass Communications", the General Assembly not only "recalled" the Mass Media Declaration and other relevant decisions of UNESCO's General Conference, but also referred to the UN resolutions concerning NIEO, as well as to the decisions and recommendations on information of NAM.

Since this resolution of December 1978, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution every year until the 1990s on questions of information, mainly endorsing the developments at UNESCO and suggesting practical measures to promote the information activities of the UN itself (through UN Information Centers, publications, radio programs, etc.). These resolutions have been prepared in

the framework of a special working group, institutionalized in 1979 to a permanent UN Committee on Information.

It was in an atmosphere of truce surrounded by many pressures that the MacBride Commission worked while the Mass Media Declaration was prepared in neighbouring chambers using quiet give and take diplomacy. I was invited to be third member of a behind the scene negotiating group for the Declaration and did not have central role in the large MacBride team. The other two Declaration negotiators were a senior journalist from the UK and a journalist-diplomat from Peru. Here I found myself in a group of three worlds representing the second one – the socialist East. No mandate from the Kremlin, just a basic trust from various parties that a Finnish professor elected as President of IOJ, headquartered in Prague, could do it.

And we did it. The Mass Media Declaration was adopted by consensus at the General Conference in Paris in 1978, followed by the MacBride Report at the General Conference in Belgrade in 1980. These were clearly compromises between the capitalist West, socialist East and the non-aligned South of the time. There was room for compromise – a truce in an information war – in the late 1970s, largely due to the East-West détente and the oil crisis, which supported those Western strategists who preferred carrot to stick.

Given a wide support to the primary ideas of the new order, it is not surprising that the MacBride Commission also ended up with its report *Many Voices, One World* promoting the overall approach "towards a new, more just and more efficient world information and communication order", to use the words of its subtitle. It is to be noted, however, that while the MacBride Report confirmed the need for a comprehensive approach to communication problems, whereby technology and infrastructures are closely linked with socio-economic policies and political principles, and whereby freedom and responsibility are understood as indivisible, the concept of NWICO remained vague and indeed undefined.

These weaknesses were instantly exposed by a group of academics, who were supporters of NWICO but annoyed about the MacBride Report's compromising line, leading them to instantly write critical essays which were published as an anthology (Hamelink, 1981). I joined this group of communication scholars with an essay criticizing the Report for treating the history of communication in isolation from fundamental social and global developments and for accepting a concept of communication which represented the mainstream of bourgeois liberalism with a functional-positivistic approach. My criticism ended like this:

> The Report is an excellent illustration of the dilemma of eclecticism: you try to be comprehensive but you lose the totality which you are supposed to discover. In this respect the Report could well be called "Mission impossible".

My colleague Cees Hamelink, editor of this publication, exposed how inadequately the Commission treated transnational corporations:

> The Report, although rightly pointing to the crucial role of transnational corporations in the field of international communications, did not sufficiently recognize that the new international information order is indeed likely to be the order of the transnational corporations. The "one world" the Report ambitiously refers to in its title may very well be the global marketplace for transnational corporations.

The same critical approach exposed crucial differences of opinion between the members of the MacBride Commission itself. Thus, for example, Gabriel Garcia Marques and Juan Somavia (from

Colombia and Chile, but both living in exile), made the following point in their dissenting opinion in the Report:

> The insistence on the need to develop communication infrastructures in the third world countries is correct and necessary, but it should not be overstated. It is not possible to solve contemporary communication problems through money and training alone. The idea of a "Marshall Plan" for the development of third world communications is inappropriate and will tend to reproduce Western values and transnational interests in third world societies. Actions in this field should be carefully selected so as to reinforce minority power structures within third world countries or serve as a vehicle for cultural domination.

Getting back to the diplomatic process of adopting the MacBride Report, we must note that the 21st session of the UNESCO General Conference in Belgrade in fall 1980 was historical, not only because it formally established the IPDC, but also because it brought together all aspects of the great debate of the 1970s, including its most controversial elements concerning the conceptual and political substance of NWICO. Two resolutions, specifically related to the issue of a new information order, were passed in Belgrade. One of these was resolution on the MacBride Report. Patient and painful negotiations between and within various geopolitical groupings led to consensus around that resolution, which no doubt was politically the most significant outcome of Belgrade:

> (a) this new world information and communication order could be based, among other considerations, on:
> (i) elimination of the imbalances and inequalities which characterize the present situation;
> (ii) elimination of the negative effects of certain monopolies, public or private, and excessive concentrations;
> (iii) removal of the internal and external obstacles to a free flow and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and ideas;
> (iv) plurality of sources and channels of information;
> (v) freedom of the press and information;
> (vi) the freedom of journalists and all professionals in the communication media, a freedom inseparable from responsibility;
> (vii) the capacity of developing countries to achieve improvement of their own situations, notably by providing their own equipment, by training their personnel, by improving their infrastructures and by making their information and communications media suitable to their needs and aspirations;
> (viii) the sincere will of developed countries to help them attain these objectives;
> (ix) respect for each people's cultural identity and the right of each nation to inform the world public about its interests, its aspirations and its social and cultural values;
> (x) respect for the right of all peoples to participate in international exchanges of information on the basis of equality, justice and mutual benefit;
> (xi) respect for the right of the public, of ethnic and social groups and of individuals to have access to information sources and to participate actively in the communication process;
>
> (b) this new world information and communication order should be based on the fundamental principles of international law as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations...

It is not difficult to see that, under paragraph (a), a great deal of diplomatic trading has resulted in favouring the Western 'free flow' position. However, all of these 11 points are merely "among other considerations" on which the new order *could* be based. Under (b), on the other hand, is a brief but

crucial statement on which the new order *should* be based. The latter endorses the general position that the fundamental principles of international law constitute a clearly defined basis for all international relations, including those in the field of journalism and mass communication. Accordingly, not only did all the Member States (including USA at the time) approve the idea of defining the new order, but its overall orientation was fixed to the UN principles of international relations. This may not appear, at first sight, as a particularly significant position, but on closer examination it is the most essential element of the whole resolution.

The other resolution concerning NWICO, proposed in Belgrade somewhat unexpectedly by Venezuela, was on "measures to initiate studies necessary for the elaboration of principles related to a New World Information and Communication Order". This short document, which came to be known as the "Venezuelan resolution", begins by "recalling" the Mass Media Declaration, the recommendations of the three regional Intergovernmental Conferences, as well as other relevant resolutions of UNESCO and the UN since 1978, and makes the point that "it would be desirable and beneficial for all sectors concerned if a clear and practical definition were drawn up of the principles and aims underlying the concept of a New World Information and Communication Order, as already expressed in various forums such as UNESCO and the Non-Aligned Movement and in meetings of professional organizations". Its operative paragraph:

> Invites the Director-General to take immediate steps to initiate studies with a view to drawing up the fundamental principles underlying a new world information and communication order and exploring the possibility and desirability of such studies serving as a basis for a Declaration on the Establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order.

Hardly revolutionary, but still the resolution met strong opposition among the Western delegations, which obviously were afraid of another unpleasant history such as the Mass Media Declaration. Yet this 'time bomb' was adopted in the Programme Commission by 51 votes in favour, 6 against, with 26 abstentions (those voting against were USA, Canada, U.K., Switzerland, Japan, and New Zealand). By and large, the balance of Belgrade (1980) repeated the main characteristics of Paris (1978): a fragile compromise with notable exceptions, surrounded by a good deal of public controversy.

However, those close to U.S. government (Carter Administration) did not express totally sceptical view of Belgrade. For example, Sarah Goddard Power, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Rights and Social Affairs, made it known soon after Belgrade that "we were able to continue the process of turning UNESCO away from Soviet-inspired ideological approaches to communications questions and to establish a communications development clearinghouse which institutionalized, for the first time, our practical, non-ideological approach".
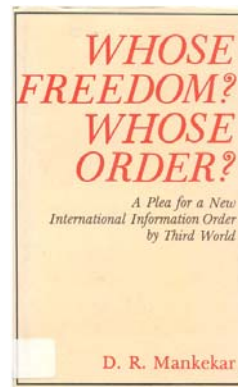
The Soviet assessment of the outcome of Belgrade was, as might be expected, diametrically opposed to the American point of view. Yuri Kashlev, executive secretary of the USSR Commission for UNESCO, summarized the situation in these terms: "This was a major victory for the socialist and developing countries. The offensive against the positions of imperialism in a highly important field of ideology continues."

That this evaluation spoke not only for the Soviet Union, but reflected a wider perspective shared to a great extent by NAM, is demonstrated in a Yugoslavian review on the General Conference. Ivo Margan, Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council, and Head of the Yugoslavian delegation to the Conference, argued that the decisions in Belgrade "rounded off ten years of work of the non-aligned movement in the struggle for the democratization of international relations, particularly in

the field of information". In his analysis, the General Conference marked "a victory of the progressive and, it may be said, revolutionary approach, and the struggle of the non-aligned movement, publicly to assert in this sphere of international life the rights of individual states, as opposed to the monopoly held by a number of agencies of the advanced countries ... effecting a form of 'information imperialism'."

Stage Four 1981-90: Corporate offensive

- conference Voices of Freedom in Talloires
- withdrawal of USA and UK from UNESCO
- removal of UNESCO's Director General M'Bow
- freezing of MacBride legacy at UNESCO
- UN-UNESCO Round Table on NWICO
- uncompromised NWICO position at NAM and among journalist organizations
- academic and professional support in books

If the balance of Belgrade appears to be somewhat confused in the light of the first reactions, the picture took a more definite shape during the next few months. The socialist and non-aligned positions, such as those quoted above, by and large remained as the final reading of that side's view on promoting the new order. But the political reaction of the leading Western powers rapidly shifted towards a neoconservative approach. A penetrating analysis from the latter point of view was offered soon after Belgrade by Rosemary Righter (1980):

> Increased state intervention in the gathering and dissemination of news will be a reality of the 1980s. A larger role for governments is implicit in the concept of a 'new world information order', already accepted in principle by all Unesco states. That role will be further developed through the formulation of government policies mobilizing the media in the service of national unity, cultural sovereignty and political goals. News-as-instrument is coming of age....

Righter regretted the strategy of accommodation, which had placed Western countries "on the defensive, again trying to buy time". But she saw signs that "the events at Belgrade, in the aftermath, may finally provoke Western realization that it must stop this slow erosion of the freedom of the press and of the flow of news and ideas". She concluded:

> If a common Western strategy were to emerge from Belgrade, it would possibly throw in question Western participation in Unesco's communications program in all its aspects. For it

was finally clear that cooperation, promised or performed, would not take the edge off the ideological challenge to the very concept of a free press.

The reaction was made even more serious by the fact that, according to a report in *The New York Times* (24 May 1981), "Western news organizations will no longer be perceived as fighting alone in the name of press freedom and democracy" but that how "they will be allied with powerful business whose interests in maintaining the status quo are unabashedly materialistic". Moreover:

> The West had failed to understand fully that the demands were part of a broad drive to increase the developing countries' share of all resources. They seek a new economic order that would rewrite the rules of international trade and finance in their favour, the West fears. "It's not about information. It's about politics, high politics", said Peter Blaker, the British Minister for United Nations affairs.

Such reactions soon escalated into a new campaign where "gloves come off in the struggle with Unesco", as the title of this newspaper article reads. And this time, it was not only a propaganda campaign in support of diplomatic bargaining. What happened was, rather, a fundamental change in the Western strategy -- from accommodation back to confrontation. It was a historical reappraisal, because ever since Nairobi 1976 the official Western approach, as recorded at UNESCO and the UN, remained fairly consistent until the end of 1980. This approach had been an integral part of the foreign policy of the Carter Administration.

The fact that Reagan took over from Carter at this stage obviously gave encouragement to a radical change in strategy -- from a flexible liberal line to a hard conservative one. However, it would be too simplistic to explain the reorientation of the Western approach in terms of the change in the U.S. Administration alone. After all, the Western strategy had never been particularly coherent and united, even within the U.S. community of mass media experts. Rather the change was due to a long-standing discord and disillusionment, which by this time had accumulated to the degree of enforcing a new offensive approach to the international information arena.

Three months later – half a year after Belgrade – 63 delegates from 21 countries gathered in Talloires (France) at the "Voices of Freedom Conference of Independent News Media", organized by the Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in cooperation with the World Press Freedom Committee. The organizers explained why the Talloires conference was held:

> For seven years a debate has been conducted in the councils of Unesco and other international organizations over the media and proposed curbs of press freedom. Those who advocate these controls have pressed for the creation of a so-called New World Information Order which is as yet undefined.

> In response the Free world media decided to take initiative and to announce the principles to which a free press subscribes...

> At this session for the first time Western and other free newspapers, magazines and broadcasters took a united stand against the campaign by the Soviet bloc and some Third World countries to give Unesco the authority to chart the media's future course.

Accordingly, as put by Rosemary Righter in *The Sunday Times* (May 24, 1981), "after 10 years of losing ground in this long-simmering controversy, western governments are at last formulating a common strategy to reverse the trend towards state interference in the exchange of news and information and its content". And Talloires turned out to be something that Leonard Marks described as "the Magna Carta of the free press". In the West this was widely perceived as a relief – in the context of an understanding, perpetuated by influential Western lobbies and media, that the

new order would be "a step toward Big Brother control over human lives similar to that pictured in George Orwell's frightening novel", as the *U.S. News & World Report* put it (15 June 1981). The outcome was the Declaration of Talloires.

As summarized by the organizers of the conference, the Talloires participants "urged to abandon attempts to regulate global information and strive instead for practical solutions to Third World media advancement". Seen in the perspective of the media debate of the 1970s, this means, first, to turn attention away from a normative consideration of the content of communication and the socio-political objectives which the media are supposed to serve and, second, to invite the media of the developing countries to cooperate with the private sector of the industrialized West in setting up, training, and maintaining their media infrastructure and personnel. In other words, "trading ideology against cooperation", as Rosemary Righter fittingly put it.

Thus Talloires was not a frontal attack against everything put forward by the new order movement. Rather, it was an updated version of the "Marshall Plan" approach which the Western powers employed at UNESCO from 1976 to 1980. It was logical, therefore, that among the Talloires participants there were some coming from the developing countries (notably such moderates as Jamaica, Egypt, and Malaysia).

By and large, philosophically and politically speaking, the notion of press freedom in the Talloires doctrine is virtually identical with the classic notion of free enterprise. It is natural, then, that the Talloires participants were "leaders of independent news media" – mostly owners or managers of private media enterprises and leading journalists working for them, i.e., representatives of proprietors' interests, rather than professional journalists' interests.

The Declaration of Talloires ends with a statement which exposes the overall bias of the document: "Press freedom is a basic human right". This is simply not true. First, it is the individual ("everyone") and not the media ("press") that is under international law the subject and 'owner' of the "right to freedom of opinion and expression". Thus freedom is granted to citizens and not to institutions such as press enterprises. Second, the human right in question "carries with it duties and responsibilities" and in no case can it be exercised contrary to the vital interests of the international community, above all the preservation of peace and security.

After Talloires, the next steps in an escalating confrontation were taken within the U.S. government. Hearings were organized by the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives. There the Assistant Secretary of State, Elliot Abrams, had this to say:

> We oppose interpretations of a New World Information Order which seek to make governments the arbiters of media content. We oppose interpretations which seek to place blame for current communications imbalances on the policies of Western governments and media. We oppose interpretations which seek to translate biases against the free market and free press into restrictions on Western news agencies, advertisers and journalists. Attempts to justify such restrictions as a necessary adjunct of the development process are spurious. The potential can be achieved only with freedom of choice in the information field. We reject any linkage of a New World Information Order with the New International Economic Order and the radical restructuring of the international economic system which it includes.

The debate in the House of Representatives produced a resolution to the effect of withdrawing the U.S. contribution to UNESCO's budget (about 25 % of total) "if that organization implements any policy or procedure the effects of which is to license journalists or their publications, to censor or otherwise restrict the free flow of information within or among countries, or to impose mandatory

codes of journalistic practice or ethics". This "Beard amendment" received an unusually high-level of support from the President of the United States. In a letter, 17 September 1981, addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, President Ronald Reagan wrote:

> We recognize the concerns of certain developing countries regarding imbalances in the present international flow of information and ideas. But we believe that the way to resolve these concerns does not lie in silencing voices nor restricting access to the means of communication, but in encouraging a broad and rich diversity of opinion. Efforts to impose restrictions on the activities of journalists in the name of issuing licenses to 'protect' them, and other restrictions of this sort that have been proposed by certain members of Unesco, are unacceptable to the United States. We strongly support – and commend to the attention of all nations – the declaration issued by independent media leaders of twenty-one nations at the Voices of Freedom Conference, which met at Talloires, France, in May of this year. We do not feel we can continue to support a Unesco that turns its back on the high purposes this organization was originally intended to serve.

The new offensive launched under the name of Talloires, was met by the advocates of NWICO with less spectacular presentations but without any notable compromising. The first reaction from the Non-Aligned Movement came only a few days after the "Voices of Freedom" had been raised in Talloires. The NAM Intergovernmental Council for the Coordination of Information happened to meet in Georgetown (Guyana) in May 1981, on which occasion the Council expressed "its full support for the activities of UNESCO concerning the promotion of the New International Information Order" and by the same token,

> rejected the simultaneous campaign of destabilization launched by Transnational Power Centers against the International Organization since the end of 1980, in the understanding that these global attacks by the big news agencies and corporate enterprises are truly aimed at preventing the implementation of the New International Information Order and its fundamental principles, as stated in the V and VI Summit Conferences of the Non-Aligned countries in Colombo and Havana respectively.

The socialist countries of Eastern Europe were equally vocal in denouncing Talloires and expressing support to UNESCO. Reflecting the uncompromised NAM position, a Yugoslavian comment in *Review of International Affairs* (No. 760, 1981) called the Declaration of Talloires "at best surprising and an anachronism for these times ... openly for the first time against the new international information order being sought by the non-aligned and developing countries and the immense majority of mankind they encompass". Soviet reactions displayed a more dramatic picture of the "information war" declared in Talloires – with its originators "often been caught red-handed in collaboration with the CIA", as *Moscow News* (No. 28, 1981) put it.

But it was not only the official position of NAM and the socialist countries that upheld an uncompromised position about NWICO. Also the professional journalists, through their Consultative Club representing NGOs of working journalists from all parts of the world, made it known that they render broad support to NWICO. At their meeting in Baghdad in early 1982 the international and regional organizations of professional journalists stressed that, while the new order is based on the respect for international law and the UN Charter, it does not mean the establishment of "government censorship" or "licensing of journalists", as the Western campaign accused.

Another platform in support of NWICO at this crucial stage emerged in India under the auspices of the NAMEDIA Foundation, established by influential journalists and publishers who took the same

approach as above-quoted Mankekar. It sponsored the first NAMEDIA Conference in New Delhi in late 1983, opened by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and addressed by NWICO veterans such as Masmoudi and MacBride. The atmosphere was uncompromised but concerned – not only because of the attack against NWICO but more fundamentally because of the U.S. interventionist line around the world, latest in Nicaragua.

At this stage, in 1983, UNESCO's General Conference in Paris requested the Director-General to give special attention among other activities to those:

> which will facilitate an in-depth analysis of the concept of a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process, so as to strengthen the bases upon which such an order conducive to a free flow and better balanced dissemination of information might be established.

This compromise formulation, adopted by consensus including the USA, invited conceptual analysis and thus confirmed that the concept is worth pushing. On the other hand, reference to "an evolving and continuous process" implied that what was at issue is no fixed order with definite parameters but rather an overall course of development. This point, insisted by the Western side as a precondition for any reference to a new order, had come to signalize an anti-NWICO position in the political process around international communication. And yet, taken literally, the phrase could also be understood as neutral reference to an obvious state of affairs which does not necessarily compromise the original idea of NWICO.

The next General Conference of UESCO, held in Sofia in 1985, no longer had the USA among the member states since it had withdrawn at the end of 1984. The U.S. withdrawal could not be justified on the basis of the above-quoted "Beard amendment", because there was no evidence of UNESCO restricting the free flow of information. It was a political decision which had more to do with a general turn away from multilateralism, i.e., from the UN platforms which followed the principle: one state, one vote. The U.S. simply disapproved to be voted down by a majority, and its departure from UNESCO was a warning signal to the international community that it may do the same in more vital bodies of the UN.

In Sofia, a hard diplomatic struggle took place around these issues as the Western side tried to stop not only the elaboration of principles but even all studies and reflection concerning NWICO and related topics. Finally a consensus was reached (including the UK which soon thereafter left UNESCO) which essentially preserved the line followed throughout the 1980s. Thus UNESCO would continue the "collection and analysis of information dealing with the development of the concept of a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process", while "broadening the study base when necessary." One of such activities was a symposium to review the effect of the 1978 Mass Media Declaration – an exercise coordinated by the present author between 1986 and 1988. This symposium served as a demonstration of how the tide was turning against NWICO and how the corporate offensive was getting more and more intensive (Nordenstreng, 1993b).

A notable chapter in the NWICO debate and struggle at this stage was the UN-UNESCO Round Table on NWICO which was first convened in Igls (Austria) in September 1983 and second time in Copenhagen in April 1986. It was a forum for expert discussions on the issues involved, without high-profile diplomacy or ambitions to achieve any concrete results. These occasions were indeed quite businesslike platforms, no doubt helping to demystify the political tensions and dogmatic positions that had accumulated around the topic.

A third UN-UNESCO Round Table never took place, even if the UN Committee on Information had given green light to it. This time it was UNESCO that pulled out, around 1987, when M'Bow was replaced by Federico Mayor as its Director-General and it became obvious that under his direction UNESCO would make a U turn in matters of communication. Suddenly UNESCO, the earlier facilitator of NWICO debate, lost its interest in NWICO and even began to suppress the debate – resorting instead to the old 'free flow' approach.

In addition, the UN consensus was gone in the middle of 1980s, as demonstrated by the annual resolution on information: the reading in December 1985 was 121 in favour, 19 against, with 8 abstentions. Those standing against the overwhelming majority were the Western countries. Their latest tactic was to first enter consensus at UNESCO, with quite diluted political substance as a consequence of some "trading ideology against co-operation", and to then bring this consensus at the UN for ratification. There was an irony in this situation, whereby the same countries that withdrew from UNESCO or threatened to do so because of its 'politicization', now insisted that UNESCO resolutions, rather than proceedings at the UN, should be the basis for discussing NWICO.

The developing countries did not fall into this trap because they realized that it is precisely the conceptual and political substance that gives them leverage also in terms of practical assistance. NWICO meant political currency to buy infrastructure – political currency not to be prematurely exhausted. It was obvious that there would have been no IPDC unless the movement towards NWICO, with instruments such as the Mass Media Declaration, would first have stirred up the Western interests to react with schemes such as the "Marshall Plan". So why to give it up? In reality IPDC did not succeed in mobilizing adequate assistance to meet the vast needs.

But NWICO was not just a tactical instrument of diplomacy to turn some more money in favour of the developing countries. It was also and above all a manifestation of a fundamental course that was taking shape in the international community. Accordingly, NAM continued all the time its traditional line with NWICO. Seen in such a historical context, it was indeed "an evolving and continuous process" – until the early 1990s.

Meanwhile, a number of NGOs got together at the MacBride Round Table on Communication in Harare (Zimbabwe) in October 1989. This was a strategic move to carry on the NWICO tradition, in the 'ecumenical' spirit of the MacBride Commission, as a coalition of professional and academic supporters of the idea without political pressures from governments or intergovernmental organizations. Yet NAM served as a friendly partner with Zimbabwe's Minister of Foreign Affairs addressing the Harare Round Table (the host country was at the time also President of NAM).

The MacBride Round Table was mostly my initiative – both as a social activist and as the IOJ President – and the closest collaborators in convening the first Round Table in Harare were Charles Chikerema, President of the Federation of Southern African Journalists from Zimbabwe, and Nikhil Chakravartty, President of the NAMEDIA Foundation from India. Our immediate motive was to overcome the discontinuation of the UN-UNESCO Round Table – to ensure that the NWICO debate would be carried on – but we were inspired also by a more general idea of creating an NGO coalition as an expression of the grassroots voice and as a mobilizer of the professional and citizen associations in support of NWICO. Today one may see that there was indeed a general trend away from governments and official political actors toward the so-called "civil society" – not only regarding NWICO but also in several other socio-political matters.
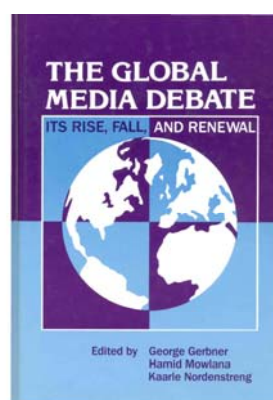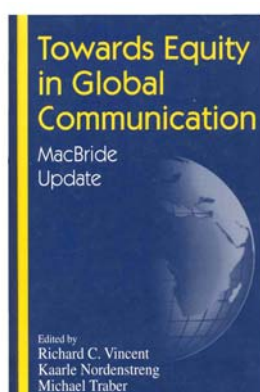
In summary, the balance of global forces changed drastically soon after the MacBride Report was issued in 1980. Ronald Reagan's advent as President in early 1981 turned the USA from multilateralism to a unilateral employment of power politics, with a relative weakening of the USSR and the NAM. The truce of the 1970s was followed by a new Western offensive in the 1980s. At this stage all the elements of compromise which were earlier regarded as valuable and honourable suddenly went out of fashion and even turned into liability risks. Thus M'Bow lost his job and NWICO as well as MacBride became taboos at UNESCO.

In a broader context of Western politics, UNESCO was regarded as a burden, whereby the Reagan administration decided that the USA would leave the Organization, followed by Thatcher's UK. Here it is important to realize that the American and British departures from UNESCO were not caused primarily by NWICO, MacBride or M'Bow, but that the true reason was a strategic shift away from multilateralism – a warning to the international community that leading Western powers would not be outvoted by the majority of the world's nations. As expressed by a former Assistant Secretary of the State of the Carter administration, "Unesco was the Grenada of the United Nations" – referring to the U.S. invasion of that small island which was a relatively small target to demonstrate what can be done on a larger scale if the interests of the big power are not respected.

The corporate offensive dominated the whole decade of the 1980s, but next to that were uncompromised positions of the NWICO advocates. While the concept of NWICO led an uncompromised life within the NAM as well as among many representative NGOs, its destiny in the universal inter-governmental forums of UNESCO and UN was more complicated and compromised. Along the 1980s, it became under increasingly heavy pressure from the Western governments, led by the Reagan Administration. Yet despite all the maneuvering and blackmail – including the U.S. and UK withdrawal from UNESCO – the concept survived until the end of the 1980s.

Stage Five 1991-2010: Globalization

- MacBride Round Tables (Harare, Istanbul…)
- Unesco regional conferences (Windhoek…)
- UN Commission on Culture and Development
- World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) mobilising a new wave
- academic and professional support in books

A new stage of the global media debate emerged in the 1990s when the NWICO debate, including references to the MacBride Report, gradually disappeared from intergovernmental platforms and

remained visible only in the NGO and academic communities typically represented in the MacBride Round Table (Vincent & al., 1999). In UNESCO, NWICO was not supposed to be even mentioned, and the UN General Assembly just recognized "the call in this context for what in the United Nations and at various international forums has been termed a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process" (Gerbner & al., 1993, p. xii). NAM for its part lost a good deal of steam when one of its central members, Yugoslavia, got disintegrated and the "collapse of communism" brought a fundamental change to the bipolar world where NAM had entered as the third force.

Moreover, a completely new version of the new order was introduced by President George Bush as a vision for the U.S. strategy in the post-Cold War world and particularly in the Persian Gulf War against Iraq in early 1991. Suddenly the USA was promoting the concept of a New World Order – including an information order dominated by the CNN – and the U.S. was not at all concerned about its 'politicization' or poor definition. Already before this, Schiller and others had sarcastically observed that a new information order has in fact been established – by the transnational corporations. Indeed, we can say that by the early 1990s NWICO "came about – in reverse" (Gerbner & al., 1993, p. xi). Cees Hamelink offers a gloomy update on this development:

> The enemies of the egalitarian democratic ideal are those forces that actively shape the new world order that is currently emerging – largely in response to the collapse of Communism. The new world order poses a serious threat to the project of an egalitarian democracy since it exacerbates existing inequalities and results in a deep erosion of people's liberty to achieve self-empowerment. Since the new world order is not welcome everywhere, it also provokes a fierce opposition in forms of national, ethnic and religious fundamentalism that – ironically – equally threaten the prospect of an egalitarian democratic arrangement of world communication (Hamelink, 1995, p. 31).

All this makes the narrative of the great debate quite paradoxical. Not only did the new world order came about in reverse but also the collapse of Communism brought a drastic shift: the radical as well as reformist forces behind NWICO were run over by emerging new corporate elites.

Yet, NWICO as an idea did not disappear. While the political context has drastically changed, the issues involved remain more or less the same. This is obvious when reading the declarations on promoting "independent and pluralistic media" which UNESCO has produced in regional conferences since 1995 (Windhoek, Alma Ata, Santiago, Sanaa and Sofia). Moreover, prospects opened by a global information society and its challenge to national sovereignty (see Nordenstreng & Schiller, 1993) did not bury but rather rehabilitated the NWICO idea. However, it was no longer called NWICO; the terminology and rhetoric was changing, but the substance mostly remained and just was complemented by new elements of technological and social development. The emerging perspective under the conditions of ever growing media concentration, on one hand, and cultural 'balkanization' of communities, on the other, is well captured by the title of the first publication of the MacBride Round Table: *Few Voices, Many Worlds* (Traber & Nordenstreng, 1992).

Globalization was the overall keyword for this stage in development of the real world as well as in the media debates. Globalization was a complex and controversial concept, opening to media people new prospects for both threats and opportunities. My reading of it on the threshold of the new millennium, in the spirit of MacBride Report, emphasized a continuing role of the nation state (Nordenstreng, 2001).

A landmark position of the globalization stage was included in the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations on 18 September 2000. It contains a largely overlooked sentence under "Human rights, democracy and good governance", which resolves:

> To ensure the freedom of the media to perform their essential role and the right of the public to have access to information. (UN, 2000, Article V)

Here, we have an authoritative document of the international community – although only a Declaration, not a text of proper international law – which speaks literally about the freedom of the media. But how? It is not an abstract freedom granted to the media but a call, or even an obligation, to perform a certain role in society and to assist people to gain access to information. Once more, it is a concept of positive freedom to perform a certain role that is captured by this clause – not a negative freedom from restraint to do whatever the media may want to do. The parameters for the "essential role" are not specified, but the Millennium Declaration leaves little doubt about what is meant under the preceding four chapters "Values and principles", "Peace, security and disarmament", "Development and poverty eradication", and "Protecting our common environment".

The latest articulations of media freedom and related issues were done at the highest level of the international community at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), in two phases: Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005. A Declaration from each phase was adopted after long and painful negotiations, by consensus involving all the geopolitical quarters. In the history of the global media debate, WSIS stands as a culmination of the post-Cold War period of globalization, which succeeded the Western offensive of the 1980s. Many issues of the NWICO came back onto the international agenda and the MacBride Report was even reprinted for students to discover.

The WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles, a nine page document of 67 paragraphs, declares in its first paragraph, in the name of the peoples of the world:

> our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (WSIS, 2003, A1)

After endorsing the Millennium Declaration, the document goes on to "reaffirm the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development", and "to strengthen respect for the rule of law in international as in national affairs" (WSIS, 2003, A3). In subsequent paragraphs it highlights human rights in the context of communication as an exceptionally strong claim, and strikes a delicate balance between human rights and fundamental freedoms, on the one hand, and responsibilities and sovereign equality of states, on the other:

> *We reaffirm,* as an essential foundation of the Information Society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; that 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. Communication is a fundamental social process, a basic human need and the foundation of all social organization. It is central to the Information Society. Everyone, everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the Information Society offers. (WSIS, 2003, A4)

> *We further reaffirm* our commitment to the provisions of Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of their personality is possible, and that, in the exercise of their rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. In this way, we shall promote an Information Society where human dignity is respected. (WSIS, 2003, A5)

> In keeping with the spirit of this declaration, *we rededicate ourselves* to upholding the principle of the sovereign equality of all States. (WSIS, 2003, A6)

The three elements of individual freedom, duties and responsibilities in a community, and sovereign equality of states were tied together as a cornerstone of the Information Society. Their combination ensured that the declaration was finally acceptable to all countries and regions – from the United States and the European Union to Cuba and China. The same conceptual and political elements have long been present in all major consensus documents of the international community regarding media and communication, but here the package deal is extended to the new sphere of the Information Society, including the Internet. This extension was a significant step that nearly ruined the WSIS during the negotiations before the Summit.

The Declaration listed key principles under eleven headings, including one devoted to media:

> We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, which are essential to the Information Society. Freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information for the creation, accumulation and dissemination of knowledge are important to the Information Society. We call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. Traditional media in all their forms have an important role in the Information Society and ICTs should play a supportive role in this regard. Diversity of media ownership should be encouraged, in conformity with national law, and taking into account relevant international conventions. We reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills. (WSIS, 2003, B9)

A separate Plan of Action was adopted in Geneva in 2003 with a long list of concrete actions. Two years later, the second phase of WSIS issued the Tunis Commitment (WSIS, 2005), a five page document consisting of forty paragraphs, which reiterated "our unequivocal support for the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action". The Tunis Commitment specifically reaffirmed the above-quoted paragraphs of the package deal and was accompanied by a separate Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, a twenty page document of 122 paragraphs. New elements, as a result of and following the first phase of WSIS in Geneva, were a recognition of "the potential of ICTs to promote peace and to prevent conflict", an agreement on the establishment of a voluntary Digital Solidarity Fund as well as a consensus about how to proceed with Internet Governance without creating a new intergovernmental agency for it, by asking the UN Secretary General to establish the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

After the WSIS, the global media debate lost momentum. Scholars had different opinions about what it really achieved, but a leading sentiment was a moderate optimism – also regarding follow-up of the MacBride and NWICO legacy (Padovani & Nordenstreng, 2004). Implementation of the

WSIS declarations has proceeded with a low profile on various platforms. UNESCO is part of this follow-up but it also continues its regular activities in the Communication and Information Sector. Its new Director-General Irina Bokova advocates a "new humanism" and stresses the ethical, legal and sociocultural aspects of the Information Society. In October 2009, the General Conference adopted a programme and budget for 2010-11 for all UNESCO sectors. The objectives for the CI sector are based on two earlier priorities: (1) Promoting freedom of expression and information; and (2) Building capacities for universal access to information and knowledge (UNESCO, 2009, 60). The first priority lays down a list of objectives, beginning with the following:

> (i) sensitize governments, public institutions and civil society to the importance of freedom of expression and freedom of the press, in particular through the annual celebration of World Press Freedom Day and the awarding of the UNESCO-Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, and raise awareness of the importance of freedom of expression and freedom of information, including on the Internet, for development, democracy and dialogue; monitor the situation of press freedom and the safety of journalists, with special emphasis on cases of impunity for violence against journalists;

> (ii) assist Member States in building capacity for the establishment and application of internationally recognized legal and regulatory standards for freedom of expression, freedom of information and free and independent media; assist Member States in the establishment of an enabling environment for freedom of expression and freedom of information; promote Internet governance based on the principles of openness, diversity, including cultural and linguistic diversity, and transparency;

> (iii) enable media professionals to apply the highest ethical and professional standards, and enable people to access information, and critically assess and use it; encourage the development of media accountability systems based upon self-regulation.

This document can be taken as a manifestation of UNESCO's contemporary position regarding the free flow doctrine. It shows that freedom of expression and information – even "freedom of the press" – are taken as central objectives. However, they are not self-serving targets; they are, instead, supposed to serve broader objectives of development and democracy. The Member States are supposed to build capacity for "internationally recognized legal and regulatory standards" and the media themselves, are invited to "apply the highest ethical and professional standards". This suggests a policy, which continues the long historical line combining freedom, responsibility and state sovereignty.

Meanwhile, the NAM, the political platform of 118 developing countries, soon endorsed the WSIS outcome in its Havana (Cuba) Summit in 2006:

> toward achieving the development oriented outcome of the Summit and the Tunis commitment and the full implementation of the agenda for the Information Society, and urged UN Member States, relevant UN bodies and other intergovernmental organisations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organisations and private sector, to contribute actively, inter alia, by initiating actions, as mandated in the outcomes, to the implementation and follow-up of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the Summit. (NAM, 2006, Paragraph 253)

This endorsement was confirmed by the NAM Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt) in 2009. Its Final Document called for "responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with codes of conduct and professional ethics" (NAM, 2009, Paragraph 252) and for "an immediate end to the misuse of media for inciting and launching campaigns against NAM members" (459.3); it also stressed the "strengthening and consolidating the work of the NAM New

Network (NNN)" (454). Moreover, the Document urged to "increase cooperation to promote a New World Information and Communication Order, based on universal, inclusive and non-discriminatory access to information" (459.2). Thus, politically the NWICO was signaled as being alive as a concept of relevance to the South.

However, this NWICO is displayed in a way that is quite different from how it was formulated in the NAM documents of the 1970s and 1980s. At that time, it was presented as a major articulation of decolonization and anti-imperialism, whereas now it is presented as one initiative among others in the chapter "Development, Social and Human Rights Issues", under the subtitle "Information and Communication Technology" which is mainly devoted to the WSIS. Another subdivision, "Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", reaffirms "that the freedom of thought, expression and dissemination of ideas and information, are fundamental for the exercise of democracy" (NAM, 2009, Paragraph 417). Accordingly, freedom of information is acknowledged more or less in accordance with the WSIS agreement but without direct reference to the media and with a perspective that is strikingly different from that of UNESCO.

SUMMING UP

To summarize the long story, let us first recall the topics of the MacBride recommendations at the end of the Report:

       Strengthening independence and self-reliance (1-21)
       Social consequences & new tasks (22-38)
       Professional integrity & standards (39-51)
       Democratization of communication (52-65)
       Fostering international cooperation (66-82)

These did not include NWICO which was just added to the Report as fashionable subtitle and a phrase in the concluding part. Yet the ideas of NWICO were imbedded in the Report, and it is perfectly justified to link the two as part and parcel of the same historical movement.

Many of the 82 recommendations remain unimplemented (see Hancock and Hamelink in Vincent & al., 1999, 269-304). Still, the topics of most recommendations are not outdated and appear even fresh with their emphasis on social instead of technology. Yet missing are new millennium topics in digital age: information society, globalization, civil society and intellectual property right.

Today there is need to continue the work by

       - researchers to keep international/global & development communication on the agenda
       - NGOs with new MacBride Round Tables
       - UNESCO with more attention to research

We scholars should pursue the issues with an analytical and broad approach, as Bernard Miege suggests in his introduction to this colloque. This approach will necessarily include much of what was proposed by the MacBride Report – however leaving aside the phrase of NWICO.

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