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WATCHING WHAT WE SAY: GLOBAL COMMUNICATION IN A TIME OF FEAR

Ted Magder

'Here speaks a voice from America. Every day at this time we will bring you the news of the war. The news may be good. The news may be bad. We shall tell you the truth.' *First broadcast of the Voice of America. February 24, 1942 – transmitted in German.*

From UNESCO to the Clash of Civilizations – the Conundrum of Global Communication

We live in a time of empire, a time when the military and economic prowess of one nation has no parallel in the course of human history. We live too in a time of globalization, when the density of networks crossing borders leaves no place unexposed to forces – economic, political, social, cultural, and environmental – that emanate from afar. This is also a time when the idea of human rights has taken its place among the principles that claim standing in the affairs between states and peoples. Not least, we live in a time of conflict and terror, when even the empire's capital is open to attack and the prospect of mass violence perpetrated by small bands of individuals or states is real.

And all of this takes place in an age of near instantaneous communication across borders, a time of information and media abundance, a time when the prospect of a global conversation, directly and indirectly, by the second and by the hour, is palpable. It is incumbent on those of us who study communication to make better sense of the role it plays in global politics and, more important, to be responsible in the claims we make about the relationship between communication and conflict. For almost a generation, most especially in the fields of cultural studies and media studies, much of the scholarship in the discipline of communication has steered clear of this terrain: cynicism of all things

political and a reluctance to use the language of values, morals, or ethics, have compromised our ability to speak responsibly and prescriptively about how we should do global communication, especially in a world full of fear.

This is not an entirely new challenge. After the Second World War, the search for a lasting peace included a new set of international institutions designed to nurture tolerance and understanding through communication. Alongside the traditional military and political apparatuses – foreign occupation, overseas bases, and alliances such as NATO – a small parcel of land on the east side of Manhattan became home to the United Nations. At the same time, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established to articulate, and give substance to, a broad set of values and priorities tied directly to global communication and world cultures. As we struggle to find the language and principles that might help lay the foundation for global communication the preamble of UNESCO's constitution, adopted in November 1945, is worth quoting at length:

> That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed;

> That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between people's of the world through which their differences have all too often broken down into war;

> That the great and terrible war which has now ended was a war made possible by the denial of democratic principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect of men, and by the propagation, in their place, through ignorance and prejudice, of the doctrine of inequality of men and races;

> That the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern; . . .

> For these reasons, the States Parties to this Constitution, believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives . . .
>
> (UNESCO, 1945)

It would be easy enough to judge the language of UNESCO as hopelessly idealistic. Some have even suggested that it represents the slippery rhetoric of the US and its allies eager to ensure that foreign markets remain open to Western media products and to place a moral code over the practices of empire (Preston *et al.*, 1989). To be sure, UNESCO's

history is awash with controversy and flawed ventures. But failed ventures have their purposes, and the language of the UNESCO charter does two things: it reminds us that the stakes involved in doing global communication are high; and it offers a set of principles that should provide the foundation for global communication. Utopian though it may seem, the constitution of UNESCO gives substance to a profound belief: that communication can promote tolerance and provide the foundation for a politics that makes it possible to change peacefully (without violence and social turmoil) the rules we live by.

Easier said than done. Conflict in the world is not merely a function of miscommunication and misunderstanding. It can, and does, reflect trenchant disagreement over the allocation of scarce resources and the core habits and rules that shape communities and societies. In fact, easy and frequent communication across borders may be a source of conflict as much as a means to resolve it. In this sense, Samuel Huntington (1996) was right: as the interactions between different civilizations increase, so to does the prospect for animosity and violence. It would seem, at least since September 11, 2001, that the 'clash of civilizations' now dominates world politics.

What we face is the challenge of global citizenship and the question of global governance. Citizens participate in the public affairs that bear on their lives. Citizens must be able to speak or, at the very least, they must be represented by credible and responsible agents who speak on their behalf. Citizenship implies democratic practices, both in the articulation of those things that matter to many and in their resolution through practice and law. Citizenship requires dialogue and communication and vigilant attention. None of these are easy, not even on a national scale; on a global scale the challenge may seem insurmountable.

Communication at a Distance: From Cultural Imperialism to Media Worlds

Communication scholars like to say that mediated forms of communication – everything from smoke signals to the internet – reduce space as a barrier to communication. One of the great advantages of mediated communication over face-to-face conversation is that it can take place over distances much greater than the unaided human voice can be heard. But only in the last 150 years, has it become relatively easy to send messages across vast distances at superhuman velocities. Electricity made it possible to send signals at speeds faster than any mode of human transportation, whether horse, boat, or plane. Considerable barriers to global communication still exist: borders remain closed; gatekeepers control access to technologies and sometimes monitor the

flow of messages; the resources necessary to join the conversation are costly to many and, in certain cases, virtually unavailable. But there is no denying these simple facts: communication across great distances is commonplace; the quantity of messages is unparalleled; and the speeds can be nearly instantaneous. In this sense, Marshall McLuhan is surely right: the world has become a 'global village.'

One way to make sense of the vastness of this daily symbolic traffic is to measure the flow of messages across borders and to identify the main interlocutors – those people or institutions who speak most frequently across vast distances. The tallies should come as no surprise. In the aggregate, Western countries predominate in the flow of news and information as well as entertainment. They dominate too in the production and management of the cross-border flow of computer data and the use of surveillance technologies, such as remote sensing satellites, to gather and disseminate information for commercial and political purposes. And of the Western countries, the United States is easily the most dominant entity in every facet of the world communication system.

Among scholars of foreign policy and international relations, US dominance in the international flow of media and information is now identified as a strategic asset. Joseph Nye, in particular, has given it a name: 'soft power.' For Nye, 'soft power' is the ability to get 'others to want what you want' through the expression and demonstration of values that others find worthy of emulation. 'Hard power can rest on inducements (carrots) or (threats),' writes Nye, while soft power 'co-opts people rather coerces them. . . . Soft power is more than persuasion or the ability to move people by argument. It is the ability to entice and attract. And attraction often leads to acquiescence or imitation' (2002: 8–9). The point is simple: power is a function of many variables, some of which exist in the realm of ideas and values and culture[1].

Nye's distinction between hard and soft power has made an impression on the foreign policy community, but it is old-hat for most scholars of communication. At least since the late 1960s, when the collection of data on cross-border flows of media became commonplace, the term cultural imperialism – and its implications of dominance and coercion – has been commonly applied to describe the consequences of the Western edge in the flow of media across borders. The culmination of this argument envisions drastic consequences: a transformation in the core habits of thought and action that define social orders, cultural practices and collective identities, summed up in terms such as Americanization, Westernization, or the more colloquial McDonaldization, Coca-Colanization, or Disneyfication.

The rhetorical appeal of these terms is undeniable. But their scholarly value is limited, especially if they are used to short-circuit analysis of how media and information flows work and how cultures change. These terms rightly draw our attention to the inequalities of power that typify

international communication, but they do not adequately describe the nature or the consequences of the flow of media across borders. Taken at face value they imply that collective identities are easily transformed, and further, that we are living in age of cultural convergence or homogenization, that the media globalization is leading to the formation of a singular global culture. But as Ulf Hannerz (1991) and John Tomlinson (1990; 1999), among many others, have argued, the evidence of global media flows and the manner in which media are interpreted and used suggest a far more nuanced and complex picture of cultural interaction than can be inferred from the master term imperialism.

One place to look more clearly for evidence is in the area of international or global news. On the face of it, the language of imperialism seems appropriate. News that crosses borders, assembled and distributed by a few, large transnational companies, has been a core feature of international communication since at least the late nineteenth century. Three European news agencies, Reuters (UK), Havas, which became *Agence France Presse* (France), and Wolff (Germany), led the way, mirroring and aiding the expansion of European colonialism. In 1870 they signed a treaty to divide between them the global market for the provision of news across borders, with Reuters, by virtue of the British empire's reach, the dominate partner in what became known as the 'ring combination' (Boyd-Barrett, 1980). The Associated Press (AP), and later United Press International (UPI), became prominent players after the First World War, paralleling the rise of the US as a superpower. If the 'ring combination' dominated the supply of international print news in the latter half of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century, it is the Anglo-American connection that dominates the supply of global TV news today. AP and Reuters are the two biggest wholesalers of raw audio-visual news material. CNN and the BBC are the two most formidable international sources of packaged TV news delivered to viewers.

At this level of analysis, the dominance of Western news agencies seems unassailable. In fact, by the early 1970s, UNESCO itself became embroiled in a dispute over its consequences, with the majority of its members arguing that the news agencies in particular, and the media more generally, had either become agents for 'the domination of world public opinion or a source of moral and cultural pollution' (Tracey, 1985: 28). CNN's coverage of the 1991 Gulf War, when it became the world's only instant chronicler of a major conflict, seemed only to confirm the formidable role played by Western news agencies in covering and framing international events. Indeed, by the mid-1990s, some scholars and certain policymakers had come to the conclusion that CNN in particular was having a measurable impact on the way governments conduct world politics (cf. Robinson, 2002).

But the international clout of CNN, the BBC, Reuters and AP in the aggregate do not tell the tale if we want to fully understand the story of global news in the 1990s. Surveys of global news reveal similar patterns

throughout the world. On any given day, there is no such thing as a common international news agenda. Instead, foreign news has a regional or continental quality: European news agencies focus on things European, while news agencies in South-East Asia focus their international news on South-East Asia. Summarizing one of the most detailed surveys of the main evening news programmes in countries from every region of the world, Graham Chapman had this to say: 'What comes out of this analysis is that the world is not really next door. Some major stories come from one side of the globe to the other, but seem of interest only to Western networks and agencies. The rest? Local concerns predominate. What it is the world chose about itself on this night is myriad, diffuse, disconnected. It seems there are many worlds on this one earth – and that mostly they stay next door, minding their own business.' (Chapman, 1992: 33). We may live in the age of globalization, but we do not yet live in the age of global news per se, either in the sense that audiences the world over pay attention to the same international stories on an everyday basis or even in the sense that audiences get more global (or foreign) news than in the past.

This is certainly true in the US where, by virtually every measure, foreign news as a percentage of total news has shrunk since the end of the Cold War. A variety of surveys reveal a similar pattern. In 1998, only two per cent of total newspaper coverage focused on international news, a drop from ten per cent in 1983 (Shaw, 2001: 27). The amount of time that network TV devotes to international news shrank from 45 per cent of total coverage in the 1970s to 13.5 per cent in 1995 (a decline of more than 70 per cent) (Moisey, 1996: 09; cf. Utley, 1997; Hoge, 1997; Lang and Lang, 2000). *Time* magazine covers devoted to foreign affairs dropped from 11 in 1987 to zero in 1997, and foreign reports in *Time* between 1985 and 1995 dropped from 24 per cent to 12 per cent. *Newsweek*'s coverage of foreign affairs shows a similar decline (Randal, 2000: 32).

Part of the explanation for this general reduction in foreign coverage is cost or, to be far more precise, revenue. Even as the costs of gathering and assembling news from afar have declined because of advances in technology, newsrooms and news divisions have fallen under the general directive to turn a profit. Relative to other news items, foreign stories are still expensive and they rarely generate a higher audience or readership than domestic news or 'soft-news.' Maintaining a full-time foreign correspondent and bureau is an expensive proposition – upwards of $150,000 a year. Instead, networks and major daily newspapers have adopted a just-in-time approach to foreign news, dropping journalists and (sometimes) anchors into a hot-zone for a breaking story. Not surprisingly, the stories that merit this kind of coverage are major crises and conflicts, especially those that might involve the use of armed forces or those that signal a threat to established 'national interest.' In general, foreign news is 'domesticated': it is less about the world than about America in the world (Lang and Lang, 2000). The one

exception may be global business or economic news, where there has been an increase in overall coverage over the past decade. According to one industry survey, The *Wall Street Journal* alone now accounts for one-third of US foreign newspaper correspondents (Shaw, 2001; cf. Hoge, 1997). The growth in specialized economic and financial news is also evident at Reuters, where general interest foreign news now represents less than 10 per cent of its revenue (Moisy, 1996: 5). We have come to know a lot about the price of oil, but little of the politics or the culture of the places from which most of it comes.

In the place where most of the oil comes from, the private satellite news channel, Al-Jazeera, operated out of Qatar is more than a match for CNN or the BBC. Since its inception in 1996, Al-Jazeera, which translates as 'the Peninsula,' has made a name for itself by offending Arab governments that routinely treat the notion of a free press with contempt and by scooping all TV news networks with its broadcasts of interviews and tapes of Osama bin Laden[2]. But what is most important, in the current context, is that it offers Arab households a close visual encounter with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on a daily basis unfiltered by Western agencies. A decade ago, the conflict would not have received the same airing on television – the means were not yet available. But in the last ten years, the use of direct broadcast satellites (Arabsat, in particular) has dramatically altered the audio-visual space of the Arab world, creating a rich mixture of private and state-owned channels that Tourya Guaaybess calls an 'Arab broadcasting space' (2002; see also Ayish, 2002). Those familiar with this new televisual landscape caution against overestimating the level of uniformity and consensus within it. The Arab world may speak with nearly one voice on the matter of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but there remain significant political and cultural differences between broadcasters and the publics they address (cf. Golden, 2002). With that said, it is still an environment where state-owned broadcasters routinely work at the behest of their paymasters, and where states can exercise a chilling degree of scrutiny and coercion over private broadcasters. And though it is true that many of the private pan-Arab broadcasters have adopted some of the idioms and formats of Western broadcasters, it would be hard to claim that the system is in the process of being Westernized. Nor is it a space free of controversy: in November 2002, during Ramadan, Egypt's first private satellite station, Dream TV, broadcast a 41-part mini-series, *Fares Bela Gawaad* (Horseman Without a Horse), that raised hackles among the Western press and the US State Department. As part of its history of the Arab struggle against European colonialism, *Fares Bela Gawaad* tells the story of a Hafez Maguib, an Egyptian journalist in the late nineteenth century, who sets out to prove the Zionist plot to control Palestine by demonstrating the validity of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a document fabricated by the Russian czar's secret police in the nineteenth century (Howeidy, 2002; Jacinto, 2002)[3].

No country has a monopoly on the retelling of history. Certainly, the impact of *Fares Bela Gawaad* has to be measured against Hollywood's remarkable presence in virtually every overseas market and its recent penchant for Arab bad guys amidst a long-standing tradition of foreign villains. But even Hollywood does not entirely control the afterlife of the stories it tells. In the days and weeks after the attacks of 11 September 2001, three videos were widely available for sale in Wenzhou China, a city that makes 60 per cent of the world's supply of disposable lighters. *Surprise Attack on America*, *America's Disaster: Pearl Harbor of the 21st century*, and *The Century's Great Catastrophe*, interlace American news footage with shots from Hollywood movies – such as *Wall Street*, *The Rock*, *Pearl Harbor* – and soundtracks, such as *Jaws* (Hessler, 2001). Godzilla makes an appearance in *Surprise Attack*. On one cover Osama bin Laden and President George Bush flank each side of the flaming towers. The back cover of *The Century's Greatest Catastrophe* rattles off credits to Touchstone Pictures, Jerry Bruckheimer and Tom Hanks, and Columbia Pictures. Osama bin Laden is featured on *Century*'s front cover and Chen Xioanan, well known in China as a newscaster for the News Corporation's Hong Kong-based Phoenix TV, does the voice-over.

The challenge that we face may have less to do with cultural homogenization than parochialism. While it may be impossible to hold the whole world in one's head, somehow the knowledge deficits and stereotypes and Manichean imagery that characterize much of the media landscape must be overcome. We live, to a large extent, in media worlds (Ginsburg *et al.*, 2002; cf. Smith, 1990). Not one world but many, where the production and reception of media is shaped as much by local and regional forces as by the macro-economics of the media industries. And while we have managed technically to overcome space as a barrier to communication, we have not accomplished the art and practice of a global dialogue.

The Press, the State, Freedom of Information, and Public Diplomacy

Shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001, the White House press secretary stood in front of a room crowded with reporters and gave an indication that the bedrock was shifting: 'people have to watch what they say and what they do' (Carter and Barringer, 2001a). Ari Fleischer was commenting on a remark by Bill Maher, host of ABC's *Politically Incorrect*, to the effect that flying a plane into a building may take more courage than firing a cruise missile at an unseen target. Fleischer's new-fangled version of 'loose lips sink ships' was enough of a departure from the prevailing assumptions about latitudes of public speech by

government officials to be stricken for a time from the official White House transcripts. In the land where the First Amendment is the First Amendment, it is presumed to be offensive for a White House spokesperson to push the press around or, at least, to be seen doing so. But in the aftermath of 9/11,we would do well to refocus our attention on the resources that states can wield, and the tactics they employ, to influence the process of international communication both by limiting access to information and by managing the public perception of events.

There is substantial evidence that media coverage of foreign events closely follows the interpretative frames offered by political elites. Once the phrase 'national security' can be uttered with some degree of legitimacy, the mainstream press is likely to adopt a patriotic pose. In the strong version of this thesis, state actors have an unassailable ability to 'manufacture consent' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). In the more nuanced version of this thesis, the press gains a measure of relative autonomy to the extent that there is some dissent or disagreement among political elites themselves (Hallin, 1997). Piers Robinson (2002), in his recent examination of 'the CNN effect' suggests that in times of policy uncertainty and elite dissensus there may be considerable space for typically marginal actors to influence the framing and interpretation of international events. But, as Robinson and others indicate, during a foreign conflict moments of serious policy disagreement are rare: in a conflict elite opinion tends to 'rally' around the executive branch of government (cf. Lang and Lang, 2002). All of this literature directs us toward one broad conclusion: that in matters of foreign policy state actors have the upper-hand in setting and framing the news-agenda.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the rally effect was ever present, political elites and the American public lined up quickly behind the White House in a moment of intense patriotism. The press went along. TV news networks branded their coverage of 9/11 with screen crawls such as 'America Fights Back' (CBS), 'America's New War' (CNN), and 'America United' (Fox). Anchors and reporters wore flag pins and red, white and blue ribbons, and the cable news networks, Fox, CNN, and MSNBC, projected a US flag onto the corner of the screen. Shortly after the attack, CBS anchor Dan Rather made an emotional appearance on the *Late Show with David Letterman*. 'George Bush is the President,' said Rather, 'he makes the decisions, and, you know, as just one American, he wants me to line up, just tell me where' (Rutenberg and Carter, 2001; cf Cohen, 2001). No channel has been more outspokenly patriotic and vehemently in favor of a war effort than Fox News and viewers have responded favorably: its audience is up over 40 per cent in the past year and it now routinely beats CNN for total viewership[4].

As the 'war on terrorism' escalated and came to include war on Iraq, the press has remained generally in the thrall of the executive branch. What has made news are minor disagreements within the executive

branch over tactics, such as the dispute between Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld over the role of the United Nations in the build-up to war on Iraq. But the idea of war itself and considerable public opposition to it has gone underreported. In late October 2002, an anti-war rally in Washington DC drew at least 100,000 people, according to police estimates at the time, the largest anti-war demonstration since the Vietnam War. But according to the *New York Times*, in an article headlined 'Thousands March in Washington Against Going to War in Iraq,' even though the sun had come out after days of rain 'fewer people attended than organizers had said they hoped for' (Clemetson, 2002). Flooded with protests and mounting evidence to the contrary, the *Times* published a new version of the event three days later with the headline 'Rally in Washington Is Said to Invigorate the Antiwar Movement,' noting that though organizers had expected about 30 bus loads of demonstrators over 650 arrived from as far away as Nebraska and Florida (Zernike, 2002). Now, according to the *Times*, as many as 200,000 people may have joined the protest 'forming a two-mile wall of marchers around the White House' (Zernike, 2002: A17).

But The White House has done much more than rely on the apparent complicity of news agencies to ensure that its message get through. In the period since 9/11, the White House has been remarkably bold in its effort to manage the flow of news and information. In early October 1991, Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security advisor told television network executives to exercise caution in broadcasting videotapes from Osama bin Laden because they could be a signal to terrorists to attack, this despite the fact that Al-Jazeera itself reaches close to 150,000 US households by satellite or cable (Carter and Barringer, 2001b). Rice's remonstration was part of a sequence of events to curtail access to information (RCFP, 2002; Clymer, 2003). Earlier that week members of Congress were shut out of intelligence briefings they normally attend and the daily Pentagon press briefings were cancelled. Three days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Federal Aviation Administration removed information concerning 'enforcement actions' against security violators, including commercial airlines that flout safety rules; on October 2, the Internal Revenue Service reading room eliminated public access except with an escort; by October 7, the day the attacks on Afghanistan began, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics had removed the National Transportation Atlas Databases and the North American Transportation Atlas (which environmentalists often use to assess the potential impact of new highway construction), and the US Geological Service asked libraries to destroy all CD-Rom charting surface water supplies in the US. Two days after Rice's conference call to network executives, Attorney General John Ashcroft signed a memorandum that effectively reduces access to government document under the Freedom of Information Act. On November 1, President Bush issued Executive Order 13233

restricting public access to the papers of former presidents. Not least, as the number of detainees in the 'war on terrorism' multiplies their names are withheld and the White House indicates that some may be tried by military tribunals with no public access. Even the President himself is less accessible: after his first 21 months in office, President Bush had held 36 news conferences, less than half the number of held by President Clinton over the same period, and substantially less than the 61 held by his father over the same period (Rutenberg, 2002).

While access to information was being restricted on the home front, American journalists overseas were denied access to the Afghanistan battlefield, in spite of a 1992 agreement that reaffirmed the Pentagon's commitment to open press coverage of military campaigns. Updated in September 2000, the 'Statement of Principles: News Coverage of Combat' declares that 'open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of US military operations,' and that 'pools are not to serve as the standard' for coverage (Aukofer and Lawrence, 1995: 197). But the first group of reporters to join US troops did not do so until November 26 – 6 weeks into the war. Even after, access was limited at best. The low point came on December 6, 2001, when Marines locked reporters and journalists in a warehouse to prevent coverage of American soldiers killed or injured by a stray bomb near Kandahar (RCFP, 2002; Hickey, 2002). The Pentagon apologized for the incident, but the orchestration of news continued, primarily through Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's press briefing in Washington, themselves a masterful display of minimalism dressed in congenial contempt for probing questions.

Each war presents its own logistical challenges. And while the Pentagon – by way of Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf – has virtually perfected the pooling of American journalists, new technologies conspire to make the job of controlling press coverage even more difficult. The most noteworthy of these is the commercial availability of detailed satellite imagery. In 1999, Space Imaging, a Colorado-based company, launched Ikonos, the first civilian satellite capable of rendering clear images of human bodies on the ground. As an end run around battlefield access, the press might have made use of Ikonos, but they could not. As the war began, the Pentagon bought exclusive rights to all Ikonos pictures of Afghanistan, though it already had six imaging satellites in orbit, four of them Keyhole satellites, capable of rendering images estimated to be six to 10 times greater than Ikonos (Cochran, 1999; Campbell, 2001; Gordon, 2001). The decision to purchase the images was shrewd, not only because it denied the pictures to the press (and other would-be purchasers), but because it allowed to US government to avoid a riskier avenue of containment and control. The sale of satellite images are governed by US laws similar to those which govern the sale of weapons and other high-technology products and the Defense Department has the ability to exercise 'shutter control' over

civilian satellites during times of war. However, the legality of 'shutter control' has never been tested in the courts and it is entirely possible that had the US government invoked it one or more news organizations may have challenged shutter control as a violation of the First Amendment. Purchasing the Ikonos images was a business venture to avoid possible legal entanglement.

All of this takes place in a country where the legal tradition of freedom of the press has a long and, relatively, progressive history (Smolla, 1992). The legal history of the First Amendment as it applies to the activities and privileges of the press makes one thing clear: the defense (and extension) of press freedom depends on the willingness of news agencies to challenge government restrictions. A free press is a press willing to go to court to protect and defend its freedoms under difficult circumstances (Lewis, 1992). But since the publication of the Pentagon Papers in 1971 by the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, and the successful defense of their publication in court, press challenges have been few and victories fewer still[5]. During the Gulf War, it was *The Nation*, *Harper's*, *The Village Voice*, and 12 other small publications and individuals (including E. L. Doctorow) that carried the First Amendment case against press pooling into court. The case was deemed moot after the war ended and the pools were disbanded, but the presiding judge did add that 'the issues raised by the challenge present profound and novel challenges as to the existence of the scope of a First Amendment right of access in the context of military operations and national security concerns' (RCFP, 2002: 9; Smolla, 1992: 296). Afterward the major news agencies made noises that they should have joined that court challenge, and with the signing of the 1992 agreement with the Pentagon on press coverage they indicated that, at the very least, future attempts by the Pentagon to impose security review procedures (Aukofer and Lawrence, 1995: 198). But the mainstream press took no legal action during the first six weeks of the war in Afghanistan when the Pentagon did not activate the press pools. It was left to *Hustler* magazine publisher Larry Flynt to carry the case to court. Flynt, who also challenged the use of press pools during the 1984 invasion of Grenada, filed suit on the grounds that journalists' access to the battlefield is a First Amendment right. Once again, the case was deemed moot: by the time it was heard, open coverage in Afghanistan had been restored and, for all intents and purposes, the war was over (RCFP, 2002: 10).

There is at least one other visible element to the state's information arsenal. Within the State Department, under the umbrella of the International Broadcasting Bureau, the US government owns and operates broadcasting services aimed at foreign audiences: Voice of America (VOA), Radio and TV Marti, WORLDNET TV, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Asia. The oldest of these, VOA, was born during World War II and became a vital player in Cold War propaganda. It broadcasts in 53 languages worldwide. Together with cultural and

educational programmes and exchanges, the broadcasters comprise what is termed 'the public diplomacy' arm of the US government (US Government, 2002). Since 9/11, public diplomacy has a new lease on life and a newly-minted Undersecretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Charlotte Beers. Ms. Beers has run two of the world's top advertising agencies, Ogilvy and Mather and J. Walter Thompson. Credited with changing the hearts and minds of Americans on everything from Uncle Ben's Rice to Campbell's Soup, Ms Beer reportedly said of her new job: 'This is the most sophisticated brand assignment I have ever had'. Public diplomacy may never be the same. Beers has created a series of TV advertisements that have played in Indonesia and other South-East Asian countries that depict the lives of five American Muslims and the tolerant and open communities in which they live (Perlez, 2002). She has also spearheaded Radio Sawa (Radio Together). Now available throughout the Middle East, Radio Sawa features a blend of American and Arabic pop music with brief news segments twice an hour. Its objective: to reach the younger generation of Arabic-speakers with a hip dose of soft power, something the staid VOA was unable to do (Soskis, 2002; cf. Peterson, 2002). It is available at www.ibb.gov/radiosawa/index.html.

4CISR and Fear

For a short time in the autumn of 2002, at the entrance way to the Children's Aid Society's pre-school in Greenwich Village there was a poster with an anonymous quotation from one of the children. It read: something bad happened and then the flags came out. How do we live in a time of fear? The answer from the White House seems to be that we should adopt a permanent state of national security exceptionalism. So far, the resistance to this strategy has been muted. A recent survey indicates that almost 50 per cent of Americans think that the First Amendment goes too far in the rights it guarantees and a similar number believe that the press has gone too far in criticizing the 'war on terrorism' (Paulson, 2002). As the White House extends its reach and closes its doors, it is a adopting a military approach to civilian government and especially to the management of public information. In the early 1990s, the US military redesigned its information management strategic plan and introduced the label 4CISR – Command, Control, Communication, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (Department of Defense, 1999). 4CISR may be an excellent model for military coordination. In some cases, it may even reduce the level of fear. But to live in a globalized world and to do global communication that will increase tolerance and make democratic govern-

ance possible will take more than militarized information management systems and flags. We need to talk.

Notes

1 Nye is keenly aware that soft power is a double-edged sword and that 'ambivalence about American culture' may limit its effectiveness. See (2002), especially, pp. 69–76.

2 Al-Jazeera maintains over 25 bureaus. It has had numerous run-ins with Arab governments that, historically, have shown little respect for freedom of the press. Saudi Arabia bars Al-Jazeera from its territory, except to cover special events (a recent talk show with Saudi dissidents was the last straw); Algeria cut its signal after a programme probed Algeria's civil war; Egypt's state media have campaigned against its 'sinister salad of sex, religion, and politics;' Bahrain has banned it for being 'pro-Israel;' and the Palestinian Authority has attempted to have unflattering images of Arafat removed from the air. After 9/11, Secretary of State Colin Powell asked Qatar to quell the station's enthusiasm for airing its exclusive 1998 interview with Osama bin Laden and what the US embassy in Qatar regarded as anti-American bias. Despite ranking as the region's most watched pan-Arab news network, Al-Jazeera does not attract as much advertising revenue as its competitors. Advertising accounts for only about 40 per cent of its revenues (Zednick, 2002; Simon, 2002).

3 It would appear that the use of the Protocols was a minor subplot of the broadcast and perhaps an attempt to boost ratings. Dream TV has flirted with controversy before. In the month before airing *Fares*, it annoyed Egyptian leaders by broadcasting criticisms of the government and a talk-show exploring the sexual angst of Egypt's young adults (Howeidy, 2002; Postelwaite, 2002).

4 Roger Ailes, the chairman of Fox News, part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, has made no apologies for his networks tone. Nor has the former republican strategist, who helped George H. Bush reach the White House in 1988, apologized for the recent revelation that after the attacks of 9/11 he advised President Bush on how to cope with its aftermath (Woodward, 2002: 207; cf. Rutenberg, 2001).

5 The Pentagon Papers case, *New York Times vs. United States*, concerned prior restraint not the right of access. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* had received copies of Defense Department documents detailing the history of US military strategy in Vietnam and began publishing them in serial form. The government sought and gained an injunction against further publication, but the Supreme Court ruled, by a slim margin, that the government could not prove a compelling threat to national security if publication continued. Later that year, in *Pell* v. *Procunier*, the Supreme Court said: 'It is one thing to say that the government cannot restrain the publication of news emanating from certain sources. It is quite another to suggest that the Constitution imposes upon the government the affirmative duty to make available to journalists sources of information not available to members of the public generally' (RCFP, 10). See also, Smolla (1992) and Levinson (2001).

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