GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURE: IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

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Introduction

A paper with this `modest' title poses daunting problems for research and analysis. The Conference organizers specified in some detail the questions they wanted addressed, namely:

a) to assess the current debate on whether communication has the ability to transform international consciousness, i.e., is it likely to lead to a less nationalistic world or more?

b) are some technologies likely to be more conducive to `consciousness' transformation than others?

c) how genuinely global is the spread of integrated communications networks and systems?

d) has the communications revolution empowered citizens *vis-à-vis* their states or states *vis-à-vis* their citizens?

e) can you identify any `breakthrough' technologies, in communications, that might have a major impact on international security in the coming decade?

As far as I can tell, their charge was not, however, informed by any knowledge of the state of social science research in this area. These questions cut to the heart of scholarly debates that have raged for decades (if not centuries) without resolution. What shapes consciousness? What is the relative importance of ideational factors, structural change, and technology?

To these mind-boggling questions, around which have formed whole schools of thought associated with figures like Hegel, Marx and Weber, the Conference organizers have added a further concern about international security at a time when unprecedented changes are occurring in both global geopolitics and in our conceptualization of security itself. Furthermore, they have cast one of their queries in the future conditional case. I am asked not simply to report on the way the world is now, but in addition to prophesy what it might become in the future.

For the ancient Greeks, the gift of prophecy, the ability to foresee the future, was given as compensation for the loss of `normal' vision. The prophet could see what lay ahead but could *not* see what lay around, for he or she was by necessity blind. At the risk of total loss of vision, I will confine my attempts at prophecy to a brief section at the end of the paper. To paraphrase Woody Allen, I will only attempt to predict the future `until I need glasses.'

The Impact of Media on Cultural Dynamics

Communications, culture and values are related in fascinating ways. Marshall McLuhan captured one dimension of this relationship in his unforgettable aphorism, the medium is the message. The media through which people communicate affect profoundly the content of communication, and also the way in which content is interpreted. Media are not transparent vessels that carry meanings between people. On the contrary, they help shape meaning and thereby exert an important influence on both culture and values.[1] Indeed, communications scholars use the term `mediation' (or `mediatization') to refer to `the impact of the logic and form of any medium involved in the communication process.' (Altheide, 1989:416)

McLuhan's ideas about communications were of course heavily derivative of the work of Harold Adams Innis, who saw communications as the material base of culture. His remarkable studies of the historical development of civilization led him to the conclusion that the mode of communication available to a society conditions its approach to both space and time, thereby giving rise to unique cultural epochs and political formations. Thus Innis distinguished oral from written cultures, and identified the invention of the printing press as the necessary and sufficient precondition to the emergence of modernity (Couch, 1990; Lang, 1989).

Innis also saw political institutions as shaped and limited by the available means of communication. He distinguished types of polities on the basis of their relationship to both space and time, and this crucial relationship depended in turn on how the available modes of communication permitted society to adapt to and manipulate these

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[1] Cf. Altheide, 1989:417: `. . . media are more than a neutral conduit of information transmission; they are concrete action agents that come to represent or stand for the location and establishment of various kinds of meanings.'

two dimensions. Media that were heavy and permanent (such as clay tablets) favoured time over space, and generated small compact polities that cherished history and tradition. Lighter media that could be transported easily (e.g., parchment) permitted polities to expand their boundaries over large areas, thus making possible the emergence of vast empires. Developments in the technology of communication (eg. the invention of the printing press) in his view had enormous effects on culture and political forms. Indeed the printing press ushered in the modern age of politics, permitting the expansion of political participation to the masses, challenging the narrow hierarchies of both Church and State, and underpinning the emergence of political ideologies.[2]

Innis' brilliant insights at first escaped the notice of most American political scientists[3] (although they were soon picked up by students of communication.) One exception, however, was Karl Deutsch, whose own work made several contributions to the emerging field of political development.

Deutsch's first major publication (in fact a revised version of his doctoral dissertation) was *Nationalism and Social Communication*.[4] Like many other scholars, Deutsch was concerned with the impact of nationalism on global political geography in the post World War II period. In several of his writings he adopted a communications perspective to unravel the mystery of nationalism and its political consequences: `If we look upon nations and governments as communications systems, impersonal, verifiable evidence can be obtained to check general descriptive or qualitative assertions about nationalism, about sovereignty, and about the merger of states' (Deutsch, 1964:49). Accordingly, Deutsch `operationalized' communication variables in an attempt to understand the relationship between subjective and structural changes. In his seminal 1961 article, (`Social Mobilization and Political Development') he formulated a series of hypotheses linking structural change with political and cultural modernization conceptualized as `social mobilization.'

Deutsch later went on to study political change (specifically integration) in the advanced industrial societies of Western Europe. At this point his work moved from Comparative Politics into the domain of International Relations. Deutsch examined the relationship between patterns of flow *between nations* of communications, trade, population and capital, and analyzed how these flows affected both international political structures and political consciousness. Deutsch's assessment of the prospects of creating international political community was much more sophisticated than the rather naive McLuhanesque slogans about the capability of communications to transform the world into a `global village'.

In fact, however, Deutsch's writings seemed to point in two different directions at the same time. Modern communications helped to achieve social mobilization and accelerated the breakdown of parochialism. This in turn facilitated the growth of nationalism and the strengthening of the nation state. At least this appeared to be the outcome in the third world. In the advanced industrial societies of Western Europe, however, communication across state boundaries was helping to break down these boundaries and facilitate supra-national political organization.

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2 Cf. Di Norcia, 1990:344. `Books encouraged the rise of secular knowledge and new scientific, literary and political elites. It [sic] also facilitated the victory of the absolute state over religion in the sixteenth century struggle for social supremacy.'

3 Kurt Lang (1989:408-9) points out that the Italian sociologist Franco Ferrarotti `is one of the few sociologists to take Innis as a point of departure and to break new ground by incorporating elements of his conceptual scheme into their analysis of the television age.'

4 Looking back at this work a decade after it was published, Deutsch (1964:46) observed: `Students of international affairs have spent years trying to find out why people insist at certain times upon having a sovereign state of their own which occupies a sharply bounded area of the world. They also have been occupied with the motivation of the rank and file of the population, who often show extreme resistance to their country's being amalgamated or merged with other governments.'

Could both these outcomes really stem from the same source? Is communication the underpinning of nationalism, or of internationalism?

This apparent paradox seems to reflect the ambivalent implications of modern communications, which like a double-edged blade can cut in two different directions, depending at least in part on the general stage of social, economic and political modernization. Wilbur Schramm, one of the pioneers of modern communications research, reminds us of two key points. First, the development of modern mass media began five centuries ago and has involved several epochal changes in the past 50 years. Second, these developments have been drastically `foreshortened' in third world countries, which have been hit all at once with changes that occurred much more gradually in the first and second world. For them, `the media tumble over one another as they grow, rather than following the historical pattern of print, picture, sound, motion, and electronics.' (Schramm: 1973, p.221) These media have a `spectacular' impact on traditional life. They change the bases of political power, world outlook, individual aspirations, and the common stock of knowledge. (See Lerner in Pye, 1963) Understandably, such changes are not universally welcomed. But they are nonetheless significant and influential. For instance, Schramm (1973:222) estimates that `[w]ithout the profound changes that have taken place in communication, sixty new countries would not be in existence today.'

Given the wide divergences found around the globe in respect to modernization, it is not surprising that changes in communications are simultaneously generating both nationalism and internationalism; and depending on the geopolitical setting, stage of economic development, and historical context, the results include both integration (as in Europe) and disintegration (as in Canada or the U.S.S.R. where regionalism and separatism appear to be increasing.)[5] Increased communication and the spread of modern mass media can lead either to cooperation or to conflict. In this respect, the medium is *not* the message. Modern media can help disseminate a variety of different cultural contents, including both global and local culture. Indeed, these two kinds of culture are in heavy competition with each other.

This paradoxical conflict between global culture and local culture is interpreted differently by scholars from different countries and varying ideological persuasions. Those at the centre of the global cultural empire view these developments with sanguinity:

> At present what seems to be at work is a complex interaction between a much more dynamic, but not yet clearly institutionalized, international system and the individual nation-states that we have traditionally viewed as relatively autonomous. Sovereignty still prevails in some domains, but a host of international or transnational forces are simultaneously at work, affecting how people act in what were once considered to be domestic affairs, and above all, impinging on the priorities of government. All governments are put under pressure by the increasingly significant flows of international trade, finance, and communications; by the effects of contemporary science and technology; and by all the other elements that make up what we imprecisely call modernization.

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[5] Laxer (1990) traces these developments to economic factors, specifically the creation of large economic trading blocs: `Today, because so many decisions have moved beyond them, nation states are becoming less effective in shaping the socioeconomic conditions in which their citizens live. The consequence is the rapid growth in the importance of two levels of identity — identity at the supranational level and identity at the regional level — both of which are undercutting the loyalty once directed to the nation state.' [James Laxer, `Global Forces leave Canada at U.S. Whim' *Toronto Star*, Oct. 9 1990, p.A13]. Cf also Rosenau (1988:333): ". . . the dynamics of post-industrialism are simultaneously fostering centralizing and decentralizing tendencies in world politics, some of which cancel each other out but many of which progressively circumscribe nation-states and the international system they have sustained for several centuries."

> But the authoritarian regimes are the most vulnerable and are therefore being seriously undermined. (Pye, 1990:6)

Those on the periphery have a different perspective. They see `modernization' and the spread of global culture as a threat to the survival of their own indigenous culture. This is a sentiment Canadians can identify with. To Canadians (and many others as well), so-called global culture is really American culture. (Nordenstreng and Schiller, 1979). In his final speech as Prime Minister, Lester Pearson voiced concern about Canadian autonomy and sovereignty *vis à vis* our southern neighbours. What worried him most was neither the military nor the economic threat, but instead the "penetration of American ideas, the flow of things American: American thoughts, American entertainment, the American approach to everything." This fear has animated much conflict between the two countries over regulation of magazine advertising, cable transmissions, film rights, and a host of other issues.[6]

American culture has a world wide appeal because it is mass culture in a very advanced stage. Canadians are not alone in fearing it. Time Magazine is the leading magazine in the Arab countries in the Middle East!

Global-cum-American culture is also closely tied up with capitalist consumerism. Indeed it is its defining characteristic. Although the countries of Eastern Europe can scarcely contain their enthusiasm for capitalist forms of development, in the West capitalism is under attack from a variety of perspectives. Despite its world wide appeal, it is considered problematic by those who are concerned with such global issues as environmentalism, and by the left which has traditionally fought to ameliorate the `underside' of capitalist development is terms of its effect on both class and region.

In an important book on *National Sovereignty and International Communication*, Nordenstreng and Schiller (1979:xii) argue vigorously that

> the preservation of national sovereignty may be understood best as a step in the larger struggle to break the domination of the world business system. In this ongoing effort, international communication has been an extremely effective and direct agent of the market system. . . . [T]he overseers of the system have insisted that communications are not only neutral but that they are beneficial to receiver societies and individuals everywhere. This, in brief, is the rationale of those who have pressed the *free flow of information doctrine* on the world community since the early 1940's. [emphasis added]

Against the free flow of information advocates, led by the United States, a number of countries urged the adoption of `prior consent' concerning international broadcasting and communications:

> The advocates of the principle of prior consent argue that the principle of sovereignty gives to a state the right freely to select and develop it own political, social, economic, and cultural systems. The concept of exchange implies that the flow should be bilateral and not in one direction only. States have uneven opportunities of using the direct broadcasting technology and this factor strengthened the need to ensure that activities in this area are conducted on the basis of prior consent. The opponents of the prior consent principle [argue]. . . that it would legitimize international censorship and stifle technological progress. . . (Signitzer, 1976:79 quoted in Norenstreng and Schiller, 1979:116)

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[6] The `security' implications are obvious, if the term security is expanded to include culture as well as military considerations. In this regard, it is interesting to contrast the duties of the Canadian Secretary of State (charged in many recent cabinets with responsibility for cultural matters) with the American Secretary of State, whose duties entail a more traditional conception of national security. We will return to these issues in the Conclusion. For a fascinating case study of Canada by a leading academic who has also served as chairman of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, see Meisel, 1986.

Similarly, western domination of news and information[7] generated a counter movement of third world and socialist countries committed to creating a new world information order (NWIO).

Patterned after the New International Economic Order, NWIO (also referred to by some authors as a New Information Order or a New World Information and Communication Order) represented the attempt by Third World and other nations to organize against the hegemonic control of the West. Its emergence coincided with the attack on the `developmentalist' paradigm by advocates of the `dependency' perspective and those interested in world systems theory (Smith, 1985, Wiarda, 1985; Chilcote, 1984; So, 1990). Drawing on Marxist-Leninist theories of imperialism, students of dependency argue that the plight of the Third World is only comprehensible when seen as part of the development of global capitalism, which favours the imperial centres of finance and systematically drains resources from the peripheral dependent states of the Third World. Instead of spreading prosperity to all regions of the world, capitalism enriches the wealthy nations at the expense of the poor.

But alongside inequalities in wealth must now be placed inequalities in access to and control over information. As Hamelink (1985:146) points out,

> Particularly after the Second World War the international flow of messages was expected to bring the nations of the world to a better understanding of each other and to the respect for the sovereignty of individual countries. Meanwhile, sufficient documentation has been amassed to show that the international flow is in fact one sided, ethnocentric, and unequally accessible to the nations.

Western control of the global mass media inspired a growing concern in the Third World with `cultural imperialism.' This concern expressed itself in a number of international conferences in the 1970's, and led to various efforts to `decolonize' information.[8] `The new international information order' can be defined as the negotiation of an international agreement for a system of relationships between the subjects and objects of international communication.' (Oledzki, 1981/2:163. See also Argumedo, 1981/2.)

Technological developments in satellite broadcasting make global communication easy to achieve, or difficult to prevent (depending on your perspective.)

> The revolution in communications has gone far beyond the impact of radio, which Daniel Lerner (1958) saw as a key instrument for modernization. The invention of microchips and satellites has meant not only that authoritarian rulers find it harder to isolate their countries from the intellectual and cultural trends sweeping the world but that their own actions are instantly played back to them and to their people. Thus, Ferdinand Marcos made his politically fatal mistake of promising an election while on U.S. television. The Chinese leaders were initially inhibited in taking instant action against the demonstrating students in Tiananmen Square because of the world wide television coverage of Gorbachev's visit to Beijing. The Chinese students demonstrating for democracy were receiving each day faxed copies of the editorials and news reports of the *New York Times, Washington Post, Boston Globe, Los Angeles Times,* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* only minutes after they reached the streets of U.S. cities. Indeed, the miracle of satellite television made

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[7] The extent of this domination is indicated by the fact that of the 1200 or so news agencies operating in the world, the four largest Western agencies (Reuters, Agence France presse [AFP], Associated Press [AP], and United Press International [UPI] together "put out 34 million words per day and claim to provide nine-tenths of the entire foreign news output of the world's news papers and television stations [as of the late 1970's]." Lorimer and McNulty, 1987:232. According to Hudson (1986:322), "Access to information, and to the facilities to produce, store, and transmit information is now considered vital to development, so that the classifications 'information rich' and 'information poor' may mean more than distinctions based on GNP or other traditional development indicators."

[8] Oledzki (1981/2) reminds us that a parallel concern animated American reactions to the dominant position of European news agencies in the early 1900's.

> the dream of Tiananmen Square a superspectacle that enthralled and then dismayed a worldwide public for nearly two months and made the Deng-Li clique's attempt at the Big Lie so obscene, so impossible to get away with. (Pye 1990: 8)

In many respects, it does indeed appear that `the global information revolution. . .is fuelling democratic movements around the world. . . .' (Pilat and White, 1990:89-90). Paradoxically, however, the health of democracy in countries like Canada and the United States is rather problematic. Voter apathy and political cynicism seem to be epidemic. In the 1988 U.S. elections, for example, only 71.1% of the voting age population registered to vote, and of that group only 70.6% actually voted. In the 1990 mid-term elections, the proportion of the population that actually voted fell to 36%.

Furthermore, whatever its effects on democratic movements, international communication itself requires `democratization' according to one scholar. Echoing the observation made above that `international capitalism is shifting into an "informational mode of development"'; and that `inter-state relations are increasingly a matter of communication or culture,' Waterman (1990:78) calls for the development of `"internationalist communication" to give direction and dynamism to the struggle against the dominant international communications media and culture.' Waterman notes that there has been considerable growth in `democratic' or `alternative' communication globally in the form of intercourse among various environment, peace, women's, human right etc. movements. These `new social movements' (NSMs) could become the `political force for the development of internationalist communication.'[9] (Waterman, 1990:84; see his `10 propositions.')

Consciousness Transformation

According to Innis, all major developments in the technology of communication will have an impact on consciousness. While many communication scholars agree with Innis, few have been able systematically to `prove' his contention in any satisfactory way. Most would agree, however, that of all recent media innovations, television has had the biggest impact. Indeed, some have gone so far as to claim that if Gutenberg effected the first great communications revolution with his invention of the printing press, television has ushered in the `second great communications revolution.' (Kidder, 1986). We in the West certainly live in a `video culture,' as Kidder calls it. The impact on our individual and collective consciousness is rather difficult to gauge. Among television's effects is the tendency to favour `movement over stillness, simplification over complexity, specificity over abstraction, personality over conceptualization, and the present over both past and future.' (Kidder, 1986:60) According to Meyrowitz (1984-viii), television and other electronic media `have altered the significance of time and space for social interaction. Echoing Innis' analysis of media as extensions of the human sensory organs, Kurt Lang (1989:409-410) observes that:

> The audio-visual media are leading the return to a new orality . . . Their mere existence also makes obsolete the book, the medium most closely linked to intellectual progress. On both these counts, the ear seems once again to be beating the eye. But without some assistance from the available technical apparatus, the spoken word does not suffice to reestablish a real dialogue across the cultural schisms that divide nations and classes. In bringing the world closer, they have allowed, or actually condemned, all of us to live much of our lives at a distance. They have come between us and the rich fabric of meaning that goes with direct experience.

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[9] Soedjatmoko (1986:68-9) offers a more cautious assessment: 'People's movements, organized or unorganized, positive or negative, are significant forces in both the North and the South. Some display a grand generosity of spirit such as the Band-Aid fund-raising concerts . . . In stark contrast to these are the quasi-fascistic movements that have revived racism, xenophobia, and anti-immigrant sentiment in the industrialized countries.'

Lang's nostalgia for the age of `direct experience' may seem a trifle unrealistic if not atavistic. We are clearly not likely to go `back' from the age of `new orality' ushered in by modern electronic media. But where *are* we going? What lies ahead? How will the communications revolution affect the relative balance of power between states and citizens? How will it affect international security?

Communications and Empowerment

The development of modern mass media has had an ambivalent impact on political power. Early theorists of `mass society' like C. Wright Mills believed that modern media would lead to public apathy and the destruction of democracy. The town meeting, the hallmark of American democracy, allowed two-way communication between leaders and citizens. Everyone could *listen and speak* as issues of common concern were debated in small gatherings. According to Mills, broadcasting changed all this forever, because it afforded `tremendous opportunities for mass hearing, but not mass participation.' Instead it created huge audiences `where citizens are mere spectators or auditors of the elite few who speak.' (Peters, 1989: 214)[10]

Mills' critics rejected his lament for democracy, arguing that he had ignored the actual pattern of social interaction found in so-called `mass society'. Challenging the mass society view of media as a giant hypodermic needle injecting information into a passive, mass society, theorists of the `two-step' model claimed to have `discovered' that people really interact face-to-fact in small groups guided by opinion leaders who are well informed by the mass media. `The media could therefore be seen not as usurpers of the public space (as Mills and a whole range of mass-society critics saw them) but as contributors to it: the media provided material for discussion via the first step of the two-step flow.' (Peters, 1989: 215)

If theorists disagreed about the impact of mass media on democracy, they were much nearer consensus that these media would enhance the power of authoritarian regimes.[11] The availability of the means of mass persuasion and control had facilitated the appearance of a new form of tyranny called `totalitarianism' about which much was written in the years following World War II. Perhaps the most influential of these works, George Orwell's *1984*, prophesied a grim society in which The Party (personified by Big Brother) used the then futuristic technology of television as an instrument of surveillance and total control. `Big Brother is watching you' was a by-word of this terrifying future world. At regular intervals, dutiful subjects would be summoned to huge TV screens where Big Brother's image and voice would boom out, shaping the thoughts and emotions of his defenceless, pathetic audience.

Neither Orwell nor Mills could not have anticipated the subsequent development of television as a medium of entertainment and commercialization. Its impact on politics has followed these primary tendencies, resulting in the commercialization of electioneering and the trivialization of political debate. But television has also had a more subtle impact on political culture that *is* best captured in Mcluhan's overworked but underdeveloped notion of the

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[10] Cf also Couch, 1990: 'All information technologies are, in McLuhan's terms, extensions of man. One of the extensions provided by the mass media is procedures whereby one person can communicate to a multitude. Print extends the ability of a person to communicate to a multitude via discursive visual symbols; radio extends the ability of a person to communicate to a multitude via discursive symbols and evocative auditory symbols; television extends the ability of a person to communicate to a multitude via discursive symbols, evocative auditory symbols, and evocative images.' By the same token, audience and viewer ratings (such as the Nielsen ratings) allow the many to send a message back to the few who decide what programs will be aired.

[11] This theme is repeated by Couch (1990:125): `Hitler's totalitarianism was bolstered by his access to and effective use of the radio to establish and maintain a state structure infused with charisma. More recently Khomeini effectively used television to establish and maintain a totalitarian regime infused with charisma.'

global village. Horrible images from the Vietnam War broadcast daily into millions of American homes ultimately eroded the legitimacy of American involvement.[12] Images of Western affluence projected into homes in Eastern Europe ultimately ignited the liberalization movement of 1989. Hesse (1990:355) describes the impact of television in terms of the achievement of `electronic unification':

> In divided Germany in recent years an `electronic reunification' took place in front of the TV sets day-by-day. People in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) received information and entertainment from the western media. For the GDR rulers, this created difficult problems. The collapse of the Honecker regime had many sources of course; but an important factor in the process of political change was the influence of West German TV, which has an excellent image in East Germany, for the quality and credibility of its news and current affairs programmes. East Germans shaped their picture of the world under the continuous influence of western TV.[13]

Thus television has not always reinforced the power and influence of established political regimes. Nor have other modern media. According to Di Norcia, (1990:354:) `Power and Knowledge meet in communications media. They both encode knowledge and mediate the struggle for social supremacy. User-friendly interpretive codes and easily accessible media abet democratic groups; difficult codes and less accessible media facilitate elite control.' Photocopying technology made possible the publication of the Pentagon Papers and countless other sensitive secret documents. The fax machine allowed sympathisers around the globe to communicate precise information to the Chinese students who were occupying Tienemen Square. The slogan `Fax the truth to China' was heard from Hong Kong to London. Modern media have been as often instruments of liberation as of enslavement. They have allowed the people to `talk back' to their would-be rulers, and to see and talk to each other around the world.[14]

Integrated Communications Networks

The capability of using the same communications network to transmit a variety of types of information or data — for example voice, computer data, and printed material — has given rise to the development and diffusion of `integrated' communications networks. Such networks are spreading throughout the globe, virtually where ever telephone linkages exist. Geographical barriers are easily transcended because most long distance telephone

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[12] Some scholars argue that the print medium, particularly newspapers, played an even larger role in delegitimating U.S. involvement in Vietnam. More will be said on this topic in the Conclusion.

[13] Cf also his conclusion: `Western TV in East Germany has a "soma effect", as in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World: Short-term satisfaction through relaxation provided by western TV. The long-term effects of western TV, however, were not system stabilizing. Western TV regularly conveyed another world. This was not only a dream-world, which facilitated escape from everyday life, but was also a spur to compare realities and act on them. In October 1989 the people of the GDR decided that the time for action had come. This "October Revolution" would not have happened at that time and in that way without the continual influence of western media, in particular western TV.'

[14] Several scholars have pointed out that television may facilitate two-way communication between the political elite and the mass public if certain recent technological innovations are encouraged. `Video text' (and other recent equivalent technologies) now make it possible for the opinion of the `silent majority' to be systematically monitored, thus permitting the development of `teledemocracy.' See, *inter alia*, Kidder, 1986; Becker, 1981.

connections are now via satellite.[15] The fax machine and the modem now make possible virtually instant sophisticated connections between individuals, and have facilitated access to computer-based data bank and decision centres. This access, moreover, is two way. The remote user can tap into these sources for financial, scientific or even military information. The clever user can also input information and in some instances manipulate the source itself by breaking through security codes. Numerous examples of the work of `computer hackers' have been documented in court cases and fictionalized in novels and films. The rather terrifying possibility of breaking computer security for nefarious personal or political purposes obviously has implications for international security. It is both an `East-West'[16] security matter and a hot issue in `North-South' relations.

Viewed in both contexts, integrated communications networks and the consequent ability to transmit information around the globe almost instantly affect international economics as much as politics. According to Walter Wriston, former Chairman of the Board of Citibank, `An individual sitting anywhere in the world before his [sic] PC can command in microseconds incredible amounts of information stored in the data base of the world. Information. . .is becoming the new capital.' (Quoted in Barfield and Benko, 1985:11)

With regard to trade and economics, McCracken and Esch (1985:3) refer explicitly to the North-South discussion but their question applies more generally as well: "Can the developed and the developing countries agree on international communication and information systems that provide the open infrastructure needed for trade and commerce to flourish across boundaries, while protecting individual rights and the sovereignty and security of nations?"

Whenever economic and financial concerns are raised, political and military considerations can't be for behind. In a careful assessment of the plethora of international policy problems passed by the communications revolution. Barfield and Benko (1985:18-19) emphasize the following:

> *Privacy and data protection.* Concern about the potential Orwellian misuse of advanced computer technologies led many nations to adopt privacy and data protection measures in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1980 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also passed its guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and Transborder Flows of Personal Data in an attempt to establish some universally agreed upon principles to promote the harmonization of national privacy laws. Debate still exists, however, on the scope of protection and government information access afforded by these laws. In particular, some national laws consider corporations to be included under their coverage, raising the potential for misuse of proprietary information.
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> *Economic and national sovereignty restrictions.* Most nations view economic power as a key component of national power and therefore consider economic restrictions in the interest of national sovereignty. All barriers to the flow of information that result from government monopolization of the national communications network, for example, can be construed as economic restrictions, since PTTs themselves are justified in such terms. The Canadian Bank Act of 1980, which requires all customer data to be stored and processed in Canada, is a restriction on transborder data flow designed to safeguard national economic interests. So too are West German Bundespost regulations that require local data processing of information. French threats to tax the value of incoming information flows directly are another example of an explicitly economic restriction advanced in the name of national sovereignty.

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[15] `Currently, two modes of transfer for international telecommunications exist — satellite and submarine cable. Global satellite communication operations are governed by INTELSAT, a 110-nation organization that owns and operates the fifteen-satellite system. INTELSAT carries about two-thirds of the world's transoceanic communications traffic and almost all international television transmission.' (Barfield and Benko, 1985:17)

[16] The term `East-West' is becoming increasingly irrelevant as the two sides grow closer economically and politically. The ultimate symbol of its growing irrelevance is surely the unification of East and West Germany that took place in October, 1990.

National security. National security controls include the obvious restrictions on the flow of strategically sensitive military information. Included in this category is the information embodied in some high-technology goods and services. The U.S. Export Administration Act, for example, places strict controls on the export of such information by limiting the export of sensitive goods. Other security controls stem from the so-called vulnerability issue. Foreign countries are designating an expanding list of data bases and types of information as vital to the national security and, as a consequence, requiring that this information be stored within the country's borders and that certain operations on, and manipulations of, these data bases be locatized and monitored.

Cultural restrictions. Nations impose restrictions on transborder data flows to preserve the `cultural integrity' of their society. The developing nations in particular cite cultural sovereignty and economic development as interrelated goals and use them both as focal points for their demand for a `new world information and communications order.' They call for restrictions on the flow of information from the industrialized North, in all its forms, to halt `cultural imperialism.' They also seek strict control over the information leaving their borders, ostensibly to stop the allegedly biased press of the industrial world from perpetuating myths about the less-developed countries that, they argue, help solidify and perpetuate dependency and underdevelopment. Industrialized nations also fear the potential effect of global communications technology on their cultural development. Canada has imposed restrictions in the radio and television industries, limiting foreign (United States) advertising and program content. Article IV of the GATT itself permits restrictions on information flows through films for reasons of cultural integrity.

Each of these four policy areas has enormous implications for international security, because each could generate friction and conflict between nation states. We will return to some of these issues in the Conclusion.

`Breakthrough' Technologies and Future Changes in International Security

Social scientists distinguish several different types of statements about the future, including prediction (literally an attempt to `say' what lies ahead, usually based on an explanatory model or theory); *projection* (literally a `throwing' ahead of recent trends and developments); and *forecasting* (a rather ambiguous term that derives from meteorology.) None of these is very reliable in international politics (even less than in weather).[17] Ten years ago virtually no one predicted the `tectonic shifts' in the global geopolitical `plates' that have brought East and West so close together. Nor would projections of various trends current at that time have yielded an accurate forecast of what in fact has transpired.

Each of us could speculate as to why recent events have taken most people by surprise. If we narrow our focus to the topic of this paper, two shortcomings in theory and analysis leap out. First, communication theorists did not anticipate the development and diffusion of the technologies that have become so important in the 1980's, *viz*. fax, VCR, personal computers, etc. More to the point, theorists could not have predicted how these technologies appear to have affected societies around the globe.

In light of these enormous, virtually unpredictable changes in global geopolitics, it is not surprising that our understanding of the concept security is itself changing. The `realist' approach to security, which has remained the dominant conception for over two centuries, has been seriously challenged.

For some, this challenge has reflected the more global view — graphically illustrated by pictures of Earth taken from outer space — that sees all Earthlings as sharing a common stake in global survival. We are all in the

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[17] Cf. Lipset (1985:329) who points out that social scientists "cannot possibly" anticipate "specific outcomes" because "we are still in a situation comparable to that of the meteorologists--they can describe what is happening to produce a cold wave or a drought; they can look at yesterday's weather and predict tomorrow's; but they do not understand enough about the complex relations among the many forces that produce diverse weather to make reliable long-term predictions."

same boat in many respects. And we cannot make our end of the canoe more stable by trying to make the other end more tippy, as Roger Fisher has put it.

Nor is security a simple, straightforward matter of defence and military strategy. Threats to security are seen increasingly in non-military areas, especially in our relationship to our fragile world eco-system, and in the patterns of global economic development that have proved so damaging to the environment. The linkage between these crises occasioned the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development, headed by Gro Brundtland, whose 1987 report was called *Our Common Future*.

Brundtland had been a member of the group established by fellow Scandinavian, Olaf Palme, who popularized the parallel notion of common security five years earlier in the title of the Report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues. In the Prologue to the Report, Cyrus Vance wrote:

> There is one overriding truth in this nuclear age — *no nation can achieve true security by itself*. . . The fact is that there are no real defenses against nuclear armed missiles — neither now nor in the foreseeable future. To guarantee our own security in this nuclear age, we must . . . work together with other nations to achieve common security. (p. vii) [emphasis added]

In his Introduction, Palme outlined the implications of this `overriding truth.' The doctrine of mutual assured destruction, with its corollary requirement of an ever-expanding arsenal of weapons and the resulting `nuclear balance of terror', must be repudiated in favour of a conception of international security based on `a commitment to joint survival rather than on a threat of mutual destruction.' (p. xiii) This in turn requires a reversal of the arms race, in fact `a downward spiral in armaments,' including conventional as well as weapons of mass destruction.

The development of military technologies of mass destruction has made total war unthinkable as a `rational instrument of statecraft' and has necessitated a reconceptualization of security itself. The notion of `common security' was propounded to address both the military and the broader economic and environmental aspects of security. In a follow-up report, written in 1989 several years after the death of their Chairman, Palme Commission members expressed the hope that ultimately `common security could evolve from a concept intended to protect against war to a comprehensive approach to world peace, social justice, economic development, and environmental protection.'[18] (*A World at Peace*. p. 7)

One fairly safe `prediction' regarding international security in the coming decade is that this expanded definition of the concept will achieve much greater currency. Environmental and economic concerns will be juxtaposed with military concerns. Furthermore problems associated with cultural security (as discussed earlier in this paper) will also achieve greater salience. All of these issues, which are clearly international collective goods of one kind or another, entail a strong imperative of multilateralism, which Barfield and Benko (1985:19) insist `remains the best hope for solving emerging problems in the international . . . system.'

Conclusion: Implications for International Security

What are some other implications of the developments described above? How will they affect international security now and in the foreseeable future? Notwithstanding the delicate caveats articulated earlier concerning the dangers of prophecy, it is possible to speculate about future developments on the basis of our previous discussion. We might begin by reiterating the point made in the title of the posthumous book by Ithiel de Sola Pool (1990): modern communications systems are indeed "technologies without boundaries." They therefore pose difficult challenges to the integrity and sovereignty of traditional nation states, which define their very existence in terms of boundaries that can somehow be "secured." For example, Louis Delvoie (1990) defines Canadian national security as "surveillance and control over land, sea and air approaches to Canada." But, as Nazli Choucri (1990) so eloquently

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[18] Several of the above paragraphs previously appeared in Bell, 1990.

pointed out, all contemporary nation states have displayed "massive incompetence in controlling the flow of goods, services, human beings and effluent" across their boundaries. In this age of satellites and fibre optics, communications and data must be added to this list of things that are flowing across national boundaries with little "surveillance" and even less "control."[19] Thus modern communications appear to have the potential to undermine national security.

But this conclusion is too facile and simplistic. To appreciate more fully the impact of Communications on Security, it is helpful to recall Kenneth Waltz's "three images" of the causes of international war. Waltz identified three distinct foci for theories of war and peace: human nature, political regimes within states, and the state system itself. Each of these images derives from a different assumption about the root cause of war. The first image explains war in terms of "human nature" -- the natural propensity to aggression and violence that is deeply engrained in the human psyche.[20] If we wish to eliminate war we must transform human nature, according to this perspective. The second image theorists argue (as did Immanuel Kant in Perpetual Peace) that wars are caused not by human nature but by autocratic rulers who act "irresponsibly" to commit their subjects to war. Kant believed that once all states were democratised, wars would disappear because "the people" would never choose such a painful and costly course of action for solving conflict. Finally, the third image theorists assume that war is a product of the state system itself. Sovereign states, irrespective of their form of government, will inevitably clash violently with one another because they lack a higher sovereign power to keep them "in Awe", to enforce agreements, and to punish transgressors (to borrow from Thomas Hobbes' unforgettable analysis of the "State of War.") To eliminate war we must either eliminate international anarchy by introducing some form of world government; or eliminate nation states and revert to smaller, less dangerous and powerful political units; or perhaps abolish and eliminate weapons, the means of warfare.

We can adapt this framework for our purposes, and explore the impact of modern communications on mass publics, political elites, and the state system. Looking ahead to the future, how will modern communications affect a) the propensity of mass publics to support (or perhaps demand) armed international conflict; b) the likelihood of elites to continue to choose this policy option; and c) the nature of the international system of sovereign states?

a) Communication and Mass Publics

In third world countries (perhaps including the Soviet Union)[21] communications will increase "social mobilization." This may either expand national power, or accelerate fragmentation through heightened regional or ethnic conflict, depending on the particular circumstances. We are living through a period of extraordinary national and subnational consciousness and conflict. Instead of eroding cleavages based on these "primordial" affiliations, modernization and industrialization seem to have sharpened them. Thus "most of the multilingual, bi-national, or

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[19] "TBF" is the abbreviation of "trans-border data flow," a recognized problem in instructional security. See inter alia, Meisel, 1986.

[20] Theorists who endorse the first image usually argue that aggression is a biological (i.e. innate) rather than a cultural (i.e. learned) behavioral disposition. Many argue further that its biological basis makes aggression impossible to eliminate. For a particularly compelling elaboration of this thesis, see Ardrey (1966) who identifies the development of tools/weapons by *Australopithecus*, an early human-like ancestor, as a crucial stage in the evolution of the species *Homo sapiens*. Note however that his theories have generated considerable scientific controversy.

[21] As of 1990, only 67% of Soviet households had radios, 35% televisions, and a mere 15% telephones. At best, the Soviet Union would be placed near the bottom of the list of "modernized" societies as far as communications are concerned.

bi-religious states that have persisted for many decades, if not centuries, have faced turmoil in recent years." (Lipset, 1985: 336) This generalization applies to East and West, North and South.

In addition to exacerbating social cleavages and antagonisms, in advanced western countries, modern communications appear to be a) fragmenting audiences, by permitting the expansion of specialized media and programming; b) eroding national boundaries, because of the impossibility of regulating the flow of communications across boundaries; c) increasing political cynicism, by exposing government action (and inaction) to public scrutiny; d) raising consciousness about issues like environmental degradation that cut across national boundaries. (Pool, 1990:262). It is unclear whether on balance communications have served to empower citizens or states. Probably they have the potential for both. In any given situation, the outcome will be a function of leadership, will, and skill in using communication systems.

One communications-related development that has definitely strengthened vox populi (the voice of the people) is the technology of public opinion surveying, which has become perhaps the foremost instrument of democracy. Governments use surveys on a regular basis to take the pulse of publics on issues and policies.[22] This practice is so advanced that Wriston (1990) identifies as the three participants in "political communication" politicians, the media, and the "mass public speaking through polls." Insofar as public policy (especially in western "democracies") must ultimately respond to public opinion, it is crucial to recognize that the public's conception of security appears to be changing:

> Security for individual people is very different from 'national security.' Individual people need food, shelter, employment, health care, and education in order to be secure. The metaphorical motion of 'national security' [i.e. which relies on the state-as-person metaphor] means spending less on what makes individual people secure.
>
> (Chilton and Lakoff, n-d.: 16)

The "traditional" conception of national security is neither god-given, natural, nor eternal. It is a social construct rooted in a particular historical conjuncture in the development of the modern state system. It has played a role that is becoming increasingly outdated, particularly in the post-cold war era. As Keohane and Nye (1977:6-7) pointed out more than a decade ago,

> National security symbolism was largely a product of the Cold War and the severe threat Americans then felt. Its persuasiveness was increased by realist analysis, which insisted that national security is the primary national goal and that in international politics security threats are permanent. . .
>
> As the Cold War sense of security threat slackened . . . [t]he intellectual ambiguity of 'national security' became more pronounced . . .

The "construct" of national security is being deconstructed, perhaps more rapidly by mass publics than political elites. But will these new, broader conceptions of security increase or diminish the prospects for international war? Will modern communications make it easier or more difficult to mobilize mass publics to support war? What type of war are we likely to see?[23]

It would be naive to assume that better global communications and a broadened conception of security will somehow eliminate war or lead to greater international cooperation. Indeed, the opposite result is just as likely. More issues, not fewer, will become politicized. More voices will be heard, and a greater sense of urgency will likely

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[22] For a strong critique of the limitations and distortion this entails, see Fletcher, 1990.

[23] As the world approached the deadline of January 15, 1991 on which the United Nations sanction for military action against Iraq took effect, public opinion in all countries actively involved in the conflict, though divided, was broadly supportive of war, and yet concerned about the potential costs in human lives and material destruction.

develop. The challenge of peace will be greater than ever.[24] This challenge is further complicated by what appears to be a desecularization of values that is occurring countries all around the globe. Religious fundamentalism is on the rise in the Middle East and in the United States. The Church is experiencing a revival in central and eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. These changes may permit the articulation of an "ethical core . . . on which a wider consensus can be built" around "intangible but fundamental human values -- a sense of cultural identity, a demand for participation, a respect for religion, an insistence on human right and justice." (Soedjatmoko 1986:68). But religion in the past has more often been a source of conflict than of harmony. A single world religion, or even a greater spirit of ecumenicism, seems so remote as to be unthinkable. Hence we can take little comfort from the resurgence of religion.

Furthermore if any conclusion can be drawn from the Gulf War, the televised coverage of such technomarvels as stealth bombers, smart bombs, and cruise missiles induced in the public a kind of "technological euphoria" that shifted attention away from the brutal destruction of human beings and the environment, blinded the public to the enormous material cost of war, and contributed to the astoundingly wide support of the war by 91% of the American public. If there was ever any doubt that the contemporary western viewer could be mobilized behind a future war against a third world country, the Gulf War melted it down.

b) Communication and Political Elites

Modern communications make it possible for elites in nearly every country to communicate with each other extensively, instantaneously, and interactively. But will they do so? And if they do, what effect will this have?

It appears that global (or at least international) communication links are widespread and growing among economic and scientific elites. The result has been a proliferation of informal and formal professional communities, invisible colleges, collaborative research, and so on. Will political and bureaucratic elites develop similar relationships with their colleagues in other countries? Will this encourage greater understanding, value convergence and closer cooperation? Will political elites learn to "see" security more broadly, and at the same time come to appreciate the "common good" attributes of many international security issues? Can they learn to overcome various perceptual pathologies (ideological, cultural, religious, etc.) that have reinforced destructive attitudes toward other people and the rest of Nature? If elites learn a new common culture will this simply expand the gap between them and the masses? Do not wealthy elites in North and South have more in common with each other than with the growing number of poor and under privileged in both settings? And is this not a potentially explosive development?[25]

These questions force us to shift our forcus to a higher level of analysis, to assess the impact of communications on the state system itself.

c) Global Communication, Values, And The Transformation Of The International System

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[24] Cf. Meisel, 1986:328, "As telecommunications becomes increasingly fundamental to the national interests of developing countries, and as the basic components of the infrastructure become more affordable, global competition for orbit and spectrum resources will become more intense. If this prospect brings about changes in values and foreign policies, then collective solutions may be found. If not, competition may well lead to intense conflict."

[25] Cf. Soedjatmoko, 1986:72, "In short, modern technologies of communication and transportation, to say nothing of a pervasive commercial culture, have added a new stratification of the world; people into transnational classes that share very little information, experience, or common concern. The psychological distance between the strata is in imminent danger of reaching the point where the only form of discourse between top and bottom is violence, punctuated by occasional spasms of charity."

To conclude this paper with a discussion of how the state system itself is being transformed by (post) modernization permits a synthesis of the many disparate strands of our agreement. Not surprisingly, the changes that are occurring in the international system are mirrored in new formulations of the theory of international relations, especially by "post modernist" writers and those attempting to construct "critical theory." But the ramifications can be seen across the discipline. James Rosenau, for example, writes of the challenge to the "state centric" international system posed by the newly emerging "multi centric" systems which comprises diverse "subnational and supranational sovereignty-free" actors that are "relatively equal." This change has rendered both the realist and the neorealist paradigm of international relations problematic, if not entirely anachronistic. However, the engine of change propelling us into this new age is the electronic revolution and the transformation of communications and information technology. Rosenau calls on students of international polities to break out of the old paradigms and become aware of the realities of this new second "world of world politics," whose structure and process is distinctive in numerous ways.

Robert Cox (1991) sounds a similar note in his discussion of the impact on territorial states of various "global forces" that characterize the emergence of a "post globalization world order" which might entail the "possibility of culturally diverse alternatives to global homogenization." And even Alvin Toffler has written on the "Powershift" that has made access to "electronic knowledge", not wealth or military might, the key factor in the new world order. The "world of world politics" has obviously become dramatically more complex. New structures have appeared at levels both above and below that of the nation state. The idea that territoriality is a defining characteristic of political association (i.e. statehood) may be overtaken by new types/political association based on shared communications (no longer dependent on geographical propinquity).

Will the development of global markets, global actors, global structures and global problems be accompanied by a new global consciousness? Such a development is probably a precondition to a harmonious new world order. As Karl Deutsch once remarked, "nothing more is required for world government than that the people of each country have as much concern for each other as the people of Alabama have for the people of Massachusetts." But he went on to add, "nothing less is required also."

If any medium has the potential of producing some form of humane global consciousness, it must surely be television.[26] Because it is primarily a visual medium, its impact can transcend language. Everyone in the world can see the same image, and they can do so simultaneously. Moreover we are witnessing for the first time in history the appearance of a "video generation." By the time individuals graduate from high school in advanced western societies they have spent more time in front of a television set than they have spent in school. For them television - not the family, not the educational system, not religion, and not books and newspapers -- has become the primary agency of political (and general) socialization. Youngsters growing up in the age of satellites have the potential to experience a truly <u>global</u> television upbringing. None of the members of this video generation is yet "in charge" of major social, scientific, economic, or political institutions. But they soon will be. The present elite, whose "first culture" (cf. "first language") is <u>print</u> -- which reinforces (indeed helped create) the conception of the territorial nation state and the paradigms of realism and neorealism -- will soon be displaced by an elite whose "first culture" is video -- which is tied in with other global forces; which transcends language; which dissolves history and tradition; which is increasingly the dominating force in both popular culture (through soap operas, TV dramas and sitcoms) and political communication (through news and public affairs programming).

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[26] I harbour no illusions about the effects of television programming as it presently exists. Hence the emphasis on potential.

Our hope for the future lies in the possibility that in the twenty-first century both elites and masses will experience a cultural mutation that will lead to a new global consciousness -- and sense of global citizenship and responsibility -- capable of sustaining human existence and the world environment on which it depends.[27]

But the likelihood of this creative transformation is slight at best. We are moving to a new world order, to be sure. But is a world order of unipolar militarism sustained by financial "tribute" (i.e. OPM -- other people's money) and dominated by the military might of the United States operating under the guise of the United Nations. Despite staggering developmental problems in the third world, the second world, and the first world, we appear to be embarking on a course of further huge investment in military weaponry and technology. As Richard Nixon astutely predicted, the war in the Gulf is but the first example of the phenomenon of "Third World War."

In 1989, the New York Times wrote an obituary for the New World Information Order, which it officially declared dead. The NWIO died not of natural causes but as a result of a relentless series of attacks, amounting to a war, conducted by the United States under the banner of "freedom of information." The United States succeeded in labelling NWIO as communist-inspired anti-democratic censorship. At the same time, the United States was advancing the cause of "freedom" through what it called a "strategic communications initiative." The New World Order, George Bush style, will feature a sophisticated use of state-of-the- art communications technology put to the service of global imperial interests. Through SCI, the United States may achieve successes beyond the wildest dreams of the supporters of SDI. They make succeed in creating a new Military Information Society (Mosco, 1991).

Pax Americana is undoubtedly preferable to a number of alternative futures. But it represents the defeat of more hopeful vision of a world order, one based on decreased militarism, increased mutual understanding, and a global commitment to tackling seriously the problems of the environment, of poverty and starvation; a world order built on technological developments that are life sustaining rather than life destroying.

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[27] Cf. Boulding, 1988, who uses the concept "global civic culture" to refer to a similar type of cultural mutation.

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