

Another view on world information

to the prominence the news agency gave to the delegate's criticism of UNESCO.

Sussman is right; control of information is the name of the game. That showed up when western delegates objected to the word "content" appearing in a sentence which gave governments control over information networks. It's bad enough for governments to control access to telephone, telegraph, satellite and all other means of moving information. For governments also to control content, i.e., what's said, is intolerable to any free people. Faced with western opposition, the committee involved adjourned for closed sessions, and came back with a new version they argued should be acceptable. Governments should have control of news messages "and what they say." What's more, these perverters of the meaning of words insisted that phrase doesn't include content.

After weeks, months and years of that kind of debate, Western delegates understandably get a little paranoid.

Many Western journalists, government delegates and politicians believe it is possible to "hang in there" and fight effectively for modification of UNESCO efforts to establish the NWICO and IPDC. They argue that many modifications have been made. Sussman accurately understands that the wording is incidental. The intent is to exercise control and to do so, in weasel words but still doing so, with full, formal UN approval. When that happens, and in embryonic form it is reality now, the free world will be the losers.

Western journalism isn't perfect, not by any means. But in it plural views are heard. Out of a multitude of opinions, free citizens of democracies can make up their own minds and vote policies reflecting their views.

IPDC gets going

At Acapulco last winter, UNESCO asked member governments for \$20 million to start IPDC. The US, at first, refused to contribute (though \$500,000 has now been allocated) as did many other Western nations. Canada contributed \$250,000 toward the \$7 million eventually raised. That a long way from the \$80 million originally asked, but IPDC is beginning to function. Funds are coming from somewhere.

The free world can't afford to appear to be giving approval to control over the means of circulating information around the world. Cutting off UNESCO funds for both NWICO and IPDC is the only effective answer. The Third World, funded in part by the Communist world, i.e., Russia, will still go ahead with IPDC. If Western funds are cut off, however, it will be seen for what it is, a propaganda vehicle endorsed by dictatorships, not by the free world. Western journalists will have no more difficulty in obtaining the news out of Argentina, Chad, Libya, Cambodia and the other trouble spots of the world than they do now. At least the world will understand the basis on which IPDC will function as a new press agency. It would then have roughly the same credibility as Pravda and Tass. □

For Canadians abroad



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