

## 8. Other issues.

Several other issues, less developed as of the moment, provide fruitful avenues for further discussion:

→ \* The role of the private sector in promoting free expression. On the one hand, there should be a shared interest among government, civil society and market sectors to have free access to information; the recent Bre-X crisis demonstrated to all sectors the value of free expression on the Internet and elsewhere. On the other hand, when Rupert Murdoch's Star satellite channel in Asia was forced to choose between China and the BBC over the latter's criticisms of human rights abuse in China, the BBC was soon enough dropped from the service.

✓ \* Press councils. It is at least worth examining whether the curious Canadian institution of press councils could serve a positive freedom of expression purpose in other countries.

✓ \* Open media alternatives. In Bosnia, several foreign governments, with some support from Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, set up the Open Broadcast Network (OBN) as a direct response to the prevailing control of all local media by the government. What precedents were created here? What can we learn from the criticisms that have been made of the OBN? How far could Canada go in other situations where it would be desirable to see a pluralistic alternative to state media domination? Under what circumstances can foreign agencies intervene unilaterally in another country's affairs? This seems an area where further work would be worthwhile to determine when such intervention makes sense.

✓ \* Radio Canada International. It could well be that RCI has a role to play in providing distance education for journalists abroad, particularly in disseminating freedom of expression tools. Obviously distinctions between state and public broadcasting would need to be monitored carefully. But the possibility of a collaborative effort including the CBC, the Department of Foreign Affairs and CCPJ is certainly worth exploring. Indeed, following the example of the BBC, it may well prove viable to bring journalists to Canada to study these issues directly.

part of PB Consult? ✓ \* Free expression consultations. Non-governmental organizations such as CCPJ and many others, together with the Canadian Bar Association and other professional associations, have the qualifications and commitment to become NGO consultant to human rights groups around the world on issues of free expression. Is it worth taking steps to attempt to provide this service systematically on a larger-scale basis?