

like—less-developed countries are more troubled by the domination of outside media in the flow of news and information they receive. Virtually all the news they receive about matters outside their own boundaries comes from outside media, accountable to no one locally. Few media organizations in these countries can afford the Canadian solution to this dilemma: employing a certain number of their own correspondents, as the CBC and, to a lesser extent, CTV, does, or even paying stringers in overseas countries. As a result, most of these countries literally know about the news of the day only that which a handful of media sources in the US and Europe tell them. Initiatives such as the Canadian-sponsored WETV, to create a countervailing source of news, seem economically uncertain. The CNN view of the world, willy nilly, becomes the prevailing one.

Just as Americans consider Canadian attempts to protect and promote Canadian cultural industries as illegitimate barriers to routine commerce and possibly even violations of freedom of expression, so measures to promote and defend national or regional information flows in developing areas can be seen as restrictions on freedom. Yet we as Canadians seem determined to find a way to promote and defend our culture while not violating free expression. This pursuit will follow many courses, though it seems reasonable to expect the solution lies somewhere in the typically Canadian compromise of promoting Canadian content while providing access for Canadians to a remarkably wide range of international, especially American, media.

As we know well, such attempts have become even more difficult as technological advances, globalization of the media, and liberalized trade agreements continue apace. Restricting and controlling satellite broadcasters such as CNN and Rupert Murdoch's various outfits, for example, is technically difficult and could well lead to retribution by wealthier states and organizations such as the World Trade Organization.

Nevertheless, Canadians remain committed to some form of cultural protection, notwithstanding the obstacles, and argue that doing so by no means conflicts with freedom of expression. At the least we can offer our experience and our measures as inspiration to other countries. Whether indigenous content requirements, ownership limits, advertising regulations or tax incentives are appropriate steps in other contexts, at least they suggest directions that can be taken. More directly, perhaps, advances in information technology, and the Internet in particular, have the clear potential to enable media in developing countries to call upon entirely new sources for their foreign news coverage, providing them a diversity of sources hitherto unthinkable. At the same time, this functions, as we have noted, to empower civil societies locally while linking them internationally.