

investigate money laundering; this is left to the federal government.

In ending his presentation Mr. German called for: (1) greater public-private sector cooperation since the breach of security is less and less likely to come through the front door; (2) a concerted effort to reduce bank secrecy laws abroad and to tighten controls on electronic banking to ensure computerized money transfers leave a trail. Finally, Mr. German cautioned that every effort should be made so that Canada does not become the "soft underbelly" of international crime made possible by IT.

### *National Media in the New Information Environment*

In the next presentation Elly Alboim, of the Earncliffe Strategy Group, presented an overview of new information technologies and the media. Specific attention was given to the way in which changes in technology, such as digitization, narrowcasting, convergence, and direct broadcasting, may be undermining the traditional "mass" national audience, encouraging fragmentation in the form of multiple and transnational "niche" communities, and altering traditional conceptions of news reporting.

Mr. Alboim started by laying out the current national media reality. He noted that the current configuration of the media is becoming increasingly unsustainable as the traditional mass audience is fragmenting and reconstituting itself along new lines that sometimes reflect socio-economic cleavages but increasingly also reflect education levels and absorption skills. As a result, most national news organizations have been forced to rethink how they gather and disseminate information. Since news organizations are wholly consumer driven this audience fragmentation has meant that news definitions have expanded exponentially, with the ensuing consequences to professional standards for news judgment, selection, and editing.

Mr. Alboim said that there are no longer "must cover" issues. Increasingly, information that is titillating or entertaining is replacing "hard" news. Alboim stated that there is a phenomenon of a "downward spiral" as traditional news consumers leave, while a new audience needs entertainment. The media has thus begun to pander to a mass audience. This, and the centrifugal pressures in a rapidly regionalizing society, means that the value of a shared national information experience is eroding.

Mr. Alboim then went on to look at the link between the media and governance. He pointed out, for example, that there is clear evidence that as the media establishes its agenda-setting function, it influences consumers' views about governance and leadership by assigning causality to leadership for problems. The popularity of government and leadership, in turn, varies with their efficacy in treating those issues and resolving them. The problem, according to Mr. Alboim, is that as news organizations determine to strengthen the attachment of the consumer by building not on the consumers' needs but the consumers' desires, media has