

Do these examples mean that television is driving foreign policy? Let us hope not. What television has done is to bring public opinion into play as never before in determining where national interest lies and the policy to further it. It may be a mighty inconvenience for policy-makers. Public ventilation usually is, because the public is such a bull among the delicate porcelains of the experts, indifferent to the endless nuances of those trained to find nuances. But I would argue that it is also, at bottom, essentially more democratic.

It should not surprise us that television, which has modified all our institutions, should be altering the conduct of international affairs.

The car changed the physical landscape of our cities and countryside; it revolutionized housing patterns and towns, shopping, personal transportation and recreation. But television has changed the landscape of our *minds*—displacing, to some extent, even the literacy that has been the mould of our reason for 500 years.

In medieval Europe, the Church was matrix of thought, the boundary of the popular imagination: it explained everything. Television sets the boundaries of the popular imagination today, and it sets them very wide, if not often very deep.

There has never been a phenomenon like television in its ubiquity, its seductive appeal, the passive absorption it encourages, its lifelikeness, its companionship, its ability to leap across international frontiers and the barriers of class and literacy. What hyperbole can you talk of a medium that has African tribesmen living close to the Stone Age and Queen Elizabeth in Buckingham Palace both doting on the same TV series, "Dallas"?

The only thing that people, on average, do more than watch television is work and sleep. And, if they don't have work and can't sleep, they watch television. Though it may be eroding literacy, it sells millions of books. Though academics deplore it, they too seek the social legitimacy television exposure confers—and so on.

Television has created a different order of public opinion. In the issues that touch foreign affairs, the public witnesses the same apparent reality as their leaders. The public is no longer a mass to be sold a policy after it is decided. It is now active in seeing policy made, one might even say *getting* policy made. Witnessing the same images, of course, is the political opposition, loyal or not, which is able to use them, like any other evidence, to challenge the competence of government.

Television is the public window of the information revolution—and its noisiest voice.