

Europe as World News Leader

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News was invented in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries; "foreign correspondence" played a major part in, for instance, the London daily press (from 1702 onwards). This foreign news consisted of letters written by "correspondents" in other European cities, who culled much of their material from their city's newspapers. Thus across Europe there was a large network of newspapers linked by letter-writing correspondents.

Today the European Broadcasting Union (now encompassing Eastern Europe and the former U.S.S.R.) is only one of numerous mechanisms moving news around Europe and into the world beyond. Europe also has most of the strongest news agencies and broadcast news operations in the world. The British and French news agencies, which established the first world news cartel in 1870, remain strong. But consider, for example, the strength of the German news organizations such as DPA (Deutsche Presse-Agentur) and ZDF (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen), not least in Eastern Europe; or Spanish news organizations such as EFE and RTVE (Radio Television Espana) in Latin America; or the strength of Italian organizations such as ANSA (Associazione Nazionale Stampa Associata) and RAI (Radio Televisione Italiana).

What part the media of the former U.S.S.R. will play in the wider world cannot yet be known, although it is worth remembering that Moscow was an important press and film center before 1917. But by 1990 Europe was the main focus of foreign news interest in the world (Cohen, 1991). In that year, 944 news organizations were represented in the U.S., 606 in Brussels, 599 in Britain, 562 in Italy, and 558 in France. Of the top 20 countries in terms of news representation, 14 were in Europe.

The U.S. acquired unambiguous news leadership (from Britain and France) only around 1945 (Tunstall, 1977), and it held that leadership until about 1980. Vietnam was perhaps, as in much else, a turning point. This was a major cold war conflict in which the U.S., but not the U.S.S.R., was an active participant; it remained for some years the leading news story and, although French, British, and other national media gave it much coverage, the U.S. media—especially Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), and the networks—provided the bulk of the reporting and imagery

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around the world. After a very slow start in the early 1960s, the U.S. media had one of their finest phases on the world scene.

But U.S. world leadership in the 1945–80 period was founded on several sorts of strength, which could not continue. During 1945–80 the U.S. had the strongest domestic customer base of newspapers and TV stations; the U.S. had the strongest news stories—with the world fascinated by the White House, Americana, and U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. also had financially strong ownerships prepared to lavish money on foreign news; the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post* all rose to "heavyweight foreign news," and "general elite," status; there were three, and then two, world-class news agencies. The three TV networks were awash with money, and they used news in general, and foreign news in particular, in a flagship or prestige-building role.

These conditions were unlikely to have continued. Even without the deregulation of broadcasting, satellites, and cable, the TV networks would have faced much stronger competition. The emergence of strong independent TV stations alone would have ensured this. But multiple deregulation added to the problems of the established media.

The customer base of U.S. newspapers and TV stations is still strong, but comparatively less so than in the 1970s. The U.S. since the 1970s has ceased to be of such compelling interest to the world. American presidents since Richard Nixon have attracted less world interest, while Congress remains almost completely unknown to the outside world; Americana (stories beyond the Washington beltway) attracts less attention, with the exception of Hollywood. Moscow, no longer Washington, has become since the late 1980s the number-one foreign posting, at least according to those British editors and foreign correspondents I interviewed in 1990 (foreign editors of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Independent TV News (ITN), and six national newspapers, personal communication, May–June, 1990).

Another weakness of American media revealed in the 1980s was in finance. At least as seen from Europe, UPI's ownership traumas, and the sales of its picture service to Reuters, marked the end of UPI as a leading news agency. The three established TV networks have also engaged in ownership changes and a series of financial cutbacks since the mid-1980s, which have led to reduction in the foreign news effort. In short, the U.S. remains the entertainment world leader; but world leadership in news has returned to Europe—partly due to destructive news competition in the U.S. in the deregulatory 1980s.

Covering the World by Satellite

Foreign news, in an era of satellites, continues to be driven by a mix of logistics, finance, and prestige. The British ITN company (Independent TV News) puts out its half-hour "News at Ten" on the ITV (Independent Televi-

sion Network). Each weekday at 9:45 p.m., London time, it has a satellite booking to the ITN bureau in Washington, DC. This transmission of the day's news package, only a few minutes before the program goes on the air, illustrates several aspects of contemporary foreign news.

Much television news is now live or "near live." In its early days television news from abroad depended on the air-freighting of film, and such news took a day or two to get on the screen. Now television news has passed daily newspapers and caught up with radio. There is huge competitive pressure to be first with live or near-live pictures of major news events.

The *logistics* behind fast modern news are not confined to satellites; the adoption of videotape was also extremely important because it eliminated film processing. The newsroom computer has also made possible the rapid reshuffling and organizing of multiple news inputs, both at the editing stage and while the program is already on air (Keirstead, 1991).

A fully established bureau is typically staffed by a minimum of five or six full-time people. However, the term "bureau" is used by some organizations to cover a lone correspondent who sometimes uses a freelance local camera crew. A more fully established bureau, like the ITN bureau in Washington, has two TV correspondents and edits its own package before satellite transmission.

Economies of scale operate powerfully in this field. A fully established bureau, which can get material onto the air most days, justifies, for example, a regular daily satellite booking. This costs less per week than does a single satellite booking from, say, an African capital. Such scale economies favor the regular use of a small number of bureaus in a few familiar cities around the world.

Even a major bureau, like ITN's Washington bureau, uses material from film agencies—as 10% owner of WTN (Worldwide Television News), ITN may edit ABC and WTN material, along with original ITN material, into its daily packages. "Our own correspondent's" voice typically provides the entire commentary, although the viewer at home may receive the impression that the vast majority of foreign TV news items include film (in fact, tape) from more than one source.

Paradoxically, it is often the countries least capable of collecting their own foreign news that are most inclined to use a high proportion of foreign material in their news output. This is especially true of countries with small but internationally minded populations, such as Sweden (Wallis & Baran, 1990) or Israel. Once a newspaper has subscribed to Reuters or AP, or a TV news operation has subscribed to Visnews or WTN, it can use as much foreign material as it likes because the subscription remains the same.

Why then do news organizations bother to collect their own foreign news at great expense? In newspapers with a significant team of foreign correspondents, the foreign department is the most expensive. A single foreign television bureau may cost up to \$2 million per year. News organizations claim that they obtain a superior product over which they have full editorial

control, and that general agency material does not fit the specific audience so well. The audience, they say, prefers trusted and familiar names, voices, and faces, reporting from far-off places.

There remains a strong element of prestige in having your own team of foreign correspondents. Having a team of foreign correspondents has long been regarded as one of the requirements of being an elite newspaper, or a "newspaper of record." In all television systems, news is itself a prestige area, and national TV organizations—responding to a mix of legislative, regulatory, and political requirements—in practice have no choice but to provide both domestic and foreign news. In the case of public-service systems, or channels, foreign news is part of the public-service mission. But foreign news is no less salient in the overall output of the U.S. commercial networks. The constraints placed on the U.S. networks are predominantly antitrust constraints originating in Washington. Nearly all of what the networks do is intended to create revenue and/or cut costs. Network-gathered foreign news is a leading exception, and the main prestige effort of the three networks.

Reuters, AP, Visnews, and WTN

Two agencies, Reuters and AP, are preeminent in the world news system. Meanwhile two other agencies, Visnews and WTN, dominate in video news. In the late 19th century, a worldwide system of fast news dissemination was built on the ocean cable technology and controlled by the British Reuters and the French Havas agencies. For over 100 years other countries, governments, and news agencies have accused the prevailing controllers of running a cartel in their own interests. The leading critics of the cartel were the American AP (before it became a leading cartel member), the Germans in 1914–18, the young Soviet Union, the Germans and Japanese, and finally the third-world nations (and UNESCO) in the 1970s and 1980s. While UNESCO was complaining about dominance by four Western agencies, the real prospect was for a decline in the number of dominant agencies from four to three or two (Tunstall, 1981).

Reuters and AP are the two dominant news agencies at present. Agence France-Presse (AFP) and UPI both have failed to keep pace. While the latter two have grown weaker, the leading two have grown stronger. The AP is the dominant agency in the U.S. domestic market. The AP-Dow Jones service links AP with the financially strongest newspaper, *The Wall Street Journal*. The other leading agency, Reuters, has become the leading provider of financial-data-on-screens around the world; Reuters's news operations are now only a secondary activity, but it is the leading news agency in Europe, Africa, and much of Asia.

A continuing theme of news agency history has been that media customers are reluctant to pay the sums required to keep the enterprise afloat. Both Reuters and AP have diversified into financial data, for which customers are much more willing to pay. Both agencies have also diversified

into other news fields. AP and Reuters run the only two major news-picture services around the world. They are major providers of radio news, and are agenda-setters for television news around the world.

Reuters, especially, has been a pioneer in the computerization of world-wide news, from the late 1960s onwards (Tunstall & Palmer, 1991). Data and news are now married within a single data system, and the news, in effect, is only one of numerous Reuters data services. But the Reuters and AP services are now part of another marriage inside newspaper, TV, and radio newsrooms. Whereas journalists have long mixed agency material with their own words, the standard newsroom computer terminal now enables the journalist to inspect his or her own story alongside agency copy on a divided screen. The foreign agency materials that surface on newsroom screens around the world predominantly come from AP or Reuters, either directly or after gatekeeping via a national agency.

AP and Reuters both have always pursued a low-profile public stance—AP has a long history of antitrust cases and Reuters was the semiofficial agency of the British empire. Both of these super agencies have long been reluctant to draw attention to the extent of their news dominance. The fact that both the U.S. and U.K. governments left UNESCO, largely because of the world news flow critique, has further inclined the two Anglo-Saxon agencies to favor a low profile. The dominance of the two extends still further.

These agencies have long had a strong element of not-for-profit in their news activities. AP originated as a cooperative and Reuters as a financial information company. Both agencies have on the world scene been willing to do deals with almost any government. Even during wars, enemy governments have for over a century communicated with each other through the agencies' exchange arrangements in neutral countries. Diplomats are reluctant to admit that these agencies have long been the main means of fast diplomatic communication, such as during the Cuban missile crisis. The subsequently introduced "hot line" is merely a conspicuous exception to the general rule. When CNN company spokespersons claimed that President Bush and Saddam Hussein listened to each other on CNN in 1990, they were claiming something that AP and Reuters had been keeping quiet for well over a century.

The video news agencies are descended from the film newsreels and the major news agencies. WTN was, when called UPI Television News (UPITN), jointly controlled by UPI and the British ITN. It is now owned 80% by ABC, 10% by ITN, and 10% by Channel 9 in Australia.

Visnews is the leading video agency, and probably employs twice as many people as does WTN. Reuters owns 51% of Visnews, NBC owns 37.75%, and the BBC 11.25%. Visnews claims that *1.5 billion* people see its TV news around the world each day. There is no precise way of checking this claim, but most TV foreign news professionals would probably agree

that Visnews has some claim to being the most widely consumed, if least recognized, world brand.

Visnews and WTN share several characteristics with the traditional news agencies. As wholesalers, they lack direct outlets of their own and maintain a low public profile. While general news agencies gear their output to newspaper edition times, these agencies schedule their output to the times of major TV news customers, in particular world regions. Visnews supplies semimediated packages, with only natural sound, and a written commentary; this enables the customer network to dub its own commentary onto the pictures, incorporating its own editorial gloss, and in effect claiming the transmitted item as its own.

Visnews has several special advantages. It uses the news output of NBC and the BBC, a combination that appeals to national broadcasters around the world. Visnews has the enormous advantage of the Reuters communications system and news output, the premier global fast news system; Reuters offices in 75 countries are available for liaison with, for example, local freelance camerapersons. Visnews also owns its own satellite subsidiary in the form of Brightstar.

Reporting from "Dub City"

Television foreign news people say that at any major news event, there are two leading groups of reporting teams. One is the Visnews-NBC-BBC-and-allies grouping. The second is the WTN-ABC-ITN-Channel 9-CNN group. Members of each group seek to occupy adjacent hotel rooms where they set up their temporary "dub city," and within such a group reporting teams combine their own material with footage from the tapes of other cooperating news organizations. The correspondent then voices the edited tape, and the dubbed package is finally fed home via satellite. As with other competitive news situations, there are also some elements of cooperation. In some cases, satellite facilities, and even technicians, are shared. Editing cooperation can, after some days, be extended into newsgathering cooperation. Yoel Cohen reports that in the early months of the Intifada, an NBC-Visnews-BBC-CBS grouping, using "reciprocal sharing arrangements," deployed some 15 camera crews "on patrol" in the West Bank and Gaza (Cohen, 1991, p. 27).

Competition and Monopoly in TV News

In the last decade, the domestic U.S. media have been rearranged around some familiar polarities, such as competition/monopoly, high cost/low cost, and prestige/profit. Both monopoly and competition increased in the American media in the 1980s. In one major medium, newspapers, monopoly increased. However, surviving daily papers continued to offer the country's best news services, including foreign news. In the other major medium,

television, competition increased. The proliferation of independent stations and cable channels led to competitive fragmentation.

Also, the polarity of high cost (mainly in national output) and low cost (mainly in local output) saw some changes. The major national media were located in New York and Los Angeles where high-cost regimes prevailed, including powerful trade unions and star salary systems. It was local media that relied heavily on agencies and soft, advertiser-friendly city news. But the growth of independent stations and cable generated huge amounts of cheap material, much of it available for national syndication. Cable evolved a number of low-cost formulas by which someone else paid for the material, such as Congress (C-Span) or the music industry (MTV). CNN had another low-cost formula: lean staffing, Atlanta rates of pay, heavy use and reuse of cheap agency material. The demand for cheap material by the fresh outlets led to fresh forms of free public relations material, such as the video news release.

Another traditional polarity of the U.S. media was between profit and prestige. Established monopoly newspapers could easily have both profits and prestige. But increasingly the competitive television field pressured networks and stations toward choosing either profit or prestige. PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) stayed with prestige, while local TV network affiliates—facing stronger competition and less regulation—gave yet further emphasis to profit.

These changes have produced particularly acute problems for the networks in general and for their news output in particular. Heightened competition has nibbled away at the network news shows from all directions: the independent stations with popular entertainment scheduled against news; the local stations have increasingly preskimmed national items into the bit local news; CNN has provided nonstop news. On the prestige side of the equation, the 22-minute news already faces many dilemmas. Sliced thin by advertising breaks, should the 22 minutes be devoted mainly to serious or light, long or short, foreign or domestic or regional items? Should anything be done about the news' elderly audience and their long-established favorite anchors? What could be done to accommodate the full possibilities of live news-and-analysis (via satellite) in a 22-minute offering already suffering from rating starvation?

These dilemmas were especially acute during the Gulf War in the winter of 1990–91. All three networks opted for the one-dominant-story formula. The networks' December 1990–February 1991 Gulf coverage exceeded their Soviet Baltic states coverage by 70 to 1 (Dennis, et al., 1991). In retrospect, the Baltic story was more important because it presaged the breakup of the Soviet Union. The Baltic story also offered some footage of real fighting provided by TV camera crews, which none of the Gulf coverage did.

The three networks' 22 minutes of head-to-head early-evening news competition is a dated formula. In the late 1980's they found a new formula, which was additional programming by the news divisions outside the nor-

mal news slot. These fresh outputs are cheaper to make than the programming they replace; the additional news shows are cheaper than the programming they replace; the additional news shows are cheaper than Hollywood entertainment; and the daytime magazine offerings are cheaper than game shows. Prestige, however, remains a problem. As the networks cut back their foreign news in particular, are they also destroying the only prestigious and expensive offering that could distinguish them from the cheap competition?

Who's Best in the Business?

The pursuit of prestige and manipulation of the corporate image continue to be important concerns for media organizations, especially on their foreign news output. All of the old adages about image against substance, and sizzle against steak, apply especially to media organizations. Some large media organizations, anxious about being accused of monopoly and excessive power, tend to produce a low publicity profile. This is true not only of the American AP but, for example, of Bertelsmann in Germany. The most bravura publicity styles are pursued by rising moguls, such as Ted Turner or Silvio Berlusconi, to boost their new enterprises.

At the level of particular stories the early impact is said, especially by television people, to be crucial. Most television is not seen by most people and, in general, the most elevated and powerful people are the least likely to see a particular program. Consequently everyone in television is enormously dependent on, and sensitive to, press coverage. Press coverage follows normal news values, which means, for instance, a focus on the first episode in a new television series. This is the episode that gets press attention, and these stories, it is said, remain in the newspaper archives as well as in the collective memory of the TV industry.

A similar process operates with news in general and especially in the case of foreign "crisis" coverage—the war, the earthquake, the plane crash, the famine, the coup. The supreme accolade that a TV network can confer on its foreign news people is to interrupt normal programming to bring the audience the first dramatic pictures of the new foreign crisis/disaster. Since this can happen at any time of the day or night, the great majority of the audience fail to see the first showing of the first dramatic pictures. For this reason, the reputation for having had those pictures is more important, in terms of prestige, than the often complex and ambiguous reality.

An example of this was provided by British television news coverage of the overthrow of the Romanian government in December 1990. Both the BBC and ITN provided much dramatic coverage, including ample film by their own camera crews and correspondents, of the demonstrations and street fighting in Bucharest. An objective judge might have scored the ITN

versus BBC competition as a draw. However ITN executives were at the time intent on raising extra news funding to cover the events in Eastern Europe and wanted to persuade their owners, the 15 ITV regional companies, of their case. Consequently ITN seized on their successful Romanian coverage to launch a quick self-congratulatory public relations and advertising campaign in the national newspapers, focusing on the ITN Romanian coverage. Newspaper editorial columns duly reported the Romanian coverage as a win for ITN and a defeat for the BBC. ITN soon received substantial additional funding from the ITV companies.

Live From Baghdad

CNN's biggest success has been in the image-projection/prestige area. The late evening hours (EST) of January 16, 1991, were CNN's finest hours. The normal rule of the first impact seems to have operated; CNN's live coverage of the first bombing of Baghdad was the only live show in the global village that night, or so the world press has subsequently told the world. But as with so much in the CNN saga, image and reality do not totally coincide.

CNN was lucky in one respect. The U.S. military command had apparently timed the opening of the air war with 7 p.m. EST—in other words, the U.S. network news—in mind. The Iraqi government, however, interposed another equally familiar publicity strategy. The Iraqis adopted the strategy of handing the story exclusively to the most amenable news organization widely available to other media; often this is a major news agency, and here it was CNN.

But while CNN coverage that evening did play right across the U.S., it did not play so well in Europe. True, European networks did retransmit the CNN news, but 7 p.m. EST is midnight or later in Europe. European audiences for the "live war coverage" were consequently small. In Britain a total of only 3 million people (a 6 rating) were awake after midnight and watching the CNN bombing transmission. Massive coverage followed—80 hours of Gulf coverage on Britain's four national networks in the first two days (MacDonald, 1991). But this coverage was dominated by large BBC, ITN, Visnews, and WTN reporting teams on the ground in the Gulf. Some CNN material (identified on screen) was shown, but made little impact on the audience. A national sample survey found that 90% of the U.K. population thought that BBC Gulf War coverage had been very or fairly "accurate/reliable," against 89% for ITV, and 5% for CNN; in the case of CNN, 93% did not know (Morrison, 1992).

CNN focuses heavily on Ted Turner as the mogul in charge. Ted Turner does indeed match three important mogul criteria—he is an entrepreneur, he has an eccentric personal and public style, and he operates the company. However, he lacks the fourth crucial characteristic—he is not the controlling owner (Tunstall & Palmer, 1991).

There is, of course, a Turner entertainment conglomerate, and CNN is only the most visible and prestigious part of this empire. CNN itself is a

complex operation that provides several different services; these in turn mean both that some CNN material does indeed reach hundreds of millions of people and also that CNN has a tiny audience share even inside the U.S.

CNN has pioneered four interesting niche markets, all of which are volatile and vulnerable. CNN's first and most dramatic offering is live news. This can be gripping viewing, as demonstrated in the initial Baghdad bombing coverage, but its limitations are also severe. Fairly few subjects are suitable for live coverage and the most obvious ones are handled by competitors; sports events are the best live situation for television. Another is the legislature (C-Span); yet another possibility, court cases, is being pursued in the U.S. by the Court TV cable channel. This leaves press conferences, ceremonies, and other publicity events, staged by large organizations, primarily the government. One other possibility is the live satellite interview spanning the continents, but this format also has obvious limitations.

Most spontaneous events, including most war events, are extremely unsuitable for television. Documentary, the TV form that tries hardest to capture "real life," is the heaviest TV user of both filming and editing time. Even if real war scenes are filmed, they tend to be seen as unsuitable for home viewing:

In the hours after the ceasefire north of the Iraqi border, it was almost impossible to drive on the highway without running over parts of human bodies. I watched wild dogs feasting on Iraqi flesh and camera crews filmed all this. But scarcely a frame reached television viewers. (Fisk, 1992, p. 13)

A second market pursued by CNN is that for rolling news. This is obviously attractive to news addicts in general and to journalists in particular. But the demand for all-news radio appears to be quite limited, except at times of special dramatic events. In the Middle East, despite the wide availability of television, BBC surveys indicate a preference for radio as a crisis news medium. In Amman, news of the outbreak of war and the outbreak of air war came primarily from radio and was then handed on by word of mouth, the source most quoted by interviewees (BBC, 1991a). Similarly Jewish Israelis obtained their first news of three crisis events (the start of the air war, the Scud attacks on Israel, and the land war) predominantly from radio, with television far behind in all three cases (BBC, 1991b).

Third, CNN operates as a supplementary video agency. Again, it has a high profile in this field because, unlike the major agencies, CNN requires broadcasters in some cases to show its logo on screen. However it is worth remembering that CNN itself is a massive user of other news organizations' material but is only a supporting player in the WTN-ABC-led "dub city" team.

Fourth, CNN delivers its own channels of cable news in the domestic U.S. market. But outside the U.S. and Canada, CNN's household penetration is much more modest than its publicity would suggest. Western Europe is

CNN's best foreign market. But on the European scene CNN is well down the cable household's league tables.¹

Like most niche markets, these ones are already under challenge. An unanticipated consequence of CNN's bravura publicity style may be to attract more competition than would otherwise be the case. The BBC's World Service Television (launched in November 1991) is a prestige-seeking service designed to bolster the BBC's reputation as world news leader. (BBC World Service Radio claims a weekly reach of 120 million people.) By late 1991 the BBC offered one satellite TV service for Europe and another for Asia via the Hong Kong-based STAR commercial satellite package. The European service provides mainly entertainment, but the Asian service mixes BBC public affairs, documentaries, and chat shows, with hourly news.

The Asian cable situation is volatile and fast-changing, while the legal position of cable in many countries is unclear. CNN is certainly well ahead, especially in Japan. Early signs are that Indian cable households greatly prefer the BBC to CNN.² The BBC, in partnership with regional satellite broadcasters, plans to offer its service worldwide by 1993. It will probably seek such partners as both Canada and Mexico. But the BBC is risking almost nothing on this service, because it is using domestic programming from its own two British channels, plus Visnews and some extra reports from its existing team of foreign correspondents.

CNN is in a much more vulnerable situation on the world scene. The direct-to-home market potential for both CNN and BBC is probably quite modest. Both services are inevitably parochial, and the international demand for foreign-language cable channels has been shown to be limited. By the end of the decade most of the strongest national markets will probably have their own all-news channels, in some cases run by the traditional national broadcasters. Competition from CNN and BBC may well push national broadcasters into making their own news more objective and more popular.³

Services such as CNN and the BBC World Service News are unlikely to get far beyond the relatively small elite numbers who want (a) an all-news service that is (b) based on another country's parochial domestic output and (c) in English. CNN's main role on the world scene is likely to continue to be that of a supplementary agency service.

¹ For instance, in September 1990, CNN was number 15 in European cable household penetration, with 4.35 million homes (*Cable and Satellite Europe*, 1990).

² In one newspaper survey in New Delhi, cable householders were asked about their "favourite foreign programmes." About 87% quoted BBC news as favorite, as against 13% for CNN news (*The Sunday Poineer*, 1992).

³ Since 1989, Britain has had the Murdoch-controlled Sky News channel available direct to home. Sky News pursues a markedly more tabloid approach than either BBC or ITV news. It focuses heavily on crime. It also uses much WTN and ABC material, including "Nightline," "Good Morning America" at midday, and "ABC News" at 11:30 p.m. In homes receiving the Astra Satellite service, Sky News has a 2% audience share (BBC, 1991c).

Covering News the British Way

In contrast to the U.S. pattern, British media fragmentation and excessive competition are found in the press, while limited commercial competition and "public service" still continue in broadcasting. Deregulatory forces of a kind did change the British media in the 1980s. But these primarily took the form of a relaxation of union power in both press and TV and a move away from vertical integration in television. For both media, 1986 was a key year.

The rapid decline in press union power and employment numbers has accompanied massive ownership changes and the launch of some new national titles. The British national daily press now looks distinctly overcrowded, with five up-market broadsheets and six down-market tabloids joined by yet another tabloid in 1991. The tabloids, which account for nearly 80% of the total 14 million national daily sales, have largely given up any attempt at objective political coverage; they have also, with the partial exception of the *Daily Mail*, given up employing foreign correspondents.

The five up-market broadsheets include a now well-established newcomer, *The Independent*. This daily has a strong commitment to foreign news with a special focus on Eastern Europe. It and three others—*The Times*, *The Guardian*, and the *Daily Telegraph*—continue to be successful competitors, with a strong interest in prestige and foreign news. *The Financial Times* (FT) has much the strongest contingent of its own foreign correspondents; as Europe's leading financial daily and with a third of its daily sales outside Britain, the FT has integrated foreign news, and its numerous foreign correspondents, into its editorial mainstream. This is in line with the foreign/finance news and news/data integration seen in the major agencies.

The Broadcasting Act of 1990, despite its modest deregulatory thrust, ensured that ITN would continue to be the main news provider for the ITV network until the year 2002. There will be several smaller news operations—Sky News on the BSkyB satellite service, a new breakfast ITV news company ("Sunrise") on cable, and a fifth conventional TV channel. But British TV news will continue to be dominated by the BBC and ITN duopoly.

The BBC, in particular, has renewed its commitment to news. The BBC now offers a serious 2 1/2 hours of breakfast news; half-hours of national news at 1 p.m., 6 p.m., and 9 p.m.; and 45 minutes of daily news analysis at 10:30 p.m. The BBC also offers a large range of weekly "current affairs" programs, as well as prime-time weekly documentary series. The ITV network and Channel 4 (and the future Channel Five) also have regulatory requirements for substantial doses of news and other factual programming. By switching between these four channels, a viewer can watch virtually uninterrupted news and news analysis for 5 or 6 hours each evening.

Each side of the duopoly has two TV channels and this greatly reduces the dilemma of whether to have nonstop news. The large existing news

commitment makes a temporary switch to all news relatively simple; the existing programs just double their running lengths. The pattern of two linked BBC channels (without advertising complexities) also makes it possible to run all news on one channel and entertainment on the other.

Regulatory and prestige requirements are supported by the very definition of public-service broadcasting (both BBC and Independent Television Commission models), which was confirmed in the 1990 Act as involving a high ratio of factual programming. In the BBC output, news and current affairs, features, and documentaries (including music, arts, natural history, and religion), sports, and adult education loom large. This factual output takes up over 50% of all BBC TV time. This massive factual sector amounts to over 200 hours per week on the four channels combined. In this sector news has a special place; news per hour is nearly as cheap as imported programming (from Hollywood and increasingly Australia), but of course much more prestigious. There is also the formula now being explored by the U.S. networks, namely, the more news hours you have, the cheaper it gets per hour.

News is also fairly popular in Britain (it comes after home-produced fiction and "light entertainment" and before imported entertainment). Thus, a major continuing presence for news on regular British TV is assured. This heavy supply, and fairly heavy viewing, of TV news does exert a strong influence on the British view of the world. In recent years the TV news has taken more of its news agenda from the tabloid press. But the TV news agenda is closer to that of the serious broadsheet national newspapers, the predominant source for Table 1. Eleven of the 20 most mentioned names in British newspapers in 1990 and 1991 belong to British politicians; there are two Royals (Charles and Diana), one sportsman, and the then U.N. secretary-general. Although Saddam Hussein was third and George Bush eighth in 1991, both Gorbachev and Yeltsin received more coverage than did George Bush in 1991. Gorbachev received the most mentions in 1990 and the second most in 1991.

Although the British media did give more emphasis to the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe in 1990 and 1991, the Gulf War was seen as the leading story in certain months. Predictably, the British media gave heavy emphasis to the British army, air force, and navy units involved in the conflict. The British media did admit that the Allies were under U.S. leadership; General Norman Schwarzkopf was the 35th most mentioned person of 1991 (although Madonna, at 26th, was ahead of him). However, the British coverage claimed various key roles for Britain—Mrs. Thatcher telling George Bush to get tough, the British army as practiced exponents of desert warfare, courageous British pilots trained to attack at low level, British special forces dressed as Arabs deep behind enemy lines, British soldiers killed by "friendly fire" from U.S. aircraft, etc.

Table 1: Most Frequently Mentioned Names in British Newspapers, 1990 and 1991

Name	1990	1991	Change (%)
1. John Major	5,321	10,814	+103
2. Mikhail Gorbachev	6,706	7,871	+ 17
3. Saddam Hussein	5,409	6,664	+ 23
4. Margaret Thatcher	6,114	3,941	- 35
5. Norman Lamont	856	3,820	+346
6. Neil Kinnock	3,022	3,747	+237
7. Boris Yeltsin	1,154	3,227	+180
8. George Bush	2,475	3,227	+ 30
9. Prince Charles	2,450	2,999	+ 22
10. Douglas Hurd	3,818	2,780	- 27
11. Michael Heslaine	3,558	2,640	- 25
12. Paul "Gazza" Gascoigne	1,418	2,255	+ 59
13. Robert Maxwell	1,024	2,234	+118
14. Kenneth Baker	1,677	2,220	+ 32
15. Princess Diana	1,419	1,776	+ 25
16. Peter Lilley	912	1,617	+ 77
17. Kenneth Clarke	1,411	1,614	+ 14
18. Chris Patten	2,016	1,558	- 22
19. Malcolm Rifkind	818	1,401	+ 71
20. Javier Perez de Cuellar	539	1,385	+156

Note: Based on predominantly up-market newspapers, including 6 national dailies, 4 national Sundays, 2 provincial dailies, and 2 specialist weeklies.
Source: *Sunday Times*, January 5, 1992.

Europe as News Superpower

The loose Reuters-Visnews-BBC alliance constitutes the strongest single news entity on the world scene. The United States has several significant news providers on the world scene, especially the AP, ABC-WTN, and the two leading newspaper syndication services. But the strongest single entity is the Reuters-Visnews-BBC alliance. Reuters is the leading news organization in the world, but is seen as being less British than the AP is considered American; Reuters, indeed, does not operate a national news agency service in its home market, and the great bulk of its revenue comes from outside Britain. Presidential palaces, finance ministries, and banks, as well as media around the world, rely on Reuters.

Visnews is 51% Reuters-owned and acquires strength from this connection. The BBC now owns only 11.25% of Visnews, but it previously had a larger share and thus has a tradition of cooperation with both Reuters and Visnews.

The BBC World Service's TV offering, launched in 1991, relies upon Visnews, the BBC's domestic output, and the BBC's own efforts in the foreign news field, which take a number of forms: (a) the BBC has a team of TV foreign correspondents and bureaus; (b) BBC domestic radio has its own separate team of radio correspondents in 20 foreign cities—these radio correspondents are also available to report on television when required; (c) BBC World Service Radio also has its own team of correspondents based in 35 foreign cities, who in turn can be used by the domestic TV and radio services; (d) the BBC has its Monitoring Service which listens in to foreign radio stations; (e) at any one time a number of other BBC factual programs will be filming in various parts of the world. For example, the BBC1 Monday night show, "Panorama," which does 40 single-item 40-minute programs per year, will normally have at least one camera crew filming abroad at any one time.

In the context of the Middle East it is worth remembering that Reuters has been the leading news agency in this area for over 100 years, and Visnews the leading film agency. The BBC's Arabic service was its first foreign-language service, launched in January 1938. London is also a major publication center for Arabic newspapers, some of them exiled from Beirut.

However, perhaps a more important point to make is that U.S. media, especially in serious news, labor under certain disadvantages, and not the least in the Middle East. American media in general tend to favor the "home news abroad" story; in other words they prefer foreign stories with a strong American involvement. This tends to give most American news media an indelible all-American coloring. Several 1990 and 1991 BBC studies conducted in such Mideast countries as Syria, Egypt, and Jordan, indicate that the Voice of America especially is widely seen by Arabs as biased in favor of its client state, Israel. The two most popular foreign radios broadcasting in Arabic are (the French) Radio Monte Carlo and the BBC.

Europe in the 1980s was already on many counts the world's leading supplier and consumer of foreign news. But the decline of communism in Eastern Europe and the breakup of the U.S.S.R. has confirmed this leadership. Eastern and Western Europe together will certainly have the world's biggest collection of major news organizations. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) was already in the 1980s the leading cooperative for news and sports coverage; with the inclusion of Eastern Europe and the former U.S.S.R., the EBU becomes still more important.

Many other multinational cooperatives are grouping within Europe. One such exchange grouping includes elite daily newspapers in 14 West European and 3 East European countries (for example *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *La Stampa*, and *El Mundo*). Each newspaper acquires access to selected output of noncompeting elite newspapers in 16 other countries. This phenomenon is likely to evolve rapidly, but it is in line with ancient European tradition as well as the historical evolution of the AP in the U.S.

West Europeans are already physically close to Eastern Europe; tens of million of West Europeans have traveled in Eastern Europe. But Europe is also closer, in several senses, than is North America to other important news areas such as the Middle East and Africa. Also, French and British media ties in both regions remain strong. Millions of citizens from Arab and African nations already reside in Europe. This means that, for example, French understanding of Islamic fundamentalism, or German understanding of the Kurdish-Turkish issue, or British understanding of South Africa has an element of "home news abroad."

This is not to deny that the United States will continue as a powerful player in the world news scene. Japan, China, and India have had major media industries throughout the 20th century, and Asiavision is already an organization of world importance. Asia may one day inherit the world news leadership. If so, it will inherit from Europe.

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