

The historical context of international communication

The study of contemporary international communication can be illuminated by an understanding of the elements of continuity and change in its development. The nexus of economic, military and political power has always depended on efficient systems of communication, from flags, beacon fires and runners, to ships, telegraph wires and now satellites. The evolution of telegraphic communication and empire in the nineteenth century exemplifies these interrelationships, which continued throughout the twentieth century, even after the end of empire. During two world wars and the cold war, the power and significance of new media – radio and then television – for international communication were demonstrated by their use for international propaganda as well as recognition of their potential for socio-economic development.

Communication and empire

Communication has always been critical to the establishment and maintenance of power over distance. From the Persian, Greek and Roman empires to the British, efficient networks of communication were essential for the imposition of imperial authority, as well as for the international trade and commerce on which they were based. Indeed, the extent of empire could be used as an 'indication of the efficiency of communication' (Innis, [1950] 1972: 9). Communications networks and technologies were key to the mechanics of distributed government, military campaigns and trade.

The Greek historian, Diodorus Cronus (fourth century BC) recounts how the Persian king, Darius I (522–486 BC), who extended the Persian Empire from the Danube to the Indus, could send news from the capital to the provinces by means of a line of shouting men positioned on heights. This kind of transmission was 30 times faster than using runners. In *De Bello Gallico*, Julius Caesar (100–44 BC) reports that the Gauls, using the human voice, could call all their warriors to war in just three days. Using fire at night and smoke or mirrors during the day is mentioned in ancient texts, from the Old Testament to Homer.

While many rulers, including the Greek polis, used inscription for public information, writing became a more flexible and efficient means of conveying information over long distances: 'Rome, Persia and the Great Khan of China all utilised writing in systems of information-gathering and dispersal, creating wide-ranging official postal and dispatch

systems' (Lewis, 1996: 152). It is said that the *Acta Diurna*, founded by Julius Caesar and one of the forerunners of modern news media, was distributed across most of the Roman Empire: 'as communication became more efficient, the possibility of control from the centre became greater' (Lewis, 1996: 156).

The Indian Emperor Ashoka's edicts, inscribed on rock in the third century BC, are found across South Asia, from Afghanistan to Sri Lanka and writ writers had a prominent place in the royal household. During the Mughal period in Indian history, the *waqi'a-nawis* (newswriters) were employed by the kings to appraise them of progress in the empire. Both horsemen and despatch runners transmitted news and reports. In China, the T'ang dynasty (618–907) created a formal handwritten publication, the *ti pao* or 'official newspaper', which disseminated information to the elite, and in the Ching period (1644–1911) private news bureaux sprang up which composed and circulated official news in the printed form known as the *Ch'ing pao* (Smith, 1979).

In addition to official systems of communication, there were also private systems of communication.

Portuguese Empire was one of the first to grasp the importance of the medium for colonial consolidation, with the kings of Portugal sending books in the cargoes of ships carrying explorers. They opened printing presses in the territories they occupied – the first in Goa in 1557 and in Macao in 1588. Other European powers also used the new technology and the printed book played an important role in the colonization of Asia.

The Industrial Revolution in Western Europe, founded on the profits of the growing international commerce encouraged by colonization, gave a huge stimulus to the internationalization of communication. Britain's domination of the sea routes of international commerce was to a large extent due to the pre-eminence of its navy and merchant fleet, a result of pioneering work in the mapping out of naval charts by the great eighteenth-century explorers, such as James Cook, enabled also by the determination of longitude based on the Greenwich meridian. Technological advances such the development of the iron ship, the steam engine and the electric telegraph all helped to keep Britain ahead of its rivals.

The growth of international trade and investment required a constant source of reliable data about international trade and economic affairs, while the British Empire required a steady supply of information essential for maintaining political alliances and military security. Waves of emigration as a result of industrialization and empire helped to create a popular demand for news from relatives at home and abroad, and a general climate of international awareness (Smith, 1980).

The postal reform in England in 1840, initiated by the well-known author, Anthony Trollope as Postmaster General, with the adoption of a single-rate, one penny postage stamp (the Penny Black), irrespective of distance, revolutionized postal systems. This was followed by the establishment of the Universal Postal Union in 1875 in Berne, under the Universal Postal Convention of 1874, created to harmonize international postal rates and to recognize the principle of respect for the secrecy of correspondence. With the innovations in transport of railways and steamships, international links were being established that accelerated the growth of European trade and consolidated colonial empires.

The growth of the telegraph

The second half of the nineteenth century saw an expanding system of imperial communications made possible by the electric telegraph. Invented by Samuel Morse in 1837, the telegraph enabled the rapid transmission of information, as well as ensuring secrecy and code protection. The business community was first to make use of this new technology. The speed and reliability of telegraphy were seen to offer opportunities for profit and international expansion (Headrick, 1991; Hugill, 1999). The rapid development of the telegraph was a crucial feature in the unification of the British Empire. With the first commercial telegraph link set up in Britain in 1838, by 1851 a public telegraph service, including a telegraphic money order system, had been introduced. By the end of the century, as a result of the cable connections, the telegraph allowed the Colonial Office and the India Office to communicate directly with the Empire within minutes when, previously, it had taken months for post to come via sea. By providing spot prices for commodities like

cotton, the telegraph enabled British merchants, exporting cotton from India or Egypt to England, to beat their competitors easily (Read, 1992).

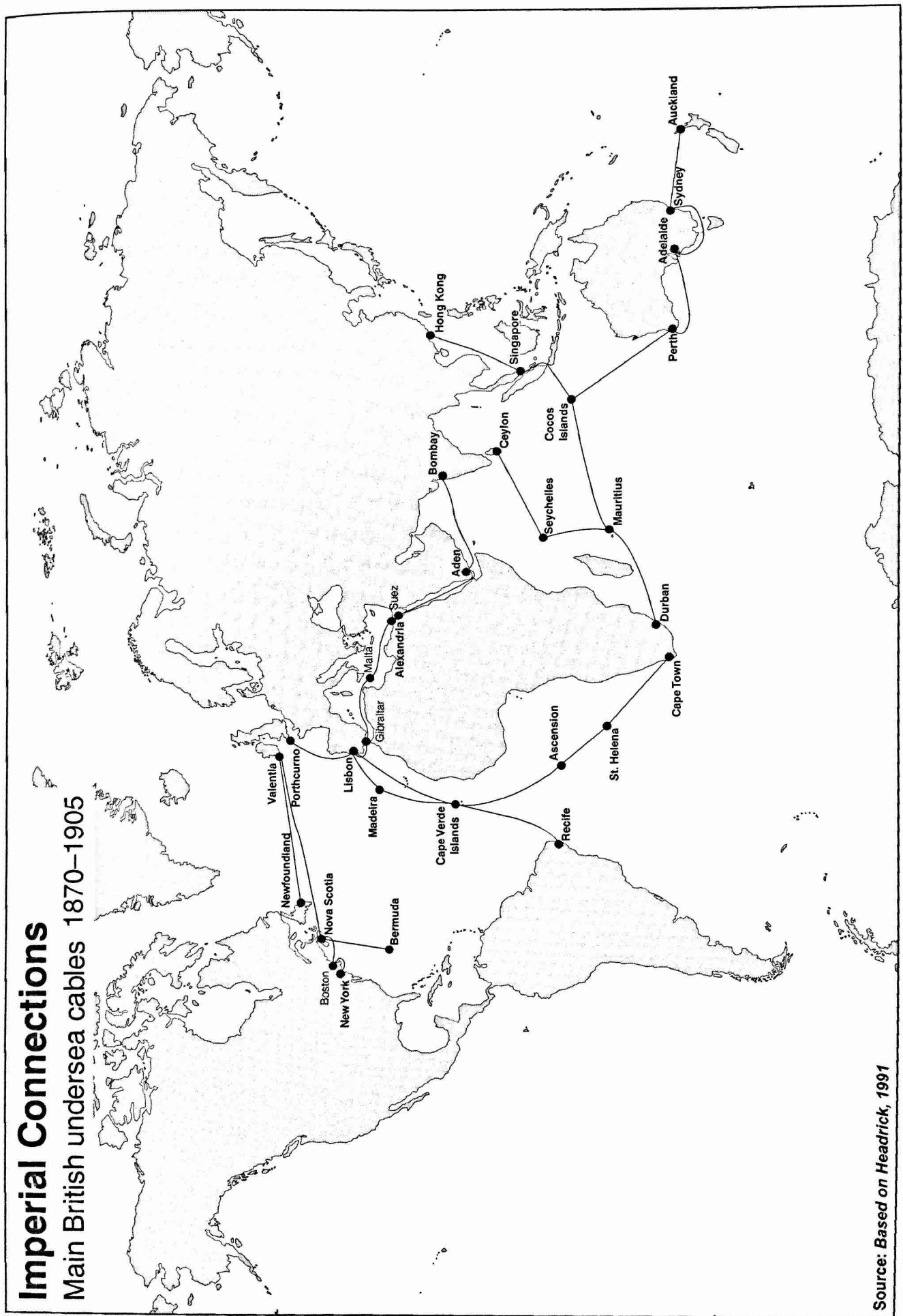
The new technology also had significant military implications. The overhead telegraph, installed in Algeria in 1842, proved a decisive aid to the French during the occupation and colonization of Algeria (Mattelart, 1994). During the Crimean War (1854–56), the rival imperial powers, Britain and France, trying to prevent Russian westward expansion that threatened overland routes to their colonial territories in Asia, exchanged military intelligence through an underwater cable in the Black Sea laid by the British during the conflict. The Crimean conflict was also notable for the pioneering war reports of Irishman William Howard Russell in *The Times* of London, who was to become the first 'big name' in international journalism.

Similarly, during the Civil War in the United States of America (1861–65), over 24,000 kilometres of cable was laid to send more than 6.5 million telegrams. The American Civil War was not only one of the earliest conflicts to be reported extensively, but also the first example both of co-operative news gathering among the American and European journalists, and of the use of photojournalism.

The first underwater telegraphic cable which linked Britain and France became operational in 1851 and the first transatlantic cable, connecting Britain and the USA, in 1866. Between 1851 and 1868, underwater networks were laid down across the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. During the 1860s and 1870s, London was linked up by cable to the key areas of the Empire (*see* map, p. 5). The first line between Europe and India via Turkey was opened in 1865. Two other cables to India – one overland across Russia and the other undersea via Alexandria and Aden – were started in 1870. India was linked to Hong Kong in 1871 and to Australia in 1872, and Shanghai and Tokyo were linked by 1873 (Read, 1992). By the 1870s, telegraph lines were operating within most countries in Asia and an international communication network, dominated by Britain, was beginning to emerge. The expansion of cable was marked by the rivalry between the British and French empires, which intensified after 1869, with the opening of the Suez Canal.

The decade from 1870 to 1880 saw the successive inaugurations of communications links between the English coast and the Dutch East Indies (Batavia), the Caribbean network, the line from the British West Indies to Australia and China, the networks in the China and Japanese seas, the cable from Suez to Aden, communication between Aden and British India, the New Zealand cables, communication between the east and south coasts of Africa, and the cable from Hong Kong to Manila (Read, 1992).

In South America, the south transatlantic cable, opened in 1874, linked Lisbon with Recife, Brazil, via the Cape Verde Islands and Madeira. Two years later, a network was established along the coast of Chile. The British cable of 1874 was joined in 1879 by a new French cable across the North Atlantic, with a spur to Brazil, and by a new German cable from Emden to the Azores to Moravia on the African coast, and from there to Recife. By 1881, a network along the Pacific coast from Mexico to Peru was in operation. In the 1880s, France established a series of links along the coast of Indochina and Africa, with networks in Senegal (Desmond, 1978).



The British-sponsored, Indo-European landline telegraph between India and the Prussian North Sea coast had gone into operation in 1865. The cable had been extended from British shores to Alexandria by 1869, to Bombay in 1870, and other cables had been extended from Madras to Ceylon and from Singapore to Australia and New Zealand by 1873, and also to Hong Kong, Shanghai and the Japanese coast. Connections were made in China in 1896, with a spur of the Great Northern Telegraph Company Danish-owned line across Siberia to Russia and other points in Europe, making possible a Tokyo–Shanghai–St Petersburg–London communications link (Desmond, 1978). Within a quarter of a century, the world's cable networks had more than doubled in length (Hugill, 1999).

Undersea cables required huge capital investment, which was met by colonial authorities and by banks, businessmen and the fast-growing newspaper industry, so that the cable networks were largely in the hands of the private sector. Of the total cable distance of 104,000 miles, not more than 10 per cent was administered by governments. To regulate the growing internationalization of information, the International Telegraph Union was founded in 1865 with 22 members, all European countries apart from Persia, representing 'the first international institution of the modern era and the first organisation for the international regulation of a technical network' (Mattelart, 1994: 9).

According to the International Telegraph Union, the number of telegraphic transmissions in the world shot from 29 million in 1868 to 329 million in 1900 (Mattelart, 1994).

For the first time in history, colonial metropolis acquired the means to communicate almost instantly with their remotest colonies ... The world was more deeply transformed in the nineteenth century than in any previous millennium, and among the transformations few had results as dazzling as the network of communication and transportation that arose to link Europe with the rest of the world.

(Headrick, 1981: 129–30)

Military operations – such as the Japanese-Russian war of 1904–5, were both assisted and reported by the first trans-Pacific cable, which had been completed in 1902, joint property of the governments of Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Canada. It ran from Vancouver to Sydney and Brisbane, by way of Fanning Island, Suva and Norfolk Island, with a spur from Norfolk Island to Auckland. A connection already existed, established in 1873, linking Tokyo and London, with spurs to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Calcutta, Bombay and Alexandria, and with cable and telegraphic spurs by way of Singapore and Batavia to Darwin, Sydney and Auckland, where ties were made to the new trans-Pacific cable to Vancouver.

A second trans-Pacific cable was completed in 1903 by US interests, providing a link between San Francisco and Manila, through Honolulu, to Midway Island and Guam, and from there to the Asian mainland and Japan by existing British cables. All of these landing points were controlled by the United States: the Hawaiian Islands had been a US territory since 1900 and Midway was claimed by it in 1867, while Guam and the Philippines had become US colonies as a result of the 1898 Spanish-American War (Desmond, 1978).

Control over cables as well as sea routes was also of enormous strategic importance in an age of imperial rivalry (Kennedy, 1971). The cables were, in the words of Headrick, 'an essential part of the new imperialism' (1981: 163).

The outcomes of the two imperial wars – the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Boer War (1899–1902) – strengthened the European and US positions in the world and led to a rapid expansion in world trade that demanded immediate and vastly improved communications links, as well as more advanced naval capabilities. The new technology of 'wireless' telegraphy (also called radiotelegraphy) promised to meet these needs.

In 1901 Guglielmo Marconi harnessed the new discovery of electromagnetism to make the first wireless transatlantic telegraph transmission, with support from naval armament companies and newspaper groups. The British Empire had a great technological advantage since the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of Great Britain dominated global telegraph traffic and had a virtual monopoly on international telegraph exchanges, as it refused to communicate with any system other than its own. The operators of a Marconi apparatus were prohibited from responding to radio signals emanating from a non-Marconi transmitter, a policy that had the effect of blocking the exchange of critically important information relating to the safe passage of ships. However, at the Berlin Conference on Wireless Telegraphy in 1906, the first multilateral agreements on radiotelegraphy were signed and the International Radiotelegraph Union was born. By 1907 Marconi's monopoly was being challenged by other European countries as well as the United States.

As Table 1.1 demonstrates, the Anglo-American domination of international communication hardware was well established by the late nineteenth century, with the two countries owning nearly 75 per cent of the world's cables. Much of the global cabling was done by private companies, with Britain's Eastern Telegraph Company and the US-based Western Union Telegraph Company dominating the cable industry. By 1923, private companies had nearly 75 per cent of the global cabling share, with British firms accounting for nearly 43 per cent, followed by American companies, which owned 23 per cent (Headrick, 1991).

Table 1.1 Cabling the world

	1892		1923	
	length (km)	global share (%)	length (km)	global share (%)
British Empire	163,619	66.3	297,802	50.5
United States	38,986	15.8	142,621	24.2
French Empire	21,859	8.9	64,933	11.0
Denmark	13,201	5.3	15,590	2.6
Others	9206	3.7	68,282	11.7
All cables combined	246,871	100.0	589,228	100.0

Source: Based on data from Headrick, 1991

The dominance of British cable companies, which lasted until the end of the First World War, was based on direct control through ownership and indirect control by means of diplomatic censorship, which Britain exercised over the messages travelling through its cables. Britain had a critical advantage in its control of the copper and gutta-percha markets – the raw materials for the manufacture of cable – since the world rates of these were fixed in London and British mining companies owned copper deposits and mines in Chile, the world's biggest producer (Read, 1992).

Colonial governments supported the cable companies, either scientifically by research on maps and navigation, or financially by subsidies. In 1904, 22 of the 25 companies that managed international networks were affiliates of British firms; Britain deployed 25 ships totalling 70,000 tons, while the six vessels of the French cable-fleet amounted to only 7000 tons. As a result, British supremacy over the undersea networks was overwhelming: in 1910, the Empire controlled about half the world total, or 260,000 kilometres. France, which in contrast to the USA and UK, opted for the state administration of cable, controlled no more than 44,000 kilometres (Headrick, 1991; Mattelart, 1994). The importance of cables as the arteries of an international network of information, of intelligence services and of propaganda can be gauged from the fact that the day after the First World War broke out, the British cut both German transatlantic cables (Hugill, 1999).

After the war, the question of who should control Germany's cables, which had been taken over early in the war, one by the British and another by the French, dominated discussions at the 1919 peace talks at Versailles and reflected the rivalry between the British cable companies and the growing US radio interests for ownership and control of global communications networks. The USA argued that the cables be held jointly under international control or trusteeship and that a world congress be convened to consider international aspects of telegraph, cable and radio communication (Luther, 1988).

US companies challenged Britain's supremacy in the field of international cables and telegraph traffic, which, they claimed, gave unfair advantage to British trade. The American view was that the pre-war cable system had 'been built in order to connect the old world commercial centres with world business' and that now was the time to develop 'a new system with the United States as a centre' (cited in Luther, 1988: 20). Weakened by the war in Europe, British companies began to lose their share of global cable to the Americans, who increased their control on international communication channels by leasing cables from them (Hugill, 1999; Hills, 2002).

Unlike cables, the Americans dominated the new technology of telephones. Following the patenting of the telephone by the Bell Telephone Company, established by the inventor of telephony, Alexander Graham Bell in 1877, telephone production increased in the USA. In 1885, American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T), later to become the head office of Bell Systems, was founded and for the next 80 years it succeeded in keeping a near-monopoly over US telecommunications networks.

The first international telephone calls were made between Paris and Brussels in 1887. At the end of the nineteenth century, the USA had the largest number of telephones, largely due to the fact that they were manufactured there. International Western Electric, subsidiary of Western Electric, itself owned by AT&T, was the first multinational network of

production and sales, setting up branches in most European countries, including Britain, Spain, France and Italy, as well as in Japan, China and Australia (Mattelart, 1994). However, the area covered by telephones was very limited – telephone networks acquired a global dimension only in 1956 when the first telephone cable was laid under the Atlantic.

The era of news agencies

The newspaper industry played a significant role in the development of international telegraph networks, to be able to exploit the rapid increase in demand for news, especially the financial information required to conduct international commerce. The establishment of the news agency was the most important development in the newspaper industry of the nineteenth century, altering the process of news dissemination, nationally and internationally. The increasing demand among business clients for commercial information – on businesses, stocks, currencies, commodities, harvests – ensured that news agencies grew in power and reach (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998).

The French Havas Agency (ancestor of AFP) was founded in 1835, the German agency Wolff in 1849 and the British Reuters in 1851. The US agency, Associated Press (AP) was established in 1848, but only the three European agencies began as international ones; not until the turn of the century did an American agency move in this direction. From the start, Reuters made commercial and financial information its speciality, while Havas was to combine information and advertising.

These three European news agencies, Havas, Wolff and Reuters, all of which were subsidized by their respective governments, controlled information markets in Europe and were looking beyond the continent to expand their operations. In 1870 they signed a treaty to divide up the world market between the three of them. The resulting association of agencies (ultimately to include about 30 members), became known variously as the League of Allied Agencies (les Agences Alliées), as the World League of Press Associations, as the National Agencies Alliances, and as the Grand Alliance of Agencies. More commonly, it was referred to simply as the 'Ring Combination' (Desmond, 1978). In the view of some it was a 'cartel', and its influence on world opinion was used by governments to suit their own purposes (Boyd-Barrett, 1980; Mattelart, 1994).

The basic contract, drawn up in 1870, set 'reserved territories' for the three agencies. Each agency made its own separate contracts with national agencies or other subscribers within its own territory. Provision was made for a few 'shared' territories, in which two, sometimes all three agencies had equal rights. In practice, Reuters, whose idea it was, tended to dominate the Ring Combination. Its influence was greatest because its reserved territories were larger or of greater news importance than most others. It also had more staff and stringers throughout the world and so contributed more original news to the pool. British control of cable lines made London itself an unrivalled centre for world news, further enhanced by Britain's wide-ranging commercial, financial and imperial activities (Read, 1992).

In 1890, Wolff, Reuters and Havas signed a new treaty for a further 10 years. Havas emerged stronger than ever – it gained South America as an exclusive territory, and also

Indo-China. Havas yielded its position in Egypt, which became exclusive Reuters territory, but continued to share Belgium and Central America with Reuters. 'The major European agencies were based in imperial capitals. Their expansion outside Europe was intimately associated with the territorial colonialism of the late nineteenth century' (Boyd-Barrett, 1980: 23).

After the First World War, although Wolff ceased to be a world agency, the cartel continued to dominate international news distribution. The first challenge to their monopoly came from AP when it started supplying news to Latin America. With the international news cartel broken by the 1930s, AP and other US agencies, such as United Press (UP), founded in 1907, began to encroach on their terrain. AP began to expand internationally, paralleling political changes in Europe with the weakening of the European empires after the First World War.

Case study

The rise of Reuters

Communication was central to the expansion and consolidation of modern European empires, the largest and the most powerful being the British Empire, which at its height, 1880–1914, dominated a quarter of humanity. The fortunes of Reuters, the most famous international news agency, can be seen to run in parallel with the growth of the British Empire.

The expansion of trade and investment during the nineteenth century had led to a huge growth in the demand for news and contributed to the commercialization of news and information services. Reuters astutely exploited this demand, helped by the new communication technologies, especially the telegraph. For British and other European investors, Reuters telegrams were essential reading for the latest news from various corners of the British Empire and by 1861 these were being published from more than a hundred datelines, including from the major colonies – India, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

By the 1870s, Reuters had offices in all the major strategic points of the empire – Calcutta, Bombay and Point de Galle on the southern tip of Sri Lanka, the end of the cable connecting

Cape Town, Durban, Mombasa, Zanzibar, the Seychelles and Mauritius (Read, 1992).

The expansion of European capitalism had created a pressing need for improved commercial intelligence and, with the development of communication, the value of world trade itself grew more than 25-fold between 1800 and 1913. This relationship between capital and communication was an aspect of what has been called 'the Reuters Factor', which 'functions like a multiplier that turns an increase in the supply of information into an increase in business' (Chanan, 1985: 113).

Reuters also enjoyed very close relationships with the British foreign and colonial administrations. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the agency increasingly functioned 'as an institution of the British Empire' (Read, 1992: 40). As Britain's most important colony, India played a 'central part in the Reuter empire within the British Empire', constituting a major market for commercial news (Read, 1992: 60). Reuters' revenues from India more than trebled from 1898 (£115,00) to 1918 (£352,00) (ibid.: 83).

Though it claimed to be an independent news agency, Reuters was for the most part the unofficial voice of the Empire, giving prominence to British views. This subservience to imperial authority was most prominent during imperial wars such as the Boer War (1899–1902), during which agency reports supported the British cause and the British troops. In the same way Reuters news from India was mostly related to economic and political developments in the Empire and largely ignored the anticolonial movement.

Defending the Empire came naturally to Reuters: in 1910 Reuters started an imperial news service and a year later the agency made a secret arrangement with the British Government under which it offered to circulate on its wires official speeches to every corner of the Empire, in return for an annual fee of £500 from the Colonial Office. During the First World War, Reuters launched a wartime news service by arrangement with the Foreign Office, which by 1917 was circulating about 1 million words per month throughout the Empire.

Reuters' Managing Director during the war years, George Jones, was also in charge of cable and wireless propaganda for the British Department of Information. Though this service was separate from the main Reuters wire service, whose support for the war was more subtle, it rallied opinion within the Empire and influenced the attitudes of the neutral countries. As one British official wrote in 1917, 'At Reuters the work done is that of an independent news agency of an objective character, with propaganda secretly infused' (quoted in Read, 1992: 127–8).

Though this service was discontinued after the end of the war, Reuters entered into another agreement with the Foreign Office under which the agency would circulate specific messages on its international wires, to be paid for by the government. This agreement remained in force until the Second World War. However, apart from support from the government the major reason for the continued success of Reuters was the fact that it 'sold useful information enabling businesses to trade profitably' (Lawrenson and Barber, 1985: 179).

The wider availability of wireless technology after the First World War enabled Reuters in 1920 to launch a trade service, which became a crucial component of the economic life of the Empire. New technology made it easier to send and receive more international industrial and financial information at a faster speed. As the globe was being connected through transoceanic trade, such information – for example, New York prices for Indian cotton – had a high premium for traders who were depending on the accuracy of Reuters commodity prices and stock market news from around the world.

Reuters' domination of international information was helped by its being a member of the cartel and it remained the world news leader between 1870 and 1914. But the weakening of the British Empire and the ascendancy of the USA forced Reuters to compete with the American news agencies, especially Associated Press, with which it signed, in 1942, a wartime news-sharing agreement, effectively creating a new cartel for news. In the post-war period, Reuters continued to focus on commercial information, realizing that in order to succeed in a free trade environment, it had to work towards integration of commodity, currency, equity and financial markets, 'around the clock and around the world' (Tunstall and Palmer, 1991: 46).

By 2006, what had been started in 1851 by entrepreneur Julius Reuter, using pigeons, had become one of the world's largest providers of financial data via the Internet – 90 per cent of its revenue came from selling business information – besides being the world's largest news and television agency.

The advent of popular media

The expansion of printing presses and the internationalization of news agencies during the nineteenth century were key factors contributing to the growth of a worldwide newspaper industry. In 1838 *The Times of India* was founded, while South East Asia's premier newspaper, *The Straits Times*, was started as a daily newspaper from Singapore in 1858. Advances in printing technology meant that newspapers in non-European languages could also be printed and distributed. By 1870 more than 140 newspapers were being printed in Indian languages; *Al-Ahram*, the newspaper which has defined Arab journalism for more than a century, was established in Cairo in 1875, while in 1890, Japan's most respected

newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun* (Morning Sun), was founded. The 1890s in Europe saw a rapid expansion of the popular press – France's *Le Petit Parisien* had a circulation of 1 million in 1890, while in Britain, the *Daily Mail* was launched in 1896 to appeal to a mass readership.

Newspapers were used to articulate the emerging nationalism in many Asian countries. The Chinese nationalist leader Sun Yat Sen founded *Chung-kuo Jih-pao* (Chinese daily paper) in 1899, while in India Mahatma Gandhi used *Young India*, later named *Harijan*, to propagate an anticolonial agenda.

However, it was the USA which had the biggest international impact on media cultures, symbolized by William Randolph Hearst, one of the world's first media moguls. His *New York Journal* introduced the penny press in the USA, while the International News Service, which sold articles, crossword puzzles and comic strips to newspapers, created the world's first syndicate service. It was succeeded in 1915 by the King Feature Syndicate, whose comic strips were used by newspapers all over the world, for most of the twentieth century.

The internationalization of a new mass culture, however, began with the film industry. Following the first screening in Paris and Berlin in 1895, films were being seen a year later from Bombay to Buenos Aires. By the First World War, the European market was dominated by Pathé, founded in 1907 in France, whose distribution bureaux were located in seven European countries, as well as in Turkey, the USA and Brazil. The development of independent studios between 1909 and 1913 led to the growth of the Hollywood film industry, which was to dominate global film production (Mattelart, 1994). In the realm of popular music, the dog and trumpet logo of 'His Master's Voice' (HMV), label of the Gramophone Company, became a global image. Within a few years of the founding of the company, in 1897, its recording engineers were at work in the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, India, Iran and China. By 1906, 60 per cent of the company's profits were earned from overseas sales (Pandit, 1996: 57). After its merger with the US giant Columbia Gramophone Company in 1931, it formed EMI (Electric and Musical Industries), beginning a process of Anglo-American domination of the international recording industry that lasted throughout the twentieth century and beyond.

By the end of the nineteenth century, US-based advertising companies were already looking beyond the domestic market. J. Walter Thompson, for example, established a 'sales bureau' in London in 1899. The USA, where advertising was given its modern form, was an early convert to the power of advertising, making it the world's most consumerist society. The spending on advertising in the USA increased from \$0.45 billion at the start of the century to \$212 billion by its end.

In the twentieth century, advertising became increasingly important in international communication. From the 1901 advertisement for the record label His Master's Voice, to De Beers' hugely popular campaign 'A diamond is forever' put out in 1948, advertisers have aimed at international audiences. This trend became even stronger with the growth of radio and television, with Coca-Cola's 1970 'It's the real thing' and Nike's 1988 slogan 'Just do it' being consumed across the world. The American cowboy and masculine trademark of the Marlboro Man, introduced in 1955 and identified with Philip Morris's Marlboro cigarettes, became a worldwide advertising presence, making Marlboro the best-selling cigarette in the

world. Though tobacco advertisements were banned on US television in 1971 and since then health groups have fought against promoting smoking through advertisement in the USA and other Western countries, the Marlboro Man was nominated as the icon of the twentieth century by the US trade journal *Advertising Age International*.

Radio and international communication

As with other new technologies, Western countries were the first to grasp the strategic implications of radio communication after the first radio transmissions of the human voice in 1902. Unlike cable, radio equipment was comparatively cheap and could be sold on a mass scale. There was also a growing awareness among American businesses that radio, if properly developed and controlled, might be used to undercut the huge advantages of British-dominated international cable links (Luther, 1988). They realized that, while undersea cables and their landing terminals could be vulnerable, and their location required bilateral negotiations between nations, radio waves could travel anywhere, unrestrained by politics or geography.

At the 1906 international radiotelegraph conference in Berlin, 28 states debated radio equipment standards and procedures to minimize interference. The great naval powers, who were also the major users of radio (Britain, Germany, France, the USA and Russia), had imposed a regime of radio frequency allocation, allowing priority to the country that first notified the International Radiotelegraph Union of its intention to use a specific radio frequency (Mattelart, 1994).

As worldwide radio broadcasting grew, stations that transmitted across national borders had to register their use of a particular wavelength with the international secretariat of the International Radiotelegraph Union, in accordance with an agreement signed in London in 1912. But there was no mechanism for either assigning or withholding slots; it was a system of first come, first served. As a result the companies or states with the necessary capital and technology gained control over the limited spectrum space, to the disadvantage of smaller and less developed countries (Hamelink, 1994).

Two distinct types of national radio broadcasting emerged: in the USA, the Radio Act of 1927 confirmed its status as a commercial enterprise, funded by advertising, while the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), founded in 1927, as a non-profit, public broadcasting monopoly, provided a model for several other European and Commonwealth countries (McChesney, 1993).

As the strongest voice in the World Radio Conference in Washington in 1927, private companies helped to write an agreement that allowed them to continue developing their use of the spectrum, without regard to possible signal interference for other countries. By being embodied in an international treaty, these provisions took on the character of 'international law', including the principle of allocating specific wavelengths for particular purposes (Luther, 1988). A major consequence of this conference was to reinforce US and European domination of the international radio spectrum. However, it was the newly formed Soviet Union which became the first nation to exploit this new medium for international broadcasting.

The battle of the airwaves

The strategic significance of international communication grew with the expansion of the new medium of radio. From the outset, its use for propaganda was an integral part of its development, with its power to influence values, beliefs and attitudes (Taylor, 2003). During the First World War, the power of radio was quickly recognized as vital both to the management of public opinion at home and propaganda abroad, directed at allies and enemies alike. As noted by a well-known writer on propaganda: 'During the war period it came to be recognized that the mobilisation of men and means was not sufficient; there must be mobilisation of opinion. Power over opinion, as over life and property, passed in official hands' (Lasswell, 1927: 14).

The Russian communists were one of the earliest political groups to realize the ideological and strategic importance of broadcasting, and the first public broadcast to be recorded in the history of wireless propaganda was by the Council of the People's Commissars of Lenin's historic message on 30 October 1917: 'The All-Russian Congress of Soviets has formed a new Soviet Government. The Government of Kerensky has been overthrown and arrested. Kerensky himself has fled. All official institutions are in the hands of the Soviet Government' (quoted in Hale, 1975: 16).

The Soviet Union was one of the first countries to take advantage of a medium which could reach across continents and national boundaries to an international audience. The world's first short-wave radio broadcasts were sent out from Moscow in 1925. Within five

The Second World War saw an explosion in international broadcasting as a propaganda tool on both sides. Japanese wartime propaganda included short-wave transmissions from *Nippon Hoso Kyokai* (NHK), the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, to South East and East Asia and also to the west coast of the United States, which had a large Japanese-American population. In addition, NHK also transmitted high-quality propaganda programmes such as *Zero Hour*, aimed at US troops in the Pacific islands (Wood, 1992).

Although the BBC, apart from the Empire Service (the precursor of the BBC World Service), was not controlled directly by the British Government, its claim to independence during the war was 'little more than a self-adulatory part of the British myth' (Curran and Seaton, 1996: 147). John Reith, its first Director General and the spirit behind the BBC, was for a time the Minister of Information in 1940 and resented being referred to as 'Dr Goebbels' opposite number' (Hickman, 1995: 29).

The Empire Service had been established in 1932 with the aim of connecting the scattered parts of the British Empire. Funded by the Foreign Office, it tended to reflect the government's public diplomacy. At the beginning of the Second World War, the BBC was broadcasting in seven foreign languages apart from English – Afrikaans, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish (Walker, 1992: 36). By the end of the war it was broadcasting in 39 languages.

The French General de Gaulle used the BBC's French service, during the war years, to send messages to the Resistance movement in occupied France, and for a time between October 1942 and May 1943, the BBC broadcast a weekly 15-minute newsletter to Russia with the co-operation of the Russian news agency TASS (*Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soiuza*). It also broadcast *The Shadow of the Swastika*, the first of a series of dramas about the Nazi Party. The BBC helped the US Army to create the American Forces Network, which broadcast recordings of American shows for US forces in Britain, the Middle East and Africa. More importantly, given Britain's proximity to the war theatre, the BBC played a key role in the propaganda offensive and often it was more effective than American propaganda, which, as British media historian Asa Briggs comments, was 'both distant and yet too brash, too unsophisticated and yet too contrived to challenge the propaganda forces already at work on the continent' (1970: 412).

Until the Second World War radio in the USA was known more for its commercial potential as a vehicle for advertisements than a government propaganda tool, but after 1942, the year the Voice of America (VOA) was founded, the US Government made effective use of radio to promote its political interests – a process which reached its high point during the decades of the cold war.

The cold war – from communist propaganda to capitalist persuasion

The victorious allies of the Second World War – the Soviet Union and the West led by the United States – soon fell out as differences emerged about the post-war order in Europe and the rest of the world (Westad, 2005). The clash was, in essence, about two contrasting views of organizing society: the Soviet view, inspired by Marxism-Leninism, and free-market