

A Constructive Approach To A Global Information Order

THE DECLARATION OF TALLOIRES

*A Statement of Principles to Which an Independent News Media Subscribes,
and On Which It Never Will Compromise*

WHY WAS A CONFERENCE HELD AT TALLOIRES?

For seven years a debate has been conducted in the councils of UNESCO and other international organizations over the media and proposed curbs of press freedom. Those who advocate these controls have pressed for the creation of a so-called New World Information Order which is as yet undefined.

In response the free world media decided to take the initiative and to announce the principles to which a free press subscribes.

To accomplish this a Voices of Freedom conference attended by media leaders from five continents was arranged by Tuft University's Fletcher School of law and Diplomacy at its European center at Talloires, France, May 15-17, 1981, in cooperation with the World Press Freedom Committee.

At this session for the first time Western and other free newspapers, magazines and broadcasters took a united stand against the campaign by the Soviet bloc and some Third World countries to give UNESCO the authority to chart the media's future course.

In a joint declaration adopted unanimously by the 63 delegates from 21 countries, UNESCO was urged to abandon attempts to regulate global information and strive instead for practical solutions to Third World media advancement.

But UNESCO has made known it will proceed with the program, obligated to permit discussions and possible action on proposals unacceptable to the West.

Those attending this historic conference stated that they are "deeply concerned by a growing tendency in many countries and international bodies to put government interests above those of the individual, particularly in regard to information."

The delegates placed emphasis on the continuing needs of the developing media, to which many have given assistance for years.

They pledged to expand the "free flow of information worldwide," and said they would support efforts by international bodies, governments and private agencies to cooperate with the Third World in updating production facilities, and in training.

The declaration provides that "press freedom is a basic human right" to which the conference pledged its support.

The declaration which follows is a statement of the principles adopted:

THE DECLARATION OF TALLOIRES

(Here is the text of the Declaration of Talloires, adopted by leaders of independent news organizations from 21 nations at the Voices of Freedom Conference in Talloires, France, May 15-17, 1981 – a statement of principles to which a free world media subscribes, and on which it never will compromise.)

We journalists from many parts of the world, reporters, editors, photographers, publishers and broadcasters, linked by our mutual dedication to a free press,

Meeting in Talloires, France, from May 15 to 17, 1981, to consider means of improving the free flow of information worldwide, and to demonstrate our resolve to resist any encroachment on this free flow,

Determined to uphold the objectives of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which in Article 19 states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers,”

Mindful of the commitment of the constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to “promote the free flow of ideas by word and image,”

Conscious also that we share a common faith, as stated in the charter of the United Nations, “in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women, and of nations large and small,”

Recalling moreover that the signatories of the final act of the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe concluded in 1975 in Helsinki, Finland, pledged themselves to foster “freer flow and wider dissemination of information of all kinds, to encourage cooperation in the field of information and the exchange of information with other countries, and to improve conditions under which journalists from one participating state exercise their profession in another participating state” and expressed their intention in particular to support “the improvement of the circulation of access to, and exchange of information,”

Declare that:

1. We affirm our commitment to these principles and call upon all international bodies and nations to adhere faithfully to them.
2. We believe that the free flow of information and ideas is essential for mutual understanding and world peace. We consider restraints on the movement of news and information to be contrary to the interests of international understanding, in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the constitution of UNESCO, and the final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe; and inconsistent with the charter of the United Nations.
3. We support the universal human right to be fully informed, which right requires the free circulation of news and opinion. We vigorously oppose any interference with this fundamental right.
4. We insist that free access, by the people and the press, to all sources of information, both official and unofficial, must be assured and reinforced. Denying freedom of the press denies all freedom of the individual.

5. We are aware that governments, in developed and developing countries alike, frequently constrain or otherwise discourage the reporting of information they consider detrimental or embarrassing, and that governments usually invoke the national interest to justify these constraints. We believe, however, that the people's interest, and therefore the interests of the nation, are better served by free and open reporting. From robust public debate grows better understanding of the issues facing a nation and its peoples; and out of understanding greater chances for solutions.
6. We believe in any society that public interest is best served by a variety of independent news media. It is often suggested that some countries cannot support a multiplicity of print journals, radio and television stations because there is said to be a lack of an economic base. Where a variety of independent media is not available for any reason, existing information channels should reflect different points of view.
7. We acknowledge the importance of advertising as a consumer service and in providing financial support for a strong and self-sustaining press. Without financial independence, the press cannot be independent. We adhere to the principle that editorial decisions must be free of advertising influence. We also recognize advertising as an important source of information and opinion.
8. We recognize that new technologies have greatly facilitated the international flow of information and that the news media in many countries have not sufficiently benefited from this progress. We support all efforts by international organizations and other public and private bodies to correct this imbalance and to make this technology available to promote the worldwide advancement of the press and broadcast media and the journalistic profession.
9. We believe that the debate on news and information in modern society that has taken place in UNESCO and other international bodies should now be put to constructive purposes. We reaffirm our views on several specific questions that have arisen in the course of this debate, being convinced that:
 - ◆ Censorship and other forms of arbitrary control of information and opinion should be eliminated; the people's right to news and information should not be abridged.
 - ◆ Access by journalists to diverse sources of news and opinion, official or unofficial, should be without restriction. Such access is inseparable from access of the people to information.
 - ◆ There can be no international code of journalistic ethics; the plurality of views makes this impossible. Codes of journalistic ethics, if adopted within a country, should be formulated by the press itself and should be voluntary in their application. They cannot be formulated, imposed or monitored by governments without becoming an instrument of official control of the press and therefore a denial of press freedom.
 - ◆ Members of the press should enjoy the full protection of national and international law. We seek no special protection or any special status and oppose any proposals that would control journalists in the name of protecting them.
 - ◆ There should be no restriction on any person's freedom to practice journalism. Journalists should be free to form organizations to protect their professional interests.
 - ◆ Licensing of journalists by national or international bodies should not be sanctioned, nor should special requirements be demanded of journalists in lieu of licensing them. Such measures submit journalists to controls and pressures inconsistent with a free press.
 - ◆ The press's professional responsibility is the pursuit of truth. To legislate or otherwise mandate responsibilities for the press is to destroy its independence. The ultimate guarantor of journalistic responsibility is to the free exchange of ideas.
 - ◆ All journalistic freedoms should apply equally to the print and broadcast media. Since the broadcast media are the primary purveyors of news and information in many countries, there is particular need for nations to keep their broadcast channels open to the free transmission of news and opinions.
10. We pledge cooperation in all genuine efforts to expand the free flow of information worldwide. We believe the time has come within UNESCO and other intergovernmental bodies to abandon attempts to regulate

news content and formulate rules for the press. Efforts should be directed instead to finding practical solutions to the problems before us, such as improving technological progress, increasing professional interchanges and equipment transfers, reducing communication tariffs, producing cheaper newsprint and eliminating other barriers to the development of news media capabilities.

Our interests as members of the press, whether from the developed or developing countries, are essentially the same: Ours is a joint dedication to the freest, most accurate and impartial information that is within our professional capability to produce and distribute. We reject the view of press theoreticians and those national or international officials who claim that while people in some countries are ready for a free press, those in other countries are insufficiently developed to enjoy that freedom.

We are deeply concerned by a growing tendency in many countries and in international bodies to put government interests above those of the individual, particularly in regard to information. We believe that the state exists for the individual and has a duty to uphold individual rights. We believe that the ultimate definition of a free press lies not in the actions of governments or international bodies, but rather in the professionalism, vigor and courage of individual journalists.

Press freedom is a basic human right. We pledge ourselves to concerted action to uphold this right.

TALLOIRES PARTICIPANTS

Delegates who attended the Voices of Freedom Conference of Independent News Media, in Talloires, France, May 15-17, 1981, were:

- ◆ V.O. Adefela, News Agency of Nigeria
- ◆ Horacio Aguirre, (Inter American Press Association), Diario Las Americas, Miami
- ◆ Robert C. Amerson (Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy), Center for International Business, Medford, Mass.
- ◆ Harold W. Andersen (World Press Freedom Committee), Omaha World-Herald
- ◆ Jean D'Arcy (International Institute of Communication), Paris
- ◆ Lord Ardwick of Barnes (Commonwealth Press Union), London
- ◆ Maribel Bahia, International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ), Paris
- ◆ R. Balakrishnan, Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, Kuala Lumpur
- ◆ Frank Batten, Landmark Communications, Inc., Norfolk, Va.
- ◆ George Beebe (World Press Freedom Committee), Miami Herald
- ◆ Dr. Hans Benirschke, Deutsche Presse-Agentur, Hamburg
- ◆ B. Brandolini d'Adda (International Federation of the Periodical Press), Milan
- ◆ Dana Bullen, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford
- ◆ Oliver F. Clarke, The Daily Gleaner, Jamaica
- ◆ Pedro Crespo de Lara, Asociacion de Editores de Diarios Espanoles, Madrid
- ◆ Anthony Day (American Society of Newspaper Editors), Los Angeles Times
- ◆ Jonathan Fenby, Paris
- ◆ Don Ferguson (North American National Broadcasters Association), Toronto
- ◆ Julio C. Ferreira de Mesquita (Inter American Press Association), Sao Paulo
- ◆ Keith Fuller, Associated Press, New York
- ◆ Peter Galliner, International Press Institute, London
- ◆ Andres Garcia Lavin (Inter American Press Association), Novedades de Yucatan, Merida, Mexico
- ◆ Murray J. Gart, Washington Star
- ◆ Dr. Mohamed Abdel Gawad, Middle East News Agency, Cairo, Egypt
- ◆ Henry A. Grunwald, Time Inc., New York

- ◆ Stephen Hearst, British Broadcasting Corporation, London
- ◆ Argentina S. Hills (American Society of Newspaper Editors), Miami and San Juan
- ◆ Lee Hills (American Society of Newspaper Editors and Society of Professional Journalists), Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Inc., Miami
- ◆ Fritz Hondius, Council of Europe, Strasbourg
- ◆ Toshio Horikawa (Nihon Shinbun Kyokai), Tokyo
- ◆ Julius Humi, United Press International, London
- ◆ Cushrow Irani (International Press Institute), The Statesman, Calcutta
- ◆ Manuel Jimenez (Central American News Agency), La Nacion, Costa Rica
- ◆ Alma Kadragic (Women in Communications), ABC News, New York
- ◆ Gerald Long, The Times Newspapers, London
- ◆ K. Prescott Low (American Newspaper Publishers Association), Quincy Patriot-Ledger
- ◆ Arch L. Madsen (National Association of Broadcasters), Bonneville International Corp., Salt Lake City
- ◆ Leonard H. Marks (World Press Freedom Committee), Washington
- ◆ Georges-Henri Martin, Tribune de Geneve, Geneva
- ◆ Lord McGregor of Durris (University of London)
- ◆ Simopekka Nortamo (International Press Institute) Helsingin Sanomat, Helsinki
- ◆ Dr. Sid-Ahmed Nugdalla, University of Khartoum
- ◆ Henri Pigeat, Agence France-Presse, Paris
- ◆ Philip H. Power (World Press Freedom Committee), Suburban Communications Corp., Ann Arbor, Michigan
- ◆ Sarah Goddard Power, Ann Arbor
- ◆ Curtis Prendergast (World Press Freedom Committee), Time Inc., New York
- ◆ Joseph P. Rawley (American Newspaper Publishers Association), High Point Enterprise, NC
- ◆ Rosemary Righter, London Sunday Times
- ◆ Mort Rosenblum, Paris
- ◆ Murray Rossant, Twentieth Century Fund, New York
- ◆ Hewson A. Ryan, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford
- ◆ Michel Saint-Pol, Agence France-Presse, Paris
- ◆ Victor de la Serna, Asociacion de Editores de Diarios Espanoles, Madrid
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- ◆ H.L. Stevenson, United Press International, New York
- ◆ Dr. Robert Stevenson, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- ◆ Leonard Sussman, Freedom House, New York
- ◆ Stanley M. Swinton, Associated Press, New York
- ◆ Frans Vink (International Federation of Newspaper Publishers), Het Laatste Nieuws, Brussels
- ◆ Walter N. Wells, International Herald Tribune, Paris
- ◆ Dr. Brigitte Weyl (International Federation of Newspaper Publishers), Konstanz
- ◆ Hector Wynter, The Daily Gleaner, Jamaica

Other organizations invited which were unable to arrange for representation, included:

International Federation of Journalists, European Broadcasting Union, Asia-Pacific Broadcasters, Newspaper Guild and Canadian Daily Newspaper Association.

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