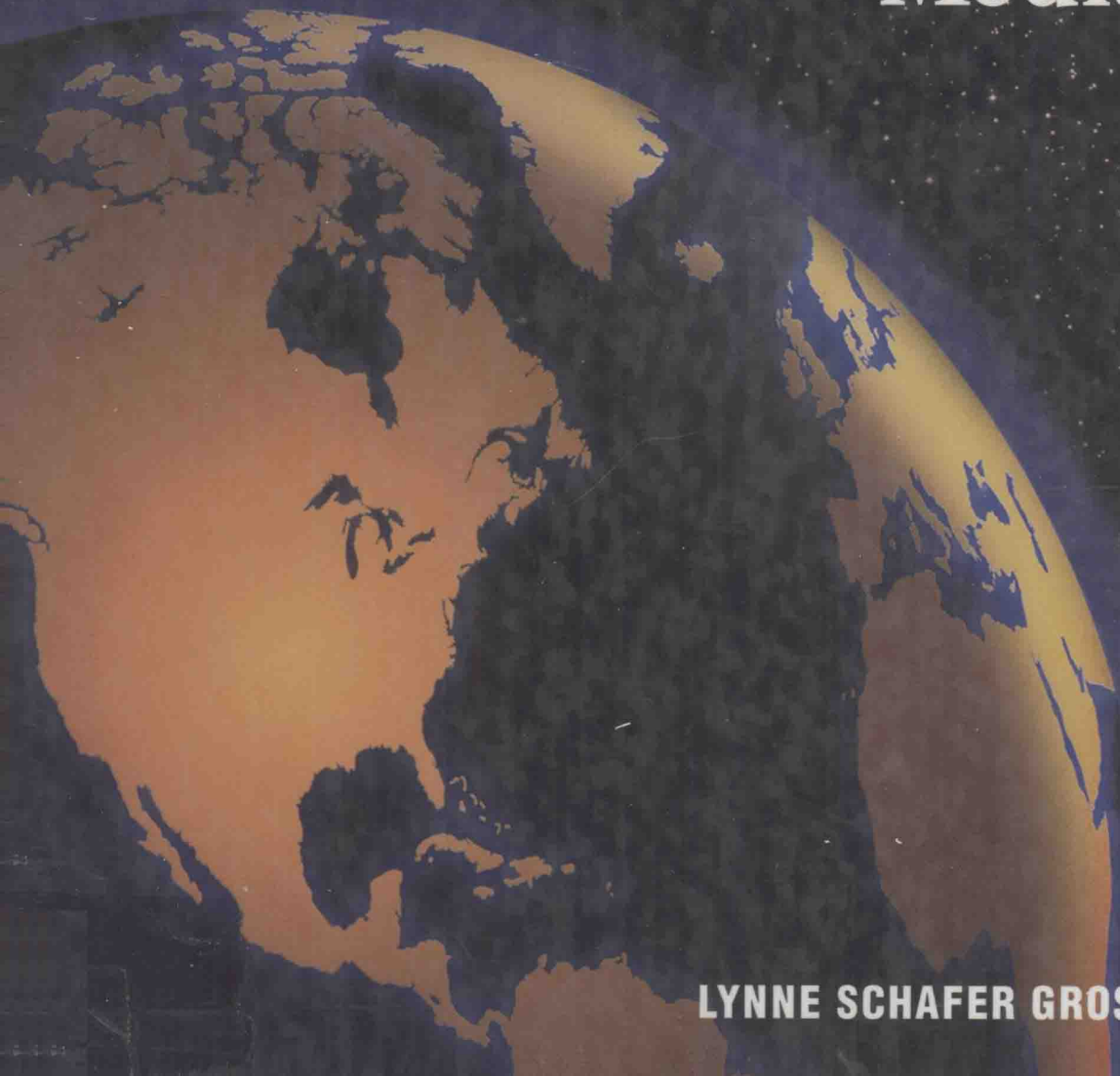
The International World of Electronic Media



LYNNE SCHAFER GROSS

THE INTERNATIONAL WORLD OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

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PREFACE

This book was born through a union of a love of travel and of radio and television. As I have worked in various countries, I have been struck by the similarities and differences in media around the world and by the rapidly changing nature of the electronic media.

Although I have wanted to write a book about the international electronic media scene for some time, I knew I could never catch the moving target and write something that was up-to-date about a large number of countries. I decided instead to ask experts in the media of particular countries to write chapters for the book.

As the chapters came in and I began perusing them, I was very happy with my decision to involve all of these writers. To me, the introspection they have brought to the chapters is fascinating. I hope you agree. Because most of the authors are natives of the countries about which they write, they convey not only the facts about their electronic media systems but also the attitudes and subtle pressures. How something is said is often as revealing as what is said.

This book is a kaleidoscope of information about various countries, but it is also a snapshot in time. With a topic such as this, it is difficult to keep up-to-date, but the authors and I tried to update material as close to deadline as possible. Between the date the chapters were originally due and the date of publication, one of the countries selected was divided into two and a number of the organizations referred to went bankrupt, merged, or expanded into forms very unlike their former selves. However, the information is as up-to-date as possible and the political ramifications discussed point the way toward the changes that have occurred and are likely to continue to occur.

FEATURES OF THE BOOK

Several special features set this book apart from others that cover international electronic media. Some of these features are the following:

- Each section of the world is introduced with a brief overview that indicates the general traits and trends in that part of the world. This enables readers to place the material of the individual chapters into a regional context.
- Each overview includes a map of the section of the world being considered, with details shown for each country that is discussed. A country's media attitude is influenced by its relationship with its neighbors.
- At the beginning of each chapter is a list of some basic statistics about the country—geographic area, capital, population, religions, languages, type of government, gross domestic product, literacy. The statistics are the same for each country, allowing for ease of comparison. This background is needed in order to understand the media structure. For example, the amount of wealth a country has determines what type of radio and TV facilities it can afford; the form of government influences the amount of control the state has over the press and the type of news that is broadcast.
- The chapters are written by authors with outstanding credentials. They have lived in, worked in, and/or taught courses on the media in the countries about which they write.
- Information about some of the countries has not been previously published. This is particularly true of the Eastern European countries that recently emerged from years of censorship and totalitarian control. The authors now feel free to tell what actually happened in the past.
- The chapter organization allows for easy comparison of the various countries because all chapters contain the same overriding topics. This lends itself well to compare-and-contrast discussions and essay questions.
- The book includes a map of the world that highlights the countries that are discussed in detail in the text. This will help students pinpoint the location of each country in relationship to the rest of the world.
- Photographs and tables illustrate points discussed in the text and allow readers to obtain more of a sense of the physical environment of each country.
- Each chapter includes a selected bibliography for those who wish to read further.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book begins with an introductory chapter that covers the importance of media on the international scene and the importance of the world community in the development of electronic media. It lays the groundwork for many of the issues discussed in succeeding chapters.

After that, the organization is according to areas of the world—North America, South America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Australasia. For each area, I have written an overview that includes philosophical underpinnings, generalizations, and a number of specifics for countries not covered in detail. This is followed by information about one or more representative countries from the area, discussed thoroughly by the author of each chapter.

All of the chapters are organized under the same major headings: general characteristics of the country; the development of electronic media in the particular country; organization and financing; programming; laws and regulations; the audience; technology; external services; the importance in the world media community; and the major electronic media issues facing the country. The inclusion of these topics should enable readers to compare and contrast the electronic media characteristics of the various countries.

At the end of the book there is a short epilogue that ties together various points brought out in the chapters and raises issues for the future.

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I am indebted not only to all the chapter authors but also to many others who have given me guidance and information, particularly Richard Barton, Pennsylvania State University; Clay Carter, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo; Prudence Faxon, California Polytechnic University, Pomona; Joe Foote, Southern Illinois University; John Gregory, Pasadena City College; Nishan Havandjian, California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo; Brian Litman; George Mastroianni, California State University, Fullerton; Brian Pauling, New Zealand Broadcasting School in Christchurch; Paul Prince, Kansas State University; Paul Smeyak, University of Florida; George Whitehouse, University of South Dakota; Manfred Wolfram, University of Cincinnati; and Fran Marino and Hilary Jackson of McGraw-Hill. I would also like to thank my husband for his help and patience as he has accompanied me on some of my information-gathering trips.

Lynne Schafer Gross

THE INTERNATIONAL WORLD OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

The Importance of Electronic Media Throughout the World

A FEW RADIO AND TELEVISION TALES

When Polish leader Lech Walesa was asked what had caused the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, he pointed to a TV set and said, "It all came from there."

In largely Islamic Turkey, two Muslim parents locked their daughter in the house because she had appeared on the TV program *Saklambac* without their permission. *Saklambac* is a local version of *The Dating Game* produced under a licensing agreement with the show's U.S. creator, Chuck Barris. The parents objected to the fact that their daughter had talked to strange men.

For several years during the 1980s, British viewer polls found that Steven Spielberg's 1983 film *E.T.* was consistently voted the most popular videocassette. Not an unusual finding, except that *E.T.* had not yet been legally released on videocassette in England. The viewers were seeing pirated tapes.

A Chinese intellectual imprisoned in China in 1989 made a list of complaints about his captors. One was that he hadn't been read his rights the way they do it on the television show *Hunter*.

The disc jockey banters in English and takes telephone requests for Madonna, Michael Jackson, and other top-40 artists. Then comes the traffic report that gives away the location. It's not the Hollywood Freeway that's backed up; it's Chien-Kuo Road in Taipei, Taiwan.

At the Vatican, Archbishop John Foley rises by 6 A.M. to watch CNN so that he knows what to pray for.

These stories, and many others like them, point out the ramifications of the global flow of information and the importance placed upon electronic media in all countries.

Back in the 1960s, a Canadian professor, Marshall McLuhan, predicted that television would create a "global village." In his words, " 'Time' has ceased, 'space' has vanished. We now live in . . . a simultaneous happening." McLuhan's prophesies are becoming more and more true each day.

But all is not perfect within this simultaneous happening. The proliferation and importance of the electronic media has its downsides and its controversies. The bulk of this book will discuss individual countries and how they organize and operate radio and TV and deal with the issues

they face in relation to media interactions with the rest of the world. This chapter will look at issues from a global point of view, discussing the background information, pros, cons, and gray areas that color the effectiveness and acceptance of the media.

Major among the issues are the free flow of information versus the need for national identity, the effects of global journalism, the ramifications of entertainment program exchange, the impact of satellites, the influence of the videocassette recorder (VCR), the growth of global advertising, the power of multinational media companies, and the problems related to technical standards.

THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION VERSUS THE NEED FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY

The issue of free flow of information versus national identity is one that encompasses virtually all other issues related to the globalization of radio and TV. On the free-flow side are those who feel that any country or media organization that wants to should be able to send media information to the people of any other country. On the national identity side are those who feel that each country should decide for itself what information should be allowed to enter its borders.

The Basis of the Arguments Not surprisingly, the main advocate of free flow is the United States, followed by the countries of Western Europe. The feeling among these countries is that when unimpeded communications traffic is allowed, people everywhere benefit. Not so, say the advocates for national identity. What happens when free flow is allowed, they claim, is that the rich industrial countries do all the sending and the poor developing countries do all the receiving. This gives people in the have-not countries a slanted view and tends to make their national cultural, psychological, and political values irrelevant. It also corrupts people in poorer countries and makes them want products and services they don't need and can't afford. "Nonsense," counter the free-flow advocates. "People are not that gullible and passive. They don't just sit there and absorb through osmosis everything they see and hear from the media. The power of the sender is not nearly as potent as the power of the receiver. In fact, when there are attempts by the industrial powers to influence other countries, these attempts often backfire. People are much more influenced by those around them than they are by the media."

Of course, where a nation stands on the issue of free flow depends largely on where it sits. The countries in what is often referred to as the Third World have distinctly different ideas than countries in the First World. (Until the breakup of communism, politicians and the media often referred to the First, Second, and Third Worlds. The First World consisted of the industrialized capitalistic countries such as the United States, England, and Japan. The Second World was the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Third World consisted of poorer, developing countries such as Nigeria and Pakistan that the First and Second World countries often tried to court into their political camps. With the downfall of communism in Eastern Europe, the Second World really no longer exists. The term "First World" is not used much any more, but the term "Third World" is still used to describe nations with relatively low living standards.)

Most of these Third World nations threw off their colonial status in the 1950s and 1960s and are now in the process of trying to develop their own unique political and economic systems. They worry that their native customs, which they value, will be destroyed if young people from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe become Madonna wanna-bes. They feel the power of the media and contend that it strengthens the strong and weakens the weak. All nations, even the ones that cannot afford it, feel the need to devel-

op a national broadcasting system, much as they feel the need to have a national airline (be it only one airplane) or a national army.

The industrialized nations, particularly the United States, have a history of free flow within their own borders. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of the press. Americans are used to advocacy journalism on the part of their reporters and often value the rights of the communicator more than the rights of those being communicated about—political campaigns where reporters try to uncover every flaw in a candidate are a case in point. It is difficult for people raised in the United States to imagine that anyone, anywhere else in the world, wouldn't want freedom of expression. Other industrial nations, although they do not share the degree of democracy present in the United States, still feel that they are doing Third World nations a favor by helping them obtain culture and information. Western Europeans, with their colonial history, and Japanese, with their work ethic, feel the need for and the appropriateness of influencing others.

The argument of free flow versus national identity is not new. When the telegraph was introduced in the late 1800s, some people feared that national sovereignty would be threatened and European versions of news would dominate. And history has shown that the growth of radio and television has strengthened the demand for democracy and spread popular (American and Western European) culture.

A major platform for the free flow versus national identity debate was created by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) during the 1970s. Most of the Third World countries had emerged from colonialism and were being courted by the First and Second Worlds. Although they were receptive to financial help from either of the powerful sides, these countries wanted their own autonomy and the potential to develop into powerful entities. During the late 1960s and early 1970s several statements had been issued calling for world equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest, and cooperation among states regardless of their economic and social structures. High among the desires of Third World leaders was access to communication technologies. They were opposed to the idea of free flow because they felt it brought a new type of colonization—electronic colonization.

The New World Information Order

UNESCO set up an International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems made up of representatives of the First, Second, and Third Worlds in an attempt to create a New World Information Order (NWIO). It tackled the complexities, changing realities, dilemmas, contradictions, and possible solutions concerning the world's communication structure. The commission's report (often referred to as the MacBride report because Sean MacBride of Ireland was the chairman) was issued early in 1980 and formally titled *Many Voices, One World: Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow*.

The report favored free flow but softened the concept by calling for free flow with a wider, more balanced dissemination. It strongly suggested that the Third World be provided with the means to contribute as well as to receive. It addressed new technologies such as computers, satellites, and data banks and recommended that have-nots should have access to these technologies but needed to proceed carefully so that negative effects were not experienced. It advocated training programs for Third World journalists and supported the idea of grassroots citizen groups involved in media. The commission came out against the general concept of censorship but was opposed to a journalistic code for the entire world that would incorporate anticensorship provisions.

The MacBride report was hailed as the first international document that provided a truly global view of the world's communication prob-

lems. But of course it was also criticized by both sides. Those on the Third World side felt the document didn't go far enough in supporting developing countries. They also feared that the recommendations for training and new technologies would lead to greater dependency of the weak on the strong and would strengthen transnational corporations. Others, particularly U.S. journalists, were upset about the weakness of the free-flow compromise and issued a dissenting document, the Declaration of Talloires (drawn up in Talloires, France) that asserted the importance of advertising and took out the word "balanced" in discussing the dissemination of information. It stated instead that everyone had a universal right to be freely informed.

The issues related to the NWIO have never been resolved and are still being debated more than 10 years after the MacBride report was issued. They relate to a great deal of what has transpired regarding technology, advertising, international media corporations, and programming in both the journalism and the entertainment categories.

THE EFFECTS OF GLOBAL JOURNALISM

Modern television has changed the way that politics and world affairs are conducted. To the extent that the free-flow argument has won (and it seems to have the upper hand), nations now find it much harder to keep their people in the dark about news—even about events occurring in their own country. National leaders find they must be responsive to world opinion, not just feedback from their own constituents.

The Shrinking of Time One of the major media factors that affects the conduct of politics is the shrinking of time. As recently as the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy had 6 days to ponder what to do before going public about the Cuban missile crisis. In 1991 during the Persian Gulf conflict, President George Bush was lucky to have 6 hours before having to make a major decision. Vietnamese war news, as powerful as it appeared, was actually several days late because film had to be flown out of Vietnam before it could be transmitted. Now, in the age of satellites and miniature TV cameras, the remotest of riots, floods, and famines can be viewed worldwide while they are happening.

This places great responsibility upon reporters to be accurate and thorough, which is difficult to accomplish when everything is happening quickly. Although pictures usually don't lie, very often a journalist's interpretation or selection of video events can jell worldwide public opinion. And these opinions jell sooner than they would otherwise because of the speed of modern electronic media. TV has managed to shorten the time between action and thought and between thought and action. Reporters attempting to obtain a "scoop" and gather information faster and better than reporters in another country or in another organization within their own country have an ethical responsibility to make sure they are reporting in a responsible manner that will not inflame international tensions.

Terrorism Journalists are also faced with ethical dilemmas in relation to international terrorism. Terrorism is legitimate news; it is rare, unexpected, violent, and intense. However, because of the media, terrorism has often become theater—played out on an international stage. Terrorists seek out the media and rely on the coverage and the resulting publicity. As the media broadcast the events, the world learns what the terrorists want and what is important to them. Journalists pursue a multitude of angles and often wind up explaining the terrorists' demands and issues more fully than any of these outlaws could have hoped.

Occasionally this leads to world understanding, but often it simply encourages other terrorists to undertake crimes, hoping for the same media exposure. When perpetrators of terror demand time on the airwaves, journalists are

caught in a tight bind. Giving time encourages the crime and others similar to it; refusing to give time usually endangers innocent people who are being held hostage. In these cases, the media become part of the event, not just the reporters of it.

News Providers A large number of organizations provide news to the international community. Individual countries or regions have their own news services that emphasize national and international events that are most likely to be of interest to them. The Africa News Service, British Information Service, and Xinhua News Agency (China) are examples.

Several truly international television news services exist, primarily VisNews (often referred to as Reuters Television) and World Television News. The former is owned by Reuters (a British company), NBC, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and the latter by Capital Cities/ABC, Nine Network in Australia, and ITN (a British news service). Although these companies have multinational owners, they are all from well-developed industrial countries, a fact that is not lost on lesser-developed nations.

In addition, regularly scheduled newscasts of one country often appear in another country. Mexican newscasts are shown on Spanish-language stations in a variety of countries. CBS, NBC, and ABC evening newscasts are broadcast in many countries (with subtitles in non-English-speaking nations.) These newscasts are not shown in national prime-time periods (in fact, they are often shown in the middle of the night), but people in other countries who want to hear the U.S. version of news can do so. The same is true for BBC news.

A large number of the world's nations operate government-run external services (to be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters) with the specific mission of broadcasting news and information, intertwined with entertainment, in such a way that it presents the host country in a good light to other specifically targeted countries and delivers to these countries information they are probably not getting from their own governments. The radio service Voice of America and the television service Worldnet are U.S. examples. Other countries with extensive external broadcasting include Britain and China.

Cable News Network The titan in supplying news to the entire world, however, is Cable News Network (CNN). Formed in 1980 by U.S. entrepreneur Ted Turner, its concept of 24-hour news was considered harebrained by most of the news establishment. However, 10 years later Turner was laughing all the way to the bank as his brainchild's profits soared to $134 million. Although CNN started as a cable TV network for viewers in the United States, Turner had internationalism in mind from the beginning. When the service went worldwide in the mid-1980s, entities in various countries slowly but surely subscribed to (or bootlegged) the satellite feeds until today close to 150 countries air CNN. When major news events occur, CNN's subscriber list increases dramatically. For example, after the 1987 stock market crash, numerous banks and security firms around the world bought the service.

Although in some countries CNN is available to the general public through broadcast or cable TV (this accounts for the taxi driver in Poland who claims he learned English from anchor Bobbie Battista), in other countries it is seen only by national leaders who have satellite dishes or by people staying in hotel rooms that are wired to receive it. And this popularity with the movers and shakers of the world has made it all the more powerful.

It has been watched regularly by Fidel Castro, Margaret Thatcher, Muammar Kaddafi, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia when he has insomnia, and George Bush, who, while he was president, once quipped, "I learn more from CNN than I do from the CIA."

Because of its continuous coverage, it is always at or close to the scene of news. While most news services are shutting down international bureaus and laying off people, CNN is opening new bureaus and increasing its staff, which is presently over 1700. Where it does not have its own correspondents, it has developed relationships with local stations that feed reports to CNN. As a result, it has become known for being first with breaking news and, much to its credit, is watched by other journalistic organizations (ABC, CBS, NBC, BBC), which get leads for their own stories from it.

One of CNN's most intriguing concepts is *CNN World Report*, a truly international newscast. Each of about 100 contributing news disseminators sends in a weekly piece about its country, which then entitles it to use anything submitted about other countries. These can be major national stories such as the merger of South Yemen and North Yemen, or softer feature material such as a change in perfume manufacturing.

Another of CNN's contributions to international journalism has been U.S.-style reporting. Newscasts from many nations consisted of long (and boring, by American standards) stories about events such as the prime minister's wife giving toys to children in hospitals or factory workers receiving awards for high productivity. The footage was largely unedited and often contained talking-head speeches—the minister of transportation with a 10-minute justification for lowering the speed limit, for example. Now that the world's journalists have seen zippy U.S. newscasts, the "sound bite" and flashy editing have been added to evening newscasts around the world.

Of course, something as omnipotent as CNN is not without its detractors. Who is to say that short, snappy stories are superior to long, complete ones. Like other news networks, it has

CNN newscasts are seen throughout the world. Shown here is news anchor Susan Rook. (© *1994 Cable News Network, Inc. All rights reserved*)

been criticized for its coverage of terrorism and its occasional tendency to hype the importance of rather minor occurrences. But the most vociferous criticisms have revolved around its Americanism, or lack thereof. People in other countries tend to think it is too American and accuse it of practicing cultural imperialism. Some say that although it is a channel that claims to have a global vocation, it views the world through an American prism. A number of U.S. organizations, on the other hand, feel that it is too internationalized and often neglects to give the American point of view. In fact, during the Persian Gulf conflict, CNN correspondent Peter Arnett, the only Western news reporter permitted to stay in Baghdad, was accused of becoming a messenger for the Iraqi point of view.

Something as successful as CNN is not likely to go unchallenged. The BBC has already started World Service Television as a competitor to CNN, and other would-be 24-hour worldwide news services are in the planning stages. However, CNN has an undisputed spot in history. It more than any other single entity has brought the world closer to Marshall McLuhan's "global village."

THE RAMIFICATIONS OF ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM EXCHANGE

Most countries, since the inception of their television systems, have aired entertainment programs produced in other countries. The granddaddy of program suppliers has been the United States, which during the early days of television sold more programming overseas than all other countries combined.

Early Television The reasons for programming dominance by the United States are multitudinous. The major growth of television occurred after World War II. The United States, which had not been physically attacked during the war, did not have to devote itself to reconstructing its cities as much of Europe did. As a result, it was free to pursue other endeavors—one of which was the development of television programming. When other countries got around to building TV systems, they found that purchasing programs from the United States was much cheaper than producing them themselves. They could produce a few of their own information programs and fill the rest of the schedule with American entertainment shows. The United States, being a wealthy country, could also afford to keep cranking out new programming year after year, for itself and for the rest of the world.

U.S. producers were accommodating. During the early days of TV, shows broke even or made money simply by being shown on ABC, CBS, or NBC. Foreign sales were pure gravy. Therefore programmers were willing to sell their programs for whatever foreign countries could pay. A wealthy European country such as France might pay $50,000 for the same programming material that was sold to a poor country such as India for $500. *I Love Lucy* was so popular in India that many of that generation's baby girls were named Lucy.

Another reason for U.S. success was that the type of entertainment programming Americans produced was popular with people around the world. The fun, danger, and challenge built into this programming had universal appeal.

Other countries were also involved in international entertainment programming distribution during the early days. The Soviet Union sent programming to the Eastern European Communist countries, most of which did not partake at all of American programming. Shows from the BBC were presented in many countries, and Brazilian soap operas were particularly popular in Latin countries, but the domination of the United States was unsurpassed.

Early Radio Radio programming has had a different evolution. The technology is relatively inexpensive, and so most nations could afford to

The claim has been made that *I Love Lucy* is being shown somewhere in the world every minute of every day. (© *Viacom*)

supply their own programming. Also, the language problem is more acute with radio than with TV. While TV programs can be subtitled or dubbed into a foreign language, audio-only in a foreign language is unintelligible. Most of early radio was nation-specific.

The element of radio that eventually became internationalized was music. Because of modern music's emphasis on beat and emotion and its deemphasis on complicated lyrics, music has become an international form of communication. Once again, it is music from the United States (followed closely by British music) that can be heard pouring from radios in Algeria, Bangladesh, China, Djibouti, and most of the rest of the world.

Radio programs in their entirety are not sold on a large scale internationally, and no country's radio industry profits greatly from international distribution. It is the recording industry that sees that the musical content of the programs is well internationalized.

Opposition to U.S. Entertainment The influx of Western (particularly American) music and entertainment TV programming was not overwhelmingly appreciated by the establishments of other nations. As in the case of news programming, cries of electronic colonialism arose, but this time it had more to do with customs than with information. The U.S. lifestyle portrayed in westerns, sitcoms, and dramas was