

destabilizations, as some Third World spokesmen note, angrily pointing to the example of the BBC's recent egging on of anti-Shah rioters in Iran) and belittle developing nations' efforts to industrialize (e.g., the low-key coverage of recent Mexican oil discoveries in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*). Says one Third World diplomat at the UN: "They (the Western news agencies) are used against us like a robber uses his knife."

The battlefield recently shifted from UNESCO to the Special Political Committee, preparatory to reaching the floor of the General Assembly. Although Britain, it is widely conceded, would be most affected by the Tunisian-Group of 77 proposal, it is the United States which has taken up the cudgels against the Third World draft. Applying intense pressure, the United States forced UNESCO to replace the Tunisian draft with a Mass Media Declaration which completely

ignored the issue of the media's responsibility for truthful reporting. This declaration was sent to the Special Political Committee on Nov. 29 for full UN sanction.

There, just before a Dec. 5 vote, the French delegation, reportedly with support from the Soviets and Indians, suddenly asked for consultations with other delegations — effectively blocking the vote.

The U.S. is saying that it will not tolerate any attempt to "curtail the freedom of the press." In a declaration to the UNESCO Plenary on Nov. 20, U.S. Delegate William G. Harley said that the U.S. "would not accept any language" that imposed "any restriction upon journalists seeking in their professional duties to gain needed access to sources of information, any harassment of professional media personnel, any suspension or blocking of the entry or exit of information across national borders, and any suppression

### **U.S.: Freedom of expression vital**

**From the Mass Media Declaration, UNESCO, Paris, Nov. 29, 1978:**

The exercise of freedom of opinion, expression and information, recognized as an integral part of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is a vital factor in the strengthening of peace and international understanding .... It is essential that journalists and other agents of the mass media, in their own country and abroad, be assured of protection guaranteeing them the best conditions for the exercise of their profession.

**U.S. Delegate George A. Dalley to the Special Political Committee, Dec. 4, 1978:**

(Dalley) recalls the incipient spirit of cooperation which is coming to prevail in the world community with respect to information and communication. In an atmosphere of tolerance, forbearance and mutual respect, we overcame some very difficult obstacles to cooperation ....

**The Delegate of Ecuador to the Special Political Committee, Dec. 5, 1978, in support of the Declaration:**

We are totally opposed to any restriction on the freedom of the press by any government. In my part of the world the government doesn't control the press; it is just the other way around. The press makes suggestions that usually are taken up and made into legislations.

### **Third World: disinformation retards development**

**From the Tunisian Group of 77 Study:**

(The Western press agencies present the Third World) in the most unfavorable light, emphasizing crises, strikes, street demonstrations and coups d'etat.

The protection of journalists is a basic element of the world communication and information system. Such protection should be extended to include the journalists' relations with their employers and should enable them to retain freedom of thought and analysis .... Journalists are disloyal to their profession if they provide erroneous, tendentious or truncated information, or information dictated by their own particular concerns, criteria or choices.

In that case, the state involved has the right to issue a correction in which it may add to incomplete information which has already been disseminated the elements needed to give an accurate picture of the facts and restore them to their proper context.

**Non-Aligned Nations Declaration, August 16, 1976, Colombo, Sri Lanka:**

The Non-Aligned countries noted with concern the vast and ever-growing gap between communication capacities in Non-Aligned countries and in the advanced countries, which is a legacy of their colonial past. This has created a situation of dependence and domination in which the majority of countries are reduced to being passive recipients of biased, inadequate and distorted information ....