

London's Global Reach? Reuters News and Network, 1865, 1881, and 1914

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RECENT scholarship informs us that London served as the world's bond market between 1865 and 1914, and that while its bankers favored the empire, including its poorest territories, by offering lower rates of interest, most of their overseas investments went to countries outside the empire. Niall Ferguson and Moritz Schularick declare that the city had an "authentically global" investment portfolio by 1914.¹ But such achievements do not make early twentieth-century London a global city. London cannot simply be identified as a global city by indicating the size and significance of its bond market or by counting the number of its transnational corporate head offices, the assets that they control, or the buildup of communications capacities in the city. Those are defining characteristics of world cities, not global cities.

Saskia Sassen defined global cities as late twentieth-century phenomena, the result of a rescaling of the strategic territories of transnational business associated with new systems of flows of goods, capital,

¹ Niall Ferguson and Moritz Schularick, "The Empire Effect: The Determinants of Country Risk in the First Age of Globalization, 1800–1913," *Journal of Economic History* 66, no. 2 (2006): 283–312. See also Niall Ferguson, "The City of London and British Imperialism: New Light on an Old Question," in *London and Paris as International Financial Centres in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Yousef Cassis and Eric Bussiere (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 57–77; and Irving Stone, *The Global Export of Capital from Great Britain 1865–1914* (London: Macmillan, 1999).

and labor.² The increasing dispersal of business activities requires more complex central enterprise functions, and especially their outsourcing to producer services firms, which must also operate on a global scale. In turn, this necessitates the formation of transnational urban systems in the form of a series of transnational networks of cities. It is this last trend that is distinctive: "To a large extent major business centres in the world today draw their importance from these transnational networks. There is no such thing as a single global city and in this sense there is a sharp contrast with the erstwhile capitals of empires."³ Global cities perform their work in networks of cities.

Reuters's transnational network of branches and agencies and their services to Westminster, Whitehall, and the city are important evidence when considering the globality of London's late nineteenth-century corporate reach. This is because they address the issue of whether London developed a nineteenth-century producer services enterprise that was transnational in scope. As historians reinterpret London as a global city, we need to reinterpret the changing global reach of the Reuters news agency. Reuters has been variously understood as an imperializing institution,⁴ as an enterprise with global ambitions that were constrained by competitors,⁵ or as one of a dominant cartel of transnational news agencies that structured news flows for much of the twentieth century.⁶ It is dangerous to reduce these metaphors and the complex research effort behind them to graphic representations, yet, each of these interpretations implies a geographic model of how

² The term is defined by Saskia Sassen, "The Global City: Introducing a Concept," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2005): 27–43. See also Diane Davis, "Cities in Global Context: A Brief Intellectual History," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 1 (2005): 92–109.

³ These trends imply an increasing disconnection of global cities from broader hinterlands or national economies, and increasing inequality within the city as a result of the demands of the professionals and enterprises producing global production systems. Sassen, "Global City," pp. 27–43. Note that Anthony King identified the 1970s and 1980s as the decades of globalization of the city of London, when American transnational corporations including producer services firms established presences in the city and globalized its practices. Anthony King, *Global Cities: Post-imperialism and the Internationalization of London* (London: Routledge, 1991).

⁴ Simon Potter, *News and the British World: The Emergence of an Imperial Press System* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003); Simon Potter, "Webs, Networks and Systems: Globalisation and the Mass Media in the Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century British Empire," *Journal of British Studies* 46 (July 2007): 621–646.

⁵ Donald Read, *Power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁶ Oliver Boyd-Barrett and Terhi Rantanen, eds., *The Globalization of News* (London: Sage Publications, 1998).

Reuters operated as a network.⁷ These geographic models of Reuters are each formed from a particular position. One is a view from the perspective of the political issues arising from interagency competition within the British Empire. Another is a view from within the Reuters head office, where the managers surveyed an array of commercial intelligence and pondered market strategy, while the third model is formed by shifting the focus away from Reuters to the structural effects of the cartel and agency business on global news markets. If we are to relate Reuters to London then we need to adopt a different viewpoint again, not to contest the other models and interpretations, but to interpret Reuters activities in relation to the London news market. If late nineteenth-century Londoners indeed inhabited a global city rather than an imperial city or a world city,⁸ then we should expect their demand for Reuters's services to be more than imperial or national. It should be a demand for business and political news from other global cities.

In researching London's historical role as a global city, Reuters is a crucial institution to investigate. Within the institutions of London's news world, Reuters's role was officially transnational rather than national (Press Association of India), provincial (UK Press Association), or urban (*The Times* of London). Reuters was a nineteenth-century producer services enterprise: it supplied political and business information to Fleet Street, the city, Whitehall, and Westminster, and it sold communications services to governments, individuals, organizations, and enterprises. The globality of its services and network therefore reflects on the question of London's nineteenth-century status as a global city. We will need to establish what agency services Reuters delivered to Londoners. How geographically constrained were the news services that were on offer, and how did Reuters mobilize these stories for Londoners?

⁷ I do not wish to discount the fluid associations and temporary linkages of those networking across the empire, but this article must take into account the special character of Reuters as an organized, commercial network operating in and among many other, less organized networks. Alan Lester, "Imperial Circuits and Networks: Geographies of the British Empire," *History Compass* 4, no. 1 (2006): 121–141.

⁸ Anthony King argued that in the eighteenth century London was already a world city with trade links largely to European cities and to North America. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars London became the dominant world financial center, but in the second half of the nineteenth century London increasingly reoriented its trade and investments to its growing empire, and London became a more imperial city. King dates the globalization of London later, in the postwar era, when London became a base for foreign capital and the host for a much more cosmopolitan complex of flows. King, *Global Cities*.

To answer these questions, this article maps the ways Reuters London news service was constituted within the news agency's wider networks. It maps the news Reuters delivered to London newspapers using the telegraphic records of the Reuters Group Archive for sample news weeks in 1865, 1881, and 1914. The content of the Reuters copy is compared and contrasted and related to the geography of the Reuters news organization at the time. Analysis reveals that the speed-up in telecommunications associated with time-space compression was largely achieved before 1881, but that Reuters news services continued to deliver news from preferred source points rather than an increasingly global coverage or the empire.⁹ The Reuters copy was drawn overwhelmingly from other world cities, featured New York content before all other news, and featured news from port cities located along shipping and cable routes. Reuters copy reveals London to have had a restricted geography of attachment and relation to the world as a whole, but, interestingly, one that was not strictly coincident with empire. Instead of the territories of empire, the maps that emerge feature the early telecommunications infrastructure that linked capitals and commercial ports to London. The Reuters copy assembled and mapped here provides one set of texts that allow us to chart aspects of London's changing transnational linkages and interests, and a hierarchy of points of attachment. It suggests that Londoners may have understood Reuters as the supplier of "international news"—reports from the capitals, courts, bourses, and docks of foreign countries—even as Reuters became an imperial institution.

THREE GEOGRAPHIC MODELS OF THE REUTERS ENTERPRISE

Simon Potter interprets Reuters as an imperializing institution, one constituent part of the imperializing British press system. Along with

⁹ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), pp. 240–283. James Carey got behind the metaphor of a shrinking world and the narrative of time-space compression in the context of the modern newspaper by relating the telegraph to the rise of the modern newspaper and monopoly capitalism, the rhetoric of universalism and the electrical sublime, changes in language (cablese), the development of standard time, a shift from arbitrage to futures in the trading of commodities, and a shift from colonialism to imperialism. News agencies had not only news generating and sales regions but also systematic organization and flows of news, and thus network geographies. James Carey, "Time, Space and the Telegraph," in *Communication in History: Technology, Culture, Society*, ed. David Crowley and Paul Heyer (New York: Longman, 1991), pp. 132–137; James Carey, "Space, Time and Communications: A Tribute to Harold Innis," in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, ed. James Carey (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 142–172.

the UK Press Association, Reuters facilitated the transmission of international and imperial news, but Reuters cultivated a specific imperial identity to gain respectability and government assistance. Through its syndicated news reports and private business services, Reuters became the key information broker of the British Empire.¹⁰ Through its cartel agreements with other news agencies, Reuters enjoyed an exclusive right to collect and sell news in the empire and followed the telegraph cables to develop an imperial news agency business. "By 1900, Reuters had some 260 offices and correspondents. News from sources was in all but the most urgent cases compiled at offices in major regional centres at Bombay, Cape Town, Melbourne and Shanghai, and then sent to London head office by cable. Here services were edited, telegraphed to British newspapers and subscribers, and cabled back to the Reuters overseas agencies, where they were re-edited for local consumption."¹¹ Simon Potter argues, I think rightly, that the telegraph had the effect of systematizing and homogenizing news and thus reshaped and restricted existing flows of news, which had been more spontaneous and fluid.¹² Under the imperial press system that emerged in the late nineteenth century, "common supplies of news continued to flow around the Empire, but under the auspices of a small number of large news agencies and newspaper combines."¹³ London's position as the news hub of the empire was reinforced, but the news flowed not only along the spokes between hub and imperial peripheries but also between sites within the empire.

In each dominion market Reuters aimed for a monopoly over the supply of international news, but local press associations countered such efforts. In the ensuing conflict media enterprises drew on a range of local, national, and imperial identities to protect their interests, thus negotiating the limits for integration of the constituent parts of the imperial press system. Reuters positioned itself as an agent of empire. Thus, Roderick Jones, general manager of Reuters from 1919 to 1941, claimed that Reuters carried on its press business at a loss, as a public service, subsidized by private telegraph services.¹⁴ In these ways imperi-

¹⁰ Potter, *News and the British World*, pp. 87–88.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Potter, "Webs, Networks and Systems," pp. 629–635. Such effects of telegraphy are known from other contexts. See Carey, "Time, Space and the Telegraph," pp. 132–137, and Carey, "Space, Time and Communications," pp. 142–172.

¹³ Potter, "Webs, Networks and Systems," p. 636.

¹⁴ Simon Potter, "Empire and the English Press, c. 1857–1914," in *Newspapers and Empire in Ireland and Britain: Reporting the British Empire, c. 1857–1921*, ed. Simon Potter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), pp. 39–61.

alism and empire impacted on the United Kingdom's emerging modern press from 1850 to 1914.¹⁵

Simon Potter argues that the British mass media did not repeatedly stress a sense of transnational community or a sense of national identity, but that these and other possibilities were part of a broad repertoire of identity constructions that newspapers could choose among, depending upon the occasion. Nevertheless, as the British press imperialized Reuters became more and more an imperial institution, one that defended and promoted its interests by invoking the identity of the loyal servant of empire. In following the cables, Reuters became an imperial institution, its identity wrapped in the symbols and rhetoric of empire, its name synonymous with imperial networks and interests, and its news aimed at the constituent readerships of the British Empire. In all of these ways we can interpret Reuters, with its head office in London, as both shaped by and constitutive of London as an imperial metropolis.¹⁶

Alternatively, Reuters has been interpreted as an international news agency, based in London, which worked with other agencies to integrate the world economy in ways that allowed global flows of news.¹⁷ Oliver Boyd-Barrett points to long-term continuities in news agency business.¹⁸ First a cartel, then market advantage ensured agency domination of world news production. From 1890 to 2000 dominant news agencies supplied "spot-news" in a journalism of information that privileged specific categories of information and events, certain sources and locations. A handful of agencies—Reuters, Wolff (Continental or CTC, later DPA), Havas (later Agence France Press), and Associated Press (AP)—carved up the world news markets between them. They were later joined by United Press International and WTN. Together,

¹⁵ John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Potter, "Empire and the English Press," pp. 39–61.

¹⁶ Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999); David Gilbert and Felix Driver, "Capital and Empire: Geographies of Imperial London," *Geojournal* 51 (2000): 23–32; Felix Driver and David Gilbert, eds., *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001).

¹⁷ John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Terhi Rantanen, "The New Sense of Place in 19th-century News," *Media, Culture and Society* 25 (2003): 435–449; Terhi Rantanen, *The Media and Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 2005); Read, *Power of News*.

¹⁸ Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, *Globalization of News*.

they dominated world news production and distribution, and began to face serious new competition only in the twenty-first century, from Al Jazeera, CNN, and the BBC. Cartel agreements dating back to 1870 not only carved up the world into separate news markets but also facilitated exchange of news between agencies and therefore across borders.¹⁹ The cartel made interagency sales routine while simultaneously securing territorial markets for individual agencies. This news originated in and was sold throughout the entire cartel network but by different agencies. Under these agreements, Reuters's London office was a "clearinghouse" for world news, deciphered, translated, sorted, and encoded for resale in specific markets.²⁰ More, Julius Reuter, himself an émigré, took advantage of his personal networks in Europe to recruit an international news network of agents and branch managers. Indeed, Emile Wolff, Julius Reuter, and Louis Havas had shared the running of a telegraph news agency business in Paris, and their subsequent business interests continued to meet, overlap, and coincide. In these various ways, Reuters can also be interpreted as an enterprise formed by and constitutive of London as a world city. In this reading London's merchant enterprises, social activity, and diverse population are viewed as being shaped by location in a port city embedded in worldwide networks and flows.²¹ As readers of news, they forged imagined links with distant others and thus generated ideas about global communities.²² Reuters worked to internationalize London within a network of world cities, and notably Paris, Berlin, New York, and Tokyo.

Both interpretations have merit, but, in his history of Reuters, Donald Read argues that whereas Reuters began with international aspirations it was forced by its competitors to become an imperial institution, as early as 1878.²³ Even then, Reuters remained caught between competing imperial and commercial projects. Read explains that around 1865 Julius Reuter launched ambitious commercial projects that he hoped would make his agency more international in scope. He expanded into Germany by establishing an office in Hamburg and by financing a

¹⁹ Read, *Power of News*.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ King, *Global Cities*; Stanley D. Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain from the Industrial Revolution to World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); P. J. Cain and Anthony G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism I: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London: Longman, 1993); James Foreman-Peck, *History of the World Economy: International Economic Relations Since 1850*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1995).

²² Thompson, *Media and Modernity*.

²³ Read, *Power of News*.

private cable across the North Sea to supply the new office. He worked to develop preferential access into the United States by investing in the French Atlantic Cable Company. Reuter also aimed to buy European agencies or at least to contain the expansion of his rivals there through a cartel agreement. However, Reuter's expansionary plans for Europe and the United States were stymied by his competitors. To pay off debts from the Franco-Prussian War, the French government sold the French Atlantic Cable Co. in 1873 to Anglo-American, which thus restored its monopoly over transatlantic cable traffic. Reuters takeover bids for the Stefani (Italian 1862), Ritzau (Danish 1867), Wolff (German 1869), and Havas (French 1872) agencies were all rebuffed. Nevertheless, the cartel agreement Reuters signed with Havas and Wolff in 1870 secured Reuters position within Europe. Reuters continued to run important agencies in Amsterdam, Brussels, Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Vienna, and a bureau in Paris. Under the cartel news sharing arrangements, Reuters assumed a dominant position: it had the largest network, the most agencies, correspondents and stringers, the most news and the largest territories.

Reuter also exploited the opportunities opened up by the expansion of the British Empire and the network of telegraph cables linked back to London: he appointed agents in outposts of the formal and informal empire. A bureau in Constantinople proved a valuable news source for the Ottoman Empire, and an office in Alexandria coordinated shipping news to and from the Indian Ocean. The firm opened branches first in Bombay and then from 1868 in Calcutta, Madras, Karachi, Colombo, and Point de Galle. Donald Read shows that India and Egypt remained vital to Reuters's business and revenues through to 1914 (Table 1). Branches were opened in Melbourne and Cape Town to coordinate the collection and sale of news in the Australian and South African colonies. South Africa became a very successful market for Reuters compared with lackluster performance in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, where the emergence of local press associations tempered agency sales to newspapers. From 1874 Reuters established offices in Latin America in conjunction with Havas. China and Japan were growing markets toward the end of the nineteenth century. Reuters found that business in informal empire markets could be risky, as both Julius Reuter's investment debacle in Persia and problems with the Reuters agent in Egypt illustrate.²⁴ However, Reuters developed a

²⁴ Graham Storey, *Reuters' Century, 1851–1951* (London: Parrish, 1951); Read, *Power of News*.

thriving trade in private telegrams. Its Eastern Private Telegram Service handled up to four thousand telegrams per month in 1875, and the trade was subsequently enhanced by provision for remittances. In the twelve years before 1906 Reuters added fifteen new branches (Table 2), but only four of these were in Europe and North America, the home territories of Havas, Wolff, and AP. Reuters revenues were declining in the United Kingdom, Europe, and North America so that more distant market regions became increasingly important to the firm (Table 1). Reuters jockeyed for position within empire news markets and faced

Table 1. Reuters revenue by region, 1898 and 1908

Region	1898		1908	
	(£)	(%)	(£)	(%)
United Kingdom	54,800	38.6	44,700	22.8
Europe	36,155	25.5	29,500	15.0
India	11,500	8.1	18,400	9.4
Far East	5,100	3.6	9,300	4.7
North America	1,200	0.8	600	0.3
Other	33,245	23.4	94,000	47.8
Total	142,000	100.0	196,500	100.0
Net Profit	6,000		14,200	

Source: Donald Read, *Power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Table 2. Reuters branch network, 1894 and 1906

Region	1894	1906
United Kingdom and Western Europe	8	10
Eastern Europe	1	3
Africa	2	4
Australasia	6	10
Middle East	2	3
India	5	6
Far East	5	8
North America	3	3
Total	32	47

Source: Donald Read, *Power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849–1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

increasing expenses, partly because of the costs of transmitting cables to its increasingly important distant markets. Donald Read concludes his survey of market reports by interpreting Reuters as an empire enterprise, that is, one focused on markets outside Europe and North America, whether they were in the formal British Empire or not.

Reuters operated in a complex fashion and context, as an imperializing institution, as an enterprise focused on formal and informal empire markets because of its American and European competitors, and as a constituent enterprise in a long-lasting global news agency cartel. However, the organizational (cartel, transnational corporation), territorial (empire), and identity (imperial) concepts used in the literature may obscure the network geography of Reuters. Where you were on the cables influenced how much and what kind of Reuters news service you received and whom you paid for this service. Different places within the British Empire received very different Reuters service.²⁵ In 1914, Reuters sent news services from London around the African coast to a number of telegraph offices, each of which received very different services: the Cape Town service received 10,000 words per month; Bonny received 4,800; Elizabethville, 100; and Melbourne, nil; while other places located in Britain's African empire received no service at all. Similarly, Reuters news was sold to Havas, which then sold the translated copy to newspapers in Marseilles, Madrid, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro, and Bogotá, where it would be credited to Havas. Reuters meant different things to people located in different places on the international news networks. Consequently we should pay attention to other viewpoints on Reuters than those possible from the vantage points of the boardroom, cartel contracts, or arrangements and disputes with dominion press associations.

What news service did Reuters deliver in London? The London market was both large and diversified. Big London newspapers developed their own bureaus and alliances with other news agencies, including dominion press associations, and so Reuters had competitors for this section of the international news market. There were many smaller newspapers and bulletins directed at niche markets within the city, including migrant communities, business readers, labor, religious and political groups, each of which desired news services tailored to its audience's needs. Reuters also sold news and information services to the British government, to private individuals, and to London busi-

²⁵ See Donald Read's map of Reuters outward services for May 1914, in Read, *Power of News*.

nesses. We should expect that the Reuters news business in London was both large and diversified, and consequently, it will be difficult to do justice to the Reuters services.

With this in mind, this article focuses on the telegram service Reuters provided to London newspapers. Workers at Reuters pasted a copy of each telegram dispatched into a set of telegraph books, a series that runs to mid 1914. By mapping the sources and content of these telegrams for three sample weeks, one in 1865, a second in 1881, and the third in 1914, this article summarizes the news flows into London newspapers from Reuters. The geography of the company's bureaus, branches, and correspondents is also mapped for these years using contracts, correspondence, account books, and telegraph address books in the Reuters Group Archive. Together these maps answer basic questions about Reuters services in London: Did Reuters supply London newspapers with empire or cartel news? Which were the places from which Reuters reported? How "global" or "imperial" was the fare served up to Londoners, and how did this change? In this article I map the changing Reuters network for Londoners in terms of source points, flows, and general content. Just how such copy was used to construct and promote identities in the minds of Londoners is a separate matter requiring further and different analysis. Whether from European and American capitals or from the ports of empire, news could have served diverse purposes. It may have been used to construct various British identities among a more varied cast of others than those conjured by the constituent subjects of empire,²⁶ however, answers to such a question must await further attention to the rituals of communication in such news stories.²⁷

REUTERS TELEGRAMS 15–21 APRIL 1865

The news that John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln while he attended the theatre in Washington, D.C., 15 April 1865 was a beat for

²⁶ For example, by expressing sympathy for the Habsburg emperor, a "constitutional monarch" ruling through an elected parliament, at the loss of his heir, described as a force for the modernizing of Austria-Hungary, at the hands of a "vicious" nationalist Slav, the editor of the *New Zealand Herald* made a distant news event into a confirmation of "British" values of monarchy, democracy, liberalism, law, and order.

²⁷ The ritual view of communication was pioneered by James Carey and Benedict Anderson, who argued that reading a newspaper is an everyday act promising simultaneity in time-space: all the other readers share similar stories at the same time. This generates an imagined (national) community. Thus, the press constitutes the world, time-space, and identities, as readers share and participate, possess a common faith in the news, and join a

Reuters in London when its telegraph boys dispatched the bulletin on 26 April, eleven days later. Reuters relied on steamships for the main transatlantic leg between American and British ports, so the news from Washington could not be delivered immediately. So, in the week 15–21 April, what news did Reuters sell to London newspapers, if not the assassination story?

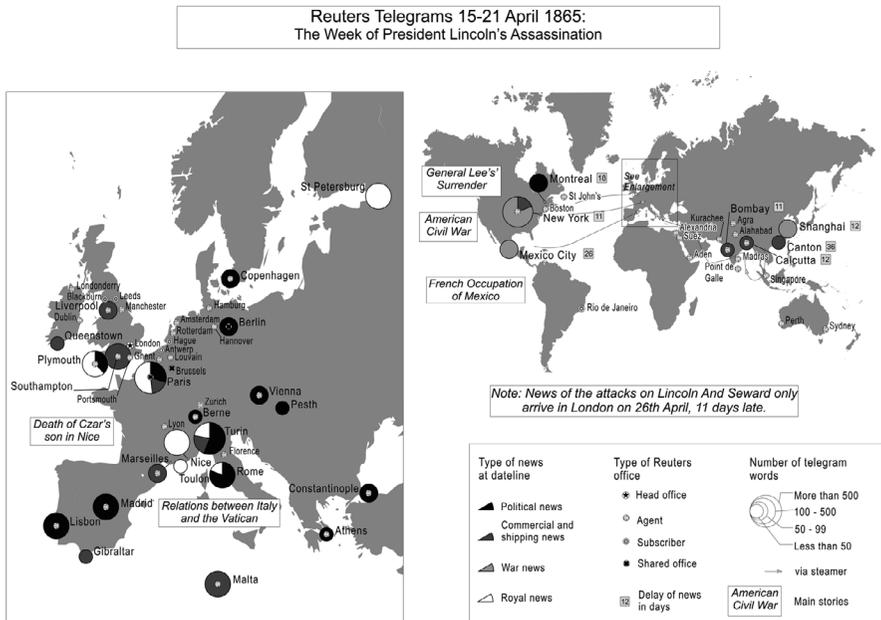


FIGURE 1. Reuters telegrams, 15–21 April 1865 (Reuters *Telegram Book* 1865, Reuters Group Archive).

world as an observer of dramatic action. Both Terhi Rantanen and Steve Cottle argue that this role for news was also filled historically by late nineteenth-century newspapers. This social construction of the world became technically feasible because of the telegraph, which constructed a simulacrum of complex systems and provided an analog model of the railroad and a digital model of language. It coordinated and controlled activity in space, often behind the backs of those subject to it. Barnhurst and Nerone count the modern newspaper itself, with its streamlined and rationalized front page, hierarchical story placement, and the division of the newspaper into compartments, as a product of this telecommunication. Carey, "Time, Space and the Telegraph," pp. 132–137; Carey, "Space, Time and Communications," pp. 142–172. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Rantanen, "New Sense of Place in 19th-century News," pp. 435–449; Steve Cottle, "Mediatized Rituals: Beyond Manufacturing Consent," *Media, Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2006): 411–432; Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, *The Form of News: A History* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001).

During those seven days, Reuters dispatched 4,795 words to London newspapers (Fig. 1). Together, datelines in Asia (4.9 percent of all copy), Gibraltar and Malta (3.1 percent), and the United Kingdom (8.7 percent) headed just 800 words, or 16.7 percent of the copy. This "empire" news comprised mostly shipping and commercial news from British and empire ports and war news from Shanghai. The news from India and China was at least eleven days old. There were no reports from Reuters agents in the Australian colonies, and Reuters had no agents in South Africa. Generally, the "empire" news coming through the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean cables dovetailed with London business interests.

Datelines in the Americas contributed significantly more copy (about 1,300 words, or 27.2 percent). This featured news from Montreal regarding Canadian interests in the American Civil War, and from Mexico City concerning the French invasion of Mexico, but the Reuters correspondent in New York compiled most of the copy coming across the Atlantic by steamer: 1,186 words (24.7 percent of the total Reuters copy in London). His news comprised commercial notices from New York markets and reports on the progress of the Civil War, including Sherman's March and General Lee's surrender. Again Reuters served up a steady stream of commercial news relevant to London business interests, but in this transatlantic news flow rumors of wars made for compelling reading.

More than half of the Reuters copy emanated from continental Europe, about 2,700 words, or 56.1 percent, in fact. The most important datelines were Paris (674 words, or 14.1 percent), Turin (569 words, or 11.9 percent), Madrid (331 words, or 6.9 percent), and Rome (275 words, or 5.7 percent). Eleven other datelines contributed to the total. News of British shipping in and out of Marseilles, and of stock, bond, and commodity prices in Paris and Turin show some concern for London interests on the Continent. However, most of the news concerned the courts of Europe. The two main stories of the week were the tensions between the Vatican and Turin over the unification of Italy, and the impending death of the tsar's son, who was in Nice at the time. Reuters bulletins reported the tsar's hurried journey to Nice via Paris to be at his son's side, the best wishes of the pope and other monarchs, condolences, mourning, and funeral preparations. From St. Petersburg to Lisbon Reuters reported Europe as engaged in the succession problems and personal tragedies of monarchs, and the aspirations of new national parliaments. Reuters correspondents and agents in European capitals compiled these bulletins, which owed much to the services of Havas and Wolff. Reuters's European copy also pulsed

along telegraph lines running through Paris or the Low Countries to London.

There was no news from South America, Africa, Central Asia, or the South Pacific. Partly this was a result of lack of sources, but not entirely; after all, Reuters had agents in Australia. Partly it was a result of a lack of commercial interest, but not entirely: there were British interests in the Red Sea, the Caribbean, and in Latin American ports. Most certainly this was not strictly a matter of empire, since the geography of Reuters datelines bears little relation to the geography of the British Empire, formal or informal, at the time. It might be better to construe the silences in terms of the paths and flows between the world cities of the time. Reuters delivered to London newspapers news from the Havas and Wolff agencies and from its own correspondents in New York, Constantinople, Paris, and Vienna. Reuters telegrams featured copy from European capitals and New York. News was also neatly associated with the telegraph lines and cables linking to London. That this was one subset of Reuters news services can also not be doubted.²⁸ Reuters tailored its services to clients, and the London news bulletins were one such target group. This meant that Reuters delivered to London newspapers neither imperial coverage in the sense of news of and from every part of the empire, nor global coverage in the sense of coverage of and from every part of the world. Instead it offered international news from the major cities located along Mediterranean, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean cables, at transatlantic steamer ports, and along European telegraph lines. In 1865 Reuters London news telegrams reported news from other world cities.

REUTERS TELEGRAMS 12–18 MARCH 1881

In the week that followed the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in St. Petersburg on 11 March 1881, Reuters delivered 11,159 words of

²⁸ For example, the Neue Börsenhalle, Hamburg, contracted in 1867 for a “full” Reuters news service, to be delivered to their commercial club and reading room within the Hamburg Exchange Buildings. A fee of £600 per annum bought them an “impressive range of news, both for content and place of origin (China and South America). Neither Havas nor Wolff could match Reuters for news from outside Europe.” Read, *Power of News*, p. 51. Reuters supplied fund quotations from ten exchanges, rates of exchange for bills and discount reports from seventeen locations, corn and flour reports from twenty specified places, cotton reports (fourteen places), colonial product reports (seventeen places), metal reports (eight places), and reports on wool and petroleum, as well as world political news, news of the arrival of transatlantic mails and specie, and freight news.

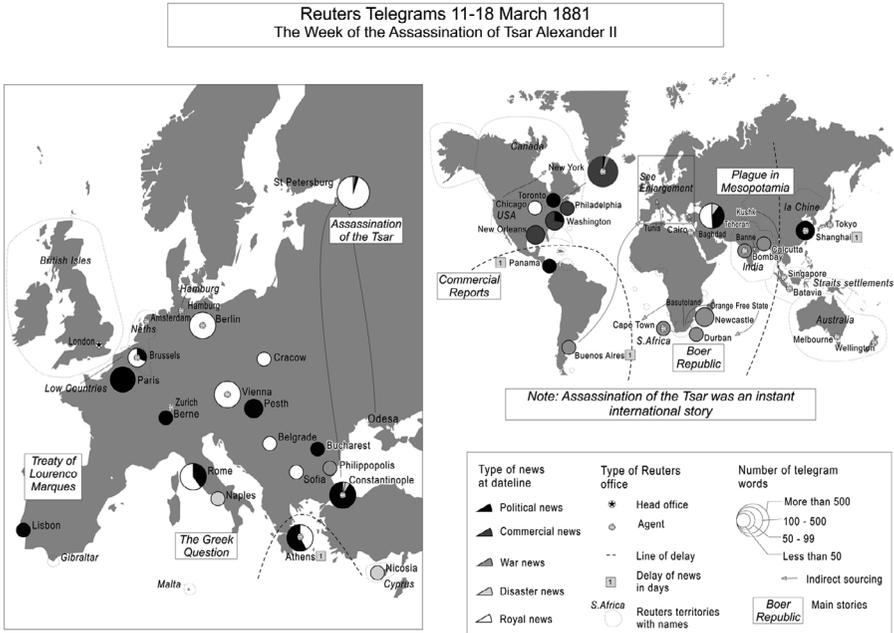


FIGURE 2. Reuters telegrams, 11–18 March 1881 (Reuters *Telegram Book* 1914, Reuters Group Archive).

news telegrams to London newspapers (Fig. 2), more than twice as much copy as in the week of 15–21 April 1865. In contrast to the mid 1865 map (Fig. 1), the news for the week in March 1881 shows both a speedup in delivery times and a geographical extension of the news point sources. War in the eastern Mediterranean caused delays in receiving news from Athens. Travel delays affected news telegrams from East and Southeast Asia, the South Pacific, and Latin America, but European, African, and North American news arrived in London on a same-day basis, ready for printing the next day. In March 1881, Reuters telegrams featured news from thirty-three datelines, up from twenty-nine in April 1865. Not one of the March 1881 datelines was in the United Kingdom, and news was now reported from more American and Asian capitals as well as South Africa. Generally, Reuters delivered news stories as they broke; its delivery times were faster, and its world coverage had been extended.

These findings are to be expected since time-space compression

accelerated in the decade after 1865.²⁹ Jorma Ahvenainen has recorded the dramatic gains in travel times for trade data as telegraph cables replaced steamships on routes to London (Table 3).³⁰ However, Ahvenainen's list of cities features cities (all but one of them port cities) located on, or soon to be on, telegraph cables, and especially those of Eastern and Associated Telegraph Co. which had a London focus.³¹ Transnational telegraph services networked time-space compression

Table 3. Time delay for trade data to London newspapers

Port	1866	1870	Connect
Alexandria	11	2	1868
Lagos	12	3	1886
New York	14	2	1866
Montreal	14	2	1866
New Orleans	17	3	1866
Havanna	24	4	1868
Bombay	29	3	1870
Cape Town	30	4	1868
Rio de Janeiro	30	3	1875
Buenos Aires	32	3	1875
Colombo	33	3	1875
Valparaiso	46	4	1875
Hong Kong	51	3	1871
Shanghai	56	4	1870
Sydney	60	4	1876
Wellington	65	4	1876
Yokohama	70	5	1871

Source: Jorma Ahvenainen, "Telegraphs, Trade and Policy: The Role of the International Telegraphs in the Years 1870–1914," in *The Emergence of a World Economy 1500–1914*, ed. W. Fischer, R. M. McInnis, and J. Schneider (Papers of the Ninth International Congress of Economic History, Part II: 1850–1914, Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1986).

²⁹ Time-space compression involved a shift from relatively isolated worlds, through speedup in the pace of life, an apparent shrinking of space to a global village of telecommunications, a spaceship earth of economic and ecological interdependencies, and shortened time horizons to an overwhelming sense of compression of our spatial and temporal worlds. Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 240–283.

³⁰ Jorma Ahvenainen, "Telegraphs, Trade and Policy: The Role of the International Telegraphs in the Years 1870–1914," in *The Emergence of a World Economy 1500–1914*, ed. W. Fischer, R. M. McInnis, and J. Schneider (Papers of the IX International Congress of Economic History, Part II: 1850–1914, Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1986), pp. 505–518.

³¹ Gordon M. Winder, "Webs of Enterprise 1850–1914: Applying a Broad Definition of FDI," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96, no. 4 (2006): 788–806.

between port cities, producing a network of cities. Those cities that did not have cable or telegraph connections, such as Kabul and Bangkok, gained only indirectly from this process. More, this emerging network geography of time-space compression should be evident in Reuters news for Londoners, since Reuters grew its agency business by following the cables.

In March 1881, Reuters telegrams continued to emphasize commercial and political news from the financial and political capitals of Europe and the United States. News of the assassination, funeral preparations, succession plans, and reactions to these events constituted the principal news story in the Reuters telegrams. Consequently St. Petersburg (4,200 words, or 37.7 percent of copy) was the most important single dateline during this week. Altogether fifteen European cities were the sources for 62.2 percent of the Reuters copy, but only St. Petersburg and Rome (590 words, or 5.3 percent) supplied more than 5 percent. Only three of these fifteen cities were not capital cities, and these three were sources for disaster and war stories. Political news and news of reactions to the assassination dominated the copy.

News from the Americas made up 27.3 percent of Reuters copy. New York (2,416 words, or 21.7 percent) was the most important news supply center in the Americas. The Reuters bureau in New York collocated commercial news from other American cities for dispatch. In this news week Reuters featured its regular reports on American markets, news of a revolt in Colombia, and a report from Buenos Aires on British army procurement, and while this indicates a wider geographical network of news supply centers, the news reported to London was tailored to British and London interests. The news was overwhelmingly commercial in character, since reports from the New York stock market, from brokers, bond agents, and commodity traders, were of interest to London readers.

Imperial news made up a modest component (11 percent) of Reuters copy. This was sourced from datelines in five Asian cities—Constantinople, Teheran, Bombay, Calcutta, and Shanghai—from Toronto, and from three ports in South Africa. There were no news telegrams from the South Pacific or from Japan, despite the presence of Reuters agencies in Melbourne, Wellington, and Tokyo. With the shift of news service delivery from steamer to telegraph cable, United Kingdom ports, Marseilles, Gibraltar, Malta, and Alexandria no longer featured as Reuters news datelines. From Buenos Aires through Cape Town to Calcutta, Reuters reported rumors of wars in South Africa and Afghanistan. Reuters reported on the shipping of horses from Buenos Aires and of troops from India as part of its coverage of the hostile situation

in southern Africa. Nevertheless, while the Boer Republics dominated news from South Africa, Durban, Cape Town, and Newcastle supplied only 2.4 percent of telegram copy. The main Reuters news from imperial territories was of plague outbreaks in Mesopotamia and Odessa, and war news from Afghanistan, none of which lay within Britain's formal empire. These stories circulated to London via Reuters agents in St. Petersburg, Constantinople, Philippopolis, and Teheran, as well as Bombay and Calcutta.

Generally, Reuters supplied Londoners with news from outside its news sales territories (Fig. 2) and thus from outside the empire. This news arrived from Havas, Wolff/CTC, and via Reuters correspondents located in foreign capitals. Despite accelerated time-space compression and an expanded organization, in 1881 Reuters remained focused on supplying London newspapers with political and commercial news from American and European capitals. Vast territories in Scandinavia; Central, East, and Southeast Asia; Africa; the Pacific; and Latin America supplied no telegrams at all. Generally, Reuters telegrams to London in this week of 1881 comprised news of and from other cities on the London-centred global cable and telegraph network.

REUTERS TELEGRAMS 30 JUNE–6 JULY 1914

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife at Sarajevo on 29 June 1914 dominated newspaper headlines in the week 30 June–6 July 1914. The Wolff/CTC and Havas agencies had special roles in reporting this event simply because the murder and much of the subsequent reaction to it occurred in their news territories. Reuters had bureaus in Vienna and Paris and could also participate. However, the full scope of Reuters news supply cannot be determined for this week because Reuters ceased to compile telegram books in the months before the assassination. Nevertheless, some sense of how Reuters telegrams featured in London newspapers can be gleaned from analyzing Reuters copy published in *The Times*. It is not at all clear that *The Times* published all the Reuters telegrams it received. By 1914 this and other London dailies had organized their own agents to supply news from abroad, and these sources competed directly with Reuters for news supply. Thus, the Reuters copy carried in this week by *The Times* was much reduced compared with the full set of 1881 bulletins: a mere 2,760 words sourced from just fourteen datelines (Fig. 3).

Financial and political news from the United States had been the mainstay of Reuters London telegram bulletins from the Americas. But

Reuters Telegrams 30th June to 6th July 1914
The Week of Archduke Franz-Ferdinand's Assassination

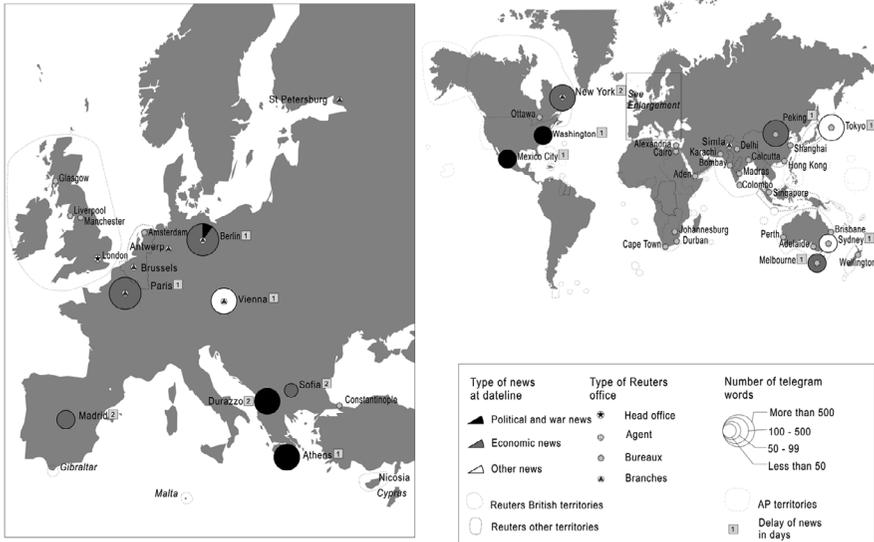


FIGURE 3. Reuters telegrams, 30 June–6 July 1914 (*The Times* 1914).

in June 1914, *The Times's* own New York bureau supplied these reports, and Reuters American material published in *The Times* augmented this in-house news production. Altogether, Reuters copy from the Americas amounted to only 8.0 percent of *The Times's* Reuters copy in the week 30 June–6 July 1914. This copy originated from New York, Washington, D.C., and Mexico City, but none of these datelines contributed 5.0 percent or more of the Reuters copy. Similarly, Reuters empire content in *The Times*—8.2 percent of copy from Tokyo and Peking, another 3.6 percent from Melbourne and Sydney—was now sourced from the extreme ends of the cables and not from South Africa or India. Alternative sources made some London newspapers more independent of the Reuters news agency. In this context stories from the cartel's agencies in Europe remained the mainstay of Reuters copy. Seven European datelines headed almost 70 percent of the Reuters copy in *The Times*.³²

³² Paris supplied 690 words (25.0 percent), Berlin 645 words (23.4 percent), Durazzo 200 words (7.2 percent), Vienna 150 words (5.4 percent), and Athens 140 words (5.1 percent), and copy also came from Sofia and Madrid.

The London press may have imperialized its content, but in doing so it rendered its recognizable Reuters content into international news.

This diminution of the value of Reuters copy to some London newspapers was not, however, reflected in the Reuters agency network (Table 4), which had expanded since 1881 (Figs. 3 and 4). The Reuters organization of 1914 comprised twenty-nine branches, eight bureaus, forty-eight agencies, and another 121 named agents (Table 4). Two patterns are readily identified: a branch organization covering some of the

Table 4. Reuters network, 1914

Region	Branch	Bureau	Agency	Agents
United Kingdom	3	0	0	0
Rest of empire	21	1	9	58
Independent	5	7	39	63
Total (no.)	29	8	48	121
Empire (%)	82.8	12.5	18.8	47.9

Source: Reuters *Telegraph Address Book*, 1914, Reuters Group Archive.

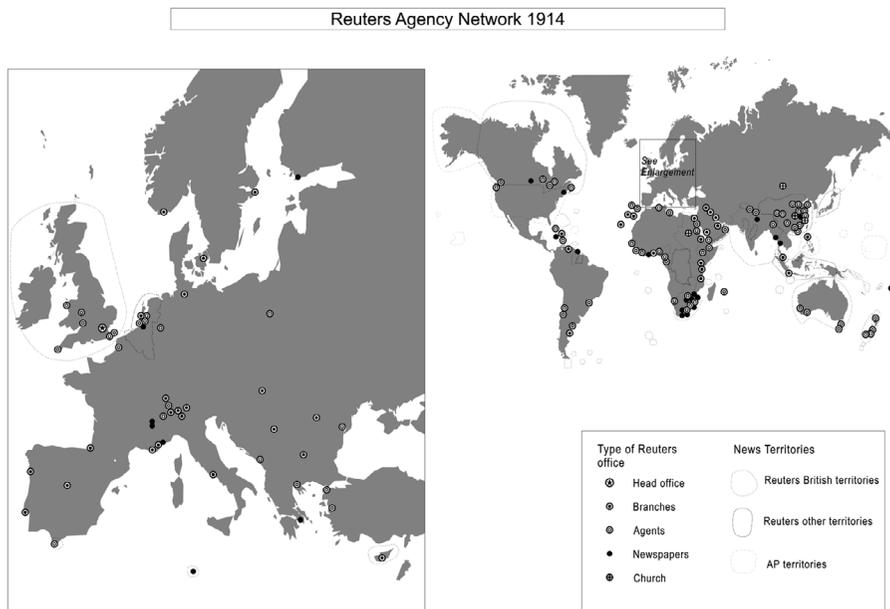


FIGURE 4. Reuters agency network 1914 (Reuters *Telegraph Address Book* 1914, Reuters Group Archive).

major cities of the British Empire, and agency contracts in many cities, ports, towns, and settlements located through the peripheral parts of Britain's formal and informal empire. The company's London head office, now colocated with that of the UK Press Association, centered a branch network largely located within British Empire territories. Even so Reuters branches were located in many, but not all, of the chief cities of the empire. There were no branches in Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, or Vancouver nor in any African cities outside of South Africa.³³ Agency contracts with sixteen expatriate enterprises—firms such as Gray, Mackenzie and Company of Busreh, Iraq, and Gellatly, Hankey and Company, of Jeddah, Palestine—extended Reuters's reach into other, peripheral territories. Reuters's partial coverage of empire markets reveals the constraints on its sales, as pointed out by both Donald Read and Simon Potter.³⁴

More interesting however, is the Reuters organization in the rest of the world. Reuters had a strong organization outside the empire. This included contracts with Havas and Wolff/CTC, as well as eleven other European news agencies, Associated Press, and the Dutch West Indies Telegraph Company. In addition, Reuters ran five branches and seven bureaus,³⁵ and had contracts with sixty-three other agents (Fig. 4, Table 4). Almost two thirds of all Reuters branches, agencies, and bureaus were located outside the British Empire. This network served a London and empire readership in that it gave Reuters a presence in British tourist destinations and expatriate communities (for example Swiss and Italian resorts and the towns of the French Riviera), the courts of Europe, the New York financial scene, and important ports, islands, and observation points on sea lanes. The extended network partly served to sell Reuters news from London in distant local territories. But the full Reuters network also generated flows of news into London for resale, and, as we have seen, international news, especially from European capitals and New York, was a mainstay of Reuters news bulletins.

³³ Reuters's empire branches in 1914 were Ottawa, Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Alexandria, Cairo, Aden, Bombay, Calcutta, Colombo, Delhi, Karachi, Madras, Simla, Singapore, Hong Kong, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney, and Wellington. Glasgow, Manchester, and Birmingham had branches, but not Dublin.

³⁴ Read, *Power of News*; Potter, *News and the British World*.

³⁵ Reuters's foreign branches were located in Amsterdam, Constantinople, Peking, Shanghai, and Tokyo. Except for Constantinople these lay inside its cartel sales territories. Bureaus were located in Antwerp, Berlin, Brussels, New York, Paris, St. Petersburg, and Vienna.

Reuters tailored the news arriving in London for sale to many different buyers. Reports compiled for imperial shipping lines and telegraphed as part of Reuters's general news services required agents in foreign ports.³⁶ Some London firms contracted Reuters to supply intelligence from specific European markets.³⁷ Exchanges located outside Reuters's cartel territory contracted for Reuters's market services.³⁸ Reuters handled telegrams for the British Foreign Office.³⁹ Its contracts with the UK Press Association were particularly lucrative.⁴⁰ The extent

³⁶ In 1902, Gray, Dawes and Company of London contracted Reuters to supply it with reports on the movements of its steamers on its London-Brisbane and London-Calcutta lines, with all reports to be circulated in Reuters services to the British, Indian, and colonial press. Clearly aimed at informing a British clientele, this service nevertheless required Reuters agents in foreign ports: Lisbon, Marseilles, Naples, and Batavia. Reuters, Reuters Telegram Company Limited and Messrs. Gray, Dawes and Co. Agreement for reporting the movements of Messrs. Gray, Dawes and Co.'s steamers, dated 9th October 1902, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 714035, LN 238. Reuters contracts with Lloyd's and other shipping related enterprises hinged on their extensive port network. See also Reuters, Agreement between Lloyd's and Reuters Telegram Co. Ltd. dated the 14th February 1910, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 8714048 LN 238; Reuters, Letters from Lloyd's List to Reuters Telegram Co. Ltd. regarding services for reporting fires abroad and quotations for the Paris bourse, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 8714045 Location LN 238; and Reuters, Agreement between Reuters Telegram Co. Ltd. and Messrs. Spottiswoode and Co. Ltd., for supply of news to the *Shipping Gazette* newspaper, dated 6 May 1914, Reuters Group Archive.

³⁷ For an annual £200 fee, Reuters agreed in 1906 to supply Expanse, Mullion, Marconi International Marine Communication Co. Ltd., of London, with a German news service of at least fifty words a day, six days per week. Reuters, Service of German news from Berlin to Expanse, Mullion, Marconi International Marine Com. Co. Ltd. letter dated 25 September 1906, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 8714057, LN 238. See also Reuters, Agreement with the *Russian Outlook* dated 21 June 1919, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 8714056 Location LN 238; and Reuters, Agreement between Reuters Telegram Co. Ltd. and P. S. Taylor for the right to copy and publish news in the *Near East* newspaper, dated 20 March 1914, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 8714049, Location LN 238.

³⁸ For example, in 1912 Reuters contracted to supply the Mexican stock exchange with "quotations of market" and Whitelaw's telegraphic code with an explanation by letter of the method of deciphering quotations. Reuters, La Bolsa de Valores de Mexico P.C.L. Letter dated 10 October 1912 accepting our terms, translation 10 October 1912, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 8714043 LN 238.

³⁹ The contract of 1921 defined previous arrangements. Reuters contracted to disseminate Foreign Office news. Such contracts made Reuters an agent of the UK government and open to charges that they were subsidized by Whitehall. Reuters, Foreign Office Agreement dated 16 November 1921. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Reuters Ltd., Agreement for the dissemination and distribution of news, dated 16 November 1921, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 871400 LN 238.

⁴⁰ The contract of 1921 confirmed the pattern of a cartel agreement creating separate provincial, London, and overseas news source and sales regions, with Reuters collecting an annual £12,000 fee for news services. Reuters, Agreement with the Press Association, dated 7 May 1921, with letter from the Press Association dated 6 May 1921, Reuters Group Archive, Archive Number 8714003 LN 238.

of Reuters's web of enterprise enabled it to meet diverse needs. For one enterprise Reuters was a supplier of news from or to the colonies, for another the news service was one of market intelligence from European bourses, and for European agencies its service might be as a supplier of news of and from the United Kingdom, British Empire, or other places in its news territory.

In this context Reuters's news supply to London newspapers was one (important) segment of the Reuters news empire. Generally, Reuters supplied London newspapers with market reports from New York and political and market news from Europe. By 1914 its position in this news market had been squeezed by competing services, most notably those developed by leading London newspapers. Donald Read noted that Reuters's United Kingdom revenues were falling in the early decades of the twentieth century, and the limited amount of Reuters copy in *The Times* in the week after the assassination at Sarajevo confirms this trend. It was not that *The Times* was publishing less international news but rather that other sources of international news were filling space once occupied by Reuters. So while Reuters looked to empire news markets to shore up its revenues, London readers continued to be treated to a steady diet of news from the world's capitals and bourses.

CONCLUSION

Reuters operated as a transnational web of enterprise⁴¹ and worked to secure a position in world markets in relation to news agencies, newspapers, private firms, individuals, and governments. Success depended upon securing a position as a monopoly trader of news to many specific markets. To do this meant regulating competition. Reuters negotiated interagency contracts with national press associations and other news agencies. These were necessarily transnational contracts and made Reuters into a web of enterprise, holding many contracts with domestic, colonial, and foreign enterprises and governments.

Reuters's interagency contracts secured access to a large throughput of world news, and it is the scale and extent of these flows that defines the firm's global reach. The inward flow of news to London differed from the outward flow. Reuters could source news from many parts of the world and deliver it, tailored, to many specific markets. It

⁴¹ Winder, "Webs of Enterprise 1850–1914," pp. 788–806.

sourced news from Australia for sale to British provincial newspapers and vice versa, but it also sourced news from European agencies for sale to London newspapers and companies. Reuters's head office was indeed a clearinghouse for world news, deciphered, translated, sorted, and encoded for resale in specific markets. However, its sales to London newspapers featured news from the courts, capitals, stock exchanges, and commodity markets in Europe and the United States above news from the cities in Britain's formal and informal empire.

Reuters's contracts also secured access to a world market for news, but this market was fragmented in many ways. Reuters bought news from its cartel partners. Its news sales were not confined to the British Empire—it sold to Havas, Wolff, and other agencies. Neither was the empire a homogeneous sales territory; position on the cable network mattered, among other things. Reuters tailored its services to specific markets and customer needs. Reuters's news bulletins to London newspapers indicate that London's newspaper market demanded both imperial and international news. Reuters's information services to London shipping, insurance, and other companies indicate specific corporate interests.

Of course, Reuters was a creature of empire. Imperial and international news could be mutually constitutive of British identities, which could be shaped through comparisons with various others.⁴² Reuters and the British press system did become imperial. There are many signs of an imperializing British press before 1914 and after: most notably, Reuters played the imperial servant. However, Reuters was also squeezed into the role of international news agency by growing national press systems. Reuters needed both world and imperial news, otherwise it could not hope to capture a large market. Reuters developed as a hybrid institution—imperial and global, British and foreign, a private enterprise working as a (subsidized) servant of the British Crown—and presented different faces to different audiences.

Behind the many faces, Reuters comprised a series of networks and bundles of relationships that linked disparate entities into circuits of exchange and identity formation.⁴³ Telegraphic cables wired together

⁴² See for example Derek Gregory, "Performing Cairo: Orientalism and the City of the Arabian Nights," <http://web.mac.com/derekgregory/iWeb/Site/performing%20Cairo.html> (accessed 15 May 2009).

⁴³ This would follow Tony Ballantyne's ideas of nineteenth-century newspapers as powerful transnational agents of "imperial globalization" but constituting Reuters as hybrid rather than imperial institution. Tony Ballantyne, "Re-reading the Archive and Opening up the

these Reuters webs, and so the primary geographic metaphor for Reuters must be a network diagram. This diagram has London at its focal point, and cities within some empire markets as increasingly significant concerns, but Reuters's news supply to London newspapers was primarily sourced from a network of world cities, the most important of which were not located in the British Empire but in Europe and the United States, later China and Japan. This article highlights extra-empire news sources and flows as a significant component of the daily news printed for London readers. The significance of Reuters within (and beyond) the British Empire press system lay partly in its ability to obtain and circulate such news even as the British (and presumably other) modern press system(s) imperialized. That there was a demand for such news in London attests to the spread of the city's interests. That such news could be sourced from a web of agents primarily located in a few other world cities speaks both to the persistent importance of those cities in organizing and coordinating flows in the world economy, and to the significance of London's relationships with them as a leading center in a network of cities.

Beginning in the mid nineteenth century, Reuters supplied news and business information to London customers. It did so on a world scale and not merely on an empire scale. Its services from European and American capitals were key products. Reuters took advantage of the growing network of telegraph cables. Paris, New York, Berlin, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Shanghai all sat on this telecommunications grid and hosted Reuters agencies or branches. It is therefore tempting to proclaim that Julius Reuter developed a global producer services enterprise on the back of the telecommunications spine laid from London and that this serves as evidence for an emerging network of nineteenth-century global cities.

Saskia Sassen and Anthony King may each have underestimated the scale and scope of late nineteenth-century producer services enterprises, but caution is advised. Reuters alone cannot stand for London's nineteenth-century producer services sector; further research is required. Moreover, Saskia Sassen notes that before the 1980s flows tended to be "within the inter-state system" and that "nations were the key actors."⁴⁴ There certainly are signs that polities and their territories

Nation-state: Colonial Knowledge in South Asia (and Beyond)," in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003). See Potter, "Webs, Networks and Systems," p. 625.

⁴⁴ Sassen, "Global City," pp. 27-43.

cut across the globality of the Reuters services. The analysis reported in this article confirms that the flows within the Reuters network need to be understood in the context of nineteenth-century empires and imperialism. Between them, Reuters, Havas, and Wolff/CTC provided global news and business information services to a network of cities, but they did so as a strategic alliance coping with and fragmented by imperial loyalties and priorities. Nevertheless, analysis of Reuters news services to London reveals Reuters as a transnational web of enterprise working to connect a network of cities in order to facilitate the transnational ambitions of London, colonial and foreign business, as well as the British Empire.

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