The Internation network includes a mix of senior reporters with worldwide contacts and younger researchers with the ideals and energy needed to produce present-day investigative reporting.

While Internation pieces always carry the Internation credit line, they are also bylined with the names of contributing writers.

The history of Internation:

The Nation launched the Internation project in May 1987, at the magazine's First Annual Conference on International Investigative Reporting held in Amsterdam in cooperation with the Dutch weekly Vrij Nederland.

Among the editors and journalists who served as panelists and speakers were I.F. Stone (U.S.), who delivered the keynote address, Lucia Annunziata (La Repubblica, Italy), Scott Armstrong (National Security Archive, U.S.), Duncan Campbell (New Statesman, U.K.), Mark Dowie (freelance, U.S.), Rinus Ferdinandusse (Vrij Nederland, Netherlands), Annette Levy Willard (Liberation, France), John Lloyd (New Statesman, U.K.), Victor Navasky (The Nation, U.S.), Nils Gunnar Nilsson (Sydvenska Dagbladet, Sweden), Anthony Sampson (freelance, U.K.), Mark Schapiro (The Nation, U.S.), David Weir (Center for Investigative Journalism, U.S.), and Peter Wivel (Information, Denmark).

Internation stories have appeared in Brecha (Uruguay), Dagens Nyheter (Sweden), De Morgen (Belgium), El Periodista (Argentina), Helsingin Sanomat (Finland), Information (Denmark), L'Espresso (Italy), L'Evenement du Jeudi (France), New Statesman (Great Britain), Politis (Britain), Proceso (Mexico), Sydvenska Dagbladet (Sweden), Tages Anzeiger (Switzerland), Tageszeitung (Germany), This (Canada), and Vrij Nederland (Netherlands).

How Internation articles are generated:

Internation editors in New York commission and edit most pieces. Some stories are brought to Internation by writers or editors working at participating publications, and some ideas come from freelance writers.

In addition to participating publications Internation draws upon the resources of the San Francisco based Center for Investigative Reporting, the Washington D.C. based National Security Archive, and many other independent research and reporting organisations. Naturally, the full staff of The Nation also is available to
Sixty five investigative journalists from Europe, the United States -- and one from India -- attended our second annual International Conference on Investigative Journalism. The gathering was co-sponsored by the British weekly, The New Statesman & Society and was held at Royal Holloway College, surrounded by the lush green hill-country of Sussex, an hour from London.

As at last year's conference in Amsterdam which was co-sponsored by the Dutch weekly Vrij Nederland, we brought together a network of editors, writers and TV producers who have been participants in the InterNation project and who are willing and able to work together on investigative stories that cross national borders.

The first event on this year's agenda was a Press Conference in London at which several participating editors denounced the use of legislation and the courts to limit press freedom.

The British situation was described as particularly urgent by Andreas Whittam-Smith, editor of the British daily The Independent -- a view supported in subsequent Conference discussions by Stuart Weir, editor of New Statesman & Society and David Leigh of The Observer. They described the chilling effects of draconian libel laws and regular invocations of the government's Official Secrets Act.

Peter Wivel, editor of the Danish daily Information, reported that his government had fined him $500 a day for several months in an attempt to force him to reveal the source of a report he ran about a fire-bomb attack on the Shell Oil Corporation (Wivel did not give in, and while he convinced the Danish courts to allow him to pay off the fines over several years, the chill remains on the Danish press).

The Nation's Victor Navasky and Scott Armstrong from the National Security Archive described the strictures on the flow of official information that have been applied by the Reagan administration through legislation and bureaucratic interference. And to conclude this opening press conference, Senior Assistant Editor of The Times of India Praful Bidwai brought word of a nationwide strike of journalists and editors directed against Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's smotheringly broad new defamation law.

Keynote by Sy Hersh:

The Conference formally opened at Saturday's breakfast with a keynote address by Seymour Hersh, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and recently the author of books on Henry Kissinger.
and the KAL-007 shutdown. Hersh was joined by others in the audience in decrying a battery of obstacles facing investigative reporting today -- specifically, shrinking budgets for investigative reporting and the various harassments mentioned above.

For the un-famous freelancers in the group it was particularly unnerving to hear Hersh speak of his battles to make mortgage payments and to fight through the indifference of editors and media proprietors.

Panel 1: Media owners and the Message:

The first panel discussion dealt with "Ideology and Investigative Reporting" and featured CBSTV Nightly News producer Carl Ginsburg, David Leigh of The Observer, British TV producer (and former Labor MP) Phillip Whitehead, and Nation writer Andy Kopkind. Each speaker recounted the ways in which the various media impact on content -- TV clearly trivializes issues -- and the impact of ownership -- with Leigh excusing himself for not investigating his boss Tiny Rowland by encouraging those who work for rival press barons to do it for him.

A trend noted by all is an increasing dominance of "shareholders' interests" in decisions involving news -- in TV or print. No considerations of quality, or social responsibility, or long-term consequence, can interfere with the pursuit of profit which is represented by audience or readership. While this has always been the general case in profit-based societies, Phillip Whitehead and Carl Ginsburg noted that in the U.K. and U.S., it is rapidly becoming the iron-rule.

A Special Discussion on Reporting AIDS:

Saturday afternoon's session began with a presentation by Britain's premier investigative reporter, Duncan Campbell, whose work has appeared on BBCTV and in the New Statesman.

Campbell was a sensation at last year's gathering when he screened his banned television report detailing a billion dollar spy-satellite boondoggle previously kept secret by Prime Minister Thatcher's cabinet. This year he was no less impressive as he constructed his argument that the highest-priority story about AIDS is that most of the scientific work is not being devoted to the highest priority task.

What we now know about the HIV virus (the "V" is redundant, Campbell observed) is that it is unlike most viruses in that the antibodies it produces contribute to the body's problems rather than solving them. This means the search for a vaccine is probably misguided and will divert money and attention from the more useful business of controlling the impact of the virus on
those people who harbor it but are asymptomatic. With characteristic originality and scientific method, Campbell has calculated that by focusing away from care and toward an illusory prevention, we will consume over a trillion dollars by the year 2000 in crisis management which we could forestall.

Other remarks by Campbell and by speakers from several other countries covered the semantics of AIDS, theories on the origin of the virus -- and how at least one theory traveled via the media from East Germany to India and back again gaining undeserved credibility on the way, the import of the disease's concentration among gays and i-v drug users, and the shortcomings of media coverage of this modern-day plague.

Panel 2: Reporting War and Peace:

Saturday afternoon's panel was devoted to "Reporting Peace, Military, and Security Issues" and featured Scott Armstrong of the National Security Archives in Washington, DC; Mary Kaldor, head of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Great Britain; and Pierre Abramavici, a documentary producer for TF1 television in France.

Armstrong gave a detailed explanation of how foreign and domestic reporters can use the Freedom of Information Act to obtain information about national security related issues, and outlined the ability of the National Security Archives in assisting journalists to track activities of the Pentagon, the Defense Department, CIA and National Security Council.

Mary Kaldor suggested areas that journalists should begin looking at for stories in the future: a post-NATO Europe; the growing rapprochement between Eastern and Western Europe; the increasing importance, in countries like Poland and Hungary, of a "second society," a loose, informal network of labor, professional and arts group that act independent of the official structure.

Abramavici described the reporting involved in producing a series of stories on Europe's arms trade with Iran -- stories that broke new aspects of the arms business, such as the existence of a Europe-wide cartel of munitions producers. All of his reporting involved extensive trans-European connections -- building on an important theme of the conference, doing investigative journalism across national boundaries.

Panel 3: International Money:

The final panel concerned "Financial and Corporate Reporting," featuring David Weir, Director of the Center for Investigative Reporting in San Francisco; Peter Koenig, a senior writer for the British business magazine, Euromoney; Will Hutton, Executive Producer for the Geneva-based European Business Channel; and Praful Bidwai, an Associate Editor of the Times of India in New
Delhi.

Opening with a recounting of his InterNation investigation into the export of hazardous wastes to the Third World, David Weir offered a model for future InterNation stories: developing sources and tracking a paper trail in several countries at once. His story, "The Export of Toxic Waste" (October 3, 1987) was cited extensively during a United Nations debate last December that led to a resolution calling for the developed countries to stop waste dumping in the less developed world; and contributed to the halt of a toxic waste shipment off the coast of Panama.

Peter Koenig picked up another key aspect of business reporting: the hidden powers and influence of large financial institutions such as the World Bank -- institutions which are difficult to crack journalistically but are often far more powerful than any single government in determining the direction of the world's economy.

"Journalists on the left," he noted, should not be intimidated by working in this area, since there are numerous "brothers in spirit" (if not in salary or occupation) who can be valuable sources of information.

The integration of Europe in 1992, he said, will be one of the biggest stories of the decade -- and something to report from a financial, as well as political, point of view.

Praful Bidwai, who has covered the Bhopal disaster extensively in his own country, suggested that the InterNation concept -- of reporters jointly working on pieces -- is ideally suited to pursuing pieces inherently of multinational dimension: Bhopal, the implications of declining genetic variability, destruction of the rainforests, all cases in which corporate actions in the Western world have direct influence on the lives of people in the Third World.

Bidwai called for the next InterNation conference to be held in New Delhi, as a way of encouraging more active participation of interested journalists in Asia and Africa.

Will Hutton, introduced as "one of the few financial journalists who hasn't bent his knees to Margaret Thatcher," noted the different demands made on television vs. print journalists -- for example, the need to develop sources normally reticent to give their names to go on camera. Hutton, based in Zurich, also gave some sense of the changing situation in Switzerland--where some of the most secretive financial institutions in the world have been forced to be more open with journalists as a result of revelations related to Marcos and Duvalier.