

REMARKS BY

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at the

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It is a pleasure to come before you today to discuss open source and FBIS' role in it. Open source is, as we are all aware, of vital and growing importance to the Intelligence Community. And for FBIS it is our raison d'être--it is our only business, and we conduct it as a service of common concern principally for the Intelligence Community, but increasingly for the government writ large and the private sector as well.

The pace of change in the open source arena is quickening as this symposium is making clear. Both the volume and importance of open source are increasing dramatically. On the one hand this growth can be attributed to an open source supply push. Simply put, as the world becomes increasingly transparent, the volume and utility of open source material grows. Perhaps the most striking example of this is provided by the break up of the former Soviet Union. The demise of this totalitarian state has been accompanied by a quantum jump in the availability of information openly and freely. As a case in point, nearly 1700 newspapers are being published there today which did not exist three years ago.

Not only is there a supply push but a technology push as well. Widely distributed, personal computing systems with immense power, large capacity digital storage media, highly capable search engines, and increasingly dense, broadband communications networks all at affordable and diminishing unit costs are leading inexorably to increasing rates of growth in the commercialization of information. And, of course, added to these push factors is a growing demand pull as a consequence

of the general awakening to the availability, affordability, and above all, the utility of open source information for supporting analysis and decision making in all sectors of society, both public and private.

One might imagine that an old-line open source supplier like FBIS would feel threatened by these trends--would fear that it might be rendered irrelevant as commercial information vendors vie for market share. Such, however, is not the case--quite the contrary as a matter of fact. Rather than feeling threatened, we at FBIS feel empowered. As I will describe in a moment, we are a niche player in an expansive and rapidly expanding enterprise. We have a particular, well-defined role which continues to be valued and viable despite not having changed fundamentally in the 50 plus years of our existence. To date our niche has not been infringed by commercial suppliers, and in our view, our competitive edge, which derives from the uniqueness of our services and our reputation for excellence, is unlikely to be eroded in future. Instead, the emergence of commercial suppliers and the steadily improving capability of our customer base to access their holdings has mitigated demands for FBIS to expand or modify its role in ways which I believe would have overextended our capabilities, eroded the sharp focus we have endeavored to maintain, and reduced our effectiveness in a highly important but bounded niche.

In short, we are optimistic about the future and our role in it. We welcome and encourage the emerging trends we are examining at this symposium--trends which we believe will secure rather than undermine our role as a principal supplier of essential open source information. While these trends are revolutionary to some, they are evolutionary to FBIS and those like it who have engaged in open source collection, processing, and exploitation for years.

Let me now turn to FBIS as an Intelligence Community open source organization, and address our capabilities as I was asked to do by the sponsors of this symposium. While many of you are familiar with our products you probably are less aware, or perhaps unaware, of how we do our work. And I can think of no better way to acquaint you with our capabilities, define our niche, and perhaps stimulate ideas among you for how we might improve our open source information services than by describing how FBIS goes about open source collection, processing, exploitation, and dissemination.

To understand FBIS as it is today, it is useful, even necessary, for you to have some background or, if you will, historical context. So if I might, allow me to begin at our beginnings. Like many Intelligence Community organizations, FBIS traces its antecedents to World War II. FBIS began as the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service when in February 1941 President Roosevelt directed the Secretary of the Treasury to allocate \$150,000 for recording, translating, transcribing, and analyzing certain radio programs broadcast from foreign transmitters--originally the Axis Powers' short-wave propaganda broadcasts. These broadcasts were beamed to the U.S. in an effort to influence public opinion and thereby U.S. policy regarding the war. Not only did FBIS

provide literal transcriptions of the broadcasts, but it performed analysis of them as well--principally trend analysis to discover shifts in tenor or content which might imply changes in Japanese intentions. In the first such analysis piece produced, the new monitoring service noted that Tokyo broadcasts had become more "hostile and defiant." While I would not suggest that this analysis, even in retrospect, could have changed the course of history, it is illustrative of the power of open source. In the years to come confirmation of the accuracy of media analysis would come more slowly and much less demonstratively.

Like many wartime offices, the monitoring service was threatened with closure at the end of World War II. Originally a part of the Federal Communications Commission, it had been transferred to the Department of the Army at the end of the war and, like many wartime entities, was caught up in a public debate regarding its proper, if any, continuing role. The threat of its potential demise brought about a flurry of criticism from a number of quarters, among them the press. Illustrative was a WASHINGTON POST editorial that described the monitoring office as "one of the most vital units in a sound postwar intelligence operation." Arguments such as this ultimately prevailed and with passage of the National Security Act of 1947, the monitoring service, reconstituted as the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, or FBIS, became a charter member of the postwar Intelligence Community.

FBIS' overseas monitoring operation, which centered on radio and press agency transmissions, grew in response to the Cold War and worldwide U.S. interests. Its mission was significantly enhanced in 1967 when it assumed responsibility for foreign press exploitation, and its focus became not just foreign broadcasts, but all foreign mass media, broadcast and print alike. In subsequent years expansion of that mission has been driven by media dissemination technologies, which has meant new efforts required by, among other things, increased television and satellite broadcasting. Most recently, our mission has been expanded to include commercial and government public data base and gray literature. Our focus across all of these media types however remains foreign collection, principally in foreign languages.

A particularly significant event occurred in 1974 when FBIS DAILY REPORTs, our flagship product, went on sale to the public through Commerce Department's National Technical Information Service, becoming available for the first time to the private sector and contributing thereby to expanded participation in informed analysis of issues significant to U.S. policy interests. Our products continue to be made available to the public through NTIS, although copyright restrictions, fair use constraints, and licensing agreements represent potential threats to this free flow of information.

From the beginning access to signals has been critical, so since opening our first wartime field bureau in October 1941 in Portland, Oregon, FBIS has developed a network of 19 regional field collection sites worldwide. These installations give us immediate access to radio

and television broadcasts and press agency transmissions and allow timely processing of a limited but significant range of perishable reports from the print media which are unavailable here except on a significantly delayed basis.

Our field offices are staffed by a mix of American and foreign national personnel and generally function as part of a sponsoring embassy, consulate, or military command. Importantly, they operate with the full knowledge and consent of the host government. Foreign nationals with native fluency in the target language monitor broadcasts and scan the press, providing summaries to U.S. staff officers who then select items for translation and subsequent transmittal to FBIS Headquarters and U.S. Government consumers. Limited resources preclude us from translating everything we monitor. Rather, we select items for full translation which are responsive to the requirements of the Intelligence Community. In essence, we operate a "smart front end" to winnow down the information we provide our customers to that which is relevant to their expressed needs. This then is our modus operandi for field operations. It is clean, efficient, effective, and perhaps most importantly, from the perspective of our hosts, benign. While we are a part of the Intelligence Community our operations are overt and unclassified and enable us to gain and preserve access to data important to informed decision making by U.S. policymakers.

A single FBIS installation may cover a number of languages, depending primarily on reception conditions for transmissions and access to other open sources from that location. Coverage focuses on sources that have proved productive in the past, but new sources are constantly being sought. Indeed, a not insignificant amount of our total effort is spent identifying and assessing sources to ensure the reliability, accuracy, responsiveness, and completeness of our coverage and the products we derive from it.

All of FBIS' operational locations are connected to the Diplomatic Telecommunications Service's system, allowing information monitored and translated in the field to be sent electronically via message traffic to all consumers with DTS links. The nearly 700 recipients of this traffic include embassies and military commands around the world, as well as many U.S. Government consumers in the Washington metropolitan area.

FBIS will maintain manned field operations far into the future. Nevertheless, we are not oblivious to advances in technology which are steadily improving the ability of the public and private sectors to efficiently move signals around the world. Indeed, we have already begun selectively using unmanned remote monitoring sites to feed signals to regional bureaus or even back to headquarters. Operational prudence, however, demands a significant field presence well into the future both to maintain timely access to open source materials not readily available locally and because the language resources critical to our operations are far more readily available abroad than here.

FBIS headquarters is located in Reston, and a significant amount of processing takes place there as well as in the field. At Reston we concentrate almost totally on sources which are less perishable, less time sensitive than the high current interest material which dominates our field coverage. The print media comprise the bulk of our sources for headquarters operations. Using our own field collection infrastructure, foreign vendors, and government acquisition programs, FBIS regularly procures and scans in excess of 3,000 newspapers and periodicals in nearly 60 languages. Language-capable staff officers select items of interest to U.S. Government consumers and send them to one of some 700 independent contract translators throughout the United States. If an item should prove time sensitive, it can be translated immediately in-house for more timely dissemination.

In short, FBIS operates in the headquarters environment much as we do in the field: skilled linguists scan large volumes of foreign language material, select items responsive to requirements, and dispatch them to contract translators for texting. Most of our translators are equipped with FAX machines and personal computers connected to FBIS Headquarters via modems and commercial phone lines to permit turnaround times compatible with the sensitivity of the information and customer needs.

In simple terms, the foregoing says FBIS monitors the media worldwide. That is our niche, although a very broad one to be sure. Our value added is severalfold: 1) The process is directly driven by customer requirements. We target sources and issues in response to changing customer interests. 2) Our collection, processing, and dissemination are timely. Proximity to sources, on-site selection and translation of relevant material, and electronic dissemination of that which is time sensitive ensure responsiveness. 3) And perhaps most importantly, foreign language materials are translated into English to ensure general, and immediate utility across our entire customer base.

As the foregoing clearly illustrates, language skills are critical to our business. Moreover, our language needs are a moving target. No better illustration of this can be provided than by the break-up of the former Soviet Union. Prior to the implosion, Russian alone was adequate to meet the demands for open source translation of materials from the USSR. Now however, upwards of a dozen languages are required as the newly independent republics return to their ethnic and linguistic roots.

I would add an aside here. FBIS, although never specifically chartered or funded as a linguistic service, provides language support to many government agencies under a variety of circumstances. For example, we sometimes provide interpreter services to U.S. government organizations sponsoring visits to this country by their foreign counterparts. Similarly, we translate foreign correspondence to U.S. government organizations and reverse translate responses. Perhaps our most interesting task of late was reverse translating the Federalist Papers into Russian to assist the leaders of that fledgling republic in their

dialogue regarding the appropriate form and limits of government institutions. On occasion, we even support the White House as was the case last year when one of our linguists provided simultaneous translation assistance to President Bush as he phoned the Estonian President to advise him that the United States had decided to extend full diplomatic recognition to that country. Language service is a growth area for FBIS, and while it is an important function, it is in government parlance an "other duty as assigned;" that is, we are not sized to meet these demands, but must accommodate them within an already stretched resource base. Achieving a balance which does not put our mainstream mission at risk is becoming increasingly difficult.

Beyond its service as a collection, translation, and dissemination instrument for open source information, FBIS plays a role in the exploitation arena. Two particularly important elements of that role are in warning intelligence and in open source based analysis. Although obvious, it bears stating that open sources play a very significant role in alerting all elements of the U.S. Government to important international developments. FBIS staffs a round-the-clock operations center that is in ready communication with government consumers, including the military, and with FBIS field bureaus. The center operates a wire service that forwards our most time-sensitive material to some 50 civilian and military watch offices where it can be used to support responsive policy and operational decisions. And of course, the center serves as a pipeline to update collection and processing requirements to our bureaus in near real time. Perhaps the most frequently cited anecdote about the warning and alert function of open source material goes back to the Cuban missile crisis, when the first word on the Soviet decision to withdraw its missiles from Cuba came in an FBIS account of a message from Premier Krushchev to President Kennedy broadcast by Radio Moscow. The President responded to this message immediately, without waiting for the official text to be delivered by the Soviets. More recently, the first word of the August 1991 coup in the Soviet Union came in an FBIS-supplied report monitored from TASS advising that Gorbachev had been replaced by Gennadiy Yanayev.

Timely reporting of hard news may be the most visible of open source's contribution, but unique insights can also be gained from long-term analysis based entirely on open source information. Careful scrutiny and tracking of changes in emphasis, volume, and placement of material in media reports, as well as the authority of the author or speaker, can frequently reveal a good deal about a country's operational intentions or impending policy shifts. This has been particularly true in the countries where media have been under strict government control, but we find it increasingly relevant where the press is relatively unfettered as well. For example, FBIS analysts anticipated the February 1979 Chinese invasion of Vietnam by demonstrating that the language used in authoritative Chinese warnings to Vietnam had almost never been used except in instances such as the 1962 Chinese intrusions into India in which Beijing had actually used military force. FBIS analysts had also identified the change in policy leading to the

February 1989 Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan as early as May 1985. I should note that the bulk of FBIS analysis is limited to government use for a period of six months from its publication date because it is single source vice integrated, all source analysis. It is then released to become part of the public domain. The important thing here, though, is not the temporary restriction on FBIS analysis but the fact that all the information on which these analytical judgments are based is open source and available through our regular means of dissemination.

In addition to the electronic dissemination means I have already mentioned, most of the material filed by the field and/or processed in the U.S. is published in regional and topical volumes sent to roughly 12,000 addressees -- counting NTIS subscribers. These publications also go to the regional Federal Depository Libraries, most of which utilize microfiche archiving. It is the intent of FBIS to ensure the continuing availability in the public domain of as much of our material as copyright and other restrictions will allow. This position is strongly supported by our customers in both the Intelligence and Policy Communities who value the work of private sector scholars and analysts who avail themselves of our material and contribute significantly to the national debate on contemporary issues such as economic competitiveness. The utility of our data for decision making in the private sector also provides us with support for this policy from that constituency.

We should see major changes in the dissemination of our products in the not too distant future. The Intelligence Community is placing increasing emphasis on electronic dissemination, and FBIS is moving forward with the community in developing improved connectivity under the auspices of the open source coordinator--connectivity which will support both profiled dissemination of and access to our entire product line vice only our field file. Our primary goal in working information handling issues is to ensure the availability of our products in a form that all our consumers can use and on as timely a basis as possible. Increasingly this means digital data electronically delivered. Toward that end we are currently working not only with the open source coordinator to meet Intelligence Community needs but also with NTIS to determine how soft copy products can best be provided to the private sector.

In closing I would like to echo earlier speakers at this conference who have alluded to the many challenges inherent in the world's current open source environment. We at FBIS share the view that there are challenges to overcome, but also share the widespread enthusiasm for the many opportunities those challenges imply. Along with other members of the open source community, we are actively investigating and participating in the development of exciting emerging technologies that have direct application to dealing with the exponential growth of information availability. Such tools as foreign language browsers and machine translation systems will assist us in optimizing the use of scarce human translation resources thereby improving productivity.

Optical character readers or other digitization techniques will provide a means of converting printed documents, both in English and foreign languages, to electronic form with accuracy and speed. Plain language data base search applications will open more of the vast archives of electronically stored information to a wider range of users, increasing efficiency and reducing the need for large support staffs for collectors and analysts alike. As these technologies mature and as we continue to integrate them into operational systems, it will become both prudent and feasible to begin archiving for subsequent, unanticipated use all of our collected data vice that subset we select, translate, and incorporate into products for dissemination.

FBIS is very much looking forward to continuing our work with our colleagues in the open source community on the development of enabling technologies and on the tighter integration of our intelligence discipline with our consumers in the Intelligence Community, the government at large, and the private sector to ensure the best possible use of open source information in support of our national interests. FBIS has been a part of the open source solution for over 50 years, and it is our intention to remain so in future. Thank you.

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