

*A suggestion about the
information explosion*

THE EXPLOITATION OF FOREIGN OPEN SOURCES

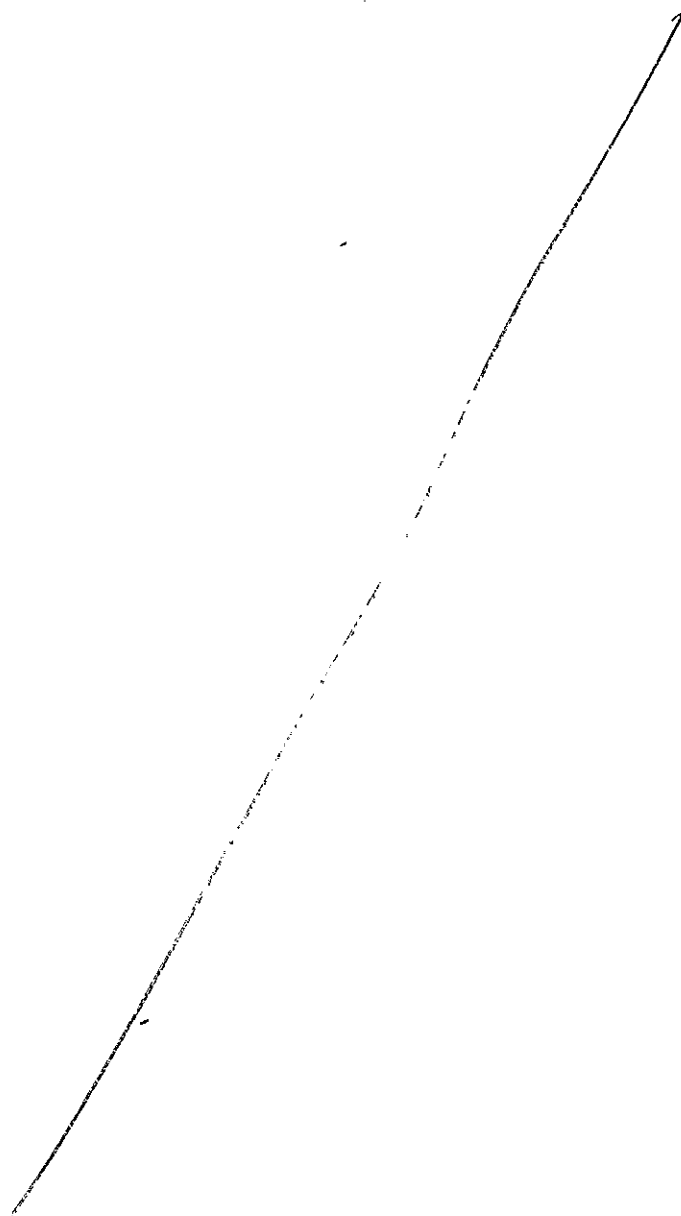


Approved for Release

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Open Sources

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CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) has the key role in monitoring foreign broadcasts and, since 1 May 1967, has had responsibility for press monitoring and translation coordination, previously functions of the Foreign Documents Division of the Office of Central Reference. In these programs, FBIS designates priority topics in accordance with requirements by various CIA components and from other intelligence services.

The extensive radio broadcast monitoring program results in the unclassified FBIS *Daily Report* series of separate reports (issued five times weekly) for the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Communist China, Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and Africa, and Latin America and Western Europe. The contents include a variety of fully translated texts in English, excerpts, summaries, and abstracts, mainly from radio broadcasts and press agency transmissions. These reports alert the intelligence community to important developments and statements by foreign officials and other key personalities.

The FBIS press monitoring and translation program issues nearly 80 periodicals and occasional publications for the use of intelligence and other governmental analysts. Most of the serial publications are unclassified and available to the public. There are five concerned with Communist China, and with other Asian and Pacific nations, also five. No less than 38 deal with the USSR, and 23 with Eastern Europe. Four are concerned with Latin America or Western Europe, and three with the Middle East and Africa. These publications are tailored to meet various intelligence needs, and embrace political, economic, sociological, military and scientific categories of information.

Most of the FBIS translations and unclassified serial publications are actually produced by the Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS), an organization established in 1957 under Department of Commerce cover. Intelligence and other government analysts can order translations of documents, articles, or books as required. JPRS unclassified publications, including translations, are listed and made available to the general public through US Government Research and Development Reports, a journal published twice monthly by the Clearinghouse for Federal Scientific and Technical Information of the Department of Commerce. As a part of its coordination function, and to prevent duplication of translation, FBIS maintains and publishes monthly the *Consolidated Translation Survey* (Official Use

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Only), listing the completed translations and those in progress of more than 100 participating organizations. In 1968 the index listed more than 400,000 translations.

In addition to the linguistic resources of JPRS, FBIS maintains a staff of intelligence officers with highly developed linguistic abilities and area knowledge, and foreign field bureaus with indigenous press monitors working in 17 languages.

Among the better known of the other translation and open source monitoring services and products available to intelligence analysts are those of the State Department and U.S. Information Service missions throughout the world, which publish summaries or digests relating to the host country. The Aerospace Technology Division (ATD) of the Air Force Systems Command, under the direction of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), scans numerous foreign scientific and technical books and journals as they are received in the Library of Congress or received from Air Force procurement officers. ATD disseminates special studies and English abstracts of foreign books and articles, the latter in very convenient 5 x 8 inch card format widely used by scientific intelligence analysts.⁶ Currently the ATD program is being reorganized. DIA and Army translate several Soviet military journals cover-to-cover on a regular basis. The Atomic Energy Commission publishes *Nuclear Science Abstracts*, an English compilation from worldwide publications relating to nuclear energy.

The non-intelligence (non-USIB) community carries on a large and productive effort to exploit for its own benefit foreign open sources in many cultural areas, producing usually through contract organizations many cover-to-cover and partial translations of Soviet and other foreign language publications. Some of the more notable and extensive of these efforts are those by various professional societies and such government agencies as the National Science Foundation and the National Aeronautics and Space Agency. The non-intelligence effort is of considerable value to intelligence analysts.

Problems and Needs

The history of US exploitation of foreign open sources by both the intelligence and non-intelligence communities shows that the

⁶ George A. Pughe, "The Dust that Isn't There," *Studies* II 2, p. 58 ff.

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programs are expanding as publications have increased (one might almost say that a worldwide "publications explosion" is in progress). As time passes, more programs are initiated and new subjects added.

The need for a centralized agency to administer the growing exploitation of all foreign open sources of information is thus already evident to rationalize the numerous efforts, all with similar objectives, going on simultaneously within and outside of the intelligence community.

Such an agency could operate openly, serving the nation as a whole, including the intelligence community. Uncle Sam already is footing most of the bill. Such an agency could be operated with greater net economy and efficiency than the multifarious undertakings of the present, since processing methods could be unified and a single, flexible automatic data processing system could be employed. Such an agency could still take advantage of the use of foreign and domestic field units and could maintain flexibility and comprehensive coverage through the use of contractors. Many linguists might be attracted who would not consider working for an intelligence organization. More promising professional careers could be offered. Arrangements with foreign governments for the exchange of publications could be expanded. NASA already has such arrangements with 80 countries, and the AEC also has an exchange program.

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Another potent argument in favor of a national agency of the type suggested is that it would allow more efficient disposition of intelligence talent and budget. Functions and selected blocs of people could be transferred from CIA and other intelligence organizations to the agency which would be funded directly by Congress. The intelligence community could with good management gain more and better open information from foreign sources under the proposed organization, which could also become a useful instrument of national policy by promoting foreign cooperation through publications and other information exchanges.

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