Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Report

An Online Database Brought to you by JISC Collections



A Tutorial and Review by the History Subject Centre

JISC Collections has recently purchased a new collection of primary source material on behalf of the UK academic community. This searchable, online archive contains hundreds of thousands of pages of foreign press materials, news transmissions and radio broadcasts from the years 1974 to 1996.

According to the JISC description, this material, "taken from *The Daily Report*, issued by the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, has been the fundamental record of political and historical open source intelligence for the United States government for nearly 70 years."

The digital edition includes transcripts of broadcasts and news from around the world, translated into English. These reports are organized by geographic location and JISC Collections has acquired the following regions: the Middle East and North Africa; South Asia; Sub-Saharan Africa; and Eastern Europe (EEU).

In terms of usability, this service provide a simple search engine interface similar to those used in online journal repositories and is easily navigable to those with basic to intermediate ICT literacy. It also offers more advanced search criteria, such as BOOLEAN and proximity indicators to eliminate irrelevant hits.

When you first enter the site, you are presented with a standard search box, which you can filter by date, country or region, type of document, publication title, or a specific event. This last option is particularly useful when keyword searching would be imprecise.



To demonstrate how to use this site, let us start with an event: The Assassination of King Faysal of Saudi Arabia in March 1975.

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Events - Click on a topic to see a list of related articles				
1974 - 1979				
1974 - Energy crisis brings oil wealth to Nigeria	<u>1977 - Pakistani General Zia-ul-Haq overthrows Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in</u>			
1974 - Turkish troops invade Cyprus	coup, and imposes martial law			
1974 - Angolan exclave of Cabinda seeks separation and independence	1977 - Congo President Marien Ngouabi is assassinated			
1975 - FRELIMO's struggle for Mozambique's independence from	<u>1977 - 1978 Ogaden War between Somalia and Ethiopia</u>			
Portugal succeeds with Lusaka Accord	1977 - 1978 China breaks ties with Albania over ideology, leaving Albania completely isolated internationally.			
1975 - Assassination of King Faysal of Saudi Arabia	Albana completely isolated internationally			
1975 - Kurdish insurgency in Iraq	 1970 - Connict between Chad and Libya begins 1070 - Ocean David Overseit and Accords sizes diversel by Accord of 			
1975 - Polisario Front forces Spain to retreat from Spanish Sahara	Part and Menachem Begin of Israel			
 <u>1975 - Phalangists attack Palestinians on Beirut bus, setting off 15-</u> vear Lebanese Civil War 	1978 - P.W. Botha elected Prime Minister of South Africa			
1975 - Indira Gandhi, defving court ruling on electoral wrongdoing.	1978 - Karol Wojtyla, Cardinal of Krakow (Poland) is elected Pope			
declares a state of emergency in India	1978 - 1979 Ugandan-Tanzanian War, culminating in ouster of Idi Amin			
1975 - 1976 Angolan independence is followed immediately by civil war	1979 - Saddam Hussein comes to power in Iraq			
1975 - 1979 Jewish settlements expand in Palestinian territories	1979 - Rhodesia becomes Zimbabwe: black majority is empowered			
1975 - 1979 - Moammar Qadhdhafi (Khadafy) formulates a political philosophy of Islamic socialism and publishes his "Green Book"	1979 - Islamic fundamentalists seize Grand Al-Haram Mosque in Mecca			
 1976 - Israel raids Entebbe airport in Uganda, releasing hostages held in hijacking 	 1979 - 1981 Revolutionary students take hostages and occupy U.S. embassy in Tehran 			
5 1976 - 1979 Senaratiet Tamil Tinere incurrent in Sri Lanka				

After clicking on an event, you are presented with a list of texts and reports, listed in chronological order. You can either chose to view the particular article (View Article) or see it in the context of its original page (View Full Page). The first article is a report from the Middle East News Agency in Cairo. If we click on (View Article) we can see the MENA's report, translated from Arabic.

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You can also search for specific material types, for example, speeches made between 1988 and 1990.

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Because we did not limit the search by region or keyword, we get a wide variety of hits. Number two, *Al-Qadhdhafi Views Agenda of People's Congress*, for example, may be of particular use to lecturers or students in courses on Northern Africa.

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When we *View Full Article*, we are given a complete transcription of Al-Qadhdhafi's speech. The page can now be printed or saved as a PDF



Finally, we can try a Boolean search. In the search box, you can enter keywords as well as the Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT and NEAR. Using NEAR will increase the likelihood of relevant hits by making sure your keywords are in close proximity to each other. For example, we can search for **Reagan NEAR "Berlin Wall".**

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Thus, we receive a list of news articles regarding Ronald Reagan's criticism of the Berlin Wall.

Despite its limited timeframe, the collection does provide an extensive collection of primary materials which can be used to study not only modern historical events, but also the perception and portrayal of those events around the world. While more advanced researchers of these regions will likely have the language skills to view this material in its original form, having certified translations of these broadcasts and periodicals can provide undergraduates a way to access the material with fewer secondary filters. Furthermore, the breadth of material leaves little doubt that this collection will be an invaluable resource to seminar tutors of world and regional history as well as undergraduate students working through honours dissertations.

A subscription to this collection is currently available to UK Higher Education Institutions **without charge** until 31 August 2014, though you will have to wait for your institution to submit a hardcopy application to JISC before you can access the site. Further information and subscription details are available at <u>http://www.jisc-</u>collections.ac.uk/catalogue/fbis.

Reviewed November 2009 by Dr Melodee Beals, Academic Coordinator, History at the Higher Education Academy