

## SUMMARY NOTES

FBIS Seminar

Jim Mathias

Mr. Mathias concluded the summary presentation by restating some common threads running throughout.

The moderators and commentators participated in the conference in order to assist the sponsor in arriving at reasoned decisions on planning and budgeting for possible application of computer technology where it would increase the cost effectiveness of performance. The summary panelists did not address themselves to the users of FBIS material since the user is unknown but to the translation services as described by the sponsor. This omits the important element alluded to by Mr. Hays when he suggested that the sponsor should look beyond the function of translation and consider the purposes for which the work is done.

The nature of human motivation is critical in the translation process and in the undesirable effects that can result from unwise division of tasks between the human translator and the computer. It was said that too often the human translator is asked to do the difficult tasks while the system designers assign the simpler tasks to the computer. This relegates the translator to second-class citizen and can seriously affect his motivation and his production. The obvious preference is to assign to the computer functions which it can perform well without imposing added undesirable tasks on the human translator in order to compensate for computer shortcomings.

There was a general consensus that the computer should be introduced into FBIS translation process wherever it is possible to maximize current capabilities for current needs. This would imply use of off-the-shelf items, research and

development where off-the-shelf items were not really adequate to the tasks, or establish a holding pattern for those functions which have been developed in the research community and not yet applied to off-the-shelf hardware.

It was suggested that the sponsor should develop a means of verifying usefulness of existing technology and systems. The verification of existing technology might be best achieved by establishing an in-house awareness through maximum exposure to research and development in the commercial and academic community. This might require the establishment of one or more high-level slots for personnel assigned specifically to monitoring developments and capabilities, or it might require establishment of a series of seminars for intensive familiarization of sponsor personnel. The verification of systems, however, might be far better undertaken through the application of dependable objective scientific tests. These tests should be conducted by the sponsor or an independent agent for the sponsor and not by designers, developers, or promoters of candidate systems. The need for experimental methodology was emphasized.

It was generally concluded that during the process of selecting systems or hardware, for application to sponsor tasks, that maximum flexibility be one of the principal criteria applied in order to assure long term usefulness and avoid costly replacement. The approach taken should not be set in concrete but should reflect the ability to cut off one method of approach if it appears unfruitful and shift to another effort or another direction. Avoid the forced choice of any single system by avoiding reliance on any one approach.