

The World News Connection

Keeping Americans Informed About Their World

A White Paper

By John Hounsell

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The U.S. Government has many valuable information resources available. This paper provides an overview of one of them, the World News Connection® (WNC), a foreign news service from the U.S. Government, and its many benefits.

Knowledge of international affairs is essential to participate successfully in today's global economy. Familiarity with the different philosophies, world outlooks, and thinking processes of other peoples is necessary for American business to be successful in the international arena.

Most Americans receive their news from U.S. outlets and simply don't have access to foreign news as it is being reported locally. Different cultures and customs can affect how the same information is reported and understood, and, consequently, Americans may not fully comprehend all that is happening in the world around them. This circumstance was recognized long ago, and the WNC database was created to help to minimize this information gap.

WNC is a powerful online subscription service bringing news from around the world, translated into English, to the WNC user desktop, usually within 24-72 hours from the time of the original publication or broadcast. The information is obtained from full text and summaries of newspaper articles, television and radio broadcasts, online sources, conference proceedings, periodicals, and non-classified technical reports. This information is collected and translated to aid decision makers at the highest levels of the Executive and Legislative branches of the U.S. Government who need to know what is happening abroad and how it is being reported locally. This same content within WNC now can provide all Americans global insight and perspective.

Historical Perspective

The importance of monitoring foreign propaganda and news was recognized before the United States entered World War II. In February 1941, President Roosevelt set up the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS) to translate or transcribe and then analyze Axis propaganda transmitted to the United States by shortwave radio. Since it was monitoring radio broadcasts, it was placed under the Federal Communications Commission. At the end of World War II FBMS was transferred to the Department of the Army.

In 1947 the FBMS was renamed the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) and placed under the Central Intelligence Agency by the National Security Act. Originally FBIS mainly monitored radio broadcasts and press agencies. As television news became more and more important it was included in FBIS' mission. In 1967 FBIS' mission was officially expanded to include all relevant foreign mass media, including radio, television,

newspapers and magazines. These news items were published in daily booklets, the FBIS Daily Reports, available only to the US Government due to copyright restrictions.

Using a print medium for dissemination, however, put a limitation on the amount of news that could be covered and made available. Consequently, dissemination was switched from print to electronic format in 1995. All news articles and analyses went into a database that could be accessed online by US government personnel.

The Effect of 9/11

It was apparent already in the 1990's that US collection of open source intelligence was not as thorough as it should be. The Aspin-Brown Commission stated in 1996 that US access to open sources was "severely deficient". With the attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in 2001 the deficiency became more evident. The 9/11 Commission report in July 2004 stated that Americans were generally unaware of the thinking of the rest of the world and recommended creating an open-source intelligence collection analysis and dissemination entity. As a result, FBIS received a boost in funding to increase its coverage of foreign news.

From FBIS to the Open Source Center

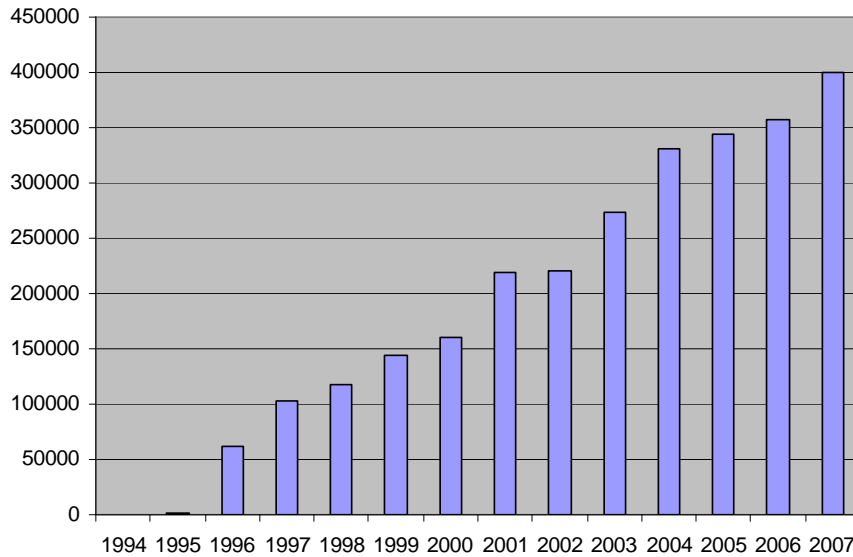
In November 2005 FBIS was subsumed under the Open Source Center. Its mission was expanded from just covering radio, television and the press, to the internet, including established news sources, private online reports, videos, and blogs.

Creation of the World News Connection®

It was recognized in 1995 that this resource should be made available to the American public. To achieve this goal, FBIS approached the National Technical Information Service to make FBIS' news collection, as well as its analyses of the news, available to the public. NTIS did so by setting up the World News Connection® (WNC). To abide by copyright laws, NTIS approached hundreds of news sources to seek copyright clearance for their articles.

The OSC database is updated hourly and sent to the National Technical Information Service. NTIS filters out the articles for which it has no copyright clearance and updates WNC with the remaining articles cleared for NTIS. The result of all this is a unique foreign news resource, covering sources and locations not covered at all by most commercial news sources. The result of these activities was a tremendous increase in the access to foreign news articles by the American public through the WNC as shown in the following graph:

Story Counts by Year



At present about half the articles in the OSC database are covered by copyright agreements or are otherwise available in WNC.

Coverage of the World News Connection®

Since it is compiled by intelligence experts from the OSC, WNC is a unique tool for timely monitoring of socioeconomic, political, regulatory, and market conditions worldwide. It is comprised of more than 1,750 non-U.S. media sources from 130 countries to give you an unfiltered view of what is happening in a specific country or region. WNC contains such well known sources as:

Agence France Presse
Xinhua
Middle East News Agency
Press Trust of India

Voice of Israel
NOTIMEX
ITAR-TASS
South Africa Press Association

WNC also covers more obscure sources and regions like:

Pajhwok Afghan News
Kuensel (Bhutan)
Borneo Bulletin
Agence Djiboutienne d'Information
Fiji Village News
Guineeconakry.info

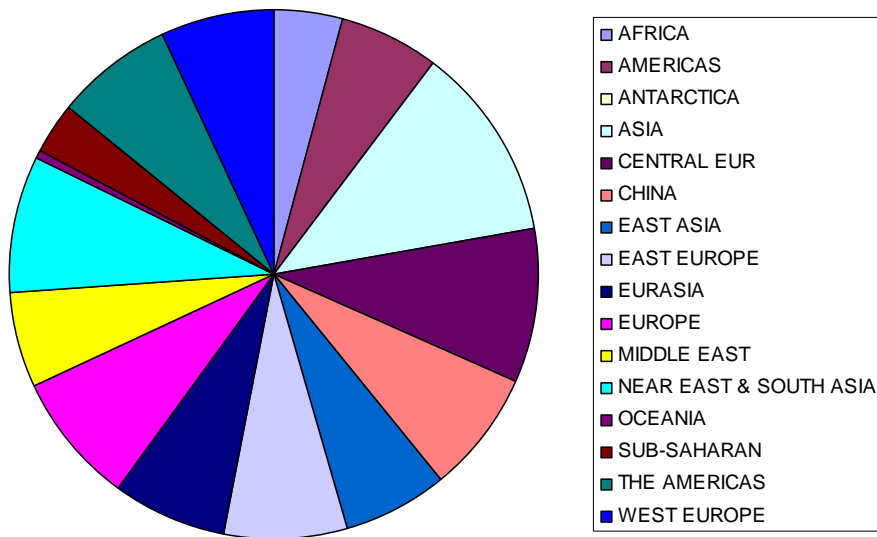
Guyana Chronicle
Rwanda News Agency
Hornafrik (Somalia)
El Nacional (Venezuela)
Movement for Democratic Change
(Zimbabwe)

NTIS provides a [listing of WNC sources](#) accessible from the WNC Website.

Regional Coverage

When FBIS became OSC it changed its regional divisions to better reflect the post-1989 world after the demise of the Soviet Union and better reflect its reporting requirements. The following graph shows the geographic coverage of the world before and after 2005. The areas with an asterisk are the old categories.

Geographic Region	Articles
AFRICA	158,980
AMERICAS	230,736
ANTARCTICA	85
ASIA	453,488
CENTRAL EUROPE*	349,922
CHINA*	280,795
EAST ASIA*	242,600
EAST EUROPE*	284,772
EURASIA	265,588
EUROPE	305,397
MIDDLE EAST*	214,062
NEAR EAST & SOUTH ASIA	322,268
OCEANIA	14,524
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA*	122,065
THE AMERICAS*	268,636
WEST EUROPE*	262,127



As you can see, WNC coverage is spread fairly evenly across all regions of the world.

The benefits of the WNC

WNC users receive many unique advantages:

- Thousands of sources not available elsewhere
- Newspaper and magazine articles (from hard copy and e-copy), television and radio broadcasts, blogs, conference proceedings, technical reports (journals and grey literature), and OSC analyses
- Local articles are translated into English
- Timeliness – WNC is updated hourly, available within 24-72 hours from the time of original publication or broadcast, sooner if translation not necessary
- Not filtered through Western biases
- Most articles are full text
- Covers 130 countries, including locations other news services don't cover
- Covers significant socioeconomic, political, scientific, technical, security, and environmental issues and events

How is WNC Used?

The most frequently cited uses of WNC include:

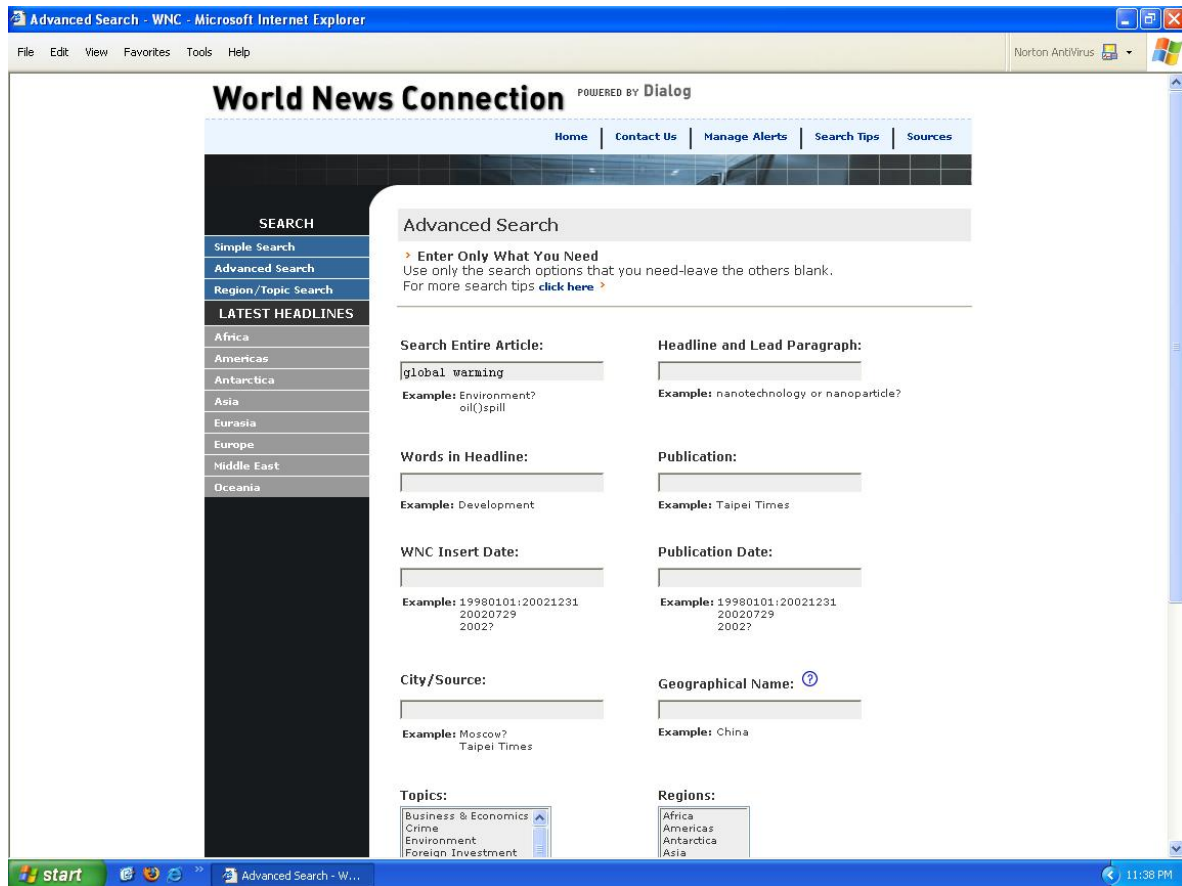
- Foreign news alert service
- Used for the English translation of foreign language articles
- Used to obtain the local view
- Used for reference
- Often used as a secondary source of news
- Used for teaching journalism and communication
- Used to prepare for travel
- Used to make investment decisions
- Used for competitive intelligence

How to Access WNC

WNC is available through the Dialog search service as well as other sources that lease the WNC database from NTIS.

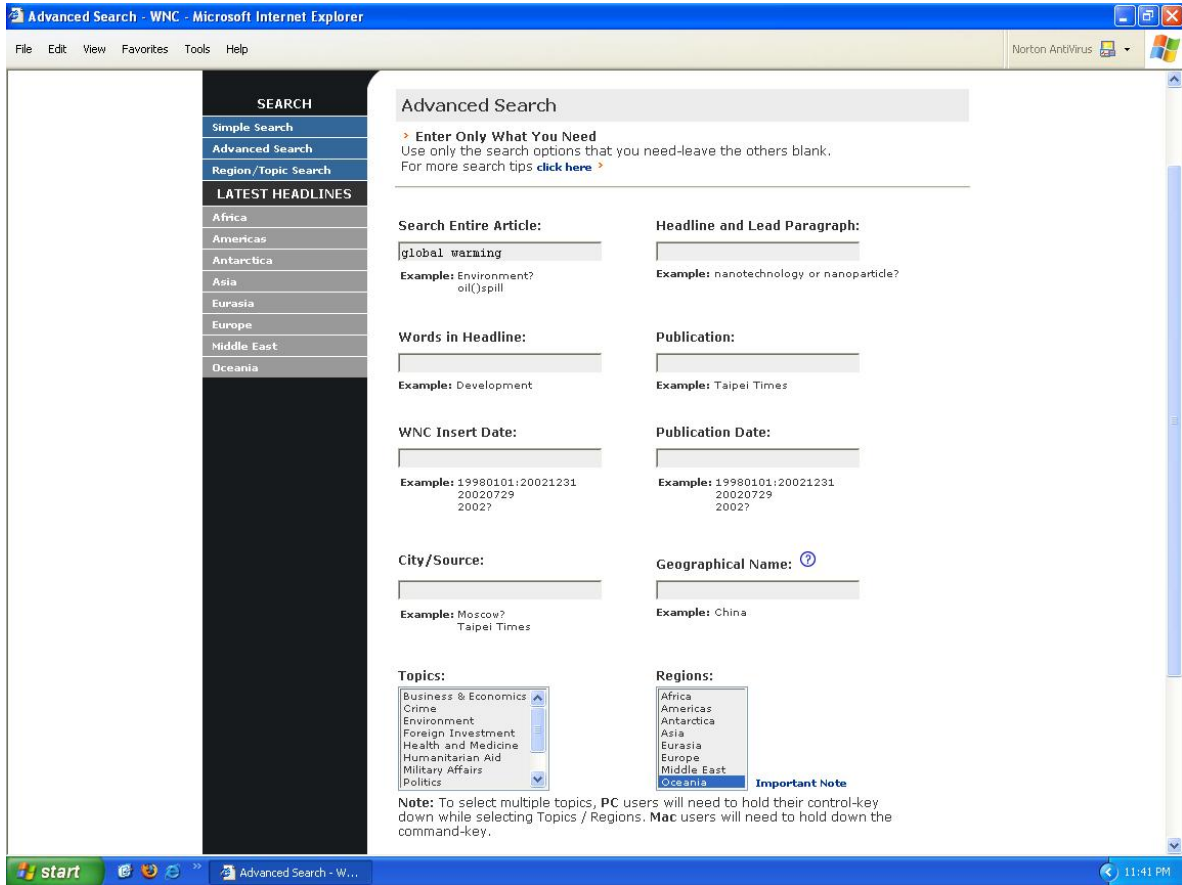
The WNC on Dialog provides both an intuitive and powerful interface. It allows text searches within the entire article or limited to the headline and lead paragraph or just the headline. You can search by publication if you know who published the article you seek. You can search by the date of publication or the date when the article was added to WNC. Users also have the ability to search by the “city source”, that is the name of the city of the publication and its name. This is particularly useful since so many publications have similar if not identical names such as *The Times* or *La Prensa*. Finally, you can specify a geographical area, region, or topic as shown in the drop down menus in the examples below.

The following search example on **global warming** returned 4,372 hits:



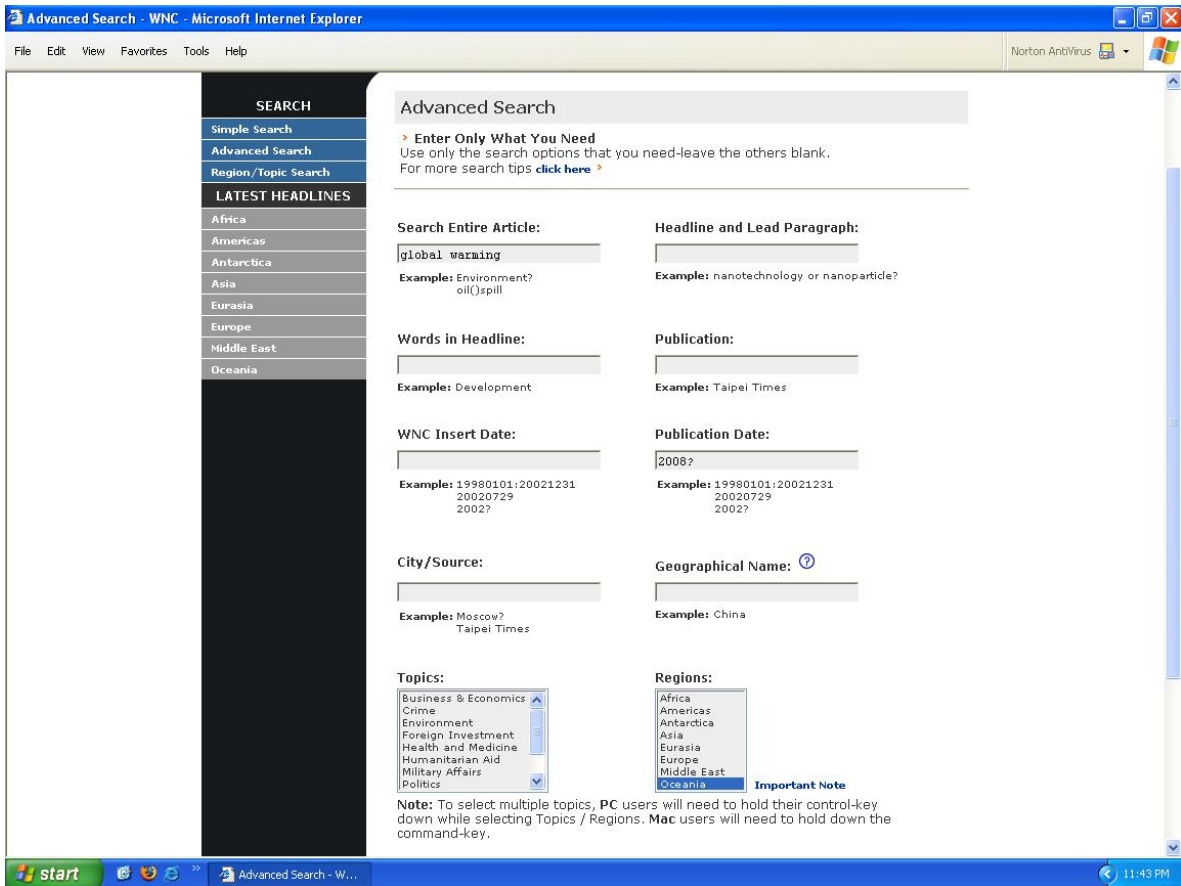
WNC Search Screen on Dialog

The **global warming** search can be further refined by limiting it to global warming in **Oceania**. The revised search results in 289 hits.



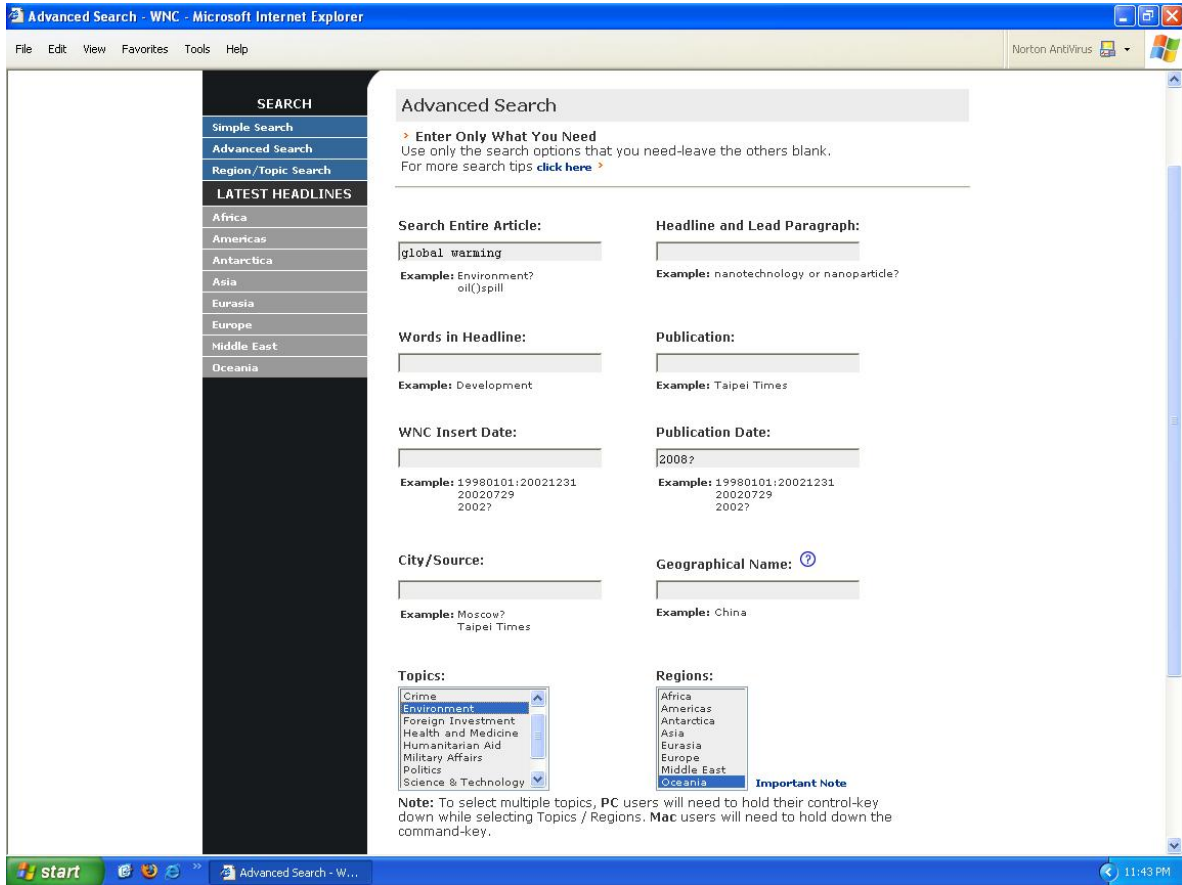
WNC Search Screen on Dialog

The search can be further refined to limit to the **current year**. This returns 67 hits.



WNC Search Screen on Dialog

Now to get the environmental impact of global warming, we also highlight the topic, “**environment**”, and come up with just 24 hits:



WNC Search Screen on Dialog

Here is a display of the first 10 hits:

POWERED BY **Dialog**

LOG OFF

Search results: **24** titles



[Create an alert for this search](#) to automatically receive new titles via email

select
all none

Display Checked

Display All

Titles on this page:

-
- 1 [Xinhua 'Roundup': PIF Summit Concludes After Discussions on Regional Growth, climate Change, Fiji by Lin Rong](#) [Xinhua "Roundup" by Lin Rong: "PIF Summit Concludes After Discussions on Regional Growth, climate Change, Fiji by Lin Rong"](#) - Xinhua - Thursday - August 21, 2008 - Word Count: 1,051 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85**

 - 2 [Global Warming May Become Critical By 2050 - Expert](#) - ITAR-TASS - Sunday - July 13, 2008 - Word Count: 1,309 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85**

 - 3 [Xinhua 'China Focus': Beijing Economists Say Equal Emissions Cuts 'Unreasonable'](#) [Xinhua "China Focus": "Equal Emissions Cuts 'Unreasonable,' Economists Say \(1\)"](#) - Xinhua - Wednesday - July 9, 2008 - Word Count: 1,151 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85**

 - 4 [Xinhua: UN Climate Change Conference Fails To Reach Concrete Agreement](#) [Xinhua: "UN Climate Change Conference Fails To Reach Concrete Agreement"](#) - Xinhua - Friday - June 13, 2008 - Word Count: 546 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85**

 - 5 [AFP: G8 Finance Ministers Wrestle With Oil, Food Crises By Sunil Jagtiani](#) - AFP - Friday - June 13, 2008 - Word Count: 717 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85**

 - 6 [AFP: Further on Australia PM Rudd Pledges Cooperation With Indonesia President By Stephen Coates](#) - AFP - Friday - June 13, 2008 - Word Count: 643 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85**

 - 7 [Taipei Times: FEATURE: Air Monitoring Scheme Gets a Hand Article by Meggie Lu](#) [staff Reporter from the "Taiwan" page: "FEATURE: Air](#)**

[Monitoring Scheme Gets a Hand"](#) - Taipei Times (Internet Version-WWW) - Saturday - June 7, 2008 - Word Count: 1,099 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85

- 8** [AFP: G8, Emerging Economies Discuss Climate Change in Japan By Harumi Ozawa](#) - AFP - Saturday - May 24, 2008 - Word Count: 536 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85

- 9** [CNA: Taiwan To Participate In Global Greens Conference In Brazil By Emmanuelle Tzeng](#) - Central News Agency WWW-Text - Thursday - April 17, 2008 - Word Count: 267 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85

- 10** [Xinhua Commentary on 2008 Boao Forum 'Green Asia' Theme "Commentary: Join Hands for a Green Asia" -- Xinhua headline](#) - Xinhua - Saturday - April 12, 2008 - Word Count: 473 - World News Connection® - US\$3.85



Titles on this page:

Display Checked

Display All

Display more titles: [1-10](#) [11-20](#)

[21-24](#)

To display full records, click a title or use the checkboxes and display buttons

Sample Record within WNC

By selecting the first one we get the full text of the report:

“Xinhua 'Roundup': PIF Summit Concludes After Discussions on Regional Growth, climate Change, Fiji by Lin Rong

Xinhua "Roundup" by Lin Rong: "PIF Summit Concludes After Discussions on Regional Growth, climate Change, Fiji by Lin Rong"

Xinhua

Thursday, August 21, 2008 T09:29:07Z

Journal Code: 341 **Language:** ENGLISH **Record Type:** FULLTEXT

Document Type: OSC Transcribed Text

Word Count: 1,051

(Computer selected and disseminated without OSC editorial intervention)

Roundup: PIF summit concludes after discussions on regional growth, climate change, Fiji ALOFI, Niue, Aug. 20 (Xinhua) -- Leaders from 15 nations of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) concluded their summit on Wednesday with the adoption of a forum communique and the Niue Declaration on Climate Change.

The leaders discussed a number of issues, including the implementation of the Pacific Plan, food and energy security, climate change and Fiji situation, and achieved "positive outcomes, " the Niuean Premier Toke Talagi told a press conference after a whole day of retreat of the Forum leaders.

Talagi is chairing in the coming year the 16-member PIF, which groups Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Tonga, Samoa, Micronesia, Kiribati, Niue, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Fiji announced to pull out of this year's summit just two days ahead of the opening.

The leaders, who meet annually to develop collective responses to regional issues, agreed to appoint Tuiloma Slade, a veteran diplomat from Samoa, as the new Secretary General of the PIF Secretariat for a three-year term, said Talagi.

REGIONAL GROWTH

Lagging the world in economic development, small island nations of the PIF are expecting the Forum to work out ways to improve their aid-ridden economies, enhance labor mobility to the richer nations of Australia and New Zealand and promote industries other than agriculture, logging and fishing.

In their Forum Communique, the PIF leaders noted that considerable progress had been made in implementing initiatives of the Pacific Plan, adopted by Forum leaders in October 2005 for strengthening regional cooperation and integration.

They also stressed the continuing need to set clear direction and targets for members, regional agencies and development partners.

Noting their concerns at recent rapid increases in food and fuel prices, leaders highlighted the critical importance of efforts to reduce dependence on oil through measures to improve energy efficiency and move towards greater use of renewable energy.

Leaders also underlined the need for urgent action to bring the bulk petroleum purchase

initiative, a move to join the force of small island countries to lower fuel prices, to fruition. Leaders welcomed New Zealand's provision of seasonal work opportunities for Pacific Island countries and welcomed Australia's announcement of a pilot scheme as a means to greater economic integration and development.

Remittance sent by overseas guest workers is a crucial source of income for small Pacific Islands countries.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The effect of "global warming" has been a threat to safety of island communities, as some low-lying countries, such as Tuvalu and Kiribati, are facing inundation from rising sea levels.

With climate change as this year's main theme, Forum leaders expressed their deep concerns over the serious current impacts of and growing threat posed by climate change to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being and security of Pacific island countries.

"Despite being amongst the lowest contributors to factors causing climate change, the Pacific Islands region is one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change including its exacerbation of climate variability, sea level rise and extreme weather events," said the leaders in their Niue Declaration on Climate Change

The forum leaders stressed the importance of cooperating towards the establishment of an effective post-2012 framework in which all major economies will participate in a responsible manner.

They called on international partners to assist their development by undertaking immediate and effective measures to reduce emissions, use cleaner fuels, and increase use of renewable energy sources.

They also encouraged all Pacific Island countries, with the assistance of development partners, to continue to address the impacts of climate change through 'no regrets' or 'low regrets' actions in affected sectors.

FIJI SITUATION

Earlier in the day, Talagi held a separate press conference on Fiji situation, issuing a communique on Fiji, which appeared as part of the complete Forum Communique released later.

The Forum leaders expressed "serious" concerns at Fiji's absence to this year's PIF summit, urging the country's interim government to honor its commitment to hold elections by March 2009.

Fiji interim Prime Minister Commodore Frank Bainimarama, who seized power in a bloodless coup in December 2006, announced on Monday that his country was pulling out of this year's PIF summit, triggering concerns among his fellow PIF partners who are expected to discuss with him face-to-face at the summit about the election process.

Reaffirming the readiness of Forum members to continue to assist Fiji to prepare the election, the PIF leaders acknowledged that there are long-term issues that need to be addressed in Fiji, including through independent and inclusive political dialogue.

They also vowed to conduct the dialogue as a "genuine" one, "without precondition, threats, ultimatum or predetermined outcomes" and with "support by all key stakeholders." The leaders agreed that they would consider a further special summit meeting by the end of 2008 to consider "special measures" in relation to Fiji, and that "measures to be considered include the suspension of particular governments from the Forum".

Talagi confirmed at the press conference that the suspension was among the measures to be

considered, but at the moment it was not being discussed.

"We are not interested in isolation," said Talagi, adding that both the contact group and himself, who is chairing the PIF in the coming year, are ready to work as medium to conduct dialogues with Fiji.

Also as part of the agenda of the PIF summit, the 20th Post- Forum Dialogue Partners' Plenary will be held on Thursday with focus on Coral Pasisi and other regional and International issues.

Since 1989, the Forum has held Post Forum Dialogues with key Dialogue Partners (PFDP) at Ministerial level. The 14-member PFDP includes: Canada, China, European Union, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Britain and the United States.

With a population of less than 1,600, Niue was the smallest country in the PIF. The last time Niue hosted a PIF summit was in 1978.

The next PIF summit will be held in Australia.

(Description of Source: Beijing Xinhua in English -- China's official news service for English-language audiences (New China News Agency))

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The content of the first article provides a local perspective regarding the impact of global warming on the Pacific Island Forum countries, and is indicative of the powerful WNC search and retrieval features, and demonstrates how the search functionality of WNC on Dialog let's you zero in on exactly what you are seeking.

Summary

For over 60 years, OSC (FBIS) analysts at domestic and overseas bureaus have monitored timely and pertinent open-source materials, including gray literature. WNC allows users to take advantage of the intelligence gathering experience of OSC. Text files containing approximately 1,200 to 1,300 articles are transferred to WNC by FTP every day. The information provided is mostly full text, but sometimes summaries, of newspaper articles from both print and online sources, television and radio broadcasts, periodicals, blogs, and non-classified technical reports.

Library patrons can use WNC to find unique editorial content originating from countries that are not normally included in the publicly available news digests. No other news source offers such a collection of the unadulterated views and reportage from around the world, informing users what people in other countries really think and feel, rather than what US reporters think about them. For a complete list of sources, go to <http://wnc.fedworld.gov/sources.html> .

For a 10-day free trial subscription please go to <http://www.dialog.com/contacts/forms/wnc.shtml>.

NTIS also offers direct access to the hourly data feed that creates the World News Connection® to those who want to develop value-added products using WNC content. For more information contact John Hounsell at 703-605-6184, jhounsell@ntis.gov or visit the WNC Website at <http://wnc.fedworld.gov>.

About the Author

John Hounsell is the Product Manager for the World News Connection® database.

Mr. Hounsell is employed at the National Technical Information Service which serves as the largest central resource for government-funded scientific, technical, engineering, and business related information available today. For more than 60 years NTIS has assured businesses, universities, and the public timely access to approximately 3 million publications covering over 350 subject areas. NTIS' mission supports the Department of Commerce mission to promote the nation's economic growth by providing access to information that stimulates innovation and discovery.