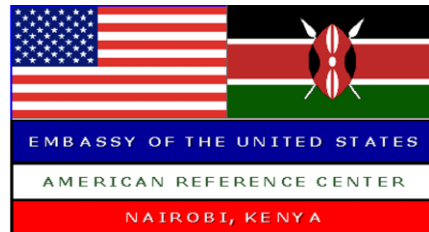




Public Affairs Section  
United States Embassy Nairobi



## INFOALERT JULY 2009

### DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

**IA58** Lyman, Princeton; Robinette, Kathryn. **Obama And Africa: Matching Expectations To Reality.** *Journal of International Affairs* vol. 62, no. 2, Spring/Summer 2009, pp. 1-18

Lyman, an adjunct senior fellow for Africa policy studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, writes that the election of President Obama aroused expectations in Africa that will be hard to meet. Obama has the advantage of following successful Bush policies in Africa, which tripled aid and provided care to millions of AIDS sufferers. But Obama must preserve Bush's gains: if aid to Africa remains static, he cannot respond to problems with food security, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and meeting the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Obama will also have to address climate change, counterterrorism and peacekeeping, and resolve conflicts in Sudan and Darfur. Then, there are two things Obama must do to create a legacy of his own: First, Obama can inspire personal and institutional responsibility in Africa, and make accountability and democracy the theme of his visits. He should provide resources to good governments and institutions that foster democracy, and prosecute organizations that illegally bribe African governments. Second, Obama can develop a new trade agenda with Africa -- he should declare Africa a single trading zone, provide technical assistance necessary to develop its trade capacity, and work to open markets in India, China and Brazil.

**IA59** Skowronski, Will. **Circulation Boost?** *American Journalism Review* June/July 2009 Currently available online at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4768>

Some newspapers are turning to easy-to-carry electronic readers as a way to attract and keep subscribers while cutting back on print and delivery costs. The New York Times, the Boston Globe and the Washington Post, already available via the Kindle, will pilot editions on a newer version of the device this summer. The papers will offer the subscriptions at a reduced cost to readers out of the home-delivery range who agree to long-term

subscriptions. The Detroit Free Press and the Detroit News, which have already sharply cut back home delivery to save newsroom jobs, plan to rely on electronic editions even more -- and so far the readers have been receptive to the changes. Newspapers are taking electronic reading devices more seriously now that the technology is making them more user-friendly -- screens are more readable, displays larger and batteries last longer.

**IA60** Marsan, Carolyn **Infomania**. *Government Executive* vol. 41, no. 5, May 2009, pp. 34-42 Currently available online at <http://www.govexec.com/features/0509-01/0509-01s3.htm>

The author notes that as participatory government brings an onslaught of public comments online, agencies will need the right tools to make sense of it all. In 2008, the General Services Administration (GSA) had 214 million electronic communications with the U.S. public, and it expects that number to increase in 2009. Similar situations have developed at other government agencies as they realize that more and more of public opinion and commentary are going to be sustained through the new media. However, these new examples of social media have several challenges in adopting customer feedback techniques like those used in the private sector, such as asking citizens to rank their interests on various subjects. While federal agencies are new at gathering and analyzing public comments, private business is experienced in managing feedback by combining automated and manual processes, structured and unstructured data. Government agencies also have legal restrictions; they often have to negotiate standard terms of services with providers because the government is bound by multiple federal regulatory requirements.

## ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

**IA61** Klare, Michael. **It's Official – The Era Of Cheap Oil Is Over**. *The Nation* posted June 11, 2009 Available online at <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20090629/klare>

Every summer, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) of the U.S. Department of Energy issues its International Energy Outlook, a data-packed assessment of the global energy situation. This year's report contained a statement of great significance: the EIA predicts a sharp drop in future global oil production. Klare notes that the EIA, which in past years has scoffed at the notion of impending global petroleum shortages, is now finally coming around to the conclusion that many experts have been warning about for years – that the era of cheap and plentiful oil is drawing to a close. While the EIA predicts that production of unconventional fuels will increase to fill the shortfall, Klare and others are doubtful that they will bridge the gap, given the large investments required and the tremendous adverse environmental impact. The EIA's report also highlights the insatiable demand for energy in Asia, and the fact that China will before long overtake the U.S. as the world's largest energy consumer, at which point it will be in a position to influence global energy policy and markets.

**IA62** Klein, Brian; Cukier, Kenneth. **Tamed Tigers, Distressed Dragon**. *Foreign Affairs* vol. 88, no. 4, July-August 2009

According to Klein, a Council on Foreign Relations international affairs fellow, and Cukier, a Tokyo correspondent for The Economist, the global economic turmoil has hurt the formerly

rapidly expanding Asian economies hardest. "By emphasizing exports, Asian countries simply replaced a reliance on foreign capital with a dependence on foreign demand," they say. As Americans save more, they will buy less of what Asia produces; pursuing export-led growth distracted Asians from building the institutions necessary for sustainable domestic economies. Those countries that manipulated their currencies "in effect subsidized exporters at the expense of other domestic producers and consumers," the authors say. Some countries also ignored corruption, inadequate rule of law, and environmental degradation. The success of export-led growth made structural reform even more difficult because of resistance from vested interests; the Asian economies are now ill prepared for the hard decisions needed to cope with a likely persistent difficult economic environment. The authors say they should be restructuring to create domestic demand by promoting human capital -- especially education, improving incomes, and reducing savings. They need to pay workers more money and, most importantly, establish social safety nets. "The lack of basic economic safeguards is the biggest reason why Asians save so much, and reducing those savings would unlock consumption," the authors say.

**IA63** Phipps, Carter. **The Genie's Out Of The Bottle** *EnlightenNext* no. 44, June-August 2009, pp. 54-62

Globalization has come under fire from many quarters as an exploitative economic trend, but Dr. Thomas Barnett, a geopolitical strategist and author, regards globalization as the most unifying, progressive, and liberating force in human history. Barnett looks across the last century -- wars that raged over the Eurasian land mass for the first half of the 20th century are now virtually unthinkable as the bonds of trade, travel, and commerce have grown, he says. The places where violence still disrupts civil society are those largely untouched by globalization, Barnett tells Phipps in an interview. Barnett thinks that the economic and social trends that unfolded in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are playing out again in globalization. He predicts that the progressivism and the enrichment of the middle class that occurred at that time will also be the outcome of globalization.

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

**IA64** Ferreira, Rialize; Henk, Dan **"Operationalizing" Human Security In South Africa.** *Armed Forces and Society* vol. 35, no. 3, April 2009, pp. 501-525

Since the UN promulgation of the concept of human security in the early 1990s, one of the countries most enthusiastic about the new paradigm has been South Africa, which has strived to reflect human security values in virtually all government activities. The authors examine how South Africa has applied the concept to its armed forces. They argue that the military "operationalization" is evident in two key respects: first, in the country's support for Africa's emerging security architecture; and second, in an increasing willingness to commit military forces to external peace operations. However, the authors believe that this trend has primarily occurred at the national strategic level, and it is not clear if a similar human-security ethic has taken place within the South African armed forces themselves.

**IA65** Hoffman, Bruce. **A Counterterrorism Strategy For The Obama Administration.** *Terrorism & Political Violence* vol. 21, no. 3, July 2009, pp.

359-377 Online link to full text available at

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a912648440~db=all~jumptype=rss>

Al-Qaeda is most dangerous when it has a safe haven from which to plant and plot attacks. It has acquired such a haven in Pakistan's Federal Administered Tribal Areas and its North-West Frontier Province and nearby areas, concludes terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman at Georgetown University. During 2008 al-Qaeda was able to re-group and re-organize in these lawless regions along the Afghan-Pakistan border, once again having a sanctuary in which it can operate, while marshalling its forces to continue its struggle with the U.S. The highest priority for the new administration and U.S. allies is to refocus on Afghanistan and Pakistan, Hoffman says; part of any counterterrorism strategy must include an understanding that al-Qaeda and its local affiliates cannot be defeated by military means alone. At its basic level, a new strategy requires two major requirements -- a military capability to systematically destroy and weaken enemy capabilities, and the means to break the cycle of terrorist recruitment and effectively counter al-Qaeda's information operations.

## US SOCIETY AND VALUES

**IA66** Etzioni, Amitai **Spent.** *New Republic* vol. 240, no. 10, June 17, 2009, pp. 20-23 Currently available online at <http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=80661c9c-9c63-4c9e-a293-6888fc845351>

The author, former president of the American Sociological Association, believes that the debate over how to address the economic crisis has overemphasized regulation. Etzioni believes that the real solution to the economic crisis is to downplay consumerism; a shift away from consumer spending would be a dramatic change for U.S. society, which for years has been afflicted at all socioeconomic levels by the compulsion to accumulate "high-status" goods. The author does not expect most people to move away from a consumerist mindset, as societies shift direction gradually, but urges more people to turn the current economic crisis into liberation from the obsession with consumer goods and a rethinking of what it means to live a good life.

**IA67** Malcomson, Scott. **Shakira's Children.** *New York Times Magazine* June 7, 2009, pp. 24-29 Currently available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/07/magazine/07Shakira-t.html>

Shakira Mebarak Ripoll of Barranquilla, Colombia, is one of the biggest-selling female singers in the world. But she has another side -- she began charitable work right after she had her first big hit at 18. Two years ago, she and a group of friends started a network of Ibero-American singers, called ALAS ("wings" in Spanish), which would use the power of their fame to mobilize fans, and persuade their governments, to advance the cause of early-childhood education. They have rallied most of the biggest pop stars in the Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking worlds. Shakira and ALAS have taken celebrity philanthropy to a new level -- to help people not in distant lands but of the Ibero-American world from which they come. Over the past decade, Latin American governments have increased their spending on primary and secondary education, but early childhood education has been less of a priority -- 46 million children in Latin America under the age of 6 are going without basic health care and education. Governments have been working on early-childhood development more in the past five years, although it remains a challenge to get a

country's health, education and social-service ministries to work together, and on reduced budgets, due to the global recession.

*Prepared by Catherine Muia, U.S. Embassy Nairobi American Reference Center – July 17, 2009*