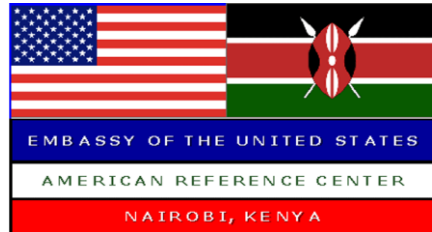




Public Affairs Section  
United States Embassy Nairobi



## INFOALERT AUGUST 2009 DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

**IA68** Kennedy, David M. **FDR'S Lessons For Obama** (*Time*, vol. 173, no. 26, July 8, 2009, pp. 26-29) Currently available online at [http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1906802\\_1906838\\_1906745,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1906802_1906838_1906745,00.html)

The author, a professor at Stanford University, notes that Barack Obama took office amid circumstances similar to those of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Kennedy writes that the big question is if, like Roosevelt, Obama can seize the moment and come up with solutions. Roosevelt used the Depression as an opportunity to revolutionize American life for generations to come, realizing the irony that a Depression made achieving those objectives possible. Kennedy writes that Obama, who similarly faces an economic downturn and massive unemployment, may use his circumstances to bring about health care reform and other programs he considers necessary to improving the public welfare.

**IA69 Civil Society in Africa.** [*United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*]. 2009. Currently available: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001832/183279m.pdf>

This study, which brings together the various data gathered and the findings of surveys carried out in Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria, serves to show that a coherent African civil society exists, which is gradually freeing itself and developing a structure, in particular through the use of new information and communication tools. It was conducted in 2002 by a consultant, Mr Bernard Akplogan, who endeavored, through the study to define the contours of the very concept of African civil society and to show how it can play a major role in awakening consciousness, sensitizing communities, and implementing the African Union's programme NEPAD.

**IA70** De Kecker, Kris. **The Monster Footprint Of Digital Technology** (*Low-Tech Magazine*, posted June 16, 2009) Available online at <http://www.lowtechmagazine.com/2009/06/embodied-energy-of-digital-technology.html>

The author notes that, for most of the modern industrial era, durable equipment such as cars, refrigerators or washing machines consumed more energy over their lifetime of use and operation than during their manufacture. The advent of computer technology has turned this situation upside down -- vastly more energy is required in the manufacture of computers and other electronic gadgets than they consume. Most of that embodied energy is in the microprocessors, which can be six orders of magnitude greater than for conventional manufacturing processes, and the energy required during manufacture keeps growing, as bigger and more powerful computer chips are needed for graphics and video games. This is exacerbated by the fact that high technology is evolving quickly, and equipment becomes obsolete after only a few years. Recycling is not the complete answer, notes the author; addressing technological obsolescence would be the best approach to lowering the ecological footprint of digital technology.

**IA71** Treverton, Gregory, Et Al. **Film Piracy, Organized Crime, And Terrorism**

*Rand Corporation, March 2009, 182 pp.* Online link to full-text PDF document available at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG742/index.html>

According to this Rand report released earlier this year, the enormous profits to be made from film piracy have attracted the attention of organized crime worldwide, and to a more limited degree, terrorist groups. Although the researchers found no evidence that terrorists are widely involved with film piracy, they did uncover three cases where film piracy supported terror groups. Criminal penalties for counterfeiting and piracy are relatively light and prosecutions sparse, yet the profits from these crimes can exceed that of drug trafficking. The danger, the authors say, is that more terrorist groups will tap into counterfeiting and piracy to underwrite their operations.

## ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

**IA72** Kapstein, Ethan. **Africa's Capitalist Revolution.** *Foreign Affairs* vol. 88, no. 4, July/August 2009, pp. 119-130

Kapstein, with the Center for Global Development in Washington, DC, notes that in recent years, Africa has experienced a major economic transformation; since 2004, economic activity in Africa has grown at a rate of about six percent a year, and the continent is attracting more foreign investment. This is a marked change from much of the previous half-century, which was characterized by stagnant economic conditions, and poor governance and monopolistic regimes led by dictators; few foreign investors were interested in Africa. Kapstein writes that one virtue of urbanization in Africa is that "it has forced members of different tribes to interact on a regular basis in ways that remain unusual in more rural settings;" this regular contact is necessary to the development of market economies and democratic institutions, because it helps erode the patrimonial relationships, in which a command economy is controlled by tribal chiefs. Kapstein predicts that the global financial crisis will slow down Africa's progress, although the continent has been relatively insulated from the current economic downturn. Africa remains relatively open to global trade, and Kapstein says that the West must help them by avoiding its own protectionist impulses. He writes: "Africans have already taken up the shovel to dig themselves out of a half-century-old hole of poor economic management and bad governance. It is now up to the United States and its European allies to help them complete the job."

**IA73 From Commitment to Action: A Demand-Driven Approach to Improving Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa.** [Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa]. *June 2009.*

<http://www.africanhunger.org/uploads/articles/f74310445c3afc6fbf0977f0b8f8d775.pdf>

Over the last year, the international community has committed itself to the challenge of reducing global hunger and food insecurity in a series of high-profile events: discussions at the World Bank spring meeting in 2008, a gathering of government leaders in Madrid in early 2009, and preparations for the upcoming G-8 and G-20 meetings. All have put the task of improving global food security at the top of the international agenda. Turning that commitment into action, however, will take more than dialogue and pledges. It will take the sustained efforts of a host of public and private organizations in both developed and developing nations: establishing policies, developing programs and budgets, making investments, staffing out projects, and working together to make the plans a reality. With leadership from both President Obama and Congress, the US government (USG) is preparing to step up its own efforts toward increasing global food security. There is basic agreement on what needs to be done. Secretary Clinton, in announcing the 2009 World Food Prize winner, touched on the key substantive areas: increasing agricultural productivity; engaging the private sector; maintaining natural resources; expanding knowledge and training, especially in R&D; increasing trade, supporting policy reform and good governance; and supporting women and their families. Projected increases in bilateral funding for international agriculture and related areas, as outlined in the FY 2010 Congressional Budget Justification and in draft authorizing legislation such as S. 384, the Lugar-Casey Global Food Security Act, will help to ensure that US assistance programs will be better resourced than they have been in the past two decades.

**IA74 Kenya and the U.S. – Meeting the Growing Challenge in East Africa.**[National Endowment for Democracy]. *July 22, 2009.*

[http://www.ned.org/events/kenya2009/kenya\\_carson.html](http://www.ned.org/events/kenya2009/kenya_carson.html)

Remarks by the Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of African Affairs, Johnnie Carson at the National Endowment for Democracy. He discusses Kenya's various potential including the highest literacy rates in Africa and the largest non-oil, non-mineral economy. He outlines the democratic hurdles faced in the 2007 elections and the security challenges so far. Describes the four impediments facing Kenya that include corruption, weak judiciary, partisan politics and growing lawlessness. He then outlines the objective of US policy and the willingness to support Kenya with specific programs adapted to Kenya's needs.

## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

**IA75 Boot, Max. Pirates, Then And Now: How Piracy Was Defeated In The Past And Can Be Again.** *Foreign Affairs vol. 88, no. 4, July/August 2009, pp. 94-107* Available online at [http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65156/max-](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65156/max-boot/pirates-then-and-now)

[boot/pirates-then-and-now](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65156/max-boot/pirates-then-and-now) More on Combating Piracy is available at <http://www.america.gov/piracy.html>

The author examines pirate activity in past centuries to see how nations dealt with the problem, and as a way to consider lessons and tactics that may be applicable now. Boot, who is a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, notes that 17th-century governments initially hired private pirate hunters, but later committed more naval assets to the task.

From 1650 to 1850 nations took other steps that included convoying merchant ships, chasing pirates on sea and land, blockading and bombing ports used by pirates, and occupying and dismantling pirate lairs. In 2008, he said, less than a half of one percent of the commercial ships passing the Horn of Africa were attacked -- and most of those attempted hijackings were unsuccessful. He notes that some suggest that shipping companies paying ransom to pirates should be denied the right to conduct business in the United States. Boot, meanwhile, advocates using private security firms to patrol alongside vulnerable ships, or, to have armed guards onboard. If past generations succeeded in defeating the Barbary pirates, the Caribbean buccaneers and the marauders of the Red Sea, Boot writes that "surely this generation can defeat the ragtag sea robbers of Somalia" but it will require a robust response by maritime nations.

**IA76** Cirincione, Joseph. **U.S. Nuclear Policy: The Open Window For Transformation** *Harvard International Review* vol. 31, no. 1, Spring 2009, pp. 42-46 Currently available online at [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_hb137/is\\_1\\_31/ai\\_n31876335/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb137/is_1_31/ai_n31876335/)

The author, former vice president of National Security and International Policy at the Center of American Progress as well as former director for non-proliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, says that the U.S. has an opportunity to reshape its nuclear policy under the Obama administration. Cirincione says that President Obama needs to be bold in implementing a strategy that would reduce nuclear proliferation and also address the four categories of nuclear threats. Cirincione lists the four most critical threats - first, the possibility of a terrorist group obtaining a nuclear weapon; second, the chance of "an accidental, unauthorized or intentional" use of a weapon by a nuclear-armed state; third, the emergence of a new armed state; finally, the end of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The author says Obama recognizes the interrelation between these threats and has developed his nuclear policy accordingly. Cirincione, however, warns that damage caused by the Bush doctrine demands that Obama act quickly in implementing his policy.

## US SOCIETY AND VALUES

**IA77** Frail, T.A. **The Writer's Eye.** *Smithsonian* vol. 40, no. 1, April 2009, pp. 84-89

Eudora Welty, who was born 100 years ago, is one of the great figures in American literature; less well-known is that she was an avid amateur photographer before any of her written work was published. Her pictures, taken in Mississippi in the early-to-mid-1930s, show the rural poor and convey the worry of the Great Depression. Welty, notes the author, had a remarkable ability to put her subjects at ease, many of whom were African-American; her interest in photography and curiosity and empathy with her subjects inspired her future writings. Welty said that "photography taught me to be able to capture transience ... these were things a story writer needed to know."