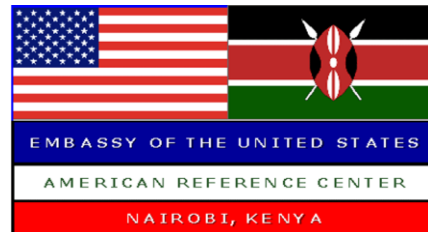




Public Affairs Section
United States Embassy Nairobi



INFOALERT NOVEMBER 2009 DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

IA97 Brainard, Curtis; Russell, Cristine. **The New Energy Beat.** *Columbia Journalism Review*, September/October 2009 Available online at http://www.cjr.org/feature/the_new_energy_beat.php

Climate change and energy issue reporting behooves journalists to collaborate within the newsroom and with news outlets to deepen expertise and resources to better explain these critical, complex topics. Varied regional concerns and new technologies increase the need for a broad knowledge base that allows for delving beyond the pronouncements of politicians or industry lobbyists. Covering energy well means giving a comprehensive "big picture" that can both inform and influence the public and policy makers.

IA98 Cunningham, Brent. **Take A Stand: How Journalism Can Regain Its Relevance.** *Columbia Journalism Review*, September/October 2009 Available online at http://www.cjr.org/feature/take_a_stand.php

Journalism in America has been damaged by its abdication of an adversarial role in public discourse. Instead, it "mostly amplifies the agendas of others—the prominent and powerful," maintains the author. He examines the changing dynamic of the news media and questions whether it has the ability to moderate public conversation and introduce new angles and ideas on national issues. Calling press objectivity "a trap" that lessens journalism's beneficial impact, he says the press needs to be on the side of the people and become a platform for establishing a public agenda.

IA99 Jacobson, Mark; Delucchi, Mark. **A Plan To Power 100 Percent Of The Planet With Renewables.** *Scientific American*, November 2009

Wind, water and solar technologies can provide 100 percent of the world's energy, eliminating all fossil fuels. Supplies of wind and solar energy on accessible land dwarf the energy consumed by people around the globe. The authors' plan calls for 3.8 million large wind turbines, 90,000 solar plants, and numerous geothermal, tidal and rooftop photovoltaic installations worldwide. The cost of generating and transmitting power would be less than

the projected cost per kilowatt-hour for fossil-fuel and nuclear power. Shortages of a few specialty materials, along with lack of political will, loom as the greatest obstacles.

IA100 The Future Of Cars: Industry Leaders Look Way Down The Road

Scientific American, November 2009

The car fleet of 2030 will use a patchwork quilt of different fuels and power trains, with some cars meant for short hops and city driving. As the years go by, vehicles will become increasingly connected to one another electronically, for crash prevention and social networking. Driver distraction will be an ongoing concern. Whether cars that run on hydrogen fuel cells will be common in 20 years remains an open question.

IA101 Garçon, Nathalie; Goldman, Michel. Boosting Vaccines: The Power Of Adjuvants. *Scientific American* October 2009 Currently available online at <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=boosting-vaccine-power>

Modern insights into the immune system have sparked interest in adding ingredients that can supercharge old vaccines and make entirely new ones possible. Vaccines are extremely effective at preventing disease, but they could work better for more people and against a wider variety of illnesses. Advances in immunology have revealed how new classes of adjuvants -- ingredients that stimulate immune responses to vaccines -- can allow vaccine designers to target specific populations and pathogens.

IA102 Stokes, Bruce. Countdown To Copenhagen. *National Journal*, October 31, 2009 Currently available online at http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/cs_20091031_9295.php

Stokes says that the negotiations at the climate-change talks in Copenhagen in December promise to be a daunting task. It is estimated that emissions will need to be cut by 50 percent by 2050 in order to hold the temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius and carbon-dioxide concentrations to 450 parts per million. The industrialized world's goals at the conference will reflect their publics' acknowledgement of the seriousness of the problem -- and in this, the U.S. lags behind the rest of the developed world. The developing nations see binding commitments as not in their national interest, noting that they account for only a fraction of global emissions, and want the developed countries to help pay for clean technology and environmental mitigation. Most countries are reluctant to take action on their own, without seeing that others are doing the same. Stokes says that "the central challenge in Copenhagen may well be finding a way to nurture trust and marry it with ambition . . . Coordinating these activities, striking a balance between accountability and equity, and pursuing the goals with sufficient urgency may prove to be among the most daunting tasks that the global community has ever undertaken."

IA103 Biotech's Plans To Sustain Agriculture. *Scientific American*, October 2009 Currently available online at <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=biotechs-plan-to-sustain-agriculture>

Popular sentiment may call for more organic methods, but the agricultural industry sees biotechnology as a crucial part of farming's future. By 2050 or so, agriculture will need to

produce about 50 percent more food than it now does because of the expanding population. Traditional crops and farming methods could not sustain that much productivity. In this panel discussion, representatives from the agricultural industry defend genetically modified crops as one of several tools that should be used to help farmers in developing countries become more productive.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

IA104 Yunus, Muhammad. **Economic Security For A World In Crisis.**

World Policy Journal. vol. 26, no. 2, Summer 2009, pp. 5-12 Online link to PDF full text available at <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/toc/wopj/26/2>

Yunus, founder of Bangladesh's Grameen Bank, notes that the optimism about global prosperity that prevailed at the beginning of the millennium has been soured by the financial collapse that began in 2008. He predicts that we are in the beginning stages of a long and painful period, in which the combined effects of the intertwined financial, food, energy and environmental crises will have a disproportionate effect on the world's poorest people. Capitalism is in crisis, says Yunus, because the basic purpose of the financial system and credit markets have been fundamentally distorted by the obsession with paper profits instead of serving human needs. He argues that capitalism is a "half-built structure" -- most efforts have been focused on the profit-making framework of the free-market system that was conceived by Adam Smith 250 years ago, yet we have paid little attention to Smith's equally-important writings on the moral dimension. Yunus believes that the current economic crisis offers an unparalleled opportunity to reintroduce the disregarded aspects of Adam Smith's message by developing what Yunus calls "social businesses", whose primary function is not to make profits, but to promote the public welfare.

IA105 Eureka Moments: How A Luxury Item Became A Tool Of Global Development *Economist*, September 2009 Currently available online at

http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14483872

Mobile phones, now affordable to the vast majority of people around the world, have become the single most transformative tool for development, according to Jeffrey Sachs of the Columbia University's Earth Institute. In Africa, "mobile money" now means financial transactions can be carried out easily even in remote areas. Mobile phones play a huge role in micro businesses, which make up 50 to 60 percent of business globally, and as much as 90 percent in Africa. Small businesses can more efficiently negotiate with suppliers and reduce the overhead of running their small enterprises. There is also some evidence that mobile phones can be used to root out corruption; the article cites the example of an official in Pakistan overseeing land transfers, who randomly called the mobile numbers of buyers and sellers to find out if they had been asked to pay bribes.

IA106 Wallerstein, Mitchel. **Losing Controls: How U.S. Export Restrictions Jeopardize National Security And Harm Competitiveness** *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 6, November/December 2009, pp. 11-19

In today's wired and highly competitive world, export controls cannot longer be effective and sometimes can be counterproductive, says Wallerstein, a former U.S. defense official and now dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. U.S. exports controls, which have become more arcane and ineffective with time, undermine

national security by discouraging innovative firms from pursuing dual-use technologies and foreign firms that own advanced technologies from bidding for U.S. defense contracts. Imposing licensing requirements that foreign rivals don't face, weakens competitive positions of U.S. high-tech companies. The business lost due to export controls -- estimated at \$ 9 billion a year -- poses a threat to the strength of key U.S. industries. In many instances, those making technical decisions about whether certain technologies or scientific information should be subject to control lack the necessary training and knowledge. Carefully targeted export restrictions are necessary in regard to rogue or aggressively militarizing states. But policymakers must abandon the notion that the U.S. can engage in technology denial without suffering significant costs to its prosperity and national security, the author says.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

IA107 Sloane, Stanton. **The Role Of A "Cyber Czar"** *Armed Forces Journal International*, September 2009 Available online at <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2009/09/4214383>. For more on cybersecurity, see <http://www.america.gov/cybersecurity.html>

The FBI reports that cybercrime is the third-greatest threat to U.S. national security, following right after nuclear war and weapons of mass destruction. The author, president of SRA International, writes that the magnitude of the cybersecurity problem is vastly misunderstood and underestimated, especially with respect to the theft of intellectual property. Apart from criminals and youthful hackers, foreign intelligence operations pose the greatest threat to critical infrastructure. Sloane predicts that any firm in possession of technology of interest has either been cyberattacked or will be. The new cyberczar, or cybersecurity coordinator, that President Obama has promised to appoint, "has his or her work cut out;" that person's most important assets will be the president's ear and money for cyberdefense improvements. Much has been written about the need for public-private cooperation in this field, and Sloane says that government and industry must promote and fund innovation.

IA108 Van Niekerk, Phillip. **Africa's Leadership Vacuum.** *Current History* vol. 108, no. 718, May 2009, pp. 232-234 Online link to PDF full text available at <http://www.currenthistory.com/>

The author, managing director of the Good Governance Group, notes that the departure from office of South Africa President Thabo Mbeki and Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo is a "step backward" from establishing a new group of leaders in Africa who can tackle corruption and conflict and promote democracy and development. This vacuum is putting at risk many of the gains Africa has made over the past decade, says the author, noting that several coups in recent months have met with tepid response. Van Niekerk notes that the only real contender for pan-African leadership is Libya's Moammar Qaddafi, who has enormous clout, but is widely seen as an eccentric with a dubious agenda, such as his far-fetched proposal for a United States of Africa. Incoming South African President Jacob Zuma may be able to make more progress in Zimbabwe than his predecessor, says the author, noting that Zuma greatly dislikes the excesses of the Mugabe regime. Although the situation may appear gloomy, says Van Niekerk, there is some cause for optimism, noting that there are new leaders emerging, though usually one or two removes from power.

IA109 Gedmin, Jeffrey. **Boom Box Usa: Surrogate Broadcasting As A Tool Of U.S. Soft Power.** *Foreign Affairs* vol. 88, no. 5, September-October 2009 Currently available online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65426/jeffrey-gedmin/boom-box-usa>

According to Gedmin, president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, U.S. government-sponsored surrogate broadcasting of accurate and reliable news remains the most effective and cost-efficient way to promote democracy and advance U.S. security interests in countries lacking independent media. The objective of surrogate broadcasting programs, such as Radio Farda in Iran, is not to overthrow a foreign government -- "when informed citizens are free to choose," Gedmin writes, "they invariably choose freedom over tyranny and prefer decent, accountable government to the arbitrary whims of authoritarian leaders." Surrogate broadcasting plays a role in Afghanistan, countering the Taliban's own information war, and in Russia, where public opinion toward the U.S. and toward democracy is ambivalent.

US SOCIETY AND VALUES

IA110 Mcmurtrie, Beth. **Fulbright Program Adapts To Obama Administration's Priorities.** *Chronicle of Higher Education* Vol. 56, No. 9, October 23, 2009, pp. A29-A32 This and the related articles are currently available online at <http://chronicle.com/article/Fulbright-Program-Adapts-to/48828/>

The Obama Administration is putting its own stamp on the Fulbright Program, the U.S. Government's flagship international exchange. In the lead article, Beth McMurtrie describes the new priorities based on her interview with Alina L. Romanowski, the State Department's deputy assistant secretary for academic programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Among the new priorities: studies of such global issues as food security and climate change through the Fulbright Science and Technology award; the increased participation of U.S. community colleges; and the kind of cultural diplomacy represented by the Fulbright Fellowships. Three profiles of Fulbright programs follow. In the first, McMurtrie looks at the role U.S. community colleges may play in Russia if a high-level visit to Moscow by a group of community college administrators in Spring 2010 develops as planned. In the second profile, Shailaja Neelakantan looks at the Fulbright program in India, which has doubled this year. In the third profile, Karin Fischer describes how a university in California has taken advantage of an underutilized Fulbright program that covers scholars' travel costs when they conduct guest lectures.

IA111 Heinberg, Richard. **Our Evanescent Culture And The Awesome Duty Of Librarians.** *Energy Bulletin*, October 7, 2009 Available online at <http://www.energybulletin.net/node/50315>

How secure is our civilization's accumulated knowledge? Educator and author Heinberg notes that earlier civilizations over the millennia have disappeared, having given insufficient thought to how their societies' achievements would be preserved. Although the sheer volume of modern cultural materials is unprecedented, in many ways our modern heritage is uniquely vulnerable, and large swaths of it are at risk of being swept away at astonishing speed. The problem, notes Heinberg, is digitization -- not just that storage formats become obsolete, but that the entire cultural enterprise depends on electricity: "digitization represents a huge bet on society's ability to keep the lights on forever." The real threats to modern information are systemic vulnerabilities, such as aging, infrastructure and declining

supplies of fossil fuels to power the electric grid. He says that the message is clear: don't let books die, and promote skills-based education to keep the practical and performing arts alive.

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