



**AMERICAN INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER
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**E-Documents
April 2009 – Issue 2**

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SIGNIFICANT E-DOCUMENTS



EARTH DAY 2009: THE GREEN GENERATION. Earth Day Networks. April 2009.

This is a two-year initiative that will launch in 2009 and culminate on the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day in 2010. The Green Generation includes ordinary people who are engaged in individual and collective activities to improve their health, to improve their schools, to participate in building a solution to urgent national and global issues, such as climate change or the world's water crises. [Note: contains copyright material].

<http://ww2.earthday.net/earthday2009> Main Page. [HTML format, various paging].

<http://ww2.earthday.net/greengeneration> [HTML format, various paging].

EARTH DAY: FIGHTING THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. World Wildlife Fund. April 2009.

Climate change is among the most pervasive threats to the web of life, yet people have the power to address its root causes and limit its impact on the planet. Smart energy choices made by individuals and businesses can dramatically reduce CO₂ emissions and slow global warming. Without action, climate change will cause the extinction of countless species and destroy some of the world's most precious ecosystems. [Note: contains copyright material].

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/sites/earthday/item6793.html> [HTML format, various paging].

EARTH DAY. U.S. Federal Agencies. 2009.

This is a U.S. government Web site providing information about Earth Day and other related events sponsored by Federal agencies.

<http://www.earthday.gov/> [HTML format with links].

EARTH DAY 2009. Los Alamos National Laboratory. April 2009.

The Laboratory focuses on how people can sustain and improve the environment. The people have an impact on the planet, and it is corporate and individual responsibility to minimize these impacts. The Web site leads to researches done by the Laboratory to help protect the future of

the planet.

<http://www.lanl.gov/environment/earthday/index.shtml> [HTML format, various paging].

EARTH DAY: HISTORY. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2009.

The site contains documents photos related to the history of Earth Day and previous Earth Day celebrations.

<http://www.epa.gov/earthday/> Earth Day Main Page [HTML format with links].

<http://www.epa.gov/earthday/history.htm> Timeline. [HTML format, various paging].

<http://www.epa.gov/history/topics/earthday/index.htm> [HTML format, various paging].

MAKE EVERY DAY EARTH DAY. U.S. Department of Energy. 2009.

This is the U.S. Department of Energy's tips to save money and protect the environment.

<http://www.energy.gov/energytips.htm> [HTML format with interactive media].

TODAY IN HISTORY: APRIL 22 EARTH DAY. American Memory, Library of Congress. 2009.

Today in History for April 22 briefly shows the history of Earth Day along with links to developments through U.S. history in conservation efforts leading up to the Earth Day.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/today/apr22.html> [HTML format, various paging].

WALDEN: THE BALLAD OF THOREAU EARTH DAY EVENT. Friends of Walden. April 2009.

Walden: The Ballad of Thoreau is a two act, four character play that reflects a conversation between Thoreau and Emerson set during the final two days Thoreau spent in his cabin before leaving Walden Pond. Over 7,100 colleges and schools have already performed the play. On Earth Day, April 22, 2009, the play will be broadcast nationwide on public TV, public radio, movie theaters and through Earth Day TV. Earth Day Network and the producers of the play have created lesson plans that make Walden an educational tool. [Note: contains copyright material].

<http://www.waldenplay.com/walden-donate.php> [HTML format, various paging].

YOU HAVE THE POWER: CAMPAIGN MATERIALS. Federal Energy Management Program, U.S. Department of Energy. March 19, 2009.

The artwork for You Have the Power campaign in conjunction with the Earth Day is available for download.

http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/services/yhttp/campaign_materials.html#ed [HTML format with links].

OTHER E-DOCUMENTS

MAN-MADE CATS HIT USD7 BILLION IN 2008. Guy Carpenter. March 29, 2009.

Man-made and technological catastrophes caused around USD7 billion in insured losses last year. This put 2008 losses around 46 percent higher than the annual average of USD4.8 billion, according to data from Swiss Re. Nineteen known events resulted in insured losses of more than USD50 million each, according to publicly available information. These events occurred in 11 countries, with losses ranging from USD80 million to nearly USD2 billion.

http://www.guycarp.com/portal/extranet/insights/reportsPDF/2009/Man_Made%20Cats%202008.pdf?vid=1 [PDF format, 16 pages].

PC ENERGY REPORT 2009: UNITED STATES, UNITED KINGDOM, GERMANY. 1E and Alliance to Save Energy. March 26, 2009.

According to the study, nearly half of U.S. workers who use a PC at their job do not typically shut down at night¹. The study, examines workplace PC power consumption in the U.S., U.K. and Germany, found that U.S. organizations waste \$2.8 billion a year to power 108 million unused machines. In 2009, these unused PCs are expected to emit approximately 20 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions, roughly the equivalent impact of 4 million cars. [Note: contains copyright material].

<http://www.1e.com/Energycampaign/Index.aspx> [HTML format with link to a PDF file].

TAX RESPONSES TO THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS. Deloitte. Web posted March 29, 2009.

Countries worldwide are taking steps to counter the effects of the global financial and economic crisis. From a tax and fiscal perspective, the approaches taken thus far range from formal “stimulus” packages, to ad hoc measures, to temporary provisions, to accelerating the introduction of planned measures or alternatively scrapping them altogether. The report provides a high level summary of responses, through tax and fiscal policies, of more than 50 countries worldwide to tackle the crisis. The focus is on implemented corporate, individual income, and indirect tax measures, other types of fiscal measures and corporate governance, and proposed and deferred measures. [Note: contains copyright material].

http://www.deloitte.com/dtt/cda/doc/content/dtt_tax_respondingtoeconcrisis__032009.pdf [PDF format, 24 pages].

MILITARY POWER OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA 2009. U.S. Department of Defense. Web posted March 26, 2009.

China’s rapid rise as a regional political and economic power with growing global influence has significant implications for the Asia-Pacific region and the world, says the report. The United States welcomes the rise of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China, and encourages China to participate responsibly in world affairs by taking on a greater share of the burden for the stability, resilience, and growth of the international system. The United States has done much over the last 30 years to encourage and facilitate China’s national development and its integration into the international system. However, much uncertainty surrounds China’s future course, particularly regarding how its expanding military power might be used.

http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/China_Military_Power_Report_2009.pdf [PDF format, 78 pages].

PROSPECTS FOR U.S.-RUSSIAN SECURITY COOPERATION. Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. March 2009.

Russia, despite claims made for and against its importance, remains, by any objective standard, a key player in world affairs. Russia is an important barometer of trends in world politics, e.g., the course of democratization in the world, according to the report. Furthermore, Russia, if it were so disposed, could be the abettor and/or supporter of a host of negative trends in the world today. Therefore, an analysis of the prospects for and conditions favoring such cooperation is an urgent and important task that cries out for clarification precisely because current U.S.-Russian relations are so difficult.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=892> [HTML format with link to PDF file].

WHITE PAPER OF THE INTERAGENCY POLICY GROUP'S REPORT ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN. The White House. March 2009.

The United States has a vital national security interest in addressing the current and potential security threats posed by extremists in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Pakistan, al Qaeda and other groups of jihadist terrorists are planning new terror attacks. Their targets remain the U.S. homeland, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Europe, Australia, our allies in the Middle East, and other targets of opportunity.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf [PDF format, 6 pages].

ASIAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, AND PACIFIC ISLANDER VICTIMS OF CRIME. Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. Erika Harrell. March 2009.

The report shows findings about violent crime and property crime experienced by the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander population in the United States. Data on nonfatal violent victimization and nonfatal property victimization are drawn from the National Crime Victimization Survey. Data on homicides are drawn from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program's Supplementary Homicide Reports. Comparisons are made using the victimization experiences of other racial and ethnic groups.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/anhpivc.pdf> [PDF format, 8 pages].

DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Web posted March 26, 2009.

Local water utilities must make significant investments to install, upgrade, or replace equipment in order to deliver safe drinking water and protect public health. Every four years, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency conducts a survey of the anticipated costs of these investments and reports the results to Congress. The results are also used to help determine the amount of funding each state receives for its Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program, which funds the types of projects identified in the survey.

http://www.epa.gov/safewater/needssurvey/pdfs/2007/report_needssurvey_2007.pdf [PDF format, 80 pages].

ECONOMIC CRISIS IS HAVING CATASTROPHIC EFFECTS ON THE ARTS AND MUSIC, WITNESSES TELL HOUSE PANEL. Committee on Education & Labor, U.S. House of Representatives. March 26, 2009.

Communities across the country are suffering as arts and music organizations struggle with declining budgets, job losses and other effects of the economic crisis, witnesses told the House Education and Labor Committee. "Arts and music organizations are facing tough realities, which has a multiplier effect on workers and communities who rely on these sectors to create jobs and generate local revenue," said U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), chairman of the committee. "These are industries that can help breathe new life into communities, towns and cities, spur economic growth and help us build a stronger America."

<http://edlabor.house.gov/newsroom/2009/03/economic-crisis-is-having-cata.shtml> [HTML format with links to testimony videos].

FLEXIBILITY IN THE TIMING OF EMISSION REDUCTIONS UNDER A CAP-AND-TRADE PROGRAM. Testimony, Congressional Budget Office. Douglas W. Elmendorf. March 26, 2009.

Elmendorf argues that many analysts agree that the most cost-effective way to spur significant changes in the production and use of energy is to put a price on carbon emissions. By establishing such a price, rather than by dictating specific technologies or changes in behavior,

the government would encourage households and firms to reduce emissions in the least costly ways. Either a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade program would effectively put a price on carbon emissions and lead to emission reductions where and how it was least costly to achieve them. http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/100xx/doc10020/03-26-Cap&Trade_Testimony.1.1.shtml [HTML format, various paging].

FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS IN 2008. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. March 26, 2009.

The tables compare the labor force characteristics of the foreign born with those of their native-born counterparts. The data on nativity are collected as part of the Current Population Survey (CPS). The foreign born are persons who reside in the United States but who were born outside the country or one of its outlying areas to parents who were not U.S. citizens. The foreign born include legally-admitted immigrants, refugees, temporary residents such as students and temporary workers, and undocumented immigrants.

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/forbrn.pdf> [PDF format, 14 pages].

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/forbrn.nr0.htm> [HTML format with links to tables].

INITIAL EVALUATION OF THE CITIES READINESS INITIATIVE. RAND Corporation. Henry H. Willis et al. March 24, 2009.

A federal program designed to help metropolitan public health agencies prepare to deliver essential medicines to the public after a large-scale bioterror attack or natural disease outbreak has succeeded in improving the level of readiness, according to the study. Researchers found that the federal Cities Readiness Initiative, a program active in 72 metropolitan areas, appears to have improved agencies' ability to rapidly and widely dispense life-saving medications and other medical supplies in the event of a large-scale bioterror attack or a naturally occurring infectious disease outbreak. [Note: contains copyright material].

http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/2009/RAND_TR640.pdf [PDF format, 118 pages].

PHILANTHROPY ANNUAL: 2008 REVIEW. Foundation Center. Web posted March 26, 2009.

The annual includes interviews with leaders in the field, commentary by respected thinkers, and key statistics on foundation giving. [Note: contains copyright material].

<http://foundationcenter.org/philanthropyannual/philanthropyannual2008.pdf> [PDF format, 116 pages].

PROTECTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education. March 27, 2009.

The document revises and clarifies the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 504) in the area of public elementary and secondary education. The primary purpose of these revisions is to incorporate information about the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (Amendments Act), effective January 1, 2009, which amended the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and included a conforming amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that affects the meaning of disability in Section 504. The Amendments Act broadens the interpretation of disability.

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html> [HTML format, various paging].

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE AMERICAN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY. The White House. March 30, 2009.

The President remarks on the state of the American automotive industry and the plans on restructuring and modernizing of it.

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-the-American-Automotive-Industry-3/30/09/ [HTML format, various paging].

“TIME TO WORK OR TIME TO PLAY: THE EFFECT OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT ON HOMEWORK, HOUSEWORK, SCREEN TIME, AND SLEEP” U.S. Department of Labor. Charlene Marie Kalenkoski and Sabrina Wulff Pabilonia. March 2009.

Recent research suggests that working while in high school reduces the amount of time students spend doing homework. However, an additional hour of work leads to a reduction in homework by much less than one hour, suggesting a reduction in other activities. The paper uses data from the 2003-2007 American Time Use Surveys (ATUS) to investigate the effects of market work on the time students spend on homework, sleeping, household work, and screen time. Results show that an increase in paid work reduces time spent in all of these activities by 84 percent, with the largest effect found for screen time.

<http://www.bls.gov/osmr/pdf/ec090010.pdf> [PDF format, 29 pages].

TRACEABILITY IN THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN. Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. March 2009.

The Office was able to trace 5 of 40 products through each stage of the food supply chain. The facilities that handled these products were able to provide information about the specific product that was purchased or were able to link that product to lot-specific information in their records. For 31 of the 40 products, the facilities that likely handled the products could be identified, according to the study. The study recommends ways to improve traceability.

<http://www.oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-02-06-00210.pdf> [PDF format, 38 pages].

USCIS INITIATES PROCEDURES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN SEEKING ASYLUM. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. March 25, 2009.

The new procedures were created to carry out the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (TVPRA). Under one of the provisions of the TVPRA, these unaccompanied children, who have been issued a Notice to Appear in immigration court, will now file their initial application for asylum with USCIS. The TVPRA also provides an opportunity for unaccompanied children, who did not previously file for asylum with USCIS and, who either have a pending claim in immigration court, on appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals, or in federal court, to have their asylum claim heard and adjudicated by a USCIS asylum officer in a non-adversarial setting.

http://www.uscis.gov/files/article/tvppa_25mar2009.pdf [PDF format, 1 page].

USING PRICING TO REDUCCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION. Congressional Budget Office. March 2009.

Congestion costs highway users billions of dollars every year. The study explains how congestion pricing works, reviews the best available evidence on projects that make use of such pricing in order to assess the benefits and challenges of the approach, and discusses federal policy options for encouraging congestion pricing.

<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/97xx/doc9750/03-11-CongestionPricing.pdf> [PDF format, 39 pages].

WORK-AT-HOME PATTERNS BY OCCUPATION. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. March 2009.

Working at home can provide people with numerous benefits, flexibility in their schedules, fewer commutes, and opportunities to catch up on work. According to the American Time Use Survey (ATUS), about 12 percent of full-time workers with a single job did some work at home on an

average day in 2003–07. However, the ability to work at home is greatly affected by the nature of one's work because some types of work can be more easily performed at home than others. <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils72.pdf> [PDF format, 3 pages].

AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE: AN AGENDA FOR NEGOTIATION IN COPENHAGEN. International Food Policy Research Institute. Gerald C. Nelson. March 2009.

The first in a series of briefs prepared to support the goal of putting agriculture on the agenda of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations in Copenhagen in December 2009. Agricultural activities around the world are responsible for almost 15 percent of annual greenhouse gas emissions, could be an important sink for emissions from other sectors, and are likely to be altered dramatically by climate change. Agriculture also provides a living for more than half of the world's poorest people. The ongoing negotiations to address climate change provide a unique opportunity to combine low-cost mitigation and essential adaptation outcomes with poverty reduction. [Note: contains copyright material]. http://www.ifpri.org/2020/focus/focus16/Focus16_01.pdf [PDF format, 2 pages].

FREEDOM ON THE NET: A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF INTERNET AND DIGITAL MEDIA. Freedom House. April 1, 2009.

As internet and mobile phone use explodes worldwide, governments are adopting new and multiple means for controlling these technologies that go far beyond technical filtering. The report looks at these emerging tactics, raising concern over trends such as the "outsourcing of censorship" to private companies, the use of surveillance and the manipulation of online conversations by undercover agents. The study covers both repressive countries such as China and Iran and democratic ones such as India and the United Kingdom, finding some degree of internet censorship and control in all 15 nations studied. [Note: contains copyright material]. http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/specialreports/NetFreedom2009/FreedomOnTheNet_FullReport.pdf [PDF format, 126 pages].

FROM HORROR TO HOPELESSNESS: KENYA'S FORGOTTEN SOMALI REFUGEE CRISIS. Human Rights Watch. March 30, 2009.

The report documents the extortion, detention, violence, and deportation at the hands of the Kenyan police faced by a record number of Somalis entering Kenya. The new refugees are joining over a quarter of a million fellow refugees struggling to survive in camps designed for one-third that number. By forcing the closure of a UNHCR-run registration center close to the border, the Kenyan authorities have also seriously aggravated the humanitarian assistance needs among Somalis arriving in the three camps near Dadaab town. [Note: contains copyright material]. http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/kenya0309webwcover_0.pdf [PDF format, 60 pages].

TIME OF TROUBLES: THE YEN AND JAPAN'S ECONOMY, 1985-2008. National Bureau of Economic Research. Maurice Obstfeld. March 2009.

The paper explores the links between macroeconomic developments, especially monetary policy, and the exchange rate during the period of Japan's bubble economy and subsequent stagnation. It emphasizes the interaction of short-term developments driven by monetary factors and the long-term determinants of the real exchange rate's equilibrium path. Since the mid-1990s, the yen's real exchange rate has generally followed a depreciating trend and Japan's comprehensive terms of trade have deteriorated, according to the paper. [Note: contains copyright material]. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14816.pdf> [PDF format, 91 pages].

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY: SOURCES AND IMPLICATIONS. RAND Corporation. Olga Oliker et al.

As Russia's economy has grown, so have the country's global involvement and influence, which often take forms that the United States neither expects nor likes, as the August 2008 conflict in Georgia demonstrated. Despite the two countries' many disagreements and the rising tension between them, the United States and Russia share some key interests and goals. The authors assess Russia's strategic interests and the factors that influence Russian foreign policy broadly. Further, they also consider the implications of Russia's evolving approaches for U.S. interests. The authors find that Russia's rising confidence will continue to create challenges for U.S. policymakers. [Note: contains copyright material].
http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG768.pdf [PDF format, 248 pages].

HEARING ON RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM IN PAKISTAN, MARCH 2009, U.S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM. Council on Foreign Relations. March 17, 2009.

Chair Felice Gaer's opening comments describe the subject of the hearing: "the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom will examine the threat that religious extremism poses to security, human rights, and religious freedom in Pakistan... The Commission has been concerned about a rising threat of religious extremism that promotes violence in Pakistan and South Asia, one of the world's most troubled regions."
<http://www.uscirf.gov/images/transcript-final.pdf> [PDF format, 31 pages].

U.S. STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN. RAND Corporation. Seth G. Jones. April 2, 2009.

This is the testimony presented before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia on April 2, 2009. [Note: contains copyright material].
http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/2009/RAND_CT324.pdf [PDF format, 15 pages].

IRON RIVER: GUN VIOLENCE & ILLEGAL FIREARMS TRAFFICKING ON THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER. Violence Policy Center. April 2009.

The report is a study of how the U.S. civilian firearms market contributes to the ongoing drug-related violence in Mexico. The report urges the Obama administration to take immediate action under the federal 1968 Gun Control Act to cut off imports into the U.S. of military-style semiautomatic assault weapons and "cop-killer" handguns capable of piercing police body armor. Such weapons are imported into the U.S. and then illegally trafficked into Mexico. [Note: contains copyright material].
<http://www.vpc.org/studies/ironriver.pdf> [PDF format, 33 pages].

SCHOOL INEQUALITY, CRISES, AND FINANCIAL LIBERALIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA. Center for Global Development. Jere R. Behrman et al. March 21, 2009.

Latin America is marked by high and persistent inequality in income, schooling, and land ownership, says the report. In such an unequal environment, the powerful are likely to dominate politics and push for policies that protect their privileges rather than foster competition and growth. As a result, changes in policies that political elites resist may be postponed to the detriment of overall economic performance. The report examines the relationship between structural, high inequality, measured by high levels of schooling inequality, and liberalization of the financial sector for a sample of 37 developing and developed countries for the period from 1975 to 2000. [Note: contains copyright material].
<http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1421333> [HTML format with link to full text PDF file].

2008 INTERNET CRIME REPORT. Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice. March 2009.

The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) reports on the number of Internet crime complaints received in 2008. A total of 275,284 complaints were received in 2008, up from 206,884 (33 percent) over 2007. Total dollar loss reported in 2008 was \$265 million, up from \$239 million in 2007. The average individual loss was \$931.
http://www.nw3c.org/downloads/2008_IC3_Annual%20Report_3_27_09_small.pdf [PDF format, 28 pages].

THE 2008/2009 WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS: WHAT IT MEANS FOR U.S. AGRICULTURE. Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Mathew Shane et al. March 30, 2009.

The world economic crisis that began in 2008 has major consequences for U.S. agriculture. The weakening of global demand because of emerging recessions and declining economic growth result in reduced export demand and lower agricultural commodity prices, compared with those in 2008. These, in turn, reduce U.S. farm income and place downward pressures on farm real estate values. So far, the overall impact on U.S. agriculture is not as severe as on the broader U.S. economy because the record-high agricultural exports, prices, and farm income in 2007 and 2008 put U.S. farmers on solid financial ground.
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/WRS0902/WRS0902.pdf> [PDF format, 30 pages].

ANNUAL ENERGY OUTLOOK 2009. Energy Information Administration. March 2009.

The Outlook presents projections and analysis of U.S. energy supply, demand, and prices through 2030. The projections are based on results from the Energy Information Administration's National Energy Modeling System. The Outlook includes the reference case, additional cases examining energy markets, and complete documentation.
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/oiaf/aeo/index.html?featureclicked=1&> [HTML format with links to PDF files].

THE COSTS OF INACTION: THE URGENT NEED FOR HEALTH REFORM. U.S. Department of Health and Human Reform. March 2009.

Americans across the country are demanding comprehensive health reform and cannot afford to wait any longer, according to the study. More and more Americans find themselves uninsured. Those Americans fortunate enough to have health insurance often don't get the quality care they need and deserve. The study highlights the flaws in the health care system and demonstrates the cost of maintaining the status quo.
<http://www.healthreform.gov/reports/inaction/inactionreportprintmarch2009.pdf> [PDF format, 7 pages].

EDUCATION WATCH: TRACKING ACHIEVEMENT, ATTAINMENT, AND OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The Education Trust. Stephanie Germeraad. March 31, 2009.

To measure how effectively states are using the infusion of federal support, the public will need accurate, reliable data. The report assembles some of the most critical indicators of student achievement, attainment, and opportunity, providing a state-by-state snapshot of public education in America. The data reveals which states are farthest along the course, which are gaining on those leaders, and which are barely out of the starting blocks. [Note: contains copyright material].
<http://www2.edtrust.org/EdTrust/Press+Room/EdWatch2009.htm> [HTML format, various paging].

THE ENERGY LEARNING CURVE: COMING FROM DIFFERENT STARTING POINTS, THE PUBLIC SEES SIMILAR SOLUTIONS. Public Agenda. April 3, 2009.

The study finds the American people reaching common ground on at least 10 major energy proposals, particularly on alternative energy. But the public may not yet be prepared for the tradeoffs and challenges needed to make these proposals a reality. Despite consensus on certain solutions, misconceptions and lack of knowledge hinder informed judgment. [Note: contains copyright material].

http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/energy_learning_curve.pdf [PDF format, 44 pages].

FRAUD CASES FELL WHILE PENTAGON CONTRACTS SURGED. Center for Public Integrity. Nick Schwellenbach. April 1, 2009.

The number of defense contracting fraud and corruption cases sent by government investigators to prosecutors dropped precipitously under the Bush administration, even as contracting by the Defense Department almost doubled, according to the report. The Defense Department investigators during the Bush administration sent 76 percent fewer contracting fraud and corruption cases to the Justice Department for potential criminal prosecution than under Clinton, according to Justice Department data analyzed by the Center. [Note: contains copyright material].

<http://www.publicintegrity.org/articles/entry/1243/> [HTML format, various paging].

SHORT SIGHTED: HOW AMERICA'S LACK OF ATTENTION TO INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STUDIES IMPEDES IMPROVEMENT. Alliance for Excellent Education. March 2009.

To future generations, Americans' current educational myopia is likely to appear, at best, a negligent failure to anticipate and meet the needs of the nation and its citizens, says the report. To provide students with a world-class education, the United States, must adopt a more global outlook. The tools and opportunities already exist; indeed, the United States has even subsidized their creation. Now the nation needs to adopt the results of internationally benchmarked assessments. [Note: contains copyright material].

<http://www.all4ed.org/files/shortsighted.pdf> [PDF format, 21 pages].

TAXATION OF SAVINGS FOR RETIREMENT: CURRENT RULES AND ALTERNATIVE REFORM APPROACHES. Urban Institute and Brookings Institution. Eric Toder. April 1, 2009.

Most advanced countries exempt returns to retirement saving from income tax, but private saving rates are falling and many people are saving too little for retirement, according to the report. There is a trade-off between the goals of promoting wide participation in retirement saving plans and allowing more choice to employees. In the United States, purely employer funded plans have been replaced by plans that rely more on voluntary employee contributions, while private saving has declined. [Note: contains copyright material].

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411865_toder_australia.pdf [PDF format, 22 pages].

ARTICLES

DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

Brooks, Michael SPACE STORM ALERT: 90 SECONDS FROM CATASTROPHE (New Scientist, no. 2700, March 21, 2009, pp. 31-35)

A recent report by NASA and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences warns that plasma storms from the sun – commonly seen in northern latitudes as auroras – pose a serious danger to electric power grids. A plasma incursion from a severe space weather event would cause rapid changes in the Earth's magnetic field, and would induce massive direct currents in long-distance high-voltage power lines, causing transformers to melt from the overload. The author notes that such an event took place in 1859, and caused severe disruptions in the telegraph networks. Today, industrial civilization has unwittingly "sown the seeds of their own destruction," as modern systems are completely dependent on electric power for food delivery, heating, cooling and refrigeration, water, sewage disposal and pharmaceuticals. A serious plasma storm could knock out hundreds of transformers within seconds, putting millions of lives at risk, and such an event would take months to recover from. The author notes that the U.S. is not alone in facing this risk – Europe is vulnerable, and China is building a 1000-kilovolt electric grid, twice that of the U.S. grid. Currently available online at <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20127001.300-space-storm-alert-90-seconds-from-catastrophe.html?full=true>

Cox-Foster, Diana; vanEngelsdorp, Dennis SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF THE VANISHING BEES (Scientific American, March 2009)

The mysterious ailment called colony collapse disorder has wiped out large numbers of bees. Millions of beehives worldwide have emptied out as honeybees mysteriously disappear, putting at risk nearly 100 crops that require pollination. The causes turn out to be surprisingly complex but solutions are emerging. Research is pointing to a complex disease in which combinations of factors, including farming practices, make bees vulnerable to viruses. Taking extra care with hive hygiene seems to aid prevention. Research into antiviral drugs could lead to pharmaceutical solutions. Currently available online at <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=saving-the-honeybee>

Dobbs, David SOLDIERS' STRESS: WHAT DOCTORS GET WRONG ABOUT PTSD (Scientific American, April 2009)

A growing number of experts insist that the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is itself disordered and that soldiers are suffering as a result. The PTSD syndrome is under fire because its defining criteria are too broad, leading to rampant overdiagnosis. The flawed PTSD concept may mistake soldiers' natural process of adjustment to civilian life for dysfunction. Misdiagnosed soldiers receive the wrong treatments and risk becoming mired in a Veterans Administration system that encourages chronic disability. Currently available online at <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=post-traumatic-stress-trap>

Frammolino, Ralph OPENING INDIA (Columbia Journalism Review, January/February 2009)

India's three-year-old Right to Information Act (RTI) is lauded by its advocates. Ordinary citizens have filed requests that led to arrests of perpetrators of violence in the 2002 Gujarat riots between Hindus and Muslims that killed more than a thousand people. Unlike the U.S. Freedom of Information Act, the author notes that "the Indian law comes with some bite." Bureaucrats who stall or mislead are liable to hefty fines. Whether it will achieve transparency in an opaque bureaucracy is still being tested. Journalists have initially been slow to use it, either because they don't trust information released by the government, or because they don't want their informal sources of information to disappear; however, they are increasingly exploring the potential of the

law. The RTI is a classic grassroots success story, stemming from a movement against corruption in payment of wages to poor workers in Rajasthan, spearheaded by activists Nikhil Dey and Aruna Roy, who are now compiling a database on the law's impact. Currently available online at http://www.cjr.org/feature/opening_india_1.php

Palser, Barbara SHINING THROUGH THE GLOOM (American Journalism Review, February-March 2009)

It's not all gloom and doom for traditional news organizations, says Palser, director of digital media for McGraw-Hill Broadcasting Company. Acting as a judge at a recent media competition, she found that forward-looking news organizations are using digital journalism which allows the user to manipulate data to create his or her own story. But tomorrow's journalists and news organizations must combine time-honored investigative skills with a mastery of Flash design, usability and all the many elements available for multimedia storytelling. Currently available online at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4701>

Rozen, Laura HUNG OUT TO DRY (Columbia Journalism Review, January/February 2009)

In November 2005, the Washington Post and the New York Times ran Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative stories on national security that revealed possibly illegal actions by the Bush administration in its "war on terror" and the secret CIA-run prison network. But the Bush administration's recalcitrance against both the press and Congressional requests for documentation, and the lack of response from public institutions have demoralized reporters, who find themselves subpoenaed by grand juries to testify about their confidential sources. In the author's view, this inhibits hard-hitting reporting on controversial subjects. Currently available online at http://www.cjr.org/transparency/hung_out_to_dry_1.php?page=all

Sproles, Claudene NATURAL DISASTERS (Choice, vol. 46, no. 7, March 2009, pp. 1247-1261)

A natural disaster is defined as the consequence of a natural hazard, such as a volcanic eruption, earthquake or flood, which affects human activities. In this bibliographical essay, the author, a librarian at the University of Louisville, explores issues ranging from causes to mitigation. Many are popular histories or case studies that examine the upheaval these events create and the failure or success of preparedness activity. Although Hurricane Katrina is perhaps the best known of recent natural disasters, with its own growing book industry, Sproles notes other incidents, now mostly forgotten, such as the hurricane recounted in the book *The Great Sea Island Storm of 1893*. The author notes that natural disasters have also played an important role in the social and cultural history of the United States, not only for the immediate damage they wreak but for the psychological and financial strain of the resulting years of cleanup and rebuilding.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Hamilton, Martha WHAT WE LEARNED IN THE MELTDOWN (Columbia Journalism Review, January/February 2009)

The author, a former Washington Post financial writer, assesses why journalists failed to see the global economic crisis coming. She finds that some reporters warned of problems in the housing market and the risks of unregulated over-the-counter derivatives markets as early as 1998, but were largely ignored. Over-tasked journalists had limited understanding of new, complex financial instruments, and didn't ask often enough for explanations. "We were all a little too willing to assume Alan Greenspan knew what he was talking about," New York Times reporter Floyd Norris says. Hamilton believes that the remedy is for journalists to be skeptical of information supplied by self-interested experts, pay more attention to new financial developments,

regulation and deregulation, and make use of the U.S. Freedom of Information Act. Currently available online at http://www.cjr.org/feature/what_we_learned_in_the_meltdown.php

Loeffler, Rachel L. BANK SHOTS: HOW THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM CAN ISOLATE ROGUES (Foreign Affairs, vol. 88, no. 2, March-April 2009)

According to Loeffler, former deputy director of global affairs at the U.S. Treasury Department, the U.S. government has effectively used financial sanctions carried out by global banks to apply pressure to North Korea and Iran. "Given the role that banks, rather than governments, now play as agents of international isolation," Loeffler says, "policymakers must develop a more sophisticated and accurate understanding of what this new tool of statecraft can and cannot do." Using financial measures routinely risks losing their effectiveness; the U.S. government needs in each case to show a clear connection between the financial activities of a rogue state and the global financial system, as it did in revealing deceptive practices by the Central Bank of Iran. It must also deal with resistance from a global bank in a situation when a target country's assets makes up a significant share of that bank's business. Currently available online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64822/rachel-l-loeffler/bank-shots>

Stuller, Jay THE POWER OF POWER (American Legion, vol. 166, no. 3, March 2009, pp. 38-43, 46-47, 51)

Stuller, co-author of PERFECT POWER: HOW THE MICROGRID REVOLUTION WILL UNLEASH CLEANER, GREENER AND MORE ABUNDANT ENERGY, notes that U.S. presidents since Richard Nixon have called for the U.S. to reduce its dependence on foreign sources of petroleum, yet that goal has remained as elusive as ever, the U.S. importing some two-thirds of its oil. A growing portion of the global oil supply is now controlled by foreign governments that are not above using energy as a geopolitical weapon. He writes that there are "no convenient truths" in energy security -- he notes the environmental drawbacks of coal and nuclear power, and that the centralized North American electric power grid is aging and inefficient. He writes that "America must make complicated and costly decisions" on energy. In order to have energy alternatives compete in the long term, the federal government could directly subsidize wind and solar projects, or find indirect methods to make them competitive, by creating a tax on carbon emissions to reduce consumption of oil, natural gas and coal, as former Vice President Al Gore proposed. Available online at <http://www.legion.org/magazine/2529/power-power-domestic-dilemma>

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

DeBiaso, Peppino A. MISSILE DEFENSE AND NATO SECURITY (Joint Force Quarterly, no. 51, Autumn 2008, pp. 46-51)

DeBiaso, Director of the Office of Missile Defense Policy at the U.S. Department of Defense, discusses the use of a missile defense system to provide security to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Threats to the security of America and its NATO allies have changed significantly in the past couple of decades. Not only has the number of nations possessing ballistic missiles grown, but it now includes rogue regimes, such as North Korea and Iran. The spread of ballistic missiles and missile technology has been accompanied by corresponding trends in weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The spread of both WMD technologies and missile delivery vehicles will influence the shape of future crises and conflicts. This article is currently available on the Internet at: http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i51/13.pdf

Goddard, Stacie WHEN RIGHT MAKES MIGHT: HOW PRUSSIA OVERTURNED THE EUROPEAN BALANCE OF POWER (International Security, vol. 33, no. 3, Winter 2008/2009, pp. 110-142)

The author, assistant professor of political science at Wellesley College, writes that, from 1864 to 1871, Prussia mounted a series of wars that fundamentally altered the balance of power in Europe, yet no coalition emerged to check Prussia's rise. Rather than provide a counterbalance against Prussian expansion, the great powers sat on the sidelines and allowed the transformation of European politics. Goddard believes that it was Prussia's legitimation strategies -- the way Prussia justified its expansion -- that undermined a potential balancing coalition. Prussia appealed to shared rules and norms, and signaled constraint, strategically choosing rhetoric that would resonate with each of the great powers, which enabled it to expand without opposition.

Online link to PDF full text can be found at

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/isec.2009.33.3.110>

Gove, David ARCTIC MELT: REOPENING A NAVAL FRONTIER (U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, vol. 135, no. 2, February 2009, pp. 16-21)

Rear Admiral David Gove, formerly the Navy's 19th oceanographer, writes that accelerating environmental changes in the Arctic pose security challenges for strategic planners. As ice melts in that region, it may open up the area to shorter commercial shipping routes, larger commercial fishing opportunities and wider access to gas and oil deposits, as well as potential mineral resources on the seabed if they can be extracted successfully. The author notes that an important tenet of U.S. policy is preserving freedom of navigation. Melting ice opened up the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route in 2008. Fewer barriers to access in the Arctic, he says, raises the prospect of new regional adversaries. Gove calls for strengthening cooperation among regional nations, noting that international accords and partnerships will be critical to resolving future challenges there. Currently available online at

http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/story.asp?STORY_ID=1762

O'Hanlon, Michael TOWARD RECONCILIATION IN AFGHANISTAN (Washington Quarterly, vol. 32, no. 2, April 2009, pp. 139-147)

The author, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, provides interesting insight into the situation in Afghanistan. Although the security situation is deteriorating, the level of civilian violence is relatively modest compared to Congo, Iraq, Colombia, Russia, South Africa, and Mexico. Kidnappings are frequent, roads are unsafe, and opium production has increased. However, there are also positive signs -- large numbers of refugees have returned, a higher percentage of children are in school (especially girls) and childhood immunizations have reached nearly 70 percent. Telephone access is widespread, inflation is in check and GDP growth has been about 10 percent per year. O'Hanlon believes that success is possible in Afghanistan, but a new approach is needed. Security forces need to be increased to around 600,000, but current plans call for only half that (including some 60,000 Americans). The concept of "clear, hold, and build" should continue, but the overall development strategy needs to be improved, making better use of local communities in programs such as the one used by the World Food Programme, through which local groups provide security and oversee equitable distribution of food delivered by the WFP. Important progress is possible through sustained attention and resources from the international community in partnership with Afghan patriots and reformers. Currently available online at http://www.twq.com/09april/docs/09apr_OHalon.pdf

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

Bartlett, Thomas CHEATING GOES GLOBAL AS ESSAY MILLS MULTIPLY (Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 55, No. 28, March 20, 2009, pp. A1, A22-A25)

In a piece of investigative journalism unusual for the Chronicle of Higher Education, Bartlett traces the various Internet manifestations of an "essay mill," first to a house in Virginia and then to an office in Ukraine and a building in the Philippines, along the way talking to essay writers in Africa and Asia, and to students who buy their work and turn it in at U.S. universities. And these aren't just essays for freshman English courses; students are buying papers for graduate courses and even a dissertation in a subject like aerospace engineering at a top university. The essay mill Bartlett investigates is sophisticated, international and profitable, charging up to \$42.99 per page for work by someone with a doctoral degree. Most of the customers with whom Bartlett talked knew what they were doing was wrong, but some insisted they were only buying models, and one insisted he was merely, like a savvy company, "outsourcing" work he doesn't have time for. Writers, many from developing countries, consider the pay good and the work interesting, and did not seem particularly disturbed by the questionable ethics involved. Some institutions, like Boston University, have made an effort to shut down essay mills, and some states have rarely-enforced laws against them. Experts on plagiarism recommend professors structure assignments better and talk to students about ethics and the purpose of college. Currently available online at <http://chronicle.com/free/v55/i28/28a00102.htm>

Gawande, Atul HELLHOLE (New Yorker, March 30, 2009, pp. 36-45)

Many people who experience profound isolation over months and years start to lose their minds, become violent or catatonic, and have difficulty readjusting to society after being freed. U.S. Navy aviators imprisoned in Vietnam "reported that they found social isolation to be as torturous and agonizing as any physical abuse they suffered," says the author. Gawande observes that "whether in Walpole [State Prison in Massachusetts] or Beirut or Hanoi, all human beings experience isolation as torture." U.S. prisons holds tens of thousands of people in long-term solitary confinement in supermaxes – facilities designed to isolate prisoners from social contact. Proponents argue that solitary confinement provides discipline when prisoners refuse to follow rules, and it separates violent aggressors from other prisoners. (However, it is sometimes used to punish petty offenses like refusing to get out of the shower quickly enough.) Some 60 supermaxes have been built since 1983, holding at least 25,000 inmates in isolation, but there has been no drop in prison violence. "Evidence from a number of studies has shown that supermax conditions—in which prisoners have virtually no social interactions and are given no programmatic support—make it highly likely that they will commit more crimes when they are released," says Gawande. A bipartisan task force in 2006 recommended ending long-term isolation in favor of the violence prevention approach used in Europe -- giving prisoners more opportunities for work, education and mental health treatment. But U.S. public opinion does not support this change, and so "the recommendations went nowhere." Currently available online at http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/03/30/090330fa_fact_gawande

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