

IRC WHAT'S NEW - October 2008

Electronic Journals – all e-journals	IIP Publications – all publications			
U.S. Elections 2008				
				
<p>Guide to the 2008 Election</p>	<p>The Candidates <i>(October 2008)</i></p>	<p>The Electoral College <i>(September 2008)</i></p>	<p>USA Elections In Brief <i>(January 2008)</i></p>	<p>The Long Campaign <i>(September 2007)</i></p>
<p>Ask America Ask America allow foreign audiences to interact with American citizens on wide range of topics using a chat tool over the Internet. U.S. government and private sector subject experts, academics, journalists, and everyday citizens are brought on as guests to do webchats on USINFO. You may visit the Ask America HomePage to see upcoming ones, and read the transcripts of the previous webchats.</p>	<p>Podcasts http://www.america.gov/multimedia/podcast.html Audio files and transcripts from America.gov</p>			
<p>Videos http://www.america.gov/multimedia/video.html?videoid=1498976413 Video files on foreign policy, U.S. politics, American life, democracy, science and health.</p>	<p>Blogs http://blogs.america.gov/ Blogs at America.gov offers readers a place to discuss designated topics with experts from the United States and around the world, and to share their comments and reactions with the broader Internet public.</p>			

SIGNIFICANT E-DOCUMENTS

THE 19TH U.S. – CHINA JOINT COMMISSION ON COMMERCE AND TRADE (JCCT): FACT SHEET. U.S. Trade Representative. Web posted September 19, 2008.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez and U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab, together with Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan, convened the 19th U.S. – China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT). The highlights of the topics discussed, include agreements in intellectual property rights, healthcare, agriculture, procurement and services.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Press_Releases/2008/September/asset_upload_file882_15113.pdf [PDF format, 3 pages].

AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS IN CAMEROON, GHANA, AND MALI: WHY IT HAPPENED AND HOW TO SUSTAIN IT. OECD Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries Working Papers, No. 9. Joe Dewbre and Adeline Borto de Battisti. September 2008.

The ten to twenty year record of agricultural performance in three countries in the region: Cameroon, Ghana and Mali, is the basis for the study. Since the mid-1980s food crop production in all three has more than kept up with population growth fuelling significant increases in per capita food availability. Ghana's cocoa exports have quadrupled and Mali's cotton exports tripled. Multiple factors contributed to the turnaround in agricultural performance. Growing per capita incomes boosted domestic demand and prices paid for food crops and livestock and generally positive trends in world prices of cocoa and cotton helped. Most importantly, in all three countries, recovery in agriculture coincided with major re-orientations of macroeconomic and agricultural sector policy. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://puck.sourceoecd.org/vl=2056365/cl=54/nw=1/rpsv/cgi-bin/wppdf?file=5kzjrtrkq30.pdf> [PDF format, 61 pages].

THE ARMY'S GREEN WARRIORS. RAND Corporation. September 23, 2008.

The U.S. Army has much to gain by carefully integrating environmental considerations into operational concepts, plans, and procedures during contingency operations. Evidence from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other conflicts suggests that a shift to a comprehensive approach to environmental considerations that encompasses policy, culture, planning, training, and investment can boost overall mission success. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/2008/RAND_RB9335.pdf [PDF format, 5 pages].

BANGLADESH: MAINTAIN MOMENTUM TO GUARANTEE CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS. Refugee International. Katherine Southwick and Dawn Calabria. September 25, 2008.

For the first time since Bangladesh gained independence in 1971, Urdu speaking minorities will be eligible to vote in December's parliamentary elections. A High Court judgment last May confirmed the group's rights to Bangladeshi citizenship, ending nearly four decades of political and socio-economic exclusion. But it will take dedicated action by the Bangladeshi government, with the support of international donors and organizations, to ensure that these people integrate fully into society and gain equal access to education, employment, health services, and other rights and obligations of citizenship. Only as full citizens can they help Bangladesh develop into a

prosperous democracy. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
<http://www.refugeesinternational.org/content/article/detail/10850> [HTML format, various paging].

BEST-PERFORMING CITIES 2008: WHERE AMERICA'S JOBS ARE CREATED AND SUSTAINED. Milken Institute. Ross DeVol et al. September 2008.

Provo, Utah, with its high-tech status, is placed on the top and is joined by other growing technology-based and global trade centers in Utah, Texas, Washington, Alabama and the Carolinas. The rebounding technology sector boosted several newcomers to the top 10 in the annual ranking of where America's jobs are being created and sustained, and metros that are highly dependent on export-intensive industries also showed success. Several past leading cities fell due to the national decline in housing and construction markets, and metros that remain concentrated in manufacturing continue lag in the rankings. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
<http://www.milkeninstitute.org/pdf/bpc2008.pdf> [PDF format, 62 pages].

BOLIVIA: A PROFOUND BREAKDOWN OF COMMUNICATION WITH LATIN AMERICA.

Council on Hemispheric Affairs. Web posted September 16, 2008.

With UNASUR having just met in Santiago, Chile to discuss the escalating crisis in Bolivia, the stage is set for a huge surge of autonomy for Latin America, owing to a series of newly auto-generated, self-managed and extensive regional initiatives. It is a shift from a decades-long hegemonic status-quo. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
<http://www.coha.org/2008/09/bolivia-a-profound-breakdown-of-communication-with-latin-america/> [HTML format, various paging].

BOTTLED WATER MUST BE BETTER TESTED, LABELED, AND REGULATED. Natural Resources Defense Council. Mae Wu. September 10, 2008.

The bottled water that millions of Americans drink each day is allowed to contain higher levels of a toxic chemical associated with birth defects and cancer than tap water, according to a bottled water expert from the Natural Resources Defense Council, testifying before the Senate. Wu stress that Americans have the right to know what toxic chemicals and other contaminants are in their bottled water. Currently water utilities are required to report annually to customers about the contaminants they have tested for and whether any health standards have been violated. There is no such requirement for bottled water. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
http://docs.nrdc.org/water/wat_08091001A.pdf [PDF format, 13 pages].

THE BUDGET AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: AN UPDATE. Congressional Budget Office. Web posted September 10, 2008.

According to undated CBO economic forecast, the economy is likely to experience at least several more months of weakness. Whether this period will ultimately be designated a recession or not is still uncertain, but the increase in the unemployment rate and the pace of economic growth are similar to conditions during previous periods of mild recession.
<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/97xx/doc9706/09-08-Update.pdf> [PDF format, 92 pages].

CARBON OFFSETS: THE U.S. VOLUNTARY MARKET IS GROWING BUT QUALITY ASSURANCE POSES CHALLENGES FOR MARKET PARTICIPANTS. U.S. Government Accountability Office. Web posted September 29, 2008.

Carbon offsets, reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from an activity in one place to compensate for emissions elsewhere, are a way to address climate change by paying someone else to reduce emissions. In the U.S., there are no federal requirements and offsets may be purchased in the voluntary market. The report examines the scope of the U.S. voluntary carbon offset market, including the role of the federal government, the extent to which mechanisms for ensuring the credibility of offsets are available and used and what, if any, related information is shared with consumers, and trade-offs associated with increased oversight of the U.S. market and including offsets in climate change mitigation policies.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d081048.pdf> [PDF format, 65 pages].

CHANGING COURSE: A NEW DIRECTION FOR U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE MUSLIM

WORLD. U.S.-Muslim Engagement Project. September 23, 2008.

Creating partnerships for peace with Muslim countries and communities is one of the greatest challenges and opportunities facing the United States today. Currently, conflict, misunderstanding, and distrust plague U.S. relations with Muslims in many countries, imperiling security for all. However, despite these tensions, the vast majority of Americans and Muslims around the world want peace, amicable relations, good governance, prosperity, and respect. The report outlines a comprehensive strategy for the U.S. to enhance international security by improving relations with key Muslim countries and communities. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.usmuslimengagement.org/storage/usme/documents/Changing_Course_-_A_New_Direction_for_US_Relations_with_the_Muslim_World.pdf [PDF format, 170 pages].

CHAVEZ WRECKS VENEZUELA, DEMOCRACY. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Roger F. Noriega. Web posted September 25, 2008.

According to Roger Noriega, the author, despite all appearances, Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez is not popular in his own country. While he is busy destroying the domestic economy, spending billions on vanity projects in foreign countries as the Venezuelan infrastructure crumbles, and supporting Colombian terrorists, his people are taking note. The November regional elections are a chance for the people to tell their president that they have had enough. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.aei.org/publications/filter.all,pubID.28682/pub_detail.asp [HTML format, various paging].

CHINA, SPACE WEAPONS, AND U.S. SECURITY. Council on Foreign Relations. Bruce W. MacDonald. September 2008.

China's successful test of an anti-satellite weapon in 2007, followed by the U.S. destruction earlier this year of an out-of-control U.S. satellite, demonstrated that space may soon no longer remain a relative sanctuary from military conflict. The author illuminates the strategic landscape of this new military space competition and highlights the dangers and opportunities the United States confronts in the space arena. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/China_Space_CSR38.pdf [PDF format, 71 pages].

COUNTRY ANALYSIS BRIEF: JAPAN. Energy Information Administration. Web posted September 16, 2008.

Japan has virtually no domestic oil or natural gas reserves and is the second-largest net importer of crude oil and largest net importer of liquefied natural gas in the world. Including nuclear power, Japan is still only 16 percent energy self-sufficient. The Japanese government actively pursues energy efficiency measures in an attempt to increase the country's energy security and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Japan/Background.html> [HTML format, various paging].

CYBERSECURITY ECONOMIC ISSUES. RAND Corporation. September 24, 2008.

The emerging field of cyber security economics could benefit from better data, better understanding, and better methods for using resources, to provide assurances that software will work as expected. The research brief presents findings that address these key cyber security concerns, perceptions of the importance of cyber security, and considerations for cyber security investment decisions. It suggests that companies, the government, and other organizations can help improve our understanding of cyber security economics by monitoring cyber security incidents and responses, soliciting and using standard terminology and measures, and sharing data whenever possible. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/2008/RAND_RB9365.pdf [PDF format, 5 pages]

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXTENDING FEDERAL SOLAR TAX CREDITS. Solar Energy Research and Education Foundation. September 15, 2008.

The report shows that more than 1.2 million employment opportunities, including 440,000 permanent jobs, and \$232 billion in investment would be supported in the U.S. by the solar energy sector alone through 2016 if Congress extends the solar investment tax credit (ITC) for 8 years. According to the study, by 2016, the solar energy industry would create 440,000 permanent U.S. jobs with much of the direct growth occurring in domestic manufacturing, construction and the trades. This figure reveals the strength of the solar job creation engine when compared to the current 79,000 direct employees of the coal mining industry and the 136,000 direct employees in oil and gas extraction. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
<http://seia.org/galleries/pdf/Navigant%20Consulting%20Report%209.15.08.pdf> [PDF format, 79 pages].

ELECTIONS: STATES, TERRITORIES, AND THE DISTRICT ARE TAKING A RANGE OF IMPORTANT STEPS TO MANAGE THEIR VARIED VOTING SYSTEM ENVIRONMENTS. U.S. Government Accountability Office. September 25, 2008.

The United States' overall election system depends on all levels of government and the interplay of people, processes, and technology, which includes the voting systems that are used during an election. The states, territories, and the District of Columbia (District) each play a pivotal role in managing voting systems to ensure that they perform as intended. The report looks at what voting methods and systems are these entities using in federal elections and what changes are underway, how do they certify or otherwise approve voting systems, what other steps do they take to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and security of voting systems, how do they identify, evaluate, and respond to voting system problems, and how do they view federal voting system-

related resources and services.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08874.pdf> [PDF format, 129 pages].

ENERGY, ELECTRICITY AND NUCLEAR POWER ESTIMATES FOR THE PERIOD UP TO 2030. International Atomic Energy Agency. Web posted September 15, 2008.

The report provides nuclear power generation projections to 2030. It reports that nuclear share of global electricity generation dropped another percentage point in 2007 to 14%. This compares to the nearly steady share of 16% to 17% that nuclear power maintained for almost two decades, from 1986 through 2005. In this current edition, it expects global nuclear power capacity in 2030 to range from a low case scenario of 473 GW(e), some 27% higher than today's 372 GW(e), to a high case scenario of 748 GW(e), i.e., double today's capacity. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/RDS1-28_web.pdf [PDF format, 56 pages].

ESTIMATES OF THE UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANT POPULATION RESIDING IN THE UNITED STATES: JANUARY 2007. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Michael Hoefer et al. September 2008.

In summary, an estimated 11.8 million unauthorized immigrants were living in the United States in January 2007 compared to 8.5 million in 2000. Between 2000 and 2007, the unauthorized population increased 3.3 million; the annual average increase during this period was 470,000. Nearly 4.2 million (35 percent) of the total 11.8 million unauthorized residents in 2007 had entered in 2000 or later. An estimated 7.0 million (59 percent) were from Mexico.

http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_ill_pe_2007.pdf [PDF format, 7 pages].

EVEN AS OPTIMISM ABOUT IRAQ SURGES: DECLINING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT. Pew Research Center. September 24, 2008.

The public is feeling much better about how the war in Iraq is going these days, but at the same time has a sharply diminished support for U.S. efforts to deal with an array of global problems. Fewer people than at any point in this decade assign high priority to such foreign policy goals as preventing genocide, strengthening the United Nations, promoting and defending human rights, and reducing the global spread of AIDS and other infectious diseases. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/453.pdf> [PDF format, 40 pages].

FACT SHEET: JUSTICE DEPARTMENT COUNTER-TERRORISM EFFORTS SINCE 9/11. U.S. Department of Justice. Web posted September 12, 2008.

Since September 11, 2001, the highest priority of the Justice Department has been to protect America against acts of terrorism. The Justice Department, working with its federal, state, and local partners as well as international counterparts, has significantly improved its ability to identify, penetrate, and dismantle terrorist plots as a result of a series of structural reforms, the development of new intelligence and law enforcement tools, and a new mindset that values information sharing, communication and prevention.

<http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel08/factsheet091108.htm> [HTML format, various paging].

FEDERAL COURT RULES CLEAN AIR, WILDLIFE, QUIET MUST COME FIRST IN AMERICA'S OLDEST NATIONAL PARK.

Greater Yellowstone Commission. Web posted September 16, 2008.

A federal court ruled on Sept. 15, 2008 that the Bush Administration's decision authorizing snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park violates the fundamental legal responsibility of the National Park Service to give top priority to conservation of national park resources. The court found that the Administration authorized snowmobile use despite scientific conclusions by the National Park Service that its decision would result in significant increases in disruptive noise, unhealthy exhaust and harm to Yellowstone's animals. [Note: contains copyrighted material] http://news.greateryellowstone.org/files/Winter_Use_GYC-9-15.pdf [PDF format, 3 pages].

FEDERAL TORT REFORM LEGISLATION: CONSTITUTIONALITY AND SUMMARIES OF SELECTED STATUTES.

Congressional Research Services, 95-797, Library of Congress. Henry Cohen and Vanessa K. Burrows. Web posted September 27, 2008.

The report considers the constitutionality of federal tort reform legislation, such as the products liability and medical malpractice reform proposals that have been introduced for the last several Congresses. Tort law at present is almost exclusively state law rather than federal law, although Congress has enacted a number of tort reform statutes. Congress has the authority to enact tort reform legislation generally, under its power to regulate interstate commerce, and to make such legislation applicable to intrastate torts, because tort suits generally affect interstate commerce. http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/95-797_20080707.pdf [PDF format, 33 pages].

FOLLOW THE MONEY: WHY THE US IS LOSING THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN.

Center for Strategic & International Studies. Anthony H. Cordesman. Web posted September 26, 2008. According to the report, the weakness of the Afghan central government and the fact that the Taliban-HiG-Haqqani and Al Qa'ida have had a near sanctuary in Pakistan have played a critical role in the resurgence of the threat, and creating an insurgency that has made major gains over the last four years. The report provides a detailed summary of the steady growth in Taliban-HiG-Haqqani and Al Qa'ida threat activity and its impact on U.S. casualties. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/080919_afghanwarcosts.pdf [PDF format, 26 pages].

FOOD SAFETY AND IMPORTS: AN ANALYSIS OF FDA FOOD-RELATED IMPORT REFUSAL REPORTS.

Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jean C. Buzby et al. Web posted September 11, 2008.

The study examines U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) data on refusals of food offered for importation into the United States from 1998 to 2004. The study found that import refusals highlight food safety problems that appear to recur in trade and where the FDA has focused its import alerts, examinations, and other monitoring efforts. The data show some food industries and types of violations may be consistent sources of problems both over time and in comparison with previous studies of more limited data. The three food industry groups with the most violations were vegetables (20.6 percent of total violations), fishery and seafood (20.1 percent), and fruits (11.7 percent).

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB39/EIB39.pdf> [PDF format, 47 pages].

FOOD STAMPS, FEDERALISM, AND WORKING FAMILIES. Urban Institute. Kenneth Finegold. Web posted September 16, 2008.

The combination of a domestic economic slowdown and the recent worldwide rise in food prices threatens to increase the number of American households experiencing “food insecurity,” which the government defines as lacking access to enough food for an active, healthy life at all times. They can, however, take advantage of state Food Stamp Program (FSP) policy options that increase eligibility and benefits. The state cost of expanding FSP is low because the federal government pays the entire cost of benefits and about half of state administrative expenses. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411752_food_stamps.pdf [PDF format, 16 pages].

THE FUTURE OF PENSIONS AND HEALTHCARE IN A RAPIDLY AGEING WORLD: SCENARIOS TO 2030. World Economic Forum. Bernd Jan Sikken et al. September 2008.

The world is ageing at an unprecedented rate. It will undermine the financial sustainability of not only traditional pension systems, but also conventional healthcare systems. The report argues that urgent action in many countries around the globe is required to meet these challenges. It indicates that new forms of collaboration between key stakeholders, individuals, financial institutions, healthcare providers, employers and governments, will be critical to finance the ongoing well-being of current and future generations in a sustainable manner. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.weforum.org/pdf/scenarios/Pensions.pdf> [PDF format, 115 pages].

A GENERATION UNPLUGGED. Harris Interactive. Web posted September 15, 2008.

According to the study, second to clothing, teens say a cell phone tells the most about a person’s social status or popularity, outranking jewelry, watches and shoes. The study also found that cell phones are fast becoming a social necessity among teens. A majority (57 percent) view their cell phone as the key to their social life. With nearly four out of every five teens (17 million) carrying a wireless device (a 40 percent increase since 2004), it’s not surprising that six in ten teens (57 percent) credit mobility for improving their quality of life. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://files.ctia.org/pdf/HI_TeenMobileStudy_ResearchReport.pdf [PDF format, 30 pages].

GREEN RECOVERY: A PROGRAM TO CREATE GOOD JOBS AND START BUILDING A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY. Center for American Progress. Web posted September 12, 2008.

As America confronts the current energy crisis, the report shows that the U.S. can create two million jobs by investing in clean energy technologies that will strengthen the economy and fight global warming. It finds that investing in clean energy would create four times as many jobs as spending the same amount of money within the oil industry. The program could be paid for with proceeds from auctions of carbon permits under a global warming cap-and-trade program that will drive private investments into clean energy and raise public revenue through carbon permit auctions. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/09/pdf/green_recovery.pdf [PDF format, 42 pages].

HIGH STAKES, MORE MEANING: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS OF REDESIGNING THE US CITIZENSHIP TEST. Migration Policy Institute. Web posted September 29, 2008.

More than a decade in the making, the redesigned citizenship test required for use after October

1, 2008 is supposed to provide a more meaningful opportunity for applicants to demonstrate knowledge about US history and civics, and allow the government more standardized test administration. The most significant change to the test is the new civics portion. As before, applicants must correctly answer six out of 10 questions drawn from a master list of 100 civics questions. However, the 100 questions have undergone a significant overhaul with new questions emphasizing core concepts of American democracy and new items about geography, Native Americans, and women. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/BR6_NatzTest_092908.pdf [PDF format, 18 pages].

IAEA ILLICIT TRAFFICKING DATABASE (ITDB). International Atomic Energy Agency. Web posted September 26, 2008.

Established in 1995, the ITDB is the IAEA's information system on incidents of illicit trafficking and other unauthorized activities involving nuclear and radioactive materials. The scope of the ITDB information is broad and includes, but is not limited to, incidents involving the illegal trade and movement of materials across borders. The Database tracks events that occurred intentionally or unintentionally, with or without crossing international borders, as well as unsuccessful or thwarted acts. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Features/RadSources/PDF/fact_figures2007.pdf [PDF format, 7 pages].

IS SUGAR SWEETER AT THE PUMP? THE MACROECONOMIC IMPACT OF BRAZIL'S ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PROGRAM. National Bureau of Economic Research. Marc D. Weidenmier. September 2008.

The recent world energy crisis raises serious questions about the extent to which the United States should increase domestic oil production and develop alternative sources of energy. The report examines the energy developments in Brazil as an important experiment. Brazil has reduced its share of imported oil more than any other major economy in the world in the last 30 years, from 70 percent in the 1970s to only 10 percent today. Brazil has largely achieved this goal by increasing domestic oil production and developing one of the world's largest and most competitive sources of renewable energy, sugarcane ethanol, that now accounts for 50 percent of Brazil's total gasoline consumption. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w14362.pdf> [PDF format, 36 pages].

THE ISMAILIS OF NAJRAN: SECOND-CLASS SAUDI CITIZENS. Human Rights Watch. Web posted September 22, 2008.

The report, based on more than 150 interviews and reviews of official documents, documents a pattern of discrimination against the Ismailis in the areas of government employment, education, religious freedom, and the justice system. The Ismailis, a religious and ethnic minority with historic roots in Najran province of southwestern Saudi Arabia, face increasing threats to their identity as a result of official discrimination. Government officials exclude Ismailis from decision making, and publicly disparage their faith. Underlying discriminatory practices have continued unabated. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
<http://hrw.org/reports/2008/saudi-arabia0908/saudi-arabia0908webwcover.pdf> [PDF format, 91 pages].

JOB-RELATED TRAINING AND BENEFITS FOR INDIVIDUALS: A REVIEW OF EVIDENCE AND EXPLANATIONS. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation Development. Bo Hansson. Web posted September 16, 2008.

The paper reviews the literature on job-related training and the effects of these investments for different groups of individuals. It elaborates on the theories, empirical explanations, and policy implications that can be drawn from these findings. Employer-provided training is by far the most important source of further education and training after an individual enters the labor market. The analysis of the distribution of returns to training reveals that although individuals benefit from these investments, the employer reaps most of the returns to training which suggests that the productivity effects are substantially larger than wage effects. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/18/41325604.pdf> [PDF format, 48 pages].

LANDMINE CASUALTY DATA: BEST PRACTICES GUIDEBOOK. Mine Action Information Center, James Madison University. Suzanne Fiederlein. Web posted September 23, 2008. The report is a reference tool designed to assist people in creating a mine/Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) victim information system or enhancing an existing system. It examines the advances in casualty data collection and management and offers lessons for countries to reflect upon as they undertake the challenging task of building mine/ERW victim information systems. The report integrates information from a wide variety of sources and presents detailed case studies, recommended best practices, lessons learned and contacts and resources for victim assistance information management and program planning. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.maic.jmu.edu/HOMIE/guidebook/guidebook8.29lores.pdf> [PDF format, 79 pages].

LATIN AMERICA: TERRORISM ISSUES. Congressional Research Service, RS21049, Library of Congress. Mark P. Sullivan. Web posted September 17, 2008.

Since the September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, U.S. attention to terrorism in Latin America has intensified, with an increase in bilateral and regional cooperation. In April 2008, the State Department highlighted threats in Colombia and the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. Cuba has remained on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism since 1982, which triggers a number of economic sanctions. In May 2008, the Department of State, pursuant to Arms Export Control Act, included Venezuela on the annual list of countries not cooperating on antiterrorism efforts.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RS21049.pdf> [PDF format, 6 pages].

MAKING BORDERS IRRELEVANT IN KASHMIR. U.S. Institute of Peace. P.R. Chari and Hasan Askari Rizvi. September 2008.

Neither India nor Pakistan has been able to impose its preferred solution on the long-standing Kashmir conflict, and both sides have gradually shown more flexibility in their traditional positions on Kashmir, without officially abandoning them. This development has encouraged the consideration of new, creative approaches to the management of the conflict. The approach holding the most promise is a pragmatic one that would "make borders irrelevant" softening borders to allow movement of people, goods, and services instead of redefining or removing them. The governments of India and Pakistan have both repeatedly endorsed the concept, but

steps to implement it have been limited. [Note: contains copyrighted material]
<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr210.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages].

MARKET REACTION TO THE ADOPTION OF IFRS IN EUROPE. Harvard Business School. Christopher S. Armstrong et al. Web posted September 16, 2008.

This study examines the European stock market reaction to sixteen events associated with the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in Europe. European IFRS adoption represented a major milestone towards financial reporting convergence yet spurred controversy reaching the highest levels of government. Overall, the findings suggest that investors in European firms perceived net benefits associated with IFRS adoption, according to the authors. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/09-032.pdf> [PDF format, 51 pages].

MEXICO'S OTHER BORDER: ISSUES AFFECTING MEXICO'S DIVIDING LINE WITH GUATEMALA. Council on Hemispheric Affairs. Web posted September 15, 2008.

In 2003, the number of documented Guatemalans in Mexico had fallen to 2,601. According to a 2000 census, 55 percent of those Guatemalans living in Mexico were to be found in Chiapas. But the indifferent attitude towards the indigenous population along the border has led to an increase in violence and abuse by the Mexican security forces. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.coha.org/2008/09/mexicos-other-border-issues-affecting-mexico%E2%80%99s-dividing-line-with-guatemala/> [HTML format, various paging].

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT 2008. United Nations. Web posted September 13, 2008.

The eight Millennium Development Goals have been adopted by the international community as a framework for the development activities of over 190 countries in ten regions. They have been articulated into over 20 targets and over 60 indicators. The report summarizes progress towards the goals in each of the regions. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2008/MDG_Report_2008_En.pdf [PDF format, 56 pages].

MISSION INCOMPLETE: WHY CIVILIANS REMAIN AT RISK IN EASTERN CHAD. Oxfam Briefing Paper. September 10, 2008.

The international community took an important step in deploying the UN and EUFOR mission to volatile and insecure eastern Chad. However, one year on, this mission is not capable of adequately protecting civilians and requires urgent reform. EUFOR has made many civilians feel safer, but as a military force is ill suited to an environment of lawlessness and banditry. According to the authors, without a comprehensive political solution to the internal crisis in Chad, there will be no hope of long-term security for the civilians who are currently at risk. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.oxfam.org/files/bp119-chad-mission-incomplete-0809.pdf> [PDF format, 27 pages.]

MORE FREEDOM, LESS TERROR?: LIBERALIZATION AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE ARAB WORLD. RAND Corporation. Dalia Dassa Kaye et al. Web posted September 29, 2008.

Some policymakers and analysts have held that democracy has nothing to do with terrorism or

even that the growth of democracy in the Middle East may exacerbate political violence. The study examines whether such links exist by exploring the effects of liberalization processes on political violence in Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, and Morocco from 1991 to 2006. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG772.pdf [PDF format, 227 pages].

MORE TO GIVE: TAPPING THE TALENTS OF THE BABY BOOMER, SILENT AND GREATEST GENERATIONS. American Association of Retired Persons. Web posted September 14, 2008.

Tens of millions of Baby Boomers and members of the Silent Generation, while not as civically active as the Greatest Generation in their younger years, are healthier, living longer and appear ready to increase their civic participation. In an effort to better understand the civic behaviors and attitudes of Americans and to help ground the research in the stories and perspectives of the Boomer and Silent Generations, AARP commissioned a series of focus groups and a nationally representative survey of Americans ages 44-79, "Experienced Americans." [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/general/moretogive.pdf> [PDF format, 45 pages].

MUSLIMS IN EUROPE: A SHORT INTRODUCTION. Center on the United States and Europe, Brookings Institute. Justin Vaisse. September 2008.

The paper briefly presents the basic facts and issues concerning Muslims in Europe, from a political and sociological perspective, and to offer elements of comparison with the U.S. There is a slight emphasis on France, due to the fact that France is home to the largest Muslim population in Europe. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/09_europe_muslims_vaisse/09_europe_muslims_vaisse.pdf [PDF format, 6 pages].

THE NEW COMPETITION FOR GLOBAL RESOURCES. Knowledge@Wharton, University of Pennsylvania. Web posted September 28, 2008.

Companies in the U.S. and Western Europe once had unfettered access to the world's resources, such as raw materials, capital and talent. Thanks to increasing demand from India, China, Brazil, Russia and other rapidly developing economies, however, that access is no longer assured. In the report, experts discuss the ways in which this unprecedented "race" for resources is reshaping global business, and how key political and financial trends in emerging economies are likely to affect companies anywhere in the world. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/papers/download/BCGReport_Competition_for_Global_Resources.pdf [PDF format, 24 pages].

NEW FINANCING TRENDS IN LATIN AMERICA: AN OVERVIEW OF SELECTED ISSUES AND POLICY CHALLENGES. Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Camilo E. Tovar and Myriam Quispe-Agnoli. Web posted September 24, 2008.

During the past fifteen years, financial markets in Latin America have experienced a major transformation. This process and its effects on the nature of risks and policy challenges in Latin America were the focus of a May 2007 conference in Mexico City sponsored by the

Representative Office for the Americas of the Bank for International Settlements and the Americas Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

This article summarizes the papers presented at the conference as well as the discussions among participants from central banks, finance ministries, multilateral institutions, academia, and the private sector. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.frbatlanta.org/filelegacydocs/er08no3_tovar.pdf [PDF format, 16 pages].

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY: CONDITION REPORT 2008. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Web posted September 20, 2008.

The study indicates that the overall condition of the sanctuary's marine life and habitats is "fair to good," but identifies several emerging threats to sanctuary resources, such as potential oil spills, invasive species, commercial development, climate change, and underwater noise pollution. The study draws from a wide range of experts in fields including water quality, habitat integrity, oil spill prevention, historic preservation, wildlife populations, and others. Some trends are improving because of reduced bottom-trawling pressure resulting from fishing regulations.

http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/library/national/oc_conditionreport08.pdf [PDF format, 76 pages].

POSSIBLE FEDERAL REVENUES ESTIMATES FROM OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION IN AREAS CURRENTLY OFF-LIMITS. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Web posted September 18, 2008.

According to the report analysis, the untapped American energy resources in currently off-limit OCS areas represent a potential \$801.5 billion in federal royalty and corporate income tax revenue. With the Congressional ban set to expire on September 30, the Democratic Leadership has introduced a bill to permanently prohibit production of almost all of these resources. CRS estimates that OCS oil and gas production in areas currently off limits to energy production could produce \$518.5 billion in royalty revenues and an estimated \$283 billion in corporate income tax revenues, a total of \$801.5 billion.

<http://republicans.resourcescommittee.house.gov/pdf/CRS%20-%20ANWR%20and%20OCS%20REVENUE%20Report.pdf> [PDF format, 5 pages].

REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM 2008. U.S. Department of State. Web posted on September 23, 2008.

The annual report highlights both the admirable protections and the unjust violations of religious freedom. The focus is on government policies and actions, but societal attitudes and abuses are highlighted. There are still too many governments that do not allow for the full enjoyment of the most basic human right. North Korea remains among the world's most egregious violators of religious freedom. The cult of personality surrounding the ruling family remains an important ideological underpinning of the regime, at times resembling tenets of a state religion.

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/index.htm> [HTML format, various paging].

A REPORT ON THE MEDIA AND THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE: DEMOCRACY IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA. Brookings Institute. Web posted September 29, 2008.

The study argues that the U.S. media have hindered effective policy making on immigration for decades, and their impact has been increasing in recent years as a result of an ongoing evolution

in the media industry. Deeply ingrained practices in American journalism have produced a narrative that conditions the public to associate immigration with illegality, crisis, controversy, and government failure. The objective is to understand how the media conditioned public opinion and the policy landscape, and the results show that the media, both traditional journalism and new forms of expression, need to be considered among the factors that contribute to polarization and distrust. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/0925_immigration_dionne/0925_immigration_dionne.pdf [PDF format, 97 pages].

SAUDI ARABIA’S “SOFT” COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY: PREVENTION, REHABILITATION, AND AFTERCARE. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Christopher Boucek. Web posted September 28, 2008.

The increasing use of unconventional, “soft” measures to combat violent extremism in Saudi Arabia is bearing positive results, leading others in the region, including the United States in Iraq, to adopt a similar approach. Understanding the successes of the Saudi strategy, composed of prevention, rehabilitation, and aftercare programs, will be important in the fight against radical Islamist extremism. Saudi authorities claim a rehabilitation success rate of 80 to 90 percent.

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp97_boucek_saudi_final.pdf [PDF format, 32 pages].

SOCIAL PROTECTION OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICA. International Food Policy Research Institute. Michelle Adato and John Hoddinott. September 2008.

Social protection involves policies and programs that protect people against risk and vulnerability, mitigate the impacts of shocks, and support people who suffer from chronic incapacities to secure basic livelihoods. It can also build assets, reducing both short-term and intergenerational transmission of poverty. It includes social insurance, social assistance, and services.

Interventions that provide training and credit for income-generating activities also have a social protection component. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/bp/bp005.pdf> [PDF format, 2 pages].

STATE OF THE WORLD’S BIRDS. BirdLife International, National Audubon Society. Web posted September 22, 2008.

The report reveals declines in populations of many of the world’s most familiar birds. It highlights avian losses worldwide. A staggering 45% of common European birds are declining, and on the other side of the globe, Australian wading birds have seen population losses of 81% in just quarter of a century. In Latin America, the Yellow Cardinal - once common in Argentina - is now classified as globally Endangered. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.birdlife.org/sowb/downloads/SOWB2008_verylowres_part1.pdf [PDF format, Part 1, 14 pages].

http://www.birdlife.org/sowb/downloads/SOWB2008_verylowres_part2.pdf [PDF format, Part 2, 14 pages].

TACKLING MARINE DEBRIS IN THE 21ST CENTURY. National Research Council. Web posted September 19, 2008.

Current measures to prevent and reduce marine debris are inadequate, and the problem will

likely worsen, says the congressionally mandated report. The study recommends the United States and the international maritime community to adopt a goal of “zero discharge” of waste into the marine environment, and a system to assess the effectiveness of existing and future marine debris prevention and reduction actions should be implemented. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12486#toc [HTML format, 224 pages Full Report]

TEENS, VIDEO GAMES, AND CIVICS. Pew Internet & American Life Project and MacArthur Foundation. Amanda Lenhart et al. Web posted September 20, 2008.

The first national survey finds that virtually all American teens play computer, console, or cell phone games and that the gaming experience is rich and varied, with a significant amount of social interaction and potential for civic engagement. The primary findings in the survey of 1,102 youth ages 12-17 include game playing is universal, with almost all teens playing games and at least half playing games on a given day. It is social, with most teens playing games with others at least some of the time and can incorporate many aspects of civic and political life. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Teens_Games_and_Civics_Report_FINAL.pdf [PDF format, 76 pages].

“THESE FELLOWS MUST BE ELIMINATED”: RELENTLESS VIOLENCE AND IMPUNITY IN MANIPUR. Human Rights Watch. September 2008.

The report documents the failure of justice in the state, where for 50 years the army, empowered and protected by the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), has committed numerous serious human rights violations. Manipur, a small state of two million people, is the country’s remote northeastern region. The report details the failure of justice in the killing and possible rape of alleged militant Thangjam Manorama Devi by the paramilitary Assam Rifles in 2004. Repeated attempts to identify and punish those responsible for her death have been stalled by the army, which has received protection under the immunity provisions of the AFSPA. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://hrw.org/reports/2008/india0908/india0908web.pdf> [PDF format, 80 pages].

UNFAVORABLE VIEWS OF JEWS AND MUSLIMS ON THE INCREASE IN EUROPE. Pew Global Attitudes Project. Web posted September 17, 2008.

The project examines views toward religious groups – specifically, Jews, Muslims, and Christians. It also explores religiosity across the 24 countries included in the survey. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/262.pdf> [PDF format, 73 pages].

U.S. POLICY REGARDING PANDEMIC-INFLUENZA VACCINES. Congressional Budget Office, Congress of the United States. Web posted September 15, 2008.

The paper focuses on the U.S. government’s role, in the development of new vaccines and the capacity to manufacture them. It provides information on progress and on the potential cost of achieving vaccine-related goals, the continuing expenditures that are likely to be needed to maintain preparedness, and the experience of other countries in preparing for a possible pandemic. The work is based on a review of the academic literature, on industry data, and on

interviews with government and industry experts who are working to improve the response of vaccine producers to a potential influenza pandemic.

<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/95xx/doc9573/09-15-PandemicFlu.pdf> [PDF format, 56 pages].

VOTING IN 2008: A CLOSE LOOK AT VOTING PREPAREDNESS IN 10 SWING STATES.

[Common Cause/Century Foundation]. Web posted September 20, 2008.

As election officials brace for record-breaking voter turnout on Election Day, a close examination of voting preparedness in 10 swing states shows that significant problems in the basic functions of the American election administration system persist. The report examines what progress has been made since 2006 in seven battleground states: Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. In addition, Colorado, New Mexico and Virginia, whose new status as likely swing states, and the potential for election administration difficulties, have also been included. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7Bfb3c17e2-cdd1-4df6-92be-bd4429893665%7D/VOTINGIN2008REPORT.PDF> [PDF format, 108 pages].

WORLD MALARIA REPORT 2008. World Health Organization, United Nations. Web posted September 26, 2008.

Half of the world's population is at risk of malaria and an estimated 247 million cases led to nearly 881 000 deaths in 2006. The advent of long-lasting insecticidal nets and artemisinin-based combination therapy, plus a revival of support for indoor residual spraying of insecticide, presents a new opportunity for large-scale malaria control. The report describes the global distribution of cases and deaths, how WHO-recommended control strategies have been adopted and implemented in endemic countries, sources of funding for malaria control, and recent evidence that prevention and treatment can alleviate the burden of disease. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.who.int/malaria/wmr2008/malaria2008.pdf> [PDF format, 215 pages].

WOULD YOU FIGHT AGAIN?: UNDERSTANDING LIBERIAN EX-COMBATANT REINTEGRATION. U.S. Institute of Peace. Richard Hill et al. September 2008.

Liberian ex-combatants most commonly cited reasons for considering a return to combat include poverty and economic disadvantage, followed by a lack of jobs, benefits, or training.

Unemployment plays a role in the potential return to combat, especially for those who were previously employed. Problems in gaining acceptance by family and community are also closely linked to willingness to consider fighting again. Respondents who have had difficulty reintegrating into their home communities and who perceive bias against ex-combatants seem more inclined to return to combat. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr211.pdf> [PDF format, 8 pages].

ARTICLES

DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

Kushner, David WELCOME TO STAR CITY (Wired, vol. 16, no. 9, September 2008, pp. 146-156)

In 2001, U.S. millionaire investor Dennis Tito became the first “space tourist,” paying \$20 million for a trip to the International Space Station, hitching a ride with the Russians. Richard Garriott, the American inventor of massively multiplayer online gaming, is set to make the trip in October, and has spent months preparing for the journey at Star City, a training center for cosmonauts outside of Moscow. Garriott tells Kushner he is spending most of his fortune on making the trip, fulfilling a childhood dream of space travel. The article describes the training that Garriott is undergoing, including practice in landing and docking the Russian spacecraft, and intensive Russian-language training because all the controls on the Soyuz are written in Russian. The austere living conditions at Space City are a sharp contrast to the rich lifestyles of the wealthy people who can afford the adventure, but U.S.-based Iranian businesswoman Anousheh Ansari, who made the trip in 2006, tells Kushner the hardest part of the trip is not the training, or the flight, but returning because “you realize you may never experience this again.”

Daniel DRIVEN (Wired, vol. 16, no. 9, September 2008, pp. 118-127,158)

Shai Agassi made millions of dollars when he sold his software company SAP a few years ago. In 2005, he became interested in the environment and energy. Now he has a plan to end the carbon economy and remake the auto industry with a project he calls Better Place, the first electric recharge grid operator (ERGO). Israel, Agassi’s nation of birth, will become the first country to experiment with an auto-fueling design system that Roth describes as “an unorthodox mashup of the automotive and mobile phone industries.” ERGO is envisioned as a network of “smart” charging stations for cars that drivers have acquired at steep discounts, according to the Agassi business model. The revenue stream from the business comes from electric-charging plans that drivers buy based on their needs – unlimited miles or pay-as-you-go. The cars would also be equipped with technology to monitor the available charge in the vehicle, estimate the adequacy of the charge for the driver’s intended trip, and direct the driver to a convenient charging station, if necessary, en route. So far, Agassi has won investors to fund the charging network, the cooperation of the Israeli government to launch an ERGO trial, and a commitment from Nissan-Renault to build a compatible electric vehicle by 2011. Denmark is also in talks with Agassi about serving as a proving ground for the system. In the United States, the governor of Hawaii has also sought talks with Better Place to begin a trial of the system.

Russell, Cristine CLIMATE CHANGE: NOW WHAT? (Columbia Journalism Review, vol. 47, no. 2, July/August 2008, pp. 45-49)

Mounting scientific evidence demonstrates the reality of global warming and attendant climate change, so media coverage must move from simply covering the science to broader areas, including what governments, NGOs, businesses and ordinary citizens are doing about it. “Climate change will require thoughtful leadership and coordination at news organizations,” the author writes, while discussing coverage and its pitfalls. The science story is ongoing, but journalists unfamiliar with the subject must beware of oversimplifying or missing important scientific subtleties. Russell cautions that we need to be alert for “techno-optimism” — renewable-energy proponents promoting the benefits without examining the potential downside. Climate change issues now touch politics, international relations, and commerce -- “virtually all aspects of contemporary life,” the author suggests coverage in science, technology, land use and transportation, economics and international cooperation. Monitoring what is done to slow deforestation in the tropics, estimated to account for one-fifth of man-made global carbon emissions, is one of “countless questions” about “a story that is only going to get bigger” over

decades. "The job of a professional journalist is to give the audience information that is good for them to know," said ABC News correspondent Bill Blakemore, adding "The unprecedented nature of this story is quite grave."

Wildcat, Dan RED ALERT (American Indian, Fall 2008, pp. 50-52)

The author, an American Indian Studies faculty member at Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas, writes that modern humans have "filled their heads with 'new stuff'" — elaborate theories and ideas — but have forgotten many important insights our ancestors possessed. He notes that the current global environmental crises "were shaped to a large extent by some of humankind not knowing what they were doing". He says that we cannot go back to the past, but must face the challenges of the present, and that the knowledge of indigenous peoples offers hope. In his book, RED ALERT, he writes that "Earth herself is telling people around the world ... that she is undergoing dramatic changes that threaten most of humankind on the planet," and that "humankind does not stand above or outside of Earth's life system."

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Fraser, Steve IS THE 'GOOD LIFE' AS AMERICA KNOWS IT OVER? (Tomdispatch, posted September 19, 2008)

Fraser, author of WALL STREET: AMERICA'S DREAM PALACE and a student of the history of relations between Washington and Wall Street, writes that the undoing of Pres. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal program and its regulatory regime, with the "socialization of risk", beginning with the massive bailout of the savings and loan associations in the 1980s, is what has resulted in the present-day collapse of the U.S. financial system. He notes that, despite the free-market, anti-government rhetoric, the bailing out of the financial industry by Washington is acknowledgment of how dependent the U.S. economy has become on the financial sector. The recent decisions of allowing some firms to survive and others to fail is more a symptom of confusion of how to deal with a spiraling crisis. Fraser notes that the financial system is out of control, and that it is "time for a reversal of course — reregulation of [the financial system] is not enough anymore ... the government must figure out how to shift the flow of investment capital out of the mine-fields of speculative paper transactions and back into productive channels that will help meet the material needs of American society." Available online at http://www.alternet.org/workplace/99395/is_the_%27good_life%27_as_america_knows_it_over/?page=entire

Hudson, Michael WHY THE BAIL OUT OF FREDDIE MAC AND FANNY MAE IS BAD ECONOMIC POLICY (Counterpunch, posted July 14, 2008)

The bailing out of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the two semi-public mortgage packaging companies that hold trillions of dollars in U.S. mortgage debt, in effect protects the interest of the commercial banking system, representing the top one-tenth of the U.S. population, writes economist Michael Hudson, a former economic adviser to former Democratic presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich. Challenging the "myth" that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac help make homeownership more accessible, Hudson contends that the two companies functioned in quite the opposite direction, making house prices increasingly unaffordable. "They have inflated asset prices with credit that has indebted homeowners to a degree unprecedented in history. That is why the real estate bubble has burst, after all," Hudson writes. He contends that politicians such as Chuck Schumer of New York, Chris Dodd of Connecticut and Barney Frank of Massachusetts are among the leaders of the charge to rescue the mortgage giants because they are giving priority to their main campaign contributors in the financial, insurance and real estate sectors. This "means more debt peonage for new home buyers rather than housing prices falling back to more affordable proportions," Hudson writes.

Starkman, Dean BOILER ROOM: THE BUSINESS PRESS IS MISSING THE CROOKED HEART OF THE CREDIT CRISIS (Columbia Journalism Review, September/October 2008, pp. 48-53)

The author, head of the business and finance desk at CJR, writes that while there have been many good articles about the subprime mortgage fiasco that has resulted in the widespread crisis in the credit markets, most have treated it as a “kind of natural disaster or nasty turn in the business cycle.” There is acknowledgement that abusive practices did occur, but Starkman writes that few have reported about how extensive they were. He says that the most comprehensive and insightful reporting on the system that produced the credit crisis was a story aired in May 2008 on (U.S.) National Public Radio, called “The Giant Pool of Money”. This narrative describes the global pool of savings, which had doubled to USD 70 trillion, was searching for higher returns, and the U.S. financial system, from the investment banks at the top, down to the mortgage brokers and salesmen across the country, was under tremendous pressure to create financial “products” for this money to invest in. Traditional underwriting procedures were abandoned in favor of aggressively selling loans to marginal borrowers. Some former loan company agents reported that the movie BOILER ROOM, about unethical stockbrokers, was used as a “training tape”. Starkman notes that systemic corruption and fraud has been revealed at lenders across the board. “Yet to be explored fully”, he writes, “is the extent of Wall Street’s role, and the size of the transfer of wealth from millions of civilians” to the financial professional class.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Campbell, Kurt; Steinberg, James MANAGING FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONS (Washington Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 4, Autumn 2008, pp. 7-20)

The authors, CEO of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) and dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs in Austin, Texas, respectively, write that presidential transitions are replete with dangers and missteps that blindside even the most experienced practitioners, but they are also times of opportunity. The end of the Cold War has changed the nature of the challenges, but the two-and-a-half-month transition that will take place at the end of this year poses even greater challenges than in the past. Although each transition is unique, the next president and his team need to understand the lessons of the past if he is to take advantage of the great opportunities for new U.S. leadership and avoid the landmines that lie ahead. Grave national security challenges during times of presidential transition are hardly new; selecting key personnel is further complicated by the sheer number of appointments that must be made as a result of the widening scope of national security issues. Although cabinet officials are almost always named and confirmed by the first day in office, cumbersome vetting procedures and congressional overload can cause second- and third-tier appointments to languish for months, producing systemic uncertainty and wedging open a dangerous window of vulnerability.

Hachigian, Nina; Sutphen, Mona STRATEGIC COLLABORATION: HOW THE UNITED STATES CAN THRIVE AS OTHER POWERS RISE (Washington Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 4, Autumn 2008, pp. 43-57)

The authors note that calling for a new G-13 forum would be a bold and useful step that the next president could take. The new president will face a radically different world than the one that George W. Bush inherited -- beyond instability in the Middle East, several major new world powers have emerged. This strategic environment is unlike any the United States has ever encountered. The authors argue that, instead of regarding the emergence of China, India and Russia as a threat to American prominence, the next administration must harness the power of these new players, particularly through a new forum that can tackle the greatest threats to contemporary global security. They note that this new world is shaped by technology, rather than ideology, and allows money, goods, and people to cross borders. By the same token, infectious diseases can spread with similar ease, and technology has empowered rogue states and terrorist

groups. In this new era, the authors note, the greatest threats to the peace and prosperity that the international community desires does not emanate from other strong powers but from these “technologically empowered forces of chaos -- the rotten fruit of globalization.”

Holbrooke, Richard THE NEXT PRESIDENT: MASTERING A DAUNTING AGENDA (Foreign Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 5, September-October 2008, pp. 2-24)

Holbrooke, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations from 1999 to 2001 and chief architect of the 1995 Dayton peace agreement, describes the many daunting challenges facing the next administration. To restore U.S. leadership in the world requires drastic change in the domestic U.S. economy and repair to the U.S. reputation around the world. Long-term economic reform requires different national policy on energy and climate change. Repairing the United States' reputation can begin immediately in the next administration by issuing a clear official ban on torture and closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. He says Obama favors diplomacy as the best way for enhancing U.S. power and influence. Except for climate change, he says, McCain takes harder-line positions on international issues than the Bush administration. Currently available online at <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20080901faessay87501/richard-holbrooke/the-next-president.html>

Kaplan, Robert LIFTING THE BAMBOO CURTAIN (Atlantic Monthly, vol. 302, no. 2, September 2008)

“Democracy will not deliver Burma from being a cobbled-together mini-empire of nationalities, even if it does open the door to compromise among them,” says Kaplan, who notes one-third of Burma's population is composed of ethnic minorities living in the country's borderlands. Both China and India are competing for power and influence in resource-rich Burma. Kaplan interviewed four Americans, who declined to be identified, with deep ties to the country. Among their observations: War fatigue has set in and the ethnic tribes show little propensity to fight each other after the regime unravels; the regime's 400,000-man army is prone to mutiny and could easily be unraveled; and, the U.S. should be building friendly relationships with Burma's ethnic minorities. Currently available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200809/burma>

Palmer, Jeffrey S. LEGAL IMPEDIMENTS TO USAFRICOM OPERATIONALIZATION (Joint Forces Quarterly, vol. 51, no 4, October 2008, pp. 79-85)

The author writes that among the African nations that comprise the new U.S. command, USAFRICOM, less than a third have an international agreement to address the future presence of American military forces. Palmer says a pan-African Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) could easily be tailored to nations that already belong to regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community or the East African Community. If the new command intends to have a long-term pro-active, peacetime role in stabilization, conflict prevention and building capability through partnerships in Africa, he said “a robust multinational agreement that enables a full spectrum of military engagement is essential.” The article, which includes an excellent map showing what agreements have been signed by U.S. and African partners, states that USAFRICOM, which began taking shape in October 2007, must be chartered with specific legislation in order “to pursue in nontraditional agenda.” Without the statutory mechanism for its mission, Palmer warns, the new command will be “hamstrung, in need of funds, limited in effect, and lacking credibility.” While a fragmented approach to international agreements may well have worked for military commands in other regions of the world, he says, such an arrangement would undermine the flexibility of strategic engagement that is at the heart of USAFRICOM. The Defense Department, with approval by the State Department, should negotiate and conclude SOFA or other applicable agreements to facilitate the command's long-term strategic objectives. Available online at http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i51/19.pdf

Reed, Donald BEYOND THE WAR ON TERROR: INTO THE FIFTH GENERATION OF WAR AND CONFLICT (Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, vol. 31, no. 8, August 2008, pp. 684-722)

The author, with the U.S. Northern Command, asserts that fifth-generation warfare has arrived and is irreversibly changing the character and nature of human conflict. This article uses four

essential elements of war -- the new domains of conflict, the changing nature of adversaries, the changing nature of objectives, and the changing nature of force -- to build a generational typology of war and conflict that informs the characteristics of fifth generation warfare. The resultant model produces two outcomes: First, it demonstrates how recent events such as the rise of computer hackers, the 2001 anthrax and the 2003-2004 ricin attacks, the 2004 Madrid bombings, and the emergence of Al Qaeda demonstrate characteristics of fifth-generation warfare. Second, it illustrates the way in which these events are unique indicators of a future in which non-state entities are increasingly able to wage war on equal footing with nation-states. The author concludes that the U.S. must embrace fifth-generation warfare if it is to successfully confront these threats that have taken on new and heretofore unimagined forms in the postmodern era of war.

Snow, Nancy INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES AND THE U.S. IMAGE (Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, no. 616, March 2008, pp. 198-222)

Snow, Senior research fellow at the University of Southern California, reviews four special issues of The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science that were devoted to the issue of international exchange programs and the U.S. image. She concludes that methods of public diplomacy that were applicable in the past can still be applied today, including the importance of dialogue in overcoming stereotypes, building relationships, knowing the target culture, and enhancing the national reputation of America during ideological contests. The primacy of one individual in contact with another individual remains one of the most important opportunities to change attitudes and, thereby, improve the image of the United States.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

Bordewich, Fergus FACE THE NATION (Smithsonian, vol. 39, no. 6, September 2008, pp. 60-69)

In late August 1858, the U.S. senatorial candidates for Illinois, incumbent Stephen Douglas and challenger Abraham Lincoln, squared off in what became the most famous debates in U.S. history. The author notes that these debates transformed the national debate over slavery, turned Lincoln into a contender for the presidency and “set a standard for political discourse that has rarely been equaled.” The author writes that, while this was a state-level race, both Douglas and Lincoln realized that they were speaking to the nation — the introduction of shorthand, the telegraph and the railroad meant that their words were transmitted across the country. Douglas was the favored candidate, and few thought that the underdog Lincoln could best him; it took several debates before Lincoln figured out how to go on the offensive, notes one historian quoted for the article, but soon he was “like Rocky Balboa”. Excitement ran high in anticipation of the two larger-than-life political figures coming into town — tens of thousands of people flocked to hear them. While Lincoln lost the election, the debates transformed him into a national political figure. Douglas, in favor of slavery, was speaking primarily to the status quo, notes the author, while Lincoln spoke “to the future, to the better angels of our own nature.”

Fletcher, Kenneth FOUR FOR A QUARTER (Smithsonian, vol. 39, no. 6, September 2008, pp. 80-85)

The photobooth, first introduced in the 1920s in New York City, proved to be immediately popular; people thronged to pay 25 cents for a strip of eight photos. By the 1950s, photobooths were ubiquitous, having spread across the country and overseas. The author profiles photographer Nakki Goranin, who has spent a decade researching the history of photobooths and collecting photo strips. Few of the old chemical-process booths are still around, having been replaced with digital booths. Goranin says that photobooth strips “tell so much about the country and what we’ve gone through” — because there is no photographer to intimidate the subject, people tend to be much less self-conscious in the photobooth. Says Goranin, “for many people, these were the only photos of themselves that they had.”

Hvistendahl, Mara CHINA MOVES UP TO FIFTH AS IMPORTER OF STUDENTS (Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 54, No. 4, September 19, 2008, pp. A1, 21-A22)

After joining the World Trade Organization in 2001, China embarked on an ambitious plan to attract 120,000 international students by 2007 and went on to exceed its goal by 60 percent. While foreign students are a lucrative source of revenue for Chinese universities, China's bid for international students is driven by its diplomatic goal of developing soft power and cultivating a non-threatening image in the world, according to Hvistendahl. As part of the same diplomatic drive, China has been opening Confucius Institutes around the world to form partnerships with foreign universities to promote Chinese language and culture. China also seeks to internationalize its universities and realizes it can't have world-class universities without large numbers of international students, says an expert on Chinese education Hvistendahl interviewed, Gerard Postiglione. Most of China's international students come from other parts of Asia, but the United States ranks third as a source, behind South Korea, the top source, and Japan. The Chinese Scholarship Council awarded more than 10,000 full scholarships to international students in 2007 at a cost of \$52 million. A separate scholarship program targets students in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. International students are drawn to study in China more by the country's growing economic and political power than by the quality of the universities, but those universities are improving. Korean students already say that the quality of the English instruction they receive in China is far superior to what they can get at home.

Perlstein, Rick A LIBERAL SHOCK DOCTRINE (American Prospect, vol. 19, no. 9, September 2008, pp. 22-24, 26)

The author, a senior fellow at the Campaign for America's Future, believes that progressive political change in American history is rarely incremental. History continues to teach us that presidents have to move quickly to enact progressive reforms before the opportunities escape them. With few exceptions, most of the reforms (such as Social Security, Medicare, desegregation) that have advanced our nation's status as a modern, liberalizing social democracy were pushed through in such circumstances. The post-Civil War reconstruction of the South, the Progressive Era remaking of democratic institutions, the New Deal, and the Great Society, were all blunt shocks that required immediate decision-making, a course of action that the White House's most effective occupants have always understood. Franklin D. Roosevelt "hurled down executive orders and legislative proposals like thunderbolts" during his First Hundred Days, hardly slowing down for another four years; Lyndon Johnson, aided by sympathy generated by John F. Kennedy's death and the landslide of 1964, generated legislation at such a breakneck pace that even his aides were awestruck.

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