



Information Resource Center

Article Alert Service

Issue 27, April 2006



Public Affairs Section

Embassy of the United States of America

<http://argentina.usembassy.gov>

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND COUNTER TERRORISM

1030. Jalali, Ali THE FUTURE OF AFGHANISTAN (Parameters, Vol. 36, No. 1, Spring 2006, pp. 4-19)

The author, professor at the National Defense University and former Afghan interior minister, analyzes the challenges and opportunities facing Afghanistan, focusing on ways to foster the long-term development of governance, security, and economic growth. Listing recent major accomplishments under the 2001 Bonn Accords, he points out that the country is again at a crossroads, with one road leading to peace and prosperity and the other to "the loss of all that has been achieved." He concludes that Afghanistan can become a success story in the region, but only with international security and economic assistance for at least ten more years, and proposes a compact between the international community and the Afghan government to institutionalize an "overarching strategic plan" that would identify and prioritize programs and the resources needed to accomplish them. [[Request full text](#)]

1031. Litman, Leah A QUESTION OF CHEMISTRY: CONTROLLING THE SPREAD AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (Harvard International Review, vol. 27, no. 3, Fall 2005, pp. 32-34)

Litman, editor-in-chief of the Harvard International Review, traces the history and use of chemical weapons in warfare. She also provides background on international efforts to control chemical weapons, including the Geneva Protocols and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The author feels a multi-layered monitoring mechanism, that can adapt to meet changing circumstances, is essential to control the current and future threat of chemical weapons. [[Request full text](#)]

1032. Corrales, Javier HUGO BOSS (Foreign Policy, January/February 2006, pp. 32-40)

Hugo Chavez, elected president of Venezuela, has revived authoritarianism in Latin America while continuing to win elections, eliminating "the contradiction

between autocracy and political competitiveness," writes Corrales. The author details the acts Chavez has undertaken to remove any checks on his power while undermining, but not banning, the opposition by polarizing his society, spreading wealth selectively and fostering bureaucratic chaos. In addition, he says, Chavez uses U.S-bashing to unite and distract his followers. The worry is that others, seeing his success, may follow this new, model for modern authoritarianism. [[Request full text](#)]

1033. Mandelbaum, Michael DAVID'S FRIEND GOLIATH (Foreign Policy, No. 152, January/February 2006)

The author, professor of American foreign policy at The Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, notes that "the rest of the world complains that American hegemony is reckless, arrogant and insensitive ... [but] the world's guilty secret is that it enjoys the security and stability the U.S. provides." Mandelbaum notes that, historically, other nations have banded together to provide a check on world powers, yet no such anti-American alignment is taking place. Unlike past empires, U.S. overseas interventions have been few in number, and generally have not been with the idea of complete control. Because of America's open political system, any country is able to gain access to Congressional committees with oversight over international relations and foreign policy. In that sense, the U.S. government has become a world government, and has in effect become a mediator over regional conflicts. He also notes that the U.S. taxpaying public is bearing the expense of maintaining a military that ensures the free flow of international trade, even for those countries hostile to the U.S. If anything can safely be said about much of the world's attitude toward the U.S., notes Mandelbaum, it is that "they will continue to criticize it, and they will miss it when it is gone." [[Request full text](#)]

ECONOMICS & TRADE

1034. McDonald, Stephen THE WORLD BIDS FAREWELL TO THE MULTIFIBER ARRANGEMENT (Amber Waves, vol. 4, no. 1, February 2006, pp. 20-25)

The author, with the Economic Research Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, notes that clothing is one of life's necessities -- and as such, a new trade policy that lowers clothing prices affects everyone. Such a change took place in early 2005, as the U.S., Canada, and the European Union discontinued most of their limits on the imports of yarn, fabric, and clothing from developing countries. Under the Multifiber Arrangement (MFA), signed in 1974, trade in textiles, primarily yarn and fabric, and clothing was managed through quotas. But, January 1, 2005, marked the end of a ten-year phase-out of the MFA quotas under the direction of the World Trade Organization. Most economists analyzing the MFA agree that free trade in textiles and clothing will mean significantly larger exports by China, India and Pakistan, while higher income exporters like Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong will export less. The same is true of countries with preferential access to the U.S. and EU markets. [[Request full text](#)]

1035. Singham, Shanker; Hrinak, Donna POVERTY AND GLOBALIZATION (National Interest, No. 82, Winter 2005/06, pp. 117-122)

Poverty, often cast as the fault of multinational corporations or "imperialist" governments, is the most virulent killer on the planet, say the authors. Trade "liberalization" has not lived up to its promise to relieve poverty, primarily because the liberalization reforms have not been accompanied by the domestic economic reforms required to create a true competitive market, they explain. Additionally, trade negotiations are conducted with a strong bias toward producers rather than consumers. As long as producers' interests continue to trump those of consumers and elites protect their own interests, say the authors, true competition cannot take place and poverty will continue to lead its victims toward the false promises of radical leaders. They propose that trade negotiators should adopt a stronger stance in favor of consumer welfare by finding ways to link the level of competition in markets to the liberalization processes. For example, they note, trade agreements that reward internal reforms which

support competitive markets will lead to the economic growth that alleviates poverty and desperation. [[Request full text](#)]

1036. Napoleoni, Loretta TERRORIST FINANCING: HOW THE NEW GENERATION OF JIHADISTS FUNDS ITSELF (RUSI Journal, vol. 151, no. 1, February 2006, pp. 60-65)

Napoleoni reviews the policies implemented to combat terrorist financing since 9/11 and argues that they are obsolete because the structure of terrorism financing is no longer transnational, but deeply rooted in individual countries. Failure of the international community to pursue a unified strategy resulted in lost opportunities and fractured anti-money laundering efforts, she says. The United States, through the Patriot Act, successfully implemented a comprehensive anti-money laundering program, she writes, but this only shifted the terrorist finance epicenter to Europe because no other country adopted similar legislation. Today, jihadists with no links to Al-Qaeda find it easier to fund themselves with criminal activities than to contact Al-Qaeda and ask for money, she explains; anyway, small-scale attacks such as the London and Madrid bombings just don't cost that much. The London bombings, for example, were almost fully funded from the salaries of those who perpetrated them, notes Napoleoni. This pattern of funding, and the dynamic methods still evolving, means the post-9/11 counterterrorism funding policies will not be effective, and she suggests novel measures aimed primarily at preventing the indoctrination of young Muslims may obtain better results. [[Request full text](#)]

1037. Ghemawat, Pankaj REGIONAL STRATEGIES FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP (Harvard Business Review, vol. 83, no. 12, December 2005, pp. 98-108)

Ghemawat, professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, says the most successful global companies tailor their strategies for different regions of the world. He notes that leaders of global powerhouses such as GE, Wal-Mart and Toyota have already recognized that globalization is highlighting regional distinctions rather than erasing them. Trade, foreign direct investment, and sales are examples of data that are showing clear regional patterns that the astute companies need to recognize in their strategic planning, writes Ghemawat. In a world that is neither truly local nor truly global, companies need to assess

both their regional and global strategies in order to maintain their competitive edge. [[Request full text](#)]

1038. PEAK OIL FORUM (World Watch, Vol. 19, No. 1, January/February 2006, pp. 9-24)

World Watch Magazine highlights the debate on peak oil, presenting five authors of moderate, yet differing viewpoints. Editor Tom Prugh notes that, despite varying opinions as to future scenarios, there is general agreement that the world will reach a peak in oil production in this century. If humanity is to make a transition away from fossil fuels, then corporations, governments and consumers must start working about a decade ahead of peak production to avoid significant economic disruption. All articles have excellent and clear presentations of statistical information in layman's terms. In OIL: A BUMPY ROAD AHEAD, Kjell Aleklett, President of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil and Gas, argues that we need to plan now because of the lead time necessary to make a transition to new energy sources. Red Cavaney, President and CEO of the American Petroleum Institute, notes in GLOBAL OIL PRODUCTION ABOUT TO PEAK? A RECURRING MYTH that new technologies have made it easier to recover oil that previously could not be reached and that any energy transition will be market-driven since substitutes will become more cost-competitive than oil. In OVER THE PEAK, Christopher Flavin, President of the Worldwatch Institute, writes that it is difficult to project when world oil production will peak without reliable international reporting standards on oil reserves, and that other energy sources, such as methane hydrates and oil sands, could speed up global warming. Robert K. Kaufmann, Professor at Boston University, writes in PLANNING FOR THE PEAK IN WORLD OIL PRODUCTION that oil production will peak in our lifetime, since not enough new reserves are in development, and that policy makers must encourage a reduction in energy consumption and plan for alternatives. In PEAK OIL: A CATASTROPHIC CULT AND COMPLEX REALITIES, Vaclav Smil, Professor at the University of Manitoba, says that doomsayers who argue that the world has already reached an oil peak are not taking into account market economics, technology development and the capacity for human innovation. [[Request full text](#)]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS & PROCESSES

1039. Blake, Charles; Martin, Christopher THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION: RE-EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOCRACY (Democratization, vol. 13, no. 1, February 2006, pp. 1-14)

Political scientists Blake and Martin use the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) to study democracy's influence on the probability of corruption. The authors argue that there is little to support the prevailing wisdom that democratic regimes hold governing officials more accountable than autocratic ones. They demonstrate that economic and cultural variables are a more predictable check on corruption than the role of democracy. However, the authors make a strong case that it is the consolidation of a "vital democratic process over time that has a robust, negative relationship with corruption." They note that democratic governments in Portugal and Spain have made significant progress in reducing perceived corruption. Other countries undergoing democratization and economic liberalization in recent years, such as Chile, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, show that democracies, sooner or later, are more likely to develop the institutions and norms that tend to limit corruption. Building an enduring democracy alone is not a panacea for controlling corruption, they note, citing Italy as a case in point. [[Request full text](#)]

1040. Adesnik, David; McFaul, Michael ENGAGING AUTOCRATIC ALLIES TO PROMOTE DEMOCRACY (Washington Quarterly, vol. 29, no. 2, Spring 2006, pp. 7-26)

The U.S. should improve its efforts to promote democracy abroad, especially under regime-change conditions and in autocratic allies such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algeria and Pakistan, through diplomatic engagement, according to authors Adesnik and McFaul. NGOs lack the ability to confront regimes directly, but the U.S. government can challenge autocratic regimes through what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has called transformational diplomacy. Although U.S. diplomats often underestimate their leverage, allowing their preference for stability to blind them to a regime's vulnerabilities, write Adesnik and McFaul, using close ties with a regime to exert pressure can influence the course of political liberalization. The authors look closely at Cold

War democratic breakthroughs in the Philippines, South Korea and Chile, and suggest that U.S. officials should engage autocratic allies while pushing for evolutionary change as a preemptive strategy to avoid revolutionary change. [[Request full text](#)]

1041. Newport, Frank POLL POSITIONS (American Legion Magazine, vol. 160, no. 3, March 2006, pp. 16-20)

This article summarizes the origin of polling and the usefulness of public opinion polls, especially in the context of political process. The author explains the methodology of polling, from the rationale behind random sampling to the legitimacy and validity of extrapolated results. Polling has become an integral part of the political process in the U.S., providing an essential means for voters to tell elected officials to pay more attention to public opinion, not special interests, and a way for politicians to maintain a dialogue with the public. Newport asserts that "paying attention to the collected wisdom of the people has a higher probability of guiding our society in the right direction in the long term" and the best way to measure that is with scientific polls. [[Request full text](#)]

1042. Gibeaut, John NEW FIGHT FOR VOTING RIGHTS (ABA Journal, Vol. 92, January 2006, pp. 42-48)

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is up for renewal and is expected to receive bipartisan support in Congress. However, it is the U.S. Supreme Court which will ultimately decide the future of the act, which appears less than certain, Gibeaut notes, as some states want to do away with the act's strict mandates. Under the Voting Rights Act, minority participation has increased but, although there is now little overt racism, civil rights leaders say that discrimination remains pervasive. In the article, Gibeaut chronicles the events that led up to the creation of the Voting Rights Act. Gibeaut notes that the Census Bureau predicts that the percentage of whites will drop to 50 percent of the nation's population by 2050, making the U.S. a truly multiracial society. As the Act's critics become more vocal, its supporters are grappling with whether it is still needed. Gibeaut writes that "the hope is that this act is going to be so successful that it no longer will be needed." [[Request full text](#)]

1043. Gerecht, Reuel Marc DEVOUT DEMOCRACIES (Weekly Standard, vol. 11, no. 16, January 2-9, 2006, pp. 29-32)

The author, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, writes that Afghanistan and Iraq are the Muslim world's most important democratic laboratories, and will have a great deal of impact on the Middle East as they wrestle with difficult questions of religion and governance. Americans can take pride in what the U.S. has done to improve life in Afghanistan, says Gerecht; although the country is poor, the economy is reviving, and an aesthetic sense is reappearing in architecture and public surroundings. In the Afghan parliament, representatives of different ethnic groups are conducting public affairs without violence, a major achievement. As in Afghanistan, we should not expect an Iraqi political system to be secular, Gerecht writes; the U.S. erred in supporting Muslim progressives and secular liberals in Iraq, all of whom fared poorly in the recent elections. What is important to recognize, notes Gerecht, is that political changes are now being made by the electorates of both countries. However, he fears that the recent increase in suicide bombings in Afghanistan threatens to distance Western forces and aid workers, who are indispensable to civil order and governance, from the local population. [[Request full text](#)]

1044. Salhani, Claude MEDIA IN CONFLICT: INCITING VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO (Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter/Spring 2006, pp. 33-39)

The author, editor of the United Press International Intelligence Desk, points out the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the media and politicians and stresses the influence of the media in humanitarian crises. He contrasts the success in reporting on the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 with the so-called "March Incident" also in Kosovo in 2004. Salhani notes that the media played a major role in shaping American perceptions of the 1999 Kosovo campaign as a "just war," unlike the U.S. intervention in Iraq. But in 2004, following an incident in which some ethnic Albanian boys drowned while crossing a river after playing in a predominately Serbian area, the Albanian-language media, "instead of reporting the story as the sad accident that it was, blew it out of proportion." This led to riots in which nineteen people were killed, about 600 wounded, thousands were evicted from their homes, and 35 Serbian Orthodox churches burned. After a review of the role of the media in the

situation, the author was brought to the region to conduct a 10-day crash course on journalistic ethics. [[Request full text](#)]

1045. Smith, Christopher E.; Hensley, Thomas R. DECISION-MAKING TRENDS OF THE REHNQUIST COURT ERA: CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES (Judicature, Vol. 89, No. 3, November/December 2005, pp. 161-169)

In this article outlining the legacy of late Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the authors compare the decision-making trends of the Rehnquist court to that of the Burger and Warren courts. The authors argue that despite Rehnquist's conservative orientation, an empirical study of Supreme Court rulings on civil rights and civil liberties demonstrates that during his tenure as chief justice, the court upheld several major liberal tenets. For example, although the court appears to be more conservative on issues such as the scope of warrant requirements in criminal cases, the court never actually overruled the Fourth Amendment protections from previous, more liberal courts. According to the authors, "The Rehnquist court did not overturn [certain] major liberal precedents... [and] the Rehnquist Court justices recognized Fourth Amendment limitations on warrantless searches especially in regard to a person's private dwelling." The authors use tables and graphs to provide a snapshot of the Warren, Burger and Rehnquist courts' rulings on major issues, as well as an analysis on individual Rehnquist court justices' voting patterns. [[Request full text](#)]

1046. Perlman, Ellen A LOOSER LOCKUP (Governing, Vol. 19, No. 4, January 2006, pp. 37-42)

Missouri's 30-year-old youth treatment program, which focuses on rehabilitation, has become a model for other states, many of which have unsuccessfully tried get-tough policies. The widespread interest in Missouri's program not only reflects the realization that rehabilitating and returning juveniles to their homes is better for the kids but also it can result in huge cost savings. One of the fundamental changes Missouri made was to separate youth services from adult corrections; otherwise, juvenile services tend to be overshadowed by the punitive nature of adult corrections. The program is designed to keep the juveniles in the community, with lower level of security, enabling them to develop dreams for

themselves with a degree of freedom; the program also sees families not as the problem but as the answer, offering family therapy. Missouri's program is based on "positive peer culture," in which youths help their peers, it inculcates positive values in them. It also offers family therapy, incorporates community volunteer advocacy groups, and provides "aftercare" on the "outside" with "trackers," who help youths with issues they face upon returning to their homes and schools. The author notes that Missouri's success rates are exceptional, writing that "the Show-Me State is doing it with less money," proving that "keeping the kids in the least restrictive environment is the best use of the taxpayer dollar." [[Request full text](#)]

1047. Paglione, Giulia DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOUSING RIGHTS: A REINTERPRETATION OF THE RIGHT TO HOUSING (Human Rights Quarterly, February 2006, Vol. 28, Iss. 1, pp. 120-149)

This article examines the connections between domestic violence and the right to housing. While much attention has been paid to domestic violence as a violation of civil and political rights, little has been given to its unquestionable links to the socioeconomic conditions surrounding and leading to the violence. The author suggests that the universally accepted human right to housing specifically includes the right to live free from domestic violence; therefore, this right is blatantly violated when domestic violence occurs. The prevention and eradication of domestic violence should consequently start with the protection of women's right to adequate housing. However, an analysis of the currently existing international instruments addressing violence against women, read together with their main interpretations, will disclose their limitation for women's protection from domestic violence. With an almost exclusive focus on civil and political rights, such instruments disregard women's housing and property rights in their provisions and do not protect battered women where they most need it: at home. Thus, the article also identifies some normative challenges and makes some observations about the solutions that require increased study and attention by international organizations and human rights organizations working with women's rights. [[Request full text](#)]

GLOBAL ISSUES & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1048. Rodrik, Dani HOME-GROWN GROWTH: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH (Harvard International Review, vol. 27, no. 4, Winter 2006, pp. 74-77)

Rodrik, a professor of international political economy at Harvard University, discusses development problems. He addresses questions such as human rights vs. economic development; the role of trade liberalization in spurring economic growth; the failure of the Washington Consensus; the role of foreign aid in poverty alleviation; and the need for democracy and strong institutions for sustainable successful economies. A lot of development has to do with accountability, giving people a sense of ownership, a stake and a voice in the community -- and that is what democracy is all about, he writes. [[Request full text](#)]

1049. Rajan, Raghuram AID AND GROWTH: THE POLICY CHALLENGE (Finance & Development, Vol. 42, No. 4, December 2005, pp. 53-55)

Rajan, Director of the International Monetary Fund's research department, notes there is general agreement among economists that there is little evidence of a robust unconditional effect of aid on growth. He emphasizes that aid effectiveness studies need to distinguish between causality and correlation when interpreting country studies. Despite extensive country studies, no one has found a "magic bullet" for growth, he writes, but there are clearly some things that seem important such as good governance, sensible macroeconomic management, laws and policies that support a positive business environment, and an economy open to international trade. Rajan recommends rich countries should make policies that meet these requirements an essential condition for aid, but cautions against micromanaging or being too prescriptive. Available online at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2005/12/straight.htm>

1050. Fischer, James; Finnell, Janine CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: WORKING TOWARD CLEAN, ABUNDANT, RELIABLE, AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY (Resource, Vol. 13, No. 1, January/February 2006, pp. 9-10)

The authors say worldwide energy use could grow by more than fifty percent -- with U.S. energy use expected to increase by a third -- in the next two decades. Increased global demand presents challenges to find new ways to increase energy efficiency, decrease carbon dioxide emissions, and replace aging electric grids that are growing increasingly vulnerable to power outages, they write. Technological advances are creating opportunities to transform energy consumption and production through such things as fuel cells, renewable energies, new lighting options, and distributed power networks. Energy policies can help accelerate these technologies by encouraging research and development, providing market-based incentives and educating consumers, the authors note. [[Request full text](#)]

1051. Mock, Greg. POWER TO THE POOR (Environment, January/February 2006, Vol. 48, Iss. 1, pp. 8-23)

This article discusses the importance of an ecosystem on the economic well being or lack of it on those living in severe poverty. Over a billion people world wide live in extreme poverty. Nature is a lifeline for people with few other alternatives for employment and sustenance. The authors of this article state that the rural poor around the world depend on harvests from forests, bodies of water and farming to provide food and income. The article surveys economic growth, stewardship of ecosystems, environmental and health factors, climate change and the impact that the environment can have on the fight against global poverty. [[Request full text](#)]

1052. Cohen, Roberta STRENGTHENING PROTECTION OF IDPS: THE UN'S ROLE (Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter/Spring 2006, pp. 101-109)

The author, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and Co-Director of the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, describes the plight of the 20-25 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), noting that providing them with

food, medicine and shelter, while ignoring violent abuse, has led to the tragic description of them as the "well-fed dead." Cohen cites U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's description of IDPs as often falling "into the cracks between different humanitarian bodies" in his 2005 report on UN reform, IN LARGER FREEDOM, but points out that the 2005 U.N. World Summit document does not deal with how to improve the UN's ability to address their plight. Cohen concludes that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees needs the authority, resources and international military support to expand its role with IDPs; she points out that "a more reliable and predictable system for those trapped inside borders will require stronger legal, institutional, and protection measures from the international community." [[Request full text](#)]

1053. Benigni, Mark D. UP BEAT OUTREACH (American School Board Journal, March 2006, Vol. 193, Iss. 3, pp.40-42)

This article focuses on Berlin UpBeat, a comprehensive school- and community-based character development and leadership training program for youths in Berlin, Connecticut. The program started in 1988 when guidance counselor Alice Mitchell was looking for a creative approach to connect the community with the school. Majority of the faculty at Berlin High School is involved with at least one UpBeat activity. It is funded primarily through grants and donations from a variety of sources including local businesses, civic and community groups, and private individuals and families. Several teenagers recognize the benefits of cocurricular programming and want a safe place to go where they feel they are contributing in a meaningful way to their community. Students in the program are grouped into houses, each of which has a specific community service role. [[Request full text](#)]

1054. Stroud, Suzanne... et al. A WINNING RECIPE FOR VOLUNTEERISM (Parks & Recreation, Jan 2006, Vol. 41, Iss.1, pp. 50-56)

A program in North Carolina takes college students, mixes in individuals with disabilities and adds park staff support to create a winning combination. Here, Stroud et al discuss inclusive volunteering, which empowers people with disabilities to serve others, rather than being the recipients of volunteer services. Inclusive volunteering brings individuals with and without disabilities together

to improve their communities by placing them in positions to be recognized as community assets with many gifts and talents to share. [[Request full text](#)]

1055. Pamela, Williamson... et al. EDUCATING STUDENTS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION IN GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS (Exceptional Children, Spring 2006, Vol. 72, Iss. 3, pp. 347-162)

Empirical evidence and federal mandates support the notion that students with mental retardation (MR) should spend some or much of the school day in general education classrooms. This study investigated trends in state-level rates for placing students in different educational settings between 1989-90 and 1999-2000. The research utilized state-reported data published in the Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Results indicate that during the 1990s (a) identification rates remained stable, (b) the proportion of students labeled with MR placed in general education classrooms for some or much of the school day increased from 27.3% to 44.7%, (c) placement in separate settings decreased from 72.7% to 55.3%, and (d) the proportion of students with MR placed in separate facilities decreased by 46%. Evidence also suggests that the U.S. has reached a plateau in educating students with MR in general education classrooms. Implications and suggestions for future research are provided. [[Request full text](#)]

1056. Cook, Glenn. WHAT'S A TEACHER WORTH? HOUSTON JOINS THE PUSH FOR MERIT PAY (American School Board Journal, March 2006, Vol. 193, Iss. 3, pp. 4-6)

This article offers a look at pay-for-performance initiatives in U.S. school districts in a bid to recruit and retain high-quality teachers. In January 2006, Houston, Texas became the largest district in the nation to approve a merit pay plan but distinguished itself from other initiatives by linking the bonuses to student test scores. Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney has proposed a bonus program for teachers whose competence is tied to increased student achievement. According to Jennifer Azordegan, an analyst with the Education Commission of the States and author of a new study on teacher salaries, the lack of research on merit pay plans makes programs such as Houston's a scary experiment. [[Request full text](#)]

1057. Krebs, Brian INVASION OF THE COMPUTER SNATCHERS (Washington Post Magazine, February 19, 2006, pp. 10-15, 23-29)

Nearly all criminal commerce on the Internet is being driven by "botnets" -- networks of hijacked home computers, known as robots or "bots." Most of the botnets are created by hackers in the U.S. and abroad, who troll the Internet, looking for vulnerable computers to take over. The botnets, often consisting of tens of thousands of hijacked computers, are used to distribute millions of junk e-mails, spyware and adware. The author notes that computer-security firms and law-enforcement authorities are spending more and more time combating botnets; they often face the dilemma of whether to shut them down right away, or monitor them for a period of time in order to gather intelligence that would enable them to track down the criminals behind them. [[Request full text](#)]

U.S. SOCIETY AND CULTURE

1058. Dionne, Jr., E. J. WHY THE CULTURE WAR IS THE WRONG WAR (Atlantic Monthly, vol. 297, no. 1, January/February 2006, pp. 130-135)

Syndicated columnist E. J. Dionne suggests positively that debates surrounding culture wars can be used to present ideal visions or fierce criticisms of the United States. Dionne, citing election exit polls, claims the country is not as polarized on important issues as journalists and political activists might contend. The real division in the nation, Dionne writes, is between those who want to have a culture war and those who don't. At election time, for example, politicians are either rallying the base or appealing to the center, preempting any real discussion of what "ails" American culture and society. Dionne says that Americans would be better off trying to find common ground by challenging the culture-war metaphor and, in the process, deflating the partisan posturing of liberals and conservatives. [[Request full text](#)]

1059. Cole, Bruce; Roberts, Cokie WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: A CONVERSATION WITH COKIE ROBERTS (Humanities vol. 27, no. 1, January/February 2006, pp. 6-9, 51-54)

Cole, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, talked with news analyst Cokie Roberts about her recent book, *FOUNDING MOTHERS*, and the importance of women in U.S. political history. Comparing the recent advances of women in politics with the role women played in the early days of the Republic, Roberts also discussed the difficulties of locating the original letters and manuscripts that formed the basis of the book. In a related article, "A Life in Letters: The Story of John and Abigail Adams," Maggie Riechers writes about the influence of Abigail Adams on her husband, President John Adams, throughout their fifty-year marriage. Available online at

<http://www.neh.gov/news/humanities/2006-01/contents.html>

1060. Robinson-English, Tracey STILL DANCING TO HER OWN TUNE (Ebony, February 2006, pp. 103-106)

Katherine Dunham, now 96, was not only one of the greatest dancers of her day, but a social activist who constantly fought prejudice as the daughter of mixed-race parents. She was one of the first African-American students to earn a bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago. She also earned a master's degree in anthropology there. She combined Caribbean dance with classical ballet to produce a style called the "Dunham Technique". She elevated African-American dance to a highly-respected art form. [[Request full text](#)] AA

1061. Brown, Chip THE FRESHMAN (New York Times Magazine, February 26, 2006)

In 2001, under the sponsorship of a veteran journalist for whom he had worked as a guide and interpreter in Afghanistan, Sayed Rahmatullah Hashemi, then 23 years old, came to the U.S. as a "roving ambassador" for the Taliban, giving speeches around the country to a decidedly mixed reception. In the fall of 2005, with little more than a rudimentary elementary-school-level education in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Rahmatullah was accepted into Yale University in a nondegree program for special students, a culmination of the long-lasting

friendship he developed with American reporter Mike Hoover. The author chronicles the extraordinary odyssey of Rahmatullah, born in Afghanistan on the eve of the Soviet invasion. He endured the violence and chaos of the Russian occupation, exile in Pakistan, and the bloody 1990s internecine conflict in Afghanistan; he joined the Taliban, but eventually became disillusioned with them, repulsed by their extreme policies. Of his introduction to the Western mind, Rahmatullah says, "You have to be reasonable to live in America, even the essays you write for class. Back home you have to talk about religion and culture, and you can win any argument if you bring up the Islamic argument. You can't reason against religion. But you cannot change Afghanistan overnight. You can't bring the Enlightenment overnight." [[Request full text](#)]

The opinions expressed in the articles are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Government