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U.S. POLICY & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

08564

COOLING DOWN THE NEW COLD WAR: HOW PRESIDENT OBAMA SHOULD MANAGE RUSSIA

| By Michael Idov, *New Republic* online, December 9, 2009

<http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=a6ddceef-c50d-4b27-bbdi-1b2b65b53aa6>

The author offers advice to the incoming Obama administration on likely flashpoints in relations with Moscow, which since the November elections has been stepping up provocative acts, such as an uptick in Anti-American propaganda, threats to deploy new short-range missiles, naval tours in Latin America and overtures to regimes hostile to Washington. He recommends that the Obama administration take a go-slow approach to this initiative and allow Russia to take a stronger role in nuclear negotiations with Iran, but that Washington join with Norway and Canada to strongly resist Moscow's attempted claims in the Arctic. Obama's charisma could also serve as a force multiplier for soft power, and the author urges him to consider a tour in Russia, which could go a long way toward repairing America's image and repudiate the Kremlin's hostile rhetoric.

08565

COMBATING THE SCOURGE OF PIRACY

Address by Condoleezza Rice, *United State Secretary of State*, December 16, 2008

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/12/113269.htm>

Here is an excerpt of the speech: "Obviously, we are here because the outbreak of piracy and the increasing threat to commerce, to security, and perhaps most importantly, to the principle of freedom of navigation of the seas is one that should concern every nation-state. And I do believe that the resolution that we have passed today will help us go a long way toward a coordinated response to the scourge of piracy.

We have noted that several factors have been limiting the effectiveness of our response, although a number of countries have been responding. The United States has been a part of that response, as has the EU, NATO, and a number of other countries in this chamber. But because there has been no existing mechanism for states to coordinate their actions effectively, I believe that our response has been less than the sum of its parts.

08566

CURRENT DETAINEE POPULATION OF GUANTANAMO: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

*By Benjamin Wittes and Zaahira Wyne with Erin Miller, Julia Pilcer, and Georgina Druce 3
Brookings Institution, December 16, 2008, 99 p.*

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/1216_detainees_wittes/1216_detainees_wittes.pdf

The following report represents an effort both to document and to describe in as much detail as the public record will permit the current detainee population in American military custody at the Guantánamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba. Since the military brought the first detainees to Guantánamo in January 2002, the Pentagon has consistently refused to comprehensively identify those it holds. While it has, at various times, released information about individuals who have been detained at Guantánamo, it has always maintained ambiguity about the population of the facility at any given moment, declining even to specify precisely the number of detainees held at the base. In its most recent statements, for example, the military refers to the Guantánamo population as numbering “approximately 250.” When the government repatriates detainees, it generally identifies the number of detainees transferred, but not their names.

08567

HAMAS AND ISRAEL: CONFLICTING STRATEGIES OF GROUP-BASED POLITICS

By Sherifa Zuhur, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, December 2008, 107 p.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/PUB894.pdf>

Efforts to separate HAMAS from its popular support and network of social and charitable organizations have not been effective in destroying the organization, nor in eradicating the will to resist among a fairly large segment of the Palestinian population. According to the author, it is important to consider this Islamist movement in the context of a region-wide phenomenon of similar movements with local goals, which can be persuaded to relinquish violence or which could become more violent. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict bears similarities to a long-standing civil conflict, even as it has sparked inter-Palestinian hostilities in its most recent phase.

08568

IRAQ IN THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

By Daniel P. Serwer and Sam Parker, United State Institute of Peace, December 2008, 21 p.

<http://63.104.169.51/articles/1012013.1009/1.PDF>

President-elect Obama has stated his commitment to withdraw combat brigades from Iraq within 16 months, leaving a residual force of unspecified size for counterterrorism operations, training and equipping Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and protection of Americans. Judging from his statements during the campaign, it appears that the President-elect would like to leave Iraq's internal problems to the Iraqis and treat Iraq as part of overall regional concerns rather than being his central focus. He aims to reduce America's Iraq commitments and restore U.S. credibility, prestige and capacity to act worldwide.

Nonetheless, as the president-elect himself has pointed out, the U.S. should get out with more care than we got in. Vital U.S. interests are still at stake in Iraq and the region. U.S. withdrawal should not create a situation even more costly to American interests than the war so far has been. The Obama Administration will have an opportunity to establish with Iraq a relationship that serves U.S. interests in a country with which we will be involved for a long time to come.

08569

MEMO TO THE PRESIDENT: REDEFINE AMERICA'S GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

By Colin I. Bradford, Brookings Institution, December 10, 2008, 3p.

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2008/1210_global_development_memo/1210_global_development_memo.pdf

America has made an awkward entrance into the 21st century. Bradford claims that the U.S.'s biggest security threat has become the United States itself. The unilateralist foreign policy of recent years has generated opposition and weakened our global standing. At the same time, the financial crisis has increased doubts about whether globalization really has a human face. The challenge now is to reverse these trends and redefine America's role in the world. To effectively address global expectations, U.S. must launch a fresh start to U.S. relations with the non-Western, developing world, recommends the study.

08570

SHARING THE BURDEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By Marina Ottaway, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2008, 8 p.

http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/sharing_burden_middle_east.pdf

Marina Ottaway explains that the United States lacks the legitimacy and capacity to monopolize leadership in the peace process. The new administration should signal its support for three key Arab undertakings: Syrian-Israeli negotiations under Turkish leadership, Hamas-Fatah talks brokered by Egypt, and the Arab-Israeli initiative most recently proposed by Saudi Arabia.

Key Conclusions:

Supporting Arab-sponsored talks transfers responsibility to regional players, who have not yet made the sustained efforts necessary to turn a proposed plan into a workable agreement.

By engaging in talks with Iran and Hamas, the United States would send a clear signal to the region—it is impossible to make peace without dealing with your enemies. If Arab countries want peace with Israel, they need to negotiate directly with Israel.

By sharing the burden with regional actors, the United States can avoid repeated diplomatic defeats.

The Obama administration should abandon efforts to build a Cold War-style coalition against Iran. Despite enthusiasm about the new president, Gulf countries remain extremely vulnerable to attacks by Iran and have no interest in provoking one. The United States should support—but not initiate—a regional dialogue with Iran and its neighbors on common interests.

08571

SPECIAL BRIEFING ON THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN GAZA

Briefing by Elizabeth Hopkins (U.S. Dept of State) and Howard Sumka (USAID), January 9, 2009

<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/2009/113765.htm>

This briefing is by Elizabeth Hopkins, Director for Asia and the Near East, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and Howard Sumka, USAID Mission Director to the West Bank and Gaza

08572

STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS AND RELATED PROGRAMS: FY2009 APPROPRIATIONS

By Susan B. Epstein and Kennon H. Nakamura, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), November 20, 2008, 41 p.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34552.pdf>

The annual State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies appropriations bill is the primary legislative vehicle through which Congress reviews the U.S. international affairs budget and influences executive branch foreign policy making in general. Funding for Foreign Operations and State Department/Broadcasting programs has been steadily rising since FY2002, and amounts approved for FY2004 in regular and supplemental bills reached an unprecedented level compared with the past 40 years, largely due to Iraq reconstruction funding. Emergency supplemental enacted annually since September 11, 2001, also have pushed spending upward.

On February 4, 2008, the President sent his FY2009 budget request to Congress. Major foreign policy issues confronting the second session of the 110th Congress include the following:

- The State/Foreign Operations budget FY2009 request represents a 7.8% increase over FY2008 enacted levels, while the request for domestic programs is flat.
- DOD/State Department interagency involvement in soft power activities.
- A foreign aid reform plan that seeks to align assistance with U.S. strategic objectives.
- Significant increases in State Department and USAID staffing.
- Continued costs relating to Iraq and Afghanistan.
- The Civilian Stabilization Initiative — authorization and funding.

08573

TALKING TO TEHRAN

By Greg Bruno, Council on Foreign Relations, December 17, 2008.

<http://www.cfr.org/publication/18012/>

After eight years of avoiding direct diplomacy, the United States is ready to talk with Iran's ruling mullahs. But whether Iran will listen to what Washington is pitching is another matter. Bruno cites Karim Sadjadpour, an Iran expert, who argues that "successful engagement with Iran will require a direct channel of communication" with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, which is no small task given the Iranian regime's historic resentment of American policies. He also cites George Mason University scholar Jack Goldstone, who wrote, "Obama must not only signal his willingness to talk, but also a willingness to change U.S. policies."

08574

TENNIS SHOES AND STOLEN TOILETS: RUSSIA'S MILITARY 'RENAISSANCE'

By Reuben F. Johnson, Weekly Standard, Vol. 14, no. 10, November 24, 2008

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/821gzfgw.asp>

While Russia has announced several grandiose plans to restore its military in recent years, economic realities -- specifically its overdependence on energy exports -- assure that these lavish promises are unlikely to materialize. While President Medvedev has announced increases in military spending, these sums are dwarfed by defense spending in the United States and Europe and will be largely absorbed in maintaining its existing assets. Russia's success in its August 2008 conflict in Georgia was the result of superior numbers, says the author, who relates anecdotes of Russian troops wearing sneakers into battle and their awe at the sight of Georgia's U.S.-built military facilities. The wasteful naval maneuvers in Venezuela and a recent accident aboard a next-generation nuclear submarine also reflect the massive economic, political, intelligence and administrative chasms that Russian defense policymakers will need to bridge in the coming years.

08575

THE THINK TANK INDEX

By James McGann, Foreign Policy, January/February 2009, 13 p.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4598&print=1

It's no accident that Barack Obama plucked his transition chief from a think tank. The world's idea factories are charged with brainstorming solutions to everything from global warming to Wall Street's implosion to the war on terror. In the first index of its kind, **FP** ranks the world's best think tanks.

In Washington, it's not for nothing that think tanks are called "governments in waiting." Presidents seek them out because they are critical to the global ideas industry. Far more than simply churning out endless papers, think tank wonks generate and fine-tune solutions to some of the most complex and vexing issues of the day. Leaders around the world need them to provide independent analysis, help set policy agendas, and bridge the gap between knowledge and action.

But not all think tanks are created equal. There are some 5,500 think tanks worldwide, in nearly 170 countries. Some organizations specialize in security; others in the environment. Some are intensely partisan; others fiercely independent. Some have budgets in the tens of millions of dollars; others are one-person operations. Some are already changing the world with their big ideas; others merely aspire to.

Until now, there has been no guide to this rapidly growing global industry. The Think Tank Index is the first comprehensive ranking of the world's top think tanks, based on a worldwide survey of hundreds of scholars and experts. Think of it as an insider's guide to the competitive marketplace for ideas that matter.

08576

TO WIN THE 'WAR ON TERROR,' WE MUST FIRST WIN THE 'WAR OF IDEAS': HERE'S HOW

| By Hady Amr and P. W. Singer, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 618, July 2008, pp. 212-222

<http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/618/1/212>

The authors, both fellows at the Brookings Institution, offer instructions for the next president to undertake initiatives in public diplomacy to reach Muslim states. They feel that these initiatives should be of the highest national security importance and receive commensurate resources. The authors note that American efforts at communicating with Muslim-majority nations since 9/11 have been unsuccessful because they lacked energy, focus and an integrated strategy. To improve the deteriorating image of the United States in the Muslim world, the authors suggest ten public diplomacy initiatives, including establishing American Centers across the region, bolstering cultural exchange programs, and involving the whole federal bureaucracy in public diplomacy.

08577

U.S.-IRAQ WITHDRAWAL/STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT: ISSUES FOR CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

By: Chuck Mason, *The Congressional Research Service (CRS)*, December 12, 2008, 14 p.

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113556.pdf>

The U.S. has been involved in military operations in Iraq since March of 2003. The legal framework under which the U.S. has operated includes H.J.Res. 114 (P.L. 107-243), multiple Security Council Resolutions, as well as orders under the Coalition Provisional Authority. The U.N. Security Council extended the mandate for the multinational forces through December 31, 2008.

On November 26, 2007, U.S. President George W. Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Kamel Al-Maliki signed a Declaration of Principles for a Long-Term Relationship of Cooperation and Friendship Between the Republic of Iraq and the United States of America. Pursuant to this Declaration, the parties pledged to "begin as soon as possible, with the aim to achieve, before July 31, 2008, agreements between the two governments with respect to the political, cultural economic, and security spheres." Among other things, the Declaration proclaims the parties' intention to

enter an agreement that would commit the United States to provide security assurances to Iraq, arm and train Iraqi security forces, and confront Al Qaeda and other terrorist entities within Iraqi territory.

On November 17, 2008, after months of negotiations, U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker and Iraq Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari signed two documents: (1) the Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Iraq, and (2) the Agreement Between the United States of America and Republic of Iraq On the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq. The second agreement is commonly referred to as the SOFA between the United States and Iraq and is incorporated by reference into the larger strategic agreement.

Congress has several tools by which to exercise oversight regarding negotiation, form, conclusion, and implementation of agreements by the United States and although the agreements with Iraq were negotiated and concluded as executive agreements, they have not been implemented. The agreements are not scheduled to be in force until January 1, 2009, and even then, there remain many unanswered questions about the specific terms within the SOFA. This report begins by discussing the historical legal framework governing U.S. military operations in Iraq. The report then provides a general background as to the contents of agreements traditionally considered Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs). Finally, the report discusses specific aspects of the SOFA, highlighting issues that may require continued congressional oversight.

DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

08578

COMMUNICATING WITH CONGRESS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE

By Tim Hysom, Congressional Management Foundation, December 15, 2008, 84 p.

http://www.cmfweb.org/storage/cmfweb/documents/CMF_Pubs/cwc_recommendationsreport.pdf

After nearly 10 years of research, outreach, and study of the communications between citizens and Congress, Congressional Management Foundation shows recommendations for all stakeholders and suggests improvements to the structure and processes for managing congressional communications.

08579

FOR SIXTH STRAIGHT YEAR, IRAQ DEADLIEST NATION FOR NATION FOR PRESS

By Committee to Protect Journalists, December 19, 2008.

<http://cpj.org/reports/2008/12/for-sixth-straight-year-iraq-deadliest-nation-for.php>

For the sixth consecutive year, Iraq was the deadliest country in the world for the press, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists' end-of-year analysis. The 11 deaths recorded in Iraq in 2008, while a sharp drop from prior years, remained among the highest annual tolls in CPJ history. Worldwide, CPJ found that 41 journalists were killed in direct connection to their work in 2008, down from 65 last year. It is investigating another 22 deaths to determine whether they were work-related. The decline in the worldwide death toll was largely attributable to Iraq, where deaths dropped from a record 32 in both 2007 and 2006. The decline in media deaths is consistent with an overall improvement in security conditions in Iraq, journalists told CPJ.

08580

FAITH & ECSTASY

By Nicholas Schmidle, Smithsonian.com, Vol. 39, no. 9, December 2008, pp. 36-47

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/34347399.html>

Most Western media coverage of Islam in recent years has focused on fundamentalists, their strict beliefs, and their link to terrorism. But less attention has been paid to Sufism, which represents the mystical side of Islam -- a personal experience with Allah, instead of the doctrinal approach of fundamentalists like the Taliban. Sufis say that attempting to define Sufism is like defining love, but the author writes that its practitioners consider Islam a religious experience, and not a social, or political one. "Sufis represent the strongest indigenous force against Islamic fundamentalism," Schmidle writes. While the West has attempted to counter fundamentalism with public diplomacy, interfaith dialogues and other efforts, the author writes that it has failed to recognize the counterterrorist power that lies in Sufism. A tradition started by a group of 13th-century mystics, including Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Sufism has many devotees today in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab, the home of the family of the assassinated prime minister, Benazir Bhutto. One Sufi interviewed by the author believes that the "spirit of Qalandar resided in Bhutto, and lives on in her son.

08581

FAITH ON THE HILL: THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

By David Masci and Tracy Miller, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, December 19, 2008.

<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=379>

Members of Congress are often accused of being out of touch with average citizens, but an examination of the religious affiliations of U.S. senators and representatives shows that, on one very basic level, Congress looks much like the rest of the country. Although a majority of the members of the new, 111th Congress, which will be sworn in on Jan. 6, are Protestants, Congress, like the nation as a whole, is much more religiously diverse than it was 50 years ago. Religious Landscape Survey of over 35,000 American adults finds that some smaller religious groups, notably Catholics, Jews and Mormons, are better represented in Congress than they are in the population as a whole. However, certain other smaller religious groups, including Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus, still are somewhat underrepresented in Congress relative to their share of the U.S. population.

08582

OBAMA'S FIRST YEAR

By James A. Barnes, National Journal, December 13, 2008, 5 p.

http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/cs_20081213_2134.php

National Journal surveyed 129 members of Congress and 232 political insiders (party chairmen, political strategists, pollsters, lobbyists, fundraisers and media consultants) to get some insight on what they expect the first year of the Obama administration to be like. Overall, the findings “suggest that 2009 will be a year of opportunity for Obama, provided that he and his Democratic allies remain focused on the overarching task of righting the economy,” the author writes. While Obama campaigned on a theme of change, most insiders do not expect there to be a major transformative change in Washington. Some of those surveyed note that the economic crisis could provide an opportunity for the next president. “A crisis gives you the opportunity ... to energize [the public],” said Ken Duberstein, President Reagan’s chief of staff. The author suggests that Obama may have more opportunity for success with his policy proposals by linking them to economic goals.

08583

PREVENTING GENOCIDE: A BLUEPRINT FOR U.S. POLICYMAKERS

By Madeleine K. Albright and William S. Cohen, Unisted State Institute of Peace, December 2008, 174 p.

The report asserts that genocide is preventable, and that making progress toward doing so begins with leadership and political will. The report provides 34 recommendations, starting with the need for high-level attention, standing institutional mechanisms, and strong international partnerships to respond to potential genocidal situations when they arise; it lays out a comprehensive approach, recommending improved early warning mechanisms, early action to prevent crises, timely diplomatic responses to emerging crises, greater preparedness to employ military options, and action to strengthen global norms and institutions.

08584

SIXTY YEARS: CELEBRATING THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

By America.gov Electronic Journal, November 2008

<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html#1108>

Sixty years ago, in the aftermath of the most horrific armed conflict ever witnessed, the nations of the world produced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Even as men and women continued to clear the battlefields, count the dead, and rebuild their cities, their representatives meeting at the United Nations in New York crafted a work of optimism and hope, a work that some have called the 20th century’s greatest achievement.

The mandate for the Universal Declaration is found in the U.N. Charter: “We the peoples of the United Nations determined ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights,” it began, “in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, ...”

This issue of eJournal USA celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration by explaining how this powerful statement of humanity’s common inheritance came to be, how it draws upon an intellectual heritage that transcends political boundaries, and how — with room always for improvement — it has bettered the lives of individuals in every corner of the globe.

New E-Journal!!

08585

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONS

| *By America.gov, Electronic Journal, Department of State. January 2009*

<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/ejs/0109.pdf#popup>

In this issue of eJournal USA, as another U.S. presidential transition takes place. The editors have tried to present readers with insight into this process, including some historical background.

It includes several interviews with Democrat Richard W. Riley, Bill Clinton’s secretary of education, and Republican Stuart Holliday, a member of George W. Bush’s transition team, who describe the process from the inside. Another with Terry Good, former director of the White House’s Office of Records Management, who provides a look at transitions from the viewpoint of civil servants who stayed on and work for several consecutive administrations.

Among other subjects covered here are Governing Is Different From Campaigning; Second-Term Transitions; The President and the Press; Inaugurations of the Past with a photo gallery.

PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION

08586

A GUIDE TO THE PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION: BARACK OBAMA, 44TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

*By Foreign Press Center, U.S. Dept of State, January 2009, 50 p.
(Includes a program of the swearing-in ceremony)*

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113868.pdf>

"A New Birth of Freedom" commemorates the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. The words, echoing across 200 years from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address, express Lincoln's hope that the sacrifice of those who died to preserve the United States would lead to "a new birth of freedom" for the nation.

08587

INAUGURATION FACT FILE, BY INFORMATION PLEASE

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/inaug1.html>

CHRONOLOGY OF U.S. PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATIONS FROM 1789

<http://inaugural.senate.gov/history/chronology/index.cfm>

FACTS AND FIRSTS: HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT U.S. PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATIONS FROM 1789 TO 2005; BY THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES

<http://inaugural.senate.gov/history/factsandfirsts/index.cfm>

"I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR": A HALF CENTURY OF INAUGURAL IMAGES. COMPILED BY THE U.S. SENATE

http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/common/image_collection/inauguration_slideshow.htm

U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES

08588

1.5 MILLION HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2007

By Stacey Bielick, National Center for Education Statistics, Issue Brief, December 2008, 4 P.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009030.pdf>

The Issue Brief provides estimates of the number and percentage of homeschooled students in the United States in 2007 and compares these estimates to those from 1999 and 2003. In addition, parents' reasons for homeschooling their children in 2007 are described and compared to 2003. Estimates of homeschooling in 2007 are based on data from the Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey (PFI) of the 2007 National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES).

08589

ALL AMERICA'S STAGE: GROWTH AND CHALLENGES IN NONPROFIT THEATER

By National Endowment for the Arts, December 26, 2008, 8 P.

<http://www.nea.gov/research/TheaterBrochure12-08.pdf>

Nonprofit theaters in the United States have seen unprecedented expansion across the United States, according to the research. It examines developments in the growth, distribution, and finances of America's nonprofit theater system since 1990. The investigation revealed that National Endowment for the Arts funding is a likely catalyst in drawing sizeable contributions from other sources. Each dollar in NEA grant support is associated with an additional \$12 from individual donors, \$1.88 from businesses, and \$3.55 from foundations.

08590

BENCHMARKING FOR SUCCESS: ENSURING U.S. STUDENTS RECEIVE A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION

By Craig D. Jerald, International Benchmarking Advisory Group and National Governors Association, Web posted December 22, 2008, 52 p.

<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0812BENCHMARKING.PDF>

Underscoring the link between a world-class education and a sound U.S. economy, leading education experts issue a report offering sweeping recommendations to internationally benchmark educational performance. The study provides states a roadmap for benchmarking their K-12 education systems against

those of top-performing nations. The report explains the urgent need for action and outlines what states and the federal government must do to ensure U.S. students receive a world-class education that provides expanded opportunities for college and career success.

08591

CENSUS BUREAU PROJECTS U.S. POPULATION OF 305.5 MILLION ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

By U.S. Census Bureau. December 29, 2008.

<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/013127.html>

As our nation rings in the New Year, the U.S. Census Bureau projected the Jan. 1, 2009, total U.S. population will be 305,529,237 — up 2,743,429, or 0.9 percent, from New Year's Day 2008. In January 2009, one birth is expected to occur every eight seconds in the United States and one death every 12 seconds. Meanwhile, net international migration is expected to add one person every 36 seconds to the U.S. population in January 2009, resulting in an increase in the total U.S. population of one person every 14 seconds.

08592

CULTURE CONUNDRUM: NEWS OUTLETS STRUGGLE TO FIND A PLACE FOR INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL STORIES

By Hsin-Yin Lee, Global, Vol. 14, no. 3, Fall 2008, pp. 42-45

http://www.globaljournalist.org/content/emprint/2008_fall.pdf

Reporting on cultural events is a tough sell for overseas media outlets unless the topic directly relates to a bilateral relationship or a “hard news” interest, such as Japanese reporters in Washington covering the annual Cherry Blossom festival or American reporters writing about Middle Eastern culture due to some connection with the war on terror. But cultural reporting is important as a means of understanding “how people in other countries work, think, dream and worry,” and language barriers and other obstacles should be overcome in order to improve this aspect of two-way communication offered by journalism. In doing so, universal themes and truths can be discovered and encouraged which would increase mutual understanding.

08593

Free At Last - The U.S. Civil Rights Movement

By America.gov, Publication, 72 p.

<http://www.america.gov/media/pdf/books/free-at-last.pdf#popup>

This publication recounts how African-American slaves and their descendants struggled to win — both in law and in practice — the civil rights enjoyed by other Americans. It is a story of dignified persistence and struggle, a story that produced great heroes and heroines, and one that ultimately succeeded by forcing Americans to confront squarely the shameful gap between their universal principles of equality and justice and the inequality, injustice, and oppression faced by millions of their fellow citizens

08594

FREE ON FRIDAY

By Zach Patton, Governing, November 2008

<http://www.governing.com/articles/0812week.htm>

Most Americans work five-day work weeks, eight hours a day. But in an effort to save operating costs and counters high gas prices, many local governments are adopting four-day work weeks, with employees working ten-hour days. In August, Utah became the first state to implement what is known as a "4/10" schedule. The state has decided to try the schedule for a year, and many state and local governments are watching to see how this schedule works. Already the state has saved significant energy costs and has seen a decline in absenteeism. A survey found that 80 percent of the state's employees like the new schedule -- and being able to offer flexible work schedules can be a powerful recruitment tool. "The governments that have moved to 4/10s are learning that adopting these schedules is complex -- there are unanticipated challenges as well as some unforeseen benefits," the author writes. What works for one state may not work for another, Patton writes -- "don't bet on too many other states or cities following with mandatory 4/10s immediately."

08595

GLOBAL TRENDS IN CULTURE, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND VALUES

By Andy Hines, Futurist, September/October 2008, pp. 18-23

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/7597839/Global-Trends-in-Culture-Infrastruture-and-Values-by-Andy-Hines>

The author, director of Custom Projects at Social Technologies in Washington, DC, notes that just a decade or so ago, many were concerned about a homogenized global culture dominated by the U.S. and its powerful entertainment industry. However, local cultures around the world have been more robust than originally thought. The author notes that people are quite capable of taking the aspects of global culture they like, ignoring the rest, and retaining what they are attached to in their native cultures; this adaptability serves as a long-term driver of change. The author explores ten trends whose influence he believes will grow in the coming decades, including cultural multi-polarity; new electronic media, particularly the Internet and mobile phones; the spread of new ideas; electrification; mobility; ethical consumption; women's rights; social freedom; and transparency.

08596

THE JOSHUA GENERATION: *Race and the campaign of Barack Obama.*

By David Remnick, the New Yorker, November 17, 2008, 20 p.

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/11/17/081117fa_fact_remnick?printable=true

Speaking at a church in Selma, Obama was not a patriarch and not a prophet but the prophesied. "I'm here because somebody marched," he said. "I'm here because you all sacrificed for me."

Barack Obama could not run his campaign for the Presidency based on political accomplishment or on the heroic service of his youth. His record was too slight. His Democratic and Republican opponents were right: he ran largely on language, on the expression of a country's potential and the self-expression of a complicated man who could reflect and lead that country. And a powerful thematic undercurrent of his oratory and prose was race. Not race as invoked by his predecessors in electoral politics or in the civil-rights movement, not race as an insistence on tribe or on redress; rather, Obama made his biracial ancestry a metaphor for his ambition to create a broad coalition of support, to rally Americans behind a narrative of moral and political progress. He was not its hero, but he just might be its culmination.

08597

PARTY LEADERS IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, 1789-2009

By CRS report, updated November 25, 2008

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113548.pdf>

This report briefly describes current responsibilities and selection mechanisms for 15 House and Senate party leadership posts and provides tables with historical data, including service dates, party affiliation, and other information for each. Tables have been updated as of the report's issuance date to reflect leadership changes. The report will be updated as changes in House and Senate party leadership positions occur.

Although party divisions appeared almost from the First Congress, the formally structured party leadership organizations now taken for granted are a relatively modern development. Constitutionally-specified leaders, namely the Speaker of the House and the President pro tempore of the Senate, can be identified since the first Congress. Other leadership posts, however, were not formally recognized until about the middle of the 19th century, and some are 20th century creations.

In the earliest Congresses, those House Members who took some role in leading their party were often designated by the President as his spokesperson in the chamber. By the early 1800s, an informal system developed when the Speaker began naming his lieutenant to chair one of the most influential House committees.

Eventually, other members wielded significant influence via other committee post (e.g., the post-1880 Committee on Rules). By the end of the 19th century, the formal position of floor leaders had been established in the House.

08598

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES: THE FEDERAL SYSTEM AND RELATED LEGISLATION

By Harold C. Relyea, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), updated November 26, 2008, 6 p.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/secrecy/RS20825.pdf>

Through the National Archives and Records Administration, the federal government currently manages and maintains 12 presidential libraries. Inaugurated with the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955, these entities are privately constructed on behalf of former Presidents and, upon completion, are deeded to the federal government. Deposited within these edifices are the official records and papers of the former President, as well as documentary materials of his family and, often, his political associates. These holdings are made available for public examination in accordance with prevailing law concerning custody, official secrecy, personal privacy, and other similar restrictions. This report provides a brief overview of the federal presidential libraries system and tracks the progress of related legislation (H.R. 1254, H.R. 1255,

H.R. 5811, S. 886). It will be updated as events recommend.

08599

WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE: A DATA BOOK (2008 EDITION)

By Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Dept of Labor, December 2008, 101 p.

<http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-databook-2008.pdf>

The past several decades have been marked by notable changes in women's labor force activities. Since the 1970s, women's labor force participation has risen substantially, particularly among women with children, and a larger share of women work full time and year round than ever before. In addition, women have increasingly attained higher levels of education: among women ages 25 to 64 who are in the labor force, the proportion with a college degree more than tripled from 1970 to 2007. Women's earnings as a proportion of men's also have grown over time. In 1979, women working full time earned 62 percent of what men did; in 2007, women's earnings were 80 percent of men's.

This report presents historical and current labor force and earnings data for women and men from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a national monthly survey of approximately 60,000 households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Unless otherwise noted, data are annual averages from the CPS. Users should note that the comparisons of earnings in this report are on a broad level and do not control for many factors that can be significant in explaining earnings differences. For a detailed description of the source of the data and an explanation of concepts and definitions used, see the Technical Note at the end of this report.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND TRADE ISSUES

o8600

CONTAINING FINANCIAL CRISIS

By Mark Jickling, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), updated November 24, 2008

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113555.pdf>

There is no precise definition of “financial crisis,” but a common view is that disruptions in financial markets rise to the level of a crisis when the flow of credit to households and businesses is constrained and the real economy of goods and services is adversely affected. Since mid-2007, governments have tried with limited success to keep the downturn in U.S. subprime housing from developing into such a crisis.

Subprime mortgage problems, and the financial shock they caused, were widely anticipated, but the spread of turmoil into many seemingly unrelated parts of the global financial system was not. Many of the losses occurring in diverse firms and markets — often quite severe — have common features: the use of complex, hard-to-value financial instruments; large speculative positions underwritten by borrowed funds, or leverage; and the use of off-the-books entities to remove risky trading activities from the balance sheets of major financial institutions. Because of the prevalence of innovative financial arrangements, the housing downturn appears to have triggered market dynamics that amplify the effects of financial shocks and generate self-reinforcing, downward financial and economic spirals.

o8601

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS HITS HOME: THE UNFOLDING INCREASE IN CHILD AND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

By Barbara Duffield & Phillip Lovell, First Focus, December 19, 2008, 22 p.

<http://www.firstfocus.net/Download/TheEconomicCrisisHitsHome.pdf>

The study finds that school districts across the country have experienced a significant spike in the number of homeless students. The report centers around a voluntary survey conducted during the fall of 2008 by the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and First Focus.

08602

FINANCIAL MARKET TURMOIL AND U.S. MACROECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

By Craig K. Elwell, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), December 3, 2008, 21 p.

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113558.pdf>

A large and relatively unimpeded flow of credit through healthy financial markets is a salient attribute of the U.S. economy and any well functioning modern economy. Banks and other financial institutions channel the economy's savings toward a variety of current productive uses. By borrowing short-term and lending long-term, these institutions create a flow of credit that passes liquidity from savers to investors, and transforms liquid short-run assets into less liquid long-term assets. These long-term assets are created by credit-financed, current spending by households on housing, consumer durables, and education, and by, current spending by businesses on new plant and equipment. But lending in credit markets requires confidence in the borrowers' ability to repay the debt (principal and interest) in full and on schedule. The current turmoil in U.S. financial markets is the result of a breakdown in that necessary confidence. In an environment of distrust, financial institutions are far less willing and able to lend long-term. The move toward short-term lending diminishes the flow of long-term credit to the non-financial economy and dampens the economic activities of households and businesses that are dependent on borrowing. Economic policy may be needed to get credit flowing smoothly again and to mitigate the damage incurred by households and non-financial businesses. A number of indicators have pointed to a substantial rise in the cost of credit and a decrease in the flow of credit to the broader economy.

08603

HIGHLIGHTS OF BUSH ADMINISTRATION TRADE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

By Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), fact sheet, December 2008, 3 p.

http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Fact_Sheets/2008/asset_upload_files_70_15256.pdf

TRADE AND THE ECONOMY. In addition to fostering America's global competitiveness, the Bush Administration's pro-trade agenda has provided new opportunities for America's workers, farmers, and entrepreneurs by opening markets for U.S. goods and services.

- The Administration's efforts to liberalize trade have contributed to a 58 percent increase in U.S. goods and services trade with the world, from \$2.5 trillion in 2000 to nearly \$4.0 trillion in 2007.
- Since 2000, U.S. exports to the world have increased 54 percent, and in 2007 achieved their highest share of GDP in U.S. history, at nearly 12 percent. In

the first three quarters of 2008, exports expanded further, surpassing 13 percent of GDP.

- In 2007, the growth of real exports accounted for nearly half of total U.S. real GDP growth.
- The Administration's trade initiatives have promoted both the economic, foreign policy, and national security interests of the United States.

08604

INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION: A RESPONSIBLE ROLE FOR BUSINESS

By Racheal Yeager, Chris Nolan, Jeremy Prepisci, Tara Rangarajan, Ayesha Khan and Chad Bolick, Business for Social Responsibility, Web posted December 20, 2008, 68 p.

http://www.bsr.org/reports/BSR_LaborMigrationRoleforBusiness.pdf

With more than 90 million people around the world migrating for work every year, labor migrants are often subject to human rights violations such as unsafe work conditions, unfair wages, and cramped and unhygienic living situations. And because these migrant workers often lack knowledge about local resources and legal processes, they don't usually seek help. Current regulations in emerging economies fail to provide adequate protection for foreign contract workers. As a result, migrant workers have become akin to other sourced commodities, with cost considerations often overshadowing rights protections.

08605

THE POLITICS OF HUNGER

By Paul Collier, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 6, November-December 2008, pp. 67-79

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20081001faessay87605/paul-collier/the-politics-of-hunger.html>

According to Collier, professor of economics and director of the Center for the Study of African Economies at Oxford University, policy makers have the power to end the food crisis by bringing food prices down: in the short term by changing regulation to increase supply, in the medium term by encouraging organizational changes to raise the growth of production, and in the long term by encouraging innovations in technology. "Feeding the world will involve three politically challenging steps," Collier says. First, as the Brazilian model of high-productivity large farms demonstrates, the world needs more commercial agriculture, not romantic attachment to inefficient small-scale farms. Second, Europe and other parts of the world need to end their bans on genetically modified crops. Third, the United States should lift its self-damaging subsidies for biofuels.

o8606

PROSPECTS FOR THE U.S. AND THE WORLD: A CRISIS THAT CONVENTIONAL REMEDIES CANNOT RESOLVE

By Wynne Godley et al. Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, December 2008, 11 p.

http://www.levy.org/pubs/sa_dec_o8.pdf

The economic recovery plans currently under consideration by the United States and many other countries seem to be concentrated on the possibility of using expansionary fiscal and monetary policies alone. The Levy Institute's Macro-Modeling Team argues that, however well coordinated, this approach will not be sufficient; what's required, they say, is a worldwide recovery of output, combined with sustainable balances in international trade.

o8607

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION REGARDING THE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

By U.S. Chamber of Commerce, December 2008, 34 p.

<http://www.theglobalipcenter.com/NR/rdonlyres/e5txnmjhsn5mjbtvtazna33y3dimpz5cuxtgeix4wix3dqpiy5domrryniqsbo6rr7xbe64tcijitq6hxnlt57u3xb/USPTOPatentProjectFINAL.pdf>

WASHINGTON, DC—The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Intellectual Property Center (GIPC) today released its U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) recommendations to President-elect Barack Obama, highlighting needed reforms to modernize the federal agency's patent arm.

"The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is an important part of America's innovation infrastructure," said Brad Huther, senior advisor of the U.S. Chamber's GIPC. "With our economy in crisis, America needs a world class patent office that effectively serves the innovators who are turning ideas into full fledged inventions, creating jobs and meeting the public's needs."

"Recommendations for Consideration by the Incoming Administration Regarding the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office" offers a blueprint for modernizing and fostering a more efficient patent office. Addressing 11 key areas, it features suggestions to improve the quality of patents, patent examiner retention, the current fee structure, and the office's relationship with the user community, among other reforms.

o86o8

SO, YOU WANT TO SAVE THE ECONOMY? INSIDE THE INFLUENTIAL NEW WORLD OF ECONOBLOGGERS

By Stephen Mihm, Boston Globe, December 7, 2008

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2008/12/07/so_you_want_to_save_the_economy/?page=1

As the financial disaster unfolded on Wall Street, Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson pressed Congress to pass the bailout plan but provided sparse justification for how he would spend the money. The author notes that a disparate range of experts in economics and finance, including some well-known individuals, starting picking apart Paulson's plan live, on the Internet, in public blogs. Many bloggers provided historical context and offered counterproposals; their readers began badgering their Congressional representatives to oppose the plan. Whether the blogs influenced Washington's response to the crisis, notes Mihm, it's clear that policymakers "are no longer operating alone." The blogs are essentially a crash course in economics and finance, a "conversation that's simultaneously esoteric and irreverent, combining technical discussions of liquidity traps and yield curves with profane putdowns and heckling headlines." Many journalists used the blogs to fill in gaps in their knowledge of esoteric aspects of mortgage finance.

o86o9

U.S. MOTOR VEHICLE INDUSTRY: FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND RESTRUCTURING

By Stephen Cooney, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), December 3, 2008, 44 p.

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113564.pdf>

The three domestically owned U.S. manufacturers of cars and light trucks are requesting federal financial assistance in the form of "bridge loans" to assure their ability to continue in business. The companies, General Motors (GM), Ford and Chrysler (collectively known as the "Detroit 3"), have directly appealed to Congress for aid in a series of hearings that began in November 2008. The companies have been affected by a long-term decline in U.S. market share, the impact of a general decline in U.S. motor vehicle sales in 2008 that has impacted all producers, and the effects of a severe constriction of credit, resulting from problems in U.S. and global financial markets. The rise in gasoline prices to more than \$4.00 a gallon in July 2008 caused a significant fall in vehicle use and miles driven, and a structural shift in motor vehicle consumption patterns. The subsequent decline in gas prices in Fall 2008 has not led to increased consumer spending on autos and light trucks, in spite of numerous incentives by American and foreign-owned motor vehicle companies.

08610

THE WORLD CAN'T WAIT: MORE FUNDING NEEDED FOR RESEARCH ON NEGLECTED INFECTIOUS DISEASES

By Families USA, December 26, 2008, 68 P.

<http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/global-health/the-world-cant-wait.pdf>

The report reveals that the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which accounts for about 78 percent of the nation's public funding for medical research, spent less than 1 percent of its fiscal year 2007 budget on diseases that are prevalent among more than a quarter of the world's population. The eight diseases, African sleeping sickness, Buruli ulcer, Chagas disease, cholera, dengue, leishmaniasis, malaria, and tuberculosis, in the report are classified by the scientific community as "neglected infectious diseases" because of their high prevalence in impoverished and marginalized populations in the developing world and because of the limited funds allocated for research on them.

GLOBAL & ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

08611

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE EU EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME (ETS): KYOTO AND BEYOND

By Larry Parker, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), updated November 24, 2008, 32 p.

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113566.pdf>

The European Union's (EU) Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is a cornerstone of the EU's efforts to meet its obligation under the Kyoto Protocol. It covers more than 10,00 energy intensive facilities across the 27 EU Member countries; covered entities emit about 45% of the EU's carbon dioxide emissions. A "Phase 1" trading period began January 1, 2005. A second, Phase 2, trading period began in 2008, covering the period of the Kyoto Protocol, with a Phase 3 proposed for 2013.

Several positives resulting from the Phase 1 "learning by doing" exercise assisted the ETS in making the Phase 2 process run more smoothly, including: (1) greatly improving emissions data, (2) encouraging development of the Kyoto Protocol's project-based mechanisms — Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI), and (3) influencing corporate behavior to begin pricing in the value of allowances in decision-making, particularly in the electric utility sector.

The United States is not a party to Kyoto. However, almost four years of carbon emissions trading has given the EU valuable experience in designing and operating a greenhouse gas trading system. This experience may provide some insight into cap-and-trade design issues currently being debated in the United States.

08612

FEDERAL POLLUTION CONTROL LAWS: HOW ARE THEY ENFORCED?

By Robert Esworthy, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), updated November 26, 2008, 49 p.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34384.pdf>

This report provides an overview of the statutory framework, key players, infrastructure, resources, tools, and operations associated with enforcement and compliance of the major pollution control laws and regulations administered by EPA. It also outlines the roles of federal (including regional offices) and state regulators, as well as the regulated community. Understanding the many facets of how all federal pollution control laws are enforced, and the responsible parties involved, can be challenging. Enforcement of the considerable body of these laws involves a complex framework and organizational setting.

08613

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: THREE POLICY PERSPECTIVES

*By Larry Parker and John Blodgett, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), updated November 26, 2008, 37 p.
(The perspectives are technological, economic, and ecological)*

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113570.pdf>

The 1992 U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change requires that signatories, including the United States, establish policies for constraining future emission levels of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide (CO₂). The George H. W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush Administrations each drafted action plans in response to requirements of the convention. These plans have raised significant controversy and debate.

This debate intensified following the 1997 Kyoto Agreement, which, had it been ratified by the United States, would have committed the United States to reduce greenhouse gases by 7% over a five-year period (2008-2012) from specified baseline years. Controversy is inherent, in part, because of uncertainties about the likelihood and magnitude of possible future climate change, the consequences for human wellbeing, and the costs and benefits of minimizing or adapting to possible climate change. Controversy also is driven by differences in how competing policy communities view the assumptions underlying approaches to this complex issue.

This paper examines three starting points from which a U.S. response to the convention is being framed. These starting points, or policy “lenses,” lead to divergent perceptions of the issue with respect to uncertainty, urgency, costs, and government roles. They also imply differing but overlapping processes and actions for possible implementation, thus shaping recommendations of policy advocates

08614

GLOBAL TEMPERATURE FOR NOVEMBER FOURTH WARMEST ON RECORD

By National Climatic Data Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. December 16, 2008.

http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20081216_climatestats.html

The year 2008 is on track to be one of the 10 warmest years on record for the globe, based on the combined average of worldwide land and ocean surface temperatures, according to a preliminary analysis. For November alone, the month is fourth warmest all-time globally, for the combined land and ocean surface temperature. The early assessment is based on records dating back to 1880.

08615

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: FEDERAL CIVIL REMEDIES AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES RELATED TO COPYRIGHTS, TRADEMARKS, AND PATENTS

By Brian T. Yeh, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), updated October 31, 30 p.

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34109_20081031.pdf

This report provides information describing the federal civil remedies and criminal penalties that may be available as a consequence of violations of the federal intellectual property laws: the Copyright Act of 1976, the Patent Act of 1952, and the Trademark Act of 1946 (conventionally known as the Lanham Act). The report explains the remedies and penalties for the various intellectual property offenses.

08616

PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCHERS ARE TESTING 109 MEDICINES AND VACCINES FOR HIV AND RELATED CONDITIONS

By Billy Tauzin, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, December 1, 2008, 16 p.

<http://www.phrma.org/files/New%20Meds%20for%20HIV-AIDS%20report.pdf>

HIV/AIDS is one of the most devastating diseases affecting patients around the world. To help fight this global disease, pharmaceutical researchers are testing 109 medicines to treat HIV/AIDS and related conditions and intensifying their efforts to develop preventative vaccines. Since first identifying the AIDS virus in 1983, 31 medicines have been approved to treat HIV infection.

According to the Joint United Nation's Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in 2007, an estimated 33 million people worldwide were living with HIV, 2.7 million new people were infected with HIV, and 2 million died from the disease. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates more than 1 million Americans were living with HIV infection at the end of 2006.

Preventative vaccine research is crucial to the continuing fight against AIDS. "A safe and effective HIV vaccine is critical to the control of HIV globally," says Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). According to the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), without a significant improvement in prevention efforts, including an HIV vaccine, infections could double from around 5 million a year in 2005 to 10 million a year by 2030. IAVI estimates that the potential positive impact of AIDS vaccines would be enormous, especially in the developing world.

08617

A U.S.-CENTRIC CHRONOLOGY OF THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS

By Jane A. Leggett, The Congressional Research Service (CRS), December 1, 2008, 11 p.

<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/113563.pdf>

Under the “Bali Action Plan,” countries around the globe are endeavoring to reach agreement by the end of 2009 on effective, feasible, and fair actions beyond 2012 to address risks of climate change driven by human-related emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). This document provides a U.S.-centric chronology of the international policy negotiations to address climate change. It begins before agreement on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992, and proceeds through the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the Marrakesh Accords of 2001, and the Bali Action Plan of 2007 that mandates the current negotiations. This chronology identifies selected external events and major multilateral meetings that have influenced the current legal and institutional arrangements, as well as contentious issues for further cooperation. Today’s negotiations under the Bali Action Plan focus on four elements: mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions; adaptation to impacts of climate change; financial assistance to low income countries; and technology development and transfer. They also are intended to define a “shared vision” for reducing global GHG emissions by around 2050. For U.S. legislators, important issues include the compatibility of any international agreement with U.S. domestic policies and laws; the adequacy of appropriations, fiscal measures and programs to achieve any commitments under the agreement; and the desirable form of the agreement and related requirements for potential Senate ratification and federal implementing legislation.

OTHER ISSUES

COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

08618

THE 21ST-CENTURY WRITER

By Patrick Tucker, Futurist, vol. 42, no. 4, July/August 2008, pp. 25-31

<http://www.wfs.org/May-June%20files/Futwrite1.htm>

Tucker, senior editor of *The Futurist*, notes that for both writers and readers, these are times of upheaval. The information technology revolution has led to an explosion in written content. For book publishers, the mission is to reinvent the concept of the book for the digital age. For many writers, particularly nonfiction writers, it means joining the online world of blogs, vlogs, and RSS feeds where the pace of news is accelerated. Some bloggers report that the money from ad clicks related to their blog content is barely enough to cover the cost of blogging. Book publishers are finding it harder to back first-time or less popular authors. Across the United States, newspapers and magazines are focusing their resources more and more on their Web sites. In the process, they're giving voice to an entirely new breed of digital journalist even as they show the door to news department veterans. Many writers are justifiably alarmed by the shift, but writers who are willing to view themselves as storytellers first and foremost, who are eager to incorporate new technology into the writing process, have a bright future.

08619

GOOGLE'S GATEKEEPERS

By Jeffrey Rosen, New York Times Magazine, November 30, 2008

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/magazine/30google-t.html?_r=1

The author, a law professor at George Washington University, notes that even though the Web might seem like a free-speech panacea, there is less focus on how the Internet is actually regulated, and by whom. As more and more speech migrates online, the ultimate power to decide who has an opportunity to be heard, and what people may say, lies increasingly with Internet service providers, search engines, and other Internet companies like Google. With control of two-thirds of the world's Internet searches, as well as ownership of YouTube, Google has enormous influence over who can find an audience on the Web; it has adopted a decision-making process about what controversial user-generated content stays up or comes down on YouTube and other applications owned by Google. Google's increasing role in policing content

on its applications is also working at cross-purposes with many national governments, which are also blocking access to YouTube, such as recent incidents in Thailand and Turkey.

08620

LOST IN CYBERSPACE: IS THERE A WAY OUT?

By Yoani Sanchez, Global Journalist, vol. 14, no. 2, summer 2008, pp. 3-4

http://www.globaljournalist.org/content/emprint/2008_summer.pdf

Sanchez, a 'Generation Y' Cuban journalist who blogs from Havana, says despite that the limited availability of Internet access in the country, the Web is helping to spur an end to years of public silence about Cuba's problems and unfulfilled promises. She relates how her posts are "marked by some emotional outbursts that serious newspapers would never publish," and how change, rather than coming from the top, is being "loosened" from the inside. She concludes that the homogeneity and sloganeering of the official press and the Cuban state's monopoly on information is currently being lost "once and for all."

08621

OECD INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OUTLOOK 2008

By Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, December 23, 2008, 350 p.

<http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/browseit/9308041E.PDF>

The economic downturn will hit the Internet economy hard in 2009, according to the OECD estimates. The Outlook says that the IT industry is likely to have grown by 4% at most in 2008 compared to the previous year. But with the outlook for the global economy worsening and business and consumer confidence plummeting, growth will remain flat or decline in 2009. Some sectors are expected to weather the storm better than others. Spending on software and IT services, including outsourcing, by governments and business is likely to continue. However, major corporate customers in sectors hard hit by the downturn, such as banking, insurance and retail, are cutting back spending plans in 2009.

08622

NETWORK EFFECTS: AN INTRODUCTION TO BROADBAND TECHNOLOGY AND REGULATION

A study commissioned by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, December 2008, 27 p.

<http://www.uschamber.com/assets/env/introbroadband.pdf>

There is a news release at
http://www.uschamber.com/press/releases/2008/december/o81222_broadband.htm

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently released two major studies showing the economic benefits of broadband to all consumers, especially senior citizens. The papers recommend policies that the federal government should adopt to spur investment in broadband infrastructure, which is also a goal of the economic stimulus package being discussed in Congress.

"An estimated \$60 billion has been invested in broadband infrastructure by the communications industry this year," said William Kovacs, the U.S. Chamber's vice president for Environment, Technology, and Regulatory Affairs. "Given these turbulent economic times, federal policy must continue to support this high-level of investment. This will spur job growth, innovation, and consumer choice. We cannot afford to reverse course."

The first paper, "Network Effects: An Introduction to Broadband Technology & Regulation" provides an introduction to broadband technology and regulation, and offers a set of recommendations to promote broadband deployment and adoption across the United States.

The second paper, "The Impact of Broadband on Senior Citizens" focuses on the importance of broadband to senior citizens and examines the best practices that policymakers should support to ensure that seniors continue to realize the full benefits of competition, innovation, and investment in this market. Future studies to be released by the U.S. Chamber will examine the impact broadband has on telemedicine, people with disabilities, and education.

o8623

NEWS AND INFORMATION AS DIGITAL MEDIA COME OF AGE

By Persephone Miel and Robert Faris , Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University. Web posted December 18, 2008, 52 p.

http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.law.harvard.edu/files/Overview_MR.pdf

This is a series of papers exploring the potential and the challenges of the emerging networked digital media environment.

o8624

NETS OF TERROR: TERRORIST ACTIVITY ON THE INTERNET

By Paul Piper, Searcher, vol. 16, no. 10, November/December 2008, pp. 28-38

<http://www.infotoday.com/searcher/novo8/Piper.shtml>

The author, a reference librarian at Western Washington University, provides a detailed overview of the presence and activity of terrorist groups on the Internet. He notes that rogue groups are drawn to the Internet because it is easy and inexpensive to communicate and disseminate information instantaneously and in an uncensored fashion worldwide. Terrorist groups use the Internet for a variety of purposes, chiefly for public announcements, data mining, recruitment, fundraising, information sharing, logistics and training. Terrorist websites, chat rooms, bulletin boards and forums are very unstable, with continually changing URLs, due to the cat-and-mouse game with authorities and private watchdog groups. The author describes and gives the website URLs of the many organizations keeping track of terrorist groups, as well as a complete listing of terrorist groups by country, with the most recently known web URLs. He believes that the terrorist presence on the Internet is still in a beginning phase, aimed mostly at staking out territory, but may eventually lead to cyber-terrorism.

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WORKING IN WIKI

By Ellen Perlman , Melissa Maynard, Governing, May 2008, pp. 1-11

<http://www.governing.com/articles/0805wiki.htm>

Web 2.0 is a new generation of Internet applications that consist of social networking tools, including websites like Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Second Life and Wikipedia. The authors write that state and local government have begun utilizing these social networking tools, and that these tools can transform the way government functions. As opposed to the current top-down culture of emails, briefings and conferences, Web 2.0 encourages a more democratic approach -- for instance, employees can be involved in creating and maintaining a Wiki page. Virtual reality Web 2.0 applications like Second Life can help bring employees at disparate locations closer together and provide a better alternative to conference calls. Second Life can also save costs through virtual training of employees. However, implementing these technologies takes managers who eager to learn the new technology and see it as a means to improve the efficiency of the organization. Success in implementing Web 2.0 in government also requires employees to select what aspect of a project they want to work on. The authors say that Web 2.0 is inevitable for government -- "Governments can either play an active role in transforming themselves or wait and let change hit them; either way, it's coming."

فهرنهايت 451 (رواية)

تأليف : راى برادبرى

ترجمة : ماجدة منصور حسب النبی

"تحمل مضامين مرعبة ... إنه مبهر حقاً ذل العالم المجنون الذى رسمه "برادبرى"، والذى يدق أجراس الخطر لكونه يحمل ملامح كثيرة من عالمنا".

نيويورك تايمز

هذه الرواية لاقت نجاحاً عالمياً ، ووزعت أكثر من خمسة ملايين نسخة، "فهرنهايت 451" هي رائعة راى برادبرى التي كتبها عن الرقابة والتحكم، ولا تزال شهرتها اليوم مدوية كما كانت منذ خمسين عاماً مضت.

"كان النظام واضحاً ، ويفهمه الجميع، الكتب يجب أن تحترق، وكذلك البيوت التي تخبئ الكتب".

"جى مونتاج" رجل مطافئ، كانت مهمته أن يشعل النيران، كان "مونتاج" يستمتع بوظيفته التي ظل يعمل بها لعشر سنوات، كان واثقاً من المتعة التي يستشعرها وهو ينطلق فى مهمة فى منتصف الليل، أو يرى صفحات الكتب تأكلها النيران، كان واثقاً من كل شيء إلى أن التقى بفتاة فى السابعة عشرة من عمرها حكمت له عن ماض عاش الناس فيه باطمئنان، ثم التقى بأستاذ جامعي حكى له عن مستقبل سوف يفكر فيه الناس ويتأملون، هنا أدر "مونتاج" ما يجب أن يفعل ...

دار الشروق – 8 شارع سيبيويه المصرى – مدينة نصر – القاهرة

تليفون : 24023399

RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH

- Florida's "Museums in the Sea" – underwater archaeological museums around Florida

<http://www.museumsinthesea.com/>

- The Financial Crisis: A Timeline of Events and Policy Actions. A web site of the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis

<http://www.stlouisfed.org/timeline/default.cfm>

- The Berkman :Media Republic
News and Information as Digital Media Come of Age

<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/pubrelease/mediarepublic/>

A series of papers exploring the potential and the challenges of the emerging networked digital media environment. The Berkman Center is one of the best places for internet law and other related issues.

- Social Mention

<http://www.socialmention.com/>

A search engine which searches the content of websites with user-generated content, such as blogs, video file sharing sites, etc; the data is fresh, which means you can track conversations as they are happening in real-time." –

<http://www.socialmention.com/about/>

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