



**Information Resource Center (IRC)
Public Diplomacy Section
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Alert Service

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The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Center is pleased to offer you **ARTICLE ALERT**, the monthly current awareness publication of the U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Section. Article Alert is designed to keep IRC users abreast of issues and concerns in the United States. **Full texts of all listed articles are available upon request** at email below tel. 267089; 267055, or fax: 267160

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**Article Alert
December 2008**

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. "The New Liberalism"

George Packer. *The New Yorker*, November 17, 2008, 8 pages.

After looking back at presidential history, interviewing President-elect Obama's advisors, and reviewing Obama's words from his books and campaign speeches, the author tries to describe how Obama might lead the country. He examines liberalism and the election of U.S. president-elect Barack Obama by providing a historical comparison with the liberalism of U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932.

2. "Asia's Democracy Backlash"

Joshua Kurlantzick. *Current History*, November 2008, 6 pages.

Asia was once regarded as the vanguard of a global wave of democratization that, over the past three decades, has swept through southern Europe, Latin America, and Africa. In recent years, however, Asia has witnessed a democracy backlash. The author examines the political trends and conditions across Southeast Asia in the early 21st century, highlighting the authoritarian backlash against democratic movements.

3. "Why Democracies Fail: Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy"

Ethan Kapstein and Nathan Converse. *Journal of Democracy*, October 2008, 12 pages.

Many of today's developing-world and post-communist democracies are backsliding and at risk of reversal, if this has not already occurred. The authors study data from waves of democratization between 1960 and 2004, examining the causes of democratic collapse and the key factors to whether young democracies live or die. They suggest that certain conditions during the initial phases seem to predict whether the democracy will thrive or fail.

4. "Towards a New Conceptualization of Democratization and Civil-Military Relations"

Thomas C. Bruneau and Florina Cristiana Matei. *Democratization*, December 2008, 21 pages.

The authors examine the relationship between elected leaders and security forces in the context of democratization and the role of the armed forces in democratic consolidation, especially in relation to what security forces actually do and how they interface with democratic governments.

5. "Cartoon Violence and Freedom of Expression"

David Keane. *Human Rights Quarterly*, November 2008, 31 pages.

The publication of the "Danish Muhammad cartoons" re-launched a continuing conflict between freedom of expression and religious tolerance that has existed for some time. The author examines the history of cartoon satire, invoking past examples of racial and religious discrimination in cartoons, while emphasizing the important role cartoonists have played in criticizing and checking the exercise of power.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

6. "Can Asia Consume a Way out of Crisis?"

Hugo Restall. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 2008, 5 pages.

The author examines the prospects of Asian governments' efforts to jump start domestic demand to replace the declining external demand from the United States and Europe. The real problem for Asia -- both from the external shock and the bursting of an investment bubble domestically -- are explored.

7. "Shifting Currents of U.S. and Asia Pacific Economics, Resources, and Security"

Muthiah Alagappa, et al. East West Center's Senior Policy Seminar, July 7-8, 2008, 28 pages.

The Senior Policy Seminar Series summarizes discussions and conclusions made at an annual meeting of senior security officials and analysts from countries of the Asia Pacific region sponsored by the East-West Center. This report examines the current turmoil in the United States and international economies, its impact on the region, and how these issues will impact the next U.S. administration.

8. "Republic of the Central Banker"

J. Bradford Delong. *The American Prospect*, November 2008, 4 pages.

Delong opines that the fate of the U.S. economy depends much more on the Federal Reserve chairman than on the president. He examines the powerful implications of the Federal Reserve's independence and discusses why he believes that Ben Bernanke may very well be the right person for his job at this juncture in U.S. economic history.

9. "The U.S. Financial Crisis: The Global Dimension with Implications for U.S. Policy"

Martin A. Weiss, et al. *CRS Report for Congress#RL34742*, November 18, 2008, 88 pages.

The impact of the U.S. financial crisis has rippled across the globe, prompting concerns about the growth of emerging markets, the future for developing countries, and the need for enhanced regulation and a new global financial architecture. The authors examine the global implications of the U.S. financial crisis by focusing on the global impact of the financial crisis and the Asian response, then exploring new challenges and policy in managing financial risk.

U.S. Government document. Full text available [online](#).

REGIONAL SECURITY

10. "Asia's Challenges for Obama"

Brian P. Klein. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 2008, 4 pages.

The Obama administration will take office at a time of relative calm in East Asia. Cross-Strait relations are at a high point, territorial issues between China and Vietnam are being addressed amicably, and Japan-China relations are progressing smoothly with reciprocal military ports of call and strong trade ties. The author examines a detailed "To Do in Asia" list for President-elect Barack Obama.

11. "Security Community and Southeast Asia: Australia, the U.S., and ASEAN's Counter-Terror Strategy"

Andrew Chau, *Asian Survey*, July/August 2008, 24 pages.

The author discusses counterterrorism policy developed by ASEAN as it relates to claims of an emerging security community among states in that region. He explores the contradiction between the ASEAN goal of regional integration and its diplomatic commitment to non-interference in domestic affairs.

12. "America's Hard Sell"

Bruce W. Jentleson and Steven Weber. *Foreign Policy*, November/December 2008, 8 pages.

The authors argue that the public diplomacy strategies of the last century will not work as well in the 21st century, contending that ideology is the most important component of national powers, technology massively multiplies soft power, and the need for consistency between "domestic values" and "international values." They also look at the leadership role performed by the United States, foreign policy failures of the administration of President George W. Bush and the use of military might as an instrument of international relations.

13. "Arrested Development"

J. Brian Atwood, et al. *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2008, 10 pages.

The authors examine why effective foreign aid programs can and should be a significant aspect of U.S. foreign policy. They discuss the need for the next U.S. president to enact major institutional reforms and the downsizing of the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID), reconstructing USAID, and devising a U.S. government policy on humanitarian and development programs.

14. "U.S.–UN Relations: Briefing Memorandum to the 44th President of the United States"

Benjamin Rivlin. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, September 2008, 7 pages.

Among the thorniest issues the next administration will confront is the role of the United Nations in the formulation of U.S. foreign policy. The author discusses the importance for the next administration to strengthen the U.S.-U.N. relations, and offers guidance for the next president to follow in order to formulate the policy toward the United Nations.

GLOBAL ISSUES AND ENVIRONMENT

15. "Can We Save the Planet and Rescue the Economy at the Same Time?"

Al Gore. *Mother Jones*, November/December 2008, 2 pages.

The former Vice President and once-presidential candidate discusses environmental issues in light of the 2008 U.S. financial crisis. He suggests that solving the problems of global warming and climate change will have a positive impact on the economic well-being of the United States.

16. "Outlook 2009"

The Futurist, November/December 2008, 9 pages.

China will most likely become the world's largest economy within the next three decades. Meanwhile, internet technology is enabling consumers to disseminate information on a whole new level. Read what the future will be like in the latest edition of the World Future Society's Annual Outlook Report. The forecasts cover various topics including business and economics, environment and resources, technology and science.

17. "Suffocating Seas"

Barbara Juncosa. *Scientific American*, October 2008, 2 pages.

The recent discovery that global climate change may be causing some parts of the ocean to be deprived of oxygen is explored. The author examines hypoxia, or low-oxygen conditions, which not only spells trouble for biodiversity, but also threatens the commercial fisheries of many nations.

MEDIA, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

18. "Overload! Journalism's Battle for Relevance in an Age of Too Much Information"

Bree Nordenson. *Columbia Journalism Review*, November/December 2008, 8 pages.

The vast amount of information available on the internet, as well as the limited ability of human beings to consume it, are affecting the production, distribution and design of news. The author discusses how seemingly limitless freedom of choice becomes a burden that may change the role of news agencies and journalists from being gatekeepers to guides through the information glut.

19. "Don't Blame the Journalism"

Paul Farhi. *American Journalism Review*, October/November 2008, 2 pages.

What is really driving newspapers' flagging economic situation? The author argues that newspapers' troubles are not related to the quality of the journalism, but purely economic and technological in origin. He examines the economic state of newspapers and how the internet has affected the entire industry.

20. "A Nonprofit Model for News"

Julie Kosterlitz. *The National Journal*, November 15, 2008, 7 pages.

As newspaper owners and broadcasters cut back or abandon coverage in the face of competition from the internet and a dismal economy, a new model of news gathering is emerging: nonprofit ventures that operate with some degree of philanthropic support. The author discusses how the nonprofit sector can play a unique role in making sure that the public has continued access to in-depth reporting.

21. "Wikipedia and the Meaning of Truth"

Simson L. Garfinkel. *Technology Review*, November/December 2008, 3 pages.

Many people have argued that Wikipedia's articles cannot be trusted because they are written and edited by volunteers who have never been vetted. Nevertheless, studies have found that the articles are remarkably accurate. The author discusses why the online encyclopedia's epistemology should worry those who care about traditional notions of accuracy.

22. "Can Phishing Be Foiled?"

Lorrie Faith Cranor. *Scientific American*, December 2008, 6 pages.

Because human factors are a critical element in the success of phishing attacks, they also can be essential weapons to foil phishers. The author discusses the anti-phishing attempts and the critical human factors that phishers exploit for criminal gain. She also explores the best ways to educate internet users so that they recognize and avoid phishing scams.

U.S. SOCIETY AND CULTURE

23. "Examining Longer-Term Teacher Effects on Asian American Student Achievement: A National Study"

Meechai Orsuwan and Mun Sim Lai. *Asian American Policy Review*, 2008, 14 pages.

The need for increasing accountability and results requires educational resources to improve cost efficiency, as well as to justify the long-term investments of taxpayers in education. The authors examine the impact of teacher characteristics on the long-term outcomes of Asian American students, focusing, in particular, on college entry, college completion, and earnings.

24. "Bridging the Gap with Technology"

Bob Coulter. *Connect Magazine*, November/December 2008, 2 pages.

Schools face a daunting task as they seek to provide high-quality education to all students, regardless of the background from which they come. The author reflects on educational technology as an instrument in bridging the learning gap. He asserts that great effort is needed to bridge the "digital divide" and ensure that all students have the benefits of educational technology.

25. "The Meaning of Columbus Day"

Mac Chapin. *World Watch*, November/December 2008, 10 pages.

Columbus Day celebrates the day, 516 years ago, when three small boats carrying Spanish sailors "discovered" the Western Hemisphere. The author examines the way historians have characterized this pivotal period in American history and the consequences these characterizations have had on American thinking about the events themselves.