



Information Resource Center (IRC)
Public Diplomacy Section
U.S. Embassy, Vientiane, Laos



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Article Alert: November, 2014

Dear All,

The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Center is very 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 irc_vientiane@state.gov or call us: 021 487089/487263.

SPOTLIGHT: U.S. POLICY TOWARD ASIA

1. "Challenges to the U.S. Rebalance to Asia"

Gary J. Schmitt. American Enterprise Institute, November 2014, 18 pages.

What is the geostrategic dynamic that led the Obama administration to believe that the existing policy was inadequate and needed to be modified? What lessons might we learn from it to guide U.S. policy in the future? The author, a resident scholar and co-director of the Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, discusses the challenges the United States faces in rebalancing to Asia.

2. "Revitalizing the Rebalance: How to Keep U.S. Focus on Asia"

Michael J. Green and Zack Cooper. The Washington Quarterly, Fall 2014, 22 pages.

The authors discuss the U.S.'s strategy under the U.S. President Barack Obama of focusing on Asia to address the balance of power in the region, and the role that the growing international power of China plays in the U.S. decision to focus its strategy on Asia.

3. "Asia: A Golden Future Still?"

Lord Powell. Asian Affairs, November 2014, 7 pages.

The author discusses the validity of the widespread assumptions that Asia is on the path to unending growth and success, and that the 21st century will be Asia's century.

WORLD AFFAIRS

4. "The Wanderer"

Paul J. Saunders. *National Interest*, September/October 2014, 6 pages.

Is U.S. President Barack Obama a foreign-policy realist? Did the Obama administration actually ever pursue a realist foreign policy? What would a realist foreign-policy strategy look like? The author, an executive director of the Center for the *National Interest*, discusses whether President Obama is a true realist, or it's an attempt from the administration to allow him to be seen as one.

5. "As the World Turns"

Michel Gurfinkiel. *World Affairs*, September/October 2014, 12 pages.

The author discusses the challenges of weak states and of New Emerging Powers (NEPs) to Western nations, then examines the roles of nationalism and anti-Americanism in the NEPs.

6. "Nuclear Weapons and Existential Threats: Insights from a Comparative Analysis of Nuclear-Armed States"

Bryan R. Early and Victor Asal. *Comparative Strategy*, September-October 2014, 18 pages.

The authors explore the existential threats that nuclear weapons possessors pose with a new, empirically based metric called the Nuclear Annihilation Threat (NAT) Index, and analyze the existential threats and vulnerabilities that nuclear-armed states face from one another.

GLOBAL ISSUES, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

7. "How We Ran Out of Air Time"

Andrew C. Revkin. *Audubon*, September/October 2014, 7 pages.

The author examines the relationship of humans with the atmosphere, focusing on how human-generated greenhouse gases and other pollutants have altered the composition and dynamics of the atmosphere, and the lag between slow-building environmental phenomena and humanity's awareness of them.

8. "How Climate Change Is Sinking Seabirds"

Carl Safina. *Audubon*, September/October 2014, 5 pages.

The author discusses the impact of warming oceans on the food chains of seabirds, and how global warming is lowering the basic amount of food produced by oceans and changing the proportions of sea life.

GLOBAL HEALTH

9. "Can Humanism Survive the Coming Transhumanist Revolution?"

Clay Farris Naff. *Humanist*, September/October 2014, 10 pages.

The author examines how humanism, based on concepts of democracy, individual autonomy, and equality, could be impacted by the growth of artificial intelligence (AI) and other innovations in intelligent technology.

JOURNALISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

10. "Just Communicating"

David A. Andelman. *World Policy Journal*, June 2014, 10 pages.

While the Internet has improved journalists' ability to transmit information, it has also reduced the resources available for their operations. Then author discusses the effects of developments in communication technology on journalism based on his experiences as a foreign correspondent during the late 20th century.

11. "Photography as Activism"

Ismail Ferdous. *Harvard International Review*, Summer 2014, 4 pages.

The author explores the role of visual media and photography in humanitarian crises, focusing on the significance of visual journalism and documentary photography in raising social consciousness.

U.S. POLITICS

12. "Why Democrats Need to Take Sides"

Harold Meyerson. *The American Prospect*, July/August 2014, 9 pages.

Young people and minorities are swelling the party's ranks and pushing it to the left. The South is increasingly in play. But can Democrats do what it takes to make Americans economically secure, even if it means breaking off with Wall Street? The author discusses why straddling class divisions do not work like it used to.

13. "Crashing the Party"

David Frum. *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2014, 9 pages.

The author examines conservatism and the U.S. Republican Party, focusing on the possible effects of the party's aging demographic of voters, including Baby Boomers and the preceding generation.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

14. "ASEAN Economic Performance, Institutional Effectiveness, and Foreign Direct Investment"

Ponlapat Buracom. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Volume 41, Issue 3, 2014, 19 pages.

The author examines the impact of macroeconomic performance and institutional factors including government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and property rights protection on foreign direct investment (FDI) flows into developing nations.

15. "Whatever It Takes' Breaks Down"

John H. Makin. *American Enterprise Institution Research*, October 2014, 11 pages.

Are we at a crossroads on the question of boosting sustainable growth? Has 2014 indeed proven to be a disappointing year for the global economy? The author examines the stagnation of global economic growth.

16. "Sugar Daddies of Global Finance"

Stanley Pignal. *World Policy Journal*, June 2014, 4 pages.

The author discusses the relationship between governments and the banking industry, particularly government bailouts of banks and government insurance of deposits and mortgages.

EDUCATION

17. “Digital Reading Poses Learning Challenges for Students”

Benjamin Herold. Education Digest, September 2014, 5 pages.

The author, a writer for *Education Week*, discusses the challenges with reading comprehension issues that students are facing when working with digital devices, and explores how reading strategies traditionally used for print materials have been adapted for digital learning environments.

19. “Why ‘Nano-Degrees’ Can Never Replace Liberal Arts Colleges”

Michael Roth. The Atlantic, September 8, 2014, 3 pages.

The author, President of Wesleyan University, discusses the benefits of a well-rounded education, voicing his disagreement with the current re-fashion vocational education which adapt workers to the existing industrial regime and train a small part of a student for a specific task.

20. “MOOC U: The Revolution Isn’t Over”

Jeffrey Selingo. The Chronicle of Higher Education, October 3, 2014, 3 pages.

Are MOOC dead? The author discusses the development of massive open online courses (MOOCs), focusing on the position of MOOCs in the academic ecosystem after a series of high-profile failed experiments using MOOCs, and the use of MOOCs as a supplement to formal classroom learning.

DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

21. “Fukuyama Is Right about Measuring State Quality: Now What?”

Jordan Holt and Nick Manning. Governance, October 2014, 12 pages.

The authors discuss how to best measure governance or state quality, focusing on Francis Fukuyama’s approach of using a public administration lens to disaggregate the public sector into two domains: upstream bodies at the center of government, and downstream delivery bodies that deliver, commission, or fund services under the policy direction of government.

22. “Is Small Really Beautiful? The Microstate Mistake”

Jan Erk and Wouter. Journal of Democracy, July 2014, 14 pages.

The authors discuss microdemocratic states -- meaning the dozen or so tiny countries with fewer than a hundred-thousand citizens each, and argue that small states are not likely to be liberal democracies.

23. “V-Dem: A New Way to Measure Democracy”

Staffan I.Lindberg, et al. Journal of Democracy, July 2014, 11 pages.

Discussing democracy promotion, the author examines a new effort to measure democracy called the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem), focusing on how to mark its progress and affect its future course.