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To request articles, please contact Ms. Gu Hong or Ms. Wang Wei by telephone, fax, mail or e-mail guhx@state.gov, or ircacee@state.gov. To request by mail, please circle the articles you wish to receive, include your name, address, and telephone number and return this list to us.

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**Information Resource Center (IRC)
American Center for Educational Exchange
Jingguang Center, Suite 2801
Hujialou, Chaoyang Qu
Beijing, 100020
Tel: 86-10-6597-3242, Ext.5212 or 5207
Fax: 86-10-6597-3006**

<http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/irc.html>

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Economics and Trade

1. DANGEROUS EXPONENTIALS: A RADICAL TAKE ON THE FUTURE

Morgan, Tim et al.

Tullett Prebon Strategy Insights, No. 5, June 2010, 39 pp

“Have you ever had the uncomfortable feeling that we are losing control of our financial system?” The authors, with the research department of a major United Kingdom-based bank, suggest that this sense of unease may be correct. They contend that the global economy is in the grip of a number of exponential factors – population, energy and resource consumption, the expansion of the money supply and seemingly out-of-control sovereign debt – that are simultaneously approaching the near-vertical phase of growth. They argue that a global economic system that must grow is about to hit an “energy ceiling”, a resource base that ultimately cannot grow. Money, they note, is merely an artificial derivative of an energy-based economy, that has grown without precedent in human history, due to the colossal energy surplus in fossil fuels. We have reached a point, they write, where a cessation of the “energy exponential” may throw our complex civilization in reverse. Our single biggest blind spot is the lack of understanding of the concept of net energy returns, which are declining rapidly as the high-quality energy sources are used up. Available online at http://www.tullettprebon.com/Documents/strategyinsights/tp0510_TPSI_report_005_LR.pdf

2. THE END OF THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

Gilley, Bruce

Washington Quarterly, vol. 33, no. 4, October 2010, pp. 87-101

Bruce Gilley, author of *THE RIGHT TO RULE: HOW STATES WIN AND LOSE LEGITIMACY*, contends that the “African renaissance is at an end, and that the looming reversal requires deep-rooted changes.” The African renaissance proclaimed by African leaders and intellectuals twenty years ago was “an attempt to have a fruitful encounter with modernity after decades of self-destructive ones.” For about ten years, the trends were positive, but since the early 2000s, the situation has deteriorated with tyranny, stagnation, and conflict on the rise again in the 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Africa’s share of global GDP is the same as in 1980 and 1990 – about 2.4 percent. Democracy has declined in the region every year since 2005. Attempts to strengthen regionalism in order to support peace and increase the continent’s role in global politics have faltered; plans for a regional free trade area and common currency are dead. As the situation has deteriorated, “vultures have moved in,” with China buying off governments in pursuit of natural resources and allies, and Latin American drug barons exploiting the same weaknesses to develop new trafficking routes to Europe. Gilley argues that the first thing to be done is to “speak plainly” and address the problems with “smart aid” policies such as the MCA rather than supporting “big-man rulers.” Other steps include establishing a zero-tolerance policy regarding stolen elections and supporting policies that “give women politicians a better chance.” Perhaps most important is accelerating the move away from patterns of social and political organization which “revolve around paternalistic ties to village chiefs.” Currently available online at http://www.twq.com/10october/docs/10oct_Gilley.pdf

3. INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE: KEY POLICY ISSUES FOR THE 112TH CONGRESS

Ahearn, Raymond J.

Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, December 30, 2010, 27 pages

The 112th Congress faces a full agenda of international trade and finance issues. Early in 2011, the Obama Administration is expected to ask Congress to approve a free trade agreement (FTA) with South Korea and possibly FTAs with Colombia and Panama. The Administration is seeking to conclude the much larger ten year-old World Trade Organization's (WTO) Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which, if completed, would also require congressional approval. The Administration is also negotiating a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, a regional FTA that currently includes nine countries on both sides of the Pacific. Currently available online at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41553.pdf>

4. **THE RISE OF THE NEW GLOBAL ELITE**

Freeland, Chrystia

Atlantic Monthly, vol. 307, no. 1, January/February 2011, pp. 44-55

The author writes that the present-day global elite consists mostly of first-and second-generation wealth; its members are hardworking, highly educated, jet-setting meritocrats who feel they are the deserving winners of a tough, worldwide economic competition. Many of them have little sympathy for the world's less successful populace, and are a transglobal community of peers who have more in common with one another than with their countrymen back home. The global market and its associated technologies have enabled the creation of a class of international business megastars. But for U.S. workers, the same forces that have enriched the plutocratic elite have ravaged their savings, employers and professions. Currently available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/01/the-rise-of-the-new-global-elite/8343/>

International Security

5. **DEFENSE BUDGETS AND AMERICAN POWER**

O'Hanlon, Michael

Brookings Institution, December 2010, 28 pages

Today, according to the author, the U.S. is witnessing a period of American economic travails, with much larger fiscal deficits. These are coupled with deep concern that less friendly powers may be poised to benefit from the relative decline of the U.S. specifically and the West in general. Is this assessment accurate? What do these shifting economic realities bode for the future of American power and ultimately the security of this country and its allies? Most of all, in light of these changes, to what extent can the United States mitigate the downsides of any hegemonic realignment of global power by more responsible fiscal policy? Currently available online at http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2010/12_defense_budget_ohanlon/12_defense_budget_ohanlon.pdf

6. **GLOBAL PUBLICS EMBRACE SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Pew Research Center Global Attitudes Project

December 15, 2010, 26 pages

Although still a relatively young technology, social networking is already a global phenomenon. In regions around the world, and in countries with varying levels of economic development, people who use the internet are using it for social networking. And this is particularly true of young people. Meanwhile, other forms of technology are also increasingly popular across the globe. Cell phone ownership and computer usage have grown significantly over the last three years, and they have risen dramatically since 2002. Currently available online at <http://pewglobal.org/files/2010/12/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Technology-Report-FINAL-December-15-2010.pdf>

7. **INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE ON CULTURE AND THE CANADA-US BORDER**

Stirrup, David; Roberts, Gillian

American Review of Canadian Studies, vol. 40, no. 3, September 2010, pp. 321-325

The authors, lecturers in North American studies at the Universities of Kent and Nottingham (U.K.) respectively, provide the introduction to this special issue. They note that today, borders are arguably more paradoxical than ever, markers of national territory in an age of globalized networks of information, travel, and trade, simultaneously containing and threatening national cultural identities. The essays included in this issue discuss a number of regional sites along the border, very important now, since after the Sept. 11 attacks, unfounded and since discredited stories circulated that the lengthy Canada–US border facilitated the entry of terrorists into the U.S. Nonetheless, US security concerns in the last nine years have brought about changes in the way that Canadians and Americans cross what has traditionally been the longest undefended border in the world. While the Canada-U.S. border is often portrayed in Canadian Studies as a symbolic line of defense for Anglo-Canadian identity and cultural sovereignty, it has not attracted the attention that the US–Mexico border has generated in American Studies. Available online at <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/section?content=a924958572&fulltext=713240928>

8. **NORTH AFRICAN PEOPLE POWER**

Bennoune, Karima

The Nation, January 17, 2011

Now that Tunisia's president has been forced from power by popular protests largely fueled by citizens using Twitter and Facebook, questions remain about the future of Tunisia and its immediate neighbors, especially Algeria. What made the largely peaceful, democratic demonstrations by the opposition in Tunisia unique is that it was not led by or inspired by fundamentalist movements that have tried to claim the oppositional space in many Arab and North African countries, as has been the case in recent years. It was instead, by all accounts, a largely secular appeal for real political reform and for social justice. The biggest external impact of events in Tunisia could come in neighboring Algeria, which has also recently experienced extensive youth protests over similar problems such as high unemployment, corruption and skyrocketing prices for food staples. But Algeria maintains emergency laws that justify the banning of public gatherings of all kinds. While these laws are based on the struggle with armed fundamentalism that consumed the country in the 1990s, they also work against peaceful government critics who have nothing to do with terrorist groups. Available online at <http://www.thenation.com/article/157817/north-african-people-power>

9. **THE TRANSFORMER**

Kaplan, Fred

Foreign Policy, no. 181, September/October 2010, pp. 92-98

Kaplan, national security columnist for Slate, chronicles Robert Gates' tenure as Secretary of Defense, notably his decision to stay on in the new administration at Barack Obama's request – the first defense secretary to keep the job after a change of party in the White House. With the defense budget review, Gates was given the leeway to implement many ideas that he'd only talked about under the Bush administration. Then came the Afghanistan review, the results of which would take a while to play out. In summer 2010, he pushed the budget agenda further, including reforms in weapons contracting and drastic cuts in the number of military commands around the world which entail similarly drastic cuts in the number of senior officers. Gates is a

paradox in another sense: A self-described protector of institutions, he has changed the way the Pentagon does business and the military fights wars more than any defense secretary since Robert McNamara. Only somewhat less dramatically, Gates has heralded a shift in military planning from the major combat operations anticipated in the Cold War to the asymmetrical conflicts against insurgents and rogue states that plague the 21st-century world. Gates, too, understands that his legacy will be shaped much more by the outcome of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Currently available online at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/16/the_transformer

10. **THE TYRANNY OF METAPHOR**

Dallek, Robert

Foreign Policy, no. 182, November 2010, pp. 78-85

Presidential historian Dallek believes that three historical, and misguided myths, or illusions, have been leading American presidents into folly for nearly a century. Is President Obama wise enough to avoid the same fate when making tough decisions about war and peace? He might if he can study his predecessors' mistakes and learn from those few U.S. presidents who managed to avoid being tyrannized by metaphor, and he will need to understand how we got there. In Dallek's view, the three illusions are: universalism, the misguided faith in America's power to transform the world; that conciliatory talks or the failure to combat every act of international aggression amounts to appeasement; and the belief in containment, the surefire effectiveness of military strength. Currently available online at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/10/11/the_tyranny_of_metaphor

Global Issues / Environment

11. **THE FUTURE OF PUBLISHING**

Havens, Andy; Storey, Tom

NextSpace, no. 16, August 2010, pp. 4-9

From newspapers to popular magazines to scholarly journals to e-books to print-on-demand "vending" machines, publishing is more complicated than what it once was. What do the changing roles of consumers and published products mean for libraries? According to a 2010 R.R. Bowker study, 764,448 self-published and micro-niche titles came out in 2009, more than twice the number of traditional books published. The Internet has created new patterns of using information, both in terms of creating content as well as consuming it. Publishers are now blending their print business with new digital brands, adding a new level of engagement. Thousands of individuals, companies, schools, and businesses have taken the tools of literary and scholarly production into their own hands. Currently available online at http://www.oclc.org/uk/en/nextspace/016/download/nextspace_016.pdf

12. **THE HAZARDS OF HYPERLOCAL**

Palser, Barb

American Journalism Review, vol. 32, no. 3, Fall 2010, p. 68

News organizations around the U.S. are betting that hyperlocal news sites will solve the needs of consumers and advertisers, but the move is proving to be expensive. The unanswered question is: how much consumer demand exists for neighborhood news? According to a survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, only 20 percent of American adults reported using digital tools to communicate with their neighbors or stay informed about community issues at least once in the past year. Only one in 10 reported reading a community blog at least once in the past year. Advertisers, too, must decide where to spend their marketing dollars – locally, or in a

broader geographic arena. New technology applications such as Foursquare, which enables local businesses to send special offers to consumers at exactly the right moment, seem to indicate that hyperlocal news sites may end up being labors of love rather than income generators. Currently available online at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4902>

13. HIDING BEHIND THE WEB

Campo-Flores, Arian

Newsweek, posted online October 1, 2010

The bloody drug wars in Mexico are getting little coverage in mainstream media there, largely because the press doesn't report what the drug cartels don't want people to know. In many parts of Mexico, especially the north, the media effectively have ceased to function; more than 30 journalists have been murdered or have gone missing since 2006, according to a report released last month by the Committee to Protect Journalists. Media offices have been targeted by gunfire, grenades, and bombs; the attackers aren't only cartel hitmen but also law-enforcement officers on their payroll. But citizens can get an idea of what is going on by logging on to Blog del Narco, the go-to web site for cartel-related news in Mexico. Drawing about 3 million hits per week, Blog del Narco followers include not just ordinary citizens, but also members of the military, police, and trafficking organizations locked in a four-year war that has cost some 28,000 lives. Described by one observer as a "technological yard sale," the blog site includes useful inside information about potential perils as well as bravado and graphic gore provided by traffickers who seem to enjoy broadcasting their brutality. A computer-science student at a university in northern Mexico administers the site and posts whatever e-mail, photos or videos he receives. Strict anonymity has protected him so far, along with his agnostic attitude toward the cartels. Currently available online at <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/10/01/the-go-to-blogger-on-mexico-s-drug-wars.html>

14. IN HAITI, THE ART OF RESILIENCE

Brubaker, Bill

Smithsonian, vol. 41, no. 5, September 2010, pp. 36-48

Haitians have had to contend with more than their share of hardships, both natural and manmade, notes the author. One victim of these calamities has been Haitian culture: even before the January 2010 earthquake that devastated this Caribbean island nation, there was no publicly owned art museum or even a single movie theater. Thousands of paintings and sculptures, valued in the tens of millions of dollars, were destroyed or badly damaged in museums, galleries, collectors' homes, government ministries and the National Palace. This past May, the Smithsonian Institution launched an effort to help restore these damaged Haitian treasures; working with private and other public organizations, the Smithsonian established a "cultural recovery center" at the former headquarters of the U.N. Development Program near Port-au-Prince. Across the United States, institutions such as the American Visionary Art Museum (Baltimore), galleries such as Indigo Arts (Philadelphia) and Haitian-Americans such as Miami-based artist Edouard Duval Carrie were organizing sales and fundraisers. Currently available online at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/In-Haiti-the-Art-of-Resilience.html>

15. NEW STUDY SHOWS OVER ONE-FIFTH OF THE WORLD'S PLANTS ARE UNDER THREAT OF EXTINCTION

Physorg.com, September 29, 2010

A new study shows that the world's plants are as threatened as animal species, with one in five plant species threatened by extinction. The study, conducted by the Kew Gardens, the London

Natural History Museum and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, reveals for the first time the true extent of the threat to the world's estimated 380,000 plant species. The main cause is human-induced habitat loss, mostly conversion to agricultural or livestock use; the most threatened habitat are tropical rain forests, though flora in temperate regions, such as conifers, are equally threatened. The study notes that "plants are the foundation of biodiversity and their significance in uncertain climatic, economic and political times has been overlooked for far too long." Currently available online at <http://www.physorg.com/news204955099.html>

16. THE SECRET WORLD OF EXTREME MILITIAS

Gellman, Barton

Time, September 30, 2010

Radical militias – armed groups of civilians ready to go to war against the U.S. government or anyone else they see as a threat to their ideas about freedom and patriotism – are making a comeback in the U.S. Within a complex web of ideologies, the most common conviction is that the Second Amendment — the right to keep and bear arms — is the Constitution's cornerstone. The militias subscribe to the long-held belief that only a well-armed populace can enforce its rights; any form of gun regulation, therefore, is a sure sign of intent to crush other freedoms. A few groups embrace white-supremacy ideology; others are fueled by violent or fundamentalist versions of Christianity. None of these movements are entirely new, but most were in sharp decline by the late 1990s. Their resurgence now is widely seen among government and academic experts as a reaction to the tectonic shifts in American politics that allowed Barack Obama to reach the White House. Obama's ascendancy unhinged the radical right, offering a unified target to a range of extremist groups. Although they are capable of violence and bloodshed and are being watched closely by authorities, most so far have never acted upon their threats. Currently available online at <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2022516,00.html>

17. TRAFFIC PROBLEMS

Farhi, Paul

American Journalism Review, vol. 32, no. 3, Fall 2010, pp. 46-51

One of the Internet's profound effects on U.S. newsrooms is the ability to measure traffic for a given story, blog or video. This has led some newspapers, such as the Washington Post, to play "the traffic game" with breaking news. In the race to put a breaking story on a news web site as fast as possible, the chances for inaccuracy rise, Farhi, a Post reporter, says. But visitor loyalty and "engagement" as well as the type of visitor, Farhi argues, may be more valuable to news agencies and their advertisers than mere numbers of visitors. Currently available online at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4900>

U.S. Society and Values

18. THE END OF MEN

Rosin, Hanna

Atlantic Monthly, vol. 306, no. 1, July/August 2010, pp. 56-72

New data showing that more women graduated from university than men in the U.S. only underscores a trend that has developed over several decades. This year, women became the majority of the workforce in the U.S. Despite inequitable pay, American women, during the recession, have retained jobs as men have lost them, giving women greater economic clout in the home. Many more women are becoming leaders in business and elsewhere, leading many to wonder if modern, postindustrial society is simply better suited to women. The unprecedented

role reversal underway is also reflected internationally, even in traditionally patriarchal societies such as Korea. Currently available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/07/the-end-of-men/8135/#>

19. **FIVE MYTHS ABOUT NEW ORLEANS AND HURRICANE KATRINA**

Shearer, Harry

Vanity Fair online, posted August 26, 2010

The author notes that, on the fifth anniversary of hurricane Katrina, the American news media maintained misconceptions about the disaster. Media outlets had done a good job of showing the suffering on live television but has failed to focus on why New Orleans suffered so badly in the aftermath of the storm. Shearer notes that what happened to New Orleans in August 2005 was not “a natural disaster.” When Katrina hit that city, it was mostly likely a Category 1 or 2 storm. The catastrophic disaster that followed was mostly manmade – a result of “mistakes, misjudgments, and misfeasance” by federal government agencies that should have done a better job regarding the protection system for the city. The primary government failure in Katrina was the failed hurricane protection system, designed and constructed under previous administrations. Currently available at <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2010/08/hurricane-katrina-anniversary-201008>

20. **FOUNDING FATHER?**

Shorto, Russell

New York Times Magazine, February 14, 2010, pp. 32-39, 46-47

Conservative activists on the Texas Board of Education say that the authors of the Constitution intended the United States to be a Christian nation and they want American history textbooks to say so, too. Following the appeals from the public, the members of what is the most influential state board of education in the country, and one of the most politically conservative, submitted their own proposed changes to the new social-studies curriculum guidelines, that will affect students around the country, from kindergarten to 12th grade, for the next ten years. One reason that Texas school-board members find themselves at the very center of the battlefield is that the state's \$22 billion education fund is among the largest educational endowments in the country; Texas uses some of that money to buy or distribute a staggering 48 million textbooks annually, which inclines educational publishers to tailor their products to fit the standards dictated by Texas school boards. Currently available online under a different title at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/14/magazine/14texbooks-t.html>

21. **GAME THEORY**

Corbett, Sara

New York Times Magazine, September 19, 2010, pp. 54//70

One of the new developments in education is teaching students by having them design and play video games; however, educators question whether keeping children plugged into such games is the best approach to learning. The goal of using video games is to build in repetition to the learning process; one middle school in New York City is teaching its students by this method. Instead of grades, students receive report cards with levels of expertise like “novice” and “master” and faculty include game designers and curriculum specialists. The possibilities of such classes for educators working in a more typically cash-strapped, understaffed school are difficult, according to the author; however, as the federal government focuses more on innovation in education, it may be feasible to implement game-based learning, even modestly, into more

schools. Currently available online under a different title at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/19/magazine/19video-t.html>

22. **HOW WELL ARE AMERICAN STUDENTS LEARNING?**

Loveless, Tom
Brookings Institution, February 2011, 14 pages

Unlike most countries, the United States does not have national education standards, no single set of expectations for what all American teachers should teach and all American students should learn. It never has. A question that the rest of the world considers foundational to its national school systems, deciding the content of the curriculum, sits in the hands of local authorities. That is because the United States has 50 state school systems. Heterogeneity extends to the deepest levels of schooling. Even students transferring from one teacher to another within the same school may, as a consequence, learn a different curriculum than their former classmates.

Currently available online at

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2011/0111_naep_loveless/0111_naep_loveless.pdf

23. **THE WAR WE LOST -- AND WON**

Wood, Gordon S.
New York Review of Books, October 28, 2010

Eminent historian Alan Taylor's book *THE CIVIL WAR OF 1812: AMERICAN CITIZENS, BRITISH SUBJECTS, IRISH REBELS, AND INDIAN ALLIES* presents a comprehensive picture of a puzzling war. It divided the new American republic politically, and it created an even sharper division between the United States and its neighbor and British ally Canada. Partly due to the slow communications of the day, the war began and ended wrong-footedly. The conflict was bloody, sometimes inexplicable, but resulted in a clearer sense of nationhood for both the United States and Canada. Currently available online at

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/oct/28/war-we-lost-and-won/>

The Rule of Law

24. **CLASSIFIED INFORMATION POLICY AND EXECUTIVE ORDER 13526**

Kosar, Kevin R.
Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, December 10, 2010, 22 pages

Recently, there have been multiple high-profile incidents involving the release of classified government information. Perhaps most prominent was Wikileaks.org's unauthorized publication of more than 600,000 classified Department of Defense documents. Such incidents have further heightened congressional, media, and public interest in classified information policy. President Barack H. Obama issued Executive Order 13526 on "Classified National Security Information" on December 29, 2009, and Congress enacted P.L. 111-258, the Reducing Over-Classification Act, which President Obama signed into law on October 9, 2010. Currently available online at <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/153313.pdf>

25. **THE RISE OF JURISTOCRACY**

Grant, James
Wilson Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 2, Spring 2010, pp. 16-22

The American political institution most widely replicated around the world is its “most undemocratic one,” the judiciary, according to the author, who traces the evolution of modern judicial activism into a “juristocracy” -- where constitutional reforms take power away from elected officials, and transfer it to unelected judges, “an expression of the old belief that democracy must be tempered by aristocracy.” He compares the U.S. system to parliamentary systems such as Britain’s, where protection of human rights still rests largely on a democratically elected parliament, rather than judicial review. While the author writes the judiciary has an important guardian role, to hold the executive branch to account, he sides with Thomas Jefferson and other believers in judicial restraint. Currently available online, under the title THE SCOURGE OF JURISTOCRACY, at <http://www.wilsonquarterly.com/article.cfm?AID=1566&AT=0>