



# ***ALERT***

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## **Economics and Trade**

### **1. DO WE STILL NEED UNIONS? YES**

Klein, Ezra

Newsweek, February 27, 2011

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's effort to end collective bargaining for public employees in his state unexpectedly became the best thing to happen to the union movement in recent memory, writes Klein. In just a few days, Walker did what unions have been failing to do for decades: unite the union movement and bring the decline of organized labor to the forefront of the national agenda. Although fewer than 7 percent of private workers are unionized today, unions still have a crucial role to play in America, says Klein. First, they give workers leverage for higher wages, voicing safety concerns, ideas to improve efficiency and protection from retaliation. Second, unions are concerned with more than quarterly profit reports — what economist John Kenneth Galbraith called a “countervailing power” in an economy dominated by large corporations. Finally, unions bring some semblance of balance to a political system dominated by moneyed business interests. Organized labor has played a major role in promoting landmark legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act and the Affordable Care Act – laws that benefit the general public, not just the unionized. Currently available online at <http://www.newsweek.com/2011/02/27/do-we-still-need-unions-yes.html>

### **2. GUARDING AGAINST DISASTER: AS JAPAN'S TRAGEDY BECOMES MORE SERIOUS, SO DOES THE NEED TO LEARN FROM IT**

Pollack, Joshua

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, posted 15 March 2011

Pollack, a consultant to the U.S. government, writes that, even as it gets worse, the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant “pales in comparison to Japan’s natural disaster.” One or more full-scale meltdowns could occur, and in a worst-case scenario, spread radiation over a wide area. We have a lot to learn from this calamity, says Pollack, not the least of those lessons are to determine what failed and why, and that the earthquake and tsunami may not be a statistical freak, that other regions of the world may experience a millennial disaster. He writes, “as hard as it may be to accept at this moment, humanity can expect to live with this technology for many decades, perhaps centuries to come; the needs of growing populations and economies simply cannot be denied, especially in the shadow of the global-warming threat.” Currently available online at <http://thebulletin.org/web-edition/columnists/joshua-pollack/guarding-against-disaster-japans-tragedy-becomes-more-serious->

### **3. IF THE CHINESE BUBBLE BURST ... WHO GLOBALLY WOULD BE MOST AFFECTED?**

International Economy, Fall 2010, pp. 9-35

The Chinese government may succeed in slowing the pace of rising asset values. In this issue, the editors of International Economy asked thirty experts for their views on what would happen if China’s real-estate and productive-capacity asset bubble finally burst. In this symposium of views, respondents wrote that the effects would be widespread; Asian countries, developing economies, members of the Eurozone, the bond markets and the Chinese public themselves would be hard hit. One respondent notes that the asset bubble has its roots in the confiscation and collectivization of all land in 1949; a whole generation of Chinese policymakers had little concept of the value of land, so when a real-estate market started in the early 1990s, the power to sell or lease land was left to local governments. Land sales became a primary source of revenue to local

governments and a major contributor to GDP growth; local authorities therefore have a vested interest in perpetuating the property bubble. Available online at [http://www.international-economy.com/TIE\\_F10\\_ChinaBubbleSymp.pdf](http://www.international-economy.com/TIE_F10_ChinaBubbleSymp.pdf)

**4. THE NATURAL DEBT CRISIS: LEARNING TO LIVE WITHIN OUR PLANET'S MEANS**

Walsh, Bryan

Time, February 22, 2011

Ask any American politician, the author writes, what is the biggest problem facing the U.S., and they will invariably say that it is our staggering debt, which will cripple the economy and consign future generations to poverty. What amazes Walsh is that the same politicians who are so worried about financial debt, and want steep spending cuts to save our future, dismiss the idea of a natural debt crisis – a crisis of climate, environment and resources caused by too many people, too much consumption, pollution and carbon dioxide. Walsh notes that the “terms we use to describe our two debts are similar, as the language used in finance bleeds over into ecology;” conservationists talk about “natural capital”, such as forests, clean air and water, fish, soil and biodiversity, without which there would be no life, let alone business. Says Walsh, if we live within our means, as conservatives might say, our natural capital would sustain us, like a bank account generating interest, “but we’re not living within our means – not even close.” Whether we are talking about the financial crisis or the natural crisis, “either way, we’re broke – and it’s time we acted like it.” Currently available online at <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2052930,00.html>

**5. WOULD MORE EDUCATION REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT AND INCOME INEQUALITY?**

Indiviglio, Daniel

Atlantic Monthly, January 17, 2011

Would more education reduce unemployment and income inequality in the United States? The author, associate editor at Atlantic and former investment banker, does not agree; he believes that the unemployment problem is cyclical, not structural. The current situation is simply that there aren't enough job openings; but most of today's unemployed will eventually find jobs with their current skills once the economy recovers. As for wage inequality, most of that can be attributed to a small handful of people who have become wealthy, thanks to modern communications, marketing and technology. But for everyone else, incomes have not changed much. Education has little to do with this, as a college degree, or even an advanced degree, does not guarantee a high income. Currently available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/01/would-more-education-reduce-unemployment-and-income-inequality/69632/>

**International Security**

**6. AMERICA CALLING: A 21ST-CENTURY MODEL**

Elliott, Kim A.

Foreign Service Journal, October 2010, pp. 31-37

The author, an audience research analyst for the U.S. International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), believes that the Broadcasting Board of Governors, a bipartisan agency since 1995 that has been a “firewall” between the U.S. government and the international broadcasting entities it funds, should move to consolidate all U.S. government-funded international broadcasting into one

multimedia organization. Under its present mandate, IBB selects the directors and presidents of these entities, and provides general supervision, such as proposing the addition or elimination of language services and investment in various media technologies. As a result, there is considerable duplication in the news coverage of VOA, the best known of the radio stations, and in the surrogate entities along with duplication in management and administrative structures. This hinders, at least in theory, a full-service broadcasting effort. To deal with these challenges, the BBG should look to its British counterpart, the BBC, as a useful benchmark to emulate. Currently available online at <http://www.foreignservicejournal-digital.com/foreignservicejournal/201010?pg=33#pg33>

**7. THE BOY WHO KICKED THE HORNET'S NEST**

Keller, Bill

New York Times Magazine, January 31, 2011, pp. 32-39, 46-47

Wikileaks, the group of anti-secrecy vigilantes, led by Julian Assange, a former computer hacker from Australia, came into possession of a large quantity of classified U.S. government communications in 2010. It was one of the biggest stories of the year and its repercussions continue. The author, executive editor of The New York Times, describes his dealings with Assange and the British newspaper, The Guardian, in their attempts to publish the documents, which were divided into military (the War Logs) and diplomatic. Keller recounts that the negotiations involved an air of intrigue verging on paranoia. Currently available online under a different title at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/30/magazine/30Wikileaks-t.html>

**8. CAUGHT IN THE MUDDLE: AMERICA'S PAKISTAN STRATEGY**

Staniland, Paul

Washington Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 1, Winter 2011, pp. 133-148

In the spring of 2009, the Obama administration put Pakistan at the center of its foreign policy agenda, as decisions made by Islamabad will have a major influence on the outcome of U.S. presence in Afghanistan. Staniland, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, notes that, despite significant effort, the strategy pursued by the administration has not accomplished its ambitious goals. He writes that "U.S. policy toward Pakistan remains locked in an uncomfortable limbo awaiting further movement on U.S. commitments to Afghanistan, India—Pakistan relations, and domestic Pakistani politics." The U.S. is subject to Pakistani influence as long as we have a large combat presence in Afghanistan. Staniland argues that the U.S. should focus its development assistance on engaging democratic leaders and civil society, and improving infrastructure and trade, and not try to fundamentally change Pakistani society. He writes, "It is unrealistic to expect a full escape from this muddle ... [but we] can achieve core goals with a mix of containment, diplomacy, and aid, while avoiding expansive, enervating commitments of dubious value." Currently available online at [http://www.twq.com/11winter/docs/11winter\\_Staniland.pdf](http://www.twq.com/11winter/docs/11winter_Staniland.pdf)

**9. IMPERIAL BY DESIGN**

Mearsheimer, John

National Interest, January-February 2011

Mearsheimer, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, writes that in the early years after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. was optimistic about the future of international politics, having emerged as the most powerful country on earth. For the past two decades, U.S. grand strategy has been to bring democracy to less-developed nations the world over, remaking them in America's image. The results, he notes,

have been “disastrous” — the U.S. is bogged down in two protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with no end in sight; we have been unable to resolve other foreign-policy challenges, such as shutting down Iran’s uranium-enrichment program or preventing North Korea from obtaining nuclear weapons. In addition, our global military reach has spawned a massive national-security apparatus that has the potential to undermine civil liberties. Mearsheimer writes that our current downward spiral was not inevitable – “we have always had a choice in how to approach grand strategy.” He argues that our interests would be best served by resorting to offshore balancing, the strategy for most of U.S. history, in which our efforts are concentrated in a few strategically important areas, ensuring that rivals elsewhere are forced to concentrate in their respective regions. Currently available online at <http://nationalinterest.org/article/imperial-by-design-4576>

**10. IS CHINA PLAYING A DUAL GAME IN IRAN?**

Garver, John

Washington Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 1, Winter 2011, pp. 75-88

Garver, professor at the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology, notes that, over the past decade, China has cooperated with U.S. efforts at the U.N. to keep Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. At the same time, China has delayed passage of Security Council resolutions, giving Iran valuable time, and has watered down many of the sanctions. Garver writes that China may be playing a dual game in the Persian Gulf, because Beijing has contradictory interests; it wants to maintain amicable relations with the U.S., which it sees as key to China’s continuing economic growth, but at the same time, cultivates a relationship with Iran to obtain access to its energy supplies. Garver believes that there is an “anti-hegemony” aspect to China’s policy, which fits in with the oil explanation; a nuclear-armed Iran would accrue benefits to Beijing, because it would force the U.S. to concentrate its military presence in the Persian Gulf, and not East Asia. He notes there is also a train of thought among Chinese analysts that China sympathizes with Iran, because China itself has been the target of U.S. “interference” and sanctions. Available online at [http://www.twq.com/11winter/docs/11winter\\_Garver.pdf](http://www.twq.com/11winter/docs/11winter_Garver.pdf)

**11. POWER AND THE PRESIDENCY, FROM KENNEDY TO OBAMA**

Dallek, Robert

Smithsonian, Vol. 41, No. 9, January 2011, pp. 36-43

Dallek, a historian and John F. Kennedy biographer, notes that in spite of his short term, Kennedy presided over tense escalations in foreign affairs. He responded to a heightened arms race with the Soviet Union and the Cuban missile crisis by expanding the power of his office, and claiming for the presidency a broad autonomy in foreign-affairs decision-making. Dallek traces how Kennedy’s successors also faced crises during their terms, their responses to them and their interactions with Congress in charting U.S. policy. Approaching the issue in the context of current events, Dallek says even today’s leaders seem not to have grasped the dire political risks that may arise as a result of unilateral decision-making in foreign affairs. Currently available online at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Power-and-the-Presidency-From-Kennedy-to-Obama.html>

**Democracy and Global Issues**

**12. GOOGLE AND MONEY!**

Petersen, Charles

New York Review of Books, December 9, 2010

In his review of two new books about the impact of the Google search engine, *GOOGLED*, by Ken Auletta, and *THE SHALLOWS*, by Nicholas Carr, the author discusses Google's history, Internet "neutrality" that gives data equal priority, and the threat to individual privacy posed by increasingly sophisticated online advertising techniques that compromise Net neutrality. Remedies suggested to protect users include "Do Not Track" options and an effective wall between data collected to provide services and that for targeted commercial purposes. Currently available online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/dec/09/google-and-money/>

13. **JAPAN'S GIANT SHOCK RATTLES IDEAS ABOUT EARTHQUAKE BEHAVIOR**  
Monastersky, Richard  
Scientific American, March 15, 2011

Noting that Japan's March 11 earthquake was a "lesson in humility", geophysicists want to understand why the Sendai quake was so much stronger than anyone expected, and what this portends for Japan and other seismic regions around the world. Few experts thought the region near Sendai, an older-crust subduction zone, was capable of producing a magnitude-9.0 earthquake; the seawalls along much of the coast were not tall enough to stop the mammoth tsunami that was spawned by the quake. However, the author notes, there were clues that the Sendai region might be subject to severe earthquakes; the 2004 Sumatra quake occurred in older subduction crust. Recent studies show that the Sendai region is getting squeezed by the motion of the tectonic plates -- the Pacific plate was stuck, and not smoothly sliding under Japan, causing strain to build up too quickly to be relieved by recent earthquakes. This is leading experts to more closely study regions such as Tonga and the northeastern Caribbean. Currently available online at <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=japan-giant-shock-rattles-ideas-earthquake>

14. **PACKED TO THE HILT**  
Hull, Jeff  
Audubon, November-December 2010

A wintry, snow-covered landscape can seem devoid of wildlife, but in fact it can provide friendly shelter to animals adapted to live in it. Only in the past decade have scientists discovered how alive the snowscape is, from the microbial life under it, to the animals and insects that burrow into it and create shelters within the snowpack. These "subnivean" ecosystems may also have a significant impact on the amount of carbon released into the earth's atmosphere and thereby on global warming.

15. **POPULATION 7 BILLION**  
Kunzig, Robert  
National Geographic, vol. 219, no. 1, January 2011, pp. 32//69

Kunzig notes that the world's population will soon reach seven billion, with more than 95% of that population growth occurring in developing countries. While wealthy nations are currently using the most resources, emerging economies are catching up fast. This is the first in a series of in-depth stories that National Geographic will run in 2011 on population. In this first segment, the author, environment editor for the magazine, sketches out a natural history of population. The challenges associated with population growth seem endless: poverty, food and water supply, world health, climate change, deforestation, and fertility rates. Kunzig notes that there has been concern about population pressures, since the first papers on demography were written in the 17th century. Over 300 years later, says Kunzig, "we are still grappling with the outcome of People v.

Planet”, but the real problem is not overpopulation but poverty. Currently available online at <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/01/seven-billion/kunzig-text>

**16. UNVEILING HIDDEN CHINA**

Caryl, Christian  
New York Review of Books, December 9, 2010

Seven new books on China prompt this examination of the changes that country is undergoing domestically and in relation to the rest of the world. China’s transition from communism to a capitalistic society is difficult and far from over. China is being shaped not only by the Communist legacy and commercial markets, but powerful ancient forces such as Taoism and Confucianism. Even if it is not “on the road to Jeffersonian democracy,” China has much adaptation ahead, within itself and in the growing effect it is having on the world. Currently available online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/dec/09/unveiling-hidden-china/>

**U.S. Society and Values**

**17. THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR STILL BEING FOUGHT**

Foner, Eric  
The Guardian, December 20, 2010

The author notes that a century and a half after the Civil War, many white Americans, especially in the South, seem to take the idea that slavery caused the war as a personal accusation. He calls for all Americans to face candidly the central role of slavery in U.S. history in order to arrive at a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the past. Foner notes that, 150 years ago, abolitionists were a very small minority, in the North as well as the South. By 1860, however, two distinct societies had emerged within the United States, one resting on slave labor, the other free. This resulted in divergent conceptions of the role of slavery in the nation's future. Regional differences certainly existed over economic policy, political power and other matters; but in the absence of slavery, it is inconceivable that these differences would have led to war. Currently available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/dec/20/american-civil-war-usa>

**18. GRAVE DECISIONS**

Craig, David J.  
Columbia Magazine, Winter 2010-2011, pp. 20-25

Columbia psychologist Sheena Iyengar applies her expertise in human decision making to the most difficult question of all: the way we die. There’s considerable debate among bioethicists about whether patients and their families in the U.S. and other industrialized nations receive too little guidance in making difficult medical decisions. The American medical system, in this regard, is more typical than the French system. In France, doctors adhere to a traditional set of ethical guidelines that date back to the time of Hippocrates and hold that patients are incapable of acting in their best interest. Doctors throughout the West tended to subscribe to this view until the 1960s and 1970s, when the idea took root that patients are in the best position to choose their own treatment. In the U.S. and many European countries, a series of court cases formalized the doctrine of informed consent, requiring doctors to detail all treatment options, along with their potential benefits and risks, and to obtain patient permission before administering care.

19. **IT'S A TERRIBLE IDEA, LET'S GET STARTED**

Beck, Sophie

Poets & Writers, November/December 2010

This thumbnail guide to launching a literary magazine and running it on a shoestring recounts the experience of the editors of *The Normal School*, a magazine based at California State University at Fresno. From the business plan to determining the audience to marketing to staffing, the author chronicles how hard work, networking and volunteers nurtured a seed idea into fruition. Coping with unexpected details and learning from mistakes, the team discovered exciting creative avenues as they offered dynamic, fresh conversation on the “front lines” of literature.

20. **LIVERPOOL'S YANKEES**

Margolick, David

Newsweek, December 6, 2010, pp. 43-45

Writer David Margolick takes a look at globalization in the world of sports in this piece about the recent acquisition of the Liverpool Football Club by John W. Henry and Tom Warner, the owners of American Major League Baseball's Boston Red Sox. “What makes more sense in an era of globalization than moguls snapping up another country's teams? And what sport makes more sense to buy into than the world's most popular one,” he writes. Margolick says Henry and Warner are off to a friendly start with the team's fiercely loyal fans, whose relationship with previous American owners dissolved amid a miasma of odium and mistrust. The two, after all, are credited with bringing two world championships to Boston after decades of futility. And they have promised not to commit the ultimate sin, which in the minds of Liverpoolians would be siphoning money from the Reds, as the Liverpool footballers are known, to the Red Sox. Currently available online at <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/11/28/red-sox-owners-go-to-bat-for-liverpool-soccer.html>

21. **MUSIC WHERE THEY LIVE**

DuLac, J. Freedom

Washington Post Magazine, January 16, 2011, pp. 12-19

Singer Mary McBride wants to play “for people who might not ordinarily get a chance to hear live music.” The woman has performed at places as diverse as the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, a women's shelter, a halfway house, a VA hospital and a low-income housing complex for Native Americans in Gallup, New Mexico, all part of what she calls her “Home Tour.” McBride wanted to visit places that are in some way providing shelter to people in need. Outside of a couple of club dates and fundraisers, all of the “Home Tour” concerts are free, with no real potential for merchandise or album sales. Financing is an ongoing issue but McBride believes that she is making a mark in other people's lives by allowing people to take a pause from their daily struggles.

22. **SHOW TIME AT THE APOLLO**

Moore, Lucinda

Smithsonian, vol. 41, no. 7, November 2010, pp. 70-75

A stellar roster of African-American singers, dancers and comedians got their start at the landmark Harlem theater, the Apollo, which over the decades transformed popular entertainment. Notables included Billie Holiday, James Brown, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, Diana Ross, Nat “King” Cole, the Four Tops, Tina Turner, and Michael Jackson, who made his last public appearance there in 2002. Now it celebrates its 75th anniversary and it is the subject of a new

exhibition of photographs, recordings, film footage and other memorabilia, entitled "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing," which was organized by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) and the Apollo Theater Foundation. Currently available online at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/Show-Time-at-the-Apollo.html>

**23. UTAH'S NEW IMMIGRATION LAW: A MODEL FOR AMERICA?**

Liasson, Mara

National Public Radio, March 18, 2011

After the state of Arizona passed tough laws penalizing undocumented immigrants, other states have contemplated similar legislation. However, Utah, one of the most conservative states in the country, recently passed immigration laws that show Republicans can pursue a more moderate course. Utah's governor Gary Herbert signed a package of laws -- one an enforcement bill milder than Arizona's, the second a guest-worker bill that would allow undocumented immigrants to work and drive without fear of deportation. While many conservatives decry the guest-worker bill as amnesty, Utah elected officials who drafted the law say they are only trying to deal with reality. The 11 million illegal immigrants who are living in the U.S. have jobs, own property, have financial obligations and are paying taxes; deporting them all is not going to happen. Says one immigration-reform advocate, "the Utah legislation is a very rough draft of what we call comprehensive immigration reform at the national level", noting that this should spur the Obama administration to do something. Available online at

<http://www.npr.org/2011/03/18/134626178/utahs-new-immigration-law-a-model-for-america>

**24. 'YOU ARE NOT ALONE!': ANIME AND THE GLOBALIZING OF AMERICA**

McKevitt, Andrew

Diplomatic History, vol. 34, no. 5, November 2010, pp. 893-921

The recent expansion of Japanese entertainment culture in the U.S. over the past three decades is remarkable. Japanese popular culture is widespread in the U.S., encompassing television shows, karaoke, character icons such as Hello Kitty and Pikachu, manga, and video games. Despite Japan's economic slump in the past two decades, America's ties to Japan have remained strong, partly because of the power of Japanese popular entertainment. The author examines what is possibly the most significant manifestation of this "new" Japanese culture -- the "reciprocity of global cultural exchange within the United States," or what he more specifically calls the "globalizing of America." However, even though diplomatic historians have begun to examine the power of ideas and consumer products, they have yet to fully understand the mechanism of cultural diffusion and consumption outside the parameters of official policymaking. Also, in marked contrast to the manner in which some U.S. cultural commodities, such as films, radio, newspapers and magazines, have expanded globally, due in no small part to the support of the U.S. government and military, Japanese popular culture has largely remained independent of state policy. Currently available online at <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/reviews/PDF/AR281.pdf>