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Reports

[Item#1](#)
Syria's Chemical Weapons: Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Mary Beth D. Nikitin et al. September 12, 2013.

Syria has produced, stored, and weaponized chemical agents, but it remains dependent on foreign suppliers for chemical precursors. The regime of President Bashar al Asad possesses stocks of nerve (sarin, VX) and blister (mustard gas) agents, possibly weaponized into bombs, shells, and missiles. The government also has associated production facilities. Chemical weapons and their agents can

deteriorate depending on age and quality; little is known from open sources about the current condition of the stockpile. Syria continues to attempt to procure new supplies of chemical weapons precursors, which are dual-use, through front companies in third countries. Most countries that have had chemical weapons arsenals in the past have destroyed, or are in the process of destroying, these weapons under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The U.S. intelligence community cites Iran, North Korea, and Syria as having active chemical weapons programs. The use or loss of control of chemical weapons stocks in Syria could have unpredictable consequences for the Syrian population and neighboring countries, as well as U.S. allies and forces in the region.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R42848.pdf> [PDF format, 29 pages, 353.13 KB].

Item#2

UN Retains Strong Global Image. Pew Research Global Attitudes Project. Pew Research Global Attitudes Project. September 17, 2013.

As the United Nations opens its 68th General Assembly session, publics around the world continue to have a positive impression of the international organization. Clear majorities in 22 of the 39 countries surveyed say they have a favorable view of the UN, including thumbs-up from Security Council permanent members Britain, France and the U.S. Ratings for the UN are on balance favorable in Russia. But the Chinese are divided in their opinion. However, views trend negatively in key Middle Eastern publics, including Israel, the Palestinian territories, Jordan and Turkey. Overall, a median of 58% across the 39 countries surveyed express favorable views of the UN, with just 27% holding an unfavorable opinion. South Koreans express the highest support (84%). Ban Ki-moon, who heads the UN, is South Korean. Meanwhile, roughly eight-in-ten Indonesians and Filipinos approve of the international body. Support is also high in Africa, and most of Europe and Latin America.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2013/09/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Project-United-Nations-Report-FINAL-9-17-132.pdf> [PDF format, 25 pages, 354.40 KB].

Item#3

Dignity Deficit Fuels Uprisings in the Middle East. YaleGlobal. Nayef Al-Rodhan. September 10, 2013.

The Arab Spring has pummeled a region with waves of hope for recovering lost dignity, short-lived success and then despair and more despair. Unending conflict has killed many and left millions more refugees. The international community has long empowered brutal dictators, in pursuit of oil or short-term stability, and then pointedly ignored dire conditions, overlooking blatant violations of human rights and international law, while blaming citizens for cycles of inept governance, inequality, corruption and unemployment, according to the report. After the Arab Spring, the region will never be the same, argues Nayef Al-Rodhan. Islam is central to the region's identity, and mistrust for outsiders, particularly the West, runs high. Al-Rodhan urges the international community to support good governance without meddling, and he anticipates moderate, accountable and inclusive political Islam to emerge and become institutionalized within more pluralistic political systems.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/dignity-deficit-fuels-uprisings-middle-east> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#4

China's Foreign Aid and Government-Sponsored Investment Activities. RAND Corporation. Charles Wolf, Jr. et al. September 18, 2013.

With the world's second largest economy, China has the capacity to engage in substantial programs of development assistance and government investment in any and all of the emerging-market countries. The authors assess the scale, trends, and composition of these programs in 93 countries in six regions: Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, and East Asia.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR100/RR118/RAND_RR118.sum.pdf Summary [PDF format, 10 pages, 0.1 MB].

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR100/RR118/RAND_RR118.pdf Full Text [PDF format, 93 pages, 0.4 MB].

Item#5

Republicans Sour on Ben Bernanke. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. September 18, 2013.

As Ben Bernanke prepares to step down as chairman of the Federal Reserve in January, the public views him somewhat more favorably (38%) than unfavorably (31%), with 32% unable to offer a rating. Bernanke is better known now than he was in March 2008, when 55% could not rate him; at that time, 24% viewed him favorably and 21% held an unfavorable view. Currently, more Republicans have an unfavorable (42%) than favorable (32%) view of Bernanke. In March 2008, three years after George W. Bush nominated him as Fed chair, Republicans viewed Bernanke favorably by three-to-one (36%-12%). Tea Party Republicans, in particular, have a highly negative view of the outgoing Fed chair.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/9-18-13%20Bernanke%20Release.pdf> [PDF format, 7 pages, 354.07 KB].

Item#6

Five Years after Market Crash, U.S. Economy Seen as 'No More Secure' Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. September 12, 2013.

Five years after the U.S. economy faced its most serious crisis since the Great Depression, a majority of Americans (63%) say the nation's economic system is no more secure today than it was before the 2008 market crash. Just a third (33%) think the system is more secure now than it was then. Large percentages say household incomes and jobs still have yet to recover from the economic recession. And when asked about the impact of government efforts to deal with the recession, far more believe that economic policies have benefitted large banks, corporations and the rich than the middle-class, the poor or small businesses.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/9-12-13%20Econ%20Release.pdf> [PDF format, 22 pages, 638.27 KB].

Item#7

State Marijuana Legalization Initiatives: Implications for Federal Law Enforcement. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Lisa N. Sacco and Kristin Finklea. September 9, 2013.

A number of criminal networks rely heavily on profits generated from the sale of illegal drugs, including marijuana, in the United States. As such, scholars and policymakers have questioned whether or how any changes in state or federal marijuana policy in the U.S. might impact organized crime proceeds and levels of drug trafficking-related violence, particularly in Mexico. In short, there are no definitive answers to these questions; without clear understanding of (1) actual proceeds generated by the sale of illicit drugs in the U.S., (2) the proportion of total proceeds attributable to the sale of marijuana, and (3) the proportion of marijuana sales controlled by criminal organizations and affiliated gangs, any estimates of how marijuana legalization might impact the drug trafficking organizations are purely speculative. Given the differences between federal marijuana policies and those of states including Colorado and Washington, Congress may choose to address state legalization initiatives in a number of ways, or choose to take no action. Among the host of options, policymakers may choose to amend or affirm federal marijuana policy, exercise oversight over federal law enforcement activities, or incentivize state policies through the provision or denial of certain funds.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43164.pdf> [PDF format, 26 pages, 409.99 KB].

Item#8

Technology, Teen Dating Violence and Abuse, and Bullying. Urban Institute. Janine M. Zweig et al. September 6, 2013.

The study explores the role of technology in teen dating violence and abuse and teen bullying. The researchers surveyed 5,647 youth—more than any previous analysis—in 10 northeastern schools. Twenty-six percent of dating teens reported experiencing abuse online or through texts from their partners, and 17 percent of all youth said they were cyber bullied by a peer. Teenage girls reported experiencing more digital dating abuse, particularly sexual abuse, and cyber bullying than teenage boys.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412891-Technology-Teen-Dating-Violence-and-Abuse-and-Bullying.pdf> [PDF format, 197 pages, 1.98 MB].

Item#9

Why Is Prosperous China So Anxious? YaleGlobal. Orville Schell. September 5, 2013.

China, like other countries, seeks economic success and global respect. The country has accomplished so much in a few short decades, massively expanding the economy, reducing poverty and developing impressive infrastructure. Yet Chinese leaders exude anxiety, suggests Orville Schell. Fearing public discontent and unrest, the Chinese Communist Party resists transparency and expanding freedoms for

its citizens. Self-confidence and global respect "rarely derive from state control, manipulations or official propaganda campaigns," he writes. "Instead, like soft power, they arise almost alchemically from societies and cultures left free to innovate and incubate new ideas."

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/why-prosperous-china-so-anxious> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#10

World Happiness Report 2013 . U.N. Sustainable Development Solutions Network. September 9, 2013.

The report strengthens the case that well-being should be a critical component of how the world measures its economic and social development. Leading experts in several fields, economics, psychology, survey analysis, national statistics, and more, describe how measurements of well-being can be used effectively to assess the progress of nations. "There is now a rising worldwide demand that policy be more closely aligned with what really matters to people as they themselves characterize their well-being," said Professor Jeffery Sachs. "More and more world leaders are talking about the importance of well-being as a guide for their nations and the world."

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://unsdsn.org/files/2013/09/WorldHappinessReport2013_online.pdf [PDF format, 156 pages, 2.35 MB].