

ARTICLE ROUND UP

AUGUST 2009

ECONOMIC SECURITY and TRADE

1. PACIFIC ASIA AND THE ASIA PACIFIC: THE CHOICES FOR APEC

C. Fred Bergsten. Policy Brief 09-16, July 2009, 5 pages.

The author assesses the record of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) over its twenty-year existence, and discusses the global environment in which APEC is likely to be operating over the next 20 years. The brief focuses on the major changes in global institutional arrangements implied by the replacement of the “Group of Seven/Eight” (G-7/8) by the “Group of Twenty” (G-20) as the chief “steering committee” for the global economy. The author also examines the increasingly central role of an informal, de facto “Group of Two” (G-2) consisting of China and the United States.

2. WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

Francis Fukuyama & Seth Colby. American Interest. Sept/Oct 2009, 11 pages.

In the eyes of these historians, the world is not yet ready for global financial liberation. They argue that applying economic theories to the real world requires mastering numerous ideas about politics, history and local context, rather than simplified mathematical models.

3. THE MAN WHO CRASHED THE WORLD

Michael Lewis. Vanity Fair August 2009, 4 pages.

Almost a year after AIG’s collapse, despite a tidal wave of outrage, there has still been no clear explanation of what toppled the insurance giant. The author decides to ask the people involved – the silent, shell-shocked traders of the company’s financial products unit – and finds that the story may have a villain, whose reign of terror over 400 employees brought the company, the U.S. economy, and the global financial system to their knees.

4. VIETNAM: COUNTRY OUTLOOK

Economist Intelligence Unit, August 5, 2009, 4 pages.

There will be no significant changes in general in 2009-2010, as the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam is almost guaranteed to maintain its firm grip on power. Although the government has

received applause for managing the economy in such a way as to prevent a contraction, there are concerns about the potential negative side-effects of its stimulus efforts.

5. GLOBALIZATION IN RETREAT

Roger C. Altman. *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2009, 6 pages.

The author examines declines in global trade, capital flows, and immigration, focusing on the lasting effects of the global economic crisis of 2008 and 2009, and geopolitical changes connected with the economic crisis. The author also explores the effect of the worldwide recession on developing countries, with particular focus on declining levels of investment and financing, and lower commodity prices.

SOCIAL ISSUES and GOVERNANCE

6. SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS RISK DISSENSION BY IGNORING HUMAN RIGHTS

Yale Global. *Meidyatama Suryodiningrat*. August 4, 2009.

For ASEAN, the ruling regime in Burma is an insufferable embarrassment to both soft authoritarian regimes like Singapore and thriving democracies such as Indonesia. The embarrassment was in the spotlight during the recent annual ASEAN summit, at which US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton lambasted Burma for its terrible human rights record before an uncomfortable group of senior officials.

Full Text: <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=12635>

7. SILICON VALLEY: NOW PLAYING AMBASSADOR

Spencer E. Ante, *BusinessWeek*, June 29, 2009, 2 pages.

The U.S. State Department is enlisting Silicon Valley companies such as Google and Twitter to help bring high technology to Iraq and Afghanistan.

On a warm spring evening in Iraq this April, months before Iranians made global headlines with angry Twitter posts, Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey and several other American technology leaders sipped wine with Barham Salih in the garden of his Baghdad home. Dorsey urged Salih to start using the microblogging service to publicize the inner workings of the Iraqi government. "The people of Iraq and the media will follow you," said Dorsey. "A technology like Twitter can bring access and transparency to government." This conversation led to Salih's first post on April 24, 2009.

8. FDR'S LESSONS FOR OBAMA

David M Kennedy. *Time*, vol. 173, no. 26, July 8, 2009, pp. 26-29.

The author, a professor at Stanford University, notes that Barack Obama took office amid circumstances similar to those of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Kennedy writes that the big question is if, like Roosevelt, Obama can seize the day and create solutions. Roosevelt used the Depression as an opportunity to revolutionize American life for generations to come, accepting the irony that a depression made achieving those objectives possible. Kennedy writes that Obama, who faces a similar economic downturn and massive unemployment, may use his circumstances to bring about health care reform and other programs he considers necessary for improving public welfare.

Currently available online at

http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1906802_1906838_1906745,00.html

9. DATA FOR ALL

Nicholas Thompson. *Wired*, vol. 17, no. 7, July 2009, pp. 68-71.

Barack Obama is the first president to appoint a chief information officer for the federal government. Vivek Kundra, who comes to the office having served in a similar position for the District of Columbia, is planning Data.gov, a Web site where all government-produced information will be easy to find, sort and download. When that is done, according to Kundra, the private sector will find ways to use the data, which will create new services for the public and new sources of profit for entrepreneurs. He points to the example of the Global Positioning System, which was once the exclusive property of the Department of Defense; now, the system is publicly available and is used for a variety of commercial and public service purposes. "The key is recognizing that we don't have a monopoly on good ideas," Kundra told Thompson in an interview. "And that the federal government doesn't have infinite resources."

Currently available online at http://www.wired.com/politics/onlinerights/magazine/17-07/mf_cio

10. THE TWITTER EXPLOSION

Paul Farhi. *American Journalism Review*, June/July 2009, 6 pages.

Twitter, a micro-blogging tool on which users share text messages of 140 characters or less, has become useful to mass media news organizations as a means of obtaining and responding to breaking news, as communication can be instantaneous and may involve a large number of sources. The author discusses the use of the online social network Twitter in today's journalism world.

11. HILLARY'S CHALLENGE

Michelle Goldberg. *The American Prospect*, July/August 2009, 4 pages.

Promoting women's rights internationally requires an extraordinary balance of strength and delicacy. The author examines the challenges facing Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in her attempt to advance women's rights in the foreign policy arena. The article includes thoughts on what Secretary Clinton should do to overcome real obstacles, particularly in facing a State Department culture that is not accustomed to paying much attention to women's rights.

REGIONAL SECURITY

12. FARM FUTURES

Catherine Bertini, Dan Glickman. *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2009, 13 pages.

With nearly a billion people living with hunger around the world, the United States should put agriculture at the center of development aid program - and make it a key part of a new U.S. foreign policy. The authors discuss the plight of the world's poor, focusing on hunger and famine, and what the U.S. government could do to alleviate it. They analyze the systemic difficulties facing small farmers in places such as Asia and Africa, and discuss the scale and type of U.S. assistance that would be required to significantly improve the situation.

13. ASIA'S RISE

Minxin Pei. *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2009, 5 pages.

According to the author, sustained, rapid economic growth in Asia since World War II has undeniably boosted the region's economic output and military capabilities. Is Asia's rise unstoppable? Will Asia lead the world in innovation? Is power shifting from West to East? The author discusses the decline of America and the dawn of a new Asian age.

14. CRAFTING STRATEGY IN AN AGE OF TRANSITION

Shawn Brimley. *Parameters*, Winter 2008-09, 16 pages.

Rising regional powers, energy scarcity, climate change, and failing states are some of the myriad of variables that will combine to form a daunting set of strategic challenges for the Obama administration. The author examines this troubling strategic inheritance and the changing geopolitical context, and proposes a defense strategy that can best protect core American interests in an age of transition.

GLOBAL ISSUES and ENVIRONMENT

15. FEELING THE STING

Laura Tangley. *National Wildlife*, vol. 47, no. 5, August-September 2009.

Scientists speculate that the huge jellyfish swarms that have been appearing worldwide may not be a normal, periodic jellyfish bloom, but something more. A 2008 National Science Foundation report says the massive jellyfish blooms reported in the Black Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, the Mediterranean Sea, and elsewhere, could be increasing “because of human activities.” Scientists cite overfishing and pollution as primary culprits. The blooms, which have had negative impacts on beach tourism, could signal a marine ecosystem that is severely out of balance.

Currently available online at

<http://www.nwf.org/NationalWildlife/article.cfm?issueID=130&articleID=1758>

16. THE MONSTER FOOTPRINT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Kris De Kecker. *Low-Tech Magazine*, posted June 16, 2009.

The author notes that, for most of the modern industrial era, durable equipment such as cars, refrigerators or washing machines consumed more energy over their lifetime of use and operation than during their manufacture. The advent of computer technology has turned this situation upside down — vastly more energy is required for the manufacture of computers and other electronic gadgets than for consumption. Most of that embodied energy is in microprocessors, which can be six orders of magnitude greater than for conventional manufacturing processes, and the energy required during manufacture keeps growing, as bigger and more powerful computer chips are needed for graphics and video games. This is exacerbated by the fact that high technology is evolving quickly, and equipment becomes obsolete after only a few years. Recycling is not a complete answer, notes the author; addressing technological obsolescence would be the best approach to lowering the ecological footprint of digital technology.

Available online at <http://www.lowtechmagazine.com/2009/06/embodied-energy-of-digital-technology.html>

17. SMALL SIZE, BIG POTENTIAL

Govindasamy Agoramoorthy; Minna Hsu. *Environment*, vol. 50, no. 4, July/August 2008, pp. 22-35.

Across the developing world, large numbers of major dams have been built, having been touted as the best means of improving supplies of fresh water. However, they have come at a great

environmental and social cost; millions of acres of wilderness and arable land have been submerged, wildlife habitats have been destroyed, and large numbers of people have been displaced. In this article, the authors study the small dams in drought-prone western India, concluding that smaller dams offer many more benefits with a much smaller environmental footprint. A network of smaller dams store as much water over a larger area than would a single large dam. Additionally, the water supply can be managed more equitably, and can be controlled at the local/community level, which is not possible with megadams.

18. GRASSOLINE AT THE PUMP

Geogre W Huber and Bruce E. Dale. Scientific American, July 2009, page 52, 54-59.

Scientists are turning agricultural leftovers, wood, and fast-growing grasses into huge variety of biofuels – and even jet fuel. But before these next-generation biofuels go mainstream, they have to compete with oil at \$60 a barrel.

U.S. SOCIETY and CULTURE

19. OBAMA SO FAR

David Gergen, Paul Krugman, Michael Moore. Rolling Stone, August 20, 2009.

Leading political observers sit down to assess his historic presidency.

20. HEALTH INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET: SEEKING THE GOLD STANDARD

Charles L. Brown; Belinda Yff; Charles S Brown. Choice, vol. 46, no. 12, August 2009, pp. 2239-2249.

The “gold standard” refers to an assessment algorithm used to identify high-quality health-related sites. In medical lingo, it is also known as a criterion standard, or a benchmark, of the best comparison tool currently available. Interest in health-related websites has existed since the beginning of the Internet, and they continue to escalate in the present economic climate, as more Americans experience loss of jobs and medical insurance and turn to online resources for health information. This bibliographical essay describes various health websites, beginning with the substantial amount of material available from the U.S. government, including the National Institutes of Health and the National Library of Medicine; associations and organizations, like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization; the American Medical Association; websites for medical, allied health and nursing students; and electronic resources and e-books for students and professionals. The most popular commercial consumer health site is WebMD, which provides authoritative, multidimensional health information services.

21. OBAMA'S TEAM: THE FACE OF DIVERSITY

James A. Barnes. National Journal. June 20, 2009.

A mere glance around Barack Obama's Cabinet table provides ample evidence of the president's philosophy that diversity is an important element of good government. Fewer than half of the 22 officials designated by Obama as having Cabinet rank are white men - only nine in fact.

22. VALUE PROPOSITION

Donald J. Monan. Boston College Magazine, vol. 69, no. 3, Summer 2009, pp. 24-27.

The author, former president of Boston College, addressed a group of higher education leaders at a Boston hotel on the purpose of a liberal arts education. From his perspective, Monan notes that liberal education has been weakened by a variety of factors, including the pressures for specialized skills in a mobilized society and, within the undergraduate colleges themselves, the increasing specialization, departmentalization, and consequent isolation of faculty members and their offerings. Instead, American higher education should be directed almost exclusively at students' intellect, through the communication of the truths, skills, habits and qualities of intellect. Liberal education should aspire, at its deepest level, to educate students in the enriching and constructive exercise of liberty.

Currently available online at http://bcm.bc.edu/issues/summer_2009/features/value-proposition.html

23. SPEAK EASY

Barbara Hoffert. Library Journal, July 2009, 4 pages.

How can we use technology to help teach second languages to people, and how can libraries be more involved? The author explains how one learns to speak a language, while also looking at tools that libraries can use to assist people in learning a second language.

24. TAKING YOUR LIBRARY ON THE ROAD

Lorette S.J. Weldon. Computers in Libraries, May 2009, 4 pages.

The author discusses the use of an electronic library assistant, using free Google modules that allow 24-hour availability of library collections, and the ability to conduct online conversations and discussions at specific time periods.

25. RICH HARVARD, POOR HARVARD

Nina Munk. Vanity Fair, August 2009, 6 pages.

Harvard faces the worst financial crisis in its 373-year history. Endowment shrinkage, over-investment on campus, and human resource problems at the Harvard Management Company may have lead to Harvard's troubles.

TRANSLATED DOCUMENTS

The following documents are testimonies from a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to examine China's role in maritime territorial disputes in Asia, and the degree to which sovereignty issues are impacting the region and U.S. interests. These documents are available on the Internet at:

http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/senate_hearing_071509.html (English)

http://vietnamese.vietnam.usembassy.gov/sn_hearing_170809.html (Vietnamese).

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