



The Infoalert offers abstracts of current articles, mostly from US publications and by US authors, highlighting significant issues in five major areas of international or U. S. domestic affairs. Views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect U.S. government policies

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ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY

IA01 Jenkins, Mark. **The Healing Fields** (National Geographic, January 2012, pp. 96-115) See text: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/01/landmines/jenkins-text>
See photos: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/01/landmines/johnson-photography>

Land mines once crippled a war-ravaged Cambodia but the nation is now a model for how to recover from this scourge. Pol Pot, says Jenkins, once referred to land mines as his “perfect soldiers” because they wait patiently and never slept. Most of these perfect soldiers were manufactured in the Soviet Union, China, or North Vietnam. Of the tens of thousands of people killed by them, less than 25% were soldiers. Most were farmers planting rice, gathering firewood, or otherwise engaging in the day to day activities of their lives. Jenkins details the story of Aki Ra who, as a child, was forced by the Khmer Rouge to plant thousands of mines and has now spent many years locating and either defusing or detonating them in place. Ra has defused, by his own count, some 50,000 mines and detonated many others. While several thousand Cambodians a year used to be killed or injured by mines, the country’s demining programs and the efforts of people like Ra brought the total down from a high of 4,320 in 1996 to 286 in 2010. There also are programs that focus on mine risk education and survivor assistance.

IA02 d’Estries, Michael. **Top Five Most Sustainable Cities In The World** (Ecoimagination.com, General Electric, November 29, 2011) See: http://www.ecomagination.com/top-five-most-sustainable-cities-in-the-world?utm_campaign=outbrain

From using renewable energy to cutting back on emissions, five cities across the globe are leading the way when it comes to implementing sustainable initiatives. Ecorazzi.com co-founder d’Estries lists Vancouver, San Francisco, Oslo, Curitiba (Brazil), and Copenhagen as the “most sustainable cities” based on their attempts to use alternate sources of power and to reduce carbon emissions.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

IA03 Stecopoulos, Harilaos. **Telling America’s Story To The World.** (American Quarterly)

In his review of four recent books on the U.S. Information Agency and the practice of public diplomacy, Stecopoulos, assistant professor at the University of Iowa, evaluates the works of several scholars who, in his words, “have proved influential in setting the public terms of the

debate about U.S. propaganda during the Bush and Obama eras." The books included in this review essay are:

Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency, American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Andrew Falk, *Upstaging the Cold War: American Dissent and Cultural Diplomacy, 1940-1960*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2010.

Yale Richmond, *Practicing Public Diplomacy: A Cold War Odyssey*. Berghahn Books, 2008.

Nancy Snow, *Persuader-in-Chief: Global Opinion and Public Diplomacy in the Age of Obama*. Nimble Books, 2009.

According to Stecopoulos, the four authors , aim to demonstrate that the history of U.S. public diplomacy offers valuable lessons for the present, to establish that public diplomacy can never be a unilateral effort, and to emphasize that public diplomacy is not insignificant, but should be a major part of foreign policy. This article is not yet available online but will appear online with the issuance of the next print issue.

IA04 Gallagher, Anne T. **Improving The Effectiveness Of The International Law Of Human Trafficking: A Vision For The Future Of The U.S. 'Trafficking In Persons' Reports** (Human Rights Review, 2011, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 381-400)

See: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/n64427411m0623x1/>

In 2000, the United States Congress passed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act requiring the State Department to issue annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Reports describing "the nature and extent of severe forms of trafficking in persons" and assessing governmental efforts across the world to combat trafficking against the criteria established by US law. This article examines the opportunities and risks presented by the TIP Reports, tracing their evolution over the past decade and considering impact on the behavior of states. In looking to the future, the article focuses on how this influential compliance mechanism could improve its legitimacy, respond to negative impacts, and better contribute to the international legal regime around trafficking.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

IA05 Dorschner, Jon. **Why The Foreign Service Should Be More Like The Army** (Foreign Service Journal, vol. 88, no. 11, November 2011)

<http://www.afsa.org/FSJ/1111/index.html#/16/>

Dorschner, a retired FSO, grew up as an Army brat but writes that he did not truly understand the military culture until, as an FSO, he was seconded to the faculty at West Point and, later, served with members of the 82nd Airborne as part of a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Iraq. He says that, despite recent improvements in the Foreign Service, the Army remains "more representative of the general American population" and is therefore less elitist. This fosters a greater sense of collegiality in the Army which helps, in turn, to promote a sense of esprit de corps, something he never heard discussed for the Foreign Service during his 27 year career. He also praises the greater "transparency" of the Army in making it clear to junior officers what they need to do to be promoted. Dorschner sums up by expressing his belief that the Foreign Service "can learn a lot from the military."

IA06 Rieder, Rem. **Political Journalism: Picking The Winner While The Game's Still Going On** (American Journalism Review, December 2011/January 2012) See: <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=5240>

"Overreacting to the momentum of the moment is hardly a new phenomenon," says Rieder as he discusses the tendency among political journalists, one they share with sportswriters, to emphasize the story of the frontrunner but change directions as soon as something unexpected happens, like the sudden surge of Newt Gingrich as a serious challenger to Mitt Romney after months of a near-consensus among journalists that Romney would be the 2012 Republican nominee. Part of the problem is the 24/7 news coverage available on cable TV. Rieder argues that citizens should resist the steady drumbeat "because the constant stream of premature if not erroneous conclusions, the dizzying whipsawing, does nothing but diminish the already sagging credibility of the news media."

ALL ABOUT AMERICA

IA07 Levin, Kevin. **Not Your Grandfather's Civil War Commemoration** (The Atlantic, December 13, 2011) See: <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/12/not-your-grandfathers-civil-war-commemoration/249920/>

At the conclusion of 2011, the sesquicentennial of the outbreak of the American Civil War, historian Kevin Levin took a close look at how the recent commemoration differed from the centennial commemoration of 1961-65. It is no small indication of what has been called "American exceptionalism" that men whose ancestors fought each other to the death 150 years ago can today sit down in peace to discuss, even argue about, the causes, hold joint memorial services, and recreate the battles, without rancor and in a spirit of historical remembrance of a joint heritage. Few nations are so blessed as to be able and willing to do this.

REGIONAL SECURITY

IA08 Washington Post Editorial Board. **Pakistan's Three-Way Power Struggle: A Dispute With Much At Stake** (Washington Post, January 25, 2012) See: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/pakistans-three-way-power-struggle-has-much-at-stake/2012/01/23/gIQA52CQRQ_story.html

The crisis in U.S. relations with Pakistan has been overtaken, in Pakistan itself, by a power struggle among three competing authorities: the civilian government, the military and the judiciary. Its outcome could determine whether Pakistan will seek to repair its alliance with the United States or become a more open adversary in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Not coincidentally, it will also show whether the country's powerful military and intelligence service can be checked by civil institutions. Though history would suggest that the generals are bound to win, so far the result has been a stalemate.

IA09 Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation. International Crisis Group.

January 25, 2012. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/kenya/B085%20Kenyan%20Somali%20Islamist%20Radicalisation.pdf>

Somalia's growing Islamist radicalism is spilling over into Kenya. The militant Al-Shabaab movement has built a cross-border presence and a clandestine support network among Muslim populations in the north east and Nairobi and on the coast, and is trying to radicalise and recruit youth from these communities, often capitalising on long-standing grievances against the central state. This problem could grow more severe with the October 2011 decision by the Kenyan government to intervene directly in Somalia. Radicalisation is a grave threat to Kenya's security and stability. Formulating and executing sound counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation policies before it is too late must be a priority. It would be a profound mistake, however, to view the challenge solely through a counter-terrorism lens, says the report. [*Note: contains copyrighted material*].

IA10 Somalia: An Opportunity that Should Not Be Missed. International Crisis Group. February 22, 2012. See <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/b87-somalia-an-opportunity-that-should-not-be-missed.pdf>

If the international community can agree on but a few core policies, there is the best chance in years to foster peace in Somalia. [*Note: contains copyrighted material*].

IA11 Foresight Africa: Top Priorities for the Continent in 2012. Brookings Institution. See

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2012/01_top_priorities_foresight_africa/01_foresight_africa_full_report.pdf

Looking at 2012, experts from the Brookings Africa Growth Initiative (AGI) and colleagues from think tanks based in the region have come together to produce this year's issue of Foresight Africa, where they outline the top priorities for the continent for 2012 and beyond. AGI scholars assess what they see as the major challenges for Africa in the coming year and provide policy recommendations on how to manage these challenges and leverage opportunities to catalyze and reignite growth in 2012. Similarly, AGI and its partner think tanks identify country-specific challenges in Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal and Kenya. [*Note: contains copyrighted material*].

IA12 Kenya: Impact of the ICC Proceedings. International Crisis Group.

January 9, 2012. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/kenya/B084%20Kenya%20-%20Impact%20of%20the%20ICC%20Proceedings.pdf>

While the International Criminal Court (ICC) has a chance to inaugurate a new era of accountability in Kenya, misperceptions could also amplify ethnic tensions ahead of the 2012 elections if its work and limitations are not better explained to the public. [*Note: contains copyrighted material*].