



**Information Resource Center (IRC)
Public Diplomacy Section
U.S. Embassy, Vientiane, Laos**



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Article Alert: April, 2014

Dear All,

The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Center is very pleased to offer you **ARTICLE ALERT**, the monthly current awareness publication of the U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Section. Article Alert is designed to keep IRC users abreast of issues and concerns in the United States. **Full texts of all listed articles are available upon request** at irc.vientiane@state.gov or call us: 021 267089/267263, fax: 021 267160.

SPOTLIGHT: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

1. "Weathering the Climate Crisis"

Sheila Jasanoff. *Current History*, January 2014, 4 pages.

The author, a professor of science and technology studies at Harvard University, discusses how population increase, industrial development, and social mobility have combined to convert Earth into a large greenhouse that threatens the human species.

2. "The Rise of Oxygen in Earth's Early Ocean and Atmosphere"

Timothy W. Lyons, et al. *Nature*, February 20, 2014, 9 pages.

As the rapid increase of carbon dioxide concentration in Earth's modern atmosphere becomes a major concern, scientists look back in the Earth's history to study the initial increase of oxygen in the ancient Earth's atmosphere, its delayed build-up in the ocean, its increase to near-modern levels in the sea and air two billion years later, and its cause-and-effect relationship with life, in the hope to better understand the redox structure of the ocean and the atmosphere.

3. "Electronic Waste Hazards"

Donovan Griffin. *Information Today*, January/February 2014, 3 pages.

The author explores electronic waste (e-waste) hazards amid the growing demand for electronics, focusing on the hazards associated with the manual disassembly of e-waste, legal challenges in restricting export of e-waste to underdeveloped nations, and options for ethical e-waste recycling.

HUMAN RIGHTS

4. "Towards a Regional Human Rights Mechanism in the Asia Pacific?: Exploring the Potential of the Asia Pacific Forum"

Silvia Atanassova Croydon. *The Pacific Review*, May 2014, 18 pages.

Why Asia Pacific is the sole region without a human rights court or commission, and without a human rights treaty? Would it be most natural for the Asia Pacific countries to manifest themselves in a unique regional human rights framework if the region has distinct values about human rights? The author discusses the prospects of creating a regional human rights mechanism in the region.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

5. "Marx Is Back"

[Charles Kenny](#). *Foreign Policy*, January 2014, 2 pages.

The author, a senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, discusses wealth and poverty around the globe, focusing on a trend that average incomes in developing countries are slowly converging with those in developed ones.

6. "Capitalism and the Emergent World Order"

Barry Buzan and George Lawson. *International Affairs*, January 2014, 21 pages.

The authors examine the strengths and weaknesses of the four main modes of capitalist governance: liberal democratic, social democratic, competitive authoritarian and state bureaucratic. The prospects for intercapitalist competition and cooperation are also assessed.

7. "Is America Stagnating?"

[James Pethokoukis](#). *Commentary*, February 2014, 5 pages.

Does U.S. economics stop growing and innovating? The author, a columnist and blogger at the American Enterprise Institute, analyzes the views of former U.S. Treasury secretary Lawrence Summers regarding U.S. economic conditions and their future outlook, particularly Summers' Secular Stagnation scenario.

DEMOCRACY

8. "Is Successful Democracy Promotion Possible? The Conceptual Problem"

[Hans Agné](#). *Democratization*, January 2014, 23 pages.

Is it logically possible that foreign involvement in democracy promotion will increase democracy in other countries? Some critical and normative theorists think the promotion of democracy from outside is self-contradictory; while others beg to differ. The author examines contrasting views on the possibility of successful democracy promotion and offers a framework for clarifying and negotiating these disagreements.

9. "A Comparative Measure of Decentralization for Southeast Asia"

[Sarah Shair-Rosenfield](#), et al. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, January-April 2014, 23 pages.

The authors examine regional authority for five Southeast Asian countries --Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand from 1950 to 2010--and evaluate regional governments at each level between the local and the national.

THE UNITED STATES AND WORLD AFFAIRS

10. "The Information Revolution and Power"

[Joseph S. Nye Jr.](#) *Current History*, January 2014, 4 pages.

How is the information revolution changing the nature of power and increasing its diffusion? The author, a professor of political science at Harvard University, discusses the impact of technological innovation and information technology on global politics and an increase in the role of soft power.

11. "The Unruled World"

[Stewart Patrick](#). *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2014, 16 pages.

While the demand for international cooperation and effective global governance is increasing, the gap is growing. The author, a senior fellow and director of the International Institutions and Global Governance Program at the Council on Foreign Relations, examines the practices and the challenges of global governance, particularly the role of the United Nations.

THE UNITED STATES AND ASIA

12. "An Emergent US Security Strategy in Southeast Asia"

[Marvin C. Ott](#) and Kenneth M. Ngo. *Asia Pacific Bulletin No. 248*, February 11, 2014, 2 pages.

Scholars from the Woodrow Wilson Center examine the change of the foundation of U.S. security strategy in Southeast Asia, and the emergence of an incipient coalition in a competitive arena with multiple actors in support of U.S. security strategy.

13. "The United States and Asia in 2013: From Primacy to Marginalization?"

[William T. Tow](#). *Asian Survey*, January/February 2014, 10 pages.

The author analyzes prospects for an American decline in global power and its impact on the U.S. regional diplomatic presence and strategic influence in the Asia-Pacific.

GLOBAL HEALTH

14. "Does Your Germophobia Breed Superbugs?"

[Kiera Butler](#). *Mother Jones*, January/February 2014, 2 pages.

The author explores the growing market for, and public health implications of, antibacterial and antifungal agents, particularly triclosan, which is added to various consumer products including yoga mats, cutting boards, and ice cream scoops.

15. "Why We Do What We Do"

[Courtney Humphries](#). *Technology Review*, January/February 2014, 6 pages.

The author explores the brain activity responsible for turning thoughts and feelings into actions, particularly the parts involved in learning, planning, anticipating rewards, making value judgments and forming habits.

JOURNALISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

16. "Going Viral"

[Ann Friedman](#). *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 2014, 2 pages.

What makes something go viral? The author discusses the nature of virality and the challenges of a language barrier and a divergent set of cultural reference points that many U.S. news outlets are facing as they use social media to pursue an international audience.

17. "The Internet Killed Distance. Mobile Phones Brought It Back"

Avi Goldfarb. *Technology Review*, January/February 2014, 2 pages.

The author discusses the importance of location in e-commerce, how online shopping spared consumers the economic costs of visiting a physical store, and the role of mobile phones in linking online and offline environment.

18. "Privacy Pragmatism"

[Craig Mundie](#). *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2014, 11 pages.

The author, a senior adviser to the CEO of Microsoft, discusses the right of privacy and the enormous amount of information generated by personal Internet use, focusing on the obsolete guidelines on corporate protection of consumer privacy issued by the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development.

EDUCATION

19. "Living and Learning with Mobile Devices"

Education Digest. February 2014, 4 pages.

Could mobile devices transform education, engage students, and personalize learning? The article discusses perception of the use of mobile devices by U.S. students in education and offers recommendations to demonstrate the value of mobiles as tools for learning.

20. "In-Depth Study of Vocabulary Development"

Marisa Mixan. *Education Digest*, March 2014, 3 pages.

The author examines the importance of increasing the level of students' terminology and vocabulary in order to prepare them for further school and career development, and offers several methods and techniques to enhance levels of speech in the classroom.

21. "Mind Games"

[Alan Gershenfeld](#). *Scientific American*, February 2014, 5 pages.

How video games hold a great potential to help confront the educational challenges of the 21st century? The author, a co-founder and president of E-Line Media, discusses the educational potential of video games and how to use video games to improve education.

LIBRARY TRENDS

22. "How to Use Better and Stronger Passwords for Yourself and Your Patrons"

[Jessamyn West](#). *Computers in Libraries*, March 2014, 3 pages.

The author, director of operations at MetaFilter.com, offers guidelines to librarians on creating secured passwords for themselves and library patrons, emphasizing the importance of password security in preventing hacking and other computer crimes.