



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



Article Alert: January, 2015

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 487000 ext. 7089 /7263.

SPOTLIGHT: DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

1. "Democratic Regression in Thailand: The Ambivalent Role of Civil Society and Political Institutions"

Erik Martinez Kuhonta and Aim Sinpeng. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International & Strategic Affairs*, December 2014, 23 pages.

What has civil society's role been in the erosion of democracy in Thailand? Has the judiciary been a source of objective rulings or a forum for the advancement of partisan interests? The authors explore the roles of civil society, an activist judiciary, political violence and party bans on building blocks of democracy and democratization in Thailand.

2. "Social Movements and Governments in the Digital Age: Evaluating a Complex Landscape"

Zeynep Tufekci. *Journal of International Affairs*, Fall/Winter 2014, 18 pages.

The author, an assistant professor at the School of Information at the University of North Carolina, discusses the ways in which online social media empowers protesters and dissidents, as well as some of its weaknesses and the evolving responses of governments.

GLOBAL ECONOMY

3. "Will Asian Growth Be Dragged Down by the West?"

Barry Eichengreen. Global Asia, Winter 2014, 4 pages.

What impact do Western economies have on Asia today? Should Asian countries expect the unfavorable external conditions currently weighing on their export sectors to persist? The author, Professor of Economics and Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, discusses the questions.

4. "Prospects for the Global Economy in 2015"

Robert Kahn, et al. Council on Foreign Relations, December 23, 2014, 7 pages.

What are the key challenges and opportunities currently confronting the global economy? Will this year be the breakthroughs in global trade liberalization? What are the sources and implications of the recent decline in oil prices? The authors analyze the economic development and foresee the economic outlook in 2015.

5. "A Pivotal Year for the Global Economic Order"

Matthew P. Goodman. Global Economics Monthly, December 2014, 2 pages.

The author, the Simon Chair in Political Economy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, analyzes the challenge to the U.S.-led global economic order, and discusses what should be the highest priorities for President Obama's international economic policy in 2015.

6. "Corporate Governance and Political Impediments to Regional Harmonization: Cases from East Asia"

Richard W. Carney. Pacific Review, December 2014, 26 pages.

Is the harmonization of financial regulatory regimes possible in East Asia? The author discusses political determinants of corporate governance and identifies four key actors as instrumental to the politics driving corporate governance outcomes in East Asia.

7. "Demography is Economic Destiny"

Mark Pisano. National Civic Review, Fall 2014, 6 pages.

The author, a professor of practice of public administration at the University of Southern California, discusses the role of demographic factors in the U.S. economy, particularly the relationship between population age, the size of age cohorts, and income, expenditures, taxes, and gross domestic product growth.

WORLD AFFAIRS

8. "2015 Global Forecast: Crisis and Opportunity"

Craig Cohen and Josiane Gabel. Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 11, 2014, 102 pages.

The authors look ahead in this annual volume at the crises and opportunities that will likely arise in 2015, how best to deal with them, and what lasting effects they might leave for the next American administration and its allies around the world.

9. "2015: A World Confused"

Jessica T. Mathews. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2014, 3 pages.

The author analyzes U.S. foreign policy in a more difficult, intrusive world, and reflects on the bewildering geopolitics, and what might lie ahead in 2015.

10. "Time to Get Serious about Regional Institution-Building in Asia"

Kuniko Ashizawa. Asia Pacific Bulletin No. 294, December 8, 2014, 2 pages.

The author, an Adjunct Professor in the School of International Service at American University, discusses why strong and inclusive regional institutions are key to a stable Asia, which Washington, in the face of multiple challenges across the globe, now desperately needs.

11. "A Changing World: Is the UN Development System Ready?"

Stephen Browne. Third World Quarterly, November 2014, 15 pages.

The author, a fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, The City University of New York Graduate Center, analyzes the United Nations development system's current roles and capacities in the changing global context.

U.S. POLITICS

12. "The American Situation"

Paul Starr. The American Prospect, September-October 2014, 2 pages.

The author discusses political polarization in the United States, particularly the nation's deadlock as Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, are now so sharply opposed to each other that they are unable to find common ground.

13. "The GOP's Road to Victory"

Mitchell B. Reiss. The National Interest, November/December 2014, 7 pages.

The author discusses the roles that U.S. national security and foreign policy that will play in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the potential for the U.S. Republican Party nominee to be successful, referencing U.S. presidential elections during the early 21st century.

HUMAN RIGHTS

14. "Is US Humanitarian Aid Based Primarily on Need or Self-Interest?"

Rob Kevlihan, et al. International Studies Quarterly, December 2014, 16 pages.

Are political goals influence U.S. humanitarian decisions? Do U.S. allocations for humanitarian aid self-interested foreign policy imperatives or need-based imperatives? The authors examine humanitarian allocations in the post-Cold War period to answer the questions.

HEALTH

15. "Killer Chairs"

James Levine. Scientific American, November 2014, 2 pages.

The author, an endocrinologist, examines the negative health impacts of sitting for long periods of time, the physiological impact of a lack of movement, and a phenomenon called nonexercise activity thermogenesis (NEAT).

TECHNOLOGY

16. "What Trends May Come in 2015"

John Blossom. Information Today, December 2014, 2 pages.

The author discusses trends in the digital information industry for 2015, particularly U.S. Federal Communications Commission's regulations on content services in the internet, microprocessors and microchip-driven sensors for cloud computing and the collaborative aspect of artificial intelligence.

17. "The Programmable World"

Thomas A. Campbell, et al. *Scientific American*, November 2014, 5 pages.

The authors discuss how novel materials and three-dimensional (3-D) printers could lead to the creation of objects that can self-assemble or change shape or function on command.

18. "In Praise of Efficient Price Gouging"

James Surowiecki. *Technology Review*, September/October 2014, 4 pages.

The author explores the Uber car service's reported dynamic pricing model, focusing on price gouging claims, Uber's alleged reliance on "surge pricing" during peak service times, and information about customers' alleged reactions to Uber's pricing policies.

EDUCATION

19. "To Prepare 21st-Century Journalists, Help Students Become Experts"

G. Pascal Zachary. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 5, 2014, 3 pages.

The author, a professor of practice at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, discusses the role of digital journalism and the importance of interdisciplinary work for journalism students.

20. "Can Peer Review Help Johnny Write Better?"

Susan M. Taylor. *The Education Digest*, December 2014, 7 pages.

The author, an Adjunct Professor at Andrews University's School of Business Administration, examines how peer review can help improve students' writing and reading abilities as well as help learn about effective collaboration.

21. "Leading in 140 Characters or Less"

Santa J. Ono. *Educause Review*, September/October 2014, 2 pages.

The author, University of Cincinnati President, discusses the effects of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram on leadership, particularly in higher education.

LIBRARY TRENDS

22. "Library Technology Forecast for 2015 and Beyond"

Marshall Breeding. *Computers in Libraries*, December 2014, 3 pages.

The author, an independent consultant and founder of Library Technology Guides, forecasts library technologies in the wake of consolidations of library systems through mergers and acquisitions, including 3D printing and maker-spaces.

23. "The Business Case for Information Literacy"

James M. Matarazzo and Toby Pearlstein. *Online Searcher*, September/October 2014, 8 pages.

The authors discuss the importance of training library patrons and professionals to promote information literacy, and explore the transformation in the role of librarians from being an expert searcher to consultant.

24. "Intricacies of Phrase Searching"

Greg R. Notess. *Online Searcher*, November/December 2014, 3 pages.

The author, a faculty and graduate services librarian at Montana State University, discusses phrase searching as one of the advanced techniques that resonates with the largest number of searches, the phrase search syntax's role as a way to reproduce the precision functionality of the + operator, and the possibility of combining phrase searching with field searching.