

Spotlight – August 2009

U.S. GOVERNMENT & FOREIGN RELATIONS

Obama Rockets to Top of Poll on Global Leaders. *World Public Opinion.* June 29, 2009.

U.S. President Barack Obama has the confidence of many publics around the world - inspiring far more confidence than any other world political leader according to a new poll of 20 nations by WorldPublicOpinion.org. On the other hand, Putin and Ahmadinejad receive lowest marks. [ARTICLE 613](#)

U.S.-Russia Commission on POW/MIAs. *Office of the Press Secretary, The White House.* July 6, 2009.

In an exchange of diplomatic notes on July 6, the U.S. and Russian Federation reached an understanding on a framework for the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. The Commission serves as a forum through which both nations seek to determine the fates of missing servicemen. [ARTICLE 614](#)

[U.S.-Russia Relations](#) . *U.S. Department of State.* July 28, 2009.

Philip H. Gordon, Assistant Secretary-Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs; Statement before the House Foreign Relations Committee.

Clinton's Challenge in India by Evan A. Feigenbaum. *Council on Foreign Relations.* July 16, 2009.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton heads to India with an opportunity to spur improving relations further, says Evan Feigenbaum. The emphasis should be on strengthening bilateral trade, energy, and nonproliferation ties, he says. [ARTICLE 615](#)

State Department: Key Transformation Practices Could Have Helped in Restructuring Arms Control and Nonproliferation. *U.S. Government Accountability Office.* July 2009.

In 2004, the Department of State (State) Inspector General (IG) concluded that State's three-bureau structure for arms control and nonproliferation policy did not adequately address post-September 11 challenges. The IG also noted that State had yet to formalize the responsibilities of the three bureaus in its Foreign Affairs Manual. Between late 2005 and early 2006, State created a new two-bureau structure to better address these issues and improve efficiency. GAO assesses the reorganizations and their effectiveness. [ARTICLE 616](#)

Empty Promises: What Happened to 'Development' in the WTO's DOHA Round? *Oxfam International.* July 16, 2009.

The report says that the Doha Round has become an exercise in prizing open developing country markets rather than one to rebalance decades of unfair agricultural and industrial trade rules. "Rich nations would do better to renounce their self-interested negotiating tactics and get back to original premise of the Doha Round if they are sincere about getting these negotiations back on track," Jeremy Hobbs, Oxfam International executive director, said. [ARTICLE 617](#)

The National Voter Registration Act at 15 by Frances Fox Piven. *Project Vote.* July 2009.

Signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, the National Voter Registration Act was hailed by some as "the final achievement of the 1960's voting rights revolution," and proponents estimated that it would add 50 million Americans to the voting rolls. However, according to the report, the lack of enforcement, failures of state and federal leadership, and restrictive court decisions have left the full potential of the NVRA unrealized, and have left millions of disenfranchised Americans still awaiting the promise of a truly inclusive democracy. [ARTICLE 618](#)

[Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008.](#) *U.S. Bureau of Census.* July 20, 2009.

About 131 million people reported voting in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, an increase of 5 million from 2004, according to the table package of the U.S. Census Bureau. The increase included about 2 million more black voters, 2 million more Hispanic voters and about 600,000 more Asian voters, while the number of non-Hispanic white voters remained statistically unchanged.

Questions for Judge Sotomayor on the use of Foreign and International Law by Steven Gorves. *Heritage Foundation*. July 6, 2009.

Judge Sonia Sotomayor has not yet had occasion to cite to or rely upon foreign or international law to interpret the U.S. Constitution. Based upon a recent speech, it appears that she will continue in the tradition of sitting members of the Court in polling "the world community" and citing rulings of foreign and international courts. The author thinks she should be questioned at length during her confirmation hearing.

[**ARTICLE 619**](#)

Sonia Sotomayor: the Criminal Justice Record. *U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee*. July 7, 2009.

The report shows results of a comprehensive study of Supreme Court nominee Judge Sonia Sotomayor's appellate decisions in criminal justice cases. "Based on a review of more than 800 criminal cases, it can be said with confidence that Judge Sotomayor is unquestionably a consensus judge on criminal justice issues," Chairman Leahy said. "In fact, Judge Sotomayor's criminal justice record proves that she is a moderate judge, whose decisions in criminal cases rarely differ from those of her colleagues on the Federal bench."

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