

Spotlight – July 2009

U.S. Government & Politics

The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government 2009. *Partnership for Public Service and American University Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation.* May 2009.

The rankings include the top five with Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Government Accountability Office, NASA, Intelligence Community, and the Department of State. [ARTICLE 535](#)

Keep Gitmo Going: the Case for Retaining the Vital Detention and Interrogation Facility at Guantanamo Bay by E. J. Kimball and Benjamin Lerner. *Center for Security Policy.* May 28, 2009.

The white paper identifies the national security, public safety, legal and economic challenges associated with closing Guantánamo and transferring detainees to the U.S. or to foreign custody. Anywhere from 10-20% of the nearly 500 detainees released from Guantanamo have returned to the battlefield in some capacity, says the paper. [ARTICLE 536](#)

2008 Presidential Campaign Financial Activity Summarized: Receipts Nearly Double 2004 Total by Judith Ingram et al. *U.S. Federal Election Commission.* June 8, 2009.

Financial activity of 2008 presidential candidates and national party convention committees increased 80% in receipts over the 2004 presidential election, totaling more than \$1.8 billion. It was the first time in the history of presidential public financing that a major party nominee declined to accept public funds for the general election. [ARTICLE 537](#)

Independents Take Center Stage in the Obama Era. *Pew Research Center.* May 21, 2009.

Centrism has emerged as a dominant factor in public opinion as the Obama era begins. Republicans and Democrats are even more divided than in the past, while the growing political middle is steadfastly mixed in its beliefs about government, the free market and other values that underlie views on contemporary issues and policies. [ARTICLE 538](#)

Women More Likely to be Democrats, Regardless of Age. *Gallup.* June 12, 2009.

A new Gallup analysis of almost 150,000 interviews conducted from January through May of this year sheds new light on the substantial gender gap that exists in American politics today. Not only are women significantly more likely than men to identify as Democrats, and less likely to identify as independents, but -- with only slight variation -- this gap is evident across all ages, from 18 to 85, and within all major racial, ethnic, and marital-status segments of society. [ARTICLE 539](#)

International Relations & Public Diplomacy

U.S. Diplomacy: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight. *U.S. Government Accountability Office.* May 27, 2009.

While the prior administration issued a national communication strategy in June 2007, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 requires that the President issue a new comprehensive strategy by December 2009 to guide interagency efforts. [ARTICLE 540](#)

Global Peace Index 2009. *Institute for Economics & Peace.* June 2009.

The global economic recession and an increase in violent conflict and political instability around the planet have taken a toll on world peacefulness in 2008, according to the 2009 Global Peace Index (GPI). The results of the 2009 GPI show that as the global economy headed into recession in 2008, many of the indicators used by the GPI to measure peace, such as the likelihood of violent demonstrations and political instability, increased, while others, such as respect for human rights, decreased. [ARTICLE 541](#)

U.S.-Iranian Engagement: the View from Tehran. *International Crisis Group*. June 2, 2009.

For the first time since Iran and the U.S. broke ties in 1980, there are real prospects for fundamental change. The new U.S. president, Barack Obama, stated willingness to talk unconditionally. Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, implicitly blessed dialogue. The briefing seeks to shed light on what Tehran thinks about dialogue, its goals and visions of a future relationship. [ARTICLE 542](#)

Change we can Believe in? The Muslim World, America, and Obama's Promise by Navtej Dhillon et al. *Brookings Institute*. June 1, 2009.

In reaching out to the Muslim world, President Obama will invariably touch upon some of the most important concerns and grievances, including the Arab-Israeli conflict and the need to enhance respect and understanding between the U.S. and the Muslim world. The president will outline the contributions and achievements of Islamic civilization, and recognize the economic, social, and political progress underway in several Muslim countries. [ARTICLE 543](#)

State Department Official Encourages Dialog with Muslim World by Ralph Dannheisser. *U.S. Department of State*. May 12, 2009.

President Obama and his administration are fully committed to pursuing "a deep and positive dialogue with Muslims around the world based on mutual respect and in support of our mutual interests," according to a key State Department official. The magnitude of the challenges faced makes it vital to go beyond interactions between governments to "reach out and develop partnerships with all elements of civil society," said acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Madelyn Spirnak. [ARTICLE 544](#)

[Remarks by President Obama to the Turkish Parliament](#) . *The White House*. April 6, 2009.

President Obama addresses the Turkish Parliament, reaching out to the Muslim world.

Crossroads on Cuba: Will Democracy or Sovereignty Prevail? by Ted Piccone. *Brookings Institute*. June 2, 2009.

Thanks to a surging movement led by Nicaragua and Venezuela, Cuba's readmission to the world's oldest regional organization, the Organization of American States (OAS), is on the agenda. The question of Cuba's suitability for membership in an organization that defines promoting and defending democracy as one of its core purposes presents a defining moment for Latin America as much as the U.S. [ARTICLE 545](#)

Walking Trough Jelly: Language Proficiency, Emotions, and Disrupted Collaboration in Global Work by Tsedal Beyene et al. *Harvard Business School Working Papers*. June 2009.

In an ethnographic study comprised of interviews and concurrent observations of 145 globally distributed members of nine project teams of an organization, the study finds that uneven proficiency in English, the lingua franca, disrupted collaboration for both native and non-native speakers. [ARTICLE 546](#)

[Core Differences Remain After Netanyahu-Obama Meeting](#). *Council on Foreign Relations*. May 19, 2009.

CFR Senior Fellow Steven A. Cook says U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wanted to project "a friendly partnership" in their White House meeting but appear to remain divided on core issues -- a two-state solution for Palestinians and Israelis and how to confront Iran.