

ARTICLE ALERT

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U.S. POLITICS AND SOCIAL PROCESSES

[1] Daydream Believers

American Journalism Review, August/September 2009

Rieder, Rem

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“America has become a country filled with people who stubbornly continue to believe what they want to believe, regardless of the facts,” says Rieder, using as examples the persistence of people who refuse to believe Obama was born in the United States and those who believe that there are in fact provisions for “death panels” in health-care reform proposals. This situation makes it all the more critical for journalists to go beyond the “he-said, she-said” reporting of the past and not hesitate to reach firmly expressed conclusions -- with fairness, of course. Mainstream journalism has long been uncomfortable about making and expressing conclusions, but according to Rieder, “as long as that conclusion is based on carefully reported evidence, not ideology, there's no good reason not to do it.”

[2] The Story Behind The Story

Atlantic Monthly, October 2009

Bowden, Mark

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Unbiased journalism is being replaced by the work of “political hit men,” Bowden says, citing the televised treatment of Judge Sonia Sotomayor after she was nominated by Obama for the U.S. Supreme Court. The information on Sotomayor -- specifically the “make policy” and “Latina woman” comments -- wasn’t uncovered by journalists, but simply reprocessed by television news rooms from conservative web sites. The conservative Judicial Confirmation Network had gathered an “attack dossier” on each of the prospective Supreme Court nominees and had fed them all to the networks in advance, Bowden says. He decries the demise of the disinterested newspaper reporter: “What gave newspapers their value was the mission and promise of journalism -- the hope that someone was getting paid to wade into the daily tide of manure, sort through its deliberate lies and cunning half-truths, and tell a story straight.”

[3] Social Networking and Constituent Communications: Member Use of Twitter during a Two- week Period in the 111th Congress

**Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. September 21, 2009.
Matthew Eric Glassman et al.**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 15 pages]

During the past 15 years, the development of new electronic technologies have altered the traditional patterns of communication between Members of Congress and constituents. Many Members now use e-mail, official websites, blogs, Youtube channels, and Facebook pages to communicate with their constituents--technologies that were either non-existent or not widely available 15 years ago. Members' use of Twitter can be divided into six categories: position taking, press or web links, district or state activities, official congressional action, personal, and replies.

[4] America's Top Dynasty?

Stephen Hess

The Washington Post, posted on September 13, 2009

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American public life is saturated with them. Kennedys. Bushes. Clintons. Powerful individuals connected to one another by blood or by marriage who, deservedly or not, take on that most paradoxical of American labels: dynasty.

**[5] A Liberalicon And A Legendary Legislator: A Five-Decade Senate Legacy
CQ Politics, August 26, 2009**

Stern, Seth.

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He was known across the nation as an emphatic and tireless advocate of progressive causes for nearly half a century, and even more than that as the patriarch of America's most storied Democratic political dynasty. At the Capitol, however, Edward M. Kennedy will be remembered as something quite different — perhaps the most effectively pragmatic dealmaker in modern times, someone who was as eager as he was skilled at working with almost anyone to get things done.

ENVIROMENT AND ENERGY

[6] China, The United States, and the Climate Change Challenge.

World Resources Institute.

Deborah Seligsohn et al. October 2009.

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 19 pages]

The report discusses the successes and challenges to effective regulation in China. It also addresses U.S. competitiveness concerns in relation to the introduction of U.S. cap-and-trade policies, and specific opportunities for enhanced climate change cooperation between the two countries.

Fact Sheets: Memorandum of Understanding on Enhancing Cooperation on Climate Change, Energy and the Environment at the U.S. - China Strategic and Economic Dialogue

Office of the Spokesman, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State

July 28, 2009

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format]

- This year marks the 30th anniversary of U.S.-China cooperation on energy and environment.
- Climate change, energy security and environmental protection are among the greatest challenges facing the United States and China and were a central focus of the first U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) held July 27 and 28 in Washington, DC.
- Discussions during the S&ED underscored the extent to which our countries are interconnected and demonstrated that cooperation between the United States and China is critical in meeting these challenges.
- The two countries produced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that elevates climate change in our bilateral relationship, recommits the United States and China to reach a successful international agreement and expands cooperation to accelerate the transition to a sustainable low-carbon global economy.
- ...

[7] State Green Economy Profiles.**National Governors Association.****Mary Jo Waits and Sue Gander. September 29, 2009.**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format with links]

As governors across the country look at ways they can help build a green economy in their state, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) has commissioned Collaborative Economics Inc. (CEI) to prepare a profile of each state's "green" economy. State profiles can be found by clicking on the map. The data is designed to provide a detailed, empirical account of each state's existing assets across multiple green sectors and serve as a foundation for identifying future growth areas and related needs.

[8] World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change**World Bank, September 15, 2009**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 365 pages]

According to the report, developing countries can shift to lower-carbon paths while promoting development and reducing poverty, but this depends on financial and technical assistance from high-income countries, says a new World Bank report released today. High-income countries also need to act quickly to reduce their carbon footprints and boost development of alternative energy sources to help tackle the problem of climate change.

[9] Securing America's Future: Enhancing Our National Security by Reducing Oil Dependence and Environmental Damage**Center for American Progress, posted on August 25, 2009****Christopher Beddor, et., al**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format]

The bill - the American Clean Energy and Security Act, or ACESA, would cap greenhouse gas emissions, boost investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy such as wind and solar, and jumpstart the transition to a clean-energy economy. These new investments in clean-energy technologies would slash global warming pollution and reduce foreign oil use while creating jobs and increasing our economic competitiveness with China and other nations...

[10] Six Sources of Limitless Energy?
Harvard Business Review, September 2009, pp.66-67
Gardiner Morse
[Contact IRC for electronic copy](#)

The article reports on six sustainable sources of energy that use technologies based on the wind, the sun, algae, ocean waves, and nuclear and geothermal energy. Innovations in the energy technologies are discussed including the stages of development for high-altitude wind turbines, genetically engineered algae that is used for biofuel, wave power from the ocean, nuclear fusion, enhanced geothermal systems, and solar cells on satellites that will be placed in space. Companies involved in green technology such as Magenn Power, Synthetic Genomics, Pelamis Wave Power, and Solaren are mentioned.

ECONOMICS AND TRADE ISSUES

[11] Obama's Trade Policy Taking Shape- Part I
YaleGlobal, 14 September 2009
Edward Gresser
[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format]

For all the furor about the US' proposed tariff on Chinese car tires, the end result is more likely to be a whimper, according to trade specialist Edward Gresser of the Democratic Leadership Council in Washington. It is unlikely that this tariff will set off the next trade war, igniting a global depression similar to the 1930s precisely because such tariffs are usual and allowed by the WTO. Furthermore, the tariffs, which, at 35 percent, will be smaller than the original recommendation of 55 percent, will drop to the normal four percent by 2012. The upshot is that such measures have little impact on the imports as noted by the small decline in US steel imports in the 2000-2003 as a result of tariffs in that period. Moreover, once the tariffs came off, steel imports returned to normal. As Gresser notes, the US has the right to impose the tire tariffs under China's WTO accession agreement and China has the right to appeal. This means that editorials and populism aside, very little will change in trade flows. (Abstract from YaleGlobal)

[12] Obama's Trade Policy Taking Shape- Part II
YaleGlobal, 16September 2009
Bernard K. Gordon
[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format]

With the upcoming G-20 meeting in Pittsburgh and recent proposed tariffs on Chinese tires as a backdrop, the spotlight has shifted to Obama's trade policy and support of the Doha Round, at least momentarily. But circumstances for the White House are different today than in the past. According to Professor Emeritus Bernard K. Gordon, India, which was blamed for stalling the Doha Round before, now appears more agreeable to resurrecting it. This places the burden firmly on Obama and his team to show that they will support Doha – a difficult enough endeavor even in placid times. Complicating the issue is the US House of Representatives' growing frustration with Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in general. FTAs became a favorite tool as the WTO's Doha Round stalled. But as Gordon's analysis of the data shows, FTAs have so far proved of questionable benefit to the US with its exports to free trade partners rising less than other countries. And many economists argue that FTAs are inconsistent with WTO principles, the preference to employ them by the US, China, and others notwithstanding. At this stage then, the world awaits for Obama to define his trade policy. Given the actions of India, Congress, and others, such policy may already be partially defined for him. (Abstract from YaleGlobal)

[13] Current Conomic Conditions: Summary
Federal Reserve District, September 9, 2009

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 48 pages]

Commonly known as the Beige Book, this report is published eight times per year. Each Federal Reserve Bank gathers anecdotal information on current economic conditions in its District through reports from Bank and Branch directors and interviews with key business contacts, economists, market experts, and other sources. The Beige Book summarizes this information by District and sector. An overall summary of the twelve district reports is prepared by a designated Federal Reserve Bank on a rotating basis.

[14] The Financial Development Report 2009
World Economic Forum. October 8, 2009.

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 380 pages]

The world's largest economies took the biggest hit, according to the report. Global financial centers still lead in the report's Index, but the effects of financial instability have pulled down their scores compared to last year. The United Kingdom, buoyed by the relative strength of its banking and non-banking financial activities, claimed the Index's top spot from the U.S., which slipped to third position behind Australia largely due to poorer financial stability scores and a weakened banking sector. The report ranks 55 of the world's leading financial systems and capital markets.

[15] The Global Competitiveness Report 2009-2010
World Economic Forum. September 8, 2009.

Xavier Sala-i-Martin.

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 492 pages]

Switzerland tops the overall ranking in The Global Competitiveness Report 2009-2010. The United States falls one place to second position, with weakening in its financial markets and

macroeconomic stability. Singapore, Sweden, and Denmark round out the top five. European economies continue to prevail in the top 10 with Finland, Germany and the Netherlands following suit. The United Kingdom, while remaining very competitive, has continued its fall from last year, moving down one more place this year to 13th, mainly attributable to continuing weakening of its financial markets.

[16] Fact Sheet: U.S.-China: Thirty Years of Science and Technology Cooperation
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S.
Department of State, October 15, 2009

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On January 31, 1979, U.S. President Jimmy Carter and China's leader Deng Xiaoping signed the U.S.-China Science Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation. The U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement provides a framework for scientific and technological research and exchanges. Some of the accomplishments achieved under the Agreement over the past 30 years include the following...

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

[17] Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power
Foreign Affairs, July/August 2009, 4 pages
Nye, Joseph S. Jr.

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"Smart power" is a term the author developed in 2003 to counter the misperception that soft power alone can produce effective foreign policy. Power is one's ability to affect the behavior of others to get what one wants. There are three basic ways to do this: coercion, payment, and attraction. Hard power is the use of coercion and payment. Soft power is the ability to obtain preferred outcomes through attraction. In an otherwise estimable new book, *Power Rules: How Common Sense Can Rescue American Foreign Policy*, Leslie Gelb argues that "soft power now seems to mean almost everything" because both economic and military resources can influence other states. But Gelb confuses the actions of a state seeking to achieve desired outcomes with the resources used to produce those outcomes. Broader goals, such as promoting democracy, protecting human rights, and developing civil society, are not best handled with guns.

Fact Sheets: American "Smart Power": Diplomacy and Development Are the Vanguard

Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State

May 4, 2009

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" The Obama Administration recognizes that the United States and the world face great perils and urgent foreign policy challenges including ongoing wars and regional conflicts, the global economic crisis, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, climate change, worldwide poverty, food insecurity, and pandemic disease.

Military force may sometimes be necessary to protect our people and our interests. But diplomacy and development will be equally important in creating conditions for a peaceful, stable and prosperous world. That is the essence of smart power – using all the tools at our disposal...."

[18] Between China and India: Is Tibet the Wedge or Link?**YaleGlobal , 8 September 2009****George Yeo**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format].

Ever since the March 14 riots in Tibet, the Autonomous Region has enjoyed increased global scrutiny, though access for foreign observers has been limited. Recently, Singapore's George Yeo became the first foreign minister to visit Tibet since the riots. A long-time student of Asian history, Minister Yeo explores Tibet's role in the relations between Asia's two rising giants China and India in its historical context. As Yeo notes, the 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet, the outbreak of rebellion followed by the flight of the Dalai Lama, and the orgy of destruction of Tibetan monasteries and artifacts during the Cultural Revolution provide the background to the current turmoil. In the years since, China has devoted enormous resources to develop Tibet, but, as is often the case, "different ethnic and religious groups living side by side respond at different speeds to globalization." Today, he notes, Tibetans lag behind Han Chinese especially in economic performance and this discrepancy needs to be recognized and managed. Another issue that could complicate the situation in Tibet is if the next Dalai Lama is found to have been reincarnated outside China, as the present Dalai Lama suggested. Many believe the reincarnation will occur in Tawang, in Arunachal Pradesh – a Tibetan inhabited region controlled by India but claimed by China – from whence the 6th Dalai Lama hailed. (Abstract from YaleGlobal)

[19] China's International Behavior: Activism, Opportunism, and Diversification**The Rand Corporation, 2009****Evan S. Medeiros**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 13 pages].

China is now a global actor of significant and growing importance. It is involved in regions and on issues that were once only peripheral to its interests, and it is effectively using tools previously unavailable. It is no longer necessary to emphasize integrating China into the existing constellation of norms, rules, and institutions of the international community; by and large, China is already there. It is influencing perceptions, relationships, and organizations all over the world. China's international behavior is clearly altering the dynamics of the current international system, but it is not transforming its structure.

[20] China's Arrival: A Strategic Framework for a Global Relationship**Center for a New American Security. September 22, 2009.****Linton Brooks et al.**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 184 pages].

According to the report, China's rise is one of the most significant geopolitical events in modern history, with important ramifications for U.S. interests, regional power balances, and the international order. As the Obama administration confronts a broad set of worldwide challenges, questions remain as to how the United States should engage China amidst uncertainty about its long-term intentions and how to balance this important relationship against concerns regarding China's behavior in the international community.

[21] Obama And East Asia: No Room For Complacency
Center for Strategic and International Studies PacNet #58, August 20, 2009
Gerald Curtis

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 2 pages]

The Obama administration's foreign policy in East Asia has been characterized more by continuity than by change, building on policies of previous administrations that have served U.S. interests well. But there is a danger that, forced by events to focus attention on the world's hot spots, continuity will shade into complacency, leaving the administration to constantly try to catch up with developments in an East Asia that is rapidly changing.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

[22] Information Literacy: Essential Skills for the Information Age
The Information School of the University of Washington. March 2008.
Michael B. Eisenberg.

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 9 pages]

The paper offers an overview of Information Literacy (IL) focusing on three contexts for successful IL learning and teaching: (i) the information process itself, (ii) technology in context, and (iii) implementation through real needs in real situations. The author covers conceptual understandings of IL, the range of IL standards and models, technology within the IL framework, and practical strategies for effective IL skills learning and instruction in a range of situations.

National Information Literacy Awareness Month, 2009: By the President of the United States of America: A proclamation.

The White House. October 1, 2009.

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 1 page].

"President Obama declares October to be National Information Literacy Awareness Month. The proclamation was an initiative of the National Forum on Information Literacy supported by Senator Kerry and the late Senator Kennedy..."

[23] Understanding Information Literacy: A Primer
U. N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2008.
Forest Woody Horton, Jr.

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 103 pages]

Explaining in an easy-to-understand, non-technical fashion to senior and middle level public and private sector executives – in government ministries, private enterprises, academic institutions, and not-for-profit organizations – how to find, retrieve, organize, evaluate and effectively use information is what the publication is all about.

[24] American Falling: Longtime Dominance In Education Erodes
Fischer, Karin

Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 56, No. 7, October 9, 2009, pp. A1, A21-A23

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The U.S. is still the top choice of international students; but by many measures, U.S. preeminence in education is eroding. As evidence of this erosion, Fischer cites the low percentage of Americans graduating with majors in engineering, the declining percentage of highly-qualified, low-income students who go to college and continuing rounds of budget cuts. Many who start doctoral programs fail to finish, especially women and minorities; more than half of the doctorates awarded by U.S. institutions went to foreign students. “I’m worried we won’t realize what’s at stake until it’s too late,” says Charles Vest, former president of MIT. The current economic and fiscal crisis has put U.S. public higher education in a more precarious situation because federal and state requirements have often put such programs as Medicaid and elementary and secondary education off-limits for budget-cutting purposes, leaving higher education to take the brunt of the cuts, as in California. Some experts are calling for a larger federal role and long-term strategic planning; others are leery of an enlarged federal role and call instead for a national discussion of education. The U.S. system was never designed to educate most Americans, says Patrick Callan, president of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education; “We’re still stuck on having the best high-education system of the 20th century, when it’s almost a decade into the 21st century.”

U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES**[25] Online Grocery Shopping: Ripe Timing for Resurgence**

The Nielsen Company.

Maya Swedowsky. Web posted October 2009.

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 9 pages]

Four mega trends, convenience, Generation Y consumers coming of age, increased broadband penetration and customization, have come together to fuel growth in the online grocery market. While the online channel is still small for the food and beverage sector, it is poised for growth, according to the report.

[26] What Divides America?

Pew Research Center, posted on September 24, 2009

Rich Morin

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format]

A survey from Pew Research Center taken this summer found that fewer people perceived there are strong conflicts between blacks and whites than saw strong conflicts between immigrants and the native born, or between rich people and poor people.

[27] The Long Way Home

Smithsonian, Vol. 40, No. 6, September 2009, pp. 70-77

Theroux, Paul

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Paul Theroux is one of the masters of travel writing, but he opens this article for Smithsonian admitting that he has never seen a great deal of his own country. He begins his cross-country road trip in Los Angeles, heading to his home in Cape Cod, Massachusetts with the plan that the journey is the destination. Along the way, he makes many of the iconic stops of the American road trip -- the Las Vegas strip, the Red Rocks of Arizona, the memorial to victims of the Oklahoma City terrorist attack, and the blues bars on Memphis' Beale Street. He finds barren deserts, ferocious weather, and pastoral scenes which he likens to similar places he has seen in distant countries. But at the end of his more than 5,400 kilometer journey, Theroux observes that he experienced "not a moment of alienation or danger, no roadblocks, no sign of officialdom, never a second of feeling I was somewhere different." Currently available online under the title "Taking the Great American Roadtrip".

ARTS AND LITERATURE

**[28] The Art of Obama Worship
Commentary. Sep 2009. Vol. 128, Iss. 2
Michael J. Lewis**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format]

The article analyzes the use of visual art in the campaign of U.S. President Barack Obama. It notes a devotional, iconic quality to the poster art of Shepard Fairey, creator of the red and blue poster of Obama's face with the word "Hope" on it. It traces the history of visual art in political campaigns back to the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany and notes that artists who painted Obama are the first since the 1960s to create sincere, irony-free political art.

**[29] Lester Young Turns 100
Smithsonian.com, August 25, 2009.
Jamie Katz**

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Though Lester Young was revered in his time as an artist of the highest rank, the 100th anniversary of his birth has not sparked much in the way of commemoration. No postage stamp; no parade in Woodville, Mississippi, where he was born on August 27, 1909; no statues in New Orleans, Kansas City or New York City —all places with a claim on the spellbinding Swing Era saxophonist known as Prez.

**[30] Thus Spake Zora
City Journal, Summer 2009, Vol.19, No.3
John H. McWhorter**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format]

Zora Neale Hurston's writing challenged black people as well as white. One of the last photos of Zora Neale Hurston, taken in the late fifties, is heartrending. Once renowned as a handsome figure who could dominate any room, she sits outside a Florida bungalow, a bloated old woman living in poverty, chatting with locals.

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