

ARTICLE ALERT

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POLITICS AND SOCIAL PROCESSES

[1] Covering Corruption: the Difficulties of Trying to Make a Difference Center for Media Assistance and National Endowment for Democracy. July 21, 2010.

Rosemary Armao

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The idea that a free press is linked to better, more honest government is accepted as a given, largely without direct evidence. Yet only recently have news organizations begun asking whether what they are doing is making any difference. The report examines the impact of reporting about corruption on the incidence of corruption, asking whether and how media has an effect in bringing about reform and better governance.

[2] Chinese Nongovernmental Organizations: Politics by Other Means? American Enterprise Institute. July 2010.

Amy E. Gadsden

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Nongovernmental organizations are growing in number and finding ways to survive in China, even though the country's political limits artificially restrict their growth, as they take up political issues but are not yet political actors, according to the author.

[3] Unwanted Imigrants: America's Deportation Dilemma YaleGlobal. July 27, 2010

Joseph Chamie

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Increased labor mobility has accompanied global population growth and ease of travel. The world has roughly 50 million illegal migrants, about one quarter of which live in the U.S. Nations widely oppose illegal immigration, but identifying, catching and then deporting violators present a huge challenge, explains Joseph Chamie. Attitudes about deportation vary wildly within communities, and proceedings are costly. As a result, the U.S. deports only a small fraction - less than 4 percent in 2008 - of illegal migrants. The stress and joblessness of global recession have made nations more eager to control borders. A law passed in the state of Arizona is scheduled to go into effect on July 29, requiring strict enforcement of federal

immigration laws, screening for illegal immigrants and penalties for non-enforcement. The world will watch closely whether it's even possible for the state to arrest and deport anticipated large numbers of immigrants in a cost-effective, legal and humane way.

[4] From Solicitor General to Supreme Court Nominee: Responsibilities, History, and the Nomination of Elena Kagan

Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. June 23, 2010.

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On May 10, 2010, President Obama nominated Solicitor General Elena Kagan to replace retiring Justice John Paul Stevens. If confirmed, Elena Kagan would be the first serving Solicitor General to be appointed to the Court since the elevation of Thurgood Marshall in 1967. She would also be only the fifth of 111 Justices to come to the bench with such experience.

ENVIROMENT AND ENERGY

[5] Trouble Waters

World Watch, May/June 2010

Renner, Michael

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South and Central Asia's imminent water shortages pose food security risks and potential for international conflicts over resources. Neighboring Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan require water when upstream Tajikistan fills its reservoirs. Afghanistan and Pakistan have a long-standing dispute over use of the Kabul River, a tributary of the Indus that flows through Pakistan and India. India, Pakistan and China are of particular concern as Himalayan glaciers that supply their chief rivers melt. Indian dam projects in Kashmir have constricted water supply to Pakistan. Meanwhile, climate change produces increasingly unpredictable monsoon patterns. The author notes that there are solutions to the challenges, but multilateral cooperation is essential.

[6] Deep Horizon Oil Spill: Selected Issues for Congress

Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. June 18, 2010.

Curry L. Hagerty and Jonathan L. Ramseur.

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On April 20, 2010, an explosion and fire occurred on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico. This resulted in 11 worker fatalities, a massive oil release, and a national response effort in the Gulf of Mexico region by the federal and state governments as well as BP. Based on estimates from the Flow Rate Technical Group, which is led by the U.S. Geological Survey, the 2010 Gulf spill has become the largest oil spill in U.S. waters, eclipsing the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill several times over. The oil spill has damaged natural resources and has had regional economic impacts. In addition, questions have been raised as to whether the regulations and regulators of offshore oil exploration have kept pace with the increasingly complex technologies needed to explore and develop deeper waters.

ECONOMICS AND TRADE ISSUES**[7] Does the Financial Crisis Threaten Democracy?**
SAIS Review, vol. 30, no. 1, Winter-Spring 2010, pp. 165-173**Davies, Iwan**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format]

The author, at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, believes that as government stimulus packages taper off, there will be concerns on whether the world economy will enter a period of sustained recovery, or whether the wounds are deeper than anticipated. Should the crisis not abate quickly, governments already struggling under the weight of excessive spending and decreased revenues will have limited policy options. This will create challenges for governments in many developing countries where economic growth is a key source of political legitimacy. Could the current or future economic crises lead newer democracies back down the road to authoritarianism? Will growing authoritarian states, such as Iran, Russia or China, come under increasing pressure to democratize? The author seeks to answer these questions by exploring the economic effects of the financial crisis and the potential impacts on political stability in developing countries.

[8] Nothing Left
New Yorker, July 12, 2010**Demick, Barbara**[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

On November 30, 2009, North Korea enacted a currency revaluation, decreeing that it would exchange existing currency for new currency at the rate of 100 to 1, with the aim of curbing private markets and solidifying state control. The plan was announced to the public with little advance warning, and caused panic in North Korea. The hard-earned savings of a nascent middle class was reduced to next to nothing; many people suffered heart attacks or strokes, or committed suicide. The unprecedented public backlash against the currency-reform effort led to an equally-unprecedented admission of failure by North Korean Premier Kim Yong-il, and the reported execution of finance minister Pak Nam-gi. Demick believes that it is no coincidence that the draconian currency-reform effort took place when an ailing Kim Jong-il is transferring succession to his youngest son, Kim Jong-eun. Demick says that this botched effort to “turn back the clock” is a sign that support for the regime among the public is eroding, and is a tacit admission by the regime of the extent to which the market threatens Kim Jong-il’s political control.

[9] The Rise and Fall of the G.D.P.
New York Times Magazine, May 16, 2010, pp. 60//71**Gertner, Jon**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#)

Economists and even governments now claim there might be better ways to take measure of a country’s health and happiness than its G.D.P. (gross domestic product), defined as the total value, or index, of a nation’s output, income, or expenditure produced within its physical boundaries. By various measures, the United States alone accounts for 20 to 30 percent of world G.D.P. It has been a difficult few years for G.D.P. which has not only failed to capture the well-being of current society,

but has also skewed global political objectives toward the single-minded pursuit of economic growth, and it has been actively challenged by a variety of world leaders, especially in Europe, and by a number of international groups, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

[10] A Libertarian Perspective on the Financial Crisis and Financial Reform
SAIS Review, vol. 30, no. 1, Winter-Spring 2010, pp. 17-26

Poole, William

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The author, a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute and a scholar in residence at the University of Delaware, believes that the pre-crisis financial environment was close to a libertarian's ideal, although it might not have seemed so at the time. He notes that the basic function of sound government in a modern economy is important and that conditions must be put in place to reduce the risk of financial crisis. Two such rules would be a subordinated debt requirement for banks and the end of tax incentives for households and businesses to accumulate debt. Given current directions it will take painful future events to persuade Congress to adopt more market-friendly approaches. Poole notes that how these events will play out is highly uncertain, but that most surprises will unfortunately be unhappy ones.

[11] Amerca's Diverse Family Farms 2010 Edition
U.S. Department of Agriculture. July 2010.

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American farms vary widely in size and other characteristics, but farming is still an industry of family businesses. Ninety-eight percent of farms are family farms, and they account for 82 percent of farm production. Small family farms make up most of the U.S. farm count and hold the majority of farm assets, but they produce a modest share of U.S. farm output. In contrast, large-scale family farms and nonfamily farms—only 12 percent of all farms—account for 84 percent of farm production. Small farms are less profitable than large-scale farms, on average, and the households operating them tend to rely on off-farm income for their livelihood. Because small-farm households receive most of their income from off-farm work, general economic policies, such as tax policy or economic development policy, can be as important to them as traditional farm policy.

[12] Innovation and the Visible Hand: China, Indigenous Innovation, and the Role of Government Procurement

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. July 7, 2010.

Nathaniel Ahrens

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 36 pages]

Indigenous innovation has become the greatest immediate source of economic friction between the United States and China. Yet despite concerns over protectionism, the global trend toward “homegrown” innovation is a healthy, positive development.

[13] Textile and Apparel Imports from China: Statistical Reports
U.S. International Trade Commission. June 2010.

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 472 pages]

The report was requested by the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Ways and Means. As requested, the USITC, an independent, nonpartisan, fact finding federal agency, produced an annual compilation of data that has been posted on a bi-weekly basis on the USITC website. The data in the report are shown on an annual and quarterly basis, by category and by Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) 10-digit subheadings.

[14] Smart Work and Smart Cities Pay
Atlantic Magazine online, April 23, 2010
Florida, Richard

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Hard work and long hours do not translate into economic wealth, according to a study conducted across major U.S. metropolitan areas. But greater "human capital" -- creative people with better educations -- results in above-average wages. In the top rankings of this study was the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara area in California; at the bottom were Louisville, Oklahoma City, Memphis, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and Nashville. Metro areas populated by people who are considered open to new experiences rank high on creativity and innovativeness. The knowledge economy is driving growth, and creative, imaginative people are crucial to that growth. Working smarter, it seems, and not working harder, is what brings wealth and well-being to metros.

[15] The Next Empire
Atlantic Monthly, May 2010
French, Howard

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Chinese companies have cashed in on lucrative oil markets in Angola, Nigeria, Algeria and Sudan and are striking mining deals in Zambia and the Congo. They are prospecting for land all across Africa for agribusiness; to get these resources to market, they are building ports and thousands of miles of highway. China is the biggest lender to Africa, the source of at least one-third of the world's commodities, and China-Africa trade has just pushed past \$100 billion annually. Dambisa Moyo, a London-based economist, believes that foreign aid has crippled Africa, and that China offers a way out of the mess the West has made. Moyo says the West's obsession with democracy is unrealistic, because in poor countries sustainable democracy is possible only after a strong middle class has emerged. China, on the other hand, has focused on trade and commercially justified investment, rather than aid grants and heavily subsidized loans; it has declined to tell African governments how they should run their countries, or to make its investments contingent on government reform. And it has moved quickly and decisively, especially in comparison to many Western aid establishments. Even taking the recent global economic downturn into account, per capita income for sub-Saharan Africa nearly doubled between 1997 and 2008, driven up by a long boom in commodities, by a decrease in the prevalence of war, and by steady improvements in governance. Although commodity prices are low for the time being, there is a growing sense that the world's poorest continent has become a likely stage for globalization's next act. To many, China -- cash-rich, resource-hungry, and unfickle in its ardor -- now seems the most likely agent for this change.

[16] Schumpeter's Children**Wilson Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 2, Spring 2010, pp. 48-57****Graham, Margaret**[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

For decades after the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, entrepreneurs and innovators drove the American economy. Financial innovation helped small businesses, despite the Great Depression, which ruined some firms and made startups difficult. In the 1970s forward, entrepreneurs such as Bill Gates and Steve Jobs became heroes. But today, rather than energizing small enterprises, creative finance “is more like a parasite, with entrepreneurs increasingly in service to finance.” Unless that turns around, the role of entrepreneurs in fueling American economy may diminish.

[17] An Entrepreneurial Recovery**Wilson Quarterly, vol. 34, no. 2, Spring 2010, pp. 44-47****Litan, Robert; Schramm, Carl**[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

Although big business is more often in the news, small companies run by entrepreneurs are crucial to America's economic success. This leads the author to the conclusion that job creation depends on the founding and development of new, entrepreneurial businesses. He notes that half of the current Fortune 500 corporations began in a recession or a bear market. The entrepreneurs should come from abroad, from universities, and young people should be encouraged to start their own businesses and given access to tools to do so.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**[18] U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads****Mediterranean Quarterly, vol. 21, no. 2, Spring 2010, pp. 1-11****Ellis, William**[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

The author, formerly with the Congressional Research Service, notes that the diffuse and opaque nature of the terrorist threat has fundamentally changed the way U.S. intelligence agencies operate. Because many more individuals could be potential objects of interest, intelligence agencies must look at or listen to everyone and everything. Much of the colossal amount of data collected in the past decade has not been properly analyzed; says Ellis, “the US intelligence community can see and hear almost everything, but apparently cannot make heads or tails of it.” The push to reduce the size of the federal service during the Clinton and Bush administrations, and the fact that the intelligence agencies had fallen behind the private sector in technology, led to widespread privatization; some 70 percent of the \$75 billion spent annually on intelligence goes to contractors. Ellis discusses various problems with rampant privatization, such as cost overruns, overly ambitious or inappropriate projects, lack of oversight, political influence by contractors, and access to data on private U.S. citizens; he believes that intelligence is an inherently governmental function, and should not be contracted out.

[19] The New Vulnerability**New Republic, vol. 241, no. 4885, June 24, 2010, pp. 21-28****Goldsmith, Jack**[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

Cyber thefts, attacks and espionage by criminal organizations and foreign states have been growing at an unprecedented rate, and while the problem is largely invisible to the general public, the government is alarmed. Goldsmith, who teaches at Harvard Law School and is a visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, reviews former U.S. government counterterrorism official Richard Clarke's new book, *CYBER WAR: THE NEXT THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT*. The extraordinary complexity of computer systems and the insufficiently secure private-sector infrastructure is a huge vulnerability for a country heavily dependent on computer technology. Goldsmith takes issue with some of Clarke's conclusions, noting that, while Clarke may be right to worry about China preparing for cyber war, China's dependency on a functioning U.S. economy greatly reduces the credibility of that threat. Goldsmith views Clarke's proposal for an international cyber-arms control agreement as unrealistic, since any given country views its own cyber-snooping as benign, but not if done by an adversary, and origination of cyber attacks can be almost impossible to determine. While no catastrophic cyber event has yet occurred, Goldsmith notes that warnings by the man who repeatedly "cried wolf" about the looming terror threat before Sept. 11 should be heeded.

[20] Smaller Dragon Takes Global Strides: the Lure of Trade, More than Military Battering, Transformed Vietnam**YaleGlobal. July 8, 2010.****Jean-Pierre Lehmann**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format, various paging]

For two decades, U.S. leaders regarded communist North Vietnam as a threat to freedom and American generals vowed to bomb the regime into submission, before abandoning the fight in 1975. The U.S. pursued an isolation policy, and Vietnam unified, yet wallowed in economic stagnation as it confiscated private property, re-educated opponents and allied with the Soviet Union. As the Soviet Union crumbled, Vietnam set out to reform its economy, explains author Jean-Pierre Lehmann, restoring diplomatic ties with China in 1991 and the U.S. in 1995 before joining the World Trade Organization in 2007. Globalization, trade and openness transformed Vietnam into a global economic force.

[21] Beijing: A Global Leader with 'China First' Policy**YaleGlobal. June 29, 2010.****David Shambaugh**[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format, various paging]

Observers have long hoped for new openness and cooperation from a confident China. They scan every international event, from the majestic Beijing Olympics of summer 2008 to the recent G-20 summit in Toronto, for indications of China's policy direction. If any clear trend is visible, it is that the world's second largest economy largely continues with a narrow,

fluctuating foreign-policy approach. "On global issues, Beijing appears to act with an odd combination of hesitancy and truculence," explains David Shambaugh.

[22] China's Perspective on a Nuclear-free World
Washington Quarterly, vol. 33, no. 2, April 2010, pp. 139-155
Zhang, Hui

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The author, a physicist and specialist in nuclear arms control and Chinese nuclear policy issues, points out that China has long supported complete nuclear disarmament, calling for a summit to discuss the prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons on the day of its first nuclear test in 1964. China claims that it developed nuclear weapons "to guard itself against nuclear coercion and blackmail" and it has always maintained a no-first-use policy. China's nuclear modernization has been designed to improve quality rather than quantity, to maintain a reliable second-strike retaliatory capability. Chinese leaders have expressed their support for a nuclear-weapons-free world, but some Chinese experts question the U.S. and Russian commitments. "For Beijing, the first and most important bold step toward nuclear disarmament would be a global agreement on no-first-use of nuclear weapons." This would strengthen the nonproliferation regime and promote further reductions of nuclear weapons. On the road to disarmament, China supports four interim steps -- deep reductions in the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, the devaluation of the role of nuclear weapons through universal no-first-use policies, ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT).

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

[23] Futures Thinking for Academic Librarians: Higher Education in 2025
Association of College & Research Libraries. June 2010.
David J. Staley and Kara L. Malen

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"For academic librarians seeking to demonstrate the value of their libraries to their parent institutions, it is important to understand not only the current climate. We must also know what will be valued in the future so that we can begin to take appropriate action now. This document presents 26 possible scenarios based on an implications assessment of current trends, which may have an impact on all types of academic and research libraries over the next 15 years. The scenarios represent themes relating to academic culture, demographics, distance education, funding, globalization, infrastructure/facilities, libraries, political climate, publishing industry, societal values, students/learning, and technology."

U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES

[24] World Cup 2010: American Fans Will Have Power in Numbers
Washington Post, June 8, 2010

Goff, Steven

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Americans are catching World Cup fever! As the world watches the World Cup this summer, the country with the largest number of fans in the stands (except for South Africa) will come not from traditional soccer strongholds but from the United States; U.S. residents purchased more than 130,000 out of 2.8 million tickets sold. The author notes that they are not necessarily coming to root for the U.S. team; given the broad ethnic makeup of the U.S., many fans will support teams from Mexico, Honduras or other Latin American countries. Goff notes that there is still a perception in the U.S. that soccer is still the sport of Spanish-speaking Americans; however, Americans of all backgrounds could be found in South Africa during the World Cup. Says Goff, the huge number of tickets sold says a lot about the growth in the popularity of the sport in the U.S.

[25] The Food Movement, Rising
The New York Review of Books, June 10, 2010
Pollan, Michael

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This review of five recent books about food, related politics and new forms of civil society being created around sustainable agriculture and local, fresh food consumption examines such issues as the impact of fast food culture on health, family life and society. The local-food movement is a backlash against the industrialized food system in the U.S., the often poor nutritional value of much processed and fast-food products, and the unknown long-term effects of the use of pesticides, antibiotics and growth hormones in U.S. agribusiness. Communities are forming around local farmer's markets, which have become "a lively public square," bringing social interaction outside the mainstream, corporate marketplaces. Issues surrounding how food is produced and distributed are becoming more important, according to the author.

[26] Great Expectations
Smithsonian, vol. 41, no. 3, June 2010, pp. 51-57
Walsh, Michael

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The first decade of the 20th century followed a period of disillusionment for African-Americans. Following Reconstruction after the Civil War, the promises of emancipation faded as the Southern states enacted "Jim Crow" laws, codifying segregation. Around 1910, millions of black Americans had begun the Great Migration northward, leaving the old Confederacy for the industrial cities of the North. As with other migrant communities, newly urbanized African-Americans discovered in sports and entertainment opportunities previously denied them. Walsh illustrates the divergent thinking of Black America at the time in the lives and careers of boxer Jack Johnson and musician and composer Scott Joplin. Johnson, whose heavyweight championship win in 1908 stunned the boxing world, was the personification of W.E.B. Du Bois, who aimed his message at the "talented tenth" of the African-American population; Joplin, on the other hand, subscribed to Booker T. Washington's by-the-bootstraps approach, in which training and education were the keys to racial advancement. Walsh notes that the two men were polar opposites -- Johnson had a high-profile, provocative personality, whereas Joplin was self-effacing and died in relative obscurity. Yet both were "engaged in their greatest work at the same time ... and offer a lot of lessons for today."

[27] Thirties Somethings
Bookforum, April/May 2010
Howard, Gerald

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When American writer Nathanael West and his new wife Eileen McKenney died in a 1940 car crash, he was a writer known mostly to admiring critics, and she the famous subject of her sister's book *My Sister Eileen*. In this review of Marion Meade's dual biography of the couple, *Lonelyhearts*, West is given his rightful place as one of America's greatest modern writers, who correctly diagnosed the American mass psyche. "You can learn more about our country and our culture from West's two great works than you can from Fitzgerald's fetishized *Great Gatsby*," Howard writes. Meade's biography is lively and informative about the "screwball" lives of the pair, but misses the core sadness, "literary failure and having one's identity captured and defined" by someone else. Meade ends her story before recounting West's stunning, posthumously acknowledged, legacy.

[28] Civic Engagement: A Topic As Old As Jefferson and As New As Today
Choice, vol. 47, no. 9, May 2010, pp. 1603//1615
Kidd, Quentin

[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

In this bibliographic essay, the author, a professor at Christopher Newport University, Newport News, Virginia, notes that scholars and the public have been interested in civic engagement for hundreds of years and that it is a growth area for academic research. Citizens engage in a positive way without basic knowledge of the political system and how it operates, or without some understanding of public policy. Does this mean that civic engagement is in decline? Questions related to the health of civil society and its connection to democratic policies and practices are not going away anytime soon. The author discusses the literature of civic engagement under areas such as making sense of the subject, everyday engagement and renewal, roles that youth can play, education, practice, civic engagement in the information age, religion, immigration, environmentalism, and new directions and approaches.