

# ARTICLE ALERT

March 2010

*Article Alert* is a monthly product of the Information Resource Center of the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai. It brings to your attention abstracts of current articles in the areas of rule of law, economics, the environment, regional security, U.S. society and more. Most of full texts are accessible from Internet. To get a free subscription, please send a sign-up email to [Shanghaiirc@state.gov](mailto:Shanghaiirc@state.gov).

---

## U.S. POLITICS AND SOCIAL PROCESSES

**[1] The Role of the Military in Presidential Politics**  
**Parameters, Vol. 34, No. 4, Winter 2009-10, pp. 58-72**  
**Corbett, Steve; Davidson, Michael J.**

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

The authors, both retired military officers, are concerned by the public endorsement of presidential candidates by retired general officers. They worry that it reflects “a disturbing trend toward the politicization of the American military” as well as a move away from the traditional nonpartisan professional military ethic. They believe that this practice should be discouraged because of its potential damage to the U.S. armed forces, noting that “political neutrality is essential to the military’s ability to survive in its present form.” The American professional ethic of a nonpolitical military began in the post-Civil War period, and no professional military officer was nominated for the presidency from 1880 until 1952, when Dwight Eisenhower ran and was elected. The partisan political activities of members of the active-duty military are restricted, but these legal restrictions do not apply to military retirees. The authors point out several potential problems to political endorsements by military retirees: civilian political leaders may not trust senior military advisers whom they see as potential political opponents; political endorsements by retirees may legitimize the spread of partisan political politics within the active-duty force; and such activities may undermine the confidence of the American public in the military’s political neutrality.

**[2] Out of Eden**  
**Discover Magazine, vol. 30, no. 11, December 2009**  
**Lawler, Andrew**  
[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

Cambridge archaeologist Joan Oates had dug in Iraq and Syria for five decades when, in 2006, she and her team discovered artifacts at Tell Brak in Syria that told the story of a sophisticated, urban culture dating back 6000 years — and its accompanying brutality. They uncovered hundreds of human bones, remains of an ancient massacre or terrible battle. The find puts urban living about 1000 years earlier than previously thought, illuminating “both the creative and violent tendencies of humanity” and opens a new perspective on the evolution of urban centers

earlier than Sumer. “Brak shows a picture more complex than that,” says University of California, San Diego, archaeologist Guillermo Algaze.

**[3] From Deliberation to Dysfunction: It is Time for Procedural Reform in the U.S. Senate**  
**Center for American Progress. March 12, 2010.**

**Scott Lilly**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 16 pages]

The report urges the Senate to adopt modest procedural changes to curb some of the filibuster’s worst abuses and make the Senate more responsible. The U.S. Senate has a proud tradition of ensuring that important decisions are carefully weighed before they become law. This has served the nation well at times. But under current practices the latitude granted to individual senators to obstruct does not always contribute to more measured consideration of national policy. In recent years, the Senate has been less and less able to follow the regular order in the consideration of pending legislation, the confirmation of senior executive branch officials, and other work.

**[4] Interstate Competition and Choice in Health Insurance**  
**The Heritage Foundation. March 16, 2010**

**Tom Feeney**

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

Americans want health care reform--but they do not want compulsive mandates imposed by Congress and the Administration. Private citizens and state legislators across the country, from both sides of the aisle, are engaging in a political rebellion, taking an ever more vocal stand against intrusiveness and coercion from Washington--which they believe to be outright un-American. Former state legislator and U.S. Representative from Florida Thomas Feeney presents interstate competition as a commonsense and very American approach to much-needed health care reform.

**[5] Who really has the public's support on health care?**

World Public Opinion.org March 15, 2010

Steven Kull

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

Polls on health care can be confusing. At last month's health care summit, Republicans repeatedly asserted that the majority is with them in their opposition to the president's health care reform plan. President Barack Obama asserted that majorities support all the major specific elements of the plan. Can they both be right?

**ENVIROMENT AND ENERGY**

**[6] Under the World’s Greatest Cities, Deadly Plates**  
**Washington Post, February 23, 2010**

**Achenbach, Joel**

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

In 1800, only one city in the world had more than a million people, Beijing. Last year, humanity reached a turning point, when more people lived in cities than rural areas; today, there are 381 cities with over a million residents each. Over 400 million people worldwide live in large cities that face significant seismic hazards, and the author writes that strong earthquakes, such as those that recently struck central Chile and Port-au-Prince, Haiti, will extract an increasing human toll due to the growing global trend toward urbanization. Achenbach notes that it is not the earthquake itself, but buildings, often poorly constructed, that kill people.

**[7] A Comparison of the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (CEJAP Act) and the Carbon Limits and Energy for America's Renewal Act (CLEAR Act)**

**Pew Center on Global Climate Change. March 2010.**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 3 pages].

The brief compares key elements of two bills currently under consideration in Congress. The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (CEJAP Act) provides a comprehensive, economy-wide approach to achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by capping emissions, using a combination of auctions and free allocations for distributing allowances, and allowing firms to trade and purchase offsets to reduce compliance costs. The second bill, the Carbon Limits and Energy for America's Renewal Act (CLEAR Act), caps greenhouse gas emissions, but the approaches used in these bills differ significantly. The brief describes the key features of each bill and Table 1 at the end of the brief contains a side-by-side comparison of the bills.

**ECONOMICS AND TRADE ISSUES**

**[8] How to Handle the Sovereign Debt Explosion**

**Financial Times, March 10, 2010**

**El-Erian, Mohamed**

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

The author, chief executive of investment firm Pimco, writes that the major development of the ongoing financial crisis is the deterioration in the public finances of many advanced economies. Greece is currently the focus of attention, but in time will affect many other Western countries. This development is overturning traditional assumptions about a big divide between advanced and emerging economies; a growing number of the former now have poorer prospects and are more vulnerable than the latter. El-Erian believes that governments of the advanced economies will pull through this difficult period, but cautions that we should recognize that traditional assumptions about economic downturns being cyclical may not apply today, when fundamental changes are taking place.

**[9] Finding Your Strategy in the New Landscape**

**Harvard Business Review, March 2010**

**Ghemawat, Pankhaj**

[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

In the wake of the recent recession and financial crisis, global firms must change their strategic approach, says Ghemawat, a professor at IESE Business School in Barcelona. He outlines different aspects and elements of that approach — target markets and competition, products, operations, innovation, organizational structures, workers and reputation. Corporations must adapt their visions to a world where national differences are more pronounced than before and managing those differences is the primary challenge. Thus, companies need to put new emphasis on differentiation of their products and services and look anew at opportunities in underserved segments of the market. Supply chains will have to become shorter, simpler, and more robust, and offshoring, while remaining a valid option, will require a second look in light of rising protectionism. The trend to shift the locus of R&D from the developed world to emerging markets will continue and the use of Web-based collaborative tools in management will pick up.

**[10] "Amazon Tax" Laws Signal Business Unfriendliness And Will Worsen Short-Term Budget Problems**

**Tax Foundation. March 8, 2010.**

**Joseph Henchman**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [HTML format, various paging].

Citing significant budget shortfalls and the inability to collect sales taxes on many Internet-based transactions, a number of states are considering the adoption of "Amazon taxes." Such laws, nicknamed after their most visible target, require retailers that have contracts with "affiliates"—independent persons within the state who post a link to an out-of-state business on their website and get a share of revenues from the out-of-state business—to collect the state's sales tax.

**INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

**[11] The Long Road to Zero**

**Foreign Affairs, vol. 89, no. 1, January/February 2010, pp. 86-94**

**Ferguson, Charles**

[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

The author notes that a clear bipartisan consensus has emerged in the Washington on the subject of nuclear security. At the same time, however, he poses an important question: In a world where the strongest conventional military power cannot envision giving up its nuclear weapons before all other nations have abandoned theirs, how will humanity ever rid itself of nuclear weapons? Ferguson, president of the Federation of American Scientists, writes of the importance of finding a way to obviate the prestige factor associated with possessing nuclear arms. He says that is what stands in the way of making progress towards President Obama's dream of nuclear weapons-free world. For more on reducing nuclear arsenals, see: <http://www.america.gov/nuclear-free-world.html>

**[12] U.S.-Iranian Relations: An Analytic Compendium of U.S. Policies, Laws, and Regulations**  
**Atlantic Council. Web posted on March 9, 2010.**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 166 pages]

This Compendium contains the text of major regulations, laws, and other documents governing U.S. interactions with Iran. Also provided are the text of U.N. Security Council Resolutions, agreements between Iran and several other countries on various issues, and other documents that represent major policy decisions in U.S. relations with Iran. The publication was launched at an Atlantic Council panel discussion on U.S.-Iran relations.

**[13] The Future of U.S. Public Diplomacy**  
**U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. March 10, 2010.**

These are testimonies before U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing, The Future of U.S. Public Diplomacy.

[Statement by Evelyn S. Lieberman](#) [PDF format, 5 pages]

[Written Testimony of Ambassador Karen Hughes](#) [PDF format, 4 pages]

[Testimony by James K. Glassman](#) [PDF format, 20 pages]

[Statement by Judith McHale](#) [PDF format, 6 pages]

**EDUCATION AND INFORMATION**

**[14] The Case for Global Civics**  
**The Brookings Institution. March 2010.**  
**Hakan Altinay**

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

Civics” often refers to the familiar constellation of rights and responsibilities emanating from citizenship in a nation-state. But what about global civics? Would this be feasible—or even desirable? In this paper, the author first “consider the unhelpful views that have impeded fruitful consideration of the concept of global civics”, then “outline the rationale for global civics and offer two thought experiments to operationalize this new concept”, and finally “argue that universities should be key sites for the conversation about global civics.”

**[15] They Spend WHAT?The Real Cost of Public Schools**  
**CATO Policy Analysis, March 10, 2010**  
**Adam Schaeffer**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 32 pages]

Although public schools are usually the biggest item in state and local budgets, spending figures provided by public school officials and reported in the media often leave out major costs of education and thus understate what is actually spent. To document the phenomenon, this paper reviews district budgets and state records for the nation’s five largest metro areas and the District of Columbia. It reveals that, on average, per-pupil spending in these areas is 44 percent higher than officially reported.

**[16] Enabling Long-term Access to Scientific, Technical and Medical Data Collections**

**RAND Corporation. March 8, 2010.**

**Jeff Rathenberg and Stijn Hoorens.**

[Click here for available text on the Internet](#) [PDF format, 91 pages].

In recent decades, online access to large, high quality data collections has led to a new, deeper level of sharing and analysis, potentially accelerating and improving the quality of scientific research. These online datasets are becoming imperative at all stages of the research process, particularly in scientific, technical and medical (STM) disciplines. Since libraries have a traditional responsibility to guarantee the availability of the output of scholarly research, they have a potentially important role to play in facilitating long-term access to these resources. Yet, the role of a national library in the realm of STM data remains unclear.

## U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES

**[17] Citizenship Today: Vicissitudes and Promise**  
**Choice, vol. 47, no. 6, February 2010, pp. 1015-1023**

**Kivisto, Peter**

[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

In this review essay, the author discusses the rapidly expanding body of literature on citizenship studies and divides it into four distinct categories: inclusion, withdrawal, erosion, and expansion. In the United States, government exists to serve its citizens. Americans expect their government to protect their basic constitutional rights, including freedom of speech and religion, the right to equal protection under the law, and the opportunity to organize and participate fully in the political, economic, and cultural life of society. U.S. citizens also recognize that they have a responsibility to their society if they are to enjoy the protection of their rights. Americans willingly, for the most part, live within the law, serve on juries when called upon, pay their fair share of taxes, and exercise their right to vote responsibly. Civic participation in the United States also means that citizens respect the rights of others, accept the authority of the elected government, and make an effort to be informed, involved, and invested in their communities and their nation.

**[18] It's the Content, Stupid**

**American Libraries, vol. 41, no. 1-2, January/February 2010, pp. 48-51**

**Smith, Steven; Mercer, Holly**

[Contact IRC for an electronic copy](#)

The authors, both associated with Texas A&M University Libraries, believe that libraries and librarians have an important stake in the development of online scholarship. Many benefits will come from the growth of digital monographs and journals as well as the development of scholarly websites, online archives, blogs, wikis, and other outlets for research even farther afield from the traditional models. Digital scholarship may be non-linear, unstructured, or open-ended, and it is often software-intensive and multimedia; more remains to be done before libraries can preserve digital content with the same degree of confidence as print.