ARTICLE ALERT

December 2009

The American Center’s Baldwin Library is pleased to offer you ARTICLE ALERT, a monthly current affairs publication. It is designed to keep library users abreast of issues and concerns in the United States.

Full texts of all listed articles are available upon request at The American Center’s Baldwin Library. Please contact us at Tel. 95-1-223106 or 95-1-223140; or email rangoonirc@state.gov

Library provides two articles free of charge.

---------------------------------------------------------------------

SPOTLIGHT: GLOBAL HEALTH

The authors examine the persistence of fundamental constraints to the long-term implementation of new mechanisms of global health governance, using three recent high-profile examples from Asia in which the tight hold of state sovereignty cut into the effective implementation of international communicable disease control efforts.

The author, a senior associate at the CSIS Global Health Policy Center, explores gender-related barriers that women and girls face in accessing health-related information, services, and resources, all of which increase their vulnerability to health dangers. Ways of linking global health strategies with a firm commitment to address gender disparities that affect global health outcomes are also discussed.

CLIMATE AND RESOURCE CHALLENGES

The author explores the interlocking between resource scarcities and the structural dimensions of violence, focusing on the dangerous implications of climate change for security and political stability, and how to manage the politics of transition in an equitable manner.
The author discusses the adverse environmental, social, and economic effects of global deforestation, focusing on methods of monetizing forest preservation and how to promote forest conservation.

How much has been done to address the causes of the food price crisis that could prevent a repetition of the events of 2007-2008? The author discusses the factors contributing to and the social impact of the food price crisis over the past two years and the conditions in 2009 which could lead to a food commodities crisis in global markets.

**DEMOCRACY AND TRANSPARENCY**

There is no questioning the good that transparency creates across a wide range of contexts, particularly government. But does it have negative effects as well? The author, Director of Harvard’s Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, examines transparency in politics and government, focusing on the impact of making all possible information relevant to decision-making available to the public.

The recent global progress on electoral democracy has been accompanied by increasing economic inequality. What are the implications of this parallel rise on the quality of democracy and on its ability to endure? The author, founder and Director of the Oxford Centre for the Study of Inequality and Democracy, analyzes the relationship between economic inequality and electoral democracy.

**U.S. POLITICS**

Since last August, President Obama’s approval ratings have been dropped to approximately 50 percent and his disapproval numbers have been hovered around the low forties. Is this sign of voter discontent the result of tactical errors by Obama? The author discusses factors that have taken a toll on President Obama’s popularity and that may affect the future of his political career. Recommendations on strategies to pull his presidency back from the brink also are presented.
*Political Science Quarterly*, Fall 2009, 20 pages.
The author, a professor of Political Science at Columbia University, analyzes how the results of U.S. presidential elections reveal voting trends reflecting geographic and demographic realignments of the U.S. Democratic and Republican Parties over the past 28 years. The nature of the 2008 Democratic Party victory and the possibility that the United States is now at the beginning of a realignment within the Democratic majority are also discussed.

**GLOBAL ECONOMY AND TRADE**

The United States and Asia share an enormous stake in each others’ continuing prosperity. The author discusses the long-term challenges faced by the Obama administration in organizing American economic diplomacy toward Asia, as well as the challenges of managing globalization and maintaining the open international economic order that has served American and Asian interests for decades already.

There is widespread concern that the United States and the rest of the world are descending into a round of protectionism and towards a trade war reminiscent of what the world experienced in the Great Depression. The author, Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, explores the short- and long-term prospects for the U.S. trade and how it will affect U.S. trading partners.

The author, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, examines the consequences of the global financial crisis, particularly the U.S. role and support for the global economy integration in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. The possibility of backlash in Western countries, as well as ways to manage it are discussed.

**GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS**

The current global financial turmoil has rekindled the interest of both policymakers and the general public in an early warning systems (EWS) to anticipate future financial crises. But what alarms can such
systems realistically sound? How would they work? And would they be effective? In this article, a group of IMF analysts discuss the new financial alarming systems and its challenges.

The global financial and economic crisis and prospects for large and sustained budget deficits in the United States have prompted countries with massive dollar holdings, such as China, to consider alternatives to the U.S. dollar. The author, Chairman Emeritus of the Advisory Committee of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, examines two possible options for the future.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND WORLD AFFAIRS

The author, a visiting professor of Asian Studies at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, analyzes salient strengths and weaknesses of the United States’ policy in Asia at the start of the Obama administration, and examines the new these policy positions and approaches to key U.S. allies in the region and Asian regional organizations.

The author looks at the debate on unipolarity versus multipolarity, with its arguments about changes in the distribution of global output, focusing on a future of U.S. dominance, and the possibility of its being equaled or bypassed by other rising powers. The extent to which the United States should and will remain the indispensable nation in world affairs is also examined.

The United States is facing one of the most tumultuous moments in its history—from foreign policy crises in Afghanistan and Iran to economic and healthcare challenges domestically. Foreign policies executed in the coming months and years could have a substantial effect on the future global balance of power, as well as potentially impact the achievement of major global goals, such as nuclear nonproliferation. The authors outline how the U.S. administration should approach the vast array of challenges currently facing the United States.
NUCLEAR POWER AND TERRORISM RISKS

Will the growth of nuclear power lead to the increased risk of nuclear weapons proliferation and nuclear terrorism? Will the nonproliferation regime be adequate to ensure safety and security in a world more widely and heavily invested in nuclear power? In this article, two security experts from Harvard and Stanford Universities discuss why the question of which states will develop nuclear power in the future matters for global security, discussing the connections between nuclear power, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism risks.

CYBERSECURITY TRENDS

Technological advances and greater connectivity may be making information systems less rather than more secure. The author, President of Forecasting International Ltd. in Virginia and a former senior editor of Omni magazine, respectively, examines the ten most significant trends that will shape the future of cybersecurity.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

While people would expect democracies to have free media and autocracies to have government-controlled media, such is not always the case. The author explores this mismatch between regime type and media system, as well as takes a look at the influence of media freedom on a government’s respect for human rights.

NEW MEDIA

These three communication experts from the University of Maryland’s Phillip Merrill College of Journalism and University of Leeds, examine the way in which television changed the political landscape and analyze how far new media, such as the Internet, are displacing television or reconfiguring the political communications
ecology. Opportunities and challenges facing media producers, politicians, and citizens also are explored.

The authors of this in-depth report ask hard questions about the function of the press and the future of “accountability” journalism as a public service at a time of crisis in news media. They make six recommendations for the support of credible, independent and original news reporting. These include new approaches to public and private financing of news organizations serving the public good; incorporation of new dissemination vehicles while retaining downsized traditional formats; and utilizing volunteer news gatherers alongside professionals.

LIBRARY TRENDS

The author, Manager of Marketing at Columbus Metropolitan Library in Ohio, examines some cultural trends in the United States that libraries can use to reach library patrons. The benefits that libraries can derive from becoming involved with the social networking websites, online reputation management tools, and other steps to make library marketing stronger are also discussed.

EDUCATION

The author, CEO of TAP Information Services, examines the future of reading and changing reading habits in the 21st century with a focus on social and technological developments that have affected the practice of reading and literacy, including television and comic books. The importance of libraries to the future of reading is discussed.

The author, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, examines how to improve teacher education programs through comprehensive changes, focusing on the new approaches that will prepare teachers, school leaders, and education specialists for the challenges of the 21st century classroom.

The authors discuss the use of mobile media to increase place-based learning in the
United States and how students can use technology, such as electronic mail and web searches, in their field research and investigations.

The author examines conflicting research regarding whether or not online courses are as effective in achieving learning outcomes as traditional classroom courses. The author’s own experiences trying new online teaching methods and how specific method impact students is also examined.

TRAVEL AND CULTURE

The master travel writer presents a personal narrative that explores his own experience of traveling across the United States beginning in Los Angeles, California, and ending in his home of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. 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.