



IRC WHAT'S NEW September 2008, Issue 2

SIGNIFICANT E-DOCUMENTS

AFGHANISTAN OPIUM SURVEY 2008: EXECUTIVE SURVEY. Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations. Web posted August 27, 2008.

The survey shows a 19% decrease in opium cultivation to 157,000 hectares, compared to the record harvest of 193,000 in 2007. Owing to a higher yield of 48.8 kg/ha (up from 42.5 kg in 2007), opium production has dropped less dramatically, down 6% from 8,200 mt to 7,700 mt. According to the report, the number of opium-free provinces has increased by almost 50% since last year, from 13 to 18. Indeed, 98% of the opium is grown in just seven provinces in the south-west (Hilmand, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Farah, Nimroz, and to a lesser extent Daykundi and Zabul), where there are permanent Taliban settlements and organized crime groups profit from insecurity. The distinct geographical overlap between regions of opium production and zones of insurgency shows the inextricable link between drugs and conflict. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2008.pdf [PDF format, 42 pages].

THE AGGLOMERATION OF US ETHNIC INVENTORS. Harvard Business School. William R. Kerr. Web posted August 14, 2008.

The ethnic composition of U.S. inventors is undergoing a significant transformation. The study applies an ethnic name database to individual U.S. patent records to explore these trends with greater detail. The contributions of Chinese and Indian scientists and engineers to US technology formation increase dramatically in the 1990s. At the same time, these ethnic inventors became more spatially concentrated across U.S. cities. The combination of these two factors helps stop and reverse long-term declines in overall inventor agglomeration evident in the 1970s and 1980s. [Note: contains copyrighted material] <http://www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/09-003.pdf> [PDF format, 41 pages].

AMERICA'S DYNAMIC WORKFORCE:2008. U.S. Department of Labor. Web posted September 9, 2008.

The report presents an overview of current conditions and notable trends affecting the American labor market and economic activity. Primary emphasis is on measures of labor market performance, employment, labor force participation, unemployment, and compensation. General measures of economic performance such as gross domestic product (GDP) and productivity growth are also described as they relate to labor market conditions and trends.

<http://www.dol.gov/asp/media/reports/Workforce2008/ADW2008.pdf> [PDF format, 70 pages].

THE ANXIOUS AMERICAN WORKER. Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University. Krista Jenkins et al. Web posted August 27, 2008.

The report presents the latest snapshots of the American worker. It is framed by overall disquiet about the economy, depicting anxious workers trying to adjust to change in their current jobs and to uncertainty about their future work life. The survey finds a widely shared belief among U.S. workers that they need additional education or training to remain successful, and that they are underpaid for what they do. The responses also reflect an inability or unwillingness to adequately prepare for retirement. Overall job satisfaction remains high, with 91% reporting that they are satisfied with their job, with 40% of workers very satisfied with opportunities for job training and education. However, there is a great deal of anxiety in the workforce as the general election of 2008 comes closer. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/uploadedFiles/Publications/Work%20Trends%20August%202008.pdf> [PDF format, 40 pages].

ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, AND GEORGIA: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS. Congressional Research Service, RL33453, Library of Congress. Jim Nichol. Web posted August 25, 2008.

The United States recognized the independence of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia when the former Soviet Union broke up at the end of 1991. The U.S. has been active in diplomatic efforts to end conflicts in the region, several of which remain unresolved. Some Members of Congress believe that the U.S. should provide greater attention to the region's increasing role as an east-west trade and security corridor linking the Black Sea and Caspian Sea regions, and to Armenia's inclusion in such links. Others urge caution in adopting policies that will heavily involve the U.S. in a region beset by ethnic and civil conflicts.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33453.pdf> [PDF format, 42 pages].

ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC OUTLOOK. Deloitte. September 2008.

The report covers the near-term outlook for Australia, India, Indonesia, and Japan. In Australia, the economy has become a bit soft after 16 straight years of expansion. The economy of India has been having an inflation epidemic and GDP growth rates have fallen from record highs. The country of Indonesia is facing record consumer and wholesale price inflation numbers. Japan also faces record inflation rates as well as an economic slowdown. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.deloitte.com/dtt/cda/doc/content/Asia%20Pacific%20economic%20outlook_September%202008.pdf [PDF format, 8 pages].

BANK SURVEY SHOWS TIGHTENING LENDING STANDARDS. Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Web posted September 2, 2008.

The credit crunch that has constricted the economy in 2008 continues, according to the survey. The survey, which covers 52 U.S. banks with combined assets of \$6.1 trillion and 21 foreign financial institutions doing business in the United States, finds increasing caution in banks' approaches to making loans. For example, about three-quarters of U.S. banks said they became stricter on prime mortgage loans, which is an increase from 60 percent who cited stricter standards in the April survey. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.frbatlanta.org/invoke.cfm?objectid=E688C172-5056-9F12-12342630347D617A&method=display_body [HTML format, various paging].

CAPITALIZING ON VOLUNTEERS' SKILLS: VOLUNTEERING BY OCCUPATION IN AMERICA. Corporation for National and Community Service. Web posted September 9, 2008.

The study places strong emphasis on pro bono volunteering as a strategic and cost-effective way to tap into the skills of volunteers and reinvent the way they serve with nonprofits. It looks at the prevalence of volunteering among people in various occupations and shows how often they use their occupational skills when they volunteer. The study is designed to help broaden and deepen public and private sector partnerships, and allow nonprofits to take full advantage of the skills their volunteers have to offer. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/08_0908_rpd_volunteer_occupation.pdf [PDF format, 16 pages].

CLIMATE PROJECTIONS BASED ON EMISSIONS SCENARIOS FOR LONG-LIVED AND SHORT-LIVED RADIATIVELY ACTIVE GASES AND AEROSOLS. U.S. Climate Change Science Program, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association. Hiram Levy II et al. September 2008.

Short-lived gases and particle pollutants, which stay in the atmosphere for just days or weeks, have a greater influence on Earth's climate than previously thought, according to the report. Such short-lived pollution includes black carbon (soot), low-altitude ozone, nitrates and sulfates. Each type of pollution influences surface temperatures differently, from the cooling influence of sulfate particles, which tend to reflect sunlight, to the warming characteristics of heat-absorbing black carbon. The report also says that while these pollutants are generated locally they will have global climate implications. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://downloads.climatechange.gov/sap/sap3-2/sap3-2-final-report-all.pdf> [PDF format, 116 pages].

DEPOLITICIZING ZIMBABWE'S ECONOMY: SOLUTION FOR TWO MILLION PERCENT.

United States Institute of Peace. Raymond Gilpin. Web posted August 27, 2008.

Although Zimbabwe's deep-seated economic malaise has robbed citizens of their savings, rendered incomes practically worthless and undermined domestic productivity, experts believe that an effort to reform the country's political corruption and irresponsible monetary policies will be central to establishing social and economic stability in the long run. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.usip.org/pubs/usipeace_briefings/2008/0827_zimbabwe.html [HTML format, various paging].

THE DEVELOPING WORLD IS POORER THAN WE THOUGHT, BUT NO LESS SUCCESSFUL IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY. World Bank. Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion. Web posted August 26, 2008.

The paper presents a major overhaul to the past estimates of global poverty, incorporating new and better data. Extreme poverty is found to be more pervasive than previously thought. However, the data also provide significant evidence of continually declining poverty incidence and depth since the early 1980s. Progress was uneven across regions. The poverty rate in East Asia fell from 80% to under 20 percent over this period. By contrast it stayed at around 50 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, though with signs of progress since the mid 1990s. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www->

wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2008/08/26/000158349_20080826113239/Rendered/PDF/WPS4703.pdf [PDF format, 46 pages].

DO NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIC CONDITIONS INFLUENCE THE CONSUMPTION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES? RAND Corporation. Web posted August 31, 2008.

The fact sheet summarizes a study examining the variation of the intake of fruits and vegetables for blacks, whites, and Mexican Americans, in addition to the relationship between neighborhood socioeconomic status and this intake. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/2008/RAND_RB9375.pdf [PDF format, 3 pages].

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF IMMIGRATION: A SURVEY. Harvard Business School. Sari Pekkala Kerr and William R. Kerr. Web posted September 2, 2008.

The paper surveys recent empirical studies on the economic impacts of immigration. Particular emphasis is given to the experiences of Northern Europe and Scandinavia. The survey first examines the magnitude of immigration as an economic phenomenon in various host countries. The second part deals with the assimilation of immigrant workers in host-country labor markets and the use of social benefits by immigrants. The survey then considers the effect of immigration on the labor market outcomes of natives. The paper concludes with studies of immigration's impact for the public sector of host countries. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/09-013.pdf> [PDF format, 37 pages].

EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2008: OECD INDICATORS. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development. Web posted September 9, 2008.

Across OECD countries, governments are seeking policies to make education more effective while searching for additional resources to meet the increasing demand for education. The study enables countries to see themselves in the light of other countries' performance. It provides a comparable and up-to-date array of indicators on the performance of education systems and represents the consensus of professional thinking on how to measure the current state of education internationally. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.oecd.org/document/9/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_41266761_1_1_1_1,00.html#5

[HTML format, Individual Chapter PDF files].

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/46/41284038.pdf> [PDF format, Whole Document, 525 pages].

THE EFFECTS OF AVIAN INFLUENZA NEWS ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOR: A CASE STUDY OF ITALIAN CONSUMERS' RETAIL PURCHASES. Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Robert H. Beach et al. Web posted September 5, 2008.

To better understand how information about potential health hazards influences food demand, the case study examines consumers' responses to newspaper articles on avian influenza, also referred to as bird flu. The focus is on the response to bird flu information in Italy as news unfolded in the period October 2004 through October 2006, beginning after reports of the first outbreaks in Southeast Asia, and extending beyond the point at which outbreaks were reported in Western Europe. Estimated poultry demand, as influenced by the volume of newspaper reports on bird flu, reveals the magnitude and duration of newspaper articles' impacts on consumers' food choices. Larger numbers of bird flu news reports led to larger reductions in poultry purchases. Most impacts were of limited duration, and all began to diminish within 5 weeks. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR65/ERR65.pdf> [PDF format, 31 pages].

ENTITLEMENTS: NOT JUST A HEALTH CARE PROBLEM. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Andrew G. Biggs. Web posted August 23, 2008.

A new consensus on entitlement reform has developed in Washington: rising per-capita health care spending is the only real crisis besetting the government's entitlement programs, while America's aging population and Social Security play minor roles. Using standard accounting practices and including all major government entitlement programs, population aging will play an equal role with health care cost growth over the next seventy-five years and a significantly larger role than health spending over the next few decades. While rising health care spending is indeed a pressing issue, discounting population aging leaves out half the problem and ignores half the potential solutions. [Note: contains copyrighted material] http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28443/pub_detail.asp [HTML format, various paging].

F AS IN FAT: HOW OBESITY POLICIES ARE FAILING IN AMERICA 2008. Trust of America's Health. Jeffrey Levi et al. Web posted August 24, 2008.

The study reports that the rates of obesity in the United States have grown in 37 states. Although many promising programs have emerged to promote healthy eating and exercise, they are not preventing the spread of obesity. More than 25 percent of adults are obese in 28 states, while more than 20 percent of adults are obese in every state except Colorado. Moreover, not one state showed a decrease in numbers of obese people. The authors recommend that the federal government convene a partnership of state and local governments, businesses, and schools to implement a strategy to tackle obesity [Note: contains copyrighted material] <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/081908.3424.fasinfat.pdf> [PDF format, 144 pages].

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT ON THE LATIN AMERICA SMALL BUSINESS LENDING INITIATIVE. U.S. Treasury Department. Web posted September 8, 2008.

The report summarizes the first year of implementation of the Latin America Small Business Lending Initiative, launched by U.S. Treasury Secretary Paulson in June 2007, to expand and improve the access of small businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean to commercial financing. The effort is intended to accelerate the job creation and poverty-reduction that small businesses provide. Expanding small business ownership helps create more sustainable, stable economies with broader economic opportunities.

http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/reports/latam_smallending_annualrpt_082808.pdf [PDF format, 5pages].

FIRE RETARDANTS IN TODDLERS AND THEIR MOTHERS. Environmental Working Group. Web posted September 4, 2008.

Environmental Working Group (EWG) found that toddlers and pre-schoolers typically had 3 times more of the neuron toxic compounds in their blood than their mothers. The study suggests that U.S. children 1 to 4 years of age bear the heaviest burden of flame retardant pollution in the industrialized world. The tests found the fire retardant, Deca, banned in Europe but unregulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, more often and in higher amounts in U.S. children than their mothers. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.ewg.org/book/export/html/26900> [HTML format, various paging].

FOOD PRICES AND THE AIDS RESPONSE. International Food Policy Research Institute. Stuart Gillespie. August 2008.

A combination of new and ongoing forces is driving global food prices. Hunger and HIV often coexist and interact. According to the World Food Programme, 22 of 30 “high-risk countries” in need of external food assistance are in sub-Saharan Africa, many of which have serious AIDS epidemics. In southern Africa where AIDS is hyper endemic, high levels of income inequality and population mobility are among the key drivers of the epidemic, factors that are likely to be further affected by food price shocks. Households and communities continue to struggle as multiple shocks and stresses, social, economic, political, environmental, and health-related, threaten their livelihood bases. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.ifpri.org/renewal/pdf/RFbrief01.pdf> [PDF format, 2 pages].

GET A GOOD NIGHT’S SLEEP. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Summer 2008.

The report provides practical guidance on how to become a smarter, safer user of financial services. It includes: Get a Good Night’s Sleep: Rest Assured, Your Money is Safe in an FDIC-Insured Account; Tips for Trying to Fix a Clogged or “Frozen” Home Equity Line; Dialing for (Your) Dollars: Beware of Phone and Fax Fraud; Reminder: Beware of Mortgage Rescue Frauds; “Green” Banking: Saving the Environment as You Save and Borrow Money. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnsum08/summer_08_color.pdf [PDF format, 8 pages].

HAITI: CONFRONTING THE GANGS OF PORT-AU-PRINCE. U.S. Institute of Peace. Michael Dziedzic and Robert M. Perito. September 2008.

The United Nation (U.N.) mission in Haiti’s successful campaign against the gangs of Port-au-Prince is an example of effective UN mandate enforcement against irregular armed forces that posed a deadly threat—in this case, to the Haitian government and the peace process. The Haiti mission’s action provides a model for other UN missions and for national governments that face a similar challenge from illegally armed groups. The report describes the conduct of military and police operations against the gangs and the overwhelmingly positive attitude of Haitian citizens toward the UN operation and its results. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr208.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages].

HISPANICS AND HEALTH CARE IN THE UNITED STATES: ACCESS, INFORMATION, AND KNOWLEDGE. Pew Hispanic Center and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Gretchen Livingston et al. Web posted August 31, 2008.

More than one-fourth of Hispanic adults in the U.S. lack a usual health care provider and a similar proportion report obtaining no health care information from medical personnel in the past year. The survey also finds that foreign-born and less-assimilated Latinos—those who mainly speak Spanish, who lack U.S. citizenship, or who have had only short tenures in the U. S., are less likely than other Latinos to report that they have a usual place to go for medical treatment or advice. However, the primary reason that respondents give for lacking a regular health care provider is not related to the cost or assimilation. Rather, when asked why they lack a usual provider, a plurality (41%) of respondents say the principal reason is that they are seldom sick. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/91.pdf> [PDF format, 81 pages].

HOT OR NOT?: RECOGNIZING AND PREPARING FOR CLIMATE-INDUCED ILLNESS.

American Sociological Association. Sabrina McCormick. Web posted August 23, 2008.

According to the report, climate change is detrimentally affecting the lives and health of many people and is resulting in 160,000 annual deaths globally, caused by vector borne diseases, food insecurity, and heat waves. The report presents an analytical framework for the newly recognized and socially-contested category of “climate-induced illnesses.” Illnesses recently recognized as exacerbated by climate change are examined along with illness crisis management. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=sabrina_mccormick [PDF format, 40 pages].

HOW AMERICA PAYS FOR COLLEGE. SallieMae and Gallup. Web posted August 20, 2008.

Working with Sallie Mae, Gallup has developed the mathematically representative picture of how the typical American family pays for college based upon in-depth statistical analysis of a nationwide survey of more than 1,400 parents and students. In addition, the study provides critical insight into the attitudes, choices, and concerns of American families in how they plan and pay for college. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.salliemae.com/content/dreams/pdf/AP-Report.pdf> [PDF format, 62 pages].

INCREASING VULNERABILITY TO HURRICANES: GLOBAL WARMING'S WAKE-UP CALL FOR THE U.S. GULF AND ATLANTIC COASTS. National Wildlife Federation. August 21, 2008.

While Florida and Gulf Coast residents bear the brunt of Tropical Storm Fay, the latest science connecting hurricanes and global warming suggests more is yet to come: tropical storms are likely to bring higher wind speeds, more precipitation, and bigger storm surge in the coming decades. The study details how: hurricanes are getting stronger as oceans warm; increasing coastal population and development puts people in harm's way; hurricanes affect wildlife; wetlands are the first line of defense against hurricanes; and to reduce risks and prepare for future hurricanes. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.nwf.org/nwfwebadmin/binaryVault/Hurricanes_FNL_LowRes.pdf [PDF format, 8 pages].

THE LAST HOLDOUTS: ENDING THE JUVENILE DEATH PENALTY IN IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA, SUDAN, PAKISTAN, AND YEMEN. Human Rights Watch. September 2008.

The prohibition on the death penalty for crimes committed by juvenile offenders, persons under age 18 at the time of the offense, is well established in international treaty and customary law. The overwhelming majority of states comply with this standard: only five states are known to have executed juvenile offenders since January 2005. In Iran and Saudi Arabia, the two countries that account for the largest number of executions of juvenile offenders, these sentences are the result of deliberate state policies to retain the juvenile death penalty. In Sudan, Yemen, and Pakistan, laws prohibiting the death penalty for crimes committed by persons under age 18 are not always implemented. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://hrw.org/reports/2008/crd0908/crd0908web.pdf> [PDF format, 23 pages].

LEARNING BY DOING: EXPERIENCES OF CIRCULAR MIGRATION. Migration Policy Institute. Kathleen Newland et al. Web posted September 5, 2008.

Policymakers in migrant-receiving countries all over the world are exploring the concept of circular migration as a way to improve upon the discredited temporary worker programs of the past. As a new policy tool that allows migrants to move more freely back and forth between their origin and destination countries, circular migration increases the likelihood that global mobility gains will be shared by both and gives migrants more options to advance their working lives. Despite the growing interest, the study finds that the concept of circular migration is not well understood and that the experience of circular programs around the world remains thin. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/Insight-IGC-Sept08.pdf> [PDF format, 28 pages].

LEGACY OR COMPLACENCY?: LULA'S UNFINISHED BUSINESS IN BRAZIL. American Enterprise Institute. August 2008.

Brazil, South America's most populous continental power, has strung together a few decades of sound economic policies and pluralistic governance to become an example of how a multiethnic democracy and free market economy can help millions pull themselves out of poverty. The report states that President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has made impressive strides during his tenure. He has demonstrated that antipoverty programs are good business and that economic growth is objectively better when the opportunity that comes with it is shared more equitably. It is hoped that he continues his efforts in the remainder of his term. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28435/pub_detail.asp [HTML format, various paging].

MEASURING LABOUR MARKETS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES: 2008 REPORT. Fraser Institute. Keith Godin et al. Web posted August 31, 2008.

The research paper assesses the performance of labor markets and explains why results differ among jurisdictions. The paper provides a series of specific evaluations as well as a comprehensive measure of labor market performance. Indicators of labor performance such as job creation, unemployment, and productivity are used to assess Canadian provincial and US state labor market performance. It also examines those characteristics and regulations of the labor market that have been shown to affect its performance. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.fraserinstitute.org/commerce.web/product_files/MeasuringLabourMarketsCanadaUS2008.pdf [PDF format, 70 pages].

MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA TODAY: A REFORM PLAN FOR A NEW ADMINISTRATION. Common Cause Education Fund. Web posted August 29, 2008.

The report lays out a plan of action for the next President and Congress to take to ensure the media performs its appropriate role in our democracy. Congress is currently considering a "Resolution of Disapproval" of the Federal Communication Commission's new media ownership rules. The report calls for the passage of House Joint Resolution 79, which would overturn the FCC's new rules and halt further media consolidation. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7Bfb3c17e2-cdd1-4df6-92be-bd4429893665%7D/MEDIAPLAN082108.PDF> [PDF format, 32 pages].

MORE AMERICANS QUESTION RELIGION'S ROLE IN POLITICS. Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. August 21, 2008.

Some Americans are having a change of heart about mixing religion and politics. The survey finds a narrow majority of the public saying that churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters and not express their views on day-to-day social and political matters. For a decade, majorities of Americans had voiced support for religious institutions speaking out on such issues. As a result, conservatives' views on this issue are much more in line with the views of moderates and liberals than was previously the case. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://pewforum.org/newassets/images/reports/summer08/survey.pdf> [PDF format, 63 pages].

NANOTECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH, AND SAFETY: ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION. Congressional Research Service, RL34616, Library of Congress. John F. Sargent. Web posted August 24, 2008.

Nanotechnology is focused on understanding, controlling, and exploiting the unique properties of matter that can emerge at scales of one to 100 nanometers. A key issue regarding nanotechnology is how best to protect human health, safety, and the environment as nanoscale materials and products are researched, developed, manufactured, used, and discarded. While the rapidly emerging field of nanotechnology is believed by many to offer significant economic and societal benefits, some research results have raised concerns about the potential adverse environmental, health, and safety (EHS) implications of nanoscale materials.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL34614.pdf> [PDF format, 45 pages].

NUCLEAR, BIOLOGICAL, AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND MISSILES: STATUS AND TRENDS. Congressional Research Service, RL30699, Library of Congress. Paul K. Kerr. Web posted August 25, 2008.

The United States has long recognized the dangers inherent in the spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons, and missiles. The report analyzes NBC weapons programs' potential threat around the globe. The total number of NBC weapons in the world is shrinking as the major powers scale back their inventories, but other countries and groups still try to acquire these weapons. The potential for secondary proliferation markets has grown, and concern about the ability of individuals to peddle nuclear technology has grown considerably. The will to acquire

or to produce NBC weapons may decrease if diplomacy, arms control treaties, nonproliferation regimes, and security and assistance strategies are effective.

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL30699_20080220.pdf [PDF format, 31 pages].

OIL DRILLING IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA.

Center for Economic and Policy Research. Mark Weisbrot and Nichole Szembrot. September 2008.

The media has played a significant role in convincing Americans that offshore drilling for oil in the United States could significantly lower the price of gasoline, according to the analysis. Even though the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Agency has stated that the benefits from such drilling would be too small to have any significant effect on oil prices, the media has overwhelmingly conveyed the impression that it could. Media coverage of the issue may have influenced public opinion, with a majority now favoring expanded drilling, as proposed by presidential candidate John McCain. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/media_drilling_2008_09.pdf [PDF format, 4 pages].

OIL'S TROUBLE SPOTS. Council on Foreign Relations. Toni Johnson. Web posted August 29, 2008.

Rising dependence on oil and soaring gasoline costs have the potential for oil supply disruptions. Hence, the stability of energy-rich regions poses major concerns. Certain areas are particularly vulnerable, one of which is the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, through which tankers carry 20 percent of the world's oil. Analysts say the Niger Delta, Iraq, and Venezuela remain vulnerable as well. With global supplies of oil already tight, potential supply disruptions could lead to significant increases in already volatile oil prices. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.cfr.org/publication/17068/oils_trouble_spots.html?breadcrumb=%2F [HTML format, various paging].

OPEC REVENUES FACT SHEET. Energy Information Administration. September 2008.

EIA estimates that members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) earned \$671 billion in net oil export revenues in 2007, a 10 percent increase from 2006. Saudi Arabia earned the largest share of these earnings, \$194 billion, representing 29 percent of total OPEC revenues. On a per-capita basis, OPEC net oil export earning reached \$1,137, a 8 percent increase from 2006. Through August, OPEC had earned an estimated \$740 billion in net oil export earnings in 2008. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/OPEC_Revenues/pdf.pdf [PDF format, 3 pages].

PARENTS IN PRISON AND THEIR MINOR CHILDREN. Office of Justice Programs, U.S.

Department of Justice. Lauren E. Glaze and Laura M. Maruschak. Web posted August 27, 2008.

The study compares estimates of the number of incarcerated parents and their children under the age of 18, by gender, age, race, and Hispanic origin in state and federal prisons in 1991, 1997, 1999, 2004, and 2007. It presents the total number of children who were minors at some time during their parent's incarceration. The report provides family background of inmate parents including household makeup, public assistance received by household, drug and alcohol use, and incarceration of family members. It includes information on the children's daily care, financial

support, current caregivers, and frequency and type of contact with incarcerated parents. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf> [PDF format, 25 pages].

PUBLIC STEM CELL RESEARCH FUNDING: BOON OR BOONDOGGLE? Competitive Enterprise Institute. Sigrid Fry-Revere and Molly Elgin. September 2008. Debates over the ethics of research using human embryonic stem cells continue long after the ban on federal tax-funding for such research. The report calls into question whether, ethics aside, stem cell research is even a sensible expenditure of taxpayer dollars. The authors argue that government stem cell research programs, such as California's Proposition 71, are bureaucratic, wasteful, and mired in political controversy. They also contend that since the stem cell research is inherently speculative and politically controversial, the public would be best served if governments left it to the private sector. [Note: contains copyrighted material] http://cei.org/cei_files/fm/active/0/Sigrid%20Fry-everere%20and%20Molly%20Elgin%20-%20Public%20Stem%20Cell%20Research%20Funding.pdf [PDF format, 26 pages].

RECENT TRENDS IN HOME PRICES: DIFFERENCE ACROSS MORTGAGE AND BORROWER CHARACTERISTICS. Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight. Andrew Leventis. Web posted August 27, 2008. The research paper analyzes differences in recent price trends for homes with different types of financing and borrower characteristics. The work follows preliminary research published in January that uncovered relative price weakness for homes not purchased with Office of Federal Housing Enterprise financed mortgages. <http://www.ofheo.gov/media/research/pricesandfinancing.pdf> [PDF format, 15 pages].

A REPORT ON THE 2008 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS ADS: ADS MORE NEGATIVE THAN PREVIOUS YEARS. Brookings Institution. September 4, 2008. Few aspects of campaigns attract as much discussion as television advertisements. Political spots generally represent the largest single expenditure by candidates and often generate considerable news coverage. According to the report, many observers are not happy with the quality of information presented in ads or the tone of political discourse. Critics worry that the emergence of 30-second commercials undermines substantive discourse and leads to campaigns that are overly negative. Both raise potential problems for democratic elections. [Note: contains copyrighted material] http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/0630_campaignads_west.aspx [HTML format, various paging].

RISING INCOME INEQUALITY IN CHINA: A RACE TO THE TOP. World Bank. Xubei Luo and Nong Zhu. Web posted August 27, 2008. Income inequality in China has risen rapidly in the past decades across regions, between rural and urban sectors, and within provinces. The dynamics of divergence across these sub-national areas have taken the form of a "race to the top." An analysis based on household income determination shows that the increase in returns to education explains two-thirds of income changes in urban areas and one-sixth in rural areas. The widening income gaps are the consequence of higher growth in leading urban and coastal areas and that the skilled population has benefited more from the economic reforms carried out during the last 25 years. [Note:

contains copyrighted material]

<http://www->

wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2008/08/25/000158349_20080825160141/Rendered/PDF/WPS4700.pdf [PDF format, 26 pages].

SEA THE VALUE: QUALIFYING THE VALUE OF MARINE LIFE TO DIVERS. Oceana. Lisa White. Web posted August 29, 2008.

The report shows that scuba divers are willing to pay more to see healthy corals, sharks and sea turtles. Divers are avid participants in ecotourism and show a great willingness to protect all that inhabits the oceans. Scuba divers contribute significant dollars to coastal economies each year through dive-related vacations. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.oceana.org/fileadmin/oceana/uploads/destructive_trawling/dive/Lisa_White_mp_8_5.pdf [PDF format, 37 pages].

SECURING THE FUTURE: A PRIMER ON SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN CONFLICT COUNTRIES. U.S. Institute of Peace. Sean McFate. September 2008.

The report serves as a primer toward understanding security sector reform (SSR) in societies emerging from conflict, a rapidly expanding field of importance. The report provides background on SSR today. It is based on statements by panelists at a public forum held at the United States Institute of Peace and on interviews conducted by the author with government agencies, commercial contract firms, international organizations, and host governments that participate in the SSR programs. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr209.pdf> [PDF format, 20 pages].

SENIORS AND DRUG PRICES IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES, 2008 EDITION.

Fraser Institute. Web posted August 31, 2008.

The report covers Canada-US price differences for the prescription drugs that are most important to Canadian seniors, aged 60 and older. On average, Canadian seniors pay 101 percent more than American seniors for identical generic drugs but pay 57 percent less than American seniors for identical brand name drugs. Higher Canadian generic prices are caused by government policies that shield retail pharmacies and generic manufacturers from competitive market forces that would put downward pressure on generic prices. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.fraserinstitute.org/commerce.web/product_files/SeniorsandDrugPrices2008.pdf [PDF format, 5 pages].

STABILITY IN RUSSIA'S CHECHNYA AND OTHER REGIONS OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. Congressional Research Service, RL34613, Library of Congress.

Jim Nichol. Web posted August 20, 2008.

There reportedly have been increasingly frequent small-scale attacks against Russian government targets in the North Caucasus. Many ethnic Russian and other non-native civilians have been murdered or have disappeared, which has spurred the migration of most of the non-native population from the North Caucasus. The United States generally has supported the Russian government's efforts to combat terrorism in the North Caucasus. However, there are also concerns about the wide scope of human rights abuses committed by the Russian government in

the North Caucasus.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34613.pdf> [PDF format, 16 pages].

SOUTH KOREA'S MIRACULOUS DEMOCRACY. RAND Corporation. Hahm Chaibong. Web posted August 31, 2008.

According to the author, despite South Korea's messy democratic trajectory, it has miraculously achieved consolidation. South Korea's democracy has turned obstacles into opportunities for reform and development. The major development is that the turnover of power during the past two decades has enabled all major political figures, factions, and parties to take turns governing the country, making them "responsible stakeholders." [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/2008/RAND_RP1370.pdf [PDF format, 16 pages].

THE STATE OF OUR NATION'S YOUTH 2008-2009. Horatio Alger Association. Web posted August 24, 2008.

Teens are feeling the weight of the world now more than ever, according to a new report issued today. There has been a steep drop-off in the number of students feeling hopeful and optimistic about the future of the country, falling from 75% in 2003 to just 53% today. Despite these declining views of a fading nation, teens are nonetheless positive as they envision their own futures. With 88% describing themselves as confident and 66% saying they feel optimistic about their own futures, they are making strides towards achieving success as young adults. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.horatioalger.org/pdfs/0708SONY.pdf> [PDF format, 80 pages].

TERRORISM AND SECURITY ISSUES FACING THE WATER INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR.

Congressional Research Service, RL32189, Library of Congress. Claudia Copeland. Web posted August 15, 2008.

Damage to or destruction of the nation's water supply and water quality infrastructure by terrorist attack or natural disaster could disrupt the delivery of vital human services in this country, threatening public health and the environment, or possibly causing loss of life. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, federal dam operators and local water and wastewater utilities have been under heightened security conditions and are evaluating security plans and measures.

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL32189.pdf> [PDF format, 21 pages].

"TO PROTECT AND DEFEND": CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY FACING THE NEXT PRESIDENT. National Association of Chiefs of Police. Web posted August 28, 2008.

Because every 22.2 seconds, an American is a victim of a violent crime, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is calling on the next president of the United States to establish a National Commission on criminal justice and homeland security. The Commission would be charged with conducting a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system, and would be required to provide the nation with a strategic plan to guide public safety and homeland security efforts in the years ahead. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.theiacp.org/documents/protectdefend.pdf> [PDF format, 13 pages].

TRANSPORTATION FUEL USE, TECHNOLOGY AND STANDARDS: THE ROLE OF CREDIBILITY AND EXPECTATIONS. World Bank. Gunnar S. Ekeland and Torben K. Mideksa. Web posted August 26, 2008.

There is a debate among policy analysts about whether fuel taxes alone are the most effective policy to reduce fuel use by motorists, or whether to also use mandatory standards for fuel efficiency. A problem with a policy mandating fuel economy standards is the “rebound effect,” whereby owners with more efficient vehicles increase vehicle usage. Taxes and standards should be mutually supportive because fuel taxes often meet political resistance. Over time, fuel efficiency standards can reduce political resistance to fuel taxes. Thus, by raising fuel efficiency standards now, politicians may be able to pursue higher fuel tax paths in the future. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2008/08/19/000158349_20080819140748/Rendered/PDF/WPS4695.pdf [PDF format, 39 pages].

UNDERAGE ALOCOHOL USE: WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK? National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Web posted September 4, 2008.

A majority (53.4 percent) of current alcohol users aged 12 to 20 drank at someone else’s home the last time they used alcohol, and another 30.3 percent drank in their own home.

The percentage of underage alcohol users who had their most recent drink in a car or other vehicle peaked at 10.1 percent at age 16 (12.8 percent of females and 7.3 percent of males).

[Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k8/location/underage.htm> [HTML format, various paging].

UNDERSTANDING AND MITIGATING VULNERABLE BYCATCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN TRAWL AND LONGLINE FISHERIES. World Wildlife Fund. Samantha Petersen et al. Web posted September 4, 2008.

The survival chances of the albatross, now officially the most threatened seabird family in the world, have been improved. At least 28 species of albatross and petrel have been caught by South African fisheries, of which 13 are threatened with extinction. The birds are caught trying to retrieve bait from long line fishing hooks, or are injured or killed during trawling operations. The findings help accurately identify management measures to reduce the wasteful killing of these magnificent birds while not unnecessarily disrupting fishing activities or impacting other vulnerable marine life like turtles and sharks. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://assets.panda.org/downloads/53_understanding_and_mitigating_vulnerable_bycatch_in_southern_african_trawl_and_longlin.pdf [PDF format, 262 pages].

THE UNITED STATES AND LIBYA: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Michele Dunne. September 2008.

The author, Michele Dunne, warns that, following recent diplomatic success in settling long-standing disputes, the United States risks falling into business-as-usual relations with Libya. The United States should set clear, strategic objectives aimed at helping the Libyan people and avoid merely putting more resources into the hands of regime insiders and crony capitalists. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/dunne_libya.pdf [PDF Format, 6 pages].

U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: UNDERSTANDING COSTS, CULTURES, AND CONFLICTS. Strategic Studies Institute. Donovan C. Chau. Web posted August 27, 2008.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has never been the centerpiece of United States foreign and defense policy. However, the current struggle between the U.S. and its allies against terrorist groups and individuals motivated by Islamic extremism thrusts SSA forward as a front in the global conflict. By comparing views in Washington, DC, with perspectives from SSA, Chau assesses that a fundamental and dangerous misunderstanding of SSA may be leading U.S. policy astray. The author suggests urgently educating a future generation of analysts, officers, and policymakers on SSA--whose interest must match their knowledge and understanding. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB821.pdf> [PDF format, 81 pages].

VOICES OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE. Alzheimer's Association. Peter Reed et al. Web posted August 27, 2008.

Hundreds of people living in the early stage of Alzheimer's stated that the stigma associated with the disease is one of their top concerns during town hall meetings that the Alzheimer's Association held across the nation. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://www.alz.org/national/documents/report_townhall.pdf [PDF format, 36 pages].

WORLDWIDE PREVALENCE OF ANAEMIA 1993-2005. World Health Organization United Nations. Web posted August 26, 2008.

Anemia is a public health problem that affects populations in both rich and poor countries. Its primary cause is iron deficiency, but a number of other conditions, such as malaria, parasitic infection, other nutritional deficiencies, and haemoglobinopathies are also responsible, often in combination. The report provides estimates of the prevalence of anemia at country, regional and global levels for all population groups: preschool-age children, school-age children, pregnant and non-pregnant women, men, and elderly. [Note: contains copyrighted material]

http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596657_eng.pdf [PDF format, 51 pages].

ARTICLES

DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

Bales, Carter F.; Duke, Richard D. CONTAINING CLIMATE CHANGE: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR U.S. LEADERSHIP (Foreign Affairs, vol. 87, no. 5, September/October 2008, pp. 78-90) Both presidential candidates have expressed willingness to limit carbon emissions. Bales, an energy consultant, and Duke, the Director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's Center for Market Innovation, have devised a four-part system for decreasing carbon pollution. The "cap-and-invest" strategy would need to be enacted by Congress and would result in increased funding for newer environmental technologies and a system of carbon-trading. A recent study by McKinsey & Company suggests that the cost of reducing US emissions by 2030 will be close to zero with the proposed plan. The authors go on to discuss a larger plan to involve the rest of the world in a system for reducing carbon emissions that requires polluting nations to buy allowances from less-developed nations, injecting cash into the economies of developing countries. The U.S.

is the world's leading innovator in environmental technology and the authors contend that it would serve the nation's economic interests to promote innovation and open up new markets to U.S. technology services.

Farhi, Paul CABLE'S CLOUT (American Journalism Review, vol. 30, no. 4, August-September 2008)

Repetition and prominence, not the ability to break news, give cable news television an enormous amount of clout, says Washington Post reporter Farhi. Using the example of the story of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Barack Obama's responses to stories about his controversial minister, Farhi argues that "few campaign stories have much impact or become an important part of the campaign narrative until they get heavy play on cable." The ability to function as "an engine of reaction and response" is cable television's greatest means for influence. "Cable's intense and often immediate coverage of the day's big controversy forces candidates to fire back, which then compels the rest of the media to cover the response," Farhi says. Whether they like to admit it or not, print media reporters are forced to consider addressing stories of whatever degree of merit if, thanks to cable television, enough people are talking about it. Available online at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4574>

Foust, Joshua CITIZEN PROPAGANDISTS: CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE ON RUSSIA-GEORGIA IS HARDER THAN YOU THINK (Columbia Journalism Review, posted September 2, 2008)

The ability of journalists as well as ordinary people to use blogs to write about what they are passionate about is creating a new class of propagandist -- "citizen propagandists," says Foust. He notes that this is especially evident with the current situation in Georgia. Foust quotes Ethan Zukerman, co-founder of the citizens' media project Global Voices, as saying "Georgian, Russian and Ossetian bloggers all want the suffering of their group acknowledged on a global stage and are all presenting the conflict from their personal perspectives." While some of these voices give sober evaluations of the conflict, too often their accounts are drowned out in a flood of citizen propaganda coming from "partisans of all stripes," says Foust. "The usual suspects pushing pre-spun views of what happened lends them zero value over traditional media sources -- surely not what the original architects of the blogosphere ideals intended," Foust says. Available online at http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/citizen_propagandists.php

Ortolani, Alex HOW CHINA CENSORS ITS BURGEONING MEDIA (Michigan Quarterly Review, vol. 47, no. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 271-282)

From a handful of state-run media outlets in the 1970s, the Chinese press has grown into many thousands of news sources including newspapers, magazines, TV and radio channels. Somehow, the government manages to watch and censor them all through intimidation, bribery, information control and close coordination with editorial boards. In a rapidly changing China, many wonder how long it will be until a truly free press develops; one observer, however, says censorship continues to be stronger than those who push against it.

Pala, Christopher VICTORY AT SEA (Smithsonian, September 2008, pp. 46-55)

The tiny Pacific island nation of Kiribati created a marine reserve the size of California, and Pala writes that this action may point the way toward restoring marine ecosystems. A scientific expedition in 2000 was the first step toward creation of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area, about 1,000 miles east of Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati. Pala quotes marine biologist Gregory Stone, who was on that trip, describing the abundance of sea life surrounding the coral reefs: "It was the first time I had seen what the ocean may have been like thousands of years ago." Humankind never took inventory of sea life before it started to fish the seas, Pala writes, so the distinction of the remote and untouched Phoenix Islands is that they provide a new baseline for understanding what healthy populations of sea life really look like. Kiribati sacrificed significant revenue from commercial fishing licenses in protecting the islands, but did so with a promise of compensation from the nongovernmental organization Conservation International.

Ratner, Steven THINK AGAIN: THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS (Law Quadrangle Notes, vol. 50, no. 2, Summer 2008, 95-97)

The author, professor at the University of Michigan Law School, expands on points he made in an article in the March/April issue of Foreign Policy magazine. In a discussion of common myths on the subject, Ratner believes that the modern Geneva Conventions were created producing a kind of international "bill of rights" that governs the handling of casualties, prisoners of war, and civilians in war zones. The conventions won't prevent wars, but they are supposed to protect innocent bystanders, shield soldiers from unnecessary harm, limit the physical damage caused by war, and even enhance the chances for cease-fires and peace. The conventions contain one section (Article 3) that protects all persons regardless of their status -- whether spy, mercenary, or terrorist, and regardless of the type of war in which they are fighting. Article 3 also prohibits torture, cruel treatment, and murder of all detainees; requires medical care for the wounded; and obligates trials conducted by regular courts that respect due process. In a landmark 2006 opinion, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that, at a minimum, Article 3 applies to detained al-Qaeda suspects even if al-Qaeda ignores them, and it may be that even tougher rules must then be used in such a fight.

Rogers, Peter FACING THE FRESHWATER CRISIS (Scientific American, August 2008)
Global freshwater resources are threatened by rising demands from many quarters. Growing populations need ever more water for drinking, hygiene, sanitation, food production and industry. Climate change, meanwhile, is expected to contribute to droughts. Policymakers need to figure out how to supply water without degrading the natural ecosystems that provide it. Existing low-tech approaches can help prevent scarcity, as can ways to boost supplies, such as improved methods to desalinate water. But governments at all levels need to start setting policies and making investments in infrastructure for water conservation now. Currently available online at <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=facing-the-freshwater-crisis>

Talbot, David HOW OBAMA REALLY DID IT: SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY HELPED BRING HIM TO THE BRINK OF THE PRESIDENCY (Technology Review, vol. 111, no. 5, September/October 2008, pp. 78-83)

Talbot, chief correspondent for Technology Review, writes that Barack Obama "has forever changed electoral politics by making new media platforms and his own social networking site fulcrums of his campaign." Jascha Franklin-Hodge, cofounder of Blue State Digital, the high-tech company working for the Obama campaign, states that the key is tightly integrating online activity with tasks people can perform in the real world -- "the core of the software is having those links to taking action." Those actions are donating money, making calls, writing letters and organizing house parties. McCain has an online campaign, but has a lot of catching up to do, according to Talbot; it needs a text messaging strategy to reach voters under age 25. Joe Trippi, who ran John Dean's campaign in 2004, states that "there won't be a campaign in 2012 that doesn't try to build a social network around it."

Vander Veen, Chad NET GAINS (Government Technology, vol. 21, no. 8, August 2008, pp. 16-20, 22)

According to the author, the World Wide Web is often dubbed "this generation's wild, Wild West," a raucous, freewheeling digital expanse; like the frontier, the Web is a showcase for an emerging society with its own ideas, goals and morals. In the virtual world of the 21st century, the web has emerged as a "pivotal theater" in which candidates for office must battle -- it has blossomed from a campaign novelty to an essential tool to reach voters. The difference during the 2008 election cycle for president is the advent of Web 2.0 applications; chief among these new applications are social networking sites, such as MySpace, Facebook and Flickr. Barack Obama's website, for example, features various links to social networking sites; some of them are broadly known, such as Digg and LinkedIn. Others target specific demographics, such as FaithBase, BlackPlanet and AsianAve; Obama uses each of these sites to deliver a message tailored to a niche audience. John McCain's site, meanwhile, makes heavy use of blogs and video. Both candidates' web site contain a feature that enables online donations, an innovation started by Howard Dean in his unsuccessful 2004 presidential race.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY CONTINUES TO INCREASE CROP YIELD AND FARMER INCOME WORLDWIDE WHILE SUPPORTING THE ENVIRONMENT (Business Wire, February 13, 2008)

Global use of biotechnology crops increased again in 2007, while biotech acreage reached an all-time high of 282 million acres (114 million hectares) in 23 countries by 15 million farmers, according to a leading agricultural research institute. In the U.S., 91 percent of soybeans and 73 percent of maize and 87 percent of cotton grown were biotech varieties, the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) reports. The report states that continuing growth in acceptance of agricultural biotechnology has helped enable large shifts in agronomic practices, leading to widespread environmental benefits. For example, no-till agriculture had been little used before 1996, or around the time biotech became commercially available. Since that year, no-till has been widely adopted due to superior weed control from biotech crops adapting to new herbicides that cause less harmful environmental impact. No-till also conserves water and soil and significantly reduces the amount of fuel used in tilling. Biotech also makes possible pest control measures that are more targeted to problem pests while reducing harmful impacts on non-target species. In 2007, several regulations covering biotechnology that support trade and research were introduced. The year also saw regulatory advances as the Codex Alimentarius unveiled a guideline for food safety assessments of genetically engineered animals. The guideline is expected to be adopted in 2008. Codex is a United Nations agency established to ensure food safety, establish fair practices for food trade and promote the development of international food standards.

Conger, Darius ECONOMICS AND THE AMERICAN FAMILY: A REVIEW OF RECENT LITERATURE (Choice, vol. 46, no. 1, September 2008, pp. 33-34, 36-45)

As Americans head into another presidential election in November, one of the most important issues facing the voter will be the economic situation of the average family. This essay focuses on the recent literature that addresses the economic decisions and outcomes of American families, a growth occupation for academic scholars and policymakers. The author breaks down his categories into history of the family; economic theory and the family; law and the family; families with children; work; child outcomes, or societal concern such as welfare reform for families at the bottom of the income distribution; and family reconfiguration, such as divorce, retirement and death. Such variety in employment studies and family research now requires a good background in demographics and population trends which was not the case even twenty years ago. One reason has been the impact of the working mother, as the beginning of the 21st century has seen increasingly vital positions in the corporate world held by women with children. The cost to employers of losing these key employees has started to impact employment policy thinking in ways that were previously not considered.

Cox, Stan TURNING YOUR LAWN INTO A VICTORY GARDEN WON'T SAVE YOU -- FIGHTING THE CORPORATIONS WILL (AlterNet, posted June 23, 2008)

The "edible-landscaping trend," adopted by ordinary Americans to grow their own food in their front and back yards, is a laudable endeavor, but it will not do much toward easing food shortages or the high cost of food, in the view of Stan Cox, a plant breeder and writer based in Salina, Kansas. "Too many people are getting the idea that the solution to America's and the world's food problems is for all us in cities and suburbia to grow our own -- it's not," Cox writes. The author argues that the food problems are the creation of "Big Agribusiness," which controls what he calls "a dirty, cruel, unfair, broken system." The global food problems stem from shortages of grains -- rice, wheat, corn and beans, produced by large agricultural corporations. The problem will not be solved by city dwellers growing cucumbers and tomatoes in their yards and balconies. Looking back over history, Cox notes that control of grain production is intimately linked with political power. Agribusiness, which dominates grain production in the U.S., functions "with the singular goal of turning maximum profit," Cox writes. He asserts that agribusiness's

attempts to increase efficiency have been "ecologically devastating," adding that the "biofuel craze ... compounds the problem." Cox argues that the solution lies in taking political action against agribusiness interests with the aim of promoting more widespread land ownership.

Hunt, Suzanne BIOFUELS, NEITHER SAVIOUR NOR SCAM: THE CASE FOR A SELECTIVE STRATEGY (World Policy Journal, vol. 25, no. 1, Spring 2008, pp. 9-17)

Hunt, an independent consultant to the U.S. Energy Department, weighs carefully the advantages and disadvantages of biofuels, both oversimplified in a debate about their potential role in addressing energy needs and climate change. She tends to agree with the view that biofuels produced from food crops have little influence on grain prices. She treads more carefully on the issue of net energy benefits. According to several studies, the production and use of virtually all biofuels produced today will lead to a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Hunt cautions, however, that such assessments are very complex. The production and use of biofuels is associated with trade-offs and risks but also with opportunities. Dealing rationally with this energy source requires developing effective safeguards against the risks and capitalizing on the opportunities, she says. For example, she views international cooperation and international biofuel standards as very important. The primary concern is that, without them "a biofuels free-for-all could develop that would pay little regard to sustainability and environmental concerns," she says. Also, it is important to consider biofuels in a broader context of agriculture-related climate-change mitigation efforts. She concludes that more sustainable farm practices can help ensure that both future biofuels and agriculture meet sustainability targets.

Morris, Jane E. THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL: IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (Development Policy Review, vol. 26, no. 1, 2008, pp. 29-57)

The author, with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in South Africa, notes that most African nations have ratified or acceded to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Yet, many national approaches do not align with regional trade, economic, science and technology policies. Use of the precautionary principle and administrative hurdles are likely to hinder regional trade and technology development, Morris writes. She lays out an analysis of the national biotechnology and biosafety policies of 44 African countries, concluding that each country has developed policies based on its own perceived needs, rather than with a focus on achieving alignment with regional economic goals. Regional trade in products produced with biotechnology are not a feature of any country's policies; if African countries can develop their own biotechnology crops and with traits relevant to the continent, they should also consider lowering trade barriers and establishing regulatory systems. She says cross-border trade barriers to biotechnology products will hamper economic development by introducing costly administrative hurdles.

Sass, Steven OVERTIME (Boston College Magazine, vol. 68, no. 3, Summer 2008, pp. 40-46, 48)

The author, associate director for research at the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, writes that job holders in the soon-to-retire Baby Boom generation, those born between 1946 and 1962, will have to work longer than their parents did. In the 1960s and 1970s, the creation of Medicare and the expansion of Social Security and employer-defined pension plans created the Golden Age of retirement. These programs let the World War II generation exit the labor force at a historically young age with enough income to maintain its standard of living. With cutbacks in Social Security and the general disappearance of traditional pensions, that option is gone. To enjoy a reasonably comfortable old age, the Baby Boom generation has little choice but to stay in the labor force longer. The picture is further complicated by a new instability in employment for older workers, and much more frequent job changes. The entry of China, India and the former Soviet Union into the world economic system has doubled the size of the labor force potentially available to U.S. employers over the last 10 to 15 years. Available online at http://bcm.bc.edu/issues/summer_2008/features/overtime.html

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Chivers, Daniel, et al. BEFORE THE DAY AFTER: USING PRE-DETONATION NUCLEAR FORENSICS TO IMPROVE FISSILE MATERIAL SECURITY (Arms Control Today, vol. 38, no. 6, July/August 2008, pp. 22-28)

The authors write that the next U.S. administration will face many challenges, but none likely more pressing than combating the threat of nuclear terrorism. They say the international community lacks clear, enforceable standards for fissile material protection now with more than 3,700 tons stored under varying methods. They assert that there is a need for a global campaign to improve physical protection standards for countries that have weapons-usable material in order to prevent the sale, theft or diversion of fissile material. The science of nuclear forensics can be used to insure accountability of materials and to identify perpetrators of nuclear attacks if they occur and to deter follow-on attacks. They recommend a comprehensive international database with countries voluntarily sharing information; this would greatly aid the ability to determine the source of interdicted fissile material or material collected in a post-nuclear attack. Creating such a database would mean working out procedural issues to confirm the veracity of the data. Currently available online http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2008_07-08/NuclearForensics

Harley, Jeffrey ONE POLICY FOR CHINA: AVOIDING CONFLICT WITH THE MAINLAND (Harvard International Review, vol. 29, no. 4, Winter 2008, pp. 20-23)

Harley, visiting fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations, discusses the position of the U.S. on the one-China principle. America has effectively deterred conflict between China and Taiwan by accepting this principle. The U.S. has been opposing Taiwanese independence and dissuading Taiwan from making unilateral declarations, while also deterring China from the use of force against Taiwan. Conflict between the U.S. and China over Taiwan is unlikely because of the high volume of trade between the two nations, growing trade relations between China and Taiwan, as well as a mutual understanding of the danger of military conflict between two nuclear powers. The U.S. must continue to maintain peace along the Taiwan Strait and provide stability in the region.

Jones, Sidney BRIEFING FOR THE NEW PRESIDENT: THE TERRORIST THREAT IN INDONESIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA (Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 618, no. 1, July 2008, pp. 69-78)

Jones, advisor to the International Crisis Group's Asia program, asserts that counterterrorism capacity in Southeast Asia is improving, reducing the likelihood of a major attack on Western targets in the near term. However, jihadi ideology has taken root in Indonesia, and while the region's largest terrorist organization, Jemaah Islamiyah, appears to be more interested in rebuilding than mounting operations, its members still constitute an important recruitment pool for other groups. Most Indonesian jihadis appear to be more focused on local than foreign targets, but that focus can aid recruitment and facilitate alliances with other organizations. The author argues that while the Iraq insurgency has not attracted Southeast Asian participation, the resurgence of the Taliban on the Afghan-Pakistan border could. Moreover, the United States, under the next president, could help develop better information sharing between South and Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia may not be the "second front" that many feared after the first Bali bombs, but the terrorism threat in the region has not gone away.

Mills, Marie GETTING A PIECE OF THE PIE: LEBANESE WOMEN BECOME DEMINERS (Journal of Mine Action, vol. 11, no. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 17-19)

After the conflict between Israel and Hizbollah ended in the summer of 2006, the Lebanese Army and the community of non-governmental organizations sought to address the huge problem of remaining unexploded ordnance in southern Lebanon. The Swedish Rescue Services Agency attracted a surprising number of women recruits for demining training. They formed the first all-women demining team in the Middle East in February 2007, modeled on female demining teams employed previously in Kosovo. Another NGO, DanChurchAid, helped establish a second female

team. In Lebanon, the author says, it helped that women were not unaccustomed to tackling physically challenging work outside their homes. Mills said women with ordnance clearing skills should have equal access to employment. Those establishing teams for women should keep in mind that men and women may face different consequences if they are injured by explosive ordnance. And, organizers must consider whether women will be placed at risk if their employment takes them "outside accepted societal norms." This article is available on the Web at <http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/11.2/focus/mills/mills.htm>

Selden, Zachary STABILIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION: RENEWING THE TRANSATLANTIC ALLIANCE (Parameters, vol. 37, no. 4, Winter 2007/2008, pp. 85-98)
Selden, assistant professor of political science at the University of Florida, argues that it is time for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to recast its mission. The original mission of the transatlantic alliance disappeared fifteen years ago, and it should now be transformed to make it capable of performing the stabilization and democratization missions that will likely be required in the coming decades. The alliance must take advantage of the nonmilitary capabilities that Europe has to offer, reorganizing NATO on a more balanced basis while countering emerging threats to mutual security. This article is currently available on the Internet at: <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/07winter/selden.htm>

Sigal, Leon V. A WAR WITHOUT END (World Policy Journal, vol. 24, no. 3, Fall 2007, pp. 1-7)
Sigal, with the Social Science Research Council in New York, examines the war in Iraq, and specifically at exit strategies for the U.S. He finds little in America's historical experience with war termination that prepares it for ending the war in Iraq. For the U.S., the costs of exiting Iraq without ending the war will be great, but America will have to bear those costs eventually. He believes that at this point, the U.S. should not prolong a fight it cannot finish; the Iraqis themselves will have to end this war and reconcile with each other.

Stenersen, Anne THE INTERNET: A VIRTUAL TRAINING CAMP? (Terrorism and Political Violence, vol. 20, no. 2, April 2008, pp. 215-233)
While it is widely believed that terrorist groups are using the Internet as a virtual training camp, evidence suggests that it is really a resource bank maintained and accessed largely by self-radicalized sympathizers, according to Anne Stenersen, a senior researcher at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment's Terrorism Research Group. The Internet appears to be used by terrorists largely the same way most individuals use it for sending e-mail, finding and sharing information, meeting and discussing issues with like-minded people, she writes. Paramilitary literature has been a part of the Internet for considerably longer than terrorists have been using it, she argues. One exception to the more common pattern was the al-Qaida strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri in his 1600-page book *The Global Islamic Resistance Call* (2005) that argues for using the Internet as a kind of Internet terrorism university. However, recent research indicates that the Internet is primarily used as a library where training manuals and handbooks can be easily accessed, and to provide an interactive environment where people can discuss training-related issues. There is evidence, she says, that there are some online "trainers" who largely answer questions and try to explain technical issues found in common paramilitary training literature.

Taylor, Humphrey THE NOT-SO-BLACK ART OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY (World Policy Journal, vol. 24, no. 4, Winter 2007/08, pp. 51-59)
Chairman of the Harris Poll, Humphrey Taylor, defines public diplomacy as how leaders and countries explain themselves and their policies to the world. Most people around the world do not see themselves as others see them. Children are taught that their country is better than others and the media and politicians reinforce these beliefs. Public diplomacy should work closely with traditional diplomacy and rely upon culture and values to promote goodwill and respect between countries. The media in other nations is a potential tool of influence and America must work toward getting more positive coverage of the U.S. and its policies in the foreign media.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

Binns, Corey TACKLING HIV (Stanford Social Innovation Review, Vol. 6, no. 3, Summer 2008, pp. 73-74)

Grassroot Soccer is a U.S.-based charitable organization which uses soccer's popularity in sub-Saharan Africa to help educate adolescents there about HIV and AIDS. Dealing with partners across sub-Saharan Africa, Grassroot Soccer educates tens of thousands of adolescents. Binns notes that Grassroot Soccer's efforts are critical; out of 29.4 million people living in sub-Saharan Africa with HIV/AIDS, 10 million are between the ages of 15 and 24, and 3 million are under the age of 15. Grassroot Soccer's 20-hour workshops are discussions which often center around a soccer ball, or use a soccer ball as prop. Participants discuss the effects and dangers of HIV/AIDS, how to avoid contracting it, and how to not stigmatize those with HIV/AIDS. At the end of the program, there is a graduation ceremony attended by many community leaders, and the graduation ceremony is often at a professional soccer game or tournament. The graduates of the program are encouraged to teach others about HIV/AIDS.

Carlson, Scott A SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY EMBRACES A SACRED JAPANESE TRADITION (The Chronicle Review / Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 54, No. 49, August 15, 2008, pp. B12-B13)

Furman University, a school in Greenville, South Carolina, once closely associated with the Baptist church, is the proud recipient of a reconstituted Japanese Buddhist temple. After the new owners of the plot of land on which it was located in Japan said they would have to tear it down if it were not removed by early 2006, the temple was disassembled into 2,400 pieces in Japan and shipped in four containers across the Pacific and through the Panama Canal. The 900-square-foot building was reassembled on the Furman campus by Japanese craftsmen. The hand-crafted temple was originally built in the 1980s by Greenville's Tsuzuki family, the matriarch of which had long ties to Furman, where she took courses in Japanese philosophy with David Shaner, a professor of philosophy and Asian studies there. Shaner plans to use the Place of Peace, as it is called now that its central shrine has been removed, as both a lesson in Asian studies and a lesson in sustainability. Designed to last centuries, the building can be taken apart so that craftsmen can repair or replace pieces as needed.

Cech, Scott WORLD GROWS SMALLER, IB [INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE] GETS BIG (State Legislatures, Vol. 34, no. 2, February 2008, pp. 20-25)

President Bush has endorsed it; national magazines are writing about it; the number of schools offering at least one of its programs is growing dramatically: the International Baccalaureate (IB) program offers an alternative to the stripped-down, test-driven, math- and reading-oriented primary and secondary education offered nowadays in much of the U.S. IB got started in 1968 as a way for the children of European diplomats to keep up with their studies while living overseas. Administered by the Geneva, Switzerland-based International Baccalaureate Organization, IB requires genuine fluency in a foreign language, lab sciences, mathematics, and the humanities. Students must take a Theory of Knowledge class and write a 4,000-word research paper and participate in extracurricular arts, sports and community service. The Diploma Program requires seniors to engage in 3 to 5 weeks of oral and written assessments and to pass rigorous exams in all six content groups. IB is "uniquely great," says the principal of a Fairfax, Virginia, high school that had to drop the program because of parent complaints it didn't offer enough extracurricular flexibility. "It's an extremely expensive program," says Carolyn Callahan of the University of Virginia's education school; "sadly, many communities are not willing to invest." However, 30 percent of the 800 IB schools in the U.S. receive federal assistance. Universities eagerly seek IB graduates; Oregon State University, for example, offers automatic admission to IB graduates who score above 30 (out of a possible 45 points), a full year's college credit, and a minimum of \$2,000 in scholarship money renewable annually provided the student maintains a B average.

Edwards, Michael PROJECT URBAN RECREATION (Parks & Recreation, Vol. 43, No. 3, March 2008, pp. 39-45)

The creation of public parks in close proximity to urban areas is a new trend in urban development. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Spokane, Washington, serve as examples of this trend, which is being spurred by increasing demand for places for outdoor exercise. Cities are opening parks that allow residents to enjoy the outdoors without leaving the city; Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Park is situated along the riverfront, with trails, bridges, green space, water landings, public art, historic artifacts, restaurants, and community events. Spokane is developing the Spokane River Gorge, which has 400 acres of river access, open space located adjacent to downtown, and a wide variety of activities to lure visitors. The author notes that parks like these benefit cities by encouraging growth of urban communities, tourism, future investment and real estate values.

Fischer, Karin PROBLEM: FOREIGN STUDENTS. SOLUTION: CORPORATE PARTNER: MORE COLLEGES ARE RECRUITING AND EDUCATING OVERSEAS APPLICANTS WITH THE HELP OF PRIVATE COMPANIES (Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 54, No. 2, September 5, 2008, pp. A41-43)

Oregon State University is the first U.S. university to strike a deal with a private company to recruit and educate foreign students in a college preparatory program, something British and Australian universities have been contracting out for years. Before September 11th, U.S. universities could sit back and wait for international students to knock on their doors, but now with increased competition and the widespread perception that the U.S. visa process is onerous, a more active approach is necessary. Private partners can do the hard work of screening and recruiting international students and even provide some additional training if, for example, a better grounding in English is necessary for full-time enrollment. Oregon State, as part of its deal with Into University Partnerships (IUP), a UK firm, has agreed to construct a \$52 million classroom and residential facility for the students IUP will provide and hopes to make \$25 million annually after five years. While such partnerships have encountered initial criticism and opposition in Australia and the UK, faculty and staff opposition has generally diminished over time, says Fischer. Oregon State's Provost, Sabah Randhawa, saw no other way for his cash-strapped institution to get foreign enrollment numbers up, and was willing to take a chance on a partnership with a private company.

Gener, Randy et al. THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT ON STAGE (American Theatre, vol. 25, no. 5, May/June 2008, pp. 28-41)

Israelis and Palestinians view their histories and rights differently. This special series of six articles explores the role that theater has played, or can play, in relieving tensions related to the conflict. In SEE UNDER HOMELAND, Richard Gener looks at various productions in the U.S. in which Israeli and American artists are pursuing humanism in a violent world. In WHO CAN SPEAK FOR ME? Richard Stein writes about the lively Israeli theater scene, which does not shy away from tackling the explosive issue of Israeli-Palestinian relations, and tries to give the Palestinians a voice, even though they cannot really speak for the Palestinians. In BEYOND CONCRETE, Tal Itzhaki explores various works dealing with the occupation and with the differing perspectives of the Israeli and Palestinian communities living on opposite sides of the separation wall. Hala Khamis Nassar in CHALLENGING THE WALLS writes about Palestinian theater groups in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem that take on issues of Palestinian society and Israeli-Palestinian relations under trying conditions. In REHEARSING FOR FREEDOM, Alisa Solomon writes about children's theater groups in the West Bank and Gaza that are trying to help children deal with trauma related to living under occupation. In 4 POSITIONS ON CULTURAL SANCTIONS, several Palestinian and Israeli theater professionals offer thoughtful and nuanced views on a controversial campaign calling for sanctions against Israel.

Laster, Lori Ann WELCOME BACK TO GROVER'S CORNERS (American Theatre, 25, no. 5, May/June 2008, pp. 24-27, 74-75)

Thornton Wilder's enduring classic, 'Our Town,' continues on as more than just a tribute to small-town America but a commentary on the human condition. According to Tappan Wilder, the playwright's nephew and literary executor, it is widely believed that 'Our Town' is performed at least once each night somewhere in this country and it has become part of the curriculum in

American Studies departments in foreign universities. It has been performed in several overseas productions sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, sometimes with well-known actors in the cast. At the time the play was written and first performed in Princeton, New Jersey, in January 1938, the threat of World War II was looming, while the U.S. was still recovering from the Great Depression. The play represents a return to a more tranquil time. The author notes that with global political tensions in the world today, the play continues to provide a sense of comfort and stability, and a return to small-town American values.

Rossetto, Louis IN A LETTER TO HIS KIDS, WIRED'S FOUNDING EDITOR RECALLS THE DAWN OF THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION (Wired Magazine, vol. 16, no. 6, June 2008, pp. 172-175)

Rossetto, cofounder of Wired Magazine, reflects on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of his magazine on the predictions for the Internet he made in 1993, and how things have actually turned out. Rossetto notes that he started Wired to chronicle the people, companies, and ideas driving the digital revolution — but had only the vaguest notion of where it was headed. Major misses included “the end of history”, characterized by Francis Fukuyama’s famous prediction that history ended with the demise of the Soviet Union; Wired failed to see that extremist groups would use the Internet to propagate virulent ideology. Another misstep was believing that the Internet would lead to the end of politics; Rossetto notes, instead of using the Internet to rebuild civil society, special-interest groups used it to get into the “mud” of politics, resulting in “one of the most toxic and least productive eras of public discourse in our history.” Among the trends Rossetto believes they accurately predicted were what he calls the “Long Boom,” the unprecedented increase in material well-being for much of humanity; the spread of liberal democracy, globalization, and a technological revolution; and what has been termed the “One Machine”, a new planetary consciousness developing among humans using ever-more-powerful PCs and networks.

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