

ARTICLE ROUND UP

MAY-JUNE 2007

These abstracts of significant articles from current periodicals literature have been prepared as a service to IRC's contacts. Most of the articles are by American authors and come from American publications. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect U.S. government policies.

ECONOMIC SECURITY(ES)

1. TOWARD A FREE TRADE AREA OF THE ASIA PACIFIC

Bergsten, C. Fred. IIE Policy Brief, Peter G. Peterson Institute for International Economics, February 2007, 13 pages.

At the Vietnam summit in November 2006, "the leaders of the 21 members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum launched a process that could ultimately produce the largest single act of trade liberalization in history. They agreed to "seriously consider" negotiating a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAPP) and instructed their officials to "undertake further studies on ways and means to promote" the initiative so they could address it at their next summit in Australia in September 2007." FTAPP would be larger and more far-reaching than the European Union (EU) or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and more extensive than General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). "The United States took the lead in promoting the initiative. . ."

2. BANKING SECTOR OPENING: POLICY QUESTIONS AND LESSONS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Martinez-Diaz, Leonardo. The Brookings Institution Issue Brief, February 2007, 9 pages.

In the 1990s, many developing countries protected their banking markets, but today countries are opening their banking sectors to foreign capital and competition. This openness can bring real benefits to the economy such as fresh capital, more competition, new financial products, and improved corporate governance; but there can be risks and vulnerabilities. This survey draws from academic literature the lessons and insights learned from countries that have opened their banking sectors. The brief also makes recommendations on how to receive the most benefit with least risk when opening their banking markets.

3. BURNING THE FURNITURE

Heinberg, Richard, Richard Heinberg's MuseLetter, No. 179, March 2007.

Faced with the prospect of growing demand for shrinking oil and gas supplies, many countries are banking on coal to make up a growing share of the energy mix. Heinberg, a journalist and educator, writes that a recent study on global coal reserves published by the Germany-based Energy Watch Group, which reports to the German Parliament, has far-reaching implications — recoverable coal reserves are much smaller than is commonly thought, and that a peak in global coal production is possible as soon as 15 years from now. The report's authors note that data on

global coal reserves is badly outdated or unreliable; countries that have taken the effort to update their estimates have experienced, in many cases, downward revisions on the order of 50-90 percent. China, the world's largest coal producer, reports 55 years of coal reserves left at current rates of consumption -- but their reserves estimates are 15 years old, China's coal consumption is increasing rapidly, and a move toward coal-to-liquid-fuels production means that China's coal production may peak in 5-15 years. In the U.S., the world's second-largest producer, total volumes may increase for 10-15 years, but in terms of energy content, U.S. coal production peaked in 1998. Heinberg writes that the current global energy predicament, far from being limited to a potential shortfall of liquid transportation fuels, is growing into a "broad-spectrum energy crisis" impacting all aspects of modern life. He concludes that "nations that are currently dependent on coal -- China and the U.S. especially -- would be wise to begin reducing consumption now, not only in the interests of climate protection, but also to reduce societal vulnerability arising from dependence on a resource that will soon begin to become more scarce and expensive." Available online at <http://www.richardheinberg.com/museletter/179>; the Energy Watch Group report is available online at <http://www.energywatchgroup.org/files/Coalreport.pdf>.

4. HOW BIOFUELS COULD STARVE THE POOR

Runge, C. Ford; Senauer, Benjamin, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 3, May-June 2007, pp. 41-54.

The rush to biofuels by advanced economies could lead to more hunger in low-income countries, according to the authors, both at the University of Minnesota. The combination of high oil prices and subsidies to U.S. agribusiness companies has resulted in diversion of a growing percentage of the U.S. corn crop into biofuel production. That has raised the price not only of corn, but also of wheat and rice, which are more in demand as substitutes for corn, and of seemingly unrelated crops that U.S. farmers are planting less as they plant more corn. Brazil, Europe, and Southeast Asian countries are also diverting more land to biofuel crops. If oil prices remain high and if government policies do not change, global prices for corn are likely to rise 20 percent by 2010 and more than 40 percent by 2020, with similar increases for wheat and oilseeds. "In the poorest parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America, where cassava is a staple, its price is expected to increase by 33 percent by 2010 and 135 percent by 2020," the authors say. Poor people in low-income countries that import both fuel and food may find that the necessities of life may become unaffordable. For many landless laborers and rural subsistence farmers, large increases in staple food prices will mean malnutrition and hunger. Available online at www.foreignaffairs.org

5. "THE WTO IN CRISIS"

Robert A. Senser. *America*, January 1-8, 2007, 4 pages.

For most, the Doha round of trade negotiations may be "somewhere between intensive care and the crematorium," but for the author, the crisis can be a blessing. He argues that the grandiose vision of a single global economy should yield to a more down-to-earth vision of a diverse global economy based on rights and corresponding obligations, and that equity, social justice and human rights should be placed at the heart of the international trading system.

6. THE END OF NATIONAL CURRENCY

Benn Steil. *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2007, 14 pages.

Global financial instability has sparked a surge in "monetary nationalism" -- the idea that countries must make and control their own currencies. But globalization and monetary nationalism are a dangerous combination, a cause of financial crises and geopolitical tension. The author argues that the world needs to abandon unwanted currencies, replacing them with dollars, euros, and multinational currencies as yet unborn.

7. UNDERSTANDING PLAGIARISM AND HOW IT DIFFERS FROM COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

K. Matthew Dames. Computers in Libraries, June 2007, 4 pages.

One of the biggest misconceptions about plagiarism is that it is synonymous with copyright infringement. This article explains the difference and identifies some of the surrounding concerns. The author also examines the role of information professionals in raising the collective level of citation knowledge and management.

SOCIAL ISSUES

8. PROTECTING PERSONAL INFORMATION: A GUIDE FOR BUSINESS

Federal Trade Commission, March 2007, 28 pages.

The Federal Trade Commission is offering a new guide for businesses with practical suggestions on safeguarding sensitive data. The 24-page brochure can help businesses of all sizes protect their customers' and employees' personal information. It offers solutions for determining what needs to be kept, how to secure it, what to get rid of, and how properly to dispose of it.

U.S. Government document.

9. UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN LOW INCOME COUNTRIES

Rohini Pande. John F. Kennedy School of Government Faculty Research Working Papers Series RWP07-020, April 2007, 46 pages.

This article seeks to understand corruption through the lens of political economy - particularly in terms of the political and economic differences between rich and poor countries. The author focuses on the political behaviors of individuals exposed to democratic political institutions and its implications for corruption.

GLOBAL ISSUES / INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION (GIC)

10. THE WORLD GOES TO TOWN: A SPECIAL REPORT ON CITIES

The Economist, vol. 383, no. 8527, May 5, 2007, 18 pp.

Sometime in the next few months, the proportion of the world's population living in cities will pass the fifty-percent mark, if it has not done so already. The Economist notes that the development of cities is synonymous with human development -- over the centuries, cities have been notable for their religious role, as the hub of empires, as centers of government and politics, education, commerce and manufacturing. This special series delves into the history of cities, and the

economic and social forces that are drawing unprecedented numbers of people to cities around the world today, creating growing infrastructure and environmental challenges.

11. FIRST BLOOD

Ratliff, Evan, *Wired*, vol. 15, no. 5, May 2007, pp. 116-125

In the more than 25 years since first identification of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, scientists have traced the origin of the virus and concluded that the killer disease evolved in humans after exposure to the simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV). It is thought that a hunter contracted the virus through exposure to the blood of his kill, and the non-lethal SIV mutated to become HIV. Biologist Nathan Wolfe and a team of hunters, field workers and laboratory scientists are now conducting a broad blood sampling collection and analysis to see if they can find the as-yet-unknown virus that may take a similar path to evolve into the next human pandemic. Wolfe's work, with funding from the National Institutes of Health, has been underway for several years with the participation of 4,000 bushmeat hunters in sub-Saharan Africa. So far, they have found that the viral animal-to-human transmission that created AIDS was not a unique event. The blood samples reveal that as many as 1 percent of hunters are infected with an animal virus. Though they are not experiencing adverse symptoms presently, the finding reveals that mutations of harmful virus could occur along this path of transmission with greater frequency than previously understood. If the work does identify the next potential killer virus, Ratliff writes, it could form the basis of a new public health model that would emphasize prevention of disease rather than reaction to it. Available online at www.wired.com with the title THE PLAGUE FIGHTERS.

12. POLYMERS ARE FOREVER

Weisman, Alan, *Orion*, May/June 2007.

The world's oceans are accumulating immense amounts of manmade plastic debris, some of it coming from ships, but most of it originating from shore. The author writes that plastic does not biodegrade — it only photodegrades, becoming more brittle with exposure to ultraviolet light, or being ground down by the mechanical action of waves. Researchers have discovered that plastic is being reduced to microscopic particles, even individual molecules, but no organism is capable of digesting it. Weisman notes that, except for a small percentage that has been incinerated, all the plastic ever made is still present in the environment today, and will eventually be ingested by every living organism. Particles of plastic act as “sponges” for toxic chemicals such as DDT and PCBs, enabling them to enter the marine food chain if ingested by jellyfish and zooplankton. A recent expedition to the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, an oceanic region that is drawing in huge quantities of plastic flotsam from around the Pacific Rim, found that the amount of plastic exceeded the marine biomass by a factor of six. The author writes that researchers have found that microorganisms have learned to digest oil and other non-natural substances, but there is no way to predict how long it will take for microbes to evolve that can handle polyethylene, PVC and other polymers. Available online at <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/270>

13. WATER WOES

Marianne Lavelle, *U.S. News & World Report*, June 04, 2007, pp. 37,44-46.

It's a special commodity everyone takes for granted. But supply is shrinking, pipes are aging and few are willing to pay the price. The author warned that a crisis is brewing.

14. DOWN GO THE DAMS

Marks, Jane C. *Scientific American*, March 2007, pp. 66-71.

Numerous dams around the world have been removed in recent years as they became more costly to maintain, contributed less to electrical power generation or conflicted with communities that want free-flowing rivers. Although dam removal returns a river to a more natural state, often with native species reestablishing populations as water quality improves, unanticipated effects may offset these benefits. Contaminated sediments trapped behind the dam, movement of non-native plants and animals to parts of the river formerly blocked by the dam, and flood control on some rivers present challenges to planners. The author, an ecologist at Northern Arizona University, is working on the restoration of an Arizona river dammed in the early twentieth century.

15. E-LAW'S BRIGHT FUTURE

Alex Kingsbury. *U.S. News & World Report*, April 9, 2007, 2 pages.

"The digital world is changing nearly every rule we have about commerce and privacy, so the need for lawyers is acute," says a third-year law student at the University of Washington. The intersection of technology, commerce, and the law, E-law is an emerging field of study developed in response to commerce and privacy infringements by the digital sector. The article examines this fast-growing field and offers some tips on how to be one of its pioneers.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (IS)

16. GUIDELINES FOR U.S. POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Walter Lohman. *Heritage Backgrounder #2017*, March 20, 2007, 9 pages.

Southeast Asia is vital to U.S. political, economic, and security interests. Ensuring that the region remains strong, independent, and outward-looking is therefore in the best interests of both the United States and the nations of Southeast Asia. U.S. foreign policy should reflect the importance of the U.S.-ASEAN relationship and be continually adjusted to meet these aims.

17. AFTER CHINA'S TEST: TIME FOR A LIMITED BAN ON ANTI-SATELLITE WEAPONS

Forden, Geoffrey, *Arms Control Today*, vol. 37, no. 3, April 2007, pp. 19-23

On January 11, a Chinese anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon destroyed one of the PRC's obsolete Feng Yun-1C weather satellites in a direct strike, creating more than 1,000 pieces of debris of sufficient size to be tracked from the ground. Debris from the test has been identified at altitudes as high as 3,600 kilometers which the author says is four times higher than the position of the original target. He says the international community has expressed its grave concern regarding this debris, which poses an increased risk to both manned space flights and commercial assets in space. "The real danger lies less in the military realm," Forden says, "than in the long-term risk to civilian communications, weather forecasting and pure scientific research conducted by all space-faring nations." He points to the evolving Code of Conduct for Space-Faring Nations, which contains a

pledge that nations would endorse, agreeing to abstain from generating space debris. The author says this would help protect global economic interests in outer space “by instituting an international taboo against creating dangerous space junk.” He suggests that the timing is right to conclude a treaty banning the most dangerous ASAT systems. This article is available on the Internet at http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_04/Forden.asp

18. THE TRIANGULAR DYNAMIC IN ASIA: THE U.S., INDIA, AND CHINA

Lisa Curtis. Heritage Lectures #1017, April 26, 2007, 4 pages.

It is likely that the world will see a triangular future evolve among the United States, China and India as they each pursue each other on a bilateral basis. She points out that each of the three bilateral relationships is mutually reinforcing in that an expansion or improvement in one relationship will likely lead the third country to pursue better relations with the other two. The author advises that the United States will need to begin factoring India into its broader Asian policies and seek multiple forms of engagement in the region that include India’s participation.

19. WHAT NEXT FOR NATO?

Michta, Andrew, *Orbis*, vol. 51, no. 1, Winter 2007, pp. 141-153.

NATO’s mission in Afghanistan is no less than a test case for the future of the alliance. Its future relevance will depend on its ability to develop and maintain broad agreement on its overall missions, but Afghanistan shows a widening gulf between the United States and Europe in the willingness to equitably share priorities and risk in the name of accomplishing the alliance’s security missions. The author argues that today, Europe appears to be trapped in the strategic “pause” of the 1990s and does not share the U.S. view on the magnitude of the threat posed by international terrorism. Iraq laid bare the historical rift between the United States on one side and France and Germany on the other, in addition to highlighting the contrast between the more skeptical “old Europe” and “new Europe” more eager to support U.S. objectives. While NATO’s role in Iraq is marginal, the clock of NATO’s future continues ticking in an increasingly uphill battle in Afghanistan.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES (SV)

20. IN THE TERRITORY; A CRITIC AT LARGE

Als, Hilton, *New Yorker*, vol. 83, no. 11, May 7, 2007, pp. 74-78, 80.

In this profile of writer Ralph Waldo Ellison, the author notes that Ellison's first and only novel, *INVISIBLE MAN* (1952), is now regarded by many as one of the important texts on urban black masculinity. When it was first published, however, its critics in the literary establishment emphasized not the book's specificity but its broad appeal. By the time Ellison died in 1994, the novel had inspired more than twenty book-length critical studies. Despite the accolades, though, every time Ellison received another prize for *INVISIBLE MAN*, he had to face the inevitable question: where was his second novel? The author notes that Ellison “had the prickly nature of a high-minded moralist, intolerant of any standards other than those he imposed on himself”. In 1938, Ellison became a member of the New York Writers' Project, an offshoot of the Works

Progress Administration; with thirty other writers and researchers, he was responsible for producing a comprehensive study called "The Negro in New York." Ellison also began to cultivate relationships with white writers and academics such as Stanley Edgar Hyman and Robert Penn Warren. He sought to emulate the writers who gave him a sense of himself as an artist, not just as a black man.

21. CASUALTY OF WAR

Bell, David A., *New Republic*, Vol. 236, No. 15, May 7, 2007, pp. 44—52.

The author urges more government and private funding to promote the study of military history at the university level. While robust History Book Club sales and popular History Channel broadcasts show that military history is very popular with the public, many leading universities have nonetheless abandoned the subject. Many major universities, such as Harvard or Johns Hopkins, have a single military historian among its history faculty. Bell attributes this development to a broad shift away from narrative history toward a social science model grounded in a liberal, Enlightenment-era thinking that dismisses war as primitive, irrational, and alien to modern civilization. Also many historians -- as a group politically well to the Left of the general public -- condemn military history as inherently "conservative." Even so, a broader, more rigorous intellectual knowledge of war is now a matter of civic interest.

22. FROM AMERICA'S MAYOR TO AMERICA'S PRESIDENT? RUDY GIULIANI

The Economist, vol. 383, no. 8527, May 5, 2007, pp. 33-34.

The *Economist* profiles former New York City mayor and Republican candidate Rudy Giuliani, as part of a series on the presidential contenders for 2008. Giuliani, who led New York through the trauma of September 11, is in his element in front of a crowd -- nevertheless, he must persuade Republican primary voters that he is conservative enough, given his pro-choice and pro-gay stance. Polls show that, should he gain the Republican nomination, Giuliani would handily beat Hillary Clinton, although Barack Obama would be more of a challenge. Although the mood of the electorate is moving against Republicans, voters said they would prefer the candidate who, after 9/11, became known as "America's mayor".

23. THE MEASURE OF LEARNING

Alex Kingsbury. *U.S. News & World Report*, March 12, 2007, 6 pages.

The author focuses on the drives to reform college education in the United States: the rising cost of tuition, and the value of what is being taught in colleges. The author also examines two major tests used to measure learning, the Collegiate Learning Assessment and the National Survey of Student Engagement.

24. THE RANKINGS REVOLT

Julie Rawe. *Time*, April 2, 2007, 2 pages.

The practice of ranking colleges and universities has long rankled some educators and administrators who believe an education is hard to quantify in the ranking formats of the most influential sources. But any single school that chose not to participate or complete the survey, or

that otherwise tried to alter the practice, found itself saddled with a ranking based on non-answers, rather than no ranking. This article describes a new group effort of colleges banding together and trying to change the ranking system with less risk to individual institutions.

25. AN EDUCATION STRATEGY TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITY, PROSPERITY, AND GROWTH

Joshua Bendor, et al. The Hamilton Project Strategy Paper, February 2007, 25 pages.

Evidence shows that education is critical to economic growth and an investment in education returns benefits to society and individuals. This paper offers a framework for educational policy from early childhood to post-secondary education. It outlines a strategy for new investments in early education and suggests some structural reforms such as a teacher tenure system.