ARTICLE ROUND UP
November – December 2008

ECONOMICS and TRADE

1. Vietnam is coming into its own way
Statement of Matthew P. Daley. President of U.S.-ASEAN Business Council, submitted to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 12, 2008, 8 pages.

Vietnam is on its way towards becoming a vibrant country and is working to alter its bureaucracy and reform statutes in a number of areas including corruption, judicial reform, intellectual property rights and fair competition. American assistance programs in Vietnam are part of that process.

2. Why America Needs An Economic Strategy
Michael E. Porter. BusinessWeek, November 10th 2008, Iss. 4107; pp. 38, 5 pages.

"With the U.S. election just days away, it has never been more important to consider what the next President must do to keep America competitive. In this time of crisis, Washington has focused on the immediate and the short term. Lost are the more basic questions we really need to worry about: What is the fundamental competitive position of the U.S. in the global economy? And what must we do to remain strong when other nations are making rapid progress? The stark truth is that the U.S. has no long-term economic strategy--no coherent set of policies to ensure competitiveness over the long haul. Strategy embodies clear priorities, based on understanding the strengths we need to preserve and the weaknesses that threaten our prosperity the most. Strategy addresses what to do, but also what not to do. In dealing with a crisis, experience teaches us that steps to address the immediate problem must support a long-term strategy. Yet it is far from clear that we are taking the steps most important to America's long-term economic prosperity. America's political system, especially as it has evolved in recent times, almost guarantees an absence of strategic thinking at the federal level. We need a strategy supported by the majority to secure America's economic future. Yet Americans hear the same old divisive arguments. To make America competitive, we have to get beyond this thinking. Political leaders, business leaders, and civil society must begin a respectful, fact-based dialogue about our challenges. We need to focus on competitive reality, not defending past policies."

Full text available at:http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_45/b4107038217112.htm

3. The Way Out
Joseph Stiglitz. Time, October 27th 2008, Vol. 172. Iss. 16; pp. 26, 3 pages.

The author stated that, "The next U.S. President will have a very hard time of it. Even the most well-thought-out plans may not work as intended. But I am confident that a comprehensive program along the lines I have suggested--stemming foreclosures, recapitalizing banks, stimulating the economy, protecting the unemployed, shoring up state finances, providing guarantees where needed and appropriate, reforming regulations and regulatory structures and replacing regulators and those with responsibility to protect the economy with those focused more on rescuing the economy than on rescuing Wall Street--will not only restore confidence but in due time also enable America to live up to its full potential. Halfway approaches, on the other hand, by continually bringing disappointment, are sure to fail."

Full text available at:http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1851739,00.html

4. The Monster That Ate Wall Street
Matthew Philips. Newsweek, October 13th 2008, Vol. 152. Iss. 14; pp. 34, 2 pages.

Wall Street's problems have captured the attention of Congress, the White House and the media. But on the country's Main Streets, worried workers, struggling small business owners and cash-strapped families are wondering if anyone is paying attention to them. A look at how Americans are coping with the economic crisis.

Full text available at:
http://www.newsweek.com/id/161199

5. The Global Financial Crisis: The Role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
CRS Report for Congress. Martin A. Weiss. Specialist in International Trade and Finance Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division.

This report discusses two potential roles the International Monetary Fund (IMF) may have in helping to resolve the current global financial crisis: (1) immediate crisis control through balance of payments lending to emerging market and less-developed countries, and (2) increased surveillance of the global economy through better coordination with the international financial regulatory agencies. This report will be updated as events warrant.

6. Wall Street Lays Another Egg
Niall Ferguson. Vanity Fair, December 2008.

Ferguson, a professor of history at Harvard University and a fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution, notes that the worldwide financial crisis is about more than the stock market. Rather, it is "a fundamental breakdown of the entire financial system, extending from the monetary-and-banking system through the bond market, the stock market, the insurance market, and the real-estate market. It is global in scope and unfathomable in scale." Credit and money have been growing faster than underlying economic activity for several decades, to the point where, two years ago, the total value of domestic and international bonds was forty percent higher than the economic output of the entire world. Says Ferguson, "Planet Finance was beginning to dwarf Planet Earth; Planet Finance seemed to spin faster, too." He notes that the "hunt for scapegoats is futile. We have all played a part ... we shall now have to question some of our most deeply rooted assumptions" about the nature of the modern economic system.

Full text available at::
http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/12/banks200812

DEMOCRACY and HUMAN RIGHTS

7. The Long March of Racial Progress
Duncan Currie. The American, November 5, 2008, 3 pages.

The story of race relations in America is one of extraordinary change and transformation. The author reflects on the long march of racial progress that made it possible for an African-American to become president of a country that fewer than 50 years ago still tolerated discriminatory Jim Crow laws.

8. State of Blogging
Nancy Mann Jackson. State Legislatures, Vol. 34, No. 5, May 2008, pp. 30-32.

Mann discusses state legislators' use of blogs as a method of communication for their constituents. While some representatives get a lot of coverage in traditional media, others who are closer to metropolitan centers have a more difficult time getting exposure. Blogs provide an easy and cheap means of publicity and a new way for constituents to meet their elected officials. Blogs are also helping create transparency in government. State legislators enjoy the opportunity to engage directly with constituents and let them know what is going on in the state capitol as it is happening. Research has shown that those who are involved in the online community are often civically engaged offline. While this is a relatively new technology, Dr. David Wyld, professor of management at Southeastern Louisiana University and author of "The Blogging Revolution: Government in the Age of Web 2.0," says that this will be a feature constituents will come to expect from their elected officials in five to ten years. First Amendment activists are concerned, however, about the comments feature on these blogs. Some are worried that filtering inappropriate comments may infringe upon a public forum, because state legislators' blogs are often hosted on government Web sites.

9. Surface Routines: How We Read on the Web
Michael Meyer. Columbia Journalism Review, vol. 47, no. 4, November/December 2008.

People's limitations when faced with the huge volume of information on the Internet, coupled with their compulsion to know what is there, are changing the way people read printed and online material. In-depth reading is often replaced by skimming greater quantities of content. Studies, such as that by Jakob Nielsen, show that people read much less in their pursuit of relevant information. Although some fear a negative impact on introspective literacy, evidence from a 2007 Poynter Institute EyeTrack study indicates readers online read substantially more text than those devoted to print, and were drawn by text rather than photos. The author concludes that while the Web may influence behavior, it merely highlights cultural inadequacies already present in social and educational institutions.

Full text available at:
http://www.cjr.org/feature/surface_routines.php

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (IS)

10. Obama Foreign Policy May Be Rooted In Multilateral Diplomacy
America.gov, November 07, 2008.

When Barack Obama takes the oath of office January 20, 2009, a new American approach to foreign policy may be in the works. But change will not come immediately, a political analyst says. The Obama administration has "potential for making real progress" in foreign policy, said Stephen Flanagan of the Center for Strategic and International Studies at the State Department's Foreign Press Center on November 4.

Full text available at:

http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/November/20081107142355hmnietsua0.1471674.html

11. Obama's World; Challenges Facing Barack Obama
Economist, vol. 389, no. 8605, November 8-14, 2008, pp. 31-32, 34.

The historic election of Barack Obama as the first African-American president of the U.S. will be tempered by the huge domestic and global challenges Obama faces when he moves into the White House in January. In his 2006 book, *The Audacity of Hope*, Obama wrote of America's need to build a new international consensus to confront transnational threats. The world of great-power rivalry, he argued, no longer exists, but the argument can be made that old-fashioned competition between the powers has come back with a vengeance since the fleeting post-Soviet interlude of the 1990s. This is hardly the agenda Obama would have chosen for himself, but he will begin his term as a war president, one who has promised to end the war in Iraq but to win the one in Afghanistan. Obama has inherited a world of pressing troubles, but as he tackles them he will have to keep an eye on the longer game -- how to prepare for the day when America may no longer be the sole superpower and only one of many big powers.

12. Bush's Legacy
David Frum, Foreign Policy, no. 168, September/October 2008, pp. 32-38.

The author, a former speechwriter and special assistant to President Bush and now a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, admits that the president may be the most unpopular president in modern times, often considered a "reckless, unilateralist cowboy", but says that history will be kinder to George W. Bush than contemporary caricatures suggest. After eight years, he leaves behind much more than a defeated dictator in Iraq. His successes include closer ties to India, a pragmatic relationship with China, pressure applied to Iran that will pay dividends for years to come, the signing of new bilateral trade agreements, and the world's first convention on cybercrime. In the two decades leading up to Bush's presidency, the U.S. and its allies were struck by a rising number of increasingly ambitious, aggressive, and deadly terrorist attacks. Conversely, if Iran is allowed to follow North Kea into the nuclear weapons club, it could well be the failure to act against the other two thirds of the "axis of evil," not the willingness to act in Iraq, that will be regarded as the most important decision of the Bush years. Bush's political opponents will continue to attack him after he leaves the presidency. Just as the Bush presidency led Democrats to express an unexpected nostalgia for Ronald Reagan, the next Republican president can expect to hear from pundits and academics alike that he falls far short of the high standard set by the last one.

13. Strengthening U.S. Public Diplomacy
Brooking Institute. Kristin M. Lord, November 2008, pages 31-41.

For generations, America's standing in the world has been a source of strength, security, prosperity, and legitimacy. That standing is now in peril, according to a wide range of studies that span the political spectrum. America's tarnished international reputation carries a price. Whether the United States seeks to draw more allied troops to Afghanistan, to win votes in international organizations, or to undermine support for terrorists, anti- American attitudes obstruct the achievement of national interests. Winning support is harder, and America's enemies' missions are easier. The author recommends a broad set of reforms and new vision for U.S. public diplomacy.

14. A Balanced Strategy - Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age

According to the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Robert M. Gates, the Pentagon must do more than modernize its conventional forces; it must also focus on today's unconventional conflicts -- and tomorrow's.

GLOBAL ISSUES & ENVIRONMENT

15. Population and Security
Elizabeth Leahy and Sean Peoples. World Watch, September/October 2008, 6 pages.

The majority of the global population lives in countries whose populations will continue to grow for the long term. Meanwhile, 42 % of the world's people live in nations where the average family size is below the number needed to maintain a stable population level. The authors contend that growing populations are contributing to risks associated with youth, migration and environmental stress. They examine the link between population growth and global security.

16. Containing Climate Change
Carter F. Bales and Richard D. Duke. Foreign Affairs, September/October 2008, 12 pages.

According to the authors, a global strategy is needed to combat the harmful effects of global warming. After examining the possible environmental and political effects of climate change, including mass migrations of populations and flooding devastation in developing countries such as Bangladesh, they discuss in detail such climate change prevention technologies as biofuels, carbon-capture mechanisms, and renewable energy sources.

17. Heroes of The Environment
Bryan Walsh. Time, October 6th 2008, Vol. 172. Iss. 14; pp. 26, 42 pages.

“Why not despair? For those who care about the environment, the future can seem dark and doomed. The drumbeat of scientific alarm over climate change intensifies, while greenhouse-gas emissions only accelerate. In our growing billions we overrun the earth, competing for resources and space, elbowing out animals and plants. The basic element that makes modern life livable--energy--is threatening to make our planet unlivable. We want to help, but the scale of the challenge leaves many of us feeling powerless Why not despair? Because solutions do exist--and there are those who are leading us to them. Some are activists like Brazil's Marina Silva, the godmother of the rain forest, and some are scientists like Germany's Joachim Luther, the godfather of solar power. Some are celebrities like Arnold Schwarzenegger, the green Governor of California, and some are obscure like Mohammed Dilawar, the conservationist who guards against the fall of the sparrow. Some are financiers, like John Doerr, the billionaire venture capitalist now funding green projects, and some are holy men like Balbir Singh Seechewal, the Sikh who cleans the corrupted rivers of India. What they have in common is the passion and resourcefulness to confront the threats facing the earth.”

Full text available at:
http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1841778_1841816_1843874,00.html

18. The Future of Wind Power
Todd Woody and Linda Eckstein. Fortune, October 27th 2008, Vol. 158. Iss. 8; pp. 59, 8 pages.

The article reports on wind power, and maintains that wind-power-related businesses will do well despite the U.S. financial crisis. The U.S. became the world leader in wind power in 2008, and the sale of wind turbines by companies like General Electric may soon reach $11 billion.

Full text available at:
http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2008/fortune/0810/gallery.tech_windpower.fortune/index.html

MEDIA, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

19. Why I Blog
Andrew Sullivan. The Atlantic Monthly, November 2008, 7 pages.

As blogging evolves as a literary form, it is generating a new and quintessentially postmodern idiom that is enabling writers to express themselves in ways that have never been seen or understood before. The author discusses blog journalism and the factors that make it distinct from traditional forms of journalism. He also offers reflections on his personal experience as a blogger.

20. Wi-Fi In The Great Outdoors
Mikel Chavers. State News, vol. 51, no. 6, June/July 2008, pp. 23-26.

Increasingly, visitors to U.S. state parks can not only hike, fish, ski, snorkel or scuba dive, but surf the Internet as well. With California taking the lead, and other states like Ohio, Kentucky and Texas following, wireless Internet hotspots are becoming more available in state parks. With its "almost negligible footprint," park directors and other state officials see Wi-Fi as meeting the need of visitors and ensuring those visitors keep coming, whether they be short-term vacationers, business or other groups holding events or retirees spending several weeks or months on the road and in the parks. The chief information officer for California State Parks comments: "We know today that people live very complicated lives. People end up being tethered to their cell phone or their computers. We were concerned that we were going to start losing people at our state parks." Some states charge for access, while others offer free service. But, in all cases, the bottom line is not to recoup costs, but to provide a service that travelers increasingly have come to expect.

Full text available at:
http://www.csg.org/pubs/Documents/SN0806.pdf

U.S. SOCIETY AND CULTURE

21. Preparing Students for the Flat World
Fernando M. Reimers. Education Week, October 8, 2008, 2 pages.

How do we prepare children to invent a future that enables them to meet their needs, develop, be happy, and continue deepening the work-in-progress that is our democracy? The author discusses global

education with three objectives: to develop global values, to build foreign-language skills, to and create globalization expertise.

22. Secrets of Successful Schools
Barry Newstead, et al. Education Digest, October 2008, 8 pages.

The authors explore strategic principles for effective school management. They offer an overview of the state of public education in the United States as of 2008, statistically pointing out the divergence in many schools' financial resources and academic achievements, despite uniform goals. Several guiding principles may help foster efficient management of resources towards effective schooling.

23. The Cellphone: Turning It into a Teaching Tool
Kathleen Kennedyx Manzo. Education Week, September 10, 2008, 2 pages.

What would happen if instead of silencing or confiscating cellphones in the classroom, teachers encouraged students to use them? The author discusses ways that teachers can turn students' cell phones into teaching tools. Examples of classroom activities with cell phones are provided.

24. Libraries Connect Communities
Peggy Barber; Linda Wallace. American Libraries, vol. 39, no. 9, October 2008, pp. 52-55.

The authors, co-founders of the Chicago-based consulting firm Library Communication Strategies, produce the Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study, which provides data and insights to help libraries and library staff strengthen their advocacy efforts and market themselves more effectively. Now in its second year, the study documents the proliferation of information technology in libraries and gathers the only data available on technology expenditures. Even before the latest economic downturn, most directors anticipated flat or declining revenues due to growing resistance to taxes and government budget deficits. The authors confirm that many libraries are increasingly turning to grants, fundraising, and gifts to supplement public financing. Not surprisingly, people at libraries with newer computers expressed a high level of satisfaction with their experience -- but so did users at less well-equipped libraries. People in poorer communities focused more on economics ("It's important for people like me who can't afford computers"), while users in more affluent areas talked more about education and research ("Computers are more important than books today") and the library as a quiet, convenient place to go ("Some of us don't want computers at home"). From 1996-2000, the number of libraries offering public-access computing went from 28 to 95 percent.

25. Obsession With Rankings Goes Global
Aisha Labi. Chronicle of Higher Education, Vol. 55, No. 8, October 17, 2008, pp. A27-29.

In the late 1990s, Chinese university administrators and the Chinese government wanted to know whether all the money being poured into Chinese higher education was producing any results. To satisfy their need for an objective international frame of reference, Nian Cai Liu, a professor at Shanghai Joao Tong University, created a ranking of the world’s top universities. Liu created his rankings by assigning scores on the basis of four factors: quality of education, quality of faculty, research output, and per capita performance. Quality of education, for example, counts the number of alumni who have won Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals. Liu’s rankings, posted on a university Web site

in 2003, created a storm because for the first time everyone could easily compare the world's universities, and officials and educators in many countries were shocked to see their own systems ranked so low. American universities dominate Liu's list -- 17 of the top 20 in the world are in the U.S., including the top 3 (Harvard, Stanford and the University of California at Berkeley). Liu's rankings play a major role in the choices made by international students and universities looking for partnerships; they also have had a major impact on governments, which in some cases are only financing scholarships for students who attend universities ranked above a certain cut-off point. Liu's rankings have also sparked a rival U.K. list, the Times Higher Education List, on which British institutions fare dramatically better. Critics take issue with the Shanghai list's emphasis on scientific research and the Times Higher Education List's heavy reliance on peer opinion. Liu welcomes criticism and tries each year to improve his methodology. Meanwhile, the lists have become "an integral part of international higher education," says Aisha Labi.

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