

Article Round Up

January – February 2007

ECONOMICS and TRADE

1. Ambassador Michael W. Marine Webchat on the VietnamNet

On Thursday, February 1, Ambassador Marine participated in a two-hour online webchat with VietnamNet Online, Vietnam's most widely read and influential online news outlet. The Ambassador fielded over thirty questions with interpretation on topics ranging from WTO accession to what the Ambassador studied in college. You can access this interview at <http://www3.vietnamnet.vn/chinhtri/2007/02/660699/>

2. “Vietnam: Laying the foundation for steady growth”

The World Bank has launched a special web package full of stories about Vietnam on its home page, www.worldbank.org. The package highlights what Vietnam has achieved as a result of the credits and grants it has received from the International Development Association – the lending arm of the World Bank that provides interest-free credits to the world's poorest countries.

3. “Vietnam’s thrust into globalization: Doi Moi’s long road”

Lawrence E. Crinter. Asian Affairs. Copyright 2006 Heldref Publication, p151-162.
“Doi Moi” in the early 1990s has helped transform Vietnam into a vibrant trading nation with a foreign trade level nearly equal to the size of the GDP. However, Vietnam’s politics are likely to remain patriarchal, substantially collectivist and imbued with the Sinic legacy.

4. “Entrepreneurial culture”

Edmund S. Phelps. Opinion Journal from the Wall Street Journal. February 12, 2007. 4 pages.

According to the Columbia University professor and the 2006 Nobel Laureate in economics, the answer why the European economies lag behind the U.S. is the dearth of economic dynamism in those countries.

5. “Developing countries need to open markets to each other”

David Dollar. Ejournal. 5 pages.

The Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiation is stalled and may very well fall part. Completing the Doha Round trade negotiations will require real leadership on the part of the developing world, especially the big developing countries that have benefited so much from globalization. The developing countries would gain more by lowering their own barriers to agricultural trade than they would by wealthy countries lowering their barriers, although the latter also must happen.

6. “Developing the domestic market”

Thomas Palley. Challenge/ November-December 2006, p20 -34

It is great controversies, but the author, an economist in Washington D.C. comments on the export-led growth and supply side policies that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) have been developed. Based on his research, the policies can not produce equitable growth and prosperity.

7. “Trade preferences for developing countries and the WTO”

Jeanne J. Grimmett. Legislative Attorney. American Law Division. CRS Report for Congress. January 8, 2006, 6 pages.

The author argues that programs such as the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) under which developed countries grant preferential tariff rates to developing countries products are facially inconsistent with the WTO obligations. WTO members must grant immediately and unconditional most-favoured-nation (MFN) treatment to the products of other Members with respect to tariffs and other trade-related measures.

8. “Making AID work”

Mark Sundberg; Alan Gelb. Finance & Development. Vol. 43, no. 4, December 2006, p14-17.

Sundberg and Gelb, both with the World Bank, say the end of the Cold War and progress towards a new aid architecture should make aid more effective. In the past, they note, aid was often guided by geopolitical considerations rather than by development objectives. Consequently, they explain, aid effectiveness suffered and was often seen as a reward for corrupt governments. However, changes since the 1990s hold clear promise for improving aid quality and effectiveness in achieving development objectives, they write. These changes include harmonization of aid efforts and improved aid allocation

selectivity on the basis of need and policy quality. This article is available online at:
<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2006/12/sundberg.htm>.

REGIONAL RELATIONS and SECURITY

9. “Vietnam’s ASEAN membership revisited: Golden opportunity or Golden Cage?”

Jorn Dosch. Contemporary Southeast Asia Vol. 28, No, 2 (2006), p234-58.

The article elaborates on the impact of ASEAN membership on Vietnam’s bilateral relations with China, the U.S. and its Southeast Asian neighbors.

10. “Vietnam must map its own flight plan”

David Koh. Far Eastern Economic Review. December 2006, 2 pages.

David Koh, of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, asks if Vietnam will ever stop mimicking China and blaze its own trail.

11. “The Chinese century”

Elliot, Micheal and others. Time. 22/1/2007, Vol. 169 Issue 4, p32-42.

Already a commercial giant, China is aiming to be the world’s next great power. Will that lead to a confrontation with the U.S.?

12. “America, Islam and the 9-11 War”

Peter Warren Singer. Current History. December 2006, p415-422.

The 9-11 War will not be won through any territorial conquest or individual’s capture. It will only end in the realm of perceptions. The author states that the U.S. will ultimately have to accept that Islamist political groups are among the most powerful and creditable in the Muslim world.

SOCIAL ISSUES

13. “Political engineering in the Asia-Pacific”

Benjamin Reilly. Journal of Democracy. Volume 18, Number 1, January 2007, p58-72.

The 1997 financial crisis undermined the argument for a putative ‘Asian-style democracy’ that prioritized economic development over political liberalization. Yet recent electoral and other reforms have set the stage for emergence of a genuine “Asian model” of democracy.

14. "What's Next?"

Cohen, Richard E. National Journal. Vol. 39, no. 4, January 27, 2007, p20-21.

"When Republicans were in control, it was all about stopping bad things from happening," tells one policy director to author Richard Cohen. Republicans controlled Capitol Hill with a Republican president and a Republican Congress for most of the past 12 years, and liberal-minded interest groups have been used to frustration and setbacks rather than success. Now that congressional Democrats are back on top and after a flurry of congressional action on the so-called first 100-hours legislation, including raising the minimum wage and lowering student-loan interest rates, Democratic leaders are beginning to focus on a long-term agenda. Long-stalled issues on interest group wish lists include the needs of low-income people, increasing energy independence, the environment -- especially global warming -- and labor issues, among others. Yet Democratic leaders must balance the demands for sweeping initiatives against other political and even practical considerations, Cohen writes, because Bush is still the president and because front and center is dealing with the war in Iraq.

GLOBAL ISSUES/INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION

15. "Industrial revolution 2.0"

Antoine van Agtmael. Foreign Policy January-February 2007, p41-45.

The author observes that the third world companies are poised to overtake the Western rivals ranging from steel and cements to automobiles and electronics.

16. "Ahead in the clouds"

Virginia Morell. Smithsonian February 2007.2 pages.

Susan Solomon helped patch the ozone hole. Now, as a leader of a major United Nations report – out this month – she is going after global warming.

17. "The great oil and gasoline dilemma"

Reubens, Edwin. Challenge, November/December 2006, p78-92

This economist believes that the rapid rise in oil prices since 2002 may have had more to do with frenzied financial speculation than with the ordinary profit maximization of the giant oil companies. On both fronts, we are not thinking aggressively enough about remedies. He believes that a windfall-profits tax, earmarked for long-run development of

alternative fuels, is the best remedy for the present situation. For the intermediate run, a powerful device, he thinks, would be an international authority to buy and sell oil.

18. “House proud”

Booth, William. *Smithsonian*. January 2007, p74-76.

American architect Michelle Kaufmann has designed a factory-made modular home, considered a breakthrough due to its use of energy-efficient elements and renewable materials. The “Glidehouse” was born in 2003 when Kaufmann was looking for a place to live in the expensive San Francisco Bay area. She built her own prototype with a floor plan comprised of connecting rectangles, one side made of glass doors, a simple shed-like roof and solar panels. Friends admired it so much, they asked Kaufmann to help them build identical homes. After many months, Kaufmann bought her own factory near Seattle, Washington from a retiring builder. The three-bedroom, two-bath home uses recycled glass and paper and cost USD 292,500 to build. The manufacturing process generates little waste and the home can be constructed in about four months. Kaufmann hopes to build 10,000 prefabricated homes in the next ten years.

U.S. SOCIETY and VALUES

19. “Under fire”

Anna Mulrine. *U.S. News & World Report* 1/8/2007, Vol. 142 Issue 1, p18-21.

As President Bush draws up a new Iraq battle plan, it’s clear he will have a fight on his hands if he wants more troops.

20. “Teachers make the difference: responsibility and commitment”

Logerfo, Laura . *Current*, October 2006, pp. 14-17

The author reports on her research on teachers and pupil achievement. She found that children with teachers who have a greater sense of responsibility for student outcomes learn more in their reading activities. One of the chief factors related to a sense of teacher responsibility is that their school’s leadership is supportive of their efforts in the classroom.

21. “Anti-Americanism”

Meter Katzenstein; Robert Keohane. *Policy Review*. No. 139, October/November 2006, 11 pages.

Katzenstein and Keohane, professors of international studies at Cornell and Princeton universities respectively, write that the negative worldwide public opinion toward the U.S. that is grouped under the label “anti-Americanism” varies considerably in degree. The liberal anti-Americanism prevalent in Western Europe is fueled by perceptions of hypocrisy, that the U.S. is not living up to its ideals -- but the authors note that hypocrisy “is inherent in the situation of a superpower that professes universalistic ideals.” Other strains of anti-American sentiment center around the U.S. market-capitalism economic model, or political institutions, or aspects of U.S. popular culture. Key to the authors’ argument is that it is vital to distinguish between opinion and bias -- negative opinion is about what the U.S. does, and bias is about what the U.S. represents. They write that opinion “does not pose serious short-term problems for American foreign policy. However, if opinion were to harden into bias, as may be occurring in the Middle East, the consequences for the United States would be much more severe.” Currently available online at <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/4823856.html>

22. “From Saigon to desert storm”

Max Boot. American Heritage. November/December 2006, p29-37.

The author examines how the U.S. military reinvented itself after Vietnam.

23. “Poker”

Jack Kelly. American Heritage. November/December 2006, p39-48.

According to Jack Kelly, the very American career of the card game can learn in 10 minutes and work on the rest of your life.

24. “Best free reference web sites 2006”

American Library Association. 11 pages.

This is an annual series initiated under the auspices of the Machine – Assisted Reference Section (MARS) of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) of ALA to recognize outstanding reference sites on the World Wide Web.

25. “U.S. Coins: Reminders of history and heritage”

Jeanne S. Holden. English Teaching Forum. Volume 45, Number 1, 2007. 7 pages.

The author, a freelance writer with expertise in economics convinces that a close examination of American coins will not only answer several technical questions but will reveal a lot about a nation’s history and culture.

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