

Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, Islamabad

AIRC ALERT

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What's New

Inauguration Marks Continuity of Democracy

<http://uspolitics.america.gov/uspolitics/government/inauguration.html>

The orderly transfer of power from one president to the next is a hallmark of U.S. democracy. The transfer occurs when the incoming president takes the Oath of Office on January 20. America.gov looks at the inauguration of Barack Obama as 44th president of the United States.

6-1 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONS Department of State Electronic Journal, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2009.

We often read or hear about turmoil before, during, or after elections around the world. An important characteristic of democracy in the United States, however, is the regularly recurring peaceful transfer of power from one president to the next. Americans know when the next presidential election will take place – the Tuesday after the first Monday in November every four years. And power will be transferred to the newly elected (or re-elected) president on January 20 of the following year. In this issue of eJournal USA, as another U.S.

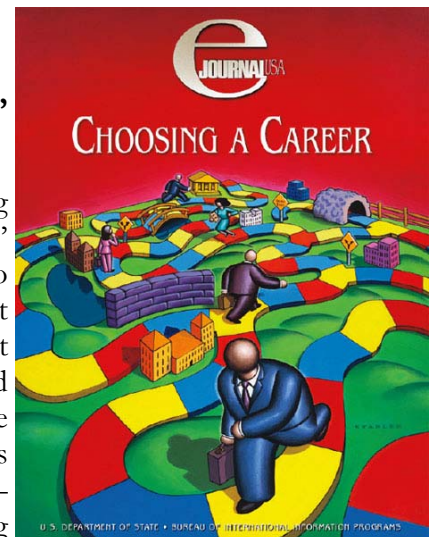
presidential transition takes place, we've tried to present our readers with insight into this process, including some historical background.



6-2 CHOOSING A CAREER Department of State Electronic Journal, Vol. 13, No. 12, September 2008.

“Go for your life,” some American kids are saying today. “Go your own way” and “Do your own thing” are the slogans some songwriters have left us. “Do what you want to do.” Different cultures and different generations have chanted a lot of mottoes about that stage of life when a person is becoming an adult and making hard choices about the future. Mottoes like these make it sound like becoming a stand-up adult is a totally excellent adventure. But – reality-check – most young people are also worried about finding some kind of interesting work that also brings them

the income to make a comfortable life. This issue contains some advice from experts who found their life's work in helping other people find the right careers.



U.S.— PAKISTAN RELATIONS

6-3/UP

ISLAMIST MILITANCY IN THE PAKISTAN- AFGHANISTAN BORDER REGION AND U.S. POLICY

By K. Alan Kronstadt and others

Congressional Research Service, November 21, 2008.

Increasing militant activity in western Pakistan poses three key national security threats: an increased potential for major attacks against the United States itself; a growing threat to Pakistani stability; and a hindrance of U.S. efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. The Pakistani military has in late 2008 undertaken major operations aimed at neutralizing armed extremism in the Bajaur agency, and the government is equipping local tribal militias in several FATA agencies with the hope that these can supplement efforts to bring the region under more effective state writ.

6-4/UP

PAKISTAN'S CAPITAL CRISIS: Implications for U.S. Policy

By Michael F. Martin and others

Congressional Research Service, November 21, 2008.

Abstract: Pakistan - a key U.S. ally in global efforts to combat Islamist militancy - is in urgent need of an estimated \$4 billion in capital to avoid defaulting on its sovereign debt. The elected government of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani is seeking short-term financial assistance from a number of sources, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China, and an informal group of nations (including the United States) known as the "Friends of Pakistan." The Pakistani government reportedly has reservations about conditions on the assistance, expressing concerns that the conditions may create political and economic problems. The current crisis has placed some strain on U.S.-Pakistan relations.

6-5/UP

PAKISTAN-U.S. RELATIONS

By K. Alan Kronstadt

Congressional Research Service, November 10, 2008.

A stable, democratic, prosperous Pakistan is considered vital to U.S. interests. U.S. concerns regarding Pakistan include regional and global terrorism; Afghan stability; democratization and human rights protection; the ongoing Kashmir problem and Pakistan-India tensions; and economic development. A U.S.-Pakistan relationship marked by periods of both cooperation and discord was transformed by the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the ensuing enlistment of Pakistan as a key ally in U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts. Top U.S. officials have praised Pakistan for its ongoing cooperation, although doubts exist about Islamabad's commitment to some core U.S. interests. Pakistan is identified as a base for terrorist groups and their supporters operating in Kashmir, India, and Afghanistan. Pakistan's army has conducted unprecedented and largely ineffectual counterterrorism operations in the country's western tribal areas, where Al Qaeda operatives and their allies are believed to enjoy "safe haven." U.S. officials increasingly are concerned that the cross-border infiltration of Islamist militants from Pakistan into Afghanistan is a key obstacle to defeating the Taliban insurgency.

DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

6-6/DGI

THE 2008 ELECTIONS

By Larry P. Goodson

Journal of Democracy, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 2008, pp. 5-15.

The article discusses the implications that Pakistan's February 2008 national elections had for the future of the country. They were precipitated by the rise of political parties that opposed Pervez Musharraf, the military ruler who usurped the presidency in 1999. The election process agreed upon was democratic in nature, with presidential balloting presided over by an electoral college. Relationships between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistani Muslim League (PML) following the impeachment of Musharraf are

examined. Also discussed is the assassination of former PPP chairperson Benazir Bhutto.

6-7/DGI

AMERICA'S EDGE: Power in the Networked Century

By Anne-Marie Slaughter

Foreign Affairs, Vol. 88, No. 1, January/February 2009, pp. 94-113.

In this article the author advances her contention that many aspects of modern living are governed and regulated by networks. She states that a number of significant factors and events, such as war, diplomacy and international business, are administered by networks that link individuals and institutions. The author suggests that the ability of the state to convert this connectivity into economic activity and growth will be the measure of the success of that state. Given that premise, the author claims that certain factors, including demographics and geography, position the United States to take advantage of global networks through the 21st century.

6-8/DGI

AMERICA'S HARD SELL

By Bruce Jentleson and others

Foreign Policy, Vol. 169, November-December 2008, pp. 43-49.

Jentleson and Weber, professors of political science at Duke University and the University of California at Berkeley respectively, argue that the public diplomacy strategies of the last century won't work as well in the 21st century. The "War of Ideas" metaphor is outdated and should be replaced with the "Marketplace of Ideas" where the U.S. competes for market share against other ideologies, some from nonstate sources. The authors contend that ideology is the most important component of national powers, technology massively multiplies soft power, and "domestic values" and "international values" must be consistent. The authors write that the U.S. will have to compete with countries, global corporations, religious movements, Internet communities -- each with strengths and shortcomings -- on a level playing field.

6-9/DGI

AN EMERGING CIVIL SOCIETY

By S. Akbar Ahmad

Journal of Democracy, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 2008, pp. 38-40.

The article discusses the emergence of a civil society in Pakistan. The prominence of this movement can be seen when, on March 9, 2007, former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf suspended Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry for refusing to resign. This act prompted a protest movement that was led by lawyers who denounced the suspension. While civil society often applies to an act of challenging the state, Pakistan's civil society is composed of non-governmental organizations which have partnered with the state to fill voids created by government failures. The movement spearheaded by these lawyers is not an attempt to restore democracy.

6-10/DGI

BURDEN OF HISTORY

By Sumit Ganguly

Journal of Democracy, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 2008, pp. 26-37.

What ails Pakistan? The question is far from trivial. The country, which made yet another rocky and uncertain transition back toward democracy in February 2008, is nuclear-armed, has a fast-growing population of more than 160 million Muslims, and shares borders with Afghanistan, Iran, and India. The significance of each of these neighbors for Pakistan's affairs can scarcely be overstated. India is already an emergent Asian power with global aspirations. Iran is a virtual pariah state with overt nuclear ambitions. Afghanistan, a remote country whose troubled history over recent decades has nonetheless sent shock waves around the world, is teetering yet again on the verge of state collapse. The futures of all three are, to varying degrees, inextricably intertwined with Pakistan's fate. Since its founding out of the partition of British India in 1947, Pakistan has labored in the shadow of critical choices made at that time.

6-11/DGI

FAITH AND ECSTASY

By Nicholas Schmidle

Smithsonian, Vol. 39 Issue 9, December 2008, pp. 36-47.

The article focuses on Sufis and the condition of Suf-

ism in Pakistan. The festival honoring the saint Lal Shahbaz Qalandar is described, including the dancing known as "dhamaal" and "djinnns," or evil spirits. It is reported that Sufis congregate in Sehwan, Pakistan, annually for the festival. The author describes Sufism as the mystical side of Islam and compares Sufism to fundamentalist Islam, including the tensions between the groups and Sufis' condition under the Taliban. The history of Qalandar is presented and Benazir Bhutto's political spirituality is discussed.

6-12/DGI

INSIDE THE PRESIDENCY

By Elisabeth Bumiller

National Geographic, January 2009.

Although the occupant of the White House changes, most of the routines for the staff that assist the president stay the same. Bumiller gives an inside look at life in the White House or on the road with the president; she interviews Gary Walters, former chief usher of the Executive Mansion, who served as a manager of the White House for 31 years, spanning six presidencies. A staff of 90, including butlers, maids, chefs, elevator operators, florists, carpenters and electricians, runs the White House residence, which has been known to welcome up to 30,000 guests in a single week. The White House staff knows how the first family wants their bedrooms set up, what snacks they like, what toothpaste they use. But these perks come at a price — first families foot the bill for personal items such as food and dry cleaning. In the article Joe Hagin, former deputy chief of staff in charge of operations, describes what it is like traveling on the road or on the plane with the president. He describes Air Force One as equipped with beds, exercise equipment and a fully functioning kitchen. He explains that the president travels with a contingent of hundreds overseas, but typically is in a "bubble" surrounded by close staffers and Secret Service agents. The article ends with a quote from former First Lady Barbara Bush: "presidents come and go. Butlers stay."

6-13/DGI

MULTILATERALISM MATTERS EVEN MORE

By Margaret P Karns

SAIS Review, Vol. 28, No. 2, Summer 2008, pp. 3-16.

The next U.S. president will face a world in which multilateral institutions and diplomacy matter far more

than at any time in the past. This importance arises from the nature of many contemporary issues, the proliferation in number and importance of nonstate actors, and the evolution of international diplomatic practice with the growth of multilateralism and pieces of global governance. This article addresses the broad need for U.S. foreign policy under the next administration to be more oriented toward multilateralism than it has been in recent years. In addressing this need, however, the next U.S. president will face a significant challenge in rebuilding US credibility, goodwill and soft power lost during the Bush administration. Symbolic gestures, words, and actions early in the new administration will be essential in demonstrating the United States' commitment to international law and organizations.

6-14/DGI

THE NEW LIBERALISM

By George Packer

New Yorker, Vol. 84, No. 37, November 17, 2008.

After looking back at presidential history, interviewing President-elect Obama's advisors, and reviewing Obama's words from his books and campaign speeches, Packer tries to describe how Obama might lead the country. Packer compares this moment to the election of President Roosevelt in 1932 but believes in Obama's idea of "deliberative democracy", in which adults listen to one another -- "who attempt to persuade one another by means of argument and evidence, and who remain open to the possibility that they could be wrong." Obama reads widely from both the "right-wing and left-wing book clubs" but Packer states that Obama's liberalism is more procedural than substantive -- his most fervent belief is in rules and standards of serious debate. Packer believes that Obama will favor activist government in questions of social welfare such as jobs, income, health care and energy but will attempt to accommodate differences on social and legal issues such as guns, abortion, the death penalty, same-sex marriage, the courts and the constitution.

6-15/DGI

PAKISTAN'S PERILOUS VOYAGE

By Farzana Shaikh,

Current History, Vol. 107, No. 712, November 2008, pp. 362-368.

The article presents an exploration into the power centers and influences with the political structure of Paki-

stan in 2008. Details are given describing the negative conditions of the government of the nation, outlining six major power groups including several officials, the tribal "neo-Taliban," the legal sector, and U.S. proxies. Commentary is offered regarding the instability of so many opposing influences and warnings are given regarding the consequences of such conditions.

6-16/DGI

RECLAIMING U.S. LEADERSHIP IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

By Maria Ivanova and others.

SAIS Review, Vol. 28, No. 2, Summer 2008, pp. 57-76.

The United States entered the 21st century actively pursuing a "go-it-alone" approach to international relations. This is especially the case in global environmental affairs, where the United States is now widely perceived as a laggard and even an obstacle to collective action. Yet, the United States was the prime proponent and creator of international environmental organizations in the 1970s. In this article, we analyze the U.S. role in global environmental governance from a historical perspective and present a platform for U.S. re-engagement. We contend that the new U.S. Administration should re-examine its strategy towards global environmental concerns and reinstate a commitment to multilateralism as well as to playing a leadership role.

6-17/DGI

REVAMPING U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

By Jeffrey Leo Hindery and others.

SAIS Review, Vol. 28, No. 2, Summer 2008, pp. 49-54.

Although many of its overall conclusions are sound, the December 2007 final Report of the HELP Commission comes up short on a number of issues. The official Report fails to adequately make the case for foreign assistance as a core pillar of U.S. national security and values. The authors, members of the Commission and authors of its Minority Report entitled Revamping U.S. Foreign Assistance, recommend that foreign assistance be repositioned within the U.S. Government structure and elevated to its own cabinet-level department. Moreover, Washington needs to be honest with itself, its international partners, and the American public about the insufficient funding devoted to foreign aid.

6-18/DGI

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS: How we used to vote

By Jill Lepore

The New Yorker, October 13, 2008, pp. 80-96.

The article explores the history of voting and election ballots in the U.S. Topics explored include paper ballots, universal suffrage, secret voting, and the role of political parties in supplying ballots. The author reflects on Australian election reform that was incorporated in the U.S. to enable private voting in booths. Other topics include election officials, voter turnout, and technology and voting.

6-19/DGI

OVERLOAD! JOURNALISM'S BATTLE FOR RELEVANCE IN AN AGE OF TOO MUCH INFORMATION

By Bree Nordenson

Columbia Journalism Review, Vol. 47, No. 4, November/December 2008.

The vast amount of information available on the Internet, and the limited ability of human beings to consume it, is affecting news production, distribution and design. It may also have a long-term negative effect on readers subjected to the overload, studies find. Some news organizations, such as the Associated Press, have taken heed and altered their formats; nonetheless, interruptive clutter abounds. Seemingly limitless freedom of choice becomes a burden which may change the roles of news agencies and journalists from being gatekeepers to guides through the information glut. Currently available online at http://www.cjr.org/feature/overload_1.php?page=all [PUBS;LT]

6-20/DGI

MAGIC AND THE BRAIN: How Magicians "Trick" The Mind

By Susana Martinez-Conde

Scientific American, November 2008.

Magicians have been testing and exploiting the limits of cognition and attention for centuries; neuroscientists are just beginning to catch up. Magic tricks often work by covert misdirection, drawing the spectator's attention away from the secret method that makes a trick work. Neuroscientists are scrutinizing magic tricks to learn how they can be put to work in experimental studies that probe aspects of consciousness not necessarily grounded in current sensory reality. Brain

imaging shows that some regions are particularly active during certain kinds of magic tricks.

6-21/DGI

SURFACE ROUTINES: How We Read on the Web

By 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, is 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.

6-22/DGI

THINK AGAIN: Climate Change

By Bill McKibben

Foreign Policy, January/February 2009.

Noted author Bill McKibben writes that it may be too late to avert climate change, but that it is imperative that the international political order stop delaying and adopt the few options humanity has left. He notes that there is no doubt left among the scientific community that global warming is a reality; many scientists feel that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest report is too conservative. The claims that agriculture will improve in some regions as frost recedes may hold true for a while, but eventually the threat of heat stress and drought will be global. Solving the climate crisis is no longer an option, as human activities have already raised the global temperature by a degree; all we can do is mitigate its worst aspects. Coordinating this effort with every country on earth will be "far and away the biggest foreign-policy challenge we face."

6-23/DGI

TOMORROWLAND: An Eco-Smart Design Competition Turns "What Ifs" Into "What Is"

By E. B. Boyd

Utne Reader, Vol. 149, September/October 2008, pp. 38-41.

The non-profit "Conscious Choice" sponsored a design competitions for forward-thinking ideas in the energy, transportation, commerce, community and "city block" categories. 70% of the competition entries came from students and included playgrounds which convert "kid power" into electricity for LED lights, a farm park which allows commuters to buy local food as they connect to public transportation, green building, and recyclable housing. The competition's goal is to inspire real-world designers to think about new ways to make city life healthier and more sustainable.

6-24/DGI

WHY I BLOG

By Andrew Sullivan

Atlantic, November, 2008.

Sullivan describes the evolution of his blogging, which he began in 2000. He describes not knowing what to write about at first, but eventually discovering that writing a blog was similar to writing an e-mail. "You end up writing about yourself, since you are a relatively fixed point in this constant interaction with the ideas and facts of the exterior world. And in this sense, the historic form closest to blogs is the diary. But with this difference: a diary is almost always a private matter," Sullivan writes. He describes blogs as a publication with a deadline at all times. "There is a vividness to this immediacy that cannot be rivaled by print," he says. Sullivan says he was quickly hooked on blogging because its unfiltered process was "liberating," but it also came with more direct criticism from readers. But the readers also become news sources, changing the way reporting works. Sullivan's article outlines the many challenges he has faced and lessons he has learned from this new medium.

6-24/IS

THE ART OF PETRAEUS

By T.X. Hammes

National Interest, No. 98, November-December 2008, pp. 53-59.

According to Hammes, retired from the U.S. Marine Corps, what General David Petraeus did to turn around the war in Iraq was make careful analysis of the actual situation on the ground and then have the will and judgment to carry out the military campaign based on that analysis. The wrong idea to take away is that a troop surge is a replicable, universal approach to countering an insurgency. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, for example, a simple solution does not exist. Despite the experience in Iraq, a number of bureaucratic and legislative reasons make unlikely that the Defense Department will focus enough attention on fighting insurgencies and too much attention on fighting conventional wars. “We need a flexible force that can organize to fight nation-states as well as nonstate actors,” Hammes writes.

6-25/IS

A BALANCED STRATEGY: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age.

By Robert Gates

Foreign Affair, Vol. 88, No. 1, January/February 2009, pp. 28-40.

In this article the author, the U.S. secretary of defense, discusses his plan to reorganize the American armed forces. He states that threats to U.S. national security cannot be met exclusively through the application of higher military appropriations. The department of defense must set priorities through the evaluation of national security concerns. The author advocates an even-handed approach that will manage the nation's three primary defense concerns: the conduct of wars already in existence, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan, the management of future insurgency threats and preparations for future conventional conflicts.

6-26/IS

ASSESSING THE DANGERS OF ILLICIT NETWORKS

By Mettel Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and others.

International Security, Vol. 33, No. 2, Fall 2008, pp. 7-44.

A common theme receiving considerable attention in recent international relations scholarship is that governments are facing challenging network-based threats posed by organized international crime and terrorist organizations. The authors, at the University of Cambridge and Yale University respectively, believe that battling these networks may not be as difficult as first believed within international security studies. They have recognized and illuminated some significant network weaknesses, noting that while both terrorism and organized crime networks are formidable, they are also vulnerable. Repeatedly targeting these networks and taking advantage of splits in these organizations can lead to breakthroughs previously not thought possible. Effectively sowing doubts and mistrust through infiltration and manipulation of information also can be effective tools, the researchers conclude. [CGI;MDK]

6-27/IS

THE DEFENSE INHERITANCE: Challenges And Choices for the Next Pentagon Team

B/y Michele Flournoy and others

Washington Quarterly, Vol. 31, No. 4, Autumn 2008, pp. 59-76.

The authors, both with the Center for a New American Security, note that when Barack Obama is inaugurated in January, he will face “the most daunting defense inheritance in generations” — wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the search for bin Laden; the increasing power of China, Russia, India, and Pakistan; changes in the nature of war, as shown by the Israeli experience in Lebanon; cyberspace warfare; instability on the world's oceans; and broader systemic problems such as climate change and increased competition for resources, including food. This dire situation is compounded by American budgetary woes made worse by the economic crisis, the spiraling costs of entitlements, and the exploding costs of the two wars. The Pentagon will be forced to make tough choices regarding personnel and weapons programs. The authors note that the Defense Department “cannot afford to continue hemorrhaging taxpayer dollars because of its broken acquisition system.” Other problems facing the new administration include countering weapons of

mass destruction, reducing the U.S. nuclear posture, reexamining the U.S. global military posture, sustaining the all-volunteer force, fixing dysfunctional management processes, and improving interagency cooperation.

6-28/IS

A FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET FOR THE FUTURE: Fixing the Crisis in Diplomatic Readiness

American Academy of Diplomacy and the Henry L. Stimson Center, October 2008, 75 p.

This report, a collaborative effort of 48 retired ambassadors and other foreign affairs experts, concludes that the U.S. faces critical foreign challenges with inadequate staff and resources as well as "authority shortfalls" relating to some economic and security assistance programs. The study reviews four categories of activity: core diplomacy, public diplomacy, economic assistance, and reconstruction/stabilization. It devotes 13 pages to public diplomacy activities, which it limits narrowly to exchanges, international information programs, and field operations carried out by the Department of State. For these activities, the report recommends increasing U.S. direct-hire staff by 487, locally employed staff by 369, and overall staff and program funding increases totaling \$610.4 million by Fiscal Year 2014. In an Appendix, the report devotes a page to international broadcasting and two pages to a skeptical look at public diplomacy activities of the Department of Defense.

6-29/IS

IN THE SHADOW OF THE OVAL OFFICE:

The Next National Security Adviser

By Ivo H. Daalder and others.

Foreign Affairs, Vol. 88, No. 1, pp. 114-129.

In this article the authors discuss aspects of the post of national security adviser to the president of the United States. They trace the history of the post from its creation during the administration of president John F. Kennedy and assess the performance of a number of office-holders including McGeorge Bundy, Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft. They suggest that the most difficult part of the post is advocating for the policy set in place by the president while balancing it against the realities of specific situations.

6-30/IS

MALE AND FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBERS: Different Sexes, Different Reasons?

By Karen Jacques and others.

Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Vol. 31, No. 4, June 2008, pp. 304-326.

Recent research into suicide terrorism suggests that women are most often motivated more by personal events, where men are more likely motivated by religious or nationalistic factors. The authors, with the psychology department at Lancaster University (U.K.), also found that women are as likely to be recruited through peer influence, exploitation, or self-promotion, though men are more likely to be recruited as a direct result of religious persuasion for suicide terrorist missions. Their research also shows that the belief that women are likely to assume passive roles or supportive roles in terrorist groups is false. They also cite the work of other researchers who believe that women are motivated from a unique set of motivations and life events. While the research is providing a necessary look into the minds of women who have chosen suicide terrorism, it also points up to the need for even more research, because the work of Jacques and Taylor comes at a time when the emerging roles women play in terrorism, across all regions and ideological spectrums, is increasing in dramatic numbers.

6-31/IS

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.

6-32/IS

PAKISTAN: The Critical Battlefield

By Bruce Riedel

Current History, Vol. 107, No. 712, November 2008, pp. 355-361.

The article presents an exploration into the political environment of Pakistan in the early 21st century, particularly highlighting its significance as a locus of the U.S. War on Terror. Paradoxical contrasts within the nation are described, describing both its role as a center for Islamic jihadist terrorism and as a victim of terrorist actions against the state's government and civilian population. An overview of the nation's political history since the 1980s is given regarding these elements

6-33/IS

PRAETORIANISM AND TERRORISM

By Aqil Shah

Journal of Democracy, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 2008, pp. 16-25.

The article discusses the challenges facing the prospect of extending civilian control over the Pakistani military. Following a bout of military rule that ended with the resignation of former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in August 2008, chief of staff General Ishfaq Pervez Kiyani has been attempting to keep the army politically neutral. Kiyani's actions have included the removal of army officers that had been placed in the civilian bureaucracy by Musharraf. Military prerogatives that were institutionalized beneath the first Pakistani commander-in-chief of the army, General Mohammed Ayub Khan, supported military rule of the civilian population. The concept of democracy has been vilified by recent Pakistani rulers, including Musharraf.

6-34/ES

BOOTSTRAPPING TRADE

BY David Christy

World Policy Journal, Vol. 25, no. 4, Winter 2008/2009, pp. 127-131.

The lessons of the Smoot-Hawley tariff act make it easy to advocate free trade, says the author, a Washington trade lawyer. However, he notes that U.S. policies must recognize both the benefits and the costs of free trade, and that it must be supported as a matter of smart politics in a time of economic trouble. More needs to be done, however, to avoid unacceptable social costs. The WTO will remain an important institution despite its detractors, says Christy; signaling U.S. continued support for trade liberalization would give it a boost. However, he argues that there is little that any U.S. administration could do to speed the Doha Round, and that the U.S. should not take anything off the table because any retrenchment would have a negative impact on the talks. He praises the G20's pledge not to erect trade barriers for at least a year, but he raises a possibility that the U.S. and other WTO members may have to cut a few corners on trade to find the way out of the crisis despite this pledge. He also argues against opening NAFTA in an attempt to renegotiate it as the U.S. "would have to pay Canada and Mexico dearly for every change we were to seek."

6-35/ES

CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

By William Swelbar

Foreign Policy, Vol. 169, November/December 2008, pp. 40-41.

Only a complete overhaul can save the airline industry in the face of the current global recession and high fuel prices, says Swelbar, a research engineer at MIT's International Center for Air Transportation. So far this year, more airlines around the world went bankrupt than in the aftermath of September 11, mostly because of high fuel prices. U.S. airlines still dominate the field but regional budget carriers in China and Europe are rapidly catching up. U.S. carriers are overextended, flying almost everywhere and often; this translates into higher passenger numbers but not nec-

essarily higher revenue. They have reduced (or kept steady) their labor and maintenance costs, but the share of fuel costs in the overall costs has more than doubled since 2003. A short article with much statistical data suggests that, to survive, U.S. airlines will have to pare their routes and number of flights and charge much higher prices.

6-36/ES

THE GREAT CRASH, 2008: A Geopolitical Setback for the West

By Roger Altman

Foreign Affairs, Vol. 88 Issue 1, January/February 2009, pp. 2-14.

In this article the author discusses the 2007 financial crisis noting that the collapse, the worst since since the depression of the 1930s, was a significant geopolitical reverse for the West. According to the author the economic downturn has reduced the appeal of free-market capitalism advanced by the U.S. and other developing countries to the point where it has ceased to become attractive to economies in the developing world. The author suggests that the reduction in Western resources and credibility will reduce the influence of the U.S. in international affairs.

6-37/ES

EXPONENTIAL MONEY IN A FINITE WORLD (PART I)

By Chris Martenson

Vermont Commons, No. 25, Fall 2008.

The author, a scientist by training and former vice-president of a Fortune 300 company, writes that in the next two decades, “the most profound changes in all of economic history will sweep the globe”, and that what the world financial system is experiencing now is just the beginning of a long, difficult period of adjustment. Martenson notes that the fundamental and fatal flaw of our current monetary system is that it must continually expand forever, a textbook example of an exponential system. However, it was designed and implemented at a time when the earth’s resources seemed limitless, so “few gave much critical thought to the implications that every single dollar in circulation was to be loaned into existence by a bank with interest.” He notes that the U.S. did not create its first trillion dollars in money stock until 1973. The money supply and the amount of credit and debt started to increase dramatically after the abandonment of gold settlement in 1971; the most recent trillion dollars was

created in only 4.5 months. What we are approaching now, Martenson says, is the near-vertical phase in the exponential growth of money and debt, which is bumping up against real-world limits of energy, food, fresh water, mineral resources and farmland. “Our monetary system demands that even more follow”, says Martenson; “this is clearly an unsustainable arrangement”. He concludes: “our choices now are to either evolve a new economic model that is compatible with limited physical resources, or risk a catastrophic failure of our monetary system and with it the basis for civilization as we know it today ... because our economic model and our entire system of money enforce a doctrine of limitless growth, they have become anachronisms incompatible with the well-being of the planet on which we live and depend.”

6-38/ES

By Raymond Fisman

HOW ECONOMICS CAN DEFEAT CORRUPTION

Foreign Policy, no. 168, September/October 2008, pp. 66-74.

The authors, professors at Columbia Business School and the University of California at Berkeley, respectively, note that we have very little idea about how corruption works or how pervasive it is. Corruption undermines the rule of law, distorts trade, and confers economic advantages on a privileged few. It prevents aid money from reaching disaster victims, topples buildings thanks to shoddy construction, and strangles business with the constant burden of bribes and pay-offs. The hidden underworld of corruption often reveals itself in unexpected ways and in situations that allow people not only to measure actual corruption but to test different methods of preventing it. They write that governments should become more experimental, in how they deal with their corruption problems, and must think seriously about evaluating what does and does not work in the real world. At some point, economic theories must be tested in the chaos of real economies to see which anticorruption approaches work, whether it is some combination of higher salaries, government transparency, or stricter punishments. If policymakers work to end corruption systematically, they may just find that economics, armed with a little creativity, can make corruption a little less common.

6-39/ES

WARNING: MORE DOOM AHEAD

By Nourie Roubini

Foreign Policy, January/February 2009.

The author, professor of economics at New York University's Stern School of Business, writes that "last year's worst-case scenarios came true," and that the global financial pandemic that he and others had warned about has arrived. This year portends the credit crunch getting worse, as the deleveraging continues and asset prices continue to fall. The U.S. will experience its worst recession in decades, and some developing economies will experience a full-blown financial crisis, and may need external financing to avoid a meltdown. Roubini notes that this crisis is not only the result of the collapse of the U.S. housing market or of abuses in subprime mortgage lending — the credit excesses were global, amounting to "the biggest asset and credit bubble in human history." He notes that drastic actions in the last year by the G-7 and others averted a total systemic meltdown, but that "the worst is not behind us ... only very aggressive, coordinated, and effective action by policymakers will ensure that 2010 will not be even worse than 2009 is likely to be."

U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES

6-40/SV

LIBRARIES CONNECT COMMUNITIES

By Peggy Barber and others.

American Libraries, Vol. 39, No. 9, October 2008, pp. 52-55.

The authors, cofounders 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.

6-41/SV

THE MEANING OF COLUMBUS DAY

By Mac Chapin

World Watch, Nol. 21, No. 6, November/December 2008, pp. 8-17.

The author, an anthropologist and director of the Washington, D.C.-area Center for the Support of Native Lands, notes that the "discovery" of the Western Hemisphere by Columbus in 1492 was the first step in a process that led to the conquest and European subjugation of the native peoples of this newly-found continent. It determined the direction the Americas were to take from that point on, notes Chapin, and much of what really happened has in the past been ignored or glossed over in the mainstream culture, from Columbus Day celebrations to history textbooks in the school system. The primary effect on the native population after the arrival of Europeans was the drastic population declines as a result of epidemics of diseases for which the natives had no immunity. It is generally accepted that 50-80 million people were living in the Americas in 1492, and that shortly after this time they suffered a demographic collapse, which radiated throughout the hemisphere, hitting hardest in the tropical lowlands and areas of dense settlement. Few regions escaped its reach, including remote corners where Europeans had never set foot. An estimated 90-95 percent of the native population died during the first century after contact — one of the most catastrophic population disasters in human history. The result of the new information is that virtually every history dealing with the European Conquest and domination of the New World's peoples now includes something about the epidemics and the population decline.

6-42/SV

READY ACCESS: NARA's Federal Records Centers Offer Agencies Storage, Easy Use For 80 Billion Pages of Documents

Tara McLoughlin

Prologue, Vol. 40, No. 1, Spring 2008, pp. 43-48.

The arrival of a new administration once again raises the challenge of preserving and organizing the records they will create during the next four years, as well as the retirement of the records from the previous administration. The author highlights the role and im-

portance of the federal records centers (FRCs) of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). McLoughlin singles out the nomination by President George W. Bush of Samuel A. Alito, Jr. to the Supreme Court as a high-profile example of the usefulness of the FRCs, which supplied copies of every opinion Alito had written during his tenure at the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. For more than 50 years, agencies have counted on NARA's FRCs to keep these workaday records of the federal government safe and accessible through its nationwide network of 17 facilities with more than 1,100 federal employees. The federal records they store include tax returns, claims files for military veterans, architectural blueprints, cancelled Social Security checks, bankruptcy court records, inmate files, and maps of national parks. The FRCs have also played a role in disaster planning and recovery; after Hurricane Katrina, they provided copies of identification and personal records to people who had lost everything.

6-43/SV

STRATEGY RETOOLED AT GATES

By Erik Robelen

Education Week, Vol. 28, No. 13, November 19, 2008, pp. 1, 10-11.

Over the past eight years, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has spent \$4 billion on education, much of it on a school improvement strategy that has not delivered the academic gains the foundation hoped for. The Gates Foundation is focusing on “fewer, clearer, and higher” standards for college readiness, better quality teaching and aiding struggling students. Gates believes the U.S. has put too much emphasis on expanding access to higher education and not enough on college completion. Only about half of U.S. students who enroll in college manage to graduate within six years, and the completion rates for African-American and Hispanic students are only about 20 percent, according to the foundation. The foundation plans to promote common core standards across states, build the public and political will to achieve college readiness for all, work with school districts to retain and compensate effective teachers in the schools that most need them, and foster technological innovations that will help students who have fallen behind.