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American Education Today

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Today the value of education needs no validation. Education builds up the ethical and moral character of the individuals and adequately equips them to excel in a highly competitive world. Quality education today will lead to a dynamic and prosperous society tomorrow. Education is among the top priorities of various countries worldwide. Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, rightly recognized the value of education in stating, "If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest."

"In a world where challenges transcend borders, education is essential for making the world more peaceful and more prosperous," stated Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. The significance of education was also acknowledged by Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings who stated, "As a universal value, education plays a fundamental role in the life of every nation. And an important part of education is teaching children to be active and informed international citizens." This is especially true with today's rapidly changing technology which has resulted in a smaller, more globalized world where internationalized education has become the need of the hour.

Statistics reveal an increasing movement of international students. More and more students are moving from various countries to the United States and vice-versa. *Open Doors 2007* data reveals that new international enrollment in U.S. institutions in fall 2006 increased by 9.97 percent over the previous year. During 2006-2007 academic year, 582,984 international students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities – a 3.2 percent increase over the previous year. India, China, South Korea and Japan comprise 43% of all international students enrolled in U.S. higher education. Likewise, U.S. student movement abroad has also grown 150 percent over the past decade.

Education has always been among the most important agendas of the United States. In the past five elections, it was one of the major issues discussed on the campaign trail. Several recent initiatives have been put in place by the federal government to ensure quality education at all levels. On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which contains the most sweeping changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since its

enactment in 1965. Based on the President's four educational reform principles, this law seeks to ensure that every child in America receives a quality education. On December 3, 2004, President Bush signed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), which reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The President stated, "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 will help children learn better by promoting accountability for results, enhancing parent involvement, using proven practices and materials, providing more flexibility, and reducing paperwork burdens for teachers, states and local school districts." On August 2, 2007, Congress passed the America COMPETES Act (America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act), which the President signed into law on August 9, 2007. This legislation is directed at increasing research investment of the United States. It authorizes \$33.6 billion for FY2008 through FY2010 for science, mathematics, engineering, and technology programs across the federal government.

Beyond the federal government, the efforts of Wendy Kopp in taking education to some of the most disadvantaged schools in America deserves due credit. Started in 1990, her exemplary program Teach for America recruits and trains students straight out of college and signs them up for two-years to teach in America's poorest communities. These teachers work in schools with America's neediest students. The popularity of Teach for America has grown steadily over the years. It is expected that more than 6,000 young teachers will be working for Teach for America by next fall. For her vision and innovative efforts, Wendy Kopp's name has been included in *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people.

Another vital component of the American education system is its community colleges, which are a crucial part of its postsecondary education system. About half of the undergraduate students in the United States go to community colleges, which provide publicly-funded higher education closer to their homes and prepare them for transfer to a four-year institution or to enter into skill specific employment.

Apart from schools, colleges, and universities, the family of a child is his first learning institution. In the American public education system and everywhere else, parents play a vital role in the initial education at home and in the family. President Bush has also

stressed the importance of parental responsibility in the education of a child. He observed, "If you expect your child to be well-educated, you have the responsibility of making sure your child gets educated, starting at home, with some basic fundamentals."

Secretary Rice said, "Education is a way to completely and totally become who you should be, who you want to be, who you ought to be. It opens the mind. It opens the heart. It opens the horizons." Identifying the importance of education, President Bush once said, "When it comes to the education of our children, failure is not an option."

The articles included in this section explore various aspects of education in the United States and many other related issues. They explore education at all levels and throw light on the efforts taken to improve the quality of education in the United States and taking education to each and every child of America.

For additional information, a webliography is presented here for your use. The inclusion of Internet sites other than those of the U.S. government should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein. The websites are current as of their publication date and are subject to change at any time.

Adventures in Education
<http://www.adventuresineducation.org>

American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
<http://www.aaas.org>

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>

American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
<http://www.aasa.org>

American Council on Education
<http://www.acenet.edu>

American Educational Research Association (AERA)
<http://www.aera.net>

Americans for the Arts
<http://www.artsusa.org>

Arizona Educational Research Organization (AERO)
<http://www.azedresearch.org>

Arts Education Partnership
<http://www.aep-arts.org>

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
<http://exchanges.state.gov>

Bureau of Indian Education
<http://www.bia.edu>

California Educational Research Association (CERA)
<http://www.cera-web.org>

Campus Program – American University, College and Employment Resources
<http://www.campusprogram.com>

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org>

Center on Education Policy
<http://www.cep-dc.org>

Council for International Exchange of Scholars: Fulbright Programs for Visiting (Non-U.S.) Scholars
http://www.cies.org/vs_scholars

Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS)
<http://www.cgcs.org>

Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)
<http://www.ciee.org>

Department of State – Education and Youth
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1958.htm>

Eastern Educational Research Association (EERA)
<http://www3.govst.edu/eera/index2.htm>

Education – Driving Tomorrow's Achievements
<http://amlife.america.gov/amlife/education/index.html>

Education Information Resources in the Department of State
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c22010.htm>

The Education Trust
<http://www2.edtrust.org>

EducationUSA
<http://educationusa.state.gov>

eduPASS!
<http://www.edupass.org>

Florida Educational Research Association (FERA)
<http://www.feraonline.org>

Foundation for Excellence in Education (FEE)
<http://www.excelined.org>

Fulbright Program
<http://www.fulbrightonline.org/>

Georgia Educational Research Association (GERA)
<http://www.gaera.org>

Harvard University
<http://www.harvard.edu>

Hawaii Educational Research Association (HERA)
<http://www.hawaii.edu/hera/>

Help Your Child Improve in Test-Taking
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/TestTaking/index.html>

Help Your Child Learn to Write Well
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Writing/index.html>

Helping Your Child Become a Responsible Citizen
<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/citizen/index.html>

Helping Your Child Use the Library
<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Library/index.html>

Helping Your Child with Homework
<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/homework/index.html>

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<http://idea.ed.gov>
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<http://www.iie.org>
- International Education Week, 2008
<http://iew.state.gov/>
- Iowa Educational Research and Evaluation Association (IEREA)
<http://www.ierea.org>
- Kellogg School of Management
<http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu>
- Louisiana Educational Research Association (LERA)
<http://leraweb.homestead.com>
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
<http://web.mit.edu>
- Michigan Educational Research Association (MERA)
<http://www.mera.net>
- Mid-South Educational Research Association (MSERA)
<http://www.msera.org>
- Mid-Western Educational Research Association (MWERA)
<http://www.mwera.org>
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators
<http://www.nafsa.org>
- National Art Education Association (NAEA)
<http://www.naea-reston.org>
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
<http://nces.ed.gov>
- National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education
<http://www.ncci-cu.org>
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)
<http://www.nctm.org>

- National Education Taskforce (NET)
<http://www.natedtaskforce.org>
- National Science Foundation
<http://www.nsf.gov>
- New England Educational Research Organization (NEERO)
<http://www.neero.org>
- North Carolina Association for Research in Education (NCARE)
<http://education.uncc.edu/ncare/>
- Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA)
<http://www.nera-education.org>
- Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association (NRMERA)
<http://www.nrmera.org>
- Open Doors* – Report on International Educational Exchange
<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org>
- Pennsylvania Educational Research Association (PERA)
<http://pera.hbg.psu.edu/index.htm>
- Report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (CRSE)
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/36/64/e1.pdf
- Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association (RMERA)
<http://ceps.ucok.edu/departments/pte/rmera>
- South Carolina Educators for Practical Use of Research (SCEPUR)
<http://www.midnet.sc.edu/scepur/>
- Southeastern Association for Community College Research (SACCR)
<http://www.tcc.edu/welcome/collegeadmin/OIE/SACCR/index.htm>
- Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA)
<http://www.sera-edresearch.org>
- Student Aid on the Web
<http://studentaid.ed.gov>

Teach for America
<http://www.teachforamerica.org>

Transforming the Federal Role in Education
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/education>

U.S. Department of Education
<http://www.ed.gov>

U.S. Network for Education Information (USNEI)
<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ous/international/usnei/edlite-index.html>

UNESCO - Education for All International Coordination
http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=50558&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

United States Educational Foundation in India (USEFI)
<http://www.fulbright-india.org>

Voice of America – America's Global College Forum
http://www.voanews.com/english/AmericanLife/global_college_for_um.cfm

Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania
<http://www.wharton.upenn.edu>

Women in Higher Education
<http://www.wihe.com>

1. AMERICA'S SECRET EDUCATIONAL WEAPON: COMMUNITY COLLEGES

By C. Peter Magrath. Phi Delta Kappan, v. 89, no. 9, May 2008, pp. 640-642

Magrath discusses the role and significance of community colleges in the education system of the United States. Although, community colleges are vital for America's future competitiveness and are attended by nearly half of all undergraduates in the United States, the community colleges are often neglected by the policy makers and even educators. Their contribution to the society often goes unrecognized and they usually don't get enough attention during the discussions about the role of higher education and the economic viability of the United States in the 21st century. The author argues that it is time to address the elitist attitude towards the community colleges and asserts that they will continue to play crucial role in higher education in the future.

2. BEGINNING TEACHER FOLLOW-UP STUDIES: A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION AND POLICY DECISIONS

By Susan D'Aniello. Intervention in School and Clinic, v. 43, no. 5, May 2008, pp. 309-312.

The article takes a look at the upcoming demand for beginning teacher follow-up studies in the United States, which is a crucial component for the teacher education program evaluation and for policy decisions. An array of education related institutions, including the U.S. Department of Education, have stressed the need for follow-up studies on beginning teachers, since the significance of the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement is firmly established. In the light of this fact, beginning teacher follow-up studies are essential and helps monitor the quality of teacher preparation programs. In a call for action, the article suggests several topics for researchers, the outcome of which would hold great importance in assisting policy makers in their critical role of improving teacher preparation programs.

3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF VETERANS' EDUCATION BENEFITS AND THEIR VALUE

By David P. Smole and Shannon S. Loane. CRS Report for Congress, June 25, 2008, 23 p.

This CRS report reviews the evolution of veterans' education benefit programs and describes the types of education benefits made available under these programs. It further examines how changes in the estimated value of these benefits compares with changes in

average college prices, and provides a discussion of the interaction between veterans' education benefits and federal student aid benefits made available under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), as amended.

4. DO WE REALLY HAVE A COLLEGE ACCESS PROBLEM?

By Clifford Adelman. Change, v. 39, no. 4, July/August 2007, pp. 48-51.

As the title suggests, this article looks at the status of higher education in the United States. It analyzes the availability of college education for first-time students and also for those returning back to college for various reasons. Access to tertiary education has been a matter of great concern of many organizations including the New America Foundation. The author cites the data gathered by the National Center for Education Statistics reflecting the higher-education enrollments in the United States. According to him the problem partly lies in our notion of access. He offers four definitions of "access" before investigating if there is a real problem of post-secondary access for students in the United States and if there is, where the problem lies.

5. EDUCATION FOR PROFIT

By Katherine Mangu-Ward. Reason, v. 40, no. 3, July 2008, pp. 39-45.

This article discusses the role and potential of for-profit education in the United States through a case study of the University of Phoenix, an educational and commercial powerhouse in the United States today. Despite all odds and critics, the university has succeeded in meeting the underserved demand for post-secondary education of Americans. As per economist Vedder, for-profit institutions provide a great education service to a large number of Americans at no direct costs to the taxpayers. For-profit education is also being seen as part of the solution to America's higher education problems.

6. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, COMPLETION, AND DROPOUTS: FEDERAL POLICY, PROGRAMS, AND ISSUES

By Jeffrey J. Kuenzi. CRS Report for Congress, April 12, 2007, 21 p.

Federal policy, programs, and issues associated with high school graduation, completion, and dropouts are covered in this CRS report. It looks at the provisions enacted in federal law that governs the definition, calculation, and reporting requirements of these critical high school outcomes. The report then looks at historical

data as well as the most recent indicators of these outcomes. It then provides a description of the federal programs designed to help youth who have dropped out, or who are at risk of dropping out, in completing high school or an equivalency certificate program.

7. INTERNATIONAL FACULTY IN U.S. COMMUNITY COLLEGES

By Ryan Wells. New Directions for Community Colleges, no. 138, Summer 2007, pp. 77-82.

This article presents a statistical analysis of the international faculty in the community colleges of the United States and seeks to explore how the international faculty members differ from their noninternational colleagues. The study is an attempt to help community college leaders better understand international faculty. The study reveals that while all the community colleges have not responded to internationalization of their faculties, many colleges are in the process of providing their students a high-quality internationalized education. However, in order to recruit and retain international faculty, the community colleges will have to better understand the issues of international faculty members.

8. LOST IN AMERICA

By Douglas McGray. Foreign Policy, May/June 2006, pp. 40-48.

The importance of integrating international learning into education in the United States is the prime focus of this article, which stressed the need to open the American classroom doors to foreign languages. In today's age of globalization, American students cannot remain unaware of the foreign languages, cultures, and goods that surround them. The influence of isolationism in education is thoroughly discussed in this article. President George W. Bush revived some of the ideas in *Strength through Wisdom*, with a new National Security Language Initiative. The modestly funded measure encourages foreign-language study as early as kindergarten, and requests new money to train and certify foreign-language teachers, particularly in so-called critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, and Russian.

9. MOUNTAIN CLIMBING, BRIDGE BUILDING AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN EDUCATION

By William R. Ogden. Education, v. 127, no. 3, Spring 2007, p.p. 361-368.

As Ogden reviews the very purpose and aim of education, he raises several issues that call for serious attention. He traces the evolution

of education in the United States since the colonial period and poses several questions to readers. He questions our over-reliance on test scores and its established notion as the basic yardstick of a student's educational potential. According to the author, equating achievement to test performance is shortsighted and is an over-simplistic assessment of learning.

10. NEW DATA SHOW GAINS IN BOTH INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS COMING TO UNITED STATES AND U.S. STUDENTS HEADING OVERSEAS TO STUDY

International Educator, v. 17, no. 1, January/February 2008, pp. 10-11.

This article highlights the increasing traffic of international students to the United States and the increasing number of American students abroad. According to the *Open Doors 2007* report of the Institute of International Education (IIE), enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities during 2006-2007 academic year witnessed a three percent increase over the previous year. The report also reveals some interesting trends related to international students like where they come from and where they go to study in the United States. The encouraging trend is the result of both an improvement in visa process and intensified recruiting and outreach efforts by American colleges and universities.

11. A PLAN TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

By Ron Haskins and Susanna Loeb. *The Future of Children*, v. 17, no. 1, Spring 2007, pp. 1-7.

http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/FOC_Brief_Spring2007.pdf

The authors in this article propose a five-part plan for the schools to achieve the goal of enhancing teacher quality in the United States, which is the major goal of educational reformers today. Research on teacher quality shows good teachers can boost student performance. Students who have good teachers for several consecutive years show cumulative gains in achievement. To ensure quality of teachers, authors propose rethinking entry requirements for teachers, giving bonuses to teachers who teach disadvantaged students, and promoting professional development of the teachers. Effective teachers could close the achievement gaps of the students.

12. THE PUBLIC ROLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Paul N. Courant, Michael McPherson and Alexandra M. Resch. *National Tax Journal*, v. 59, no. 2, June 2006, pp. 291-318.

Most students attending colleges and universities in the United States and the rest of the world attend public institutions. The public role in higher education becomes an obvious concern in this context. This paper evaluates a number of arguments for publicly provided and supported higher education. It concludes that there are strong equity reasons for public support of higher education for lower-income students, and that general public support may have positive effects on efficiency as well.

13. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION: BACKGROUND, FEDERAL POLICY, AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION

By Jeffrey J. Kuenzi. *CRS Report for Congress*, March 21, 2008, 31 p.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and competitiveness issues have received a lot of attention in recent years. This CRS report addresses this issue and provides background and context to understand the legislative developments in this area. The report first presents data on the state of STEM education in the United States and says that the United States is lagging behind in preparing sufficient number of students, teachers, and practitioners in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The report also examines the federal role in promoting STEM education. The report concludes with a discussion of the legislative actions recently taken to address federal STEM education policy.

14. SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS EDUCATION: STATUS AND ISSUES

By Christine M. Matthews. *CRS Report for Congress*, March 28, 2008, 24 p.

This CRS report takes stock of the contemporary status of science, engineering, and mathematics education and the issues and concerns surrounding them. This report limits its scope to selected science and education issues along with a summary of findings from various studies. It looks at the shortcomings in science and mathematics education and achievement of U.S. students at precollege level and the efforts taken towards improving the competencies in these areas. Quality of science and mathematics education and the scientific knowledge of the students entering other disciplines is a matter of serious concern in the United States. The future ability of the U.S. science and engineering base to generate the technological advances

needed to maintain economic growth is among the prime concerns of the 110th Congress.

15. TEACH FOR AMERICA, HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

By Samantha J. Katz. Bioscience, v. 57, no. 9, October 2007, p. 735.

While highlighting the success of the program Teach for America (TFA) and calling it a hope for the future, Samantha J. Katz demonstrates how the program has brought a difference in the community and discusses current initiatives in this direction. Teach for America was founded by college student Wendy Kopp in 1990 and has placed the top college graduates in some of America's poorest urban and rural public school system for two years. As of 2007, 4400 teachers reach approximately 375,000 students. The TFA group members come from various disciplines having demonstrated leadership qualities and are authoritative yet approachable. TFA also has a regional support network that helps with professional development throughout the two-year commitment. It has recently launched an initiative to boost the number of math and science teachers in America's lowest-income communities. The initiative aims to increase the number of corps members teaching math and science from 880 to 2000 to serve about 300,000 students by the year 2010.

16. AN UPDATE ON NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND NATIONAL TRENDS IN EDUCATION

By Laura H. Chapman. Arts Education Policy Review, v. 109, no. 1, September/October 2007, pp. 25-36.

The author provides a critical review of the key provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to highlight the repercussions of the law mainly on art education. She also advocates changes that could be considered at the time of reauthorization of NCLB. While most observers believe that although the reauthorized law will provide more flexibility, it would retain a strong focus on test scores in reading, math, and science as indicators of achievement, which would be far from the model of educational excellence – a balanced program of studies in the arts, sciences, and humanities.

17. WHERE DIFFERENCES MATTER: A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FAMILY VOICE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

By Elizabeth B Kozleski, et al. The Journal of Special Education, v. 42, no. 1, pp. 26-35.

This article provides a comparative analysis of research findings from a study that was implemented simultaneously in South Africa and

the United States. The study aimed at investigating and understanding how context and culture influence and shape the ways in which families access and experience educational systems when their children have disabilities. In both the countries the national governments have policies that provide a foundation for school practices at the local level. However, in both countries ethnicity, racism, and disability affect the ways in which school personnel and families negotiate differences in how children are viewed, assessed, and offered support for learning needs. In both the cases, sustained efforts are needed to develop support and services that work well for students with disabilities and their families.

18. WHO IS NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND LEAVING BEHIND?

By Theoni Soubdis Smyth. The Clearing House, v. 81, no. 3, January/February 2008, pp. 133-137.

This article attempts to assess the effects of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation. The author maintains that educators disapprove of the legislation as they feel that the plan is flawed, developmentally inappropriate, ill funded, and has left more students, teachers and schools behind than ever before. The author takes a historical look and analyzes the detriments of educational testing. The evaluation of the mandates of NCLB leads to a conclusion that many subgroups of school populations are not receiving equal educational opportunities. The most adversely affected subgroups include the students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, minorities, students with special needs, and second-language learners. The investigation of the history of educational assessment and analysis of the various effected populations mandate a need for public action.

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

19. FAST 50: THE WORLD'S MOST INNOVATIVE COMPANIES

By Chuck Salter, et al. Fast Company, no. 123, March 2008, pp. 73-117.

Writers from the magazine *Fast Company* identify 50 companies that are moving forward in innovative ways. Some companies are included on the list for their new patents granted this year, others for innovative management techniques, or new products brought to market. Tata made the list for their endeavor to bring a \$2500 car to India and GE for re-engineering the CF34 jet engine. Communications and computer firms are represented as well as

niche retailers. Google is first on the list and the authors describe what makes Google an innovative company through profiles of Google managers.

20. NEW AGE THINKING

By John B. Shoven. *Foreign Policy*, January-February 2008, pp. 82-83.

Will the worldwide tidal wave of aging baby boomers create a fiscal burden that will devastate the global economy? No, says Shoven, director of the Institute for Economic Policy Research at Stanford University. Our concept of "old" has itself become old-fashioned, he writes. He recommends using modern mortality risk measurements – or the chance a person has of dying within the next year – to measure age. The higher the mortality risk, the "older" a person is. Today's 65-year-old man can expect to live another 17 years and has the same mortality risk a 59-year-old man did in 1970 or a 56-year-old man did in 1940. The average length of retirement for today's 65-year-old man has stretched to more than 19 years. To keep the costs of ever-lengthening retirements under control, Shoven recommends altering retirement ages and pensions to reflect current mortality risks.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

21. GLOBAL JIHADIST RECIDIVISM: A RED FLAG

By Dennis A. Pluchinsky. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, v. 31, no. 3, March 2008, pp. 182-200.

Pluchinsky, a research analyst in Washington, raises an important issue about terrorists and the likelihood that, once released from custody by authorities, they will return to terrorism. Research in this area has been almost lacking since most governments have been unable to effectively track the whereabouts of terrorists once released from custody. In a few instances there have been reports by authorities that former terrorists were captured conducting new terrorist activities. Pluchinsky argues that, given the sharp rise in transnational terrorism across multiple national boundaries, terrorist recidivism has the potential to become a major problem over the next several decades. "It is a manpower issue that has the potential to periodically refuel the global jihadist movement," he writes. There are clearly valid presumptions, preliminary indicators and

anecdotal evidence which suggest that global jihadist comeback needs to be further examined, and a tracking systems needs to be developed.

22. LOST OVER IRAN

By Eric Umansky. *Columbia Journalism Review*;v 46, no. 6, March/April 2008, pp. 26-30.

The author, contributing editor to *Columbia Journalism Review*, writes that the National Intelligence Estimate of December 2007 that concluded that Iran had frozen its nuclear weaponization program back in 2003 came as a shock to the U.S. media, which had not questioned the administration's claims that Iran was not far away from building nuclear weapons. The U.S. received more help from the Iranians than anyone else in its campaign to root out al-Qaeda from Afghanistan. Soon after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Iran made an offer that "put nearly everything on the table", writes the author, from support for Hezbollah to the nuclear-energy program. The overtures received very little publicity, as Iranian officials did not want to be seen publicly making peace offerings to Washington. Umansky believes that "there does appear to have been an opportunity for equilibrium that, with little notice in the media, was passed up not by Iran but by the Bush administration."

23. THE TASKS OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION AND TRANSFERABILITY

By Valerie Bunce. *Orbis*, v. 52, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp. 25-40.

Bunce, professor of international studies at Cornell University, asserts that there is no single road to democracy. Nevertheless, there are some factors that seem to have consistently positive effects on democratic development, including the existence of a large and diverse civil society as well as a sharp political break with the authoritarian past. Subsequently, these are followed by issues such as regular turnovers in political leadership as well as governing parties and stable state borders. Bunce asserts that a successful democratic transition must also include political institutions which empower parliaments and, in culturally diverse societies, give minorities' political voice without locking them into permanent coalitions. The less significant issues include economic considerations. Nevertheless, Bunce advocates that these reforms are far more likely in democratic settings than in authoritarian regimes and far more supportive for robust economic performance.

DEMOCRACY & HUMAN RIGHTS

24. CAN OUTSIDERS BRING DEMOCRACY TO POST-CONFLICT STATES?

By John R. Schmidt. *Orbis*, v. 52, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp. 107-122.

Schmidt, the founding Deputy Coordinator for Security and Governance at the U.S. Department of State, argues most interventions by outside forces to promote democracy in post-conflict states since World War II have failed. The most successful were in societies such as Germany and Japan, featuring relatively high per-capita GNP and diversified economies; prospects for democracy tend to diminish as per-capita GNP decreases. The effects of conflict make democracy promotion considerably more difficult, particularly when poorer societies are plagued by weak institutions, corruption, religious extremism and ethnic or religious animosities. He states that even if outsiders are able to control violence and actively promote democracy, success will depend on the underlying political culture and willingness of key political actors to play by democratic rules once the outsiders have gone. Schmidt ponders that outsiders need to develop the best possible understanding of their prospects for success before committing to intervention.

25. PRODUCING TRUTH: THE POLITICS OF INVESTIGATING PAST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN POST-COMMUNIST STATES

By Brian Grodsky. *World Affairs*, v. 169, no. 3, Winter 2007, pp. 125-133.

Using case studies from Poland, Serbia, and Uzbekistan, the author, professor of political science at the University of Maryland, illustrates how ruling elites use truth commissions to transform national identity by creating new "foundation myths" which, conveniently, rediscover history in ways that add to their own power. In Poland, former Solidarity dissidents controlled the process, and faced opposition from Communists, who still held key ministries and had a sizable parliamentary presence. Initially opposed, Serbia's President Kostunica launched a process to placate The Hague, but controlled the process to gain favor with his political base. Uzbekistan faced the curious position of investigating Soviet-era crimes, which were attributed to foreign occupation from Russia while actively committing new abuses of its own. The author argues that the political processes at play warrant more academic study.

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

26. CONTRIBUTIONS OF STATISTICS TO MODERN PROGRESS

By Dharam V Chopra. *Choice*, v. 45, no. 7, March 2008, pp. 1097-1107.

This bibliographical essay provides a snapshot of the history, importance, and applications of statistics. Statistics are providing very important tools for gaining knowledge using inductive logic and computer technology. The mathematical science of statistics deals with the collection, analysis, interpretation or explanation, and presentation of data, and is applicable to a wide variety of academic disciplines, from the natural and social sciences to the humanities, and to government and business. Statistical methods can be used to summarize or describe a collection of data (descriptive statistics) or they may be modeled in a way that accounts for randomness and uncertainty in the observations, and then used to draw inferences about the process or population being studied (inferential statistics).

27. MASHUPS AS DIY TOOLS

By Laura Gordon-Murnane. *Online*, v. 32, no. 1, January/February 2008, pp. 14-17.

The author believes that content is not only critical to the information professional's work but that it is also growing exponentially. With more Web 2.0 tools appearing daily, this data explosion is just the tip of the iceberg as tools for entry, use, reuse, distribution, and redistribution are making possible things that previously were too expensive or difficult. More exciting is the movement toward blended search results, which allow data to be interpreted differently than when it is presented as straight text. Blended content is not limited to search engine results and news sites – it is also happening with mashups, which combine data from more than one source to create a new tool, resource, widget, and ultimately a new experience. Two such mashups are HealthMap, which tracks the current global state of infectious diseases and their effect on human and animal health, and ChicagoCrime.org, a mashup of crime data from the Chicago Police Department and Google Maps, showing crimes reported in the past two years for a certain zip code.

GLOBAL ISSUES

28. A CHANGING CLIMATE: THE ROAD AHEAD FOR THE UNITED STATES

By Todd Stern and William Antholis. *The Washington Quarterly*, v. 31, no. 1, Winter 2007-08, pp. 175-188.

The next U.S. President must adopt an aggressive policy to address global climate change, according to these authors who are with the Center for American Progress and the Brookings Institution respectively. They recommend that the president engage in a "layered diplomacy," with a focus on a core group of nations responsible for the majority of world emissions. The G-8 group is the model for one multilateral forum suggested by the authors to focus on global warming. They recommend the creation of an E-8 to address critical ecological dangers involving executive level representation from Brazil, China, the European Union, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, and the United States. The authors' most emphatic point is that the threats of global warming are too imperative to ignore. "These daunting risks should impel us to take aggressive action to insure the world against grave harm", they write.

29. THE COMING REVOLUTION IN AFRICA

By G. Pascal Zachary. *Wilson Quarterly*, v. 32, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp. 50-66.

Even as daily headlines bring grim news of misery, disease, and death in Africa, an agricultural transformation is lifting tens of millions of people out of poverty. A rising generation of small farmers promises not only to put food on the African table but to fundamentally change the continent's economic and political life. While media images of starving and diseased Africans dominate international discussions of this continent, food production in the most heavily populated areas has far outpaced actual population growth, such as in Nigeria, with the largest population of any African country. Here food production has grown faster than population for twenty years. In other West African countries, including Ghana, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Benin, crop output has risen by more than four percent annually, far exceeding the rate of population growth. Farm labor productivity in these countries is now so high that in some cases it matches the levels in certain parts of Asia. The World Bank's *African Development Indicators 2007* reports that many African economies have moved to a path of faster and steadier economic growth. However, farmers still must deal with the skepticism of African leaders who scorned and exploited

them for decades but who are now beginning to support and even participate in agricultural development.

U.S. SOCIETY, VALUES & POLITICS

30. A BETTER WAY TO TRAVEL?

By Peter Richmond. *Parade*, November 4, 2007, pp. 6-8.

Americans spent over 3 billion hours stuck in traffic last year, notes the author, and in the first eight months of 2007, almost a quarter of all plane flights arrived late. Says Richmond, "one solution is staring us in the face" – U.S. passenger railroads, which have been allowed to atrophy for several decades, a victim of skewed transportation priorities which favored highway construction. The author believes that one reason the U.S. railroad system has fallen so far behind other countries is the long-standing aversion for government funding of the nation's railroads, which have traditionally been private companies founded by nineteenth-century industrial barons. Although the best passenger rail service is along the Eastern seaboard, there are many regional urban areas around the country that would be well-served by a rail alternative to highway or air travel.

31. FOOD STUDIES: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE

By Jonathan Deutsch and Jeffrey Miller. *Choice*, v. 45, no. 3, November 2007, pp. 393-401.

Interest in food has reached an historical high, according to the authors. A scan of bestseller lists includes cookbooks by celebrity chefs, diet books, food memoirs, food travel books, serious overviews of food, and books about the food supply. There is even a cable television network, Food Nation, devoted to all topics of food while movies with food themes are appearing in greater numbers every year. For the food historian, archives such as those maintained by The Schlesinger Library for Women in Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies have noted an increase in resource, such as its historical cookbook collection. This unique collection allows the serious researchers to study the manner in which food dictated the American way of life. In this essay, the authors discuss the important early works, subject-related journals, and the "go-to" reference works. Other sections include food history, food and the social sciences.

32. RARE BREED

By Guy Gugliotta. *Smithsonian*, v. 38, no. 12, March 2008, pp. 38-47.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/rare-breed.html>

The fastest cat on the planet is on a fast track to extinction, with its numbers diminished from about 100,000 worldwide at the turn of the last century to about 12,500 today. Gugliotta profiles Laurie Marker, the American founder of a Cheetah conservation center in Namibia, which is at the forefront of efforts to save the cheetah. After working with the fast cats in a wildlife park in California in the 1970s and 1980s, Marker went to Namibia to devote herself to study and preservation of the animals. Her study of cheetahs is considered the world's definitive work, and has helped to unveil breeding and roaming behaviors that provide better insights into stabilizing and increasing their numbers. For instance, she has worked with Namibian ranchers to encourage alternatives to shooting the cheetahs in order to protect their herds from the predators. In doing so, she has helped to raise greater interest and support for preservation in a country that is home to about 3,000 of the animals, a population that is stabilizing and even increasing.

33. THINKING LIKE A MONKEY

By Jerry Adler. *Smithsonian*, v. 38, no. 10, January 2008, pp. 58-62.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/monkey-200801.html>

Yale University psychologist Laurie Santos is conducting research with a population of monkeys on a small island off the coast of Puerto Rico. Her objective is to determine their capabilities for complex and abstract thought through experiments involving food. Adler describes one experiment, in which Santos tries to ascertain the monkeys' concept of "false belief" – the recognition that another individual may be mistaken. Her observations are not conclusive as the experiment is described in these pages, but Santos' work is bringing her closer to understanding the vastness of the gap between the thought processes of humans and monkeys despite their shared status as primates. "The more you hang out with the monkeys," she tells Adler, "the more you realize just how special people really are."

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