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E-ALERT is compiled based on an email service we receive from the Department of State's Office of International Information Programs. We are sending it to you to alert you of the latest issues and debates in the United States.

It covers (1) U.S. Federal government documents, especially those from executive branch departments and those from the Congressional branch - - Committees, the U.S. General Accounting Office, and the Congressional Budget Office; (2) policy briefs from major private think tanks, especially those in Washington; and (3) major reports from national professional associations. A few new high quality, high relevance think tank-sponsored books are also listed.

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Reports

**Item#1**

10 WORST COUNTRIES TO BE A BLOGGER. Committee to Protect Journalists. April 30, 2009.

With a military government that severely restricts Internet access and imprisons people for years for posting critical material, Burma is the worst place in the world to be a blogger, according to the report. It also identifies a number of countries in the Middle East and Asia where Internet penetration has blossomed and government repression has grown in response. "Bloggers are at the vanguard of the information revolution and their numbers are expanding rapidly," said CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon. "But governments are quickly learning how to turn technology against bloggers by censoring and filtering the Internet, restricting online access and mining personal data."

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

<http://cpj.org/reports/2009/04/10-worst-countries-to-be-a-blogger.php> [HTML format, various paging].

**Item#2**

AUDACIOUSLY HOPEFUL: HOW PRESIDENT OBAMA CAN HELP RESTORE THE PRO-TRADE CONSENSUS. Cato Institute. Daniel Ikenson and Scott Lincicome. April 28, 2009.

The authors show how restoring the pro-trade consensus must be a priority of the Obama administration. If the United States indulges misplaced fears, restrains economic freedoms, and attempts to retreat from the global economy, the country will suffer slower economic growth and have greater difficulty facing future economic and foreign policy challenges. The determination of the president to arrest and reverse America's misguided and metastasizing aversion to trade could dramatically improve prospects for restoring the pro-trade consensus, says the report.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

<http://www.freetrade.org/files/pubs/pas/tpa-039.pdf> [PDF format, 40 pages].

**Item#3**

CRIME, VIOLENCE, DISCIPLINE, AND SAFETY IN U.S. PUBLIC SCHOOLS. National Center for Education Statistics. Samantha Neiman and Jill F. Devoe. Web posted May 5, 2009.

The report uses data from the 2007-08 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) to examine a range of issues dealing with school crime and safety, such as the frequency of school crime and violence, disciplinary actions, and school practices related to the prevention and reduction of crime.

Full Text:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/2009326.pdf> [PDF format, 81 pages].

**Item#4**

DISSECTING THE 2008 ELECTORATE: MOST DIVERS IN U.S. HISTORY. Pew Research Center. Mark Hugo Lopez and Paul Taylor. April 30, 2009.

The electorate in last year's presidential election was the most racially and ethnically diverse in U.S. history, with nearly one-in-four votes cast by non-whites, according to an analysis of Census Bureau data by the Pew Research Center. The nation's three biggest minority groups, blacks, Hispanics and Asians, each accounted for unprecedented shares of the presidential vote in 2008. Overall, whites made up 76.3% of the record 131 million people who voted in November's presidential election, while blacks made up 12.1%, Hispanics 7.4% and Asians 2.5%.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1209/racial-ethnic-voters-presidential-election> [HTML format, various paging].

**Item#5**

ENSURING GREEN GROWTH IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC CRISIS: THE ROLE OF ENERGY TECHNOLOGY. International Energy Policy. Web posted May 2009.

Despite the severity of the current financial and economic crisis, it cannot be allowed to distract us from addressing critical and strategic climate change and energy challenges, says the report. The energy sector produces 60% of global greenhouse gas emissions and so it must also be a key part of any strategy to reduce them. The paper describes the most promising low-carbon technologies, their current status and the policy framework that will be necessary to achieve their widespread deployment.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

[http://www.iea.org/Textbase/Papers/2009/ensuring\\_green\\_growth.pdf](http://www.iea.org/Textbase/Papers/2009/ensuring_green_growth.pdf) [PDF format, 23 pages]

**Item#6**

GLOBAL FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT: RESPONDING TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND MEASURING SYSTEMIC RISKS. International Monetary Fund. April 2009.

The report assesses key risks facing the global financial system with a view to identifying those that represent systemic vulnerabilities. In the current crisis, the report traces the sources and channels of financial distress, and provides policy advice on mitigating its effects on economic activity, stemming contagion, and mending the global financial system.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfsr/2009/01/pdf/text.pdf> [PDF format, 246 pages].

**Item#7**

HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN PERIL: PREPARING TO PROTECT WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING PANDEMIC INFLUENZA. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. April 30, 2009.

A union survey of more than 100 health care facilities across the country reveals that many are not adequately prepared to protect workers' health and safety during an influenza pandemic. The report concludes that workers face a very high risk of becoming infected when caring for patients with pandemic flu unless adequate health and safety measures are in place in advance of a pandemic.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

[http://www.afscme.org/docs/Health\\_Care\\_Workers\\_In\\_Peril.pdf](http://www.afscme.org/docs/Health_Care_Workers_In_Peril.pdf) [PDF format, 14 pages].

**Item#8**

IMPROVE TAX FAIRNESS AND HELP THE DEVELOPING WORLD. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Angel Gria. April 24, 2009.

Governments and financial centers around the world have come forward with pledges to open up bank records to foreign tax investigators. The message could not be clearer: aiding tax evasion is no longer acceptable. For scores of tax havens, it's time to reform, says the report. With aid budgets under pressure and trade volumes weakening amid the global economic crisis, governments are looking to tax systems as a new frontier for development policies.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

[http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_37427\\_42630276\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3343,en_2649_37427_42630276_1_1_1_1,00.html) [HTML format, various paging].

**Item#9**

OBAMA, CATHOLICS AND THE NOTRE DAME COMMENCEMENT. Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life] April 30, 2009.

Most Catholics who have heard about the issue support the University of Notre Dame's decision to invite President Barack Obama to speak and receive an honorary degree at its May 17 commencement, even though he supports abortion rights and embryonic stem cell research. But a new poll also finds a deep division on this issue between the most-observant Catholics and those who are less observant, as defined by frequency of worship service attendance.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=413> [HTML format, various paging].

**Item#10**

PIRACY OFF THE HORN OF AFRICA. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. April 21, 2009.

Recent attacks, including those on U.S.-flagged vessels, in the waters off the Horn of Africa have brought new U.S. and international attention to the long-standing problem of piracy in the region. The apparent motive of many active Somali pirate groups is profit, and piracy has proven to be a lucrative activity for many thus far. Ransoms paid to Somali pirates and their supporters, estimated at over \$30 million in 2008, may exacerbate ongoing fighting and further undermine security in the region.

Full Text:

<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40528.pdf> [PDF format, 31 pages].

**Item#11**

SWINE FLU (H1N1 VIRUS) SURVEY. Harvard Opinion Research Program, Harvard School of Public Health. Robert J. Blendon et al. Web posted May 1, 2009.

Following the declaration of a public health emergency due to the new H1N1 virus, also known as swine flu, the Harvard Opinion Research Program at the Harvard School of Public Health conducted a poll about how concerned Americans are about the outbreak, how they are responding and what they believe about transmission, prevention and treatment.

[Note: contains copyright material].

Full Text:

[http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/files/Swine\\_Flu.TOPLINE.pdf](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/files/Swine_Flu.TOPLINE.pdf) [PDF format, 7 pages].