

## Up Front

The **Up Front** section of this issue of the *Index* focuses on the keywords “regional integration” and “Iraq.” We begin by considering two papers dealing, respectively, with potential lessons from the EU for the process of Asian integration, and the current status of the relationship between Ukraine and the EU. This is followed by brief overviews of two papers dealing with the situation in Iraq.

### <Regional Integration>

#### “ The Asian Way of Regional Integration: Are There Lessons from Europe? ”

“The Asian Way of Regional Integration: Are There Lessons from Europe?”

Rolf J. Langhammer, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, *Kiel Economic Policy Papers*, Jan 2007, No.7, pp.1-21  
<http://www.ifw-kiel.de/pub/kepp/2007/kepp07.htm>

This paper published by the Kiel Institute for the World Economy in the *Kiel Economic Policy Papers* series considers the possibility of drawing lessons from Europe for the process of regional integration in East Asia.

The scope of initiatives towards integration in the East Asian region has expanded (from real sector integration to monetary integration and from an ASEAN-based process to a process involving ASEAN+3) due to external events such as the stalemate in the Doha Round of WTO negotiations and attempts by nations in the region to ensure that there is no recurrence of the financial crisis, and therefore differs from the European integration process in being pushed forward by external events rather than a political process internal to the region. The measures that have been instituted in response to these and other external challenges remain shallow and no sanctions for noncompliance have been instituted.

The East Asian region has recorded the highest number of regional integration agreements (RIA) in the world since 2000. However, this actually represents a large number of bilateral agreements, resulting in a “noodle bowl” effect in the region. While this means that there are a large number of “spokes,” the region lacks a “hub” for integration. Regionalization is market-driven rather than driven by institutions.

The heterogeneity of East Asia and the existence of unresolved political conflicts between nations in the region represent significant impediments to an EU style integration process. The author also indicates that East Asian nations are unwilling to surrender sovereignty to a regional institution, as in the EU.

Monetary cooperation is being pursued in East Asia, stimulated by the Asian financial crisis and also by the successful launch of a common currency in the EU. Here also the Asian experience differs from that of the EU, with monetary cooperation in East Asia being attempted at a much earlier stage of real sector integration than was the case in the EU. There is some debate as to whether a specific level of real sector integration is necessary for the success of monetary integration, but the author concludes that East Asia will have to succeed in regional integration and coordination of macroeconomic conditions in order to promote monetary integration.

The author indicates finally that although the integration processes of the EU and East Asia differ, globalization and the increasing importance of cross-border externalities will cause East Asia to give consideration to the strategies used by the EU to increase the effectiveness of integration, such as “defining the rationales, setting targets, monitoring implementation, multilateralizing bilateral arrangements and...involving the private sector.”

## **“ Domestic Politics and European Integration in Ukraine ”**

“Conflict and Reform in Eastern Europe”, Kataryna Wolczuk, Institute of International Affairs (IAI)  
*the International Spectator*, vol. XLI, no. 4, Oct-Dec 2006  
[http://www.iai.it/sections\\_en/pubblicazioni/THEINTERNATIONALSPECTATOR/issues/2006\\_4.asp](http://www.iai.it/sections_en/pubblicazioni/THEINTERNATIONALSPECTATOR/issues/2006_4.asp)

This issue of *The International Spectator*, published by the Istituto Affari Internazionali, focuses on relations between Eastern Europe and the EU. Here we consider the first paper, which looks at the situation in Ukraine.

The EU has to date refrained from consideration of the question of Ukraine’s membership in the regional community, despite the nation’s recent demonstration of its commitment to democracy. Relations between Ukraine and the EU are instead being oriented by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and an associated Action Plan, which outlines reform efforts to be undertaken by the nation. The implementation of the Action Plan has represented a challenge for Ukraine, given the split in the Orange coalition, the difficulties in achieving agreement on policy facing the present coalition government, and the general inefficiency of the country’s post-Soviet political infrastructure. The author of this paper considers that only continuous pressure from the EU will enable the Europeanization of Ukraine, and that EU monitoring is required to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan. More direct EU involvement would, however, only be legitimized by the possibility of Ukraine’s accession to the Union. Despite the problems, the Action Plan is actually providing Ukraine with necessary policy guidelines. The nation is persisting in its implementation, due to its desire for EU membership. While the ENP has been designed to bypass the issue of integration, Ukraine has sought to use the policy to bring it closer to membership of the EU, prompting the author to conclude that the ENP can achieve change in the European neighborhood if countries seek to go beyond it.

## **<Iraq>**

### **“ Iraq: Last Chance ”**

“Iraq: Last Chance”, Robert Zelnick, The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace  
*Policy Review*, Dec 2006/Jan 2007, pp.3-23  
<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/4884111.html>

This *Policy Review* article by Boston University journalism professor Robert Zelnick analyzes the current situation in Iraq and considers possibilities for the future, based on its author’s visit to the country in August 2006. While conceding that the U.S. has been naïve in its approach to the conflict, Zelnick contends that the consequences of a hasty withdrawal make this option impossible. Other solutions must be found.

Zelnick’s article focuses initially on the status of sectarian militias, which are blamed for the continuing violence in Baghdad. Some of these militias have been in existence for many years, and have considerable community support, while others are the product of the increasing diversification of Iraqi politics since 2003. Prime Minister Maliki has declared security in Baghdad to be his main priority, but it is difficult for him to deal with the problem, given the fact that the army is not yet fully effective and that his party is politically indebted to Islamic parties which control the main militias. Maliki’s failure to deal with the situation prompted the mounting of Operation Together Forward, an operation in which Iraqi and U.S. troops were jointly deployed in some of the most troublesome areas of Baghdad. Such actions on the part of the U.S. represent a new direction, given that it had previously regarded the militias as an issue to be dealt with by the Iraqis themselves. However, a lack of political

support is hindering the effort, and strategies that have been suggested to enable the integration of militia members into society and weaken support for the militias have not been implemented.

Similarly, little has come of Maliki's "national reconciliation initiative," a strategy that proposed granting amnesty to insurgents and members of the former regime. This program is considered essential, because many former bureaucrats are candidates for the amnesty, and Iraq currently suffers from a lack of bureaucratic expertise. This lack of an experienced bureaucracy is hindering the functioning of the government and prolonging the chaotic situation in the country, but the decision on how to apply amnesty remains a difficult one.

Zelnick also considers the possibility of a division of Iraq into a federation of Sunni, Shia and Kurdish states, focusing in particular on the current situation in Kurdistan. Kurdish autonomy would be virtually assured, Zelnick claims, except for the fact that the Kurds are seeking to make Kirkuk their capital and the area around the city part of their territory. Opinions are divided as to where these efforts could lead. Some predict that Kurdistan will achieve full independence and become a U.S. base in the region, while others believe that the attempt to annex Kirkuk will result in further conflict. The U.S. is currently not involving itself in Kurdistan, given its strategy of seeking a united Iraq.

Zelnick speculates as to the possible outcome in Iraq if the U.S. pulls out: An escalation in the Shia campaign against the Sunnis, generating increasing reaction from the Sunnis, who will seek assistance from al Qaeda and surrounding nations. The Shias will be assisted by Iran in consolidating their power in the south, while the Sunnis will engage in conflict with Kurdistan in the north. To prevent this scenario, Zelnick suggests steps that can be taken to make victory in Iraq more likely. He indicates that the U.S. must maintain or increase its troop numbers. He further suggests that the Coalition should work with the Iraqi government to convince the Sunnis to quit the insurgency by offering amnesties and access to oil profits and increasing military action against them. According to Zelnick, these strategies should be the only ones employed. The U.S. should be prepared to capitalize on the development of either a strong central government or a federation of states. Flexibility is essential, Zelnick suggests; the U.S. should also be prepared, if the country splits apart, to exploit its relationship with the Kurds to enable it to maintain a base in the region.

## “ Who wins in Iraq? ”

“WHO WINS IN IRAQ?” Vali Nasr, Dexter Filkins, Daniel Byman, et al.  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Foreign Policy*, Mar/Apr 2007, pp.38-51  
[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=3704](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3704)

In this article, published in the March/April 2007 edition of *Foreign Policy*, ten commentators each write on a different potential “winner” of the conflict in Iraq. Below, we offer a summary of several of these linked pieces.

### Winner No. 1: Iran

Initial hopes that democracy in Iraq would present a threat to Iran's government have not been fulfilled. Iran is actually the biggest “winner” of the war in Iraq. The war has strategically benefited Iran by eliminating the Baathist regime. Iran enjoys friendly relations with the new Iraqi regime, and has rapidly expanded its influence in Iraq. The Iraqi army, which once held

### Who Wins in Iraq?

1	IRAN
2	MOQTADA AL-SADR
3	AL QAEDA
4	SAMUEL HUNTINGTON
5	CHINA
6	ARAB DICTATORS
7	THE PRICE OF OIL
8	THE UNITED NATIONS
9	OLD EUROPE
10	ISRAEL

Iran's ambitions towards regional expansion in check, is no longer a threat. In addition, the increasing US commitment to Iraq will make it more difficult for the nation to contain Iran. While Iran also faces new challenges as a result of the situation, overall the war has strengthened the nation's position while weakening that of the US.

### **Winner No. 5: China**

The erosion of the international prestige of the US in the wake of the situation in Iraq has been advantageous to China. China's claims to seek harmony in international affairs appears to contrast favorably with the unilateral attitude of the present US administration, and this has contributed to enabling China to project a more positive image. The situation in Iraq has also altered the situation in the Strait of Taiwan. While the US government remains supportive of Taiwan, it would now be more difficult for the US to intervene in the event of an invasion by China, given the reduced inclination of US citizens to send troops overseas and the increased commitment of US resources to Iraq.

### **Winner No. 7: The Price of Oil**

Many countries in the Arab world, while opposing the war in Iraq, have benefited economically from it. The peak price of almost eighty dollars a barrel reached by crude oil in 2006 is the result of a number of factors, but one of the most important is the US invasion of Iraq. Arab economies are booming, enabling Saudi Arabia, for example, to increase public spending in order to alleviate some of their social problems. The supply of oil from Iraq has not been resumed as first hoped, and the war has also enabled OPEC to limit production, resulting in increased prices.

### **Winner No. 8: The United Nations**

As belief in the idea of US invincibility declines due to the situation in Iraq, the United Nations may emerge as a key element in the world order. Given that the US cannot isolate itself from the world but may be unable in the future to impose its will unilaterally, it will have no choice but to lead a group of powers on the basis of consensus. It will be required to work with a reformed UN in order to do so. The UN system possesses legitimacy, is experienced in nation-building and possesses significant human resources. Because of this, a reformed UN could be more effective than unilateral US intervention, given also that the US has been shown to be ineffective in terms of nation building.

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<http://www.nira.go.jp/ice/libe/prw/pri.html>

## **Focus Topic : Income Inequality in the U.S.**

A paper published by Alan Reynolds of the Cato Institute, questioning the validity of analyses that demonstrate a growing income gap in the US, drew an immediate response from Gary Burtless of the Brookings Institution. The two papers display a profound difference in terms of their approach to the same policy issue, providing a clear indication of the necessity for diversity in the arena of policy research.

### **“ Has U.S. Income Inequality Really Increased? ”**

“Has U.S. Income Inequality Really Increased?”, Alan Reynolds, Cato Institute, *Policy Analysis*, Jan 8, 2007, No. 586, pp.1-24  
[http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=6880](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6880)

This *Policy Analysis* paper by Alan Reynolds, published by the Cato Institute, investigates whether perceptions of increasing income inequality in the United States are an accurate reflection of the actual situation. Reynolds indicates that the most publicized reports of increasing income inequality are based on income tax return data, but ignore the effect of changes in U.S. tax rules on the results of the analysis. These changes in the tax rules have changed the items that are reported as income on tax returns, and Reynolds claims that this has distorted estimates of the ratio of the highest incomes to total incomes. The estimate of income inequality will vary depending on what is counted as income for the top one percent of taxpayers (the numerator) and what is counted as income for the nation (the denominator).

The paper examines seven factors that it is claimed have resulted in incorrect estimates of income inequality. These are: 1) A transfer of business income from corporate to individual income tax returns; 2) A significant increase in the use of tax-favored savings schemes such as 401(k)s and IRAs; 3) A large increase in transfer payments for low-income families; 4) A boom and bust cycle in realizations of capital gains and exercise of stock options; 5) A change in stock options from a type taxed as capital gains to a type taxed as salary; 6) Changes in tax rates, which affected reported income; and 7) Growth in the AGI gap of unreported income.

These factors have all affected what is reported as income on tax returns, making it misleading to compare tax data from the 1970s and 1980s with more recent tax data. For example, Reynolds claims that including transfer payments in the denominator of the figures used in the influential Piketty-Saez estimate of the income share of the top percentile of taxpayers reduces that estimate by 3%. Given this type of result when changes generated by changes in tax laws are considered, Reynolds concludes that there is no evidence of an ongoing increase in the inequality of US incomes since the late 1980s.

### **“ Comments on “ Has U.S. Income Inequality Really Increased ” ”**

“Comments on “Has U.S. Income Inequality Really Increased” by Alan Reynolds Cato Institute”  
Gary Burtless, the Brookings Institution, Jan 11, 2007, pp.1-9  
<http://www.brookings.edu/views/papers/burtless/20070111.htm>

Gary Burtless of the Brookings Institution responds to Alan Reynolds’s claims in this paper. Burtless admits that data sources are imperfect and ignoring the problems can generate misleading conclusions, but argues that Reynolds tends to highlight the flaws in data series that support the assertion that income inequality has increased, while ignoring equally serious flaws in data series that support his own contention.

Burtless indicates that Reynolds’s focus on criticizing the use of tax data as a means of estimating income distribution is in itself misleading, because the main source of information on income distribution is actually an

annual survey conducted by the Census Bureau. This survey shows that inequality in income distribution has increased. The Gini coefficient, the most widely used indicator of inequality among economists, rose from 1989, recording a record figure in 2005. Burtless indicates that by this measure inequality was approximately 9% higher in 2005 than in 1989.

However, there are also flaws in the Census Bureau data. Burtless in fact indicates the possibility that the Census Bureau, despite the fact that it publishes a variety of different measures of inequality employing different definitions of income, may consistently underestimate income inequality. These underestimates will also get bigger if the incomes of the top earners increase faster than the incomes of those further down the income scale.

In addition to tax records, the W-2 records tabulated by the Social Security Administration provide an alternative to Census Bureau statistics. Burtless claims that both the 1040 income tax return data and W-2 records indicate that the relative incomes and wages of the top income recipients in the US have increased more quickly than the incomes and wages of those outside the top level. He further points out that analysts are aware of the effects of changes in tax laws on the reporting of income by top income earners, and attempt to consider it in their analyses. While Reynolds makes valid criticisms of the adjustments made by some of these analysts, Burtless does not believe that such criticisms affect the interpretation of W-2 records. These records show that the ratio of the wage received by an earner in the 99.99<sup>th</sup> percentile to the median wage increased more than 1.5 times between 1990 and 2005.

### **Policy Analysis: Different Approaches**

The Brookings Institution, established in 1916, is one of the leading policy research institutes in the United States. Strobe Talbott, former Deputy Secretary of State under the Clinton administration, currently serves as the institute's President. The Brookings Institution has 277 personnel, making it the fourth largest policy research institute in the U.S. The institute is largely financed by an endowment, in addition to receiving support from various sources, including philanthropic foundations. Brookings' main focus is conducting research and educational activities. While continuing to publish detailed policy discussions and analyses in book form, Brookings seems to have recently increased its focus on the publication of short papers and policy briefs.

The Cato Institute was founded in 1977, and has 96 staff members. The institute's stated mission is to "broaden the parameters of public policy debate to allow consideration of the traditional American principles of limited government, individual liberty, free markets and peace." Membership fees, mainly provided by wealthy conservatives who share the institute's values and principles, represent Cato's main source of funding.

A comparison of the policy discussions published by the two institutes shows that the Cato Institute's approach is more advocative than that of the Brookings Institution. Cato seeks through its activities to broaden public awareness of the values it promotes. Below, we summarize a paper published by Alan Reynolds of the Cato Institute, questioning the validity of analyses that demonstrate a growing income gap in the US. This paper drew an immediate response from Gary Burtless of the Brookings Institution, whose response we also summarize. The two papers display a significant difference in terms of their approach to the same policy issue, providing a clear indication of the necessity for diversity in the arena of policy research.

(Reference: *NIRA's World Directory of Think Tanks, 2005*)

## Policy Proposals by Japanese Think Tanks

### “ Is It Worthwhile for Indonesia to Rush into a Free Trade Deal with Japan? ”

“Is It Worthwhile for Indonesia to Rush into a Free Trade Deal with Japan?”  
Kazuhiko OYAMADA, Institute of Developing Economies(IDE), Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) , Japan  
*Discussion Papers* (IDE), 200703, n92, pp.1-27  
<http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Dp/Abstract/092.html>

This *Discussion Paper* published by IDE-JETRO applies a global trade model to consider whether it is most beneficial for Indonesia to conclude an economic partnership agreement with Japan rapidly, or to spend more time in negotiating the agreement.

Indonesia and Japan agreed on the framework of an EPA in November 2006, but other ASEAN members have already concluded EPA or FTA agreements with Japan. These countries are competing with Indonesia in the Japanese market in some product categories, and the timing of the agreement is therefore an important consideration. This paper attempts to consider the economic impact on Indonesia of a free trade arrangement with Japan and the effect, from Indonesia’s perspective, of delays in concluding the agreement. The author uses a case in which Indonesia does not liberalize trade with Japan, while Malaysia and the Philippines do, as the benchmark case in the model, and finds that the welfare loss to the country in this scenario would reach 4,000 million US dollars in 2001 prices. The author therefore indicates that reaching an agreement with Japan quickly would be Indonesia’s best strategy if it wishes to avoid welfare loss. However, because the welfare gains from the rapid conclusion of an agreement are insufficient to offset the welfare loss in the benchmark case, Indonesia’s best option would be to take time to gather information if it prioritizes the achievement of a national consensus regarding an economic agreement with Japan.

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### < Articles and Papers Relating to this Issue’s Keywords >

(Please refer also to the URLs for the papers discussed above.)

#### < Regional Integration >

“Regionalism in South Asian Diplomacy”, Alyson J. K. Bailes, John Gooneratne, et al.  
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Sweden  
*SIPRI Policy Paper*, 200702, n15, pp.1-76  
<http://www.sipri.org/contents/publications/Policypaper15.html>

“Should Southeast Asia fear the Chinese juggernaut? The view from the Philippines”, Josef T. Yap  
Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), Philippines  
*Policy Notes (PIDS)*, 200612, 2006-08, pp.1-6  
<http://dirp4.pids.gov.ph/ris/pn/pidspn0608.pdf>

“After Enlargement: Europe’s New Migration System”, Adrian Favell  
Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), Denmark  
*DIIS Brief*, 200612, pp.1-7  
<http://www.diis.dk/sw31237.asp>

“Economic Integration in Asia: Bilateral Free Trade Agreements Versus Asian Single Market”  
Hedi Bchir, Michel Fouquin, Center for International Prospective Studies (CEPII), France  
*CEPII Working Papers*, 200610, n2006-15, pp.1-56  
<http://www.cepii.fr/anglaisgraph/workpap/summaries/2006/wp06-15.htm>

“How Japan’s Economic Class Views China and the Future of Asian Regionalism”  
Mireya Solis, Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), Japan, *JIIA Policy Report*, 200607, pp.1-9  
[http://www2.jiia.or.jp/en/pdf/policy\\_report/pr20060712.pdf](http://www2.jiia.or.jp/en/pdf/policy_report/pr20060712.pdf)

"Prospects for EU-Ukraine Economic Relations", Malgorzata Jakubiak, Anna Kolesnichenko (eds.)  
Centre for Social and Economic Research (CASE), Poland, *CASE Report*, 2006, n66, pp.1-120  
[http://www.case.com.pl/strona--ID-publikacje\\_raporty\\_case\\_publikacja\\_id-12469866\\_nlang-710.html](http://www.case.com.pl/strona--ID-publikacje_raporty_case_publikacja_id-12469866_nlang-710.html)

"Global Governance –In Pursuit of a New International Order–"  
Yozo Yokota, Hirotsugu Koike, Akiko Fukushima, et al., National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA), Japan  
*NIRA Policy Brief*, 200602, No.6, pp.1-8  
<http://www.nira.go.jp/newse/paper/pb/pb06.pdf>

#### < Iraq (incl. Iran) >

"Escaping the Trap: Why the United States Must Leave Iraq"  
Ted Galen Carpenter, The Cato Institute, USA, *Policy Analysis (Cato)*, 200702, n588, pp.1-22  
[http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=7424](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=7424)

"The U.S. Should Oppose the Proposed U.N. Alliance of Civilizations"  
Brett D. Schaefer, The Heritage Foundation, USA, *Backgrounder*, 200702, #2009, pp.1-8  
<http://www.heritage.org/Research/InternationalOrganizations/bg2009.cfm>

"The Scapegoats Among Us / Blame-shifting after 9/11"  
Mary Eberstadt, Hoover Institute on War, Revolution and Peace, USA  
*Policy Review (Hoover)*, 200701, n140, Dec/Jan, pp.25-46  
<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/4884201.html>

"The Bottom Line on Iran: The Costs and Benefits of Preventive War versus Deterrence"  
Justin Logan, The Cato Institute, USA, *Policy Analysis (Cato)*, 200612, n583, pp.1-28  
[http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=6790](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6790)

"Who Killed Iraq?", Rajiv Chandrasekaran  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA, *Foreign Policy*, 200609, Sept/Oct, pp.36-43  
<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>

"Iran's Nuclear Program: America's Policy Options", Ted Galen Carpenter  
The Cato Institute, USA, *Policy Analysis (Cato)*, 200609, n578, pp.1-20  
[http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=6690](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=6690)

#### < Income Inequality >

"Minimum Wages and Firm Training", Wolfgang Lechthaler and Dennis J. Snower  
Kiel Institute of World Economics (IfW), Germany, *Kiel Working Papers*, 200609, 1298, pp.1-21  
<http://www.ifw-kiel.de/pub/kap/2006/kap1298.htm>

"Options to Fix the Alternative Minimum Tax", William G. Gale  
The Brookings Institution, USA, *Papers* (Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center), 200701, pp.1-59  
<http://www.brookings.edu/views/papers/gale/20070119.htm>

"Minimum Wage and Tax Evasion: Theory and Evidence", Mirco Tonin  
Institute of Economics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (IEHAS), Hungary  
*KTI/IE Discussion Papers*, 200702, MTDP 2007/01, pp.1-62  
<http://econ.core.hu/doc/dp/dp/mtdp0701.pdf>

"The roots of democracy; Equality, inequality, and the choice of political institutions", Carles Boix  
Hoover Institute on War, Revolution and Peace, USA  
*Policy Review (Hoover)*, 200603, February/March no 135, pp.3-21  
<http://www.policyreview.org/135/boix.html>

\* Data listed -----

Article or paper title / Name of think tank / Series title or journal name, publishing data, vol. no., pages; a URL indicates that the full text (or an abstract) of the paper is available on the Internet

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