

VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

LE HONG HIEP (M.A.)

Beyond Words

A reading course of advanced English in
international relations



VOLUME I

BEYOND WORDS

A READING COURSE OF ADVANCED ENGLISH IN
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

LE HONG HIEP (M.A.)

Faculty of International Relations

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

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Instructions to students

This course is designed for forth year students of international relations. Accordingly, the reading texts are selected with a view to helping the students reach an advanced level of reading skill, while also providing them with further knowledge on a wide range of issues in international politics and international relations. In addition to helping the students expand their vocabulary and understand the reading text, the course is also aimed at helping them explore the beauty and elegance of English by learning how to read between the lines and beyond the words, understanding not only the meaning of the texts but also the stories behind them.

All the main articles of the course are picked from *The Economist* magazine, while further reading texts are selected from a variety of credible sources, including reports, books, and journal articles.

The course is divided into 9 units covering various topics and arranged in an order of increasing difficulty. Apart from the main reading text, each unit is composed of 6 sections:

1. *Pre-reading Group Presentation:*

In this section, a pre-defined group of students in the class are required to do a short presentation on a given topic which is selected in accordance with the main theme of the reading text. In order to properly present the topic, the students are expected to do some reading beforehand. The reading material is provided through a web-link. However, the students can base their presentation on any other relevant and credible source. The purpose of this task is to provide students with background information, which will be helpful for them to better understand the reading text.

2. *Vocabulary:*

This section includes a number of tasks to help students expand their vocabulary. The tasks are mainly based on the words or phrases contained in the main reading text.

3. *Comprehension:*

With tasks of various types, this section is designed to provide students with a guide to better understanding the reading text through analytical and critical thinking. The tasks are also aimed at checking whether students fully understand the meanings hidden behind the words.

4. *Summary:*

This section is designed to give students a chance to check their understanding of the reading text by summarizing it.

5. *Translation:*

In this section, students are required to translate the reading text into Vietnamese. For students of English as a foreign language, translating an English text into their native language is as important as understanding it, as the translated text will be a test as to whether they fully understand the original text or not. This section is therefore also aimed at helping students to improve their translating skills.

6. *Further reading:*

This section provides students with another reading text which addresses a topic related to that of the main one. The further reading texts therefore normally provide supplementary information that are useful for students to better understand the main reading text.

In addition, at the end of each unit, there is a table for vocabulary check and a self-analysis section. The former is designed to help students revise the vocabulary they have expanded through the unit, while the latter is to help them check whether they have fully understood the reading texts and got the most out of the unit.

As this course book was designed in a relatively short period of time, errors and shortcomings are unavoidable. The author is therefore deeply grateful for any correction, comment or suggestion from course instructors and students. All correspondents regarding this course book should be directed to the author via his email address: *lehonghiep@gmail.com*.

Thank you and happy reading!

When two plus two equals three

Aug 6th 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

The promise of reform and renewal stalls under Raúl Castro



1. WHEN Cuba celebrated the anniversary of its revolution at the end of last month with a mass rally in the central city of Holguín, a nearby building was draped with a gigantic picture of Fidel and Raúl Castro thrusting their arms skyward under the words, “The Vigorous and Victorious Revolution Keeps Marching Forward.” But this habitual triumphalism was in sharp contrast to the messages that Raúl, installed as president last year in place of his ailing elder brother, put across in his speech to the crowd and in another this week to the National Assembly. He announced the unexpected and indefinite postponement of a long-overdue Communist Party congress, which he had scheduled for the end of this year. And he was blunt about Cuba’s economic problems.
2. Lower world prices for nickel and a fall in tourism revenue have led the government to cut its forecast for economic growth this year from 6% to 1.7%. The island is still recovering from three devastating hurricanes last year, which the government says caused damage worth \$10 billion. The American economic embargo is still there, too.
3. But Raúl Castro blamed “our own shortcomings” for the fact that “often two plus two results in three.” Even as he fixes some problems, others open up. He has answered longstanding grumbles about public transport by repairing Cuba’s pot-holed roads and buying new Chinese buses. Last month he ordered a wage increase for 543,000 teachers and education workers. But he has also

ordered cuts in “non-essential” education and health spending, as well as in the meagre free-food rations that Cubans receive from the state. Some of these measures are a response to a trade deficit that soared by 65% in 2008. Partly because of the higher cost of food and fuel, imports rose by 41%, to \$14.2 billion, whereas exports were just \$3.7 billion.

4. Hugo Chávez, Venezuela’s president, supplies Cuba with cheap oil in return for the services of Cuban doctors and security and intelligence specialists. But Cuban oil consumption appears to have risen sharply, because the government dealt with chronic power-cuts by buying thousands of thirsty diesel generators. To save energy, in June the government ordered all factories, shops and offices to switch on their air conditioning for just five hours a day, in the afternoons. So shops are mostly empty in the mornings and idle employees sit around by open doors and windows.
5. Food is also in short supply. Despite its abundant farmland, Cuba imports 80% of its food (much of it from the United States since a loophole was opened in the embargo in 2001). Inefficient state farms occupy three-quarters of the best land but leave much of it idle. Raúl Castro has tried to raise production by offering land to private farmers. But this scheme has been slow to get off the ground: agricultural production actually fell by 7.3% in the first quarter, and meat production fell by 14.7%. “The land is there, here are the Cubans, let’s see if we get to work,” he said in Holguín.
6. On taking over as president, Raúl Castro called for “changes of structure and concept” in the economy, raising hopes in some quarters that Cuba would imitate Vietnam in moving to a capitalist economy under communist political control. Those hopes have yet to be met. He has instead concentrated on better administration, quietly promoting his own aides to key positions in the state bureaucracy. He has stressed discipline and control. The assembly approved a law to set up a new auditor-general’s office, to stamp out corruption. The education minister and the rector of the University of Havana were fired after a poll found revolutionary spirit was lacking among both students and professors.
7. This spirit of caution was reflected in the decision to postpone the party congress, an event that would define “the economic model that will guide the life of the nation,” he said. It was also expected to see the handing over of political leadership, from the elderly revolutionary nomenklatura to a younger generation. But Raúl Castro said the party was not yet ready. The real reason appears to be the continuing influence of Fidel. Obligated to surrender the presidency when he underwent abdominal surgery three years ago, he still exerts influence and an apparent veto power behind the scenes. Instead of a congress, Raúl Castro convoked a “national conference” to elect new party leaders.
8. The regime and the Cuban people face an unusually hot summer. But there are no signs of political control weakening. Unlike Fidel Castro, Raúl is sparing in his use of strident ideological rhetoric. In his speeches he made few references

to the United States and its embargo. He welcomed the resumption last month of talks about migration, suspended under George Bush. But he reminded the assembly, and the world, that “I was elected to defend, maintain and continue perfecting socialism, not to destroy it.”

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read Fidel Castro’s biography, available online at:
<http://history1900s.about.com/od/people/p/castro.htm>
- Make a short presentation on Fidel Castro.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Match each of the following definitions with a word or phrase from the article:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. to delay | ..... |
| 2. very large, tall, or bulky | ..... |
| 3. very frank or straightforward | ..... |
| 4. a complaint or expression of discontent | ..... |
| 5. unsatisfactorily small | ..... |
| 6. always present or recurring | ..... |
| 7. a small gap in a law that allows it to be circumvented | ..... |
| 8. to put an end to something | ..... |
| 9. to call a formal meeting | ..... |
| 10. showing careful restraint | ..... |

B2. Match each of the phrasal verbs in the left column with a relevant definition in the right column.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. Put across | a. to delay or postpone something |
| 2. Put forward | b. to put in writing, record |
| 3. Put off | c. to establish something, or bring something into being |
| 4. Put aside | d. to switch off a light or extinguish a fire |
| 5. Put out | e. to attack somebody violently |
| 6. Put through | f. to propose for consideration |
| 7. Set up | g. to begin doing something |
| 8. Set about | |

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 9. Set upon | h. to disregard something |
| 10. Set down | i. to make something understood or
accepted by expressing it clearly |
| | j. to bring to a successful end |

C. Comprehension

C1. Answer the following sentences:

1. According to the article, what are major causes of Cuba's current economic difficulties?
2. What does Raul Castro mean by "often two plus two results in three"?
3. In which way has Raul Castro responded to Cuba's soaring trade deficit?
4. What is ironic about Cuba's agriculture?
5. What does Cuba want to learn from Vietnam?
6. How has Raul Castro tightened discipline and control?
7. What is the party congress expected to do?
8. Explain the meaning of the sentence "*The regime and the Cuban people face an unusually hot summer*" (paragraph 8).

C2. The article has 8 paragraphs. From the list of headings below choose the most suitable heading for each paragraph:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. Paragraph 1 | a. Cuba's shortage of energy |
| 2. Paragraph 2 | b. Raul Castro's foreign policy |
| 3. Paragraph 3 | c. Cuba's food problem |
| 4. Paragraph 4 | d. Raul Castro's political agenda since taking over
presidency |
| 5. Paragraph 5 | e. Cuba's revolutionary zeal versus harsh reality |
| 6. Paragraph 6 | f. Cuba's political prospect |
| 7. Paragraph 7 | g. Objective reasons for Cuba's economic difficulties |
| 8. Paragraph 8 | h. Cuba's economic cooperation with Venezuela |
| | i. Raul Castro's efforts to fix problems |
| | j. Fidel Castro's influence |
| | k. The cause of postponement of Cuba's Communist
Party congress |

D. Summary

Please summarize the article in no more than 200 words.

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

Cuba in the Post–Cold War World

The Cuban pursuit of security from the United States and autonomy from the Soviet Union was not without complications. Havana was unwilling to sacrifice its relationship with the Soviet Union for a larger international role, but neither was it willing to forgo internationalism to improve relations with the United States. On the other hand, the dilemma did not persist for long. By the late 1980s the Cuban relationship with the Soviet Union was in disarray. The emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev and the reforms associated with perestroika and glasnost plunged Cuban-Soviet relations into crisis. The introduction of market mechanisms, the restoration of private property, and the adoption of explicit earning differentials based on market values, among other measures, were greeted in Cuba with mounting disbelief and dismay, and eventually with public disapproval and open denunciation.

A divisive and, it turned out, an irreparable ideological rift had opened between Cuba and the Soviet Union. The Cuban leadership responded to the liberalization of Soviet communism with “rectification,” fundamentally a reaffirmation of the principles and modalities that had driven mobilization policies during the 1960s. Appeals were made to conciencia, to voluntarism and moral incentives. The primacy of the Communist party and one-party rule were reaffirmed, and once again the summons to more struggle and greater sacrifice emerged as the principal themes of the official discourse.

The divergence between Cuba and the Soviet Union widened through the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, years during which the Soviet leadership progressively disavowed Marxist-Leninist tenets, abandoned central planning, and arrived at an increasingly cordial accommodation with the United States. These were decisive years, as Cubans found themselves caught up in momentous changes, not all of their making and far from their capacity to control but nonetheless of direct and vital national consequences. Most immediately, changes in the Soviet Union released powerful social forces across eastern Europe. One by one, countries of the old socialist bloc broke with the Soviet Union and eventually socialism itself foundered and fell among the Warsaw Pact nations. In mid-1991, momentous changes overtook the Soviet Union. An abortive coup against the Gorbachev government served as a catalyst for accelerated reforms and eventually resulted in the break-up of the USSR and completed the collapse of communism in eastern Europe.

The repercussions of developments in Europe were experienced almost immediately in Cuba as the deepening dispute between Moscow and Havana developed fully into an open break. In late 1991, Gorbachev announced the unilateral decision to withdraw from Cuba a training brigade of nearly 3,000 troops, a gesture that carried more

symbolic meaning than substantive import. The Russian decision in 1992 to reduce military supplies and curtail training programs, however, as well as the announcement that future transfer of arms and military equipment would be conducted on the basis of cash transactions, did represent substantial cutbacks and threatened to weaken Cuban military defense.

The portents were unambiguous. The collapse of the Soviet Union led immediately to retrenchment of existing international commitments and a moratorium on new agreements. Moscow found itself in a very much reduced capacity to fulfill previous military arrangements and meet existing commercial obligations. Even if the will had been present—and there is no evidence to suggest that it was—the wherewithal was not. The Russians turned inward, wholly absorbed with severe economic dislocation and deepening political instability.

Old allies became new adversaries. The Cold War was over and the international balance of power that had so powerfully shaped many of the policies and programs of the Cuban revolution tilted decisively against the government of Fidel Castro. Cuba found itself virtually alone and isolated, with few political friends and fewer military allies.

It was the loss of trading partners and the suspension of economic relations with the former socialist bloc, however, that produced disarray and distress and plunged Cuba into a crisis that threatened to undo thirty-five years of social gains and economic achievements. Cuba found itself increasingly unable to import the goods it consumed and without markets to export the goods it produced. After decades of favorable trade relations with socialist bloc countries, Cuba faced the necessity to undertake far-reaching realignments in commercial relations. Soviet trade and aid so vital to Cuban developmental strategies during the 1960s and 1970s began to dwindle in the late 1980s and virtually ceased altogether by the 1990s. Soviet oil and petroleum by-products, delivered at prices below world market, had accounted for an estimated 90 percent of Cuban energy needs. Socialist bloc merchant vessels had carried 85 percent of Cuban foreign trade with costs usually assigned to the island's debt.

The rise of market economies in eastern Europe had calamitous consequences in Cuba. The old socialist bloc Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) had previously accounted for almost 85 percent of Cuban trade, transactions conducted almost entirely in nonconvertible currency. Commercial relations with the former Soviet Union declined by more than 90 percent, from \$8.7 billion in 1989 to \$4.5 billion in 1991 and \$750 million in 1993. Trade with eastern European countries ended almost completely. Soviet oil imports decreased by almost 90 percent, from 13 million tons in 1989 to 1.8 million tons in 1992. Shipments of capital grade consumer goods, grains, and foodstuff declined and imports of raw materials and spare parts essential for Cuban industry ceased altogether. Fertilizer imports declined by 80 percent, from 1.3 million tons to 25,000 tons. The vast cattle herds that had previously depended on imported feed were devastated. Imported feed declined from 600,000 tons in the mid-1980s to 40,000 tons in the mid-1990s. Milk production fell by half and beef production decreased by two-thirds. In the years between 1989 and 1992, production of eleven of the fifteen principal agricultural commodities fell sharply. Poultry declined by nearly 80 percent. The number of pigs fell by almost 70 percent.

The production of powdered milk declined by nearly 90 percent. Between 1990 and 1993, the Cuban economy shrank by more than 40 percent.

The economic crisis assumed a logic of its own, and all through the early 1990s conditions across the island progressively worsened. The cancellation of trade arrangements with countries of the former socialist bloc and the subsequent suspension of commercial agreements, trade subsidies, and economic assistance from the Soviet Union subjected Cuba to the full impact of international market forces. Even world market conditions seemed to conspire against Cuba, as the price of oil increased and the price of sugar decreased, making a difficult situation worse.

Source:

Louis A. Pérez, Jr. (2006). *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution (3rd edition)*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 291 – 93.

Distant horizons

Apr 23rd 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

If you've got muscle, flaunt it

1. WITH an unprecedented display of its rapidly growing naval armoury, China has flaunted its ambitions as a global power. To mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), Chinese leaders on April 23rd reviewed a maritime parade of hardware ranging from nuclear submarines to amphibious assault-craft and fighter bombers. The only missing ingredient of naval might was an aircraft-carrier. Officials hint it will not be long before China has some of these too.
2. Ten years ago, the PLAN's 50th anniversary slipped by with little more than a few commemorative stamps and plenty of bunting. But the last decade has seen the fruits of a huge military modernisation and expansion programme, launched after tensions mounted in the Taiwan Strait in 1995 and 1996. This has included the purchase of billions of dollars worth of Russian naval hardware, and the deployment of homemade ships, submarines and missiles. The build-up has sent ripples of unease across China's neighbourhood.
3. China was anxious lest the parade, in the port city of Qingdao, sent too scary a message. It invited foreign navies to take part too, including America's 7th Fleet, which sent a guided-missile destroyer, the USS Fitzgerald. The official theme of the show was "harmonious ocean". China's neighbours wish it were so. China disputes its sea borders with several countries, most heatedly with Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines. Of the five floating vessels at Qingdao's naval history museum, two were involved in the sinking of a Vietnamese ship during a skirmish in the South China Sea in 1988.
4. The deployment of two American aircraft-carriers near Taiwan during a crisis in relations in 1996 troubled China's leaders. Its military build-up, including the naval expansion, seemed primarily aimed at deterring any future American intervention over Taiwan. In the past few years, cross-strait tensions have eased, most markedly since the election last year of a more China-friendly Taiwanese president, Ma Ying-jeou. But the huge increase in its demand for foreign oil and other resources means China is now thinking more about how to protect its more distant supply lines.
5. As it happens, these lines traverse the disputed South China Sea, almost all of which China claims, but where it has lacked the ability to project naval power. China is coy about its naval strategy, but in March the Pentagon's annual report on China's military capability argued it could be trying to develop the ability to "hold surface ships at risk" out to a second island chain (see map),

far beyond the first chain, which encompasses claimed offshore territories including the South China Sea. The second chain reaches Guam, where America has a big military presence.

6. Some of the new weaponry on display in Qingdao suggested that projecting power is becoming a bigger priority for China. Among the vessels inspected by President Hu Jintao from on board a Chinese-made destroyer were two nuclear-powered submarines. China's official press identified them as a Xia-class ballistic-missile submarine and a Han-class attack submarine. These are not China's very latest models, but showing them at all was rare.



7. China is coy about its submarines. Foreign military officials attending the regatta toured a Song-class diesel-electric submarine. The Song has been in use since the 1990s, but it was the first time that some of these officials, despite repeated requests, had been allowed inside one. China has said nothing about its new Jin-class submarines armed with long-range nuclear missiles. The Pentagon reported that the first of these had been deployed.
8. The Qingdao review did include an interesting addition to China's fleet, a Yuzhao-class amphibious-assault ship, which could be used to dispatch troops and helicopters over long distances. One Western diplomat says he sees its deployment as potentially useful for settling scores in the South China Sea. The contrast between the display of such weaponry and China's rhetoric about harmony he calls "a bit of schizophrenia". China's self-image as a responsible great power was also on show, however, with a large new hospital ship, useful for humanitarian missions. Three vessels have just completed an anti-piracy tour in the Gulf of Aden. This continuing mission is China's first active naval deployment beyond the Pacific.
9. Chinese leaders chose not to spoil the jolly mood in Qingdao by talking about aircraft carriers. But officials have dropped several recent hints that China is close to announcing it will acquire its first one. Admiral Gary Roughead, the American navy's highest-ranking officer, told reporters in Qingdao that "it may cause concern" among navies in the region if China failed to make clear how it planned to use a carrier. But since such a ship would be of limited use in coastal defence, coming clean might cause even more concern.

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read the article *Modernizing the People’s Liberation Army of China* (Carin Zissis, 2006) on the Website of Council of Foreign Relations:

<http://www.cfr.org/publication/12174/>

- Make a short presentation of the article before the class.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Match each of the following definitions with a word or phrase from the article:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. having no earlier parallel or equivalent | ..... |
| 2. show something off | ..... |
| 3. taking place or operating both on land and in water | ..... |
| 4. to escape from one’s memory and be forgotten | ..... |
| 5. strings of cloth or paper decorations | ..... |
| 6. a small wave or series of gentle waves across a surface | ..... |
| 7. characterized by friendly agreement or accord | ..... |
| 8. brief fight between two armed groups | ..... |
| 9. to travel across, over, or through an area or a place | ..... |
| 10. reluctant to reveal something | ..... |
| 11. a number of warships functioning as a single unit | ..... |
| 12. to send somebody somewhere to do a task | ..... |
| 13. fine-sounding but insincere or empty language | ..... |
| 14. a state characterized by contradictory or conflicting attitudes, behavior, or qualities | ..... |
| 15. to confess or tell the truth about something | ..... |

C. Comprehension

C1. Find the sentence in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Rephrase them in your own words, provide further explanation where necessary:

- With an unprecedented display of its rapidly growing naval armoury, China has flaunted its ambitions as a global power. (1)
- Ten years ago, the PLAN’s 50th anniversary slipped by with little more than a few commemorative stamps and plenty of bunting. (2)

- c. The build-up has sent ripples of unease across China's neighbourhood. (2)
- d. China was anxious lest the parade, in the port city of Qingdao, sent too scary a message. (3)
- e. The official theme of the show was "harmonious ocean". China's neighbours wish it were so. (3)
- f. One Western diplomat says he sees its deployment as potentially useful for settling scores in the South China Sea. (8)
- g. Chinese leaders chose not to spoil the jolly mood in Qingdao by talking about aircraft carriers. (9)
- h. But since such a ship would be of limited use in coastal defence, coming clean might cause even more concern. (9)

C2. Answer the following sentences:

- a. What are the purposes of China's modernization and expansion of its navy?
- b. What may be the main reason for PLAN to choose "harmonious ocean" as the official theme of the show?
- c. What does the phrase "hold surface ships at risk" mean?
- d. Based on the sentence "Some of the new weaponry on display in Qingdao suggested that projecting power is becoming a bigger priority for China", what can be inferred about PLAN's "new weaponry"?

D. Summary

Please summarize the article in no more than 200 words.

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

Military Modernization . . . Beyond Taiwan

The Chinese military forms an important, and growing, part of Beijing's overall national strategy. China's leaders believe that control and use of the armed forces and other instruments of power are essential to ensure that the Party remains dominant, and that China can secure its borders, defend its territorial claims, and shape its security environment in a way that allows its continued economic growth and development. As China's economy expands, so too will its interests and the perceived need to build an armed force capable of protecting them. In its latest Defense White Paper, China notes that, "[t]he military factor plays a greater role in . . . national

security,” and, “[t]he role played by military power in safeguarding national security is assuming greater prominence.”

Consequently, although the principal focus of China’s military modernization in the near term appears to be preparing for potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait, some of China’s military planners are surveying the strategic landscape beyond Taiwan. Some Chinese military analysts have expressed the view that control of Taiwan would enable the PLA Navy to move its maritime defensive perimeter further seaward and improve Beijing’s ability to influence regional sea lines of communication. Conversely, some of these analysts believe, the political status quo with Taiwan constrains China’s ability to project power. General Wen Zongren, Political Commissar of the elite PLA Academy of Military Science, stated in a recent interview that resolving the Taiwan issue is of “far reaching significance to breaking international forces’ blockade against China’s maritime security. . . . Only when we break this blockade shall we be able to talk about China’s rise. . . . [T]o rise suddenly, China must pass through oceans and go out of the oceans in its future development.”

Analysis of Chinese military acquisitions also suggests the PLA is generating military capabilities that go beyond a Taiwan scenario. All of China’s SRBMs, although garrisoned opposite Taiwan, are mobile and can deploy throughout the country to take up firing positions in support of a variety of regional contingencies. China is also developing new medium-range systems that will improve its regional targeting capability. There are corresponding improvements in intercontinental-range missiles capable of striking targets across the globe, including in the United States.

Similarly, China’s air and naval force improvements – both complete and in the pipeline – are scoped for operations beyond the geography around Taiwan. Airborne early warning and control and aerial refueling programs for the PLA Air Force will extend the operational range for its fighter and strike aircraft, permitting extended operations into the South China Sea, for example. Naval acquisitions, such as advanced destroyers and submarines, reflect Beijing’s pursuit of an “active offshore defense,” to protect and advance its maritime interests, including territorial claims, economic interests, and critical sea lines of communication. Over the long-term, improvements in China’s command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) capability, including space-based and over-the-horizon platforms, could enable Beijing to identify, target, and track foreign military activities deep into the western Pacific and provide, potentially, hemispheric coverage.

Chinese forces have increased operations beyond China’s borders and home waters, most notably the highly publicized intrusion of a HAN-class nuclear submarine last year in Japanese territorial waters during operations far into the western Pacific Ocean. After completing its first around-the-world cruise in July 2002, China continues to send its fleet abroad to show the flag and gain familiarity with open-ocean operations. Finally, China has increased participation in global peace operations. China now has some 1,000 peacekeepers abroad, including 500 attached to the UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), 230 with the UN Observer Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and 125 as part of the UN Mission for Stabilization in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

China does not now face a direct threat from another nation. Yet, it continues to invest heavily in its military, particularly in programs designed to improve power projection. The pace and scope of China's military build-up are, already, such as to put regional military balances at risk. Current trends in China's military modernization could provide China with a force capable of prosecuting a range of military operations in Asia – well beyond Taiwan – potentially posing a credible threat to modern militaries operating in the region. China could accelerate its military development by using more of its civil production capacity for military hardware (industrial facilities for China's commercial ship-building – which now occupy about 10% of the global market in terms of dead weight ton production – are co-located with military shipyards, for example) or by increasing purchases of advanced military hardware and technology from abroad.

Beijing has described its long-term political goals of developing comprehensive national power and of ensuring a favorable strategic configuration of power in peaceful terms. Themes include an emphasis on peace and development, the non-use of force in settling disputes, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, the defensive nature of China's military strategy, a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons, and support for nuclear weapons-free zones.

Nevertheless, China's military modernization remains ambitious. In the recent past, moreover, military responses in support of Chinese claims to disputed territory or resource rights have produced crises and conflicts with China's neighbors, including India, Japan, the Philippines, the then-Soviet Union, and Vietnam. In the future, as China's military power grows, China's leaders may be tempted to resort to force or coercion more quickly to press diplomatic advantage, advance security interests, or resolve disputes.

Source:

The Military Power of the People's Republic of China, US Department of Defense Annual Report to Congress, 2005.

The noodle bowl

Sep 3rd 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

Why trade agreements are all the rage in Asia

1. THESE are worrying times for world trade. Despite a recent levelling out after the first quarter's collapse, the World Trade Organisation reckons global trade volumes will be around 10% lower this year than in 2008. Trade ministers convened in New Delhi this week to talk about resurrecting the Doha trade talks—but those talks remain moribund. Yet amid the general gloom, activity on one sort of trade—bilateral free-trade agreements (FTAs)—continues at a feverish pace in Asia. This month, another deal was signed, this time between India and South Korea.
2. The agreement is the first between two of Asia's four biggest economies (India, China, Japan and South Korea). But the stream of FTAs, typically between one large economy and a smaller partner, has become a flood in the past decade. From just six in 1991, their number had increased to 42 by 1999. But almost three times as many have been signed since, bringing the number of such agreements in Asia to 166 by June this year, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
3. Still more—62 at last count—are at various stages of negotiation, including one between Japan and India. China and Taiwan are in talks about a deal, which shows just how deeply FTA fever has taken hold of Asia (trade deals are even used as a way to bridge the gulf between the two Chinas). And apart from bilateral agreements, several countries, including China and Japan, now have signed trade deals with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional body.
4. Asian countries' enthusiasm for bilateral agreements is palpable, and they have reason to want to bolster intra-Asian trade. The growth of global supply chains means that parts made in one Asian country from raw materials imported from another are re-exported to a third for final assembly. These countries hope that more bilateral agreements will enable more specialisation. India, for example, hopes that its new FTA will allow it to become a hub for Korean electronics companies seeking to exploit lower labour costs to make goods destined for markets in the Middle East.
5. Added to all this is the fact that Asia's big economies are set to provide the world with most of its growth this year, and emerging Asia will continue to be the world's fastest-growing region for several years. Strategic rivalries

complete the list of incentives. Many think that India has jumped into the fray because China has been signing one pact after another.

6. But economists caution that the proliferation of FTAs is unlikely to do wonders for the region's trade. Aaditya Mattoo, of the World Bank, points out that because trade barriers in Asia are already relatively low, the benefit of a small further reduction in barriers in one market is tiny.
7. Bilateral deals come laden with complicated rules about where products originate—rules which impose substantial costs of labelling and certification on firms. The more overlapping deals there are, the more complex the rules and the higher the costs. Those who follow Asia's FTA mania refer to this as the "noodle bowl". No wonder few firms actually want to use FTAs. An ADB survey of exporters in Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand in 2007-08 found that only 22% took advantage of them. Certainly, the huge rise in trade deals seems to have done nothing to boost the share of the continent's trade that is intra-Asian (see chart).



8. Countries may worry that a multilateral deal would erode the preferential terms they got through bilateral ones. If so, the flurry of bilateral deals may have come at the expense of a world trade agreement. Gary Hufbauer of the Peterson Institute of International Economics in Washington, DC, thinks that China and India have decided they would "rather pursue bilateral FTAs than make the necessary concessions to push Doha across the finish line."
9. Some would dispute that. India, widely blamed for contributing to the collapse of the Doha talks in July 2008, is now holding a summit of trade ministers which aims to bridge the gap between world leaders' repeated promises to complete the round by 2010 and the reality that, as one WTO insider puts it, "nothing is happening on the ground". Indian politics should allow greater negotiating flexibility, if talks restart, thanks to a stronger government and an opposition in disarray. But a deal will require America to build up domestic support for more open trade. Until that happens, Asian countries may content themselves with a fuller noodle bowl.

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read the article on the Doha Development Round, available online at:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doha_Development_Round
- Make a short presentation on the Doha Development Round.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Match each of the word in the left column with a definition in the right column

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Moribund (1) | a. exciting |
| 2. Resurrect (1) | b. to diminish something gradually |
| 3. Feverish (1) | c. nearly dead |
| 4. Palpable (4) | d. reluctant yielding, compromise |
| 5. Hub (4) | e. obvious, self-evident |
| 6. Fray (5) | f. considerable |
| 7. Substantial (7) | g. center |
| 8. Erode (8) | h. burst of activity |
| 9. Flurry (8) | i. bring back to life, revive |
| 10. Concession (8) | j. lively activity or situation |

C. Comprehension

C1. Find the sentence in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Use context clues to answer the question that follows.

- Despite a recent levelling out after the first quarter's collapse, the World Trade Organisation reckons global trade volumes will be around 10% lower this year than in 2008. (1)*
What can be inferred about global trade volumes in the second quarter?
- Those who follow Asia's FTA mania refer to this as the "noodle bowl". (7)*
What does the "noodle bowl" imply?
- If so, the flurry of bilateral deals may have come at the expense of a world trade agreement.(8)*
What world trade agreement is the author referring to? Why do bilateral trade deals come at the expense of such an agreement?
- But a deal will require America to build up domestic support for more open trade. (9)*
What can be said about current American trade policy?
- Until that happens, Asian countries may content themselves with a fuller noodle bowl. (9)*
What does the phrase "a fuller noodle bowl" imply?

C2. Read the text again and decide whether each of the following statements is True (T), False (F) or Not Relevant (NR) if there's no information on the statement.

T/ F/ NR

1. China and Japan have concluded a bilateral FTA.
2. 123 FTAs were signed in Asia since 1999 until June 2009.
3. Japan and India are negotiating a FTA.
4. Rules about product origin cause firms to pay considerably for labelling and getting certificates of origin.
5. Many firms don't want to use FTAs because rules regarding product origin are too complicated.
6. Intra-Asian trade has increased significantly thanks to the rise in the number of FTAs.
7. India and China play an important role in the outcome of the Doha trade round.
8. The Doha trade round mainly addresses American agricultural subsidies.

D. Summary

Please summarize the article in no more than 200 words.

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

Small developing countries in the Doha Round

A large number of small and low-income developing countries and LDCs are now members of the WTO; together they dominate its membership. Although a majority of them belong to the LDC category, there are some that do not such as the Kyrgyz Republic, Surinam, Guyana, Tajikistan and the like. Cambodia is one such country which became the 148th member of the WTO. With growing numbers, this category of countries has acquired a good deal of influence in the multilateral trade system and its decision-making process. As noted in Chapter 3, during the Fifth Ministerial Conference in Cancún, and the subsequent WTO meeting in Geneva in July 2004, this group held together as the Group-of-Ninety (G-90) and was led by Rwanda.

Two interesting characteristics of small and low-income developing countries and LDCs tend to stand out. First, their economies and trade volume are small, if not tiny. By definition, each one of them accounts for 0.05 per cent, or less, of multilateral imports of goods and services. Realistically, such a small trader has little to offer in terms of market access concessions to its trading partners during the MTNs. This eliminates this group of small developing countries from any serious reciprocal

bargaining, which is considered central to the WTO operations. Second, the interests and trade-related requirements of this group of WTO members are imperfectly aligned with the extensive agenda of the multilateral trade system. In addition, as these small economies enjoy preferential market access to industrial country markets, further multilateral liberalization in the Doha Round would in many cases erode rather than enhance the market access of these countries. Many of them would reap few benefits from broadening the WTO mandate. If anything, they might incur substantial costs. Owing to these two characteristic differences from the principal trading economies, small and low-income developing economies stand out as an unusual and exclusive group in the multilateral trading system.

As alluded to earlier, the contemporary intellectual and political environment strongly favours a 'fair' Doha Round outcome for this country group. In such a *mise-en-scene* the multilateral trading system is faced with the challenge of equilibrating two important and seemingly incompatible issues. Accommodating the interests and needs of this country group on the one hand, and ensuring rapid, efficient and expeditious progress in the Doha Round on the other. Stiglitz and Charlton (2004) noted that the primary principle of

the Doha Round should be to ensure that the agreements promote development in the poor countries. To make this principle operational the WTO needs to foster a culture of robust economic analysis to identify pro-developmental proposals and promote them to the top of the agenda. In practice this means establishing a source of impartial and publicly available analysis of the effects of different initiatives on different countries. This should be a core responsibility of an expanded WTO Secretariat.

The other objective of this analysis would be to reveal that if any WTO agreement 'differentially hurts developing countries or provides disproportionate benefits to developed countries', it should be regarded as unfair and be considered inappropriate for and incompatible with the DDA (Stiglitz and Charlton, 2004). In the final analysis, the DDA should promote both *de facto* and *de jure* fairness.

To be sure, the MFN liberalization route is considered both efficient and innovative for the Doha Round, but the multilateral trading system 'faces the classic conflict between efficiency and distribution' (Mattoo and Subramanian, 2004). If the MFN-based liberalization is the most efficient for reallocation of global resources, it also leads to adverse distributional effects on economies that have been granted the benefit of preferential market access. As the WTO has followed the GATT tradition of arriving at decisions by consensus, this situation is further deformed and exacerbated by the fact that the small, low-income WTO member countries in this group have as much say in ensuring the progress of the Doha Round and creating an efficient multilateral trading system as a large industrial economy member. Without this say, the multilateral trading regime could not be egalitarian. To resolve this knotty, if paradoxical, situation Mattoo and Subramanian (2004) proposed devising a transfer mechanism for compensating the small and low-income WTO members that stand to lose by further liberalization of the multilateral trade regime.

A word about consensus in the GATT/WTO system is relevant here. Although the legal requirement of the Marrakesh Agreement (or the GATT-1994) establishing the

WTO is of a two-thirds or three-fourths majority, depending upon the decision being made, some decisions can only be made by consensus, giving the small member economies *de jure* powers to block any agreement in those areas. In the Doha Round negotiations, this power can be exercised in some categories of issues, while it cannot be exercised on others. For instance, it can be exercised in issues like inclusion of the four Singapore issues and deepening the WTO rules, which requires a two-thirds majority. The latter category covers areas like anti-dumping and subsidies agreements, and strengthening the framework of the GATT-1994 and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

However, these *de jure* powers can have less influence over further market access liberalization negotiations. Members that mutually agree can proceed and exchange market access concessions without countenance or interference from other members, who are less concerned in these areas. Thus, in a lot of areas in the DDA, agreements can be reached without the apprehension of small developing countries blocking them. In addition, this country group has come to acquire *de facto* powers, which stem from the fact that during the Uruguay Round they were required to take on numerous obligations, which they subsequently found demanding, intricate and costly to implement. Delivering on those commitments seemed beyond the institutional and budgetary capabilities of these economies. These obligations were in areas like liberalization of trade, institutional up-gradation and protection of intellectual property rights. The small and low-income members argue that if they are expected to take on arduous obligations, they should also have a commensurate influence over WTO affairs. Basically, this is fallacious logic because, first, small developing economies and the LDCs were not the only economies that were asked to take on costly obligations, all the participants were. Second, in acknowledging their special set of circumstances they were given significant latitude and more time than other members for fulfilling demanding and stringent WTO obligations.

To be sure, a transfer mechanism such as that proposed by Mattoo and Subramanian (2004) would be difficult to devise. Even if it was devised, it would be politically infeasible to implement. If so, then the system would gravitate towards what is feasible, albeit less desirable. As regards the question, what is desirable?, it is logical to say that if this country group consents to let the multilateral trading system move forward with the broad liberalization agenda in the DDA, they would be offered a *quid pro quo* in the form of improved non-preferential market access and increased technical and financial assistance. Both are valuable and have long-term significance for this country group. At the present time, the favourite systemic response to this knotty riddle that is emerging is as follows: As the financial assistance and market access response is seemingly infeasible, small member economies are being relieved of WTO obligations which they see as an imposition, in the process eliminating their opposition and antagonism to the continuance of multilateral trade liberalization under the DDA.

Source:

Dilip K. Das. (2006). *The Doha Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations: Arduous Issues and Strategic Responses*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Pp. 101-4.

Unit

4

Party-hopping

Apr 30th 2009

From The Economist print edition

Arlen Specter has shifted the balance of power in Washington yet farther to the left



1. THIS week was always going to be a gloomy one for the Republicans, with Barack Obama celebrating his first 100 days in office and the media singing “hallelujah”. But the mood got a lot gloomier on April 28th when one of the most senior Republicans in the Senate announced that he was switching parties.
2. Arlen Specter’s statement could not have been better timed from the White House’s point of view. Just as Obama was about to hit the 100-day milestone, the press was suddenly obsessed by the spread of swine flu. Mr. Specter’s party-hopping not only shifted the spotlight back onto politics. It also provided the White House with a perfect opportunity to hammer home one of its favourite messages: that the Republican Party is becoming such a rump of Rush-Limbaugh-worshipping fanatics that sensible people have no choice but to back Mr. Obama.
3. Mr. Specter explained his decision to switch parties by saying that his vote in favour of Mr. Obama’s stimulus package had caused an irreconcilable schism with Pennsylvania’s Republican Party, particularly the hardcore members who vote in primaries. But in truth he could probably have pointed to any number of irreconcilable schisms with his former party. Mr. Specter parted ways with

the Republican Party because the Republican Party is ceasing to be a viable force in Pennsylvania.

4. Mr. Specter faced a strong challenge in next year's Republican primary from Patrick Toomey, a fierce conservative who has been ahead of him in the polls by some 20 points, buoyed by white-hot Republican fury at the Obama administration and generously financed by the low-tax, minimal-government lobby, the Club for Growth. And even if he had survived Mr. Toomey's onslaught, he would then have had to perform the difficult trick of moving back to the centre to beat a Democrat. Why subject himself to trial by fire when he could simply switch party?
5. Mr. Specter's party-hop will dramatically change the political terrain that Mr. Obama faces in his second 100 days, all but guaranteeing the Democrats control of the 60 seats in the 100-seat Senate that allows them to pass legislation without the threat of a filibuster. The only thing that now stands between them and this supermajority is Norm Coleman and his interminable legal battle to prevent his Democratic rival, Al Franken, from being seated, and that battle looks increasingly doomed.
6. Yet the supermajority may not prove to be the cure-all that many Democrats hope. Party discipline is much looser in the Senate than in the House—and an inveterate maverick such as Mr. Specter is not going to cease behaving like one. In his statement he insisted that he would not be “a party-line voter any more for the Democrats than I have been for the Republicans.” He also noted that his opposition to a law to make union organising easier will not change.
7. Mr. Specter's decision is yet more proof that the once mighty Republican Party is in a perilous state—abandoning the middle ground of politics to the Democrats and retreating into an ideological and regional cocoon. A recent Washington Post/ABC News poll revealed that the proportion of Republicans had shrunk from 25% in late March to just 21% today, the party's lowest figure for more than a quarter of a century. That compares with 35% for Democrats and 38% for independents. A recent Democracy Corps poll also shows that Mr. Obama enjoys a 16-point advantage over the Republicans on the economy, a 24-point advantage on health care and a 27-point advantage on energy policy.
8. Even these dramatic numbers may understate how bad the situation is for the Republicans. The party is rapidly disappearing in whole swathes of America. The proportion of Republicans among 20-somethings has reached its lowest ebb since records began to be kept after the second world war. Just two and a bit years ago Pennsylvania had two Republican senators. Today it has none, and there are precious few in the entire north-east.
9. Mr. Specter argued that he had almost no choice but to abandon an increasingly shrunken and hardline party. More than 200,000 Pennsylvania Republicans, most of them suburban moderates, shifted their party identification to the Democrats during the last election cycle, giving Mr. Obama a ten-point victory in the state and leaving Mr. Specter at the mercy of

an ever-diminishing band of hardliners. Mr. Specter’s particular nemesis, the Club for Growth, is proving to be a Club for Shrinkage.

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read the articles on *Election of Representatives* and *Election of Senators*, available online at:

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/election/representatives.html>
<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/9-12/election/senators.html>

- Make a short presentation on the election of US representatives and senators.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Match each of the following definitions with a word or phrase from the article:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. dark in a way that creates a cheerless or dispiriting atmosphere | ..... |
| 2. not capable of being made to agree or coexist with something else | ..... |
| 3. the division of a group into mutually antagonistic factions | ..... |
| 4. violent anger | ..... |
| 5. overwhelming assault or force | ..... |
| 6. an obstructor of the passage of legislation | ..... |
| 7. seemingly endless | ..... |
| 8. destined to failure or misfortune | ..... |
| 9. an independent thinker who refuses to conform to the accepted views on a subject | ..... |
| 10. unbeatable enemy | ..... |

B2. Match each of the idioms in the left column with a relevant definition in the right column.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. to hammer home something | a. to make something more clearly understood |
| 2. to home in (on someone or something) | b. to make oneself comfortable as if one were in one's own home |
| 3. to bring something home (to somebody) | c. for a very long time |
| 4. a home truth | d. to keep repeating an idea or |

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 5. to hit a home run | opinion so it is understood |
| 6. a home away from home | e. a place where you feel as |
| 7. until the cows come home | comfortable as you do in your own |
| 8. to make oneself at home | home |
| | f. an unpleasant fact, usually |
| | something bad about oneself |
| | g. to aim one's attention toward |
| | something |
| | h. to succeed with something |

C. Comprehension

C1. Find the sentence in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Rephrase them in your own words, provide further explanation where necessary:¹

1. This week was always going to be a gloomy one for the Republicans, with Barack Obama celebrating his first 100 days in office and the media singing “hallelujah”. (1)
2. Arlen Specter’s statement could not have been better timed from the White House’s point of view. (2)
3. It also provided the White House with a perfect opportunity to hammer home one of its favourite messages: that the Republican Party is becoming such a rump of Rush-Limbaugh-worshipping fanatics that sensible people have no choice but to back Mr. Obama. (2)
4. Mr. Specter parted ways with the Republican Party because the Republican Party is ceasing to be a viable force in Pennsylvania. (3)
5. And even if he had survived Mr. Toomey’s onslaught, he would then have had to perform the difficult trick of moving back to the centre to beat a Democrat. (4)
6. The only thing that now stands between them and this supermajority is Norm Coleman and his interminable legal battle to prevent his Democratic rival, Al Franken, from being seated, and that battle looks increasingly doomed. (5)
7. Party discipline is much looser in the Senate than in the House—and an inveterate maverick such as Mr. Specter is not going to cease behaving like one. (6)
8. The proportion of Republicans among 20-somethings has reached its lowest ebb since records began to be kept after the second world war. (8)

¹ To better understand sentence #3 and #6, you may need to look for more information on the internet.

C2. Read the text again and decide whether each of the following statements is True (T), False (F) or Not Relevant (NR) if there's no information on the statement.

- | | T/ F/ NR |
|---|----------|
| 1. Democratic Party is seen as a right-wing party. | |
| 2. The media showed a positive attitude to Mr. Obama's first 100 days in office. | |
| 3. Pennsylvania's Republican Party did not support Mr. Obama's stimulus package. | |
| 4. The Club for Growth lobbied for policies favorable for economic growth. | |
| 5. Mr. Specter's party-hop will guarantee the Democrats control of the 60 seats in the 100-seat Senate. | |
| 6. Mr. Norm Coleman is a Republican senator. | |
| 7. After switching party, Mr. Specter will be a party-line voter for the Democrats. | |
| 8. More than two years ago, all senators from Pennsylvania were Republican. | |

D. Summary

Please summarize the article in no more than 200 words.

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

Far from the perfect democracy: Lack of competition

The basic premise of a democracy is that those in power can be turned out if the citizenry disapproves of their actions. Competition is necessary. How one defines competition is less than clear, however.

In one sense the electoral system in the United States is extremely competitive. It is hard to imagine an election closer than the presidential election of 2000. Even in 2004, if a few votes in Ohio had switched from President Bush to Senator Kerry, Kerry would have been elected. Partisan control of the U.S. House and Senate has been determined by the swing of a few key races in recent elections. Much the same can be said for many state legislatures. Looked at from the perspective of overall partisan control, the electoral system is extremely competitive.

However, if one looks at the state and district levels, much less competition exists. Only about fifteen states have really been in play in the last two presidential elections. In the other thirty-five states, the result was all but known well in advance. Citizens in those states had virtually no opportunity to weigh the candidates or to express their views.

The 2002 and 2004 elections to the House of Representatives were by most accounts the least competitive in modern history. Whether one looks at the reelection rates of incumbents (more than 98 percent in each case), contests in which the loser seriously threatened the winner (about 10 percent in each of those elections), seats in which one party or the other did not even field a candidate or fielded a candidate who polled less than 20 percent of the vote (about three in ten), or the average margin of victory (about 40 percent), true competition was all but absent. Even in the more competitive election of 2006, the vast majority of districts saw little real competition. Results in most state legislative races were similar. Statewide elections—for governor or U.S. senator—were competitive in some states but in others lacked close races as well.

- *Incumbent advantage.* Certainly incumbents have enormous advantages in terms of name recognition, the ability to serve their constituents and to reinforce positive images, experience in campaigning, and ease of fund-raising. But perhaps incumbents have earned those advantages. They have won office initially, after all, and that is no easy task. One could argue that they stay in office and win easily because they are good at what they do. Should the system be altered to reduce the advantages incumbents have or to increase campaign resources for challengers?
- *Redistricting.* For legislative districts, the ways in which district lines are drawn often favors incumbents. Gerrymandering, drawing district lines for political purposes, is as old as the nation and done with increased sophistication and effectiveness today. Creative mapping, however, does not explain one-party states or one-party dominance in some regions. Some scholars claim that those who draw the lines are blamed unfairly for the lack of competition, that citizens tend to congregate into geographic areas with those who share similar views, or that views change to conform with one's neighbors' views, thus creating communities of political homogeneity. Should district lines be drawn in a way that ignores incumbents' residences or the partisanship of the voters?
- *Campaign finance revisited.* Certainly campaign finances play a role. Most challengers are underfunded. Interest groups tend to support incumbents of both parties, because they know incumbents are likely to win. Their contributions, rightly or wrongly, are assumed to guarantee access to decision makers. Can a system be devised that assures challengers a fair chance to raise enough money to compete?
- *Quality of candidates.* The disparity in campaign resources might in fact be a function of the poor quality of those seeking to oppose incumbents. If better candidates were to seek office, they would be able to raise more money and run more competitive races. How one defines "better" candidates is subjective, but by any definition the vast majority of those who do seek to run

fall short. Parties spend a good deal of time recruiting candidates who they feel can run competitive races, often only to be turned down. Can means be devised to encourage more qualified candidates to seek office? What incentives would lead those who currently decided not to run to make the opposite decision?

Source:

Louis Sandy Maisel. (2007). *American political parties and elections: A very short introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

The Burmese road to ruin

Aug 13th 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

Once a model for Myanmar's generals of successful autocracy, Indonesia now has even more to teach them



1. IF THERE was ever a role model for Than Shwe, Myanmar's reclusive "senior general", it was Suharto, Indonesia's late kleptocrat. Suharto was the senior general who had everything. His fabulous wealth made the greedy Burmese generals look like paupers. His children parcelled out the economy as if it were the family vegetable plot. Feted rather than shunned, he was dubbed "father of development" by his fan club, and even many foreigners agreed: development banks needed him more than he needed them. And he held power for 32 years. No wonder the Burmese junta gazed admiringly at Indonesia.
2. The two countries do have much in common. Both are fabulously rich in resources—hydrocarbons, minerals, timber. Both reached postcolonial independence by way of Japanese occupation. Both are multiethnic states haunted by the twin spectres of racial tension and a separatist periphery. And both have armies with inflated views of their importance to national survival.
3. A fine recent book on Indonesia by Marcus Mietzner of the Australian National University highlights five features of the Indonesian armed forces. Four are also shown by Myanmar's. First is the army's (debatable) view of itself as the main bringer of independence. Second is its disdain for periods of civilian rule in the 1950s, dismissed as chaotic, corrupt and, through the spread of regional rebellions, dangerous to the country's integrity. Out of this disdain grew a third feature, a doctrine known in Indonesia as *dwifungsi*, or

dual function, of running the country as well as defending it, and a fourth, the entrenchment of the armed forces in the infrastructure of the state. Last year Myanmar's benighted people were forced to endorse a *dwifungsi* constitution in a referendum. Under it, ludicrously undemocratic elections are to be held in 2010, giving some veneer of legitimacy to the soldiers' unbudgeable heft in parliament and government.

4. The fifth point, too, may yet apply to Than Shwe. What Mr. Mietzner terms the "increasingly sultanistic character" of the ageing Suharto's rule opened up a rift with his fellow generals. When the economy collapsed in 1998 and the threat of anarchy loomed, Suharto looked over his shoulder and found nobody was following him. In the end, dictators, however unpopular, despotic and incompetent, rarely fall because they have too many enemies. They fall because they have too few friends left.
5. Fall, however, Suharto did, in 1998, disqualifying Indonesia's recent history as a serviceable model for Than Shwe. But what has happened there since Suharto fell should still interest him for two reasons. The first is that there has been almost total impunity both for the grasping dynasty and the torturing soldiers who guarded it. One obstacle to political reform in Myanmar is the generals' fear of war-crimes trials, truth-and-justice commissions, or perhaps lynch-mobs. Indonesia should offer them hope that political change need not inevitably bring retribution.
6. But Indonesia is an encouraging example for Myanmar for a better reason, too. Facing multiple long-lived insurgencies, Myanmar's generals fear for their country's unity. In the late 1990s, Indonesians also worried about national disintegration and communal strife. Yet except for tiny East Timor, the country remains in one piece. Moreover, under Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, just re-elected president, it is politically stable, economically resilient and largely peaceful. All political transitions are bumpy. But Indonesia's has been surprisingly free of turbulence. And the country is showing signs of some political self-confidence. This week it reverted to the timid, "non-interfering traditions" of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), curtailing a gathering in Jakarta of exiled Burmese opposition leaders. But at ASEAN's summit in July, it spoke out for more robust regional human-rights standards and against the Burmese junta.
7. There are two ways, however, in which the Burmese dictatorship differs crucially from Suharto's. The first is that, whereas Suharto faced only insipid opposition leaders, Than Shwe has a nemesis, Aung San Suu Kyi, who is hugely popular at home and internationally revered. There was something personally vindictive about the Alice in Wonderland trial to which his junta has just subjected her. Not just the proceedings ("sentence first—verdict afterwards") but the supposed crime itself—in effect, being poorly guarded—were beyond ridicule. His intervention to show "clemency" by cutting her sentence was salt in her wounds. The whole farce speaks of Than Shwe's determination at all costs to keep her incarcerated during the election in 2010. The army will never forget its embarrassment in 1990 when her party trounced the army's candidates. She was already in detention.

8. Second, Suharto’s claim to paternity over development was not all hot air. Under him Indonesia achieved average annual economic growth of over 6% for three decades. Inequality was stark, but the benefits of growth were felt by most Indonesians. In Myanmar, a tiny, pampered middle class enjoy luxury hotels, golf and shopping malls in Yangon; the generals bask in comfort in the mountain fastness of Naypyidaw, their absurdist capital. But most of Myanmar’s people still toil away as subsistence farmers. Economic collapse is not a risk. There is nothing to collapse.

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read the article on *Burma (Myanmar)*, available online at:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burma>

- Make a short presentation on Myanmar, focusing on the rule by the military junta.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Match each of the following definitions with a word or phrase from the article:

1. a government in which somebody holds unlimited power
2. a government official who is a thief or exploiter
3. a very poor person
4. to divide and distribute something between a number of people
5. extreme contempt or disgust for something or somebody
6. unenlightened
7. absurdly ridiculous
8. unmovable
9. useful
10. punishment
11. bitter and sometimes violent conflict relating to different social groups
12. able to recover quickly from setbacks
13. dull because lacking in character and lively qualities
14. to defeat an opponent or team convincingly
15. empty statements or promises

C. Comprehension

C1. Find the sentence in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Rephrase them in your own words, provide further explanation where necessary:

1. His children parcelled out the economy as if it were the family vegetable plot. (1)
2. Both are multiethnic states haunted by the twin spectres of racial tension and a separatist periphery. (2)
3. Second is its disdain for periods of civilian rule in the 1950s, dismissed as chaotic, corrupt and, through the spread of regional rebellions, dangerous to the country's integrity. (3)
4. Under it, ludicrously undemocratic elections are to be held in 2010, giving some veneer of legitimacy to the soldiers' unbudgeable heft in parliament and government. (3)
5. What Mr. Mietzner terms the "increasingly sultanistic character" of the ageing Suharto's rule opened up a rift with his fellow generals. (4)
6. Indonesia should offer them hope that political change need not inevitably bring retribution. (5)
7. There was something personally vindictive about the Alice in Wonderland trial to which his junta has just subjected her. (7)
8. His intervention to show "clemency" by cutting her sentence was salt in her wounds. (7)

C2. Read the text again and decide whether each of the following statements is True (T), False (F) or Not Relevant (NR) if there's no information on the statement.

- | | T/ F/ NR |
|---|----------|
| 1. Suharto was believed to be essential in the economic development of Indonesia. | |
| 2. Myanmar was occupied by Japan before gaining its independence. | |
| 3. The army began to rule Indonesia in the 1950s. | |
| 4. The Myanmar's army used the <i>dwifungsi</i> constitution to legitimize its rule over the country. | |
| 5. Suharto was responsible for Indonesia's economic collapse in 1998. | |
| 6. After Suharto fell, he was punished by a war-crime court. | |

7. Myanmar's junta fears that if they lose power, they will face retribution.
8. Than Shwe wanted to imprison Aung San Suu to prevent her from running for the election in 2010.

D. Summary

The article has 8 paragraphs. Please write a heading for each of them.

- | | |
|----------------|---------|
| 1. Paragraph 1 | a. |
| 2. Paragraph 2 | b. |
| 3. Paragraph 3 | c. |
| 4. Paragraph 4 | d. |
| 5. Paragraph 5 | e. |
| 6. Paragraph 6 | f. |
| 7. Paragraph 7 | g. |
| 8. Paragraph 8 | h. |

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

Suu Kyi's sentence spurs criticism of Burma

World leaders criticized Burma's government Tuesday after pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi was found guilty of violating her house arrest and handed an 18-month sentence.

U.S. President Barack Obama said Suu Kyi's conviction was a violation of "the universal principle of human rights" and that she should be released immediately.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper also condemned the sentencing of the 64-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate as "unwarranted, unjustified and vindictive."

"This decision is clearly not in accordance with the rule of law: the charges laid against her were baseless, and her trial did not come close to meeting international standards of due process," Harper said in a press release.

Suu Kyi faced a maximum five-year sentence for violating the terms of her house arrest by harbouring uninvited American John Yettaw, who swam to her lakeside home on May 4 and stayed for two days.

The court at Insein Prison in Rangoon initially sentenced her to three years of hard labour. But minutes later, a special order from junta chief Senior Gen. Than Shwe cut the sentence, sentencing her instead to 18 more months of house arrest.

Shwe also reduced the sentences of Suu Kyi's two female house companions who had faced similar charges.

Defence will appeal

The reduced sentence is "not a concession. It is a manipulation of an illegal process," said South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of 14 Nobel laureates to speak out on the sentence. Others who condemned it included the Dalai Lama and former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

The UN Security Council is debating a draft statement that would condemn Burma and call for the release of Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners.

Suu Kyi's defence is planning to file an appeal, said Nyan Win, a lawyer for Suu Kyi.

Her legal team also filed a petition Tuesday with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights arguing Suu Kyi is being arbitrarily detained in violation of international human rights law.

"Even though [the verdict] is not unexpected, we were still hoping for the best inside our minds," Alice Khin, a former doctor to Suu Kyi told CBC News. "This news is like a kind of tragedy for us."

Suu Kyi has already spent about 14 of the last 20 years in detention. Her house arrest was supposed to end May 27, but with the 18-month extension, Suu Kyi will be kept out of the political arena throughout the country's 2010 elections. Some analysts have speculated that this is the goal of the ruling junta.

"The facade of her prosecution is made more monstrous because its real objective is to sever her bond with the people for whom she is a beacon of hope and resistance," said British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Won elections in 1990

Suu Kyi's opposition party won national elections in 1990, but Burma's generals refused to relinquish power.

The credibility of the elections will be in doubt unless Suu Kyi and other political prisoners are freed, said UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

During the trial, the prosecution argued even though Yettaw's stay was uninvited, it meant Suu Kyi breached the terms of her house arrest and violated an internal security law.

Suu Kyi's defence team did not contest the facts of the case but argued the law was invalid because it applies to a constitution abolished two decades ago. They also said

government security guards stationed outside Suu Kyi's compound should be held responsible for any intrusion.

Despite strong international condemnation, it would likely be only China or India that could have any sort of influence on Burma's decision, analysts have said.

American handed 7-year sentence

Officials said Suu Kyi has been returned to her lakeside villa after being held in prison during her trial.

Yettaw, 53, who has been suffering epileptic seizures leading up to the sentencing, was returned to prison.

The Missouri resident will serve three years in prison for breaching Suu Kyi's house arrest as an abettor, three years of hard labour for violating immigration laws and a fourth year of hard labour for swimming in a restricted zone.

Source:

Radio Canada, 11 August 2009:

<http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2009/08/11/burma-aung-kyi-verdict.html?ref=rss>

Welcome to Moscow

Jul 2nd 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

Paranoid, mischievous and heading in the wrong direction, Russia is an awkward prospect for Barack Obama



1. THE last time Barack Obama was in Russia, he and Senator Dick Lugar were detained by border guards for several hours at an airport in the Urals, where they were looking at how American funds were helping to get rid of stocks of dangerous Soviet-era weapons. America's president has every reason to hope things will go better this time, but that is not setting a very high hurdle for success. Of all the great power relationships Mr. Obama inherited from George Bush, Russia is the most awkward—awkward not only because it has been getting ever harder to deal with but also because it cannot be ignored.
2. Over the past ten years, under Vladimir Putin's leadership, Russia has become more nationalistic, corrupt and corporatist. Its economy, although much bigger than a decade ago, is even more dependent on oil and gas, an industry now controlled by a small group of kleptocratic courtiers and former spies. The decision by Ikea, a well-known Swedish furniture supplier once bullish about Russia, to suspend investment because of graft is an indictment of the dire commercial climate. Its non-energy exports are smaller than Sweden's.
3. Russia's population is shrinking alarmingly, its death rate double that in most developed countries. Conflicts in its north Caucasus republics have flared again. Its armed forces are woefully ill-equipped and poorly trained. Mr. Putin has kept control by unleashing a virulent brand of anti-Western "patriotism"—the latest textbooks are as tough on America as they are soft on Stalin—and thuggishly silencing the opposition. Last year in a pretence of democracy Mr. Putin

installed Dmitry Medvedev (Mr. Obama's supposed host) as president while he himself became prime minister.

4. In the long term Mr. Putin's refusal to modernise his country will weaken Russia. Yet the place Mr. Obama has to deal with now is still a potent force. The largest country on earth, Russia stretches from Europe to China. It is the world's biggest producer of oil and gas. It has a seat on the UN Security Council and of course that nuclear arsenal. Above all it has the capacity to do both great harm and some good.
5. Recently, the harm has been more noticeable. Last year's invasion of Georgia, followed by Russia's decision to recognise South Ossetia and Abkhazia, was the clearest sign that Mr. Putin has given up any hope of joining the West. Since then he has slammed the door on the World Trade Organisation, opting instead for a no-doubt-mighty customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan. Russia has long criticised the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe for daring to highlight election malpractice. Now Mr. Medvedev is promoting a European security structure that would in effect give Russia a veto over any expansion of NATO. Countries such as Ukraine, in what Russia regards as its sphere of influence, are nervous. At the UN Russia has dragged its feet on sanctions against Iran and autocrats pretty much everywhere.
6. And yet Iran is also one of many examples of how Russian and American interests should coincide. Neither Mr. Obama nor Mr. Putin wants to see Iran emerge as a nuclear power, setting off a destabilising arms race in the Middle East. Both also want a stable Afghanistan, with al-Qaeda pushed out of sanctuaries there and in Pakistan: Russia has been a useful conduit for Western supplies and troops. Both have worked to safeguard nuclear and other weapons materials in the old Soviet Union and are co-operating usefully in other countries.
7. Mr. Bush's policy towards Russia was both confused and confusing. One moment he was looking into Mr. Putin's eyes and finding a man he could trust; the next he was preaching democracy while failing to lift cold-war economic restrictions. Mostly, though, he was not very interested in Russia—and it showed. Russia, self-esteem wounded, claimed that America was promoting democracy to further its geopolitical interests.
8. Mr. Obama's combination of calmness and humility could well help America deal with a country whose national pride is dangerously spiked with a sense of inferiority. But there are plenty of pitfalls ahead. America's president needs to resist the temptation to play on supposed differences between Mr. Putin and the more "liberal" Mr. Medvedev. These are more notional than real, as the farcical second show trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a former oil boss and a Putin rival, which is taking place on Mr. Medvedev's watch, demonstrates.
9. Robustness is necessary because of the widening gap between the interests of the Russian people and those of its ruling elite (the people who stoke anti-Americanism even as they send their offspring to Western universities and buy

up holiday homes in France). With the economy declining and social discontent rising, a stand-off with the West might be tempting for Mr. Putin’s cabal—but ruinous for most Russians.

10. Most of all, Mr. Obama needs to be firm over Russia’s ambitions to dominate the countries along its western and southern borders. Mr. Bush’s attempt to hurry Georgia and Ukraine into NATO, ready or not (they weren’t, and won’t be for a long time) was a mistake. But both countries, like all others in Europe, have the right to choose their own friends. Mr. Obama must make clear that he will not cut them adrift and will not tolerate attempts to destabilise their governments. Europeans could help too by diversifying their oil and gas supplies so that Russia is not tempted to turn off their taps either.
11. Ironically, given Mr. Obama’s difficulties in the Urals, the easiest place to start may be arms control. There is room to reduce further both sides’ warheads; it is also a subject that flatters Russia. But this is going to be an awkward relationship, one where the West’s expectations of success should be low.

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read the report titled *US - Russia Relations: Facing Reality Pragmatically* by Thomas Graham, available online at:

http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/080717_graham_u.s.russia.pdf

- Make a short presentation on the US – Russia relations based on the report, focusing on the section titled “Towards more constructive relations”.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Find each word in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Use context clues to determine the meaning of the word. Choose the best definition:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Detained (1) | a. held back | b. greeted |
| 2. Bullish (2) | a. optimistic | b. worried |
| 3. Flared (3) | a. stopped | b. broke out |
| 4. Virulent (3) | a. malicious | b. popular |
| 5. Slammed (5) | a. opened | b. closed |
| 6. Pitfalls (8) | a. enemies | b. traps |
| 7. Farcical (8) | a. ridiculous | b. solemn |
| 8. Cabal (9) | a. group | b. opponents |

B2. Match each of the idioms in the left column with a relevant definition in the right column.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. to drag one’s feet (5) | a. to have an opportunity |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2. get your foot in the door | b. to do nothing; to stand still |
| 3. get off on the wrong foot | c. to express one's dissatisfaction with something by leaving, especially by walking away |
| 4. put your foot down | d. to tell someone in a strong way that they must do something or that they must stop doing something |
| 5. put one's foot in one's mouth | e. to have a defect of character |
| 6. shoot oneself in the foot | f. to cause oneself difficulty; to be the author of one's own misfortune |
| 7. have feet of clay | g. to be slow to act on something, usually because you would prefer not to do it |
| 8. vote with one's feet | h. to sit down |
| 9. let grass grow under one's feet | i. to say something that you regret |
| 10. get some weight off one's feet | j. to begin doing something in a way that is likely to fail |

C. Comprehension

C1. Find the sentence in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Use context clues to answer the question that follows.

1. *“America’s president has every reason to hope things will go better this time, but that is not setting a very high hurdle for success” (1)*
What does the word “that” refer to?
2. *“Since then he has slammed the door on the World Trade Organisation, opting instead for a no-doubt-mighty customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan.” (5)*
What can be inferred about Russia’s relations with Belarus and Kazakhstan?
3. *“America’s president needs to resist the temptation to play on supposed differences between Mr. Putin and the more “liberal” Mr. Medvedev.” (8)*
Is Mr. Medvedev a truly liberal politician? Why?
4. *“Europeans could help too by diversifying their oil and gas supplies so that Russia is not tempted to turn off their taps either.” (10)*
What can be inferred about the oil and gas issue in Russia – Europe relations?
5. *“Ironically, given Mr. Obama’s difficulties in the Urals, the easiest place to start may be arms control.” (11)*

Why does the writer think it is **ironic** that arms control may be the easiest place to start?

6. *“There is room to reduce further both sides’ warheads; it is also a subject that flatters Russia.” (11)*

Why is arms control a subject that flatters Russia?

D. Summary

Please summarize the article in no more than 200 words.

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

Arms control

Arms control approaches the problem of curbing international violence from a different perspective from that of disarmament, its major conceptual competitor. It does not focus on reducing or eliminating the number of weapons in existence per se but tries to place restraints on the use of force. The guiding assumption behind arms control is that the root causes of international conflict lie in the political realm. Weapons aggravate tensions between states, but they do not cause them. Proponents of arms control further assume that in spite of their differences, potential enemies have an interest in cooperating so that the most damaging and disruptive features of a conflict will not come to pass.

Two principal forms of arms control agreements have been negotiated. The first involves agreements that are intended to avoid or to control crisis situations. One example is the Hot Line and Modernization Agreements (1963) that established direct radio, wire-telegraph, and satellite communications between the United States and the Soviet Union. A second example is the Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures (1984) that produced an agreement requiring all states to give two years’ advance notice of any large-scale military exercise, provide a calendar of out-of-garrison military maneuvers to which observers could be sent, and accept three verification challenges per year.

The second type of arms control agreement addresses the size and composition of military forces. The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I and II) are examples. Other examples include the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty that banned nuclear testing in the atmosphere, outer space, and underwater and placed restrictions on underground testing; the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty that sought to stop the spread of nuclear weapons to nonnuclear states; and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (1996) that has been signed but was rejected by the U.S. Senate.

Arms control agreements need not take the form of formally negotiated treaties. They may also consist of informally agreed upon “traffic rules” and unilateral actions undertaken in the spirit of self-restraint. An example of the former would be the

mutual announcements made by the United States and Russia after the Cold War that they would “detarget” their nuclear weapons. Examples of unilateral actions include General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev’s announcement that the Soviet Union would suspend its nuclear testing and Christmas bombing moratoriums by the United States during Vietnam.

From about 1946–57, disarmament proposals rather than arms control dominated the American foreign policy agenda. Although a change in outlook had already begun, the severity of the Cuban missile crisis caused policy makers to look beyond disarmament to arms control as a vehicle for reducing the threat of nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The high and low point of arms control were the SALT treaties. They were ambitious treaties to cap the number of nuclear missiles and warheads, but they did not bring about any real reduction in the size of the two nuclear arsenals. Compliance and verification problems in the management of arms control agreements also produced a sense of disenchantment with the products of lengthy arms control negotiations. Led by President Ronald Reagan, American officials began a two-pronged search for an alternative to arms control. One path led in the direction of renewed interest in disarmament and an effort to produce real reductions in nuclear arsenals. The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) symbolized this effort. The second path led in the direction of pursuing a viable defense against nuclear weapons. The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), or “Star Wars,” symbolized this quest.

Nuclear arms control has had a checkered history. In the words of one longtime observer it has had a series of “wins, losses, and draws.” Advocates credit it with having slowed the global arms race, helped avoid crises, and saved significant amounts of money. Critics argue that it served only to weaken the United States, making the country more vulnerable to Soviet pressure, and failed to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. The debate rages as strong as ever in the post-cold war era as arms control is forced to address new issues, such as the Chinese nuclear threat, the increased importance of multilateral over bilateral agreements, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, dual-use technologies, and the need to place curbs on the proliferation of conventional weapons. May 2003 saw Russia and the United States take a new step forward in arms control. That month the Russian parliament’s lower house ratified the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (also known as the Moscow Treaty), which was signed by U.S. president Bush and Russian president Vladimir Putin on May 24, 2002. The U.S. Senate had approved the treaty in March, but Russia delayed action due to its opposition to the Iraq War.

Source:

Glenn Hastedt. *Encyclopedia of American foreign policy*. New York: Facts on File, Inc. 2004. P 26.

Waking from its sleep

Jul 23rd 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

A quiet revolution has begun in the Arab world; it will be complete only when the last failed dictatorship is voted out



1. WHAT ails the Arabs? The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) this week published the fifth in a series of hard-hitting reports on the state of the Arab world. It makes depressing reading. The Arabs are a dynamic and inventive people whose long and proud history includes fabulous contributions to art, culture, science and, of course, religion. The score of modern Arab states, on the other hand, have been impressive mainly for their consistent record of failure.
2. They have, for a start, failed to make their people free: six Arab countries have an outright ban on political parties and the rest restrict them slyly. They have failed to make their people rich: despite their oil, the UN reports that about two out of five people in the Arab world live on \$2 or less a day. They have failed to keep their people safe: the report argues that overpowerful internal security forces often turn the Arab state into a menace to its own people. And they are about to fail their young people. The UNDP reckons the Arab world must create 50m new jobs by 2020 to accommodate a growing, youthful workforce—virtually impossible on present trends.
3. Arab governments are used to shrugging off criticism. They had to endure a lot of it when George Bush was president and America's neoconservatives blamed the rise of al-Qaeda on the lack of Arab democracy. Long practice has made Arab rulers expert at explaining their failings away. They point to their culture and say it is unsuited to Western forms of democracy. Or they point to their history, and say that in modern times they would have done much better

had they not had to deal with the intrusions of imperialists, Zionists and cold warriors.

4. Some of this is undeniable. A case can indeed be made that Islam complicates democracy. And, yes, oil, Israel and the rivalry between America and the Soviet Union meant that the Arab world was not left to find its own way after the colonial period ended. More recently the Arabs have been buffeted by the invasion of Iraq. Now they find themselves caught in the middle as America and Iran jostle for regional dominance.

Strangely, your highness, they like voting

5. Still, as the decades roll by the excuses wear thin. Islam has not prevented democracy from taking root in the Muslim countries of Asia. Even after its recent flawed election, Iran, a supposed theocracy, shows greater democratic vitality than most Arab countries. As for outside intrusion, some of the more robust Arab elections of recent years have been held by Palestinians, under Israeli occupation, and by Iraqis after America's invasion. When they are given a chance to take part in genuine elections—as, lately, the Lebanese were—Arabs have no difficulty understanding what is at stake and they turn out to vote in large numbers. By and large it is their own leaders who have chosen to prevent, rig or disregard elections, for fear that if Arabs had a say most would vote to throw the rascals out.
6. For this reason, you can bet that if the regimes have their way, Arabs will not get the chance. Arab rulers hold on to power through a cynical combination of coercion, intimidation and co-option. From time to time they let hollow parties fight bogus elections, which then return them to power. Where genuine opposition exists it tends to be fatally split between Islamist movements on one hand and, on the other, secular parties that fear the Islamists more than they dislike the regimes themselves. Most of the small cosmetic reforms Arab leaders enacted when Mr. Bush was pushing his “freedom agenda” on unwilling allies have since been rolled back. If anything, sad to say, the cause of democracy became tainted by association with a president most Arabs despised for invading Iraq.

The illusion of permanence

7. Can regimes that are failing their people so clearly really hold sway over some 350m people indefinitely? Hosni Mubarak has been Egypt's president for 28 years; Muammar Qaddafi has run Libya since 1969. When Hafez Assad died after three decades as president of Syria, power passed smoothly to his son Bashar. After the failure of Mr. Bush's efforts to promote democracy, and the debacle in Iraq, Barack Obama has put “respect” rather than “freedom” at the centre of America's discourse with the Muslim world. That may be wise: since the advent of Mr. Obama, America's standing has risen in Arab eyes, and Mr. Bush's zeal for reforming other countries was counterproductive anyway. But this suggests that if the Arabs want democracy, they will have to grab it for themselves.
8. Some in the West are wary of Arab elections, fearing that Islamists would exploit the chance to seize power on the principle of “one man, one vote, one

time”. Yet Islamists seem to struggle to raise their support much above 20% of the electorate. Non-Arab Muslim countries like Turkey and Indonesia suggest that democracy is the best way to draw the poison of extremism. Repression only makes it more dangerous.

9. Democracy is more than just elections. It is about education, tolerance and building independent institutions such as a judiciary and a free press. The hard question is how much ordinary Arabs want all this. There have been precious few Tehran-style protests on the streets of Cairo. Most Arabs still seem unwilling to pay the price of change. Or perhaps, observing Iraq, they prefer stagnation to the chaos that change might bring. But regimes would be unwise to count on permanent passivity. As our special report in this issue argues, behind the political stagnation of the Arab world a great social upheaval is under way, with far-reaching consequences.
10. In almost every Arab country, fertility is in decline, more people, especially women, are becoming educated, and businessmen want a bigger say in economies dominated by the state. Above all, a revolution in satellite television has broken the spell of the state-run media and created a public that wants the rulers to explain and justify themselves as never before. On their own, none of these changes seems big enough to prompt a revolution. But taken together they are creating a great agitation under the surface. The old pattern of Arab government—corrupt, opaque and authoritarian—has failed on every level and does not deserve to survive. At some point it will almost certainly collapse. The great unknown is when.

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read the article on the Arab World, available online at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_World
- Make a short presentation on the Arab World, focusing on the section titled “*Language, politics, religion and people*”.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Find each word in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Use context clues to determine the meaning of the word. Choose the best definition

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Slyly (2) | a. Skillfully | b. Clumsily |
| 2. Menace (2) | a. Reassurance | b. Threat |
| 3. Shrugging off (3) | a. Dismissing | b. Accepting |
| 4. Buffeted (4) | a. Rocked | b. Cheered |
| 5. Genuine (5) | a. Fake | b. Real |
| 6. Rascals (5) | a. Dishonest people | b. Honest people |

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 7. Bogus (6) | a. Fake | b. Genuine |
| 8. Secular (6) | a. Irreligious | b. Religious |
| 9. Tainted (6) | a. Promoted | b. Spoiled |
| 10. Prompt (10) | a. Stimulate | b. Prevent |

B2. Use context clues to match each of the phrases in the left column with a relevant definition in the right column

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Wear thin (5) | a. to have control or influence over a person or place |
| 2. Take root (5) | b. to make someone stop paying all their attention to something |
| 3. At stake (5) | c. in motion or progress |
| 4. Hold sway (7) | d. to become less effective |
| 5. To be under way (9) | e. in danger of being lost |
| 6. Break the spell (10) | f. to become established and accepted |

C. Comprehension

C1. Read the text again and decide whether each of the following statements is True (T), False (F) or Not Relevant (NR) if there's no information on the statement

- | | T/ F/ NR |
|---|----------|
| 1. The Arabs play an important role in the advance of human civilization. | |
| 2. Arab states turn out to be dangerous for their own people because of their overpowerful security forces. | |
| 3. If the present trend continues, it is unlikely that Arab states will create enough jobs for their growing work forces by 2020. | |
| 4. Arab governments are very receptive to criticism. | |
| 5. Mr. George W. Bush criticized some Arab states for harbouring terrorists. | |
| 6. Iran strives to dominate the region. | |
| 7. Palestine and Iraq are examples of how foreign intrusions may prevent the promotion of democracy | |
| 8. Arab leaders don't like democratic elections because they fear that they may lose power. | |
| 9. The fact that the cause of democracy in Arab states became tainted had nothing to do with President Bush. | |

10. Mr. Barrack Obama doesn't want to promote democracy in Arab states.
11. Turkey and Indonesia show that democracy can help to prevent extremism.
12. On average, Arab women give birth to more children than before.

C2. Answer the following questions

1. What does the title of the article mean?
2. What are the failures of Arab countries?
3. What are Arab rulers' excuses for their resistance to democracy?
4. Why are some in the West wary of Arab elections? Explain the principle of "one man, one vote, one time".
5. What's the attitude of most Arabs to democratic changes?
6. What are the factors leading to the highly possible collapse of the old pattern of Arab government in the future?

D. Summary

Please summarize the article in no more than 200 words.

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

Islamism and Reform

Across the Middle East, Arab leaders consistently cite the Islamist threat as a prime reason why they cannot risk pursuing political change. They warn that more open political systems will bring to power anti-Western, antidemocratic Islamist groups bent on imposing a theocracy. This warning, in turn, has consistently found a receptive audience in Washington. This is largely a function of Washington's unhappy experience during the Iranian Revolution of 1978–79, which placed U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf in jeopardy. In addition, the aborted Algerian elections of 1991–92 stoked fears within the foreign policy community that political change in the Middle East might foment instability, though it was the military that aborted the elections, setting the stage for Algeria's decade-long plunge into violence.

It is clear that Islamist organizations in the Middle East do not share U.S. goals for the region. At the same time, it is important to distinguish between violent extremist groups (such as al-Qaeda, Islamic Jihad, and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) and other Islamist organizations, including political parties, that have sought to pursue their agenda peacefully. These nonviolent

groups include Egypt's Hizb al-Wasat (Center Party), which has consistently failed to obtain legal recognition; the Islamic Action Front in Jordan; the al-Islah (Reform) Party in Yemen; Bahrain's al-Wefaq (Harmony); Morocco's Justice and Development Party; and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, the forebear of many of the Islamist organizations throughout the world. Moreover, it should be recognized that the United Iraqi Alliance—a coalition of Shi'a groups—is one of the leading Islamic democratic movements in the Middle East.

Complicating matters for U.S. policymakers is the existence of hybrid organizations such as Lebanon's Hizballah and Palestine's Islamic Resistance Movement, known by its Arabic acronym Hamas. These organizations are responsible for terrorist attacks that have killed thousands of Israelis, Americans, Europeans, and other Arabs. Hamas affiliated clerics exhort their followers throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip to engage in jihad and Hizballah's own satellite television network, al-Manar, preaches hate and incites Arabs across the region against both the United States and Israel. At the same time, however, both groups maintain effective social-service networks that have provided schooling, medical care, and other types of assistance for Palestinians and Lebanese in need. Both have also entered the legitimate political arena. Popularly elected Hizballah representatives have served in Lebanon's parliament since 1992. Although it sat out the Palestinian presidential elections in January 2005, Hamas has significant representation on Palestinian municipal councils and has indicated that it will participate in the Palestinian legislative elections.

Some Arab leaders assert that there is no difference among violent extremist groups, those which have pursued a constitutional strategy, and hybrids like Hamas and Hizballah. In one sense this is demonstrably true: Islamist organizations, by definition, desire the establishment of Islamic states based on shari'a. Some U.S. policymakers and Arab reformers fear that the promotion of democracy could lead to the replacement of one form of authoritarianism with another, i.e., the problem of "one man, one vote, one time." It is important to recognize that there is no incompatibility between being a devout Muslim and a democrat. Yet it is equally important to understand that while Islamist organizations may support democratic procedures as a route to power, they also tend to have a majoritarian view of democracy. This neglects a critical component of democracy: protection of minority rights.

Given the challenges that Islamist groups pose to the United States and its interests in the Middle East, the United States should pursue a four-pronged strategy toward these organizations:

1. Washington must continue to fight Islamist violence and use the full range of foreign policy tools to confront the immediate threat that al-Qaeda and its affiliates pose.
2. While Arab governments have legitimate security concerns, Washington should not accept the use of security as an excuse to justify the suppression of any peaceful political party or organization, including those that are Islamist. Although it is up to Arabs to determine who can participate in their respective political arenas, Washington should make clear to Arab leaders its view that any group willing to abide by the rules and norms of the democratic system -

nonviolence, tolerance of opposing views, respect for the rights of all citizens including women and racial and religious minorities, and the rule of law - should be permitted to participate in the political process.

3. Washington should not object to the peaceful political participation of Islamist groups that have been involved in violence in the past, provided they demobilize their military assets and demonstrate a credible commitment to all aspects of the democratic process. Policymakers must recognize, in any case, that armed organizations such as Hamas and Lebanese Hizballah are already participants in the democratic activities of their societies.
4. To mitigate the possibility that Islamist movements will overwhelm more open Middle Eastern political systems,
 - The United States should support fully competitive elections in parallel with the establishment of the rule of law, judicial independence, changes to electoral laws, and the empowerment of institutions to ensure accountability as well as transparency.
 - Washington should promote constitutional arrangements that would restrain the power of majorities to trample the rights of minorities. Most democracies have mechanisms such as an upper chamber of the legislature chosen on a specialized basis or a supreme court to guard against the “tyranny of the majority.” To be sure, these institutions already exist in some Arab countries, but they are often tools that institutionalize the power of the state. Truly independent high courts and safeguards to protect the prerogatives of upper houses of parliaments have the potential to prevent excesses by extremist groups.

In the end, U.S. policymakers must have a realistic sense of what is possible in developing a policy to deal with Islamist groups. Washington currently has little leverage with both violent and nonviolent Islamist groups. Islam plays a central role in Arab societies and Islamism has a powerful appeal throughout the Middle East. As a result, in more open Arab political systems, Islamist movements will likely play an important political role.

Source:

US Council on Foreign Relations. *In Support of Arab Democracy: Why and How*. 2005. Pp. 18-21.

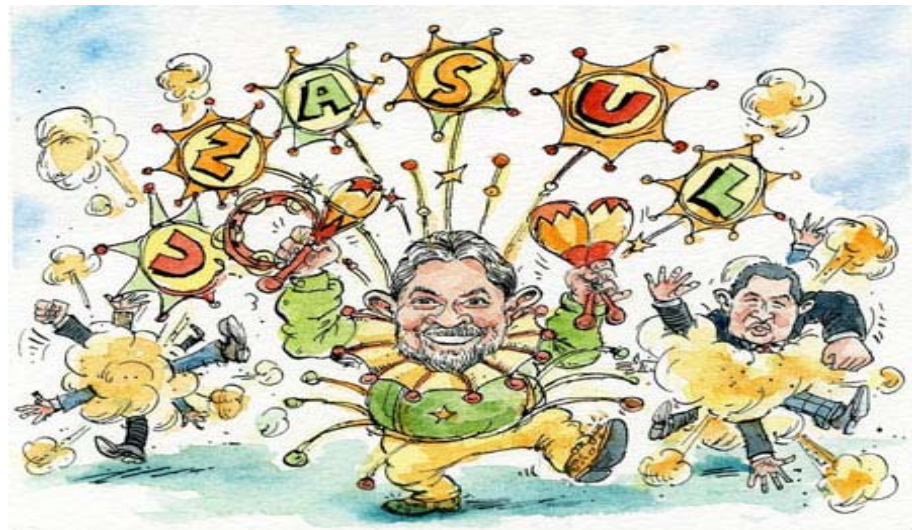
www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Arab_Democracy_TF.pdf

Lula and his squabbling friends

Aug 13th 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

A bold Brazilian attempt to integrate South America has run into difficulty. Critics at home say Brazil should put national interest over leftist ideology



1. WHEN the leaders of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUL in Portuguese), a 12-country group inspired by Brazil, met in Ecuador's capital, Quito, on August 10th, there was little spirit of union. Their meeting followed a row between Venezuela and Colombia, whose president, Álvaro Uribe, did not attend, in part because Ecuador broke off diplomatic relations with his country last year.
2. Hugo Chávez, Venezuela's president, backed by his allies, Bolivia and Ecuador, wanted to condemn Colombia for granting facilities at seven military bases to the United States, which is helping it battle guerrillas and drug-traffickers. "Winds of war are blowing," he thundered. Four countries, including Chile and Peru, backed Colombia. Brazil's president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, tried to damp down the dispute, suggesting that the group meet both Barack Obama and Mr Uribe to seek reassurances about the use of the bases. But then Mr Chávez launched a diatribe against Colombia and Mr Obama. Lula cut short his visit to Ecuador and headed home, giving warning that UNASUL could "cease to be an integration process, becoming just a group of friends." If only.
3. This fiasco provides fuel for both sides in a long-running debate in Brazil about the foreign policy of the Lula government. The critics, who include

- several senior former diplomats, accuse the government of placing ideology above Brazil's national interest—especially in policy towards South America.
4. Lula's predecessor, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, sought to boost trade and other ties with the United States and Europe. On taking office in 2003, Lula placed new stress on south-south ties. Brazil has doubled the number of its embassies in Africa, to 30, and joined or set up a clutch of new clubs. These include IBSA, with India and South Africa, of which Itamaraty, the foreign ministry, is especially proud.
 5. As evidence that this policy has borne fruit, Celso Amorim, the foreign minister, points out that most of Brazil's trade is now with developing countries, thus anticipating Mr Obama's advice that the world should not rely on the United States as consumer of last resort. He concedes that Brazil does not agree with the other big emerging powers on everything, but they do share an interest in trying to change the way that international institutions and the world economy are run.
 6. The critics see in some aspects of the government's diplomacy an implicit anti-Americanism. Lula got on well with George Bush even while disagreeing with many of his policies. Brazil's relations with the United States are correct, but oddly distant. Lula retains a soft spot for Cuba, perhaps because Fidel Castro helped him and his party when they were struggling against a military regime which, at its outset at least, had American backing.
 7. But the anti-Americanism comes from some aides more than from the president himself. He has promoted ultranationalists within Itamaraty. He gave responsibility for South America to Marco Aurélio Garcia, the foreign-relations guru of his Workers' Party. This was one of Lula's many balancing acts, compensating his left-wing base for its disappointment that he ignored them on economic policy.
 8. Brazil has successfully led the UN mission to stabilise Haiti. But in Lula's first term his advisers seemed to think they could integrate South America, against the United States and from the left. Several South American countries do not share their anti-Americanism. (One former Lula adviser derides them as "boy scouts" and as the equivalent of the collaborationist Vichy regime in wartime France.)
 9. Brazil embraced Hugo Chávez's Venezuela, inviting it to join the Mercosur trade block. The naivety of this approach became apparent when Bolivia, at Mr Chávez's urging, nationalised the local operations of Petrobras, Brazil's state-controlled oil company. In what has been called the "diplomacy of generosity" towards left-wing governments in its smaller neighbours, Brazil agreed to pay more for Bolivian gas. Last month it similarly agreed to pay Paraguay more for electricity from Itaipu, the hydroelectric dam they share.
 10. By common consent, policy towards South America has become more pragmatic in Lula's second term. In particular, Brazil's relations with Colombia have improved. Brazilian diplomats say privately that their aim is to

contain and moderate Mr Chávez. But Lula has often seemed to endorse him. Would Brazil ever criticise Mr Chávez for endangering democracy? “It’s not the way we work,” says Mr Amorim. “It’s not by being a loudspeaker that you change things.” Yet Brazilian officials were not shy about criticising Colombia’s military agreement with the United States.

11. Their critics argue that Brazil should seek to integrate South America on the basis of rules, rather than political sympathy, and that by proclaiming regional leadership it risks becoming the target of regional grievance. They also question the utility of UNASUL and its first project, a South American Defence Council. “To defend against what?” asks Mr Cardoso. Brazil’s armed forces did not propose the defence council, nor do they see the American presence in Colombia as a threat. “The United States isn’t attacking Latin America. Chávez threatens, he’s not being threatened,” says Mr Cardoso.

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read the article on Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, available online at:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luiz_Inácio_Lula_da_Silva
- Make a short presentation on Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Match each of the word in the left column with a definition in the right column

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Damp down (2) | a. Indirect, unspoken |
| 2. Diatribe (2) | b. reluctantly accept something to be true |
| 3. Fiasco (3) | c. to give public support to somebody or something |
| 4. Predecessor (4) | d. to control, restrain, or reduce the intensity of something |
| 5. Clutch (4) | e. humiliating failure |
| 6. Concede (5) | f. resentment, bitterness or anger |
| 7. Implicit (6) | g. influential expert |
| 8. Guru (7) | h. somebody who held a position or job before somebody else |
| 9. Deride (8) | i. more concerned with practical results than with theories and principles |
| 10. Pragmatic (10) | j. to show contempt for |
| 11. Endorse (10) | k. bitter verbal or written attack |
| 12. Grievance (11) | l. group |

B2. Choose a particle from the list to fill in the blanks in the following sentences

For example:

Lula get on well with George Bush even while disagreeing with many of his policies.

down; over; by; off; away with; through; at; after; to; across
--

1. She finally got _____ the divorce.
2. He tried to get _____ the cause of the problem.
3. The heat was getting me _____.
4. You should get _____ them to mow the lawn.
5. The mistake got _____ the editor, but the proofreader caught it.
6. We seem to be getting _____ the copier paper at an alarming rate.
7. I tried to get my point _____ to the audience.
8. You could get _____ a phone call, but it would be better to write.
9. Leave it with me; I'll get _____ it later today.
10. We have to get _____ at the crack of dawn tomorrow.

C. Comprehension

C1. Find the sentence in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Use context clues to answer the question that follows.

1. *Lula cut short his visit to Ecuador and headed home, giving warning that UNASUL could “cease to be an integration process, becoming just a group of friends.” If only.* (2)

What does the phrase “If only” imply in this context?

2. *These include IBSA, with India and South Africa, of which Itamaraty, the foreign ministry, is especially proud.* (4)

What does “IBSA” stand for?

3. *This was one of Lula’s many balancing acts, compensating his left-wing base for its disappointment that he ignored them on economic policy.* (8)

What can be inferred about Lula’s economic advisors?

4. *One former Lula adviser derides them as “boy scouts” and as the equivalent of the collaborationist Vichy regime in wartime France.* (8)

Explain this sentence.

5. *“It’s not the way we work,” says Mr Amorim. “It’s not by being a loudspeaker that you change things.”* (10)

What does the phrase “being a loudspeaker” mean?

C2. Read the text again and decide whether each of the following statements is True (T), False (F) or Not Relevant (NR) if there's no information on the statement.

- | | T/ F/ NR |
|--|----------|
| 1. Ecuador broke off diplomatic relations with Colombia in 2008. | |
| 2. Mr. Hugo Chavez blamed Colombia for helping the United States to wage war on Venezuela. | |
| 3. After becoming president in 2003, Lula paid more attention to promoting relations with developing countries. | |
| 4. Itamaraty did not have any role to play in the establishment of IBSA. | |
| 5. Brazil doesn't share the same views with the other big emerging powers on some international issues. | |
| 6. Brazil used to be ruled by a military regime. | |
| 7. All South American countries have anti-American policies. | |
| 8. Paraguay is currently ruled by a left-wing government. | |
| 9. UNASUL was established by a Brazilian initiative. | |
| 10. Colombia's military agreement with the United States is a serious threat to Brazil. | |

D. Summary

Please summarize the article in no more than 200 words.

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

The ghost at the conference table

Barack Obama will inject a new cordiality into relations with Latin America, but he will be judged on what he does on Cuba

THE last time the heads of government of the Americas got together, at the Argentine resort of Mar del Plata in November 2005, it was a fiasco. At a protest rally of 25,000 organised with the help of the hosts, Venezuela's Hugo Chávez spent more than two hours denouncing the United States and its plans for a Free-Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). At the meeting itself, 29 countries backed the trade plan, moribund though it was, and Mexico's president gave Mr Chávez a public earwiggling. George Bush and Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva left early and Argentina and Uruguay were not on speaking terms.

So the first aim of many of the 34 leaders who are due to assemble in Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, between April 17th and 19th, is to preserve the diplomatic niceties and create a better atmosphere in the Americas. In this they may well succeed. For the region's political landscape has changed. Most obviously, the United States now has in Barack Obama a president who is as widely admired in Latin America as Mr Bush was disliked. Mr Chávez is on the defensive, his socialist economy wounded as badly as any other by the world recession. The most divisive issue concerns the one country that is not invited. Latin America is now united in wanting to end the diplomatic isolation of Cuba, and many would like the United States to lift its long-standing economic embargo against the island.

That is because a transition of sorts is under way in Cuba, with Raúl Castro replacing his brother Fidel as president, even if there are no signs that this change will be matched by democracy supplanting communism. It is also because Latin America's many left-of-centre governments, to varying degrees, see friendship with Cuba as an issue of symbolic importance.

But for the United States, Cuba is a matter of domestic politics (as are nearly all the other issues that matter to Latin Americans, such as drugs and immigration). Mr Obama was poised to announce, ahead of the summit, the scrapping of curbs imposed by Mr Bush on visits and remittances to the island by Cuban-Americans. He may also allow American companies to sell Cuba communications gear, such as an undersea fibre-optic cable, according to an administration official.

Many Americans would like him to go further. Bills introduced last month in both houses of the United States Congress with strong bipartisan support would allow all Americans to travel to Cuba. Another would ease food sales to Cuba, already allowed under cumbersome conditions. But most supporters of these bills stop short of wanting to scrap the embargo altogether while Cuba still lacks political and economic freedoms. And an influential minority in the Democratic party opposes any change in policy.

In Trinidad, many Latin Americans are likely to call for Cuba to be readmitted to the Organisation of American States (OAS), which suspended its membership in 1962. That is not straightforward, since the OAS in 2001 committed its members to embrace and defend democracy. But as Peter Hakim of the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think-tank, points out, the governments could ask the OAS to undertake exploratory contacts with Cuba that fall short of its formal readmission.

Whether or not Mr Obama manages to defuse the Cuba question before arriving, he will be the centre of attention in Port of Spain. Since taking office he has held bilateral meetings with Brazil's Lula and with Canada's Stephen Harper. He saw Mexico's Felipe Calderón in January, and plans to visit him on his way to Trinidad. But for most of the other leaders it will be their first chance to meet Mr Obama.

Any substantive discussions will start with the financial crisis. Five of the region's leaders were at the G-20 meeting in London earlier this month. There may be more talk of mobilising emergency funds from the IMF and regional development banks. According to Jeffrey Davidow, an experienced diplomat brought in to co-ordinate

American preparations for the summit, Mr Obama will “focus on social inclusion and equity”. Those are themes that resonate with many Latin Americans.

So does co-operating on alternative energy and dealing with climate change. But this will not include any commitment from the United States to lift its tariff on Brazilian ethanol. Many Latin Americans would like to rethink the “war on drugs”, which they see as failing. Instead, there may be talk of beefing up anti-drug aid to Central America and the Caribbean, because of evidence that Mexico’s crackdown on drug gangs is driving the trade to neighbouring countries.

Caribbean leaders, many of whose economies are acutely vulnerable to the financial crisis, are requesting a separate meeting with Mr Obama. For Trinidad, the summit is a chance to promote itself as a Caribbean hub. But it is a small one: with hotels swamped, many summiteers are staying in specially-chartered cruise ships.

Administration officials insist that Mr Obama is keen “to listen” to the neighbours. Brazil stresses that the Americans should respect the political “diversity” of Latin America. Whether some of the more radical leftist leaders in the region will be conciliatory is not clear. Mr Chávez is meeting several of his allies in Venezuela prior to the summit. While saying that he wants to “reset” Venezuela’s relations with the United States, he may also try to stage a political ambush of Mr Obama.

Even if all goes more smoothly than in Mar del Plata, the balance of power in the Americas has subtly changed. Brazil has become more assertive, and its priority is to be the dominant power in South America. For Brazil, the summit is a “non-event”, says Rubens Barbosa, a former Brazilian ambassador to Washington. It sees the Summits of the Americas—the first one was called by Bill Clinton in 1994—as an American rather than a Brazilian project, indissolubly linked to the doomed FTAA.

Under Mr Calderón, Mexico wants to play a more active role in the region, but is preoccupied with drug violence and recession. Brazil and Mexico often see each other as rivals rather than allies. But the summit may confound those who exaggerate the declining clout of the United States in the region. “The summit is a one-man show. The spotlight is on Obama. Nobody else matters,” says Mr Hakim.

Source: The Economist print edition, Apr 8th 2009

Unit 8 - Vocabulary check

No.	Verb	Noun	Adjective	Note
1.	Eg. Triumph	Triumph Triumphalism	Triumphal	

Unit 8 - Analysis

Is there any word in the reading text that I don't understand?

Have I fully understood the text?

Points that I need to clarify:

-
-

Has my summary captured main points of the reading text?

Is my translation of the reading text clear, comprehensible and well-written?

Dragon nightmares

Apr 16th 2009

From *The Economist* print edition

The European Union finds it hard to agree over how to deal with China



1. HERE is a quick way to spoil a Brussels dinner party. Simply suggest that world governance is slipping away from the G20, G7, G8 or other bodies in which Europeans may hog up to half the seats. Then propose, with gloomy relish, that the future belongs to the G2: newly fashionable jargon for a putative body formed by China and America.
2. The fear of irrelevance haunts Euro-types, for all their public boasting about Europe's future might. The thought that the European Union might not greatly interest China is especially painful. After all, the 21st century was meant to be different. Indeed, to earlier leaders like France's Jacques Chirac, a rising China was welcome as another challenge to American hegemony, ushering in a "multipolar world" in which the EU would play a big role. If that meant kow-towing to Chinese demands to shun Taiwan, snub the Dalai Lama or tone down criticism of human-rights abuses, so be it. Most EU countries focused on commercial diplomacy with China, to ensure that their leaders' visits could end with flashing cameras and the signing of juicy contracts.
3. Meanwhile, Europe's trade deficit with China hit nearly €170 billion (\$250 billion) last year. China has erected myriad barriers to European firms, notes a scathing new audit of EU-China relations by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), a think-tank. The trend is ominous. In five years, China wants 60% of car parts in new Chinese vehicles to be locally made. This is alarming news for Germany, the leading European exporter to China thanks to car parts, machine tools and other widgets.

4. As ever, Europeans disagree over how to respond. Some are willing to challenge China politically—for example, Germany, Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands. But they are mostly free traders. That makes them hostile when other countries call for protection against alleged Chinese cheating. In contrast, a block of mostly southern and central Europeans, dubbed “accommodating mercantilists” by the ECFR, are quick to call for anti-dumping measures. But that makes them anxious to keep broader relations sweet by bowing to China on political issues.
5. The result is that European politicians often find themselves defending unconditional engagement with China. The usual claim is that this will slowly transform the country into a freer, more responsible stakeholder in the world. The secret, it is murmured, is to let Europe weave China into an entangling web of agreements and sectoral dialogues. In 2007 no fewer than 450 European delegations visited China. Big countries like France and Britain add their own bilateral dialogues, not trusting the EU to protect their interests or do the job properly. There are now six parallel EU and national “dialogues” with China on climate change, for example.
6. Alas, familiarity with Europeans does not preclude contempt. EU-China dialogues on human rights or the rule of law are a way of tying Europeans down with process, avoiding substance. China abruptly cancelled an EU-China summit scheduled for last December. The astonishing snub was presented by Chinese diplomats as punishment for France’s Nicolas Sarkozy for meeting the Dalai Lama when his country held the rotating presidency of the EU (with other EU countries left to take note).
7. Chinese interest in the EU peaked in 2003, when it looked as if the club would soon acquire a constitution, a foreign minister and a full-time president. But the honeymoon had ended by 2006, after China failed to get the EU to lift an arms embargo imposed after the Tiananmen Square killings of 1989. At policy seminars and closed-door conferences, state-sponsored Chinese analysts now drip condescension. America is a strong man and China a growing teenager, said one at a 2008 conference in Stockholm; Europe is a “rich old guy”, heading for his dotage. At a recent Wilton Park conference in Britain, a Chinese academic called the EU a weak power, unprepared to challenge American hegemony: China was not about to work with it on a new world order.

Unity meets disunity

8. If you wanted to design a competitor to show up European weaknesses most painfully, you would come up with something a lot like China. It is a centralised, unitary state, which is patient and relentless in the pursuit of national goals that often matter more to the Chinese than anyone else. European governments do not even agree on what they want from China. They are fuzzily committed to EU “values”, but will readily trample on those in a scramble to secure jobs and cheap goods for their voters. They do not share

the same vision of trade policy, or how best to press China on climate change. Worse, the biggest countries, especially France, Germany and Britain, compete to be China's favourite European partner. This causes damage. It was mad that the British and Germans did not rush to back Mr. Sarkozy when he was bullied over the Dalai Lama. They could easily have insisted that EU leaders meet whomsoever they want.

9. Yet talk of a "Chi-merican" G2 running the world is overblown. For one thing, China will probably prefer to keep its own global options open. For another, senior Brussels figures rightly insist that the EU's voice cannot be ignored in global economic discussions. It is China's largest trading partner, after all, with two-way trade worth a huge €300 billion.

10. Ideally, European governments would be less feeble and fractious. Failing that, Europe could set itself more modest goals. Chinese officials are reportedly fascinated by European welfare and public-health systems, as well as by EU product regulation. Providing a model for red-tape or welfare reform may not be as much fun as jointly running a multi-polar world. But with its pathetic record of handling partners such as China, Europe should welcome recognition of its relevance, however it is offered.

A. Pre-reading Group Presentation

- Read the article on the history of the European Union, available online at:
http://www.delchn.ec.europa.eu/eugu_basi1_hist1.htm

- Make a short presentation on the history of the European Union.

B. Vocabulary

B1. Match each of the word/ phrase in the left column with a definition in the right column

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Hog (1) | a. introduce or lead up to something |
| 2. Putative (1) | b. treat somebody rudely |
| 3. Usher in (1) | c. disdain, arrogance, haughtiness |
| 4. Shun (2) | d. threatening |
| 5. Snub (2) | e. irritable and likely to complain |
| 6. Scathing (3) | f. take more of something than is fair or |
| 7. Ominous (7) | polite center |
| 8. Preclude (6) | g. avoid somebody intentionally |
| 9. Drip (7) | h. lack of strength or concentration |
| 10. Condescension (7) | i. pitiful, contemptible |
| 11. Dotage (7) | j. generally accepted |

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 12. Trample (8) | k. highly critical |
| 13. Fractious (10) | l. let out something, particularly an emotion, in great quantity |
| 14. Pathetic (10) | m. prevent |
| | n. tread heavily on something or somebody so as to cause damage or injury |

C. Comprehension

C1. Find the sentence in the paragraph indicated in the parentheses. Use context clues to answer the question that follows.

1. *Here is a quick way to spoil a Brussels dinner party. (1)*
 What does “Brussels” imply?
2. *After all, the 21st century was meant to be different. (2)*
 According to the author, in which way is the 21st century different?
3. *If that meant kow-towing to Chinese demands to shun Taiwan, snub the Dalai Lama or tone down criticism of human-rights abuses, so be it. (2)*
 What is “it” in this context?
4. *That makes them hostile when other countries call for protection against alleged Chinese cheating. (4)*
 What do “them” and “other countries” refer to, respectively? Why are the former hostile to the latter’s call for protection against Chinese cheating?
5. *In contrast, a block of mostly southern and central Europeans, dubbed “accommodating mercantilists” by the ECFR, are quick to call for anti-dumping measures (4).*
 What does the phrase “accommodating mercantilists” mean?
6. *But that makes them anxious to keep broader relations sweet by bowing to China on political issues. (4)*
 What does “them” refer to? Why are they anxious to bow to China on political issues?
7. *EU-China dialogues on human rights or the rule of law are a way of tying Europeans down with process, avoiding substance. (6)*
 In the author’s opinion, are dialogues on human rights or the rule of law useful? Explain.

8. *The astonishing snub was presented by Chinese diplomats as punishment for France’s Nicolas Sarkozy for meeting the Dalai Lama when his country held the rotating presidency of the EU (with other EU countries left to take note).* (6)

Explain the phrase “with other EU countries left to take note”.

9. *Yet talk of a “Chi-merican” G2 running the world is overblown.* (9)

Why is the talk of a “Chi-merican” G2 running the world overblown?

10. Explain the title of the article and the illustration.

C2. Read the text again and decide whether each of the following statements is True (T), False (F) or Not Relevant (NR) if there’s no information on the statement.

T/ F/ NR

1. Earlier European leaders laid more emphasis on the political aspect of the relations with China.
2. European firms have no difficulty in penetrating Chinese market.
3. Sweden has a protectionist trade policy.
4. Anti-dumping measures are associated with mercantilist trade policies.
5. European politicians hope engagement with China will transform the country for the better.
6. China wanted to conduct separate national dialogues on climate change with EU members to weaken the Union’s position on the issue.
7. EU has abandoned its plan to adopt a constitution.
8. EU imposed an arms embargo on China following the Tiananmen Square killings of 1989.
9. EU is divided over how to deal with China.
10. The author highly appreciates the way Europe handles China

D. Summary

Please summarize the article in no more than 200 words.

E. Translation

Please translate the article into Vietnamese.

F. Further reading

The Sino-European encounter:

Historical influences on contemporary relations

Michael Yahuda

Independent relations since the end of the Cold War

The end of the Cold War brought to an end the bipolar structure of international politics which had shaped and constrained the character of relations between Chinese and Europeans in the previous four decades. To be sure, that structure had become less clear-cut in the last few years of the 1980s as the Soviet Union under the leadership of Gorbachev had begun to loosen its attachment to long-held Cold War positions and as Chinese policies of economic reform and opening up to the outside world were beginning to change the basis of China's relationship with the capitalist world. Nevertheless, the actual end of the Cold War brought about fundamental changes to world politics and economics that opened up new opportunities for China and Europe to deepen and expand their relationship on terms that owed little to third parties.

The immediate focus of the two sides was coming to terms with what might be termed the "domestic after-effects" of the Cold War, with the fortuitous result that each side was better placed to deal with the other. As China's leaders reestablished tight control over their country and began to improve relations with immediate neighbours, Deng Xiaoping's "Southern Tour" in 1992 overrode most of his colleagues to press ahead still further with rapid economic growth based on economic reforms and opening-up. The Europeans, for their part, began to firm up some of the political dimensions of their union, which had hitherto been dominated by the economic and trade dimensions. The European Community had been making progress in developing common positions on foreign policy especially towards the end of the 1980s, but the end of the Cold War bloc in Europe, the unification of Germany and the appearance of post-communist governments in the former Eastern Europe injected new momentum that found expression in the Treaty of Maastricht of 1992 that gave institutional form to a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of what was now called the European Union.

For their part, China adapted rapidly to the end of the Cold War in Europe by reestablishing diplomatic relations with the post-communist states of Eastern Europe. Although Beijing's principal objective was to forestall Taipei from making diplomatic inroads into the new Europe, China's quick acceptance of the new realities facilitated the improvement of relations with the EU once the immediacy of Tiananmen had begun to fade. In any event trade relations had not been broken off and by 1990 European leaders were beginning to appear in Tiananmen Square, notably the British Prime Minister, whose visit was deemed vital to securing a Chinese agreement on Hong Kong matters, whose impending transfer back to China had been agreed in 1984.

In response to the international impact of the fast-growing Chinese economy and to the emergence of East Asia as a new centre of the international economy, the European Commission, as the executive arm of the EU, issued its first policy paper in 1993 on an Asian strategy that was in fact centred on China. Although the paper was produced at the initiative of Germany and France it expressed a common EU view. Free of the difficulties and divisions that beset the Europeans nearer to home, distant China offered new opportunities primarily for trade and commerce, but also as a place where the EU could put into practice many of the policies which were emerging as part of its CFSP. Namely, encouraging the development of good governance through the rule of law, assistance in tackling environmental problems, poverty alleviation, training and assistance in management and in technology transfers, promoting democracy and the expansion of civil society, and so on.

Collectively and separately the Europeans have devoted significant resources to these endeavours. The ultimate goal was to deepen China's participation in the international system and to promote its emergence as a responsible great power that observed the norms and principles of international society. In so far as the Europeans had a larger goal for world order it was for a system that would be characterized by observance of international law and regulations as agreed in multilateral institutions. In that sense the EU approach towards China has been reasonably consistent as one of the key places where a distinctive EU voice would emerge. Meanwhile relations between the Europeans and the Chinese took place both at the level of the EU and at the level of the separate states. As in earlier periods, the three major states – France, Germany and Britain – were the key players in the relationship. The successful handover of Hong Kong by Britain to China in 1997 helped to reduce lingering Chinese suspicion of British (and by implication European and Western) sincerity regarding their professed support for China's rise as a major player in world affairs. The handover of Macau by Portugal in 1999 brought to an end the remaining European imperial toehold in China. Although these matters were settled on a bilateral basis by China with each of the two European states, it was at the EU level where negotiations of terms of trade took place and where the key points of the relationship with China were defined for all members of the EU.

The EU and the Chinese have since been able to institutionalize the easier and less problematic dimensions of their relationship, which by 2004 both agreed to call a “strategic partnership.” But that was only after what the Chinese found were surprisingly tough negotiations with the EU over the terms of its entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001. The following year the Chinese government published a “White Paper” on their relations with Europe, the first time they had done so with regard to any country or region. By 2004 the value of EU–China trade exceeded both that of China's trade with the US and with Japan, and China ranked as the EU's second most valuable trading partner after the US. As to be expected, there were some disagreements about trade – as in fact is common between all major trading partners – but they did not dent the progress of relations.

It took the issue of the lifting of the arms embargo to bring to the fore some of the underlying limits on the character of the new EU–China relationship. Two factors in particular came into play: first, the weakness of the EU as a coherent international actor and second, the difference in the Chinese and the European approaches to the global role of the United States as the world's only superpower. The EU may have the

institutional mechanisms to operate as a unitary actor in negotiating terms of international trade, but that does not apply as yet to broader foreign and security policy. Yet reminiscent of their view of the role of Western Europe in the Cold War in the 1970s and early 1980s, China saw the EU as an independent political centre that could help them to check the policies of the dominant power in the international system that they saw as an adversary, actual or potential. China's leaders portrayed the world as undergoing economic globalization while becoming politically multipolar. The burgeoning economic relations with the EU were seen as part of the process of globalization, but what the Chinese sought was EU acceptance of China's multipolar vision in which the EU would become a separate pole, independent of the US.

France shared this view, as did Germany under Chancellor Schroeder to a certain extent, and together they were the most important advocates for lifting the embargo. Many in the EU bureaucracy also shared this view insofar as they held that the EU should articulate an independent voice in world affairs, coupled with its own defence force, that would inevitably be separate from, if not opposed to, the United States. However, Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden and some of the new EU members objected sometimes for different reasons – reflecting the diversity of the priorities in foreign policy by European states. Britain and some others objected in principle to the vision of a multipolar world with the EU as a separate pole. Others such as Sweden objected to lifting the arms embargo on the grounds that China had not yet done enough to improve its human rights record. Interestingly, the Chinese side did not proceed to ratify the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights even though many in the EU suggested that that would have eased the way to lift the embargo.

Meanwhile, a new source of friction has developed in Sino-European relations as the depth of their economic relationship is beginning to hurt vested domestic economic interests in Europe. The rapid development of Chinese exports in certain consumer goods has given rise to demands that they be curtailed. But perhaps more importantly, they have accentuated fears of the malevolent effects of globalization in some European countries – fears that were a factor in the rejection of the European constitution in referendums in France and the Netherlands in 2005. Additionally, the European emphasis on the promotion of good governance, especially in Third World countries, is encountering new difficulties as a consequence of the different approach adopted by their Chinese partners. Professing the principle of non-interference, a resurgent China has cultivated regimes in developing countries in its pursuit of energy and other raw materials without regard to the character of the regimes or their treatment of their own citizens.

Thus, despite forging an independent relationship, which both sides continue to see as vital to their interests, the Europeans have found themselves constrained by their obligations to allies whose national security interests are more directly affected by China's rise. In many respects it may be argued that up until this point Sino-European relations enjoyed a free ride as there was no clash of major interests between them. But now in addition to the problem over the arms embargo, the difficulties of adjusting to some of the effects of globalization in Europe are also causing problems in Sino-European relations. Perhaps it may be argued that these apparent setbacks are signs of the mature stage reached by the relationship. In a world in which issues of security and economic change cannot be confined to any of its individual regions

without affecting the others, it is to be expected that EU – Chinese relations could be free of friction. The next stage of their relationship should show how their strategic dialogue, begun in 2005, and new Framework Agreement negotiations begun in 2006, can deal with these problems.

Source:

David L. Shambaugh. (2008). *China–Europe Relations: Perceptions, Policies and Prospects*. New York: Routledge. Pp. 26-9.

