

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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RANDI WEINGARTEN HOSTS INSTITUTE CONVERSATION ON CIVIC EDUCATION

A remarkable group of researchers, policymakers, journalists, and other leaders gathered in Washington, D.C., on May 3 for a thoughtful, in-depth discussion of civic education in the United States sponsored by the Albert Shanker Institute.

The conversation, led by AFT and Shanker Institute president Randi Weingarten, touched on a wide range of issues pertaining to civic education, including what it means for democracy and political participation, how to expand coverage of the topic in U.S. schools' curricula, and the arguments for doing so.

Participants brought a wide range of perspectives and experiences to the table. Among those attending were National Endowment for the Humanities chairman Jim Leach; Brookings Institution senior fellow William Galston; NEA president Dennis Van Roekel; former Republican congressman Mickey Edwards; Washington Post education reporter Valerie Strauss; Newark Public Schools superintendent Clifford Janey; AT&T senior vice president Charlene Lake; Core Knowledge Foundation chairman E.D. Hirsch Jr.; and Ernest Green, a member of the "Little Rock Nine," the group of African-American students who integrated Little Rock public schools in 1957.

Although much of the discussion was focused on civic education in the K-12 context, participants paid significant attention to the fact that imparting this knowledge is also the responsibility of parents, the mass media, and communities.

There was relative consensus on two things: attention to the role public schools play in the education of well-prepared citizens has been overshadowed by

decades-old arguments over how to boost test scores; and there was a general sense that this is having a corrosive effect on the substance and tenor of democratic discourse in the nation.

The depth and breadth of the participants' knowledge and experience fostered a lively discussion on these points. Some participants focused on the relationship between civic education and measurable effects such as voter turnout and news consumption, while others discussed a perceived decline in the public's understanding of and support for policies that promote the common good.

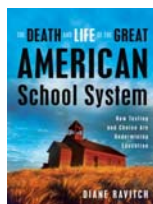


Another interesting set of comments addressed whether and how the current national focus on math and reading has helped to

push subjects like civics out of the curriculum, and whether mandatory assessments of history and civics would help. While some participants supported this idea, others were more skeptical—expressing hesitation about introducing yet more testing into U.S. public education, and arguing that civics tests might only serve to make the subject matter more rigid and less interesting for teachers and students alike.

Several possibilities for action were raised, including more frequent NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) assessments, federal legislation, and the development of common core state standards for civics. Although there was some healthy debate about the most effective course to take, all participants agreed that something needs to be done and that civic education needs to play a bigger role in U.S. public education, public policy, and family and community discourse.

ASI CO-HOSTS DIANE RAVITCH BOOK RECEPTION



Shanker Institute board member and noted education historian Diane Ravitch, whose new book has created a big stir in education policy circles, was the main attraction at a March 15th event hosted by the institute and AFT.

The reception, discussion and book signing for Ravitch, who served as a U.S. Department of Education official in the first Bush administration, celebrated the release of *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*.

Continued on page 2

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1: RAVITCH BOOK RECEPTION

Ravitch's message was clear: Policymakers must exercise judgment or the tools of school improvement will continue to usher in a "warped" vision of education reform, one based on limited tests of basic skills, misapplied market models and a life-raft approach to what should rightfully be a community/public enterprise. Less than two weeks into its release, her book is already in its third printing and is serving as a strong cautionary tale filled with implications for the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

While policymakers are finding the book to be a must-read, Ravitch told the ASI/AFT audience that the most enthusiastic readers seem to be teachers, hundreds of whom have e-mailed her about the work. They tell me, "Thank God someone is finally speaking up for us," she said, because teachers feel like their voices aren't being heard in discussions about reforming public education.

"The testing and accountability movement is feeding right into the frenzy to privatize public education," she said. Many reformers—or "deformers," as she called them at the ASI/AFT event—have promoted a narrow curriculum, a belief that "everybody is on their own" when it comes to children's education, and "the illusion of progress through statistical game-playing." As currently practiced in schools and districts, testing, choice and accountability "have taken us farther away from the goal of education."

Ravitch also cited failings in the current rendition of ESEA, the No Child Left Behind Act, and a climate where policymakers have forgotten that "testing and choice are means; they are not ends." That landscape has been fertile ground for "red herrings" in school reform, such as the belief that the road to improvement lies in dismantling teachers unions and wholesale firing of teachers. "I don't believe in blowing up schools and systems."

Randi Weingarten lauded Ravitch's strong defense of public education, and urged policymakers to be mindful of public schools and their unique mission in a nation that still embraces the twin concepts of universal access and the promise of universal attainment, regardless of students' backgrounds. "The bottom line is that the neighborhood school has a moral obligation to take all comers," she said. That sets them apart from niche reforms like charters, and it should have great bearing on lawmakers when they take up legislation like ESEA, the nation's fundamental pledge of federal help when it comes to leveling the playing field for all students.

INSIDE THE INSTITUTE NEWS

INSTITUTE'S COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS TO EXPAND



Except in the case of published reports, The Shanker Institute has not made a focused effort to draw more public and policy attention to its issues and events. Over the next year, we plan to change that using two general types of activities.

First, we will expand and improve our use of communication media. This will

include more content and regular updating of our website, as well as a blog. The blog (currently in the design phase) will be a forum for thoughtful and evidence-based discussion of labor, education, and democracy.

The second general type of activity is to more actively build on the issues and ideas coming out of conversations and seminars by creating listserv communication with attendees, organizing follow-up meetings and commissioning papers, policy briefs, survey research, and other types of products. The purposes of these papers and follow-ups

would be to inform policymakers and spread good information and thinking across the research and policy communities. These additional communication strategies should increase the impact of our events, strengthen and expand our contacts in multiple circles, and promote ideas that the Institute supports.

NEW STAFFER

As of April 2010, the Shanker Institute has added a new staff member. Senior Fellow Matthew Di Carlo comes to us from the AFT Research Department, where he started in May 2008. Matt's focus is on quantitative analysis, and he is involved in a wide variety of issues, including teacher compensation, value-added methodology, and charter schools. Prior to joining AFT, Matt was a graduate student at Cornell University, where he was also an organizer in a campaign to unionize research and teaching assistants. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Cornell in 2008. You can reach him at mdicarlo@ashankerinst.org.

EDUCATION

FIFTH GOOD SCHOOLS SEMINAR TAKES ON TEACHER EVALUATION

Teacher evaluation—one of the most hotly-debated issues in K-12 education—was the topic of the Albert Shanker Institute's fifth "Good Schools Seminar," held April 27-28 in Washington, D.C.

The Institute's seminar brought together some of the foremost experts on evaluation, as well as teams of local leaders and administrators from 12 different school districts.

The participants, all from districts that had already demonstrated success in working collaboratively, included teams from the ABC district in California; Baltimore; Douglas County, Colo.; Hillsborough, Fla.; New Orleans; Newark, N.J.; North Allegheny, Pa.; North Suburban, Ill.; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; St. Paul, Minn.; and Waterford, Conn.

The seminar's purpose was to inform these labor-management teams about the latest research in the field, and to create a lasting network of reformers who are willing to work together to bring about effective change in U.S. public education.

The seminar provided an incredible deluge of information, and this was deliberate. Not only are the technical and practical issues surrounding evaluation reform complex, but the political pressures and difficulties in maintaining productive partnerships between teacher unions and district administrators are as well.

The seminar opened with Peg Goertz, from the Consortium for Policy Research in Education and the University of Pennsylvania, and Peter McWalters, from the Council of Chief State School Officers.

They provided an overview of how states are currently changing the way they use test data in evaluations, mostly as a result of federal funds made available through the Race to the Top program and the broad state support for a new set of Common Core State Standards developed by the National Governors Association and the CCSSO. The speakers also speculated on the potential impact of new assessment designs that will emerge from consortia of states that receive federal funding for assessment development.

She congratulated the district and union leaders for their willingness to work together constructively during such a volatile period—one in which blame-placing is all too easy—and emphasized the need to inform teachers adequately about the new evaluation systems, the importance of using multiple measures other than student test scores in judging teacher effectiveness, and the political pressures surrounding these reforms.



GOOD SCHOOLS

The seminar ended with three labor-management teams—from Douglas County, Colo., Pittsburgh, and Hillsborough, Fla. — reporting on how they developed their collaborative approaches and where they hope to take their current reforms. These teams offered the attendees serious lessons about reform strategies that can lead to improved student achievement.

Barnett Berry, of the Center for Teaching Quality, took on the issue of how changes in teacher evaluation should interact with effective curricula, standards and tests. The fact that all of these are in the process of being changed simultaneously will make it difficult to ensure compatibility across state and district implementation, but participants seemed to agree that this is essential.

Presentations by Drew Gitomer, from the Educational Testing Service, and Daniel Willingham, from the University of Virginia, emphasized both the prospects and limitations of using technically difficult methods in evaluations, such as value-added models.

In the first of the final two sessions, AFT and Institute president Randi Weingarten shifted focus to the voices and concerns of teachers, and the critical importance of labor-management collaboration in designing and implementing evaluation systems.

EDUCATION CONTINUED

INSTITUTE HOSTS CONVERSATION ON CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Education reform will fail a vast number of U.S. students unless the role of career and technical education (CTE, formerly called vocational education) is reconsidered, recast and placed in the mainstream of K-12 curriculum design. These were some of the conclusions of a small group of top federal and state policymakers, educators, business and labor leaders, practitioners, researchers and other workforce experts who took part in an informal Conversation on Feb. 17, hosted by AFT president Randi Weingarten and sponsored by the Albert Shanker Institute.

Weingarten was joined at the meeting by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan; West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin; West Virginia First Lady Gayle Manchin, who is a member of the state board of education; and White House special counselor for manufacturing Ron Bloom; as well as other policymakers, scholars and specialists.

The meeting, titled "Modernizing Career and Technical Education, High School's Neglected Resource for Comprehensive Postsecondary Preparation," was the first in a series of conversations led by Weingarten and hosted by the Shanker Institute. These informal meetings are designed to promote frank discussion about critical questions in American education and public policy. The bipartisan conversations include individuals with differing viewpoints on the issue at hand, and are designed, in part, as a response to the current, very polarized political environment in the nation's capital. The conversation format assumes the expertise of all participants, and emphasizes the personal exchange of views and analysis. It was a private gathering, with no formal presentations and no press.

The initial discussion featured spirited exchanges on the role of CTE, noting that CTE historically has been accorded second-class status in American education, despite the increasing expectations for job expertise, the high labor market demand for skills, and the excellent wages that are often available for job credentials based on them. The participants also noted that secondary school programs aimed at prepar-



Randi Weingarten chats with West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin and his wife Gayle.
(photograph by Michael Campbell)

ing students for careers, and the postsecondary training that is often required, have a record of reducing dropout rates, especially among the most disadvantaged and at-risk youth. There is a clear record of postsecondary educational achievement for graduates of strong technical high schools. In other words, a high-quality CTE program that incorporates rigorous math and English instruction, taught in a "ready for work" context, can be a solid foundation for success at both two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions.

Still, the history of CTE as a default placement for disadvantaged and struggling students, and the mantra of "college for all," has led to suspicion by some minority and working-class families that their children are being unfairly "tracked" into poor programs, without being given an "equal opportunity to learn." One response to this dilemma that has gained some traction in

the policy community is to explain the need for multiple, high-quality pathways. This idea recognizes that there can be more than one road to educational and occupational achievement, and encourages the development of rigorous coursework that is presented in a career or occupational, as well as an academic context. The increasingly technical and quantitative skills required by the modern economy, in fact, demand unrelenting attention to student performance and achievement, which cannot be sacrificed in any educational setting.

Some experts also noted that, in the world's highest-achieving nations, there is a heavy emphasis on career, vocational and occupational education. While students in those countries take achievement tests (and do better than U.S. students, typically), the focus is on skills, and achievement for its own sake, not simply test results. Students are taught to take pride in the concrete skills they master, to respect those skills in others, and to accept that it takes hard work to achieve their occupational aspirations.

The participants discussed and debated a number of other issues, such as the role of business in education, the efficacy of expanding school hours, leveraging private-sector resources effectively, the importance of middle school achievement, and the proper role of testing and accountability. At the conversation's end, participants agreed that they wanted to continue this dialogue, and that a report of the substance of the discussion would be written and circulated among the group for comment and recommendations for further action.

DEMOCRACY

SHANKER INSTITUTE HELPS SPREAD DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION IN IRAN

A “civic activism” website offering Iranian democrats online courses and interactive learning tools on civic leadership, democratic institutions, cyber-security and more was launched recently by the Center for Liberty in the Middle East (CLIME). The website incorporates a translated (into Farsi) version of the DemocracyWeb project, co-sponsored by the Albert Shanker Institute and Freedom House.

The new website is called Tavaana: E-learning Institute for Iranian Civil Society. Tavaana means “empowered” and “capable” in Persian. A CLIME spokesman said the word holds a vision for a free and open Iranian society, one in which each Iranian enjoys the full spectrum of civil and political liberties. She added that the Internet has been instrumental to the emergence of a robust, broad-based civil society in Iran. A groundswell of civic e-

communities is circumventing government censorship to share ideas and organize. Tavaana builds on this newfound cyber-freedom of expression and association by providing e-learning opportunities for Iranian civil society.

The Shanker Institute/Freedom House website, which is part of this Iranian activist project, was itself launched in Feb. 2009. It is designed to give students a better understanding of U.S. democracy, using the comparative study of the political systems of other countries, based on the Freedom House *Map of Freedom* and its annual “Freedom in the World” report, a widely-respected set of criteria for characterizing political systems annually with respect to democracy. The core notion of the value of comparative political study is derived from the Institute-sponsored *Education for Democracy* statement. DemocracyWeb includes enriched materials on history, civics, and social



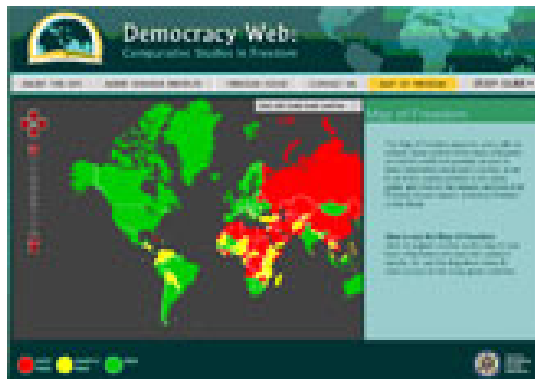
studies designed for use by teachers, professors, and their secondary and college level students. It also offers concrete, factual and philosophical understanding of

the origins of democratic principles in the U.S., and how a variety of contemporary political systems function with respect to these same principles. The Shanker Institute and Freedom House continue to support and refine DemocracyWeb.

SHANKER INSTITUTE SPONSORS MAP OF LABOR RIGHTS

The Albert Shanker Institute has commissioned Freedom House to develop an innovative way to document the political, social, and regional dimensions of the renewed assault on global worker rights. The project, including a color-coded, global *Map of Labor Rights*, is scheduled for release in the Fall.

The report is based on Freedom House’s *Freedom of the World* survey. It consists of reports on the state of trade union and worker rights in the 100 most important countries in the world, written by country analysts who write for *Freedom in the World*. The report includes an overview essay that summarizes the findings, assesses regional performances, and zeroes in on the methods used to suppress worker rights and control trade union activity. It stresses the crucial role of worker rights as a pillar of freedom, analyzes the methods used by governments to



deprive citizens of these rights, and elaborates on the findings of *Freedom in the World* on the state of trade union rights in both global and regional perspectives.

When completed and disseminated, the report should have substantial credibility due to its relationship with the *Freedom in the World* survey. This survey ranks among the most influential reports on the status of global democracy. Its findings have been formally incorporated into the for-

eign policy making process of the United States, and are widely cited by scholars, journalists, and policymakers. Many Freedom House reports also draw widespread attention from the world media, and their conclusions are often the subject of editorials in leading press outlets, parliamentary debate, and commentary from government representatives.

The color-coded *Map of Labor Rights*, unlike the *Freedom in the World* and the *Map of Press Freedom* reports on which it is modeled, will depict a five-category ranking of nations to reflect a more nuanced depiction of global labor rights. In this way, the map can reflect the difference in the state of labor rights between the United States and Germany, for example.

LABOR

INSTITUTE TO CO-HOST CONFERENCE ON LEARNING REPS

The Albert Shanker Institute, the AFL-CIO, the Council on Competitiveness, and the Council on Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL) plan to co-sponsor a two-day conference, on June 29-30, 2010, in Washington, D.C., aimed at helping to bring an adapted model of the British workplace learning program, *UnionLearn*, to the United States.

UnionLearn places workplace advisors, called “learning representatives,” into the workplace, where they act as mentors and resource guides for employees who seek to improve their skills and broaden their career possibilities.



This event will bring together union representatives who are active in current workplace “learning advisor pilot programs” in the United States – from the AFT and other unions -- with leaders in labor, business, government, and foundations.

The director of the U.K. *UnionLearn* program will present an overview of its work. The conversations will focus on how to take the learning advisors model to scale and how to leverage change in both the public and private workforce development systems. Finally, participants will discuss the potential for developing a concrete action plan to take the adapted *UnionLearn* model to the next level in the U.S.

ASI WORKSHOP ON LEARNING REPS IN SKOKIE, ILLINOIS

The Albert Shanker Institute recently worked with the AFT in sponsoring a training session for potential worksite union learning representatives (ULR) in the North Suburban School District

Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the UK, featuring British ULRs discussing their experiences in interviews and on the job. All the union representatives thought it had revitalized their organi-

zations, brought in new members, and activated more women, minorities and young people.

The attendees (all paraprofessionals, teacher aides, library assistants, and other school support personnel) also heard reports on an AFT pilot program in Baltimore, which is well underway.

For more information on AFT’s learning rep pilot projects, visit: <http://archive.aft.org/learningreps/>



of Skokie, Ill., outside Chicago. Four potential learning representatives attended the training.

The session included a focus on defining the role and functions of learning representatives and a video from the

The ULR program is one of the British labor movement’s most innovative approaches to union building, inasmuch as it places lifelong learning at the heart of union culture and programs.

READINGS FOR LEADERS

EDUCATION READINGS

A TFA TEACHER—DO I REALLY TEACH FOR AMERICA?

In this article, Teach for America teacher Alex Diamond uses his experience to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the program. He explains how teachers are trained in the mechanics of helping students do better on standardized tests, but are only superficially engaged with the content that they will be responsible for teaching. As a social studies teacher, he found this to be particularly frustrating since the "overarching goals" of the coursework "are not easily reduced to bite-sized testable items"--thus, neither his success nor that of his students could so easily be measured. Diamond also concludes that TFA's teacher preparation model ignores some of the most effective instructional approaches that could be used to engage students with the subject matter, the use of role play, for example. "Even after a year and a half in the program," says Diamond, "a final conclusion about TFA escapes me. It does not merit the purely positive and unproblematized treatment it often receives in mainstream media. At the same time, I have too much respect for its teachers and staff members to simply write it off."

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/24_03/24_03_tfdiamond.shtml

HOW SHOULD WE TEACH OUR FUTURE TEACHERS?

In this *Washington Post* article, Donna Gordon Blankinship reports that educators agree that too much is being left out of teacher education--from the best methods to teach specific content and skills, to how to keep students engaged and orderly, to public speaking, to using test data to tailor instruction. This article quotes several experts on the problems and possible solutions, including Suzanne Wilson, chair of teacher education at Michigan State University, who has spoken to the Shanker Institute board on the same topic, and Deborah Ball, dean of the University of Michigan's school of education, with whom the Institute has an ongoing project to improve teachers' access to "mathematical knowledge for teaching."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/26/AR2010052604690.html>

PLAN B: SKIP COLLEGE

In this *New York Times* article, Jacques Steinberg touches on the controversial reality that most students do not earn a four-year college degree, and he suggests that the traditional baccalaureate is oversold as a credential that is in short supply in the marketplace. Indeed, some economists and workforce specialists believe that other forms of credentialing, such as apprenticeships, may be appropriate and positive for many individuals. The article also points out that no more than half of all students who began a four-year bachelor's degree program in the fall of 2006 will get that degree within six years. These figures, from the Department of Education, don't include transfer students, who aren't tracked. For college students who ranked among the bottom quarter of their high school classes, the numbers are even more stark: 80 percent will probably never get a bachelor's degree or even a two-year associate's degree.

A weakness of the article is that it uses discredited data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that underestimate the educational requirements of the marketplace. A soon-to-be-released study by the Center on Education and the Workforce projects that the U.S. economy will be shy 22 million jobs that require at least a two-year degree through 2018. At the same time, it points out that the current system does not address the real educational needs and aspirations of a very large cohort of students, and that there is a need for multiple pathways to postsecondary success. Among others, it cites Robert I. Lerman of American University, a longtime resource for the Shanker Institute, which has devoted a significant amount of time to the workforce education issue.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/16/weekinreview/16steinberg.html>

CRITIQUE OF RACE TO THE TOP SCORING

Richard Rothstein of the Economic Policy Institute points out that the complicated scoring system of the RttT application review process is in many respects arbitrary, needlessly complex, and not based on the research as to what works. In the current recession, the allocation of precious funding based on criteria that are not proven to work is both unwise and unfair.

http://epi.3cdn.net/4835aafd6e80385004_5nm6bn6id.pdf

READINGS FOR LEADERS

EDUCATION READINGS (Continued)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

Psychologist Daniel Willingham's guest post on Valerie Strauss' blog in the *Washington Post* takes an interesting look at the relationship between poverty/inequality and educational outcomes in the U.S. and other nations. Willingham questions the "conventional wisdom" that nations with high income inequality (like the U.S.) will inevitably have educational inequality. His simple, exploratory analysis finds no raw correlation between inequality and national average test scores. However, individual-level data indicate that the U.S. does a poor job of educating its most disadvantaged students relative to other nations. This suggests that while educational inequality is not an inevitable result of income inequality, the U.S. would do well to pay attention to practices in nations that have successfully narrowed the achievement gap.

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/guest-bloggers/willingham-about-poverty-and-s.html>

DEMOCRACY READINGS

ISLAM, OBAMA, AND THE EMPTY QUARTER

In this *Wall Street Journal* op-ed piece, democracy activist and former political prisoner Saad Eddin Ibrahim claims that Arab democrats are "disappointed" in the Obama Administration's Middle East policy, citing especially the reduction in democracy assistance budget in next year's U.S. aid to Egypt, and the "mild" U.S. response when Egypt recently extended 29 years of "emergency" law for another two years. He noted that the extension includes the period of the Egyptian presidential elections next year. "Arab autocrats," he said, "could not be more heartened." Ibrahim argued that the U.S. could redeem itself in the eyes of democracy activists by demanding that Egyptian officials take serious measures to ensure free and fair elections, mostly notably inviting international election observers to play a role. The Shanker Institute has worked with Ibrahim on democracy issues, including the *Muslim Voices* reader, which is now complete.

<http://www.lebanonwire.com/1005MLN/10051710WSJ.asp>

WHY DOES DEMOCRACY NEED EDUCATION?

This interesting 2006 paper by Edward L. Glaeser, Giacomo Ponzetto and Andrei Shleifer examines the relationship between education and democracy and finds that the two are highly correlated. It then suggests a causal mechanism to explain this correlation. That is, schooling teaches people to interact with others and raises the benefits of civic participation, including voting and organizing. In the battle between democracy and dictatorship, democracy has a wide potential base of support but offers weak incentives to its defenders. Dictatorship provides stronger incentives to a narrower base. As education raises the benefits of civic participation, it increases the support for more democratic regimes relative to dictatorship, and, thus, enhancing the likelihood of pro-democracy revolutions and reducing that of successful anti-democratic coups.

http://www.nber.org/papers/w12128.pdf?new_window=1

READINGS FOR LEADERS

DEMOCRACY READINGS (Continued)

NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY EMBRACES ADVANCE OF DEMOCRACY

In this *Democracy Digest* piece, Michael Allen explains that advancing democracy remains an integral element of U.S. foreign and security policy, according to the National Security Strategy document released in late May. The strategy commits the U.S. to supporting peaceful democratic movements while making the case for engaging autocratic regimes. This administration will support “the development of institutions within fragile democracies, integrating human rights as a part of our dialogue with repressive governments, and supporting the spread of technologies that facilitate the freedom to access information.” The NSS also promotes an expansive notion of democracy, insisting that democracies must deliver by addressing broader human needs, including economic opportunity. In this context, it integrates democracy into “an aggressive and affirmative development agenda” that seeks to “set in place accountable and democratic institutions that serve basic human needs.”

<http://www.demdigest.net/blog/democracy-assistance/new-national-security-strategy-robustly-embraces-goal-of-advancing->

LABOR READINGS

THE RETURN OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY

Economist Dani Rodrik reports on industrial policy, and how British Prime Minister Gordon Brown promotes it as a vehicle for creating high-skill jobs. French President Nicolas Sarkozy talks about using it to keep industrial jobs in France. The World Bank's chief economist, Justin Lin, openly supports it to speed up structural change in developing nations. McKinsey is advising governments on how to do it right.... But when it comes to industrial policy it is the United States that takes the cake.

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/rodrik42/English>

HONDA STRIKE BECOMES A RALLYING POINT IN CHINA

Keith Bradsher and David Barboza report on a strike at an auto-parts factory owned by Honda in southern China, which has become the center of focus in that the nation's struggle with income inequality and worker rights. The Chinese media – usually silent on such issues -- are reporting extensively on the workers' demands and calling on the government to do more to increase wages nationwide. The 1,900 workers at the Honda factory have been on strike to demand higher pay since mid-May. The resulting shortage of transmissions and engine parts has forced Honda to halt production at all four of its assembly plants in China. According to the *New York Times* story, the action is the “clearest sign yet” of growing labor unrest in a country that is now the cornerstone of many companies' global supply chains. A spokesman for the China Institute of Industrial Relations in Beijing, said that the strike was a significant development in China's labor relations history because the workers appeared to be well organized and united. “The strike at Honda is the largest strike that has ever happened at a single global company in China,” he said, adding that, “such a large-scale, organized strike will force China's labor union system to change, to adapt to the market economy.”

The Shanker Institute has long sponsored programs related to workers rights and democracy in China, often working in cooperation with exiled Tiananmen Square dissident Han Dongfang, director of the *China Labour Bulletin*, which is based in Hong Kong.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/29/business/global/29honda.html?emc=eta1>



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