



June 2008 News

Information Resource Center (IRC)

Public Affairs Section - U.S. Embassy

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<http://damascus.usembassy.gov/irc.html>

A look at the Information Resource Center (IRC):

The Information Resource Center is a specialized reference and research facility located in the American Cultural Center.

Through a wide variety of online databases, we provide you with free, comprehensive and authoritative information on all aspects of the U.S. We have access to documents on domestic and foreign policies, media issues, legislative developments, as well as social, economic and political issues.

The IRC is the place to access research and reference materials. The staff responds to inquiries for in-depth information from a diverse group of people including journalists, professors, authors, scientists, and business people.

IRC staff can also provide individualized instruction for researchers, scholars and journalists, using the IRC's traditional and electronic resources.

IRC service:

Outreach Program: Our outreach program includes:

1. The creation of specialized information packages in response to institutional or individual inquiries.
2. Daily electronic distribution of news, articles and research papers on a wide range of topics such as political, economic, social and cultural issues. Interested Syrian professionals can join this service by contacting the IRC staff to enroll and start receiving materials in their chosen field of interest.
3. **E-Docs alert service:** provides an annotation and URL for reports, studies and papers. It includes documents from: (1) U.S. executive agencies and the Congressional branch; (2) think tanks; (3) professional associations; and (4) international organization. IRC will send you these annotations classified by themes, with the URL to access the full report. If it is inconvenient for you to print out long reports, IRC invites you to visit us and get the full text report in hard copy free of charge.

Internet Café: The IRC Internet Café has eleven computers with free Internet. The computers are available to the public from 12:00 - 4:30 pm Sunday through Thursday. If you are unfamiliar with the Internet, IRC staff can help with individualized training.

The IRC staff provides quick assistance and research using our resources. Queries are accepted by phone at 3391-4118/3391-4195, email at ircdamas@state.gov, or by appointment during working hours.

All IRC services are free of charge. A nominal fee per page is charged for printing from the IRC computers and for photocopying. The IRC is open to anyone age 18 and older. Entry to the Center requires a valid identification card for Syrians or a valid passport for non-Syrians.

Service Hours:

Sunday–Thursday
12:00pm – 04:30pm

Our online databases:

IRC offers you free access to the following online database which is available only through IRC computers. Research is free and you only pay 1 Syrian Pound for printed page. Please contact us to learn more about this free service and arrange for an appointment.

EBSCOhost online databases:

It is a collection of online journal databases containing thousands of journal articles that cover a wide variety of topics. This multi-disciplinary database provides full text for more than 4,500 journals, including full text for more than 3,700 peer-reviewed titles. PDF back files to 1975 or further are available for well over one hundred journals, and searchable cited references are provided for 1,000 titles. If you need to find journal articles for a research paper or project, EBSCOhost is a great place to begin your search.

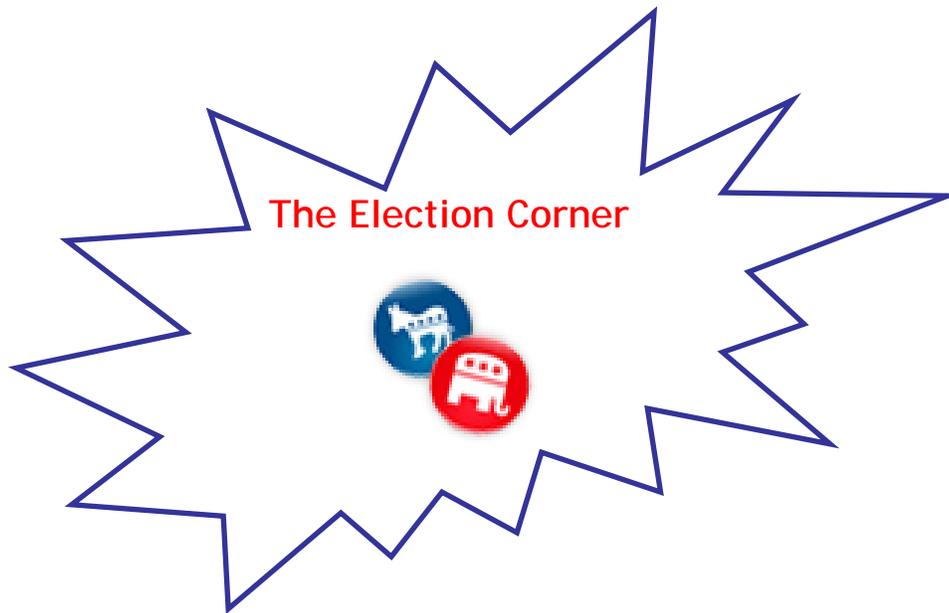
Become an IRC Fan!

Visit our Facebook page and become one of our Fans! Be the first to invite to our cultural events, learn more about studying in USA, read our news and announcements, join our discussion board, send us questions and queries, and write on our wall.

IRC Damascus on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Damascus-Syria/IRC-Damascus/19451965179>

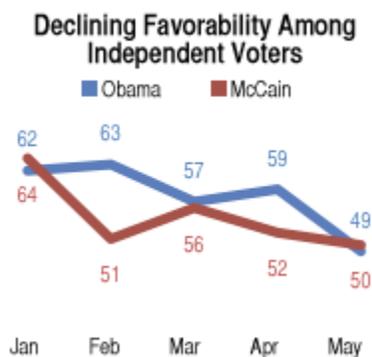
See you there!



The Election Corner

This feature will allow those of you interested in U.S. Elections to get updated information, look at related governmental and non-governmental websites, get statistical resources, and help you learn more about the U.S. Elections process.

General Election Match up: Political vs. Personal Negatives

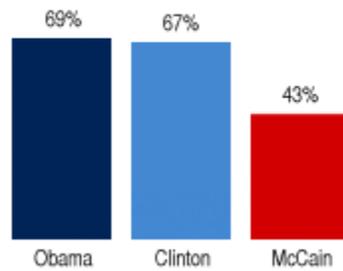


29 May 08: While Obama has opened up a wide lead in the Democratic primary, he now runs about even against McCain. The tightening general election shows some sully of Obama's personal image over the past three months, which is in some measure a negative reaction from frustrated Clinton supporters. McCain's image has also become more negative since February, however, unlike Obama, those who disapprove cite his political beliefs.

Character and the Primaries

Positive Narratives in the Press

Percent of all assertions studied



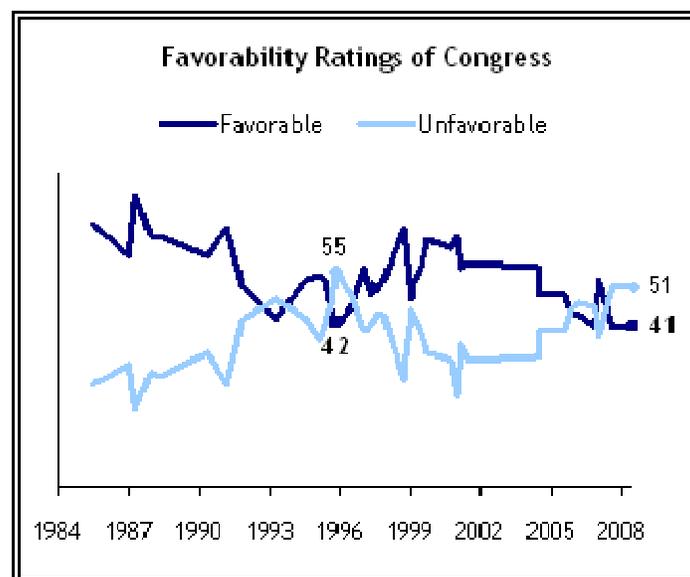
29 May 08: A new analysis of media coverage during the first ten weeks of the 2008 primary season finds the dominant personal narratives about Obama and Clinton were almost identical in tone, and were both twice as positive as negative. The coverage of McCain's character was less positive than that of either Democratic candidate.

Democratic Party's Favorable Rise, Congress Still Unpopular

Conservatives' Ratings of GOP Slip
June 3, 2008

The overall image of the Democratic Party has improved over the past year, although the Democratic-led Congress remains widely unpopular. A majority of Americans (57%) say they have a favorable view of the Democratic Party, up six points since July 2007 and 10 points since July 2006.

In contrast, views of the Republican Party remain at historic lows. Currently, 53% of Americans express unfavorable views of the Republican Party while only 39% say they have a favorable opinion of the party. These ratings are unchanged from July 2007, and have changed little since April 2006.



Public attitudes toward Congress remain very negative. Currently, just 41% of the public expresses a favorable opinion of Congress, with 51% unfavorable; that is identical to opinions of Congress in July 2007. Views of Congress were more positive in January 2007, shortly after the Democrats won control of the House and Senate (53% favorable vs. 38% unfavorable).

In historical terms, positive opinions of Congress are about as low as they were in October 1995, during the standoff between former President Clinton and the GOP-led Congress that led to a government shutdown. In October 1995, 42% expressed favorable views compared with 55% who held unfavorable opinions.

Currently, majorities of Republicans (62%) and independents (58%) have unfavorable opinions of Congress. By contrast, a majority of Democrats express a favorable opinion of Congress (54%), compared with 40% who have an unfavorable view. There has been virtually no change in these partisan ratings of Congress since last year.

Fewer Republicans Rate Their Party Favorably

	July 2007 %	May 2008 %	Change
Republicans	83	73	-10
Cons	87	74	-13
Mod/Liberal	73	72	-1
Independents	31	38	+7
Democrats	16	17	+1
Cons/Mod	21	20	-1
Liberal	8	12	+4

Although the overall favorability of the Republican Party has not changed since July 2007, Republicans' views of their own party are down 10 points since last year; currently, 73% of Republicans have a favorable view of their party compared with 83% in July 2007. Virtually all of this decline has come among conservative Republicans. Currently, 74% of conservative Republicans have a favorable view of the party compared with 87% last July.

Independents express slightly more favorable opinions of the GOP than they did last summer. However, far more independents express positive opinions of the Democratic Party than of the Republican Party. A majority of independents (52%) express favorable views of the Democratic Party while only 38% of independents rate the Republican Party favorably, a gap of 14 percentage points. Positive ratings of the Democratic Party among independents have increased 11 points since July 2006 (from 41% to 52%).

Partisans' Views of the Parties			
<i>Percent "favorable"</i>	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Dem</i>	<i>Ind</i>
<i>Republican Party</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
May 2008	73	17	38
July 2007	80	16	31
July 2006	81	14	35
July 2005	88	19	40
June 2004	93	20	48
June 2003	93	29	54
December 2002	93	28	55
July 2001	89	22	46
<i>Democratic Party</i>			
May 2008	24	88	52
July 2007	18	86	48
July 2006	17	87	41
July 2005	21	88	42
June 2004	24	86	53
June 2003	27	88	55
December 2002	27	88	52
July 2001	20	91	56

The Democratic Party receives much higher ratings from Democrats than the GOP receives from Republicans. Nearly nine-in-ten Democrats (88%) express favorable opinions of the Democratic Party, compared with 73% of Republicans who view their party favorably. In addition, somewhat fewer Democrats than Republicans have a favorable opinion of the opposing party. Just 17% of Democrats express positive opinions of the Republican Party. By comparison, 24% of Republicans (24%) say they have a favorable view of the Democratic Party, up from 18% in July 2007.

More related election articles can be found in here:

http://www.csis.org/media/csis/events/080506_covering_elections_transcript.pdf

<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/851/public-focused-on-obama>

All Publications on Election '08:

<http://pewresearch.org/topics/election'08/>

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Upcoming web chats

Web chats are online, text-based discussions that allow audiences outside the United States to interact with American citizens on a wide range of topics. U.S. government and private sector subject experts, academics, journalists, and everyday citizens are brought on as guests to do web chats on USINFO.

To participate, you only need a computer with Internet access and a browser. There is no special software to be downloaded.

For more information, please see the link below:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats/faq.html>

Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2008

Time: 02:45 pm EDT (18:45 GMT)

Guest: Chuck Todd



Elections Update Webcast

http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html#todd_16_jun_2008

Chuck Todd became NBC News' political director in March 2007. He also serves as NBC News' on-air political analyst for "NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams," "Today," "Meet the Press with Tim Russert" and MSNBC, including "Hardball with Chris Matthews." "Chuck Todd became NBC News' political director in March 2007. He also serves as NBC News' on-air political analyst for "NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams," "Today," "Meet the Press with Tim Russert" and MSNBC, including "Hardball with Chris Matthews."

Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2008

Time: 10:00 pm EDT (13:00 GMT)

Guest: Thomas C. Dorr



Food Versus Fuel

http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html#dorr_10_jun_2008

With worldwide demand for energy increasing every day, the development of new, clean, renewable energy sources is critical to Earth's environment. In the United States, work is under way on a variety of potential answers to the global energy challenge including biofuels. Join Under Secretary for Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture Thomas Dorr who will discuss biofuels, the impact of ethanol manufacture on food prices and its global ramifications.

Thomas C. Dorr was appointed Under Secretary for Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2002 by President Bush. He oversees three program areas that provide up to \$18 billion annual funding authority for loans, grants, and technical assistance to rural residents, communities, and businesses. He also serves as the Chairman of the USDA Energy Council which is responsible for advancing the President's Energy Initiative. He took an active role in the recent Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC) which continues life in the form of renewable energy pledges from more than 100 nations, states, communities and businesses internationally. As president of a family farming and agribusiness company for 30 years, Dorr has broad agricultural, financial and business experience.

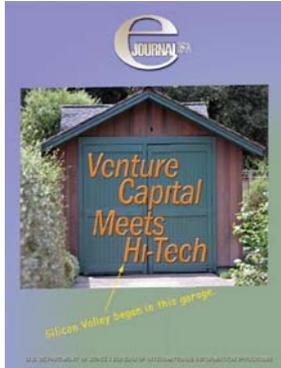
Past web chats

If you are looking for past web chats, please go to the below link where you can find them all:

http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html#dorr_10_jun_2008



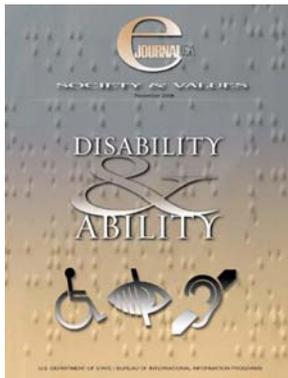
Electronic Journals



Venture Capital Meets Hi-Tech

<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html#0508>

This e-journal explores the phenomenon that drives uncounted Americans — and now citizens of other nations — to create fledgling “start-up” businesses that explore and exploit the latest developments in high technology. It also investigates the closely related “venture capital” phenomenon. How investors match their funds to (hopefully) winning ideas is a big part of the start-up story.



Disability and Ability

<http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html#1106>

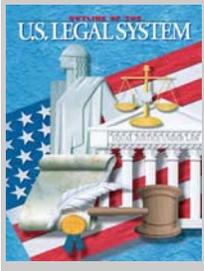
With support, people can overcome even severe disabilities while maximizing their abilities and lead fulfilling and productive lives. We hope you will enjoy reading about the Americans with Disabilities law and about the programs underway to help turn disabilities into abilities, from accommodation to technology and medical research. Opening opportunities and removing barriers to people with disabilities is a work in progress, but the results can be truly inspiring.



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Publications

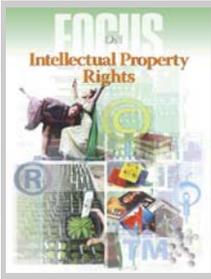


U.S. Legal System

<http://www.america.gov/publications/books/outline-of-u.s.-legal-system>

This Outline covers the history and organization of the federal and state judicial systems; the criminal and civil court processes; the background, qualifications, and selection of federal judges; the role of other participants (lawyers, defendants, interest groups) in the judicial process; and the implementation and impact of judicial policies.

(Hard copies of this publication are available at the Information Resource Center. Please visit us to get a copy.)



Focus On: Intellectual Property Rights

<http://www.america.gov/publications/books.html#ipr>

Essays by government, academic, and industry experts introduce intellectual property rights issues and key concepts -- patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, and new forms of IP. Articles also explain why countries need effective intellectual property systems, and what governments in each region are doing to enforce IPR. Includes a glossary of IP terms, a list of print and Internet IP resources, and a separate resource list for children and young adults.

Photo Gallery and Videos

Telling America's story with photos and videos.

Offering an audio-visual tour of the stories and issues shaping our world, the photo gallery and videos are two of many invaluable services "America.gov" site offers for its audience.

Both, the gallery and videos can be browsed by the following subjects:
Foreign Policy, U.S. Politics, American Life, Democracy, Science and Health.

Photo Gallery: Please visit the below galleries or go to the photo gallery direct link to see more photo collections.

<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#7a78bf28-e356-4d21-a311-0c218ec8f6f8>

<p>Democracy:</p> <p><u>Democracy and Economic Prosperity</u></p> 	<p>American Life:</p> <p><u>Photographers Who Reshaped Modern Portraiture</u></p> 	<p>Science & Health:</p> <p><u>Sustaining Natural Wealth</u></p> 	<p>Foreign Policy:</p> <p><u>International Champs Embrace Giving</u></p> 
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Videos:

Please point the mouse on any picture then use "Ctrl" key and click on the link to take you the video you want to watch or go to the link below to see all the video collection.

<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/video.html?playerId=1475282956>

<p>Democracy is the Right to Dissent</p>  <p>2 min. 47 sec.</p>	<p>Muslim Fashion Designer</p>  <p>2 min. 30 sec.</p>	<p>Olive Oil</p>  <p>2 min. 58 sec.</p>	<p>Language Immersion</p>  <p>2 min. 25 sec.</p>
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Websites of interest

Legal information, International Law and Comparative Law:

www.llrx.com

This site is an introduction to legal systems of various countries, etc. It also has materials on trade and cultural property protection laws.

American Writers:

[Http://Americanwriters.Org](http://Americanwriters.Org)

Free videos about works and authors in American Literature.

Open Educational Resources:

<http://www.oercommons.org>

A clearinghouse of free teaching and learning resources from K-12 lesson plans to college curriculum.

Making of America:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/>

Making of America (MOA) is a free digital library of primary sources in American social history primarily from the antebellum period through reconstruction. The collection is particularly strong in the subject areas of education, psychology, American history, sociology, religion, and science and technology. The book collection currently contains approximately 10,000 books with 19th century imprints.

Global Edge:

<http://globaledge.msu.edu/ibrd/ibrd.asp>

Global edge is an impressive website covering country studies, market potential indicators, global resources, statistics, etc. Award Winning!

