

FUTUREWATCH

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An information service on current, international perspectives on our futures, prepared by futures scanner, **Jennifer Coote, Futures Thinking Aotearoa**. Annual dates in last two digits.

COMMUNICATIONS/TRANSPORT

On Media

A workshop report from **US Institute for Peace** examined Arab media, *August, 05* (http://usip.org/virtual_diplomacy/publications/reports/18.html), with special focus on attitudes to US and to the West. The relevant Arab governments play a double role since mostly, they control the media, where they appease the ideological positions of their own threatening insurgencies while focusing public ire on external factors rather than domestic oppression. Recently, low-cost access to Arab satellite TV has resulted an explosion of channels all competing for market share. Their populism shapes the Arab "street", fuelling a sense of victimisation perpetrated by Israel and US against Arabs and creating a prism of individual and collective humiliation and resentment. Though critics who raise questions are perceived as undermining Arab solidarity, more of this is occurring. **Al Jazeera**, the dominant channel, directs its professional skills towards

provocation and debate rather than factual reporting, a common approach among professional Arab journalists. Censorship, the competition for audience attention, and the lack of expectation that the press will act as fourth estate contribute to this.

Print media is still influential for elites, but online sources are diverse and growing though shadowed by governments. Young people, who have considerable attraction to Western values, recourse to the Web and the growing numbers of local "blogs"

The public reporting by western media of investigation in US and Western media of government officials, including **Secretary Rumsfeld** showed the reality of holding officials accountable. Gruesome terrorist acts shown in realtime provoked widespread revulsion against such "jihad." Competition in saturated markets encourages some channels to seek more credibility by more open reporting for niche markets. The interdependence of media, public and government patrons in oppressive regimes appears to be loosening.

Is the "blog" phenomenon a real revolution in expression of popular opinion? Sceptics query whether claims that mainstream media are dinosaurs has longer-term validity. These have the capacity to survive since they provide us with factual

and investigative reporting rather than a diet of op-eds and wire feeds and their reliability gains advertiser's support. The blog revolution is more valid in countries lacking information and outlets to query hierarchies such as China, Iran. *Financial Times*. Weekend Feb 18/19, 06. Pp. W1-2.

An Alternative Internet: Radical Media, Politics and Creativity, C. Atton, Edinburgh Univ Press, 04. Open source software and open source movements are creating a complexity of innovative approaches: electronic civil disobedience; radical online journalism; far-right media on the Internet; radical creativity and distribution; alterative radio and fan culture.

Transnational Television Worldwide: Towards a New Media Order, Ed. J. K. Chalby, I.B.. Taurus, 05, covers a major trend, driven by satellite and cable, the transnational diaspora, the liberalization of legal constraints and the evolution of content from universal to localised and distinctive. It covers a wide range of niches, connecting people across geographic space and providing a cosmopolitan perspective.

Knowledge Power and Access

Knowledge Power: Intellectual Property, Information and Privacy, R. Martin-Bennett, Lynne Rienner, 04. The control of information flows affects all users, who are poorer if the hand is either too heavy or too market-oriented. A Read-Only Internet may be emerging, where copyright gatekeepers sell bits of information, constraining user's power to access and reuse. The potential of the Read-and-Write Internet is being sti-

fled. *Financial Times*. Dec 2, 05. P. 11, examines recent incidents of creative remixing media forms online who have been blocked by copyright holders.

Library Trends Vol 53/4 Spring 05 is devoted to **The Commercialized Web: Challenges for Libraries and Democracy**. Search engines have become a basic resource for Internet information seekers, but after 1998 when there was money to be made from advertisers, they also became conduits for commerce. Most users are unaware of the mainstream, commercial steer the search engines provide. Implications of Internet commercialisation for research and democracy are wide and these contributors cover topics ranging from students use, through political and economic structures, to building an individual resource portal and collaboration in contributor-run archives.

Information Management academic **J. D. Campbell**, *Educause Review, Jan-Feb, 06* speculates on the long-term future of academic librarians as the digitalization of academic information matures, and major university library collections are being scanned for digital access. A transition period may ensue with management of print based resource not digitalised but valued for research.

Beyond that some roles are:- providers of quality learning spaces particularly for collaborative and cross disciplinary interaction; creators of metadata, through development of tools, portals and strategies for precision search on the Web; collecting and digitalising archival material; and maintaining digital repositories of research resources in

diverse range of digital formats. Choosing resources and managing resource licences, a virtual reference service, and teaching Information Literacy are more problematic long-term.

Considering the long term future of the academic library and the role of librarians requires a wide discussion framework not constrained by assumptions that the library as an institution is dated.

Only a Game?

Video gaming has mushroomed from a minority to a mass entertainment form, particularly in US and Asia. Three fundamental factors are emerging, reflecting strong social impacts. Attitudes to gaming are marked by a generational divide, about 50% of US population are gamers but over 75% of these are under 40. Older people, the gaming critics, fail to appreciate the skills demanded to meet the complexity of games. In response, games are being developed with wider appeal, especially to women. Critics contend that gaming makes people violent, but studies are inconclusive though longer term research is needed. Lastly games have tremendous education potential as they develop from linear narrative, demanding more skills and moral choices. Some commentators liken the responses to gaming to those made to early movies. *The Economist*. 6 August, 05. Pp. 61-63.

Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Games, E. Castronova, Univ. Chicago Press, 05, offers an economist's take on gaming. It is increasingly interlinking

with the real world. Trade in virtual items, from swords to characters and even profits from trade in the virtual world, is happening in online markets. Virtual economies are part of many synthetic worlds but they emphasise fun, not growth overall or wellbeing and inflation is high.

Watch out for These!

G.T. Huang, *Technology Review*, Sept, 05 reports that holographic memory discs, now under development, could store up to 128 hours of video programme and record it in 3 hours. Data stored in three dimensional inference patterns overcomes many of the current limitations for storage on hard drives. A whole new realm of applications is enabled, from compact storage of libraries of media, through personal record files to government and corporate data centres.

The Digital Home can have different meanings for the public and technology firms. For the latter it means a home where all sorts of electronic devices: PCs, TV set-top boxes, stereo, game console, even garage doors, refrigerators and environment conditioning-units are connected to each other and to the Internet, with data transferring seamlessly. Consumers would have to acquire new products, but are consumers looking for an electronic nerve centre for their homes? Evaluation depends on the correlation between the user's sense of crisis and their pain in switching. *The Economist*. 3 Sept 05. Pp. 59-61.

New Scientist, 10 Sept, 17 Sept, 05, outlines the coming identity revolution as biometrics transforms the

multitude of identification items we carry into a single card, which may contain a fingerprint or eventually an iris scan. This theoretically can identify a person instantly and with much greater accuracy. But there are problems. Fingerprints can be sweaty and scan poorly, some people no longer have them; iris scans can be affected by the behaviour of the subject. The new technologies offer many benefits but there is still room for error and theft, which could consequently be more serious.

FAB: the Coming Revolution on Your Desktop-from Personal Computers to Personal Fabrication, N. Gershenfeld, Basic Books, 05. This expounds the potential for human ingenuity and innate sense of craftsmanship to utilise personally-developed software to create new stuff. At present such possibilities exist in the prototypes developed from CAD-CAM technology in "fab labs" full of expensive equipment. But like the computer, the "fab lab" may eventually be shrunk in size sufficiently for home use

A Transport proposal to overcome the vehicular gridlock in cities such as Auckland is seeking funding for a prototype **Sky Cab** for this city, a 600metre track and cabs. The tracks are elevated and built on existing footpaths, with the cabs, each carrying about eight people, hanging from the elevated beam, which allows them to run in both directions simultaneously. A fully developed system could cover 167 kilometres around much of greater Auckland. Infrastructure and the materials in the system would be as unobtrusive, convenient, efficient and cost effective. *e.nz* March/April

06.Pp. 30-32.

ECONOMICS/BUSINESS

A Diversity of Global Challenges

The intensity of international industrial interdependence is creating unease amongst commentators. **B. Lynn, The End of the Line: the Rise and Coming Fall of the Global Corporation**, Doubleday, 05, illustrates his argument from the US and the depth of its economic links with China since early 1900's. The long series of company mergers led to extremely powerful oligopolies controlling industrial sectors, accompanied by the disintegration of the 20th century vertically-integrated corporation and the development of just-in-time production process. This radical reorganisation and its intense specialisation appears to enhance the probability of international peace, a trade utopia. But most firms fail to understand the risks involved because they are too removed from the realities of their production systems. The radical laissez-faire policies have exacerbated the dangers, producing a power vacuum on the commercial level into which other countries can move in pursuit of special interests, with carefully calibrated coercion of major but more dependent powers, as the Taiwan-China standoff illustrates. Protection of the new industrial commons requires action by the state or concert of states. See also *Financial Times*. 18 Oct 05. P. 13; *National Interest*. Winter, 05-06.

Why Most Things Fail: Evolution, Extinction and Economics, P. Ormerod, Faber & Faber, 05. Economists can learn from biologi-

cal systems about corporate failure, an aspect which they have hitherto ignored. Human affairs and behaviour is so complex that most decisions are made in deep ignorance about the future. A new biological approach would take account of changing conditions and emphasise innovation, because a diversity of possibilities ensures some survive.

Economics professor **B. Gibson** uses a computational general equilibrium model to explore the relationship between trade liberalisation, growth and income distribution. Two trajectories were simulated; one with per capita income growing to enable human capital formation and reduce economic informality; however, the second is also possible where lower growth expands both the informal sector and an inadequate level of human capital formation. *Journal of Development Economics*. Vol. 78. 05. Pp. 69-94.

Political economist **R. Anderson -Connolly**, *Challenge, Jan-Feb 06*, utilises US data to examine relationships between growth, economic progress and measures of general wellbeing. GDP may be necessary for economic progress but does not automatically ensure general wellbeing and progress. Nations pressured to reform their economies for greater competitiveness, measured in GDP, could diminish their overall quality of life.

Limits to Privatisation, Eds **E. von Weisacker et al**, Earthscan, 05 is a comprehensive, readable survey of privatisation with case studies, examination of contexts, governance issues. Its an overall message is that success or failure is

strongly influenced by the associated kind and degrees of regulation.

Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers and Copycats Are Hijacking the Global Economy, **M. Naim**, William Heinemann, 05. The effects of this illicit trade are so widespread that few goods or services do not feel their influence. They are steadily eroding the foundations of the global economy, and form a new economic reality not just a criminal section. Improved policing is suggested but does this really meet the problem?

Moving to Sustainability?

Industrial Transformation: Environmental Policy Innovation in the United States and Europe, **T. de Bruijn, V. Norberg-Bohm**, MIT Press, 05. This evaluates twelve innovative, voluntary, collaborative and information-based programmes for facilitating changes in production and consumption structures leading to environmental sustainability. Three sets of factors contribute to their effectiveness:- building new relationships between stakeholders promotes better solutions; engaging industry in learning process promotes major improvements; or creating first movers. Failures may also occur. Lessons learnt are analysed.

Political economics academic **G. Alperovitz**, **America Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming Our Wealth, Our Democracy and Our Liberty**, 05, examines hopeful signs, developing below the radar, at state and municipal level, which include programmes, policies, strategies and institutions which seek to foster

community economic and environmental security. This should build to a political and experiential basis for national capacity. This must reckon with questions of both democracy and a more environmentally supportive culture. Democratic renewal starts at the micro-level but the reality of constant flux resulting from economic instability undercuts local initiatives. Strong commitment is required to build the long-term countervailing force. See also *Worldwatch*. Nov-Dec 05.

The Logic of Sufficiency, T. Princen, MIT Press, 05. A unique study of the development of the efficiency principle and its link to that of economic growth with a proposal for a sufficiency principle which places "good" above "ever better", and thus promotes quality and sustainability. The ends for which growth or "enough" are sought is the key.

Asian Dragons

Management academic **Y. Huang**, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 06, examined details of the microeconomics of development data on China and India, finding that while China dominates on all macroeconomic measures its microeconomics are deteriorating. The average Indian firm is posting much better returns, and improving value for investment steadily. Output obsession has contributed to over-appreciation of China's economic growth against that of India, which appears more efficient in the long-run. China needs to correct deep institutional distortions by banning land grabs which undermine security of property rights, creating market based land

transactions, launching privatisation programmes, drastically improving political and corporate governance and accountability and opening up the financial sector for domestic and foreign competition. Icelandic economic academic **T. Gylfason**, *Challenge*, Jan-Feb 06, analyses different data sets to conclude that India and China offer models for smaller nations, but their differences lies in the measures to build up different kinds of capital. While India is moving more slowly than China and has failed to constrain population growth, its long-term prospects are brighter than China because it has stronger democratic foundations which are the slowest and hardest to build.

Business Challenges

The current explosion of extremely expensive disasters is forcing the re-insurance industry to rethink its financial base, realising that times may get tougher. Current fall-back capital sources may no longer cope and new possibilities include recourse to the bond market or hedge funds. *Financial Times*. 20 Dec 05. P. 11.

T. H. Davenport, *Harvard Business Review*, June 05, examines the next wave of outsourcing, as business processes are being analysed at all levels with a view to standardisation. This enables not only more efficient domestic operations but greater potential for outsourcing processes or marketing them.

NZ manufacturers are preparing new strategies to make domestic production competitive in face of outsourcing to Asia. The creative sector needs a production base at

the other end of the local economy and this adds immeasurably to the value for those employed and for the nation. Government is seen as needing to raise its level of investment in infrastructure, in regulatory efficiency and in international trade policies. A mind change is required in "Kiwi thinking"; the competitor is not the other NZ centres but the world outside and going offshore means working together with other NZ producers to market whole operations not one product. *Management*, Feb 06.

FUTURES THINKING

Worldviews

I. Wallerstein, World-Systems Analysis: an Introduction, Duke Univ Press, 04. A master and founder opens up a subdiscipline which combines sociology with history. Our current global circumstances need to be analysed within the context of a centuries-long politico-economic process arising from the sixteenth century. A world system encompasses a spatial-temporal frame which cuts across different political and cultural units. A world-economy likewise has multiple units, with a core axis binding core, semi-peripheral and peripheral productive processes. World Empires have endeavoured to build power on these systems unsuccessfully because they eventually stifle the capitalistic urge.

Powerful Times: Rising to the Challenges of Our Uncertain World, E. Kelly, Wharton School Publishing/Pearson Prentice Hall, 05. In our messy, complex and volatile world open-minded thinkers

can utilise seven matching pairs of forces or dynamic tensions which will have increasing influence. Clarity and craziness combines more data and more confusing information. Secular and sacred, as business and government utilise rationality but the masses crave meanings. Power and vulnerability power accumulates in some states, but random terrorism and/or natural disasters proliferate. Technology acceleration and pushback are exacerbated by lack of shared mental models and knowledge bases. Intangible and physical economies are-both increasing in significance. Prosperity and decline result from the spread of the market economy. People and planet: even as our understanding of human economies and earth systems deepens towards sustainability we find the planet has its own autonomy.

War and Peace and War: The Lifecycle of Imperial Nations, P. Turchin, Pi Press, 04, comes from an evolutionary ecologist, who draws on modern discoveries in psychology, experimental economics, evolutionary biology and physics to draw out patterns from history. Co-operation is his key focus, and he suggests that those groups who can do this in areas where it is crucial to do so, survive and thrive. Thus areas on the margins of empires offer fertile territory for new ones. Empires fail as inequalities in wealth and power naturally emerge.

Better Thinking

One World: The Ethics of Globalisation, P. Singer, Yale Univ. Press, 04. This forward thinking and controversial philosopher applies his

skill to a range of global issues:- the global atmosphere, economics, law and community. He argues from first principles universally understood. He calls for an ethical foundation for the single world community with decisions being taken at the lowest level capable of dealing with the issue.

Future Think: How To Think Clearly In a Time of Change, E. Weiner, A. Brown, Pearson Prentice Hall, 05. Objective information and clear-eyed thinking are essential for futures thinking in times of change. Sixteen proven paths to insight are outlined, grouped in four parts. For example, at the personal/organisational level: looking through alien eyes; trend/countertrend; substitute spiral for pendulum; extremes inform the middle; efficiency breeds vulnerability; the multiple effect of new distribution channels; entropy; integrity begets quality.

Complexity and the Limits of Knowledge, Special Issue, Futures, Sept, 05. Complex systems provide special challenges since they do not lead to simple answers. Contributors explore three core themes: the limits to knowledge which our new understanding of complexity provides; the implications for science, academia, business; our possible responses and the measures needed in decision and policy making.

WORK

About Time, Work and Families

US academics **J. Robinson, G. Godbey,** *The Futurist, Sept-Oct 05,* report on **2003 American Time Use Survey** based on time diaries con-

ducted with 20,000 people over 15. These reveal surprisingly that most on average have some six hours daily to spend in leisure:-sport, exercise, recreation, socialising and communication, TV, reading, relaxing, thinking, using computers and games, music, arts entertainment events. Similar findings have been reported in this series of studies since 1965. Public perception and reality in the diaries are grossly misaligned, and has misled many researchers on work and lifestyle. While women have cut their housework time, they spend it at work, while men are slightly increasing their household participation. Half of leisure time is spent watching TV, but not more than in 1990.

The Time Divide: Work, Family and Gender Equality, J. A. Jacobs, K. Gerson, Harvard Univ. Press, 04. Sociologists utilise a number of research studies to illuminate the debates about US family work-life balance. Hours have increased at the ends of the social scale, and vacation time has shortened, but the length of the average working week has not changed since 1970. Professionals and managers are putting in the longer hours, also some blue collar workers. Women's labour force participation and dual earner families led to increased combined work-time. The upsurge of single mothers creates another group with family/work pressures. The extra hours are being worked by institutional demand not the preference of the workers.

Working in a 24/7 Economy: Challenges for American Families, H. B. Presser, Russell Sage Found-

ation, 03, focuses on work scheduling, as fewer (though still a majority) of Americans work a standard schedule. Most dual earner couples include one who works weekends, and non-standard schedules are increasingly the experience of the lower income workers. Family together time suffers

Social researcher **P. Callister**, *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, March 05, analysed the working patterns for families with young children under five for the period 1986-2001. NZ workers overall have longer hours than many OECD countries. He includes families where one partner or both were in paid work. Some noticeable changes include:- far more parents with higher educational qualifications in workforce, with most of these fathers working long hours (50) as are a larger number of mothers. There has been a major decline of mothers working part-time (under 30 hrs) and most parents who are working shorter hours have poor educational qualifications; some of the latter parents have combined 80 hours.

Long hours may be accepted for job security, career advancement or for housing payments, but some women are opting out of career advancement to have families, though their workforce re-entry is strong by overseas standards. Fathers may be the ones with the "double burden" of long hours, as they have also increased their time with children, and many fathers want reduced or flexible hours for this reason. Under 5's show minimal adverse response to increase maternal workforce participation

though poor quality, excessive child-care plus poor home life have negative effects.

Policies to reduce excessive work hours: voluntary workplace agreements, capped hours, greater encouragement for part-time work, or ideally culture change (Nordic countries) which accepts lower hours with greater gender equality for home and work.

Ideas and Possibilities

Egalitarian Capitalism: Jobs, Income and Growth in Affluent Countries, **L. Seaworthy**, Russell Sage, 04. The ideal of an egalitarian society has majority support in many western economies, since it reduces the favouritism of socio-economic and genetic advantage. Supporting evidence for "employment-friendly egalitarianism" suggests that it is sustainable and need not impede the growth of economic output. Features include a reasonably high wage floor and/or an earnings subsidy, plus retraining, job placement and child care.

Ideas are Free: How the Idea Revolution is Liberating People and Transforming Organizations, **A. G. Robinson, D. M. Schroeder**, Berrett-Koehler, 04. "Employees often know how to improve performance and cut costs better than their bosses do." Radical change can take place when managers encourage large scale employee input to improve performance and the quality of people's lives. Drawn from what works and what does not, in ideas from seventeen countries.

Living Wage Movements: Global Perspectives, Ed **D. M. Figart**,

Routledge. Living wage advocates argue that minimum wages are not living wages, and a worldwide campaign has ignited in a number of countries. Already several US states have passed living wage laws. The progress of these movements and regulations is assessed in several countries including NZ.

Poor Workers Unions: Rebuilding Labour From Below, V. Tait, South End Press, 05. These are usually rooted in racial, ethnic and gender struggles, with independent community groups, offering below-the-radar visions for the labour movement. They cover low-wage service workers, those with multiple places of employment and "No-wage" workers. To reverse its decline, the labour movement as a whole needs to build a broader alliance incorporating such movements.

PEACE / WAR / WORLD AFFAIRS

Building a Peaceful World

The Coming Democracy: New Rules for Running a New World, A. Florini, Brookings, 05. Based on a Brookings project on new approaches to global governance, this study is readable, constructive, well-researched in its assessment of challenges to globalisation for all sectors. The combined environmental, social, economic and security challenges find governments constrained, and international systems embryonic. More effort is needed to establish norms which are transparent and acceptable, rather than relying on entrenched power elites.

Designing a Peacebuilding

Infrastructure: Taking a Systemic Approach to the Prevention of Deadly Conflict, T. P. Dress, UN Development Dossier, UN Non-governmental Liaison Service, 05. Greater inclusiveness and collaboration are essential for effective UN conflict mediation, since peacebuilding increasingly involves civil society as well as governments. A succinct summary of present operations leads to recommendations associated with the proposed UN Peacebuilding Commission. There should be a UN Centre for the Study and Transformation of Conflict, to research and liaise with other UN agencies and provide early warning of conflicts.

G. Oberleitner, *Global Governance, April/June 05*, examines the challenge posed to international law by the concept of Human Security which arose from UN usage in 1994. This focuses on the individual need, reflecting a waning of state sovereignty, an expansion of the meaning of security and promotion of the saving of strangers through humanitarian interventions, reform of the Security Council and adequate reaction to new threats. It potentially could become the new organising principle of international relations. **D. Henk**, *Parameters, Summer 05*, examines the significance of the concept for US military professionals.

State of the World 2005: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress toward a More Sustainable Society, M. Renner et al, W. W. Norton, 05, focuses on **Redefining Global Security**. It is part of an ongoing project by Worldwatch

Institute with partners to deepen understanding of the issues. Core insights: weapons do not necessarily provide security; a purely national basis is inadequate; the concept needs to encompass individual well-being and safety; democratic government and vibrant civil society may provide more security than an army; global social pressures can trigger polarization and radicalisation; resource depletion, ecosystem destruction and population growth will cause evermore devastating "natural" disasters; water is the most precious resource, with 40% of global population living in water-stressed communities by 2015; climate change will sharpen some of the above challenges; anti-terrorist measures may be fuelling a cycle of violence.

Peace Entrenched: Planning for a Palestinian State Should Not Await a Final Settlement. *Rand Review, Summer 05* (<http://www.rand.org/publications/randreview/issues/summer2005/peace.html>) A series of RAND studies concludes that if Israelis and Palestinians agree to a peace settlement then the task of building a successful Palestinian state would be achievable and affordable. It would require considerable and sustained support from the international community, US, EU, UN, World Bank, IMF, because infrastructure is needed for transport and communications, and for water, energy and open space for the cities and their offshoots.

T. Land, *Middle East, Jan 06*, reports that **M. El Baradei**, Director of the IAEA is trying to convert the present crisis over Iran's apparent nuclear ambitions into a fresh impe-

tus for a Middle East Nuclear-Weapons Free Zone. Essentials for such a possibility are: a clear definition of the territories covered, universal membership (even if "creative ways are needed for Israel, India and Pakistan to be involved"), an international verification and control compliance system, a regional verification and co-operation mechanism, and UN Security Council guarantees to assist any country whose security is threatened. A first step is underway, an agreement for a mechanism to assure countries of a reliable supply of nuclear fuel while removing from their reach the sensitive weapons grade material. Promotion of peaceful uses is one objective of IAEA.

On War and Weapons

L. Harbom, P. Wallensteen, *Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 42/5, 05*, analysed 228 armed conflicts since 1946, 118 of these occurring after the end of the Cold War. Since the 1970 the number has been falling, currently about 30 annually. The vast majority have been fought within states, with about 20% of involving overt outside state assistance. Covert assistance, money and logistics, occurs far more often.

D. Morton, *Foreign Policy, Jan /Feb 06*, outlines the policies and practise of the **US National Rifle Association, (NRA)**, which has become a very skilled global gun lobby, assisting a diverse range of national groups with local campaigns. This is conducted very quietly since the conservative, pro-America nature of the NRA colours perceptions. It now has a official sta-

tus as a NGO at the UN where its emissary operates skilfully at the same time acting as the leading official for the World Forum on the Future of Sports Shooting, a primary voice for the pro-gun movement internationally. The essential message for the pro-gun campaigns is that "the right to keep and bear arms," equals "Freedom"; that gun control should be focused on criminals; that guns should have serial numbers for tracing illicit trade.

Worldwide

After the Cosmopolitan? Multicultural Cities and the Future of Racism, M. Keith, Routledge, 05. Through globalisation, UK and other receiving societies are producing a new kind of multiculturalism, where ethnic specificity and cultural difference are constantly changing. Binaries of black/white, Asian and Muslim have limited relevance when belonging, exile and diaspora mean that "home" is everywhere and no where. Even "immigrant" needs to be redefined for many of these are either from overseas Western societies or Eastern European countries. Stronger, direct links are also introduced to international politics in far countries.

NACLA Report on the Americas, Jan-Feb 06, covers aspects of **Cuba in the Americas**. Cuban academic **L. S. Salazar** highlights a recent foreign policy initiative, **Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) 2004**, an embryonic initiative by the three radical political leaders of Bolivia, Cuba and Venezuela to forge an alternative paradigm to the US for the integration of Latin

America and the Caribbean. This addresses the varied development levels of the states. A Latin American Investment Fund is being created to counter dependence on extra-regional investors. Venezuela is making preferential trade deals with Cuba and some Caribbean states in oil and petroleum products. Cuba is supplying large numbers of trained medical workers and teachers for comprehensive health care systems in Venezuela. Success for these and similar plans could tip the region towards self-sustained, long-term development.

Securing A Peaceful Pacific, Eds J. Henderson, G. Watson, Canterbury Univ. Press, 05, is based on contributions to a Conference at CU 2004, concerned with the ongoing conflicts and underlying instability of the area and countering strategies. Sixty contributions, academic, military, governmental, diplomatic, non-governmental, arranged in fifteen sections including an Overview and Conclusion, cover security, interventions, regionalism, military and police, politics and governance, society, environment, development, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, W. Papua.