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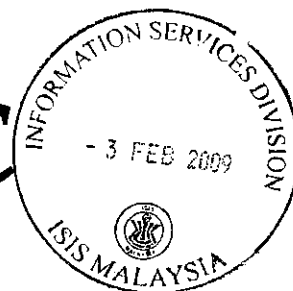
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Abdullah Ahmad is a politician and former editor in chief of the *New Straits Times*. His column starts on page 16.

Matt Armitage is a writer and photographer who runs his own boutique content and communications agency. Based in South East Asia for the last ten years, he lives his life on the other side of the lens. His piece begins on page 56.

Chan Kok Keong is Chairman of the Advisory Panel on Local Government, Perak. His contribution starts from page 26.

Clive Kessler is Emeritus Professor School of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He has been researching and writing on Malaysian affairs for

more than 35 years. His essay begins on page 10. **Sharaad Kuttan** hopes that his interview with Rana Dasgupta is only the first in a series of conversations with individuals struggling the understand, and perhaps transform for the better, the complex realities that constitute contemporary life in Asia's teaming cities. His book review starts from page 66.

Ann Lee is mostly a writer, editor and award-winning playwright who divides her time between Indonesia and Malaysia. She has degrees in film and the history of science, medicine and technology. Her column is on page 14.

Julian CH Lee is an anthropologist in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University, Malaysia. His article is on page 24; he talks about cider (with Richard Sutcliffe) on page 74.

Andrew Leci is a sportscaster with ESPN. He is also a chef and stage actor, and once worked in the financial markets. His piece is on page 37.

Joe Leong a writer with long experience in journalism, public relations, advertising, publishing and video production, keeps a sharp eye on all things Borneo. His article begins on page 34.

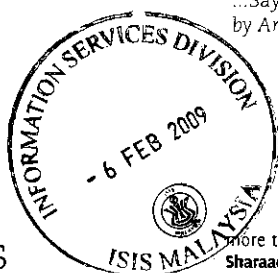
Benjamin McKay is a lecturer in film studies at Monash University Sunway and keenly observes Malaysian culture from the comfort of the fringes. His article is on page 23.

Carmen Nge is Dean of the Faculty of Creative Industries, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. Her contribution is on page 70.

Richard Sutcliffe is an anthropologist in the School of History, Heritage, and Society, Deakin University, Australia. He and Julian Lee's contribution is on page 74.

Emily Tan is a writer with *The Edge Business and Investment* weekly. She interviews Oliver Stone on page 48.

Yong Yen Nie is a writer with *The Edge Business and Investment* weekly. Her Cambodia travel piece starts from page 60.





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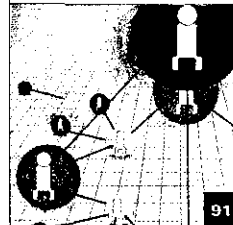
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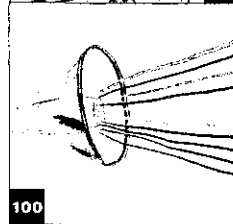
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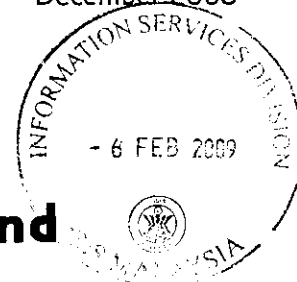
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People are starting to talk of Obama creating an Eisenhower-lite foreign-policy team. This is a very good thing, if only a start. America no longer knows how to make good strategy. From the Nazi defeat in World War II to America's triumph in the cold war, time and time again we have seen strategic competence is the cornerstone of foreign-policy success. A new council of wise men and the retooling of our infrastructure are musts.

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Every president faces the daunting task of putting together a team that can lead America while transitioning to the role of leader of the free world. Given the way the new administration's cabinet is shaping up and the heap of global crises, Obama's charge may be more difficult than most. Three recent books by government insiders show how history can help the president navigate his transition. Obama can learn from Eisenhower's command, Carter's missteps and Kennedy's curiosity.

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Can women keep us safe? For all the talk of a rise of women to positions of power, there is still a dearth of the female perspective in national security. With the unprecedented appointment of three women to some of the highest posts in the new administration, all related to protecting America's interests, the voice of the softer sex may indeed help us better fight the threats of terrorism.

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With the rise in oil prices and a conservative fiscal policy, Russia turned from a debtor nation into an economic powerhouse. Putin's strategy created a compromise between the excesses of the free market and the inefficiencies of a command economy. Yet there remain deep cracks in the foundation of the post-Soviet structure. With global finance in a meltdown, can his Putinomics survive?

'Is the economic crisis going to be the end of green?'

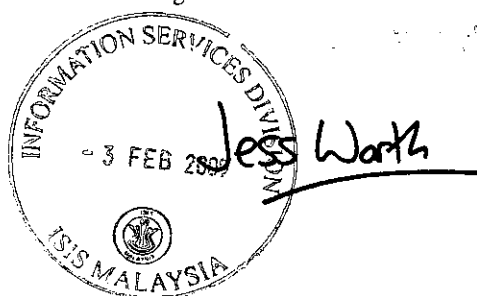
New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman has asked, provoking a furious debate online. I've been hearing such rumblings a lot lately. The financial meltdown has certainly eclipsed climate change as the crisis *du jour*; and if last month's UN climate talks in Poznan were anything to go by, it's making it even harder to get progress from governments that is anything other than cheap and half-hearted.

This is a most dangerous state of affairs. It's like finding out that you've got cancer, but then delaying going to the doctor's for treatment for a few months because you want to repaint your house. No doubt your house needs a lot of work, but ultimately there's little point if you won't be around to enjoy it.

Stopping climate change must be our number one priority – and this is the main theme of this month's magazine. But how we go about it goes hand in hand with the task of rebuilding a fairer economy, as we highlight in the 'Clean Start' special feature. The same crushing injustices that triggered the financial collapse have been driving global warming. Now, suddenly, we have an opportunity to change the system. Can we seize it?

With this in mind, the NI held a 'Clean Start' event on 15 December. Speakers included NI contributors Walden Bello and Susan George, and the lively discussion ranged from how we got into this global mess, through specific policies that would put us on a fairer greener path, to how we build a movement to make it happen. Don't worry if you missed it – you can watch clips of all the speakers on our website.

The stakes couldn't be higher. I urge you to get involved, at: www.newint.org/cleanstart



Jess Worth for the
New Internationalist Co-operative

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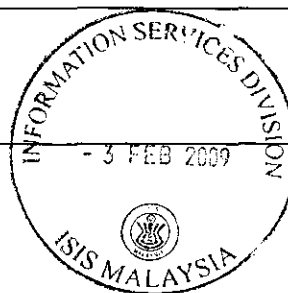


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