

# IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER OF TIME

Saving Daylight Is Not Embraced By All Nations

—by *Monica Hesse*



Time, as in the relentless forward-ticking of our lives, is mostly a nuisance, a loose concept that was standardized about 120 years ago when railroads decided that there should be an official noon rather than just whenever the sun was overhead-ish.

It is the master of doctor appointments and movie star times, and arbitrary decisions that it's too late to phone someone on this or that coast. Time is daily grind minutiae. Except when it represents something bigger.

On November 1st, when we end daylight saving time by staging a countrywide 2 a.m. do-over, we will be participating in a 90-year tradition that has, throughout the world, been both a political maneuver and a statement of rebellion. A matter of life and death and a symbol of assimilation. An extra hour of sleep each fall that will only be lost again come spring.

Japan doesn't observe daylight saving. This is noteworthy, because most industrialized nations do. It's a spot-check mark of a developed civilization, like paid vacation or your own version of "American Idol." Europe and the United States kicked off the concept during World War I as an energy-saving measure, to increase production and consumption by shifting the daylight to when we're awake.

Japan, however, doesn't participate in time changes and hasn't since a brief stint from 1948 to 1952. That experiment was a power play, enforced by U.S. troops who thought Japa-

nese clocks should march forward with the American ones 13 time zones away. When the Americans left, daylight saving did, too, and the Japanese haven't looked back since.

"They thought of daylight savings as a form of occupation," says David Prerau, a daylight saving expert who consults with governments around the world on time issues. Nearly 60 years later, they still do—and have only recently begun exploring the idea of reinstating it.

China also doesn't observe time changes, but then again, it doesn't observe time zones, either. The entire country is set to Beijing, meaning 9 a.m. is still dark for some citizens and practically the middle of the afternoon for others. This doesn't seem that surprising, considering. Actually, it seems appropriate—Communist-style logic and efficiency, ostensibly well reasoned but ultimately a pain for 1.3 billion people.

Countries are defined by their people, by their food, by their exports. It stands to reason they could be defined by their keeping of time as well. And yet it seems so delightfully random and quirky when a region's personality matches up with its decision to save daylight or not—when we feel like we can read great meaning into what time it is in Nepal, for instance. Which, incidentally, will always be on standard time, and will always be different from anywhere else in the world.

In order to assert its independence and separation from surrounding countries, tiny Nepal put itself on the quarter-hour,

*Time*, p. 48, 2nd col.



## Ballot nominations, 2010

### FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT

April 2010 to April 2011



**Curtis L. Smith**

### FOR DIRECTOR

April 2010 to April 2013



**Karen Meckel**

meaning that if it's noon in Washington, it's 9:45 p.m. in Nepal. Pfft on you, India, China and Bangladesh.

In conflict-filled Iran, the government has gone on and off observing daylight saving time, depending on regime changes. In Russia, Stalin imposed daylight saving one spring but forgot to officially end it in the fall; terrorized civilians didn't go back to standard time for more than 60 years.

Canada gives every province the right to determine whether it will observe daylight saving. Canadian citizens, being amenable, have gone along with whatever the United States is doing.

"The only people who adopted daylight savings and never wavered from schedule are the British," says Michael Downing, author of "Spring Forward: The Annual Madness of Daylight Saving Time." Staying the course and all. Those dependable, reliable Brits.

The diverse United States hasn't managed to get on a national page for time changes: Mavericks in Arizona don't observe it at all. Hawaii doesn't, either. The swing state Indiana, where time zones change by county, passed legislation in 2005 that every county would participate in daylight saving.

What these time change wars are really all about, of course, is a sense of control. Over our daily schedules, over our national identity and, in the bigger sense, over the one thing that waits for no man. We cannot stop the march of time, but we can stop clocks, even wind them back an hour once a year.

"The entire idea of daylight savings is at best theoretical, or possibly philosophical," Downing says. "The idea that we can save time or lose time by moving its measuring device is preposterous." Almost as preposterous as the idea of someone dying for time.

Back in 1999, terrorists on the daylight-saving West Bank built several time bombs, delivered to co-conspirators in Israel and scheduled to explode at a set time. Problem was, Israel had just switched back to standard time, so the only people injured were the terrorists themselves when the bomb detonated an hour earlier than they expected and killed them all. — *Reprinted from The Washington Post, November 1, 2008*



## The Global Airborne ISR Market 2008-2018

### Airborne Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

Since the Global War on Terrorism began, the airborne intelligence, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have played an increasing role in military and defence opera-

tions. Increasing demands for national security, situational awareness and timely intelligence are all set to boost the airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems (ISR) market over from 2008 onwards. The US is investing heavily to acquire and upgrade its airborne ISR systems, planning to invest \$28 billion by the middle of the next decade. Can you capture a large share of this market? This in-depth market analysis will help you. The latest vision-gain defence report —The Global Airborne ISR Market 2008-2018—examines how the market will develop over the next 10 years, identifying the key companies and issues that will drive the market.

