This Week’s Newsmakers
Dec. 10 – Dec. 17, 2010
Prepared by University Communications

Top Story
Report Details Ties between U.S., Nazi War Criminals

Richard Breitman, professor of history, talked to the Associated Press about a report he coauthored that uncovered the CIA’s use of Nazi war criminals to wage “a covert war” against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The New York Times also wrote a story and more than 315 news outlets, including the Los Angeles Times, Wall Street Journal, Houston Chronicle, FOXNews.com, MSNBC.com, and Forbes.com, republished the AP article. (12/10, 12/11)

Additional Feature
SOC Adds Current to Public Media Initiatives

The New York Times announced that public media trade publication Current will have a new home with American University’s School of Communication. Larry Kirkman, dean of the School of Communication, noted that the school is “a laboratory for the future of public media,” as demonstrated by initiatives like the Center for Social Media and the Investigative Reporting Workshop, which produces for PBS’s FRONTLINE. Several other news outlets, including The Chronicle of Higher Education and Politico, also published the announcement. (12/13)

Quotes
Healthcare Ruling

“It’s just one judge, and on an issue of this importance, the Supreme Court justices will approach it from their own standpoint,” said Dan Marcus, professor of law, on NBC Nightly News about a Virginia judge’s decision to rule President Obama’s healthcare bill unconstitutional. (12/13)

Politicians Fear Military Pay Raise Too Small

While opposition to the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell may be mostly to blame for delaying approval of the Defense Authorization Bill, it isn’t the only provision that has politicians sweating. “Dealing with military pay, benefits and health care is a classic third rail of defense planning,” Gordon Adams, professor of international service, told CNN.com about the bill’s proposal to give military personnel a 1.9 percent pay raise—an amount politicians fear is too small. (12/11)

Obama’s History of Compromise Brought Him to Tax-Cut Deal

“This deal is all about stimulating the economy. Obama knows that if the economy recovers over the next two years he will rather easily win re-election, much like Reagan in 1984,” said Allan Lichtman, professor of history, to Bloomberg BusinessWeek about President Obama’s compromise on taxes with congressional Republicans. (12/16)

AU Expert on WikiLeaks, Health Care Law

Stephen Vladeck, professor of law, spoke to MSNBC.com and PBS.org about the WikiLeaks controversy. He said the single biggest problem with the Espionage Act is that its limits have never truly been tested. Vladeck was also a guest on WAMU’s The Kojo Nnamdi Show to discuss a Virginia federal judge’s ruling of the healthcare bill. “The question here is whether imposing [the] healthcare requirement is a bridge too far,” said Vladeck. (12/12, 12/14, 12/15)
Changing D.C.’s Adoption Laws

“A lot of policies around child welfare had incentives that a lot of people hadn’t thought about,” said Mary Hansen, professor of economics, on WAMU’s Metro Connection. Hansen discussed her research—which uncovered a subsidy discrepancy that made adoption in D.C. less financially beneficial than being a foster family—and how it helped change D.C. adoption laws. (12/13)

Much of Obama’s Agenda in Hands of Courts

“The fact that Obama’s political agenda is sunken into litigation reflects how deeply the country is divided over fundamental issues,” said Jamin Raskin, professor of law, to the Washington Examiner about the opposition to many of the president’s sweeping policy changes leading to lawsuits. (12/14)