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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

### REPORTS

#### [Iran Nuclear Negotiations: Status of Talks and the Role of Congress](#)

Statement of Anthony Blinken, Deputy Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. January 21, 2015 [PDF format, 7 pages]

“The challenge posed by Iran’s nuclear program has long been one of our country’s foremost national security priorities, and it has been a primary focus of both the Congress and the Administration. The international community shares our serious concerns about Iran’s nuclear program. Together with our partners in the P5+1 and the EU we have been unified in pursuing a comprehensive solution that lays these concerns to rest – consistent with the President’s firm commitment to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon... Today I plan to update you on our goals for and the status of the negotiations... We remain committed to continue – and when necessary, to expand – regular consultations. We all have the same goal – to make the world a safer place by resolving the international community’s concerns with Iran’s nuclear program. We continue to believe that the best way to do that is to negotiate a comprehensive plan of action that, when implemented, will ensure that, as a practical matter, Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon and that Iran’s nuclear program is exclusively peaceful... We never expected this to be an easy process, and so far those expectations have proved correct. It is also a process that cannot be rushed. After thirty-five years without diplomatic relations, and after more than ten years of attempts to put a halt to Iran’s proliferation of sensitive nuclear activities, we are now trying to see if we can work through a multitude of complicated issues in order for us and the international community to be assured of the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear program. Our goal is to conclude the major elements of the deal by the end of March and then to complete the technical details by June.”

#### [The North Korean Threat: Nuclear, Missiles and Cyber](#)

Testimony by Sung Kim, Special Representative for North Korea Policy before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. January 13, 2015.

“North Korea is one of the most difficult and complicated challenges the United States faces. As we respond to its destabilizing, provocative, and repressive policies and actions around the world, we appreciate the interest and attention you and the Committee have given to this issue... our policy aims to bring the DPRK to the realization that it must take the steps necessary to end its isolation, respect the human rights of its own people, honor its past commitments, and comply with its international obligations. North Korea is not, as they claim, developing nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles in response to a threat from the United States or any outside power. Rather, North Korea believes these programs will help prolong the Kim regime and obtain material and political benefits from the international community. By portraying the United States as a strategic enemy, the DPRK hopes to

strengthen its narrative that the U.S. is responsible for North Korea's bad behavior and, therefore, solely responsible for mitigating it. We are not. North Korea is responsible for North Korean actions. Standing up to North Korea requires a sustained and concerted effort by all of the countries in the Six-Party process, and indeed by the entire international community."

### **[The United States as an Arctic Nation: Opportunities in the High North](#)**

Statement of Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr. Special Representative for the Arctic, U.S. Department of State before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats, U.S. House of Representatives. December 10, 2014 [PDF format, 11 pages]

"Recognizing the importance of the Arctic, and in line with the President's commitment to elevate Arctic issues in our nation's foreign policy, particularly as the United States prepares to chair the Arctic Council in 2015, Secretary Kerry appointed me as the Special Representative for the Arctic this past July. My broad charge is to lead our nation's efforts to promote our priorities and advance U.S. policy in the Arctic region, a region in which we have vital national interests... We remain cognizant of how significant changes in the Arctic are creating new challenges and opportunities for the United States and the other Arctic nations. A rapidly warming Arctic climate threatens traditional ways of life while affording new shipping routes and increased opportunities for trade, allows for increased oil and gas exploration while risking environmental pollution, and attracts tourism while communities tackle food security, health concerns, and suicide. The challenge of charting a path toward a sustainable future in the Arctic is not lost on me. The federal interagency community is committed to working within our capacities to improve the future of this region.

### **[Countering ISIL: Are We Making Progress?](#)**

Statement by Brett McGurk, Deputy Special Presidential Envoy to the Coalition to Counter ISIL, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. December 10, 2014 [PDF format, 15 pages]

"My testimony today will focus first on Iraq with a brief overview of what has transpired since the city of Mosul fell to ISIL exactly six months ago. I will then discuss the current situation in Iraq, including both the promise and the inevitable challenges facing its new and inclusive federal government, as well as our ongoing efforts to create the conditions to combat ISIL in Syria and foster the conditions for a political transition process to move forward. I will also explain key elements of our integrated campaign to defeat ISIL, now anchored by a 60-member global coalition... We are now planning the next phase of the Iraq campaign. U.S. military training and advising personnel are deployed to engage directly with Iraqi security commanders and tribal leaders to organize a counteroffensive. We are also working with a number of coalition partners to establish several sites across Iraq to train 12 new Iraqi brigades (nine Iraqi Army and three Kurdish Peshmerga). These sites will be located in northern, western, and southern Iraq – and the forces they generate will be designed to help Iraq restore and retain sovereign control over its territory."

### **[The "Islamic State" Crisis and U.S. Policy](#)**

Katzman, Kenneth, et. al. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. January 8, 2015 [PDF format, 41 pages]

"The Islamic State is a transnational Sunni Islamist insurgent and terrorist group that has expanded its control over areas of parts of Iraq and Syria since 2013. It threatens the governments of both countries and potentially several other countries in the region. The emerging international response to the threat is multifaceted and includes coalition military strikes and assistance plans. There is debate over the degree to which the Islamic State organization might

represent a direct terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland or to U.S. facilities and personnel in the region... The U.S. desire to show progress against the Islamic State and in the recruitment of regional partners raises questions of whether the U.S. mission and commitment might expand. The Administration has ruled out deploying combat forces to either Iraq or Syria, but it has not ruled out providing forward aircraft controllers, additional military advisors, or other related ground based military assets. Some experts assert that coalition partners inside Iraq and Syria—Iraqi government forces and select Syrian groups—are too weak to defeat the Islamic State and will eventually require help from U.S. combat troops. Several regional coalition members apparently seek an expansion of the U.S.-led mission to include an effort to oust President Assad of Syria. In December 2014, the 113th Congress provided new authorities and funds for efforts to combat the Islamic State organization in Syria and Iraq in the FY2015 national defense authorization (P.L. 113-291) and consolidated appropriations acts (P.L. 113-235).” *Kenneth Katzman is an Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs at the Congressional Research Service.*

### [American Public Attitudes Toward ISIS and Syria](#)

Telhamy, Shibley. Sadat Chair for Peace and Development, University of Maryland; Brookings Institution [Note: contains copyrighted material] January 8, 2014 [PDF format, 9 pages]

“Americans overwhelmingly say that ISIS is the biggest challenge facing the United States in the Middle East—well above Iranian behavior and Palestinian-Israeli violence. Overall, 70% say ISIS is the biggest threat, compared with 13% for Palestinian-Israeli violence and 12% for Iranian behavior. Unlike most other policy issues toward the Middle East, there is little variation on this issue across party lines. If airstrikes fail to stop ISIS, 57% of Americans oppose and 41% support sending ground forces to fight ISIS. However, there are significant differences across party lines: a majority of Republicans (53%) support sending ground forces compared with only 36% of Democrats and 31% of Independents. Among those who support deploying ground forces, 43% say that what justifies such deployment is that ISIS is an extension of Al Qaeda, against whom the United States is in a war that must be finished. The next justification, selected by 33%, is ISIS’s ruthlessness and intolerance. These two top categories hold across party lines. In comparison, few respondents select ISIS’s threats to allies (7%), or even ISIS’s potential to threaten most of America’s vital interests, including domestic interests (16%), as justification for deploying ground troops.”

### [Be Afraid. Be A Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq](#)

Byman, Daniel L.; Shapiro, Jeremy. The Brookings Institution. January 2015 [PDF format, 34 pages]

“Many U.S. and European intelligence officials fear that a wave of terrorism will sweep over Europe, driven by the civil war in Syria and continuing instability in Iraq. Many of the concerns stem from the large number of foreign fighters involved... The foreign fighter problem in Iraq and Syria is simply bigger than past cases. Recent reports estimate that between 2,000 and 3,000 foreign fighters from Western countries have traveled to Syria and Iraq as of September 2014, including over 100 Americans; France, Britain, Belgium, and Germany have the largest numbers of citizens in the fight... This paper first lays out the standard schematic view of how and why some foreign fighters become dangerous terrorists, drawing on the Afghanistan experience in the 1980s to illustrate the arguments. The second section discusses why many seasoned observers believe the Syria conflict is likely to be particularly dangerous. In the third section, we examine why terrorism in Europe and the United States was less than expected from previous jihads such as Iraq, again drawing implications and lessons specific to Syria, as well as examining factors unique to the Syrian conflict itself. The fourth and final section identifies policy implications and recommendations.” *Daniel Byman is director of research and a senior fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings. Jeremy Shapiro is a fellow with the Project on International Order and Strategy and the Center on the United States and Europe in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings.*

### [The Case for a New Federalism in Libya](#)

Mezran, Karim; Eljarh, Mohamed. The Atlantic Council. December 2014. [PDF format, 9 pages]

“Following Muammar Qaddafi's ouster more than three years ago, Libya fragmented, and the absence of a capable central government opened up the space for a violent political struggle over the country's key resources and state institutions that continues today. Given Libya's troubled history with centralization, there is a need for a rethink about a post-revolutionary form of governance. However, calls for federalism based on the country's three historical regions (Cyrenaica in the east, Fezzan in the south, and Tripolitania in the west) are outdated and do not take into account that Libyans' loyalties to tribe, clan, or region trump their sense of national identity. In this publication the authors argue that in order to empower local authorities to address distinctly local grievances while supporting a vision for a unified Libya, the authors offer a fresh proposal for a federalist system in which the executive branch handles foreign affairs and national security issues and considerable legislative powers are devolved to the regions.” *Karim Mezran is a senior fellow at the Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East at the Atlantic Council. Mohamed Eljarh is a nonresident fellow at the Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East.*

### [New Anchors for U.S.-Egypt Relations](#)

Katulis, Brian; Awad, Mokhtar. Center for American Progress. January 2015 [PDF format, 26 pages]

“In the past year, the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, or ISIS, and the nuclear negotiations with Iran have dominated U.S. policy toward the Middle East. But Egypt, as the most populous Arab country, remains a central test in the broader battle to achieve stability and progress in the region. Four years after the start of the Arab uprisings, Egypt continues to face many of the same challenges that sparked the initial protests. The United States and Egypt should try to work together to build a set of new anchors for progress and stability at this turbulent time of transition in the Middle East. 2015 offers potential opportunities, but it will require Egypt and the United States to learn some lessons from the past four years and to look to the future. The two countries need to move beyond the old way of doing business—a heavy focus on conventional military cooperation—and look to a future where the bilateral relationship includes expanded economic cooperation and a new, more constructive diplomatic and political dialogue.” *Brian Katulis is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress. Mokhtar Awad is a Research Associate with the National Security and International Policy team at the Center for American Progress.*

### [Preserving Ukraine's Independence, Resisting Russian Aggression: What the United States and NATO Must Do](#)

Daalder, Ivo, et. al. The Atlantic Council; Brookings Institution; the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. February 2015 [PDF format, 17 pages]

“This report is the result of collaboration among scholars and former practitioners from the Atlantic Council, the Brookings Institution, the Center for a New American Security, and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. It is informed by and reflects mid-January discussions with senior NATO and U.S. officials in Brussels and senior Ukrainian civilian and military officials in Kyiv and at the Ukrainian “anti-terror operation” headquarters in Kramatorsk... Argues that to deter further aggression by the Kremlin and its surrogates, Ukraine urgently needs significant military assistance. Drawing on discussions with senior US, NATO, and Ukrainian officials, the authors—Ivo Daalder, Michele Flournoy, John Herbst, Jan Lodal, Steven Pifer, James Stavridis, Strobe Talbott, and Charles Wald—argue that in order to enable Ukraine to defend itself, the US government should provide Ukraine \$3 billion in nonlethal and defensive lethal military assistance over the next three years... The report outlines the background to the crisis over Ukraine, describes why the United States and NATO need to engage more actively and urgently, summarizes what the authors

heard in discussions at NATO and in Ukraine, and offers specific recommendations for steps that Washington and NATO should take to strengthen Ukraine's defenses and thereby enhance its ability to deter further Russian aggression." *Ivo Daalder, President, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and former U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO. Prior to joining the Council in July 2013, Daalder served as the Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).*

### [Russia's Breakout From the Post-Cold War System: The Drivers of Putin's Course](#)

Dmitri Trenin. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. December 22, 2014.

"In 2014, Russia broke out of the post-Cold War order and openly challenged the U.S.-led international system. This was essentially the result of the failure of attempts to integrate Russia into the Euro-Atlantic community. The new period of rivalry between the Kremlin and the West is likely to endure for years. Moscow's new course is laid down first and foremost by President Vladimir Putin, but it also reflects the rising power of Russian nationalism... The abrupt end of the quarter-of-a-century-long era of cooperation and partnership between Russia and the West, and the return of confrontation and hostility between them, did not come out of the blue. The root cause of the dramatic reversal was the failure of Russia's integration into the Euro-Atlantic political, security, and economic systems despite repeated attempts. In 2012 and 2013, the pretense of partnership became increasingly untenable. The Syria crisis found Moscow and Washington not only backing opposing sides in the strategically important Middle Eastern country but also disagreeing fundamentally about the global order: sovereignty, intervention, and the use of force... The competing offers to Ukraine, one from Brussels to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU), and another from Moscow to join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), turned Ukraine into the site of a tug of war, which soon resulted in a violent crisis with global implications." *Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, has been with the center since its inception. He also chairs the research council and the Foreign and Security Policy Program.*

### [Pivot 2.0: How the Administration and Congress Can Work Together to Sustain American Engagement in Asia to 2016](#)

Green, Michael J.; Szechenyi, Nicholas. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). January 5, 2014 [PDF format, 28 pages]

"Opinion surveys demonstrate that a majority of Americans consider Asia the most important region to U.S. interests and a majority of Asian experts support the Obama administration's goal of a "pivot" or "rebalance" to the Asia-Pacific region. Yet doubts have also grown about whether the pivot can be sustained by a president politically weakened by the 2014 midterm results, constrained by budget sequestration, and pulled into crises from Ukraine to Iraq and Iran. On issues from immigration to Cuba policy, the Obama administration and the incoming Republican Congress appear set for confrontation. Yet Asia policy remains largely bipartisan—perhaps the most bipartisan foreign policy issue in Washington. It is therefore critical—and practical—to ask that the White House and the Republican leadership in the Congress chart a common course on policy toward Asia for the next two years. This report outlines concrete areas for action on trade, China, defense, Korea, India, and Southeast Asia." *Michael Jonathan Green is senior vice president for Asia and Japan Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and an associate professor at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. Nicholas Szechenyi is a senior fellow and deputy director of the Japan Chair at CSIS.*

### [Arctic 2015 and Beyond: A Strategy for U.S. Leadership in the High North](#)

Rosenberg, Elizabeth; Titley, David Wiker, Alexander. Center for a New American Security. December 11, 2014. [PDF

format, 13 pages]

The authors lay out the challenges and opportunities that face the United States as it assumes the chair of the Arctic Council in April 2015. This policy brief recommends that the United States devote increased time, attention, money and leadership to the Arctic; build foundations for sustainable and responsible economic expansion; ensure safety and security of Arctic oceans and borders; develop greater cooperation with Russia on Arctic matters; and forge long-term partnerships and new coordinating mechanisms. “Strong U.S. Arctic policy and leadership are increasingly fundamental to the United States’ strategic and economic interests. Such leadership and focus in this area will be essential to underpinning U.S. initiatives on Arctic matters in multilateral forums, such as the Arctic Council... The United States must accelerate its rate of investment in Arctic infrastructure, operations and legal and regulatory capacities to be able to set the terms for the coming era of expanded Arctic activity. The United States must also implement binding international agreements on such matters as search and rescue, oil spill response and polar shipping codes, among others, to attract opportunity, manage risk and help establish a solid framework for international engagement in this region in the years to come.” *Elizabeth Rosenberg is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Energy, Environment and Security Program at the Center for a New American Security. Dr. David Titley is the founding Director of the Center for Solutions to Weather and Climate Risk at the Pennsylvania State University and an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. Alexander Wiker is a Post-Graduate Fellow at Pennsylvania State University’s Dickinson School of Law.*

### [2015: A Crucial Year for Financing Development in Africa](#)

Sy, Amadou. The Brookings Institution. January 2015 [PDF format, 5 pages]

“In 2015, African and other world leaders will meet in Addis Ababa for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. This meeting will be crucial for Africa given the vast resources needed to support inclusive, sustainable growth across the continent. It will also provide a unique opportunity for African leaders to gauge their countries’ progress on implementing the current development financing agenda, as well as reformulate their strategies given new and emerging trends in finance. In his latest paper, Amadou Sy reviews the changing dynamics of development finance on the African continent, specifically examining the diverse roles of domestic and international, public, private and “blended” financing for development. Over the past decade, the author finds that development finance has transformed dramatically in Africa, with official development assistance steadily declining, and domestic and external financial flows such as sovereign bonds, remittances, private capital flows and foreign direct investment (FDI) rising. Thus, he contends that longer-term, more stable forms of financial flows, including FDI, are increasing to Africa.” *Amadou Sy is senior fellow at the Brookings’ Africa Growth Initiative and a member of the Editorial Board of the Global Credit Review.*

## ARTICLES

### [Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq](#)

Klausen, Jytte. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. January 2015, pp. 1-22.

“Social media have played an essential role in the jihadists’ operational strategy in Syria and Iraq, and beyond. Twitter in particular has been used to drive communications over other social media platforms. Twitter streams from the insurgency may give the illusion of authenticity, as a spontaneous activity of a generation accustomed to using their cell phones for self-publication, but to what extent is access and content controlled? Over a period of three months, from January through March 2014, information was collected from the Twitter accounts of 59 Western-origin fighters

known to be in Syria. Using a snowball method, the 59 starter accounts were used to collect data about the most popular accounts in the network-at-large. Social network analysis on the data collated about Twitter users in the Western Syria-based fighters points to the controlling role played by feeder accounts belonging to terrorist organizations in the insurgency zone, and by Europe-based organizational accounts associated with the banned British organization, Al Muhajiroun, and in particular the London-based preacher, Anjem Choudary." *Jytte Klausen is the Lawrence A. Wien Professor of International Cooperation at Brandeis University and an Affiliate at the Center for European Studies at Harvard University.*

### [Towards a Regional Strategy Contra ISIS](#)

Harrison, Ross. *Parameters*. Autumn 2014, pp.39-49.

"ISIS represents a threat with three different faces. To the United States and its western allies, it is a terrorist organization. However, for Arab states, ISIS represents an insurgency without political boundaries that threatens the survival of countries [such as Iraq, Syria and Libya] in the midst of civil wars, puts at risk weak states desperately trying to avert civil war, like Lebanon and Jordan; and poses a challenge to the legitimacy of even stronger states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia. When examined from a regional perspective, ISIS represents the spearhead of a broader movement threatening to sunder the Arab political order that has existed since the end of World War I, and potentially threatening non-Arab states such as Iran, Turkey and even Israel. Any strategy to eradicate ISIS must take into account the threat's three essential aspects. To deal with it, the United States will need the capability to fight ISIS using military means, but also to strengthen the military and political capacity of individual Arab states at risk. Moreover, it will need to move beyond country-specific approaches towards a regional effort to manage the relationships between competing powers, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, all of which have contributed to the instability that has allowed ISIS to flourish." Ross Harrison is on the faculty of the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, where he teaches strategy. He also teaches Middle East politics at the University of Pittsburgh.

### **Understanding the Strengths and Vulnerabilities of ISIS**

Terrill, W. Andrew. *Parameters*. Autumn 2015, pp. 13-23.

"The emergence of the IS threat and its role in both Syria and Iraq has presented new challenges for the United States, Iraq, and their allies. An ongoing and evolving understanding of IS strengths and weaknesses is therefore necessary to meet American and Iraqi goals of containing, degrading, and ultimately destroying this organization as well as working with allies to develop a comprehensive strategy to meet these goals. Iraqi policy-makers, US intelligence analysts, military advisors to the Iraqis, and others will need to be especially attentive to IS to find military, political, economic, and information campaign vulnerabilities capable of being exploited and enemy strengths to guard against and neutralize. The United States, Iraq, and their allies seek either to destroy IS or marginalize the organization so it is no longer a serious threat. They also hope to eliminate conditions under which IS successor organizations might be reborn from a series of defeats. All of this can only be done with a comprehensive and evolving understanding of IS strengths and weakness. At the present time, the most important advantage that IS maintains is Sunni Arab hostility to the Baghdad government, which must be significantly diminished in order to undermine the roots of IS appeal. This will not be an easy problem to overcome, but it is achievable provided that the Iraqi government behaves responsibly and US military forces in that country are able to help rebuild the Iraqi military while airstrikes and other actions buy time. US Army, and possibly Marine Corps, trainers must also plan to continue supporting Kurdish forces in Iraq and possibly work with Sunni local defense forces assigned to operate in Sunni areas." *W. Andrew Terrill, Ph.D. is a research professor at the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College.*

### [Iran's ISIS policy](#)

Esfandiary, Dina; Tabatabai Ariane. *International Affairs*. January 2015, pp. 1-15.

"This article assesses Iran's strategy in dealing with the threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It examines the implications of the rise of ISIS in Iran's immediate neighbourhood for Tehran's policies in Syria and Iraq and investigates how each of these countries affects Iranian national interests. It provides an overview of the major events marking Iran and Iraq's relations in the past few decades and discusses the strategic importance of Iraq for Iran, by looking at the two countries' energy, economic and religious ties. It also considers Iran's involvement in Syria since the beginning of the Syrian conflict. The article sheds light on the unilateral action taken by Tehran to counter ISIS, the adjustments it may have to make to its involvement in Syria, and the potential areas for tactical cooperation between Iran and the United States, as well as other key regional states such as Saudi Arabia. The article investigates three likely scenarios affecting the developments in Iraq and Iran's possible response to them as the events in the Middle East unfold." *Dina Esfandiary is a MacArthur Fellow at the Centre for Science and Security Studies at King's College London. Ariane Tabatabai is a visiting Professor in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and an associate in the Belfer Center's International Security Program and Project on Managing the Atom at Harvard University.*

### **Counterterrorism as War: Identifying the Dangers, Risks, and Opportunity Costs of U.S. Strategy Toward Al Qaeda and Its Affiliates**

McIntosh, Christopher. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. January 2015, pp. 23-38.

"The U.S. war on Al Qaeda is well into its second decade—why has this particular conflict been so difficult to end? This article argues it is not due to the strategic acumen of Al Qaeda, but because of the problems intrinsic to relying on war as the framework for U.S. counterterrorism policy. The normal means of ending wars are complicated with a terrorist enemy and at odds with strategies that have historically had success at the end stages of counterterror campaigns. Continuing along the current path risks an ongoing war the United States will likely neither win nor fully end... Despite the Obama administration's moves to wind down U.S. combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States remains very much at war—the conflict with Al Qaeda and its affiliates continues in areas like Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan, but possesses other fronts in areas around the globe as well. There is little reason even to presume it will remain limited to its current scope in the future, as the recent expansion of the effort into Iraq and Syria to combat former affiliate Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) demonstrates. Although this war is well into its second decade since the initial 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), the American vision for how this war ends remains as unclear as it was over thirteen years ago". *Christopher McIntosh is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Studies at Bard College.*

### [In Syria, A Last Gasp Warning for U.S. Influence](#)

Lister, Charles. *Markaz Blog*. December 5, 2014.

"Having engaged intensively face-to-face with the leaderships of nearly 50 Syrian armed opposition groups in recent weeks, I can safely say that the levels of trust and respect for the United States within the Syrian opposition is at an all-time low. Rather than bolstering the confidence and stature of armed groups Washington has been backing, recent U.S. policy decisions and actions in Syria have dramatically undermined their position within the conflict, thereby emboldening extremists. As such, the United States looks on the verge of losing its last remaining elements of leverage and policy interest in the Syrian conflict. This would be a deeply dangerous development and must be

avoided at all costs. While considerable strategic foreign policy errors have been made since the eruption of conflict in Syria in 2011, the rise of ISIS and its brutal behavior to Syrians and Western hostages alike has encouraged the consolidation of a Syria policy seemingly entirely devoid of an understanding or appreciation of dynamics and perceptions on the ground.” *Charles Lister is a visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center.*

### **Europe Reborn: How to Save the European Union From Irrelevance**

Matthijs, Matthias; Kelemen, R. Daniel. *Foreign Affairs*. January/February 2015, var. pages.

“The European Union (EU) indeed has serious reasons for concern. Public trust in EU institutions has hit all-time lows, and Euroskeptic parties made record gains in elections for the European Parliament in May 2014. And the EU's economic challenges today far exceed those of 30 years ago. A convergence of factors -- including capable new leaders, the gradual emergence of a new economic policy consensus, and, paradoxically, the mounting threats to the EU's territorial integrity from outside and within -- offers Europe a window of opportunity in which to revive the union, recast its policies, and win back public support. To pull off such a turnaround, the EU will first have to get its economic house in order, refocus on growth, and fix the governance institutions that stand behind its common currency. A failure to act decisively would lead to further stagnation and, ultimately, irrelevance. But taking resolute steps could poise Europe for another rebirth. The eu has worn out its default strategy of muddling through crises. Lurching from one calamity to the next has damaged the credibility of Brussels and national governments alike. It is time for a bold and far-reaching agenda. To see a Europe truly reborn and fit for the twenty-first century, eu leaders must reassert with confidence-on the economy, on security, and on democracy-that Europe is stronger when it stands united.” *Matthias Matthijs is Assistant Professor of International Political Economy at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and a co-editor, with Mark Blyth, of the forthcoming The Future of the Euro (Oxford University Press, April 2015). R Daniel Kelemen is Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University and the editor of Lessons From Europe? What Americans Can Learn From European Public Policies (CQ Press, 2014).*

### **Why Ukraine Is Our Business**

Michta, Andrew A. *The American Interest*. January 26, 2014, var. pages.

“As Russia’s war against Ukraine transforms the military equation along Europe’s periphery with breathtaking speed, the West continues to communicate that it will do nothing that would stop or at least complicate Putin’s military advance. If unchecked, Russian aggression may shift farther westward, this time into the NATO area itself: the Baltics and, if the alliance continues to weaken and eventually unravels from the inside, possibly even into Poland and Romania. Simply put, so long as NATO remains America’s principal alliance and a means to project our power and influence, Ukraine is most emphatically our business. This is not about going to war; it’s about extending military aid to a country under attack at a critical geostrategic point between Europe and Eurasia. If Russia defeats Ukraine, the loss will reverberate across the continent, underscoring how vulnerable the residual security paradigm in Europe has become to the naked use of force. This is a region whose security has been successfully integrated with ours for decades; America, faced with crises across the globe, cannot afford to allow it to unravel. What is at stake in Ukraine is the future of NATO and the stability and security of Europe.” *Andrew A. Michta is the M. W. Buckman Professor of International Studies at Rhodes College and an adjunct fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).*

### **Connected Choices: How the Internet Is Challenging Sovereign Decisions**

Hathaway, Melissa E. *American Foreign Policy Interests*. Fall 2014, pp. 300–313.

“Modern societies are in the middle of a strategic, multidimensional competition for money, power, and control over all aspects of the Internet and the Internet economy. This article discusses the increasing pace of discord and the competing interests that are unfolding in the current debate concerning the control and governance of the Internet and its infrastructure. Some countries are more prepared for and committed to winning tactical battles than are others on the road to asserting themselves as an Internet power. Some are acutely aware of what is at stake; the question is whether they will be the master or the victim of these multilayered power struggles as subtle and not-so-subtle connected choices are being made. Understanding this debate requires an appreciation of the entangled economic, technical, regulatory, political, and social interests implicated by the Internet. Those states that are prepared for and understand the many facets of the Internet will likely end up on top.” *Melissa E. Hathaway is President of Hathaway Global Strategies, LLC, and Senior Advisor at Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center. Recently, she was appointed to the Global Commission for Internet Governance (Bildt Commission). She served in two U.S. presidential administrations, spearheading the Cyberspace Policy Review for President Barack Obama and leading the Comprehensive National Cybersecurity W. Bush.*

### **[The Challenge of Maintaining American Security Ties in Post-Authoritarian East Asia](#)**

Erickson, Andrew S. ; Chong, Ja Ian. *The National Interest*. January 29, 2015, var. pages.

“The United States faces challenges trying to maintain robust security partnerships with politically liberalizing societies where Washington was perceived complicit in suppression of legitimate indigenous interests. This mixed legacy can inspire electorally empowered publics to raise new complications for continued U.S. presence and influence. Washington must understand and mitigate attendant risks. To explain why and how, we draw on in-depth conversations and interviews with a wide variety of interlocutors in the societies discussed. New domestic dynamics in politically liberalizing societies demand revisions to relations with Washington, complicating a range of U.S. interests, including forward deployment, ensuring freedom of navigation and maintaining regional stability. Yet, these societies often wish to maintain substantive security cooperation with Washington. Hence, their “ambivalent alignment.” Today, these developments are most readily apparent in East Asian societies, complicating “rebalancing” efforts. Over time, the legacy of American complicity in single-party dominance and even authoritarian rule may likewise affect the U.S. position in other key regions such as the Middle East. Washington must actively address challenges associated with political transition to better mitigate the attendant volatility and risks associated with such processes.” *Andrew S. Erickson is an associate professor at the Naval War College and an Associate in Research at Harvard’s Fairbank Center. Ja Ian Chong is an Assistant Professor at the National University of Singapore.*

### **Countersurge: A Better Understanding of China’s Rise and U.S. Policy Goals in East Asia**

Bebber, Robert. *Orbis*. Winter 2015, pp. 49-61.

“Many analysts argue that China will supplant the United States as the dominant world power, or at least soon emerge as a peer super-power competitor. The Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) expects that China will overtake America as the world’s largest economy by 2016... Yet, in fact, what we are likely to see is not a “rise” of Chinese power, but a “surge”—a temporary situation of perhaps twenty to thirty years. Demographic, economic, and political factors will all combine to create a ceiling on Chinese power and ultimately cause it to decline. China’s population is aging and will soon start shrinking. Because of this, in part, its economic growth is slowing. Few countries have attempted to expand their military power under such conditions, and those that have—like the Soviet Union—generally failed, sometimes catastrophically. Two to three decades is a big window for U.S. leaders to address, but viewing it as a window puts the situation into perspective. This perspective better

defines the actions that are needed, and the available options. Several outcomes are possible, and the goal of the United States should be to create the most favorable conditions for sustaining American influence well into the twenty-first century and beyond. To do this, the United States must develop military capabilities that will prepare it for the coming strategic window, along with the economic and political initiatives that will enable it to influence events in the region." *Robert "Jake" Bebbler is an information warfare officer assigned to the staff of Commander, U.S. Cyber Command.*

### [Power Rankings: The Critical States](#)

Russell Mead, Walter; Gallagher, Nicholas M. *The American Interest*. January 29, 2015, var. pages.

"To mark the beginning of 2015, we've been examining the most powerful nations in the world, a task amounting to an attempt to describe the way in which geopolitical power is working at this moment in time. First we looked at the "real G-7", the world's heavy hitters who set or aim to alter the "global system." Then there was the second tier— regional, emerging, or fading powers who form the "teams" that the top players assemble to play this bruising sport. As anyone who picks up a newspaper knows, however, a lot of the day-to-day action in world power games involves a third class of state. These countries don't have the conventional military might or the economic, diplomatic, or cultural heft that the great powers wield. But by their suicidal aggression, willingness to contravene the normal rules of national behavior, or plain inability to keep order, they can upset the plans of great powers and endanger their neighbors. Think of them as "critical states"; their impact on world politics results from their potential either to cause or to suffer a crisis that dramatically affects world events." *Walter Russell Mead is James Clarke Chace Professor of Foreign Affairs and Humanities at Bard College and Editor-at-Large of The American Interest.*

## U.S. DOMESTIC POLICY AND TRENDS

### REPORTS

#### [Remarks by the President in State of the Union Address](#)

The White House. January 20, 2015.

"At this moment -- with a growing economy, shrinking deficits, bustling industry, booming energy production -- we have risen from recession freer to write our own future than any other nation on Earth. It's now up to us to choose who we want to be over the next 15 years and for decades to come. Will we accept an economy where only a few of us do spectacularly well? Or will we commit ourselves to an economy that generates rising incomes and chances for everyone who makes the effort? Will we approach the world fearful and reactive, dragged into costly conflicts that strain our military and set back our standing? Or will we lead wisely, using all elements of our power to defeat new threats and protect our planet? Will we allow ourselves to be sorted into factions and turned against one another? Or will we recapture the sense of common purpose that has always propelled America forward?... I want our actions to tell every child in every neighborhood, your life matters, and we are committed to improving your life chances as committed as we are to working on behalf of our own kids. (Applause.) I want future generations to know that we are a people who see our differences as a great gift, that we're a people who value the dignity and worth of every citizen -- man and woman, young and old, black and white, Latino, Asian, immigrant, Native American, gay, straight, Americans with mental illness or physical disability. Everybody matters. I want them to grow up in a country that shows the world what we still know to be true: that we are still more than a collection of red states and blue states; that we are the United States of America."

### [The Manufacturing Footprint and the Importance of U.S. Manufacturing Jobs](#)

Scott, Robert E. Economic Policy Institute [Note: contains copyrighted material] January 22, 2015 [PDF format, 50 pages]

“While U.S. manufacturing has been hit hard by nearly two decades of policy failures that have damaged its international competitiveness, it remains a vital part of the U.S. economy. The manufacturing sector employed 12 million workers in 2013, or about 8.8 percent of total U.S. employment. Manufacturing employs a higher share of workers without a college degree than the economy overall. On average, non-college-educated workers in manufacturing made 10.9 percent more than similar workers in the rest of the economy in 2012–2013. The report examines the role manufacturing plays in employment at the national, state, and congressional district levels, including the number of jobs manufacturing supports, the wages those jobs pay, and manufacturing’s contribution to GDP... Using a new model and new congressional district data to estimate the job impacts of manufacturing for the 113th Congress, this study finds that manufacturing is a key source of jobs in many congressional districts, both net jobs and jobs as a share of total congressional district jobs. For example, in over a third of congressional districts manufacturing accounts for 10 percent or more of total jobs.” *Robert E. Scott joined the Economic Policy Institute in 1996 and is currently director of trade and manufacturing policy research.*

### [The Federal Minimum Wage: In Brief](#)

Bradley, David H. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. January 13, 2015 [PDF format, 11 pages]

“The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), enacted in 1938, is the federal legislation that establishes the minimum hourly wage that must be paid to all covered workers. The minimum wage provisions of the FLSA have been amended numerous times since 1938, typically for the purpose of expanding coverage or raising the wage rate. Since its establishment, the minimum wage rate has been raised 22 separate times. Proponents of increasing the federal minimum wage argue that it may increase earnings for lower income workers, lead to reduced turnover, and increase aggregate demand by providing greater purchasing power for workers receiving a pay increase. Opponents of increasing the federal minimum wage argue that it may result in reduced employment or reduced hours, lead to a general price increase, and reduce profits of firms paying a higher minimum wage.” *David H. Bradley is an specialist in Specialist in Labor Economics at the CRS.*

### [Strengthening Police-Community Relations in America’s Cities: A Report of The U.S. Conference of Mayors Working Group of Mayors and Police Chiefs](#)

United States Conference of Mayors. January 22, 2015 [PDF format, 10 pages]

“This report, developed by a working group of mayors and police chiefs appointed by U.S. Conference of Mayors President and Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, provides a set of recommendations for local and national actions intended to improve police-community relations in America. These recommendations emerged from discussions held by the Conference of Mayors leadership when it met in Sacramento in September and from further discussions held by mayors and police chiefs who met in Little Rock in October on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. The recommendations are grouped into six areas: building police-community trust, improving police department practices, ensuring timely and accurate communications, conducting independent investigations, addressing racial and economic disparities, and providing national leadership. In some instances, the recommendations go beyond the purview of mayors and police chiefs and call for actions by the broader community in cities and the nation as a whole, and by the federal government.”

### [Evolving Patterns in Diversity](#)

Martin, Steven, et. al. Urban Institute [Note: contains copyrighted material] January 20, 2015 [PDF format, 11 pages]

“From 2010 to 2030 the United States will become more racially and ethnically diverse, but demographic projections suggest the patterns of increasing diversity will vary widely across cities and regions. The study projects changes in the population shares across geographies for four major groups: Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, non-Hispanic whites, and non-Hispanic others. Though growing diversity across the U.S. will be welcome in many ways, it will also bring challenges to areas in which different groups increase in population share. This brief examines how changes in the population sizes of racial and ethnic groups will affect future patterns of diversity across geographic regions of the United States.”

### [Sustaining and Strengthening DC Schools](#)

Gallagher, Megan; Bogle, Mary. The Urban Institute. December 2014 [PDF format, 6 pages]

“Mayor-elect Bowser assumes control at a delicate juncture in the turbulent history of DC schools... In 2013–14, the District had the largest student body in over 25 years. And, over the past 15 years, public schools in DC have gained ground on national tests. Contrary to the widespread belief that these gains are the result of a greater number of students from more affluent, higher-educated families, a recent analysis of DC’s own achievement tests suggests that only 10 percent of the test score increase can be attributed to changing demographics. In fact, all subgroups, including Hispanic and black students and students from lower-income families (identified by their eligibility for subsidized meals) have experienced some incremental improvements. Several reforms, including these four, may be contributing to these gains: Universal pre-K; School building improvements; IMPACT, the evolving performance-rating system for all DC Public Schools (DCPS); a robust school choice movement.” *Megan Gallagher is a Research Associate in the Urban Institute's Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. Mary Bogle is a Senior Research Associate at The Urban Institute.*

### [The Changing Face of America’s Electorate](#)

Oakford, Patrick. Center for American Progress. January 5, 2015.

“This issue brief identifies what the American electorate is projected to look like in key battleground states during the 2016 elections, and based on those projections, identifies the potential electoral influence of voters of color. This is accomplished by estimating the racial and ethnic makeup of the 2016 voter-eligible population and then demonstrating the potential political impact of demographic changes by conducting two election simulations. Two narratives regarding the 2016 elections are already emerging around voters of color. The first storyline is that the growing number of voters of color in battleground states such as Virginia and Ohio will provide Democrats with an electoral windfall and thus an even smoother path to the White House... The second emerging narrative—which is simply the inverse of the first scenario—highlights the fact that Republicans must make inroads with voters of color if they want to have a fighting chance at winning the White House and a number of U.S. Senate races in 2016. Increased Republican support among voters of color is not unrealistic, particularly given the fact that as recently as the 2004 presidential election, President George W. Bush received 44 percent of the Latino and Asian American vote and 11 percent of the African American vote nationally. Thus, the second election simulation identifies which states, if any, Republicans could win if they regained their 2004 levels of support among voters of color.” *Patrick Oakford is a Senior Policy Analyst in the Economic Policy department. His research focuses on issues relating to U.S. immigration policy and the labor force.*

### [Passenger Rail: Investing in our Nation's Future](#)

Statement of Peter M. Rogoff, Undersecretary for Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation before the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, U.S. Senate. December 10, 2014 [PDF format, 7 pages]

“Our intercity passenger rail system carries more than 30 million passengers to more than 500 American cities each year. Over the last 35 years, travel by passenger rail alone has increased by 62 percent. In forecasting growth over the next 35 years, investment in America’s passenger rail system is essential. The GROW AMERICA Act authorizes \$19 billion over four years to invest in a National High-Performance Rail System. One of the hallmarks of this proposal is the creation of a new rail account within the transportation trust fund to provide predictable, dedicated funding for rail. Supporting the nation’s intercity passenger rail system has not just been a solely Federal commitment or Amtrak endeavor, but it is a priority that has also ranked high for States in recent years. Since 2009, 32 states and their partners have invested more than \$4 billion in matching funds against the FRA’s primary intercity passenger program, the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program, including Connecticut DOT contributing \$175 million for improvements to the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield project and Illinois DOT pledging more the \$120 million for the Chicago-St. Louis Corridor Program. Altogether, 80 percent of the HSIPR Program did not require a state match, yet despite the absence of a match requirement, states have invested over \$3 billion into the system.”

### [Private Capital, Public Good: Drivers of Successful Infrastructure Public-Private Partnerships](#)

Puentes, Robert; Sabol, Patrick. The Brookings Institution. December 2014 [PDF format, 30 pages]

“Despite its fundamental and multifaceted role in maintaining national growth and economic health, infrastructure in the United States has not received an adequate level of investment for years. Political dysfunction, a challenging fiscal environment, greater project complexity, and the sheer size of the need across different sectors are forcing leaders across the country to explore new ways to finance the investments and operations that will grow their economies over the next decade. Part of this exploration means new kinds of agreements between governments at all levels and the private sector to deliver, finance, and maintain a range of projects... These public-private partnerships (PPPs) are alternately framed as a panacea to all of America’s infrastructure challenges or a corporate takeover of critical public assets. In reality, they are neither. A well-executed PPP is simply another tool for procuring or managing public infrastructure—albeit a new and increasingly popular one. This paper provides providing an overview of basic PPP structure, how to consider proper risk and reward sharing, and the purpose and the rationale behind these arrangements. It is based on extensive background research and directly informed by interviews with leading practitioners from the public and private sector. Primarily, this paper presents nine recommendations for public leaders as they consider PPPs and is intended to serve as a guide to executing them in the public interest.” *Robert Puentes is a senior fellow with the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program where he also directs the program’s Metropolitan Infrastructure Initiative”. Patrick Sabol is a senior policy/research assistant with the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program.*

### [The Future of Privacy](#)

Rainie, Lee; Anderson, Janna. Pew Research Internet Project. December 18, 2014 [PDF format, 79 pages]

“The terms of citizenship and social life are rapidly changing in the digital age. No issue highlights this any better than privacy, always a fluid and context-situated concept and more so now as the boundary between being private and being public is shifting...This report is a look into the future of privacy in light of the technological change, ever-

growing monetization of digital encounters, and shifting relationship of citizens and their governments that is likely to extend through the next decade... To explore the future of privacy, we canvassed thousands of experts and Internet builders to share their predictions. We call this a canvassing because it is not a representative, randomized survey. Its findings emerge from an "opt-in" invitation to experts, many of whom play active roles in Internet evolution as technology builders, researchers, managers, policymakers, marketers, and analysts. We also invited comments from those who have made insightful predictions to our previous queries about the future of the Internet." *Lee Rainie is the Director of the Pew Research Center's Internet Project. Prior to launching the Pew Internet Project. Janna Anderson is Director of Elon University's Imagining the Internet Center.*

### **[Border Security: Immigration Enforcement Between Ports of Entry](#)**

Seghetti, Lisa. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. December 18, 2014 [PDF format, 48 pages]

"Border enforcement is a core element of the Department of Homeland Security's effort to control unauthorized migration, with the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) within the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) as the lead agency along most of the border. Border enforcement has been an ongoing subject of congressional interest since the 1970s, when illegal immigration to the United States first registered as a serious national problem; and border security has received additional attention in the years since the terrorist attacks of 2001. This report reviews efforts to combat unauthorized migration across the Southwest border in the nearly three decades since the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) initiated the modern era in migration control. In reviewing such efforts, the report takes stock of the current state of border security and considers lessons that may be learned about enhanced enforcement at U.S. borders. The report begins by reviewing the history of border control and the development of a national border control strategy beginning in the 1990s. The following sections summarize appropriations and resources dedicated to border enforcement, indicators of enforcement outcomes, metrics for estimating unauthorized migration flows, and possible secondary and unintended consequences of border enforcement. The report concludes by reviewing the overall costs and benefits of the current approach to migration control and raising additional questions that may help guide the discussion of these issues in the future." *Lisa Seghetti is a Section Research Manager at the Congressional Research Service.*

## **ARTICLES**

### **[2015's Top 10 Legislative Issues to Watch](#)**

*Governing.* January 2015.

"States and localities will spend much of their time this year grappling with troublesome new realities and trying to work out their relationship with Washington. New realities are a given in any governmental year, but the 2015 crop includes some unusually potent ones. Legislators will be dealing with widespread water shortages, dwindling transportation funds, the emergence of new drugs that threaten to blow up Medicaid budgets, and revised pension accounting rules, among other challenges. There will be passionate debates about how to regulate the hospitality and taxi industries, and about how to safely transport the oil and gas pouring out of North Dakota and Canada. Meanwhile, expect to see ongoing tensions with the federal government. On education, for instance, many states are frustrated by what they see as top-down remedies that emphasize accountability through standardized testing. The Common Core backlash will continue this year, as a critical period begins for these new curriculum standards. States will be dealing with a mandate from the Environmental Protection Agency to cut 30 percent in carbon dioxide emissions nationwide."

## **Start-Up Slowdown: How the United States Can Regain Its Entrepreneurial Edge**

Litan, Robert. *Foreign Affairs*. January/February, 2015, pp.47-53.

“Americans like to think of their country as a cradle of innovation. After all, the US has produced many of the world's finest entrepreneurs, from Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford to Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg. The numbers, however, tell a different story. Over the past 30 years, the rate of start-up formation in the US has slowed markedly, and the technology industry has come to be dominated by older companies. This presents a risk to innovation, because the most transformative leaps forward tend to come not from established firms but from entrepreneurs with little to lose. If the US wishes to reclaim its status as an innovation hub, it must reform a wide swath of policies -- including those covering immigration, business regulation, health care, and education -- to support new businesses. Rousing the country from its entrepreneurial slumber will require deep structural change, but the stakes are high. In the balance hangs the welfare of future generations and the global leadership of the US... Entrepreneurs create the future and boost national economies. For the United States, economic strength is key to maintaining and strengthening its status as a world leader. Rousing the country from its entrepreneurial slumber will require deep structural change, but the stakes are high. In the balance hangs the welfare of future generations and the global leadership of the United States.” *Robert Litan is a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at Brookings Institution where he formerly was Vice President and Director of Economic Studies and also a Senior Fellow.*

## **53 Historians Weigh In on Barack Obama’s Legacy**

*New York Magazine*. January 11, 2015, var. pages.

“Over the past few weeks, New York magazine asked more than 50 historians to respond to a broad questionnaire about how Obama and his administration will be viewed 20 years from now. After the day-to-day crises and flare-ups and legislative brinkmanship are forgotten, what will we remember? What, and who, will have mattered most? What small piece of legislation (or executive inaction) will be seen by future generations as more consequential than today’s dominant news stories? What did Obama miss about America? What did we (what will we) miss about him?. Almost every respondent wrote that the fact of his being the first black president will loom large in the historical narrative — though they disagreed in interesting ways. Many predict that what will last is the symbolism of a nonwhite First Family; others, the antagonism Obama’s blackness provoked; still others, the way his racial self-consciousness constrained him. A few suggested that we will care a great deal less about his race generations from now — just as John F. Kennedy’s Catholicism hardly matters to current students of history. Across the board, Obamacare was recognized as a historic triumph.”

## **5 Features of Successful Metro Export Efforts**

Liu, Amy. *The Avenue Blog*. January 6, 2014.

“As the third year of the Global Cities Initiative draws to a close, it is time to take stock of what we’ve learned from the 12 metropolitan areas that have adopted metro export initiatives and another eight that will soon release their plans. These efforts grew out of strong local desire to create good jobs in the recession’s wake. With U.S. consumer demand sluggish and global middle class consumption rising, it made common sense to help firms and regional economies expand through exports and trade even though the concept was quite novel as an economic development strategy. Better yet, these jobs pay more, with firms that export paying at least 17 percent more in wages than local-serving firms. To help metro areas tap global growth, Brookings joined forces with JP Morgan Chase to arm public and private sector leaders with custom market data and a forum for developing customized export strategies. ” *Amy Liu is a senior fellow, and co-director of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program.*

### [Galvanize Foreign Direct Investment in U.S. Clean Energy](#)

Devashree, Saha. *The Avenue Blog*. December 19, 2014.

“The United States has made great strides in developing its clean energy sector. Clean energy investment reached \$36.7 billion in 2013, increasing by nearly 250 percent since 2004. Despite the gains, the United States will need to continue investing on the order of 1 percent of GDP per year to be able to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Where will this investment come from? Undoubtedly the bulk of this capital will need to be raised here in the United States. However, there is another not-inconsequential potential source of investment, if we can lure it: foreign direct investment (FDI). The United States is already the number one destination for FDI, attracting more than \$193 billion in 2013. The prospects for additional investment are bright, with global consulting firm A.T. Kearney’s 2014 Foreign Investment Confidence Index reporting increased optimism from senior global corporate executives for U.S. investments.” *Devashree Saha is a senior policy analyst and associate fellow at the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program.*

### [The Man Who Sells Everything: A Conversation With Jeff Bezos](#)

*Foreign Affairs*. January/February 2015, pp.2-6.

“What In an interview, Jeffrey Preston Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon.com, talked about entrepreneurship. Bezos said there are a few qualities that entrepreneurs benefit from. One is that view of divine discontent. He thinks entrepreneurship and invention are pretty closely coupled. Entrepreneurs also benefit greatly from being willing to fail, willing to experiment. Another quality he would mention is passion for the mission, whatever it is. Certainly, good luck and good timing are huge components of outsized success in entrepreneurial endeavors. New inventions and things that customers like are usually good for society. They can be tough on incumbents, and so people who have built a business doing it the old way think it would be better if things could be more stable for longer periods of time. Corporate culture and the selection of people -- and those are related -- are the keys to running a large business enterprise in an entrepreneurial way.”

### [The 8 States to Watch in 2016](#)

Jacobson, Louis. *Governing*. January 16, 2016, var. pages.

“As hard as it is to fathom, the 2016 elections are already underway -- most of them started mere seconds after the midterms wrapped up. And while the presidential contest will hog most of the spotlight, there are a few other races that will get a fair share of attention. In fact, eight states in particular will play host to multiple competitive contests in 2016 -- from presidential and congressional elections to gubernatorial and state legislative races. We've listed the eight states (...) based on the number of competitive contests they'll host, the marquee value of the key candidates and the size of the state's population.” *Louis Jacobson is deputy editor of PolitiFact, the fact-checking website that is part of the Tampa Bay Times of Florida.*

### [De Blasio’s New York](#)

Freeman, Joshua B. *Dissent*. Winter 2015, var. pages.

“Since Bill de Blasio swept into City Hall at the start of 2014, progressives in New York have been in an ebullient mood. The one-time student radical and community organizer ran on a program attacking economic inequality—a “tale of two cities,” he called it—and took power after twelve years of billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg and eight

years of law-and-order Republican Rudy Giuliani... Indeed, during his first year in office, de Blasio took steps that distinguished him from his immediate predecessor. After a bruising fight in Albany, he won state money for a massive expansion of pre-K education. The first bill he signed into law extended a very modest mandatory sick leave law (passed over Bloomberg's veto) to cover an additional half a million workers." *Joshua B. Freeman teaches history at Queens College and is the author of American Empire: The Rise of a Global Power, the Democratic Revolution at Home, 1945-2000.*

### **What We Can Learn from Detroit**

Rapson, Rip. *Living Cities Blog*. January 28, 2015, var. pages.

"Detroit has become the largest city in the United States to exit bankruptcy, with the approval of a plan to slash \$7 billion in debt and reinvest \$1.4 billion to improve city services – a result made possible by the "Grand Bargain", an \$816 million infusion of capital from the State of Michigan, philanthropy and the Detroit Institute of Arts that safeguarded against both deep cuts in city pensioners' benefits and the dismantling of the DIA's art collection." *Rip Rapson is president and CEO of the Kresge Foundation, which contributes \$100 million to Detroit's "Grand Bargain".*

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