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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

REPORTS

[National Security Strategy](#)

The White House. February 2015 [PDF format, 4 pages]

“This new National Security Strategy positions the United States to safeguard our national interests through strong and sustainable leadership. It sets out the principles and priorities to guide the use of American power and influence in the world. It advances a model of American leadership rooted in the foundation of America’s economic and technological strength and the values of the American people. It redoubles our commitment to allies and partners and welcomes the constructive contributions of responsible rising powers. It signals our resolve and readiness to deter and, if necessary, defeat potential adversaries. It affirms America’s leadership role within a rules-based international order that works best through empowered citizens, responsible states, and effective regional and international organizations. And it serves as a compass for how this Administration, in partnership with the Congress, will lead the world through a shifting security landscape toward a more durable peace and a new prosperity. This strategy builds on the progress of the last 6 years, in which our active leadership has helped the world recover from a global economic crisis and respond to an array of emerging challenges. Our progress includes strengthening an unrivaled alliance system, underpinned by our enduring partnership with Europe, while investing in nascent multilateral forums like the G-20 and East Asia Summit. .. These complex times have made clear the power and centrality of America’s indispensable leadership in the world. We mobilized and are leading global efforts to impose costs to counter Russian aggression, to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL, to squelch the Ebola virus at its source, to stop the spread of nuclear weapons materials, and to turn the corner on global carbon emissions. A strong consensus endures across our political spectrum that the question is not whether America will lead, but how we will lead into the future.”

U.S. Policy In Ukraine: Countering Russia and Driving Reform

Statement by Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Secretary of State, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. March 4, 2015.

“Today Ukraine is central to our 25 year Transatlantic quest for a “Europe whole, free and at peace.” With your permission, I’d like to focus on three challenges. First, I’ll focus on the work Ukraine is doing – with U.S. and international community support – to build a more democratic, independent, European country. Second, I will address both the opportunity Russia has to implement the February and September 2014 Minsk Agreements as well as the further costs the United States and our European allies and partners will have to impose if Minsk is further violated. Finally, I will talk about other new threats to European security – energy vulnerability, corruption and propaganda – that the Ukraine conflict brings into high relief and what we’re doing to address them... This is a manufactured conflict – controlled by the Kremlin; fueled by Russian tanks and heavy weapons; financed at Russian taxpayers’ expense and costing the lives of young Russians whose mothers, wives and children are told not to investigate their deaths too closely if they want to receive benefits. The United States and the EU have worked in lock-step to impose successive rounds of tough sanctions – including sectorial sanctions – on Russia and its separatist cronies as the costs for their actions. In Crimea, we have shown through our sanctions on investment that, if you bite off a piece of another country, it will dry up in your mouth. Our unity with Europe remains the core of our policy toward this crisis.”

U.S. Economic Policy in East Asia and the Pacific

Remarks by Antony J. Blinken, Deputy Secretary of State. Tokyo, Japan. February 13, 2015.

“So what exactly is the United States doing to support and share in the growth, in the achievement, and the stability, prosperity, and peace that we see spreading throughout the Asia-Pacific? We have this policy that we call the rebalance, and it has several pillars, each of which contributes in substantial ways to facilitating and supporting this region’s growth and economic dynamism. To start with, we’re redoubling our commitment to the region’s security, which is essential to its economic future. Because the plain fact is that conflict and trade do not mix. So we’ve enhanced and we’re modernizing our alliances, especially with Japan. Over the past few years, our two nations began revising our bilateral Defense Guidelines for the first time in more than two decades. This is part of a larger, transparent discussion about our collective self-defense. This review – along with Japan’s decision to relax some restrictions on defense equipment exports – will help make sure that the Alliance evolves to reflect both the shifting security environment and the growing capabilities of Japan’s Self-Defense Forces.”

Understanding the Impact of U.S. Policy Changes on Human Rights and Democracy in Cuba

Testimony by Roberta S. Jacobson, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. February 3, 2015.

“Our previous approach to relations with Cuba over a half century, though rooted in the best of intentions, failed to empower the Cuban people and isolated us from our democratic partners in this hemisphere and around the world. Additionally, the Cuban government has used this policy as a rationale for restrictions on its people. As a result, unfortunately and unintentionally, those most deprived were the Cuban people. The President’s initiatives look forward and are designed to promote changes that support universal human rights and fundamental freedoms for every Cuban, as well as changes that promote our other national interests. They emphasize the value of people-to-people contact and very specific forms of increased commerce. We are already seeing indications that our updated approach gives us a greater ability to engage other nations in the hemisphere and around the world in promoting

respect for fundamental freedoms in Cuba. It has also drawn considerably greater attention to the actions and policies of the Cuban government... We have only begun the official talks on normalizing relations – which will take considerably longer than the first step, which is the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. But even while we do so, we will continue, both directly and through diplomatic channels, to encourage our allies to take every public and private opportunity to support increased respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Cuba.”

[The Fight Against ISIS: Building The Coalition And Ensuring Military Effectiveness](#)

General John R. Allen, Special Presidential Envoy For The Global Coalition To Counter ISIL, U.S. Department of State before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. February 25, 2015 [PDF format, 7 pages]

“Today, Coalition members are coming together to take the coordinated actions required to meet this growing threat. More than a dozen nations have changed laws and penalties to make it more difficult to travel and fight in Syria and Iraq. Through capacity building in the Balkans, criminal justice efforts in North Africa, and a 20 million euro investment from the European Union to engage at-risk communities, governments are taking a series of concerted actions. Even with these expanded measures, foreign fighters continue to stream to the battlefields of Syria and Iraq ... so we are enhancing our cooperation with key international partners to confront this threat. We must continue to improve how we harmonize border and customs processes, track potential and actual fighters en route to the battle, and share intelligence with partners. This kind of information sharing and creative thinking between partners is also vital in meeting a related and similarly urgent challenge: constraining ISIL’s access to financial support. Here, the Coalition has made significant gains in synchronizing practices to block ISIL’s access to banks, both in the region and globally. This includes stemming the flow of private donations and limiting ISIL’s financial options by restricting its ability to generate oil revenues. We are now expanding these efforts to counter ISIL’s access to local and informal financial networks.”

[FACT SHEET: The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism](#)

White House. February 18, 2015.

On February 18, the White House hosted a three-day summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) to bring together local, federal, and international leaders – including President Obama and foreign ministers – to discuss concrete steps the United States and its partners can take to develop community-oriented approaches to counter hateful extremist ideologies that radicalize, recruit or incite to violence. “CVE encompasses the preventative aspects of counterterrorism as well as interventions to undermine the attraction of extremist movements and ideologies that seek to promote violence. CVE efforts address the root causes of extremism through community engagement, including the following programs: Building awareness—including briefings on the drivers and indicators of radicalization and recruitment to violence; Countering extremist narratives—directly addressing and countering violent extremist recruitment narratives, such as encouraging civil society-led counter narratives online; and Emphasizing Community Led Intervention—empowering community efforts to disrupt the radicalization process before an individual engages in criminal activity.”

[The Evolution of Terrorist Propaganda: The Paris Attack and Social Media](#)

Mark Wallace, Chief Executive Officer, Counter Extremism Project, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade. January 27, 2015 [PDF format, 9 pages]

“The Counter Extremism Project (CEP), is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, international policy organization whose mission is to combat the growing threat from extremist ideology. Led by a renowned group of former world leaders

and former diplomats... CEP's mission is to combat extremism by pressuring financial support networks, countering the narrative of extremists and their online recruitment and calls for terror, and serving as a resource for best practices laws, policies and regulations CEP is assembling what we hope will be the world's most extensive research database on extremist groups and their networks of support, mapping the social and financial networks, tools and methodologies and providing an indispensable resource to governments, media, NGOs and the public. Modeled in part on advocacy efforts to counter Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, CEP exposes shadowy channels of financial support to extremist groups and brings to bear private and public sector pressure to disrupt them We use the latest communications tools to expose the threat of extremists and to mount a global counter-narrative to directly counter extremist ideology. Our efforts are focused particularly on young people in communities across the globe vulnerable to extremist messaging and recruitment."

[The ISIS Twitter census: Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter](#)

Berger, J.M; Morgan, Jonathon. Center for Middle East Policy, the Brookings Institution. March 2015 [PDF format, 68 pages]

"The Islamic State, known as ISIS or ISIL, has exploited social media, most notoriously Twitter, to send its propaganda and messaging out to the world and to draw in people vulnerable to radicalization. By virtue of its large number of supporters and highly organized tactics, ISIS has been able to exert an outsized impact on how the world perceives it, by disseminating images of graphic violence (including the beheading of Western journalists and aid workers and more recently, the immolation of a Jordanian air force pilot), while using social media to attract new recruits and inspire lone actor attacks. Although much ink has been spilled on the topic of ISIS activity on Twitter, very basic questions remain unanswered, including such fundamental issues as how many Twitter users support ISIS, who they are, and how many of those supporters take part in its highly organized online activities... While there are legitimate debates about the bounds of free speech and the complex relationship between private companies and the public interest, some have argued against suspending terrorist social media accounts on the basis that suspensions are not effective at impeding extremist activity online... We set out to answer some of these important questions using innovative techniques to create a large, representative sample of accounts that can be clearly defined as ISIS supporters, and to attempt to define the boundaries of ISIS's online social network... This study consists of four parts: ISIS supporter demographics; ISIS supporter social media metrics; A detailed discussion of the methodology used for this paper; A preliminary examination of the effects of suspending social media accounts and recommendations for further study and policies." *J.M. Berger is a nonresident fellow with the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World at Brookings and the author of Jihad Joe: Americans Who Go to War in the Name of Islam (Potomac Books, 2011) and ISIS: The State of Terror (Ecco, 2015). Jonathon Morgan is a technologist, data scientist, and startup veteran. He runs technology and product development at CrisisNET.*

[The Growing Strategic Threat of Radical Islamist Ideology](#)

Rick Brennan, Jr, Senior Political Scientist, The RAND Corporation before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives. February 12, 2015 [PDF format, 8 pages]

"My central argument today is that the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and other radical Islamist organizations, both Sunni and Shi'a, continues to grow throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and other areas around the world. While the threat is often portrayed as terrorism, the true danger is the ideology that provides the logic of extremism, violence, and acts of inhumanity... I have divided my comments into four sections. The first provides an overview of the global threat posed by radical Islamist ideology from both the Sunni Salafist movement and the Iranian version of revolutionary Shi'ism. The second section explores the threat posed by ISIS in

Iraq and Syria and throughout the Middle East, Africa, and both Pakistan and Afghanistan, where they are establishing networks and recruiting efforts. The third section will address the causes of the collapse of the Iraqi Army. Finally, the fourth section provides my assessment of how to best utilize the U.S. military in operations against ISIS... This rapid rise in Salafi-jihadist groups corresponds to a comparable rise in the number of active Salafi-jihadist militants, with estimates indicating a range of between 9,000 and 22,000 in 2001 to between 30,000 and 88,000 in 2013... While the tactic of terrorism is frequently the immediate threat focused upon by political leaders, I think it is critical to note that the ideology underlying these actions seeks revolutionary change of the existing political and social order. Thus, the strategic challenge of our generation isn't one particular group of insurgents or terrorists; it is the ideology that gives them cause. Defeating this ideology will require the development of a grand strategy that employs all elements of national power and influence."

[**A Transatlantic Approach for the Arab World: Stability through Inclusivity, Good Governance, and Prosperity**](#)

Burwell, Frances E., et. al. The Atlantic Council. January 2015 [PDF format, 12 pages]

"Four years after popular uprisings for rights, dignity, and economic justice erupted across North Africa and the Middle East, US and European pledges to strongly support the region's democratic and economic transformation are but a faded memory. At a 2011 White House summit, the United States and the European Union (EU) committed to work together closely to help nascent democratic transitions succeed. Unfortunately, in the face of mounting challenges across the region and recurrent doubts that the West has much influence to wield, that commitment never took root in US, EU, and European member state bureaucracies. Now, with all the uprisings except Tunisia's failing to bring democratic governance, and the Arab world instead experiencing a dark phase of violent conflict, sectarian tension, state deterioration, and authoritarian regression, US and European engagement has reverted to its pre-2011 pattern of prioritizing security through close cooperation with autocratic Arab governments. Transatlantic cooperation on security, intelligence, and military action in the region is strong." *Frances G. Burwell is Vice President at the Atlantic Council and Director of the Transatlantic Relations Program.*

[**Fortress Jordan: Putting the Money to Work**](#)

Barakat, Sultan; Leber, Andrew. Brookings Doha Center. February 2015 [PDF format, 22 pages]

"A lot can change in a year. In late August 2013, with the U.S. administration contemplating air strikes against Syria's Assad regime following chemical weapons attacks against civilians in the suburbs of Damascus, Jordanian officials were publicly adamant that their country would play no supporting role. Yet barely a year later, on September 23, 2014, government spokesman and Minister of Information Muhammad al Momani announced that Jordanian aircraft had bombed targets deep within Syria as part of a U.S.-led coalition combating the jihadi Islamic State (IS) group. While Jordan's participation certainly reflects deeply held fears of the IS threat within Jordan's political and security establishment, it also reminds the international community, in particular the United States, of the country's most valuable exports: regional security and stability. Jordan has been a reliable Arab ally to Western powers for decades, and serves as a key base for regional humanitarian and diplomatic activity. Its competent military and intelligence services provide an effective security buffer for Israel and the Gulf alike. Jordan has also hosted millions of refugees, most recently from Syria with over 600,000 registered by the UNHCR, though the country has likely taken in many more" *Sultan Barakat is a Senior Fellow and the Director of Research at the Brookings Doha Center. Andrew Leber is a Research Assistant at the Brookings Doha Center.*

[**The Days After a Deal with Iran: Congress's Role in Implementing a Nuclear Agreement**](#)

Hanauer, Larry. RAND Corporation [Note: contains copyrighted material] February 2, 2015 [PDF format, 37 pages]

"The president has extensive authority under the law to provide sanctions relief to Iran as part of a comprehensive nuclear agreement. Nevertheless, Congress can take a range of steps to facilitate, hinder, or even block the executive branch's efforts to relieve economic sanctions. It is therefore important to understand Congress' options for shaping the implementation of a nuclear agreement with Iran and to assess the likelihood and impacts of each. "In practice, Congress's ability to derail an Iran nuclear deal is quite limited. The executive branch has considerable executive and statutory authority to waive, suspend, or otherwise ease many of the economic restrictions on Iran, both because sanctions laws give the president such powers and because many of the sanctions were initially imposed (and could thus be reversed) by executive order (EO). Furthermore, the president is likely to veto any congressional effort to block implementation of a nuclear agreement, and Congress may not have the votes to override this presidential prerogative. Congress could, however, take a wide range of actions affecting implementation of a nuclear deal. On one end of the spectrum, lawmakers could support a deal's implementation by removing statutory sanctions; on the other, it could withhold funds needed to execute the deal or nullify it through legislation." *Larry Hanauer is a senior international policy analyst at the RAND Corporation, where his research focuses on defense, intelligence, and national security issues in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.*

[Toward a strategy for dealing with Russia](#)

Hill, Fiona. The Brookings Institution. February 11, 2015.

"President Vladimir Putin's Russia presents a unique challenge to the Western-backed world order. Putin believes that Russia's power, position, and history mean that it cannot be treated as just another country. He wants the West and his neighborhood to think about how Russia might be negatively affected before they make decisions on security or economic issues in which Moscow has a stake. And if Putin deems that a decision puts Russia at risk, he wants the same right Russia has in the United Nations Security Council—the right of a veto. The West clearly doesn't accept this, but right now does not know how to respond. We cannot simply adapt strategies used for dealing with other countries, nor are past precedents for dealing with Russia itself of much value. Russia today is an entirely new challenge. Even a strategy of just waiting Putin out and hoping for someone else to come along is not an option. Putin is not an anomaly. His perspectives are deeply ingrained in Russian society. Any successor will be as staunch a defender of Russian interests as he is. So what is to be done? We need to chart out a new relationship with Russia." *Fiona Hill is director of the Center on the United States and Europe and a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution.*

[The Strategic Importance of North America to U.S. Interests](#)

Statement by Shannon O'Neil, Senior Fellow for Latin America Studies, Council on Foreign Relations, before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. February 3, 2015 [PDF format, 6 pages]

"North America today is a global economic powerhouse, home to almost five hundred million people living in three vibrant democracies. Together the three nations account for over 26 percent of global GDP. Totalling roughly \$20 trillion, their combined economies outpace the European Union in economic production. And though the United States makes up the majority of the economic weight (in terms of GDP and as the home to almost a third of the world's largest companies), both Canada and Mexico rank among the top fifteen largest global economies. North America is also one of the most economically dynamic regions of the world today—the World Bank predicts the region will outperform average global GDP growth in 2015. Because of geography, markets, and the choices of millions of individuals and thousands of companies, North America has become one of the most integrated and interdependent regions in the world. Sharing 7,500 miles of peaceful borders, Canada and Mexico now play vital roles

in the United States' stability, security, and prosperity.”

ARTICLES

[The Geopolitical Stakes of America's Trade Policy](#)

Froman, Michael. *Foreign Policy*. February 17, 2015.

“This century’s defining battle could be won or lost without a shot fired. As President Barack Obama’s National Security Strategy makes clear, the rules-based system we have led since World War II is competing against alternative, more mercantilist models. Unlike past challenges to American leadership, this competition is primarily economic in nature, and victory hinges more on opening markets and raising standards than on building bombs and raising armies. To be sure, the traditional link between economics and strategy hasn’t been upended as much as extended. Beginning with the first estimates of national income, which were developed in 17th century Europe to compare the ability of states to raise and support militaries, economic power has been viewed primarily as an enabler for military power. This basic belief was widely adopted and held sway among most strategists through the Cold War... In this environment, trade has emerged as one of America’s most important foreign policy tools — both for increasing our strength at home and for exercising it abroad. At home, one-third of our economic growth since 2009 is due to the increase in U.S. exports. Last year, the United States exported \$2.35 trillion in goods and services, a record amount that supported over 11 million U.S. jobs. During a period of uneven global growth, growing exports are a key driver of America’s resurgence.”

[The Obama Undoctrine](#)

Yglesias, Matthew. *Vox.com*. February 9, 2015.

“Over the course of the 45-minute interview — which ranged from big questions of international relations theory to small details of budget policy —he articulated a foreign policy vision guided by a striking principle or, as he put it, a “strong belief that we don't have military solutions to every problem in the 21st century.” One could construe this as simply a banal observation, but in the context of the post-Cold War world it's actually rather profound. The American military is genuinely awe-inspiring in its capabilities, and the absence of a rival super-power means there are few external checks on the use of military force. This leaves the United States predisposed to overreact and over-commit, with leaders from both parties driving the country to dissipate its resources on foreign entanglements with questionable cost-benefit ratios. Obama wants to take credit not only for the drawdown of two wars, but for holding to a policy of wise restraint — not in absolute terms, but relative to a political system and an elite consensus that is constantly pushing in the direction of more military intervention. In essence, he's articulated an un-doctrine — a theory of mistakes to avoid.” *Matthew Yglesias is Executive Editor at Vox.com.*

[Disaggregating and Defeating Terrorist Safe Havens](#)

Arsenault, Elizabeth Grimm; Bacon, Tricia. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*. February 2015, pp. 85-112.

“Terrorist organizations’ physical safe havens continue to shape the terrorist threat to the United States by extending the groups’ longevity and increasing the threat they pose. As a result, eliminating terrorist safe havens has been a key component of U.S. counterterrorism policy since at least 2001. However, some scholars challenged the post-9/11 policy consensus that terrorists find sanctuary in weak states and so-called ungoverned spaces. This article seeks to bridge this gap between scholarship and policy by offering a typology for disaggregating different kinds of terrorist safe havens. Our typology operates on two axes based on host government will (i.e., the host government's posture

toward each group with haven inside its borders), as well as government capability, (specifically whether the host government possesses the specific capabilities needed to oust each group). This intersection of will and capability produces three types of havens. We briefly illustrate each type of haven using the exemplar case study of Pakistan—a location often described as an overarching safe haven, but which is actually home to several sanctuaries—and offer policy recommendations for addressing them. A need exists to disaggregate and identify how the United States can approach haven elimination. This typology and the analysis that stems from it offer a starting point for devising such strategies." *Elizabeth Grimm Arsenault is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Security Studies Program, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. Tricia Bacon is a professor at the Department of Justice, Law, and Criminology, School of Public Affairs, American University.*

[What ISIS Really Wants](#)

Wood, Graeme. *The Atlantic*. March 2015, var. pages.

"What is the Islamic State? Where did it come from, and what are its intentions? The simplicity of these questions can be deceiving, and few Western leaders seem to know the answers. In December, The New York Times published confidential comments by Major General Michael K. Nagata, the Special Operations commander for the United States in the Middle East, admitting that he had hardly begun figuring out the Islamic State's appeal. "We have not defeated the idea," he said. "We do not even understand the idea." In the past year, President Obama has referred to the Islamic State, variously, as "not Islamic" and as al-Qaeda's "jayvee team," statements that reflected confusion about the group, and may have contributed to significant strategic errors... One way to un-cast the Islamic State's spell over its adherents would be to overpower it militarily and occupy the parts of Syria and Iraq now under caliphate rule. Al Qaeda is ineradicable because it can survive, cockroach-like, by going underground. The Islamic State cannot. If it loses its grip on its territory in Syria and Iraq, it will cease to be a caliphate. Caliphates cannot exist as underground movements, because territorial authority is a requirement: take away its command of territory, and all those oaths of allegiance are no longer binding." *Graeme Wood is a contributing editor at The Atlantic.*

[Women and Islamic Militancy](#)

Zakaria, Rafia. *Dissent*. Winter 2015.

"A small but growing number of young Muslim women have joined an estimated 20,000–31,500 ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria. About 10 percent of foreign recruits from Europe, North America and Australia are women. Of these approximately two hundred women and girls, the majority are believed to be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. Seventy women are thought to have come from France, sixty from the United Kingdom, and scattered numbers from other European nations and from Canada. two American women from Denver and Minneapolis have probably joined the group as well. Why is ISIS drawing women, particularly from Western countries with supposed access to secular freedoms, to heed the call of an extremist group well known for its misogynist ideology and its violent treatment of women?" *Rafia Zakaria is an author, attorney, and human rights activist. She is the author of the memoir The Upstairs Wife: An Intimate History of Pakistan, due out in February 2015 (Beacon Press).*

[Four Years After, Tunisia Remains the Arab Spring's Lone Success Story](#)

Miller, Chris. *YaleGlobal*. February 5, 2015, var. pages.

"The wave of protests that swept through the Middle East in 2011, known as the Arab Spring, rocked governments and ended a handful of dictatorships. "All of the revolts of 2011, except for Tunisia's, have ended in tragedy," notes Chris Miller. "The uprisings were quickly sullied by a region-wide clash between the Muslim Brotherhood and

autocratic governments.” Domestic elites and alarmed leaders in neighboring states like Saudi Arabia and the UAE targeted the Brotherhood, a locus for opposition politics, while Qatar supported the group. A military coup overturned the democratic choice in Egypt; civil war rages in Libya and Syria. Miller concludes: “The recipes of Tunisia’s relative success seem straightforward: limit outsiders’ meddling, avoid sectarian politics and encourage all sides to compromise.” *Chris Miller is a PhD candidate at Yale University and a research associate at the Hoover Institution.*

[A return to the Middle Eastern great game](#)

Indyk, Martin S. *Order from Chaos* (blog). February 17, 2015, var. pages.

“There is no place in the world today where chaos is more prevalent and the reestablishment of order more critical than the Middle East. The “great game” between rival great powers may have originated in Central Asia but it found its most intense expression at the “crossroads of empire” in the Middle East. As long as American interests are still engaged the United States cannot desist from playing it. The United States used to have a strategy for the Middle East. It was known as the “pillars” strategy, and it was based on working with the regional powers that were committed to maintaining the status quo—Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Turkey. The challenge was to contain the revisionist powers—Egypt, Iraq, and Syria—who were backed by the Soviet Union. Over time, the United States lost the Iranian pillar but gained an Egyptian one, reinforcing the Sunni Arab order, but now confronting a Shia revolutionary power in the Gulf. In 1992, the United States became the dominant power in the region in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the eviction of Saddam Hussein’s army from Kuwait. After that, Bush ’41 and Clinton ’42 adopted a clear, common strategy for preserving stability that involved three components: 1. Pax Americana – an American-sponsored comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict; 2. Dual Containment of the two revisionist powers - Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and the Ayatollahs’ Iran; 3. Arab Exceptionalism - America’s authoritarian Arab partners in preserving the Middle East order were given a pass when it came to the treatment of their citizens.” *Martin S. Indyk is vice president and director of the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C., and a former U.S. ambassador to Israel.*

[The Smart Way to Intervene in Libya](#)

Eljahr, Mohamed. *Foreign Policy*. February 17, 2015, var. pages.

“The crisis in Libya is becoming less of a local problem and more of a regional and international one. Both Libyan leaders and the international community must acknowledge this reality. While a homegrown solution to the crisis would have been the preferred option, Libyans now lack the capacity to address their problems on their own. Their country needs the help of the outside world. It is crucial that any solution must be coordinated with trustworthy Libyan partners who can join the international community in the struggle against the rise of the Islamic State and who stand for inclusion, democracy, and the rule of law. Such Libyan voices are indispensable to any international or regional solution.” *Mohamed Eljarh is a Nonresident Fellow with the Atlantic Council’s Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East and a regular contributor on Foreign Policy’s Transitions blog.*

[The Misunderstood Lessons of Bosnia for Syria](#)

Radin, Andrew. *The Washington Quarterly*. Winter 2015, pp. 55-69.

“In developing U.S. intervention policy in Kosovo, Iraq, Libya, and most recently Syria, the 1992 to 1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has repeatedly been used as an analogy... Three lessons from Bosnia are frequently identified: first, to understand the problem of ethnic civil wars as a threat to U.S. reputation and its leadership in the world; second,

to prescribe diplomacy backed by force in order to end civil wars; and, third, to see military action to end civil wars as a moral obligation. However, the latter two lessons represent a flawed interpretation of the war in Bosnia. First, the effectiveness of diplomacy backed by force actually depends on the military and political balance on the ground. Second, to the extent that there is a moral obligation to intervene militarily, there is a further moral obligation to engage in a post-war mission to build peace... The experience in Bosnia heavily influenced the thinking of a generation of analysts and policymakers. The Bosnian war is a rich source of examples and insight for thinking about how the United States can and should act toward countries experiencing ongoing civil wars, perhaps especially because U.S. intervention successfully ended the war in Bosnia. However, the use of partial, incomplete, or inaccurate lessons drawn from Bosnia, or from any other conflict, undermines the formulation of an effective U.S. policy.”

Andrew Radin is an Associate Political Scientist at The RAND Corporation.

[The Rise and Fall of the Unipolar Concert](#)

Wright, Thomas. *The Washington Quarterly*. Winter 2015, pp. 7-24.

“Foreign policy experts have struggled to describe the unusual character of contemporary world politics. Much of the debate revolves around the concept of polarity, which deals with how power is distributed among nations, as experts ask if the United States is still a unipolar power or in decline as new powers emerge. The polarity debate, however, obscures more than it clarifies because the distribution of power does not determine the fate of nations by itself. It leaves out strategic choice and does not predict how the United States would exercise its power or how others would respond to U.S. primacy. World politics can take many paths, not just one, under any particular distribution of power. The most remarkable feature of post-Cold War world politics has not been the much-discussed power accumulation of the United States—although that is indeed noteworthy—but rather the absence of counterbalancing and revisionist behavior by other major powers. Recently, we have seen the return of both balancing behavior (i.e. efforts to deter or defeat the United States) and revisionism (i.e. efforts to change the status quo) by Russia and China. Moscow has sought to prevent the further expansion of the European Union and NATO through military interventions and coercive diplomacy in Georgia, Ukraine, and Armenia. It revised the map of Europe by annexing Crimea, which was the first act of irredentism there since World War II. And it has launched countless provocations—such as incursions into air and maritime space—against NATO and EU member states including Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark.” *Thomas Wright is a fellow and director of the project on International Order and Strategy at the Brookings Institution.*

[The New Industrial Espionage](#)

Brenner, Joel. *The American Interest*. December 10, 2014, var. pages.

“The information revolution has rendered obsolete the legacy legal regime on intellectual property rights, enabling spying for commercial purposes to morph into a strategic issue... We are dealing with a trade and economic issue. Theft via networks should not be treated differently than theft by any other means. The question is whether the theft of legally protected IP should be treated differently when undertaken by governments or their surrogates. Answering this question requires an examination of basic ideological differences regarding espionage.... Countries already deal with that problem in their own national courts, however. Assuming that misappropriation were shown, would it be sufficient to show an intention to use the misappropriated IP for commercial purposes, or would actual introduction of a product into the flow of commerce be required? Would proof of damage be necessary? These questions raise ordinary issues of judicial proof.” *Joel Brenner is a lawyer and security consultant and the Robert Wilhelm Fellow for 2014–15 in the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the former national counterintelligence executive and former inspector general and senior counsel of the National Security Agency.*

U.S. DOMESTIC POLICY AND TRENDS

REPORTS

[The 2015 Economic Report of the President](#)

Council of Economic Advisers, Executive Office of the President. February 19, 2015.

The Economic Report of the President is an annual report written by the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers. An important vehicle for presenting the Administration's domestic and international economic policies, it provides an overview of the nation's economic progress with text and extensive data appendices. "In 2014, our economy added jobs at the fastest pace since the 1990s. The unemployment rate plunged to its lowest point in over 6 years, far faster than economists predicted. Ten million Americans gained the security of health coverage. And we continued to cut our dependence on foreign oil and invest in renewable energy, making us number one in the world in oil, gas, and wind power. These achievements took place against a backdrop of longer-term economic strength. Since the crisis, we've seen our deficits cut by two thirds, our stock market double, and health care inflation at its lowest rate in 50 years. The housing market is rebounding. Manufacturers are adding jobs. More Americans are finishing college than ever before. Now America is poised for another good year, as long as Washington works to keep this progress going. But even as the economic recovery is touching more lives, we need to do more to restore the link between hard work and opportunity for every American. That's the idea behind middle-class economics—the simple fact that our country does best when everyone has a fair shot, does their fair share, and plays by the same set of rules."

[President Obama's 2015 Trade Policy Agenda](#)

Statement by United States Trade Representative Michael Froman at the Senate Committee on Finance. January 27, 2015.

"As a central part of the President's overall economic strategy, our trade agenda is committed to supporting more good jobs, promoting growth, and strengthening the American middle class. At USTR, we're advancing those goals by knocking down barriers to U.S. exports and leveling the playing field for American workers and businesses of all sizes. As we work to open markets around the world, we are enforcing our trade rights so that American workers, and farmers, ranchers and businesses get the benefit of all the economic opportunities the United States has negotiated over the years... "During the most recent year on record, 2013, U.S. exports reached a record high of \$2.3 trillion and supported a record-breaking 11.3 million jobs. At a time when too many workers haven't seen their paychecks grow in much too long, these jobs typically pay up to 18% more on average than non-export related jobs... That leadership is apparent in our work during the last year to advance the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP. The contours of a final agreement are coming into focus, and we have made important progress in the market access negotiations and in addressing a number of twenty-first century issues such as intellectual property, digital trade, competition with state-owned enterprises, and labor and environmental protections. At the November TPP Leaders meeting, all 12 countries reaffirmed their commitment to concluding a comprehensive, high-standard agreement as soon as possible. Another promising area is Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or T-TIP. With the new European Commission in place, the United States and the European Union are moving forward with a fresh start in the T-TIP negotiations, which will build upon the \$1 trillion in two-way annual trade. In November, President Obama and EU leaders reaffirmed their commitment to an ambitious, comprehensive, and high-standard T-TIP agreement."

[Jobs and a Healthy Economy](#)

Statement of John Engler, President of Business Roundtable, before the Senate Committee on Finance United States Senate. January 22, 2015 [PDF format, 14 pages]

“To sustain strong and consistent U.S. economic performance, we believe that Congress and the Administration must work together to adopt pro-growth policies. As communicated in *Achieving America’s Full Potential*, these policies include maintaining fiscal stability, enacting pro-growth tax reform, expanding U.S. trade, investing in physical and digital infrastructure, fixing our broken immigration system and adopting a smarter approach to regulation. Fiscal stability means completing budgets on time and avoiding showdowns and shutdowns that threaten the economy. We ask that you keep in mind that, despite near-term projections of a declining federal budget deficit, deficits are projected to begin expanding further within the next 10 years, placing the United States on an unsustainable fiscal path. To avoid this fate, America needs long-term fiscal stability that creates the right conditions for sustained business investment, economic and wage growth and job creation. With more than one in five American jobs supported by trade and 95 percent of the world’s consumers living outside of the United States, expanding U.S. trade opportunities is critical to supporting U.S. growth, well-paying American jobs and U.S. business investment.”

[America’s Advanced Industries: What They Are, Where They Are, and Why They Matter](#)

Muro, Mark, et. al. The Brookings Institution. February 2015 [PDF format, 88 pages]

Fifty high-technology innovation industries are crucial to future prosperity in the United States but face substantial competitiveness challenges, concludes this new report released by the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program. The authors analyze the advanced industries sector, which includes 50 R&D- and STEM-worker-intensive manufacturing, energy and services industries ranging from aerospace and automotive to energy generation, computer software and biotech. The advanced industries sector directly employs 12.2 million Americans and, factoring in both direct and indirect employment, supports over one-quarter of all U.S. jobs. The report includes state and metropolitan rankings of advanced industry intensity, determined by number of advanced industry jobs as a percentage of total employment. At the metropolitan level, San Jose, CA; Seattle, WA and Wichita, KS hold the top three spots, followed by Detroit, MI. Michigan, Washington and Massachusetts lead the state rankings. According to this paper, the competitiveness of the advanced industries sector will be critical to revitalizing the U.S. economy. “These industries are the chief source of transformative new technologies whose impact radiates throughout the entire economy, increasing productivity, enhancing households’ living standards and generating additional economic activity. Likewise, the sector accounts for 60 percent of the nation’s exports.” *Mark Muro, a senior fellow and director of policy for the Brookings’ Metropolitan Policy Program, manages the program’s economic work and key policy projects.*

[2015 State of Entrepreneurship Address](#)

Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. February 2, 2015 [PDF format, 20 pages]

At the Foundation’s sixth annual State of Entrepreneurship Address at the National Press Club in Washington, Acting President and CEO Wendy Guillies called for economic renewal through a new entrepreneurial boom, beginning with two of the biggest demographic forces shaping the U.S. economy: the aging of baby boomers and the emergence of millennials into the workforce. Following the address, a panel of policy experts presented arguments for why we should be either pessimistic or optimistic about these two demographic groups’ contributions to entrepreneurship. “Over the past few years, as the United States economy has struggled to gain traction, entrepreneurship has been steaming ahead. Since the financial crisis, venture capital and angel investments have approached new peaks, and

startup valuations have gone through the roof. Venture capital funding is now at levels not seen since the dotcom crash—by the end of the third quarter in 2014, more venture capital had been invested than in any single year since 2001. Investments by angel investors continued to grow, with both deals and dollars rising back toward pre-recession levels.”

[Demographic Trends Will Shape the Future of Entrepreneurship](#)

Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. February 25, 2015 [PDF format, 2 pages]

“Changing demographic trends are altering the American economic landscape in ways that will affect the economy for years to come. Large numbers of workers are nearing traditional retirement age, and a new generation of young, highly educated workers is poised to take their place. The aging of Baby Boomers and the emergence of Millennials are two of the biggest demographic developments in America today. These shifts are occurring at a time in which big questions remain about the strength and future of the U.S. economy. An increasing number of reports and data analyses have revealed that rates of business creation have been slowing across the United States—a troubling development since new and young businesses account for nearly all net new job creation.”

[Fixing No Child Left Behind: Innovation to Better Meet the Needs of Students](#)

Testimony of Jim McIntyre, Superintendent, Knox County Schools, Knoxville, Tennessee, before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. February 3, 2015 [PDF format, 13 pages]

“The Knox County Schools serves nearly 60,000 students in 90 schools and is a uniquely metropolitan school system, as we serve an urban, suburban, and rural population all within a single school district. The Knox County Schools enjoys a long, proud tradition of educational innovation and student academic success... We are here to talk about innovation, and I believe the remarkable work being done by our teachers, students, staff and principals in the Knox County Schools is a model of innovation that is working... So, what are we doing that we feel may be innovative? First, our visionary School Board has adopted a five year strategic plan, entitled Excellence for Every Child that articulates and embraces the concept of “multiple pathways to success.” We believe that every student can, and must, find academic success, but that it might take different options and pathways for individual students to get there. Therefore we have actively created alternatives to the traditional comprehensive high school. For example, four years ago we opened a new Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) magnet high school. With rigorous curriculum, a non-traditional setting, expert faculty, strong leadership, a wonderful school culture, and pervasive technology, the L&N STEM Academy has already been recognized as one of the top performing schools in the state of Tennessee.”

[Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States](#)

Pell Institute; the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD), University of Pennsylvania. February 2015 [PDF format, 60 pages]

“The purpose of this indicators are: “To report the status of higher education equity in the United States and to identify changes over time in measures of equity; and to identify policies and practices that promote and hinder progress and illustrate the need for increased support of policies, programs and practices that not only improve overall attainment in higher education but also create greater equity in higher education attainment... This report is written to inform the conversation about high education equity issues and to foster the mandate to both monitor our progress and to search for and support policy and practices leading to greater equity in educational opportunity. To this end, the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education (Pell Institute) and Alliance for Higher

Education and Democracy (AHEAD) have prepared reflection essays presented at the end of the report concerning the issues raised by the Equity Indicators report. It is the intent of the project that this will initiate yearly dialogues that will accompany the annual monitoring of our progress... This report is written to inform the conversation about high education equity issues and to foster the mandate to both monitor our progress and to search for and support policy and practices leading to greater equity in educational opportunity. To this end, the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education (Pell Institute) and Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) have prepared reflection essays presented at the end of the report concerning the issues raised by the Equity Indicators report.”

[**Do More, Add More, Earn More: Teacher Salary Redesign Lessons from 10 First-Mover Districts**](#)

Hawley, Karen et al. Center for American Progress [Note: contains copyrighted material] February 17, 2015 [PDF format, 31 pages]

The report examines how 10 school districts are redesigning teacher compensation systems so the teachers who make a bigger difference get a bigger paycheck. “The 10 districts presented in this report have been among the first in the nation to redesign their teacher compensation systems. These so-called first-mover districts include: Baltimore City, Maryland; Denver, Colorado; Douglas County, Colorado; Harrison School District 2, Colorado; Hillsborough County, Florida; Lawrence, Massachusetts; New Haven, Connecticut; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Putnam County, Tennessee; and Washington, D.C. First-mover districts vary in location, size, governance structure, and student academic performance, proving that diverse districts throughout the country can find ways to reform teacher compensation systems regardless of context. The first-mover districts considered the following key components during the teacher compensation redesign process. Not all districts altered each component of the process, but each considered the following elements as part of their comprehensive approach to redesign compensation: Base salary; Teacher effectiveness; Speed of salary growth; Career pathway opportunities; Incentives for hard-to-staff schools and positions; Bonuses, rewards, and recognition; Opt-in timeframe.” *Karen Hawley Miles is the founder and executive director of Education Resource Strategies Inc., or ERS. Under her leadership, ERS has pioneered a process for quantifying, comparing, and realigning district and school resources for more strategic use.*

[**A Profile of Immigrants in Houston, the Nation's Most Diverse Metropolitan Area**](#)

Capps, Randy; Fix, Michael; Nwosu, Chiamaka. Migration Policy Institute. March 2015 [PDF format, 26 pages]

“Houston is the most diverse, rapidly growing major U.S. metropolitan area, and immigration has contributed greatly to its growth and diversity. In 2013 the Houston metro area was home to 6.3 million people, of whom 1.4 million were foreign born—an increase of nearly 60 percent from 2000, which is nearly twice the national growth rate. Its immigrant population ranked fifth largest among U.S. metropolitan areas and third in the numbers of Mexican, Vietnamese, and Honduran immigrants. This report provides an overview of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Houston's immigrants, along with their naturalization rates, legal status, and potential eligibility for immigration benefits such as citizenship or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The report finds that Houston's strong labor market and growing economy provide a solid foundation for the integration of immigrants and their children. At the same time, Houston has a relatively low-wage economy, and the low incomes of Houston's immigrants—particularly Latinos—may present barriers to their integration and access to legal assistance, health care, and other needed services.” *Randy Capps is Director of Research for U.S. Programs at the Migration Policy Institute. Michael Fix is President of the Migration Policy Institute, a position he assumed in July 2014 after serving as CEO and Director of Studies. Chiamaka Nwosu, who is with the Statistics Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, is a former MPI consultant and data intern.*

[The Future of Work in the Age of the Machine](#)

Kearney, Melissa S., et.al. The Hamilton Project, The Brookings Institution. February 2015 [PDF format, 8 pages]

“As rapidly advancing computer power and automation technology change the nature of work and the future of the economy, our nation will face new and pressing challenges about how to educate more people for the jobs of the future, how to foster creation of high-paying jobs, and how to support those who struggle economically during the transition. A commitment to economic growth that is widely shared has been a fundamental tenet of The Hamilton Project since its inception. The Project has released numerous policy papers focused on the issues of access to higher education, effective training and skill development, and investments in our nation’s infrastructure and workforce. In this framing paper, The Hamilton Project explores the debate about how computerization and machines might change the future of work and the economy, and what challenges and opportunities this presents for public policy.” *Melissa S. Kearney is the Director of the Hamilton Project; a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; and a Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Maryland.*

[Local News in a Digital Age](#)

Pew Research Center’s Journalism Project. March 5, 2015.

“Whether in a tech-savvy metropolis or a city where the town square is still the communication hub, local news matters deeply to the lives of residents. Across three disparate metro areas in the U.S., nearly nine-in-ten residents follow local news closely—and about half do so very closely, according to a new, in-depth Pew Research Center study, conducted in association with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. About two-thirds of the residents in each city discuss local news in person a few times a week or more... During a period of tremendous technological change—change that is far from complete—this study takes a microscope to the information streams in three news environments across the United States: Denver, Colorado—a highly educated urban area of more than 2 million with internet adoption above the national average and a large Hispanic population (19%) Macon, Georgia—a metro area of 175,000 with a substantial share of black residents (41%), an unemployment rate above the national average, and a local university working to serve as a hub for journalism innovation; and Sioux City, Iowa—a city that spans three states and has a predominantly white population of just 125,000. These cities are not meant to be extrapolated to the United States as a whole, but rather serve as a set of case studies on the ebb and flow of daily local news that speak to the diversity of modern American cities.”

ARTICLES

[Priorities for jumpstarting the U.S. Industrial Economy](#)

Barton, Dominic; Katz, Bruce. *Harvard Business Review*. February 2, 2015, var. pages.

“The factory floor at Pittsburgh’s Aquion Energy doesn’t look much like the steel mills that once populated this Rust Belt city. Retooled industrial-age machinery sits alongside robotic-manufacturing equipment. Science and engineering professionals work closely with experienced technicians to produce next-generation batteries, not forged metal. But just as U.S. Steel did in an earlier era of manufacturing, Aquion and innovative firms like it are spearheading economic and employment growth across the country. Spun out of Carnegie Mellon’s materials science research department in 2008, Aquion now employs 130 workers, manufacturing batteries to store electricity generated by intermittent renewable resources. This is the kind of technology—and the type of firm—that will make renewable energy more efficient and more cost-effective. Aquion is a modern success story for American industry. But in order to create and

foster more such firms, we need to recognize that today's most cutting-edge industrial players are not monolithic; they straddle the lines between manufacturing and services, and production and innovation... The defining characteristics of companies in this super-sector are a commitment to innovation and a focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills in the workforce. The industries that we deemed "advanced" are those with research and development spending that exceeds \$450 per worker and a workforce with greater than the U.S. average (20%) of highly intensive STEM occupations." *Dominic Barton is the global managing director of McKinsey & Company and a trustee of the Brookings Institution. Bruce Katz is a vice president at the Brookings Institution and founding director of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program. He is also co-author of The Metropolitan Revolution (Brookings Press, 2013).*

[Meet the country's top advanced industry hotspots](#)

Fikri, Kenan; Muro, Mark. *The Avenue* (blog). February 12, 2015.

"Last week we released new research defining the U.S. "advanced industries" sector and showing how heavily the future prosperity of U.S. regions and the nation depends on this list of 50 R&D- and STEM-worker intensive industries. These industries—which range from automotive and aerospace manufacturing to energy activities to digital services like computer system design and software—play an outsized role in powering regional and national economic success. Their vitality and expansion are a prerequisite for any future inclusive growth. And yet, only a limited number of U.S. metro areas retain truly dense and diverse advanced industry bases, however. The table below shows the 20 large metro areas where advanced industries employ the biggest share of the workforce. What can we say about this list? Thirteen of the top 20 metro areas are located west of the Mississippi. The preponderance of younger, largely Western metro areas in the top rankings suggests that advanced industries—with their large economic multipliers, significant knowledge spillovers and long supply chains—have helped pull the country's economic gravity westward. Add in the Southeastern entries and only three of the country's densest concentrations of advanced industry activity—Boston, Bridgeport, and Detroit—can be found in the traditional industrial heartlands of the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and Midwest." *Mark Muro is a senior fellow and director of policy for the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings. Kenan Fikri is a Senior Policy Analyst at the Metropolitan Policy Program.*

[The Significance of President Obama's Precision Medicine Initiative](#)

Daniel, Gregory W.; Romine, Morgan. *Health369* (blog). February 2, 2015.

"Last week the Obama Administration provided more detail regarding its Precision Medicine Initiative, initially announced during the President's 2015 State of the Union address. Designed to bolster ongoing advancements in the scientific understanding of human diseases, the effort can broadly be linked to what is more commonly referred to as "personalized medicine" – getting the right treatment to the right patient at the right time. This approach has demonstrated success in recently developed treatments for cancer, Cystic Fibrosis, and other areas with unmet medical need by relying on a clearer picture of the patient's genetics, health data and medical history. The increasingly sophisticated treatments use this information to target specific genetic aberrations, or other so-called "biomarkers." President Obama has specifically requested a \$215 million investment... The funds will be spread among the National Institutes of Health (NIH)—including \$70 million to the National Cancer Institute—the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). The ultimate goal is to have scientists build better tools and databases by using data from nearly one million volunteers." *Gregory W. Daniel is a Fellow at Brookings' Economic Studies Program and the Managing Director for Evidence Development & Innovation, at the Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform.*

[What America Will Look Like Decades From Now](#)

Maciag, Mike. *Governing*. March 4, 2015, var. pages.

“America might not resemble the country’s current demographics very much several decades from now. The majority of Americans will be of a racial or ethnic minority. Retirees and children will make up a larger share of the total population. The foreign born, too, will likely see their numbers multiply significantly. A Census Bureau report published this week explores these and other issues, projecting national population estimates for various demographic groups through 2060. The following summary highlights a few of the more notable demographic shifts set to take place in the coming years.” *Mike Maciag is the Data Editor at Governing magazine.*

[Top 5 Issues States Face in 2015: Elections](#)

Kalisa, Kamanzi. *Council of State Governments e-Newsletter*. January 2015, var. pages.

“With the 2016 elections on the horizon, states will be looking at new policies to improve the security, efficiency and administration of elections. U.S. elections by their very nature are decentralized and often complex with each state determining its own election laws and voting equipment. Five elections policy areas loom large for state policymakers in 2015—voting technology, overseas voting, data sharing between the states, voting law challenges and campaign finance.”

[The GOP’s 2016 Edge](#)

Sabato, Larry J.; Kondik, Kyle; Skelley, Geoffrey. *Politico*. February 4, 2015, var. pages.

“The campaign shifted into full swing on December 16, when former Florida governor Jeb Bush announced that he would “actively explore the possibility of running for president,” and it accelerated with Mitt Romney’s double January bombshell that he was considering, then had stopped considering, a third run. Beyond Bush, a growing list of credible and incredible Republicans have been gearing up to run, while the Democratic heavyweight, Hillary Clinton, has been agonizing not over if, but when, she will announce her campaign. Let’s put the primaries aside, though, and assume (maybe dangerously) that both parties, as they typically do, produce credible nominees from each party’s mainstream to compete for the presidency.” *Larry J. Sabato, a regular columnist for Politico magazine, he is university professor of politics and director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. Kyle Kondik is managing editor of Sabato’s Crystal Ball, a nonpartisan political newsletter produced by the University of Virginia Center for Politics. Geoffrey Skelley is associate editor at Sabato’s Crystal Ball.*

[The Geopolitical Origins of the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965](#)

FitzGerald, David S.; Cook-Martín, David. *Migration Policy Institute Online Journal*. February 5, 2015, var. pages.

“In 2015, the United States marks the 50th anniversary of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which radically shifted U.S. policy away from selecting immigrants by national origin. Until 1965, the national-origins quotas created a preference for immigration from countries in Northwestern Europe, loosely restricted immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, and tightly restricted immigration from Asia, Africa, and the colonized Caribbean...The 1965 law eliminated the national-origins quotas and relied on a preference system focused on immigrants’ family relationships with U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, or their skills. The law banned discrimination in the issuance of immigrant visas based on “race, sex, nationality, place of birth, or place of residence,” with several major exceptions... The 1965 immigration law quickly transformed the ethnic portrait of the United States. The European and Canadian share of legal immigrants fell from 60 percent in the 1950s to 22 percent in the 1970s. By contrast, the

Asian share of legal immigration rose from 6 percent in the 1950s to 35 percent by the 1980s and 40 percent in 2013. The demographic diversity of the U.S. population today in many ways is the direct result of the 1965 legislation, which had been championed by President Kennedy and after his death was signed into law by President Johnson in a ceremony at the foot of the Statue of Liberty on October 3, 1965.” *David S. FitzGerald is Co-Director of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, Theodore E. Gildred Chair in U.S.-Mexican Relations, and Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California, San Diego. David Cook-Martín is Associate Professor of Sociology at Grinnell College and Director of its Center for International Studies.*

[What Americans Actually Think About Immigration](#)

Jones, Robert P. *The Atlantic*. February 25, 2015, var. pages.

“A poll of 40,000 people reveals that the areas of consensus are broader than many suspect... The AVA (American Values Atlas) was designed to harness the power of big data—more than 40,000 telephone interviews—in order to provide a lens for understanding public opinion at levels not typically possible—such as at the state and metro level— or among smaller subgroups of Americans whose voices cannot be discerned in typical surveys. The AVA includes two measures in the area of immigration, one focused on policy, and the other on how immigrants are perceived. And the results are revealing. At the national level, the AVA finds solid support for a path to citizenship. When asked to identify the best approach for dealing with immigrants who are living in the country illegally, six in 10 Americans say there should be a way for such immigrants to become citizens provided they meet certain requirements, while 17 percent say they should be allowed to become permanent legal residents but not citizens, and 19 percent say they should be identified and deported. Similarly, Americans hold fairly positive assessments of the economic impact of immigrants, with 55 percent saying that immigrants strengthen the country because of their hard work and talents.” *Robert P. Jones is the CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization focusing on religion, values, and public life.*

[Improving workers’ skills must include immigrants](#)

Wilson, Jill H. *The Avenue* (blog). February 26, 2015, var. pages.

“On February 16, a U.S. district judge put the brakes on the most controversial parts of President Obama’s executive actions on immigration signed in November. In response a week later, the Department of Justice filed a request for a stay that, if granted, would allow the programs to move forward while the appeals process works out. Meanwhile, another aspect of President Obama’s executive action has gone almost unnoticed: the establishment of a taskforce to focus on the integration of immigrants into the economy and their communities. Recognizing the important role that immigrants play in today’s economy, and the growing role they will play in the coming decades, the White House Taskforce on New Americans aims to bolster efforts at the federal, state, and local levels to address the civic, economic, and linguistic incorporation of residents born outside the United States.” *Jill H. Wilson is a Senior Research Analyst and Associate Fellow at the Brookings Institution.*

[How Immigrant Activists Changed L.A.](#)

Pastor, Manuel. *Dissent*. Winter 2015, var. pages.

“Once known as the “wicked city” for its vicious anti-labor politics, Los Angeles has, particularly over the last decade, gained a reputation as a bastion of progressivism. In L.A., one of the few places in the United States where private-sector unionization saw steady gains before the 2008 recession, activists have organized across racial lines for community benefits agreements, job training programs, and transit justice... Why the dramatic shift in L.A.’s tone and

policy? Any success has many parents (or, at least, people who claim to be its parents), but there seem to be three main causes: the rise of a progressive labor movement with electoral ambitions and skills, the emergence of regional community-based organizing with a sharp analysis of power, and—the concern that lies at the heart of this essay—the creation of an immigrant voice that has gained both the confidence and the capacity to effect change.” *Manuel Pastor is professor of Sociology and American Studies & Ethnicity at the University of Southern California and the director of the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity.*

[How state governments are addressing cybersecurity](#)

Dawson, Gregory; Desouza, Kevin C. *TechTank* (blog). March 5, 2015, var. pages.

“The authors examine state government IT plans and identify two states with stronger plans than their peers: Idaho and Mississippi. “Our findings indicated that federal agencies are unprepared. Half of federal agencies make no mention of the need to secure IT systems nor do they address cybersecurity efforts in detail. We have also studied cybersecurity in state government IT plans. All states, with the exception of Alaska, publish an IT strategic plan and we did a content analysis of these documents to assess each state’s cybersecurity positioning. We conducted this research knowing that the National Association of State CIOs (NASCIO), when issuing its annual list of priorities for state CIOs for 2015, exhorted state CIOs to examine a variety of security related concerns to determine what constitutes “due care” in addressing them. Our purpose in conducting this analysis was to determine how well states were conducting this “due care”. As expected, our findings were mixed. We were able to identify two states that had strong efforts and performed better than their peers.” *Gregory S. Dawson is an Assistant Professor in the Information Systems Department at the W.P. Carey School of Business and is also a Research Fellow at the Center for Organization Research and Design also at Arizona State University. Kevin C. Desouza is a nonresident senior fellow with the Center for Technology Innovation.*

[The Pentagon & Climate Change: How Deniers Put National Security at Risk](#)

Goodell, Jeff. *Rolling Stone*. February 12, 2015, var. pages.

"Rear Adm. Jonathan White, the Navy's chief oceanographer and head of its climate-change task force, is one of the most knowledgeable people in the military about what's actually happening on our rapidly heating planet. Whenever another officer or a congressperson corners White and presses him about why he spends so much time thinking about climate change, he doesn't even try to explain thermal expansion of the oceans or ice dynamics in the Arctic... Those who talk most about climate change — scientists, politicians, environmental activists — tend to frame the discussion in economic and moral terms. But last month, in a dramatic turn, President Obama talked about climate change in an explicitly military context: "The Pentagon says that climate change poses immediate risks to our national security," he said in his State of the Union address. "We should act like it... The scale of military assets that are at risk due to our rapidly changing climate is mind-boggling. The Pentagon manages more than 555,000 facilities and 28 million acres of land—virtually all of which will be impacted by climate change in some way.” *Jeff Goodell is an American author and contributing editor to Rolling Stone magazine.*

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