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- November 2014 -

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

REPORTS

[Afghanistan in Transition: U.S. Civilian Presence and Assistance Post-2014](#)

Majority Staff Report for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. October 27, 2014[PDF format, 31 pages]

"This report examines the U.S. assistance and diplomatic approach to Afghanistan amid the security and political transitions taking place in the country. As we enter this new phase, it is critical that the United States reexamine its presence in Afghanistan to ensure that assistance is provided in the most efficient, cost effective, and sustainable manner possible. Later this year, international donors will meet with the new Afghan government to discuss assistance to the country. This report is meant to inform those deliberations and other engagements with the new Afghan government to combat corruption and bolster efforts to ensure that U.S. tax dollars are spent wisely. It is equally important that the benchmarks for strengthening rule of law and women's rights are reinforced by the Afghan government and the international community. This report examines increasing accountability for U.S. assistance, refining the U.S. assistance approach, and creating a more robust U.S. diplomatic posture and civilian presence, and offers a series of recommendations for the U.S. Government as it engages the new government in Kabul and contends with the remaining security and development challenges across the country."

[FACT SHEET: Promoting Prosperity, Security and Good Governance in Central America](#)

The White House. November 14, 2014.

"The United States developed a Central America strategy to complement the work undertaken by regional governments and multilateral development banks. The U.S. strategy focuses on three overarching lines of action: 1) Promoting prosperity and regional economic integration; 2) Enhancing security; and 3) Promoting improved governance. The United States seeks to contribute to the evolution of an economically-integrated Central America that provides greater economic opportunities to its people, with strong democratic institutions, with more accountable, transparent, and effective public institutions, and where citizens feel safe and can build their lives in peace and stability. This will require coordination with Central America, Mexico, Colombia, international financial institutions, the private sector, civil society, and other international partners to promote regional prosperity through a sustained, well-coordinated plan to address longstanding challenges to economic growth in the region."

[The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: Big Opportunities for Small Business](#)

Workman, Garrett. The Atlantic Council. November 14, 2014 [PDF format, 21 pages]

"Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in both the United States and European Union stand to gain significantly

from the implementation of an ambitious Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP). Using data from a targeted survey and interviews conducted with SME executives on both sides of the Atlantic, this report cites three core challenges for SMEs as they begin exporting: a lack of clarity on how to get started, problems finding the right clients, and a confusing mix of regulatory differences and contradictory registration requirements between the United States and the European. SMEs represent the vast majority of all firms on both sides of the Atlantic and are responsible for over two-thirds of net new job creation over the last decade in both the United States and the European Union. Yet, they face significant barriers when attempting to export their goods and services... This report uses a case study approach, examining the export experiences of American and European businesses from a range of industries to identify concrete challenges that SMEs must overcome when trying to trade across the Atlantic. By identifying the most significant challenges, the author outlines specific policy recommendations to ensure TTIP helps to remove the roadblocks.” *Garrett Workman is an Associate Director at the Global Business & Economics Program of the Atlantic Council.*

[**The Importance of the Internet and Transatlantic Data Flows for U.S. and EU Trade and Investment**](#)

Meltzer, Joshua. Brookings Institution. October 2014 [PDF format, 26 pages]

“The Internet and the free movement of data globally is an important and growing driver of economic growth, jobs and welfare. This growth happens as the Internet increases productivity and reduces trade costs, which also stimulates trade. The United States International Trade Commission (ITC) estimates that digital trade has increased U.S. GDP by 3.4 to 4.8 percent and created up to 2.4 million jobs. The gains could be even higher if countries reduced their barriers to digital trade. Consumers also benefit as they are able to access new and innovative services. Access to the Internet and the ability to move data freely across borders increases the productivity of businesses and reduces trade costs, thereby creating economic growth and jobs. This is providing new opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises to participate in the global economy. Consumers are also benefiting as they are able to access new and innovative services... This paper focuses on the importance of the internet and transatlantic data flows for U.S. and EU trade and investment. Whether the U.S. and the EU are able to take full advantage of the opportunities for international trade and investment presented by their increasingly online and digital populations will affect transatlantic economic relations as the world’s two largest economies, the U.S. and EU decisions on support for cross-border data flows will also have global implications.” *Dr. Joshua Meltzer is a fellow in Global Economy and Development at the Brookings Institution and an adjunct professor at the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies.*

[**U.S.-Arab Counterterrorism Cooperation in a Region Ripe for Extremism**](#)

Dunne, Michele; Wehrey, Frederic. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. October 23, 2014.

“U.S. cooperation with Arab allies against terrorist groups is essential—and also problematic. Many Arab governments are fueling the very extremism they purport to fight and looking for cover from the United States for increasingly repressive policies. Washington needs a holistic counterterrorism strategy that ensures its Arab allies do not use U.S. assistance to perpetuate terrorism and that supports those in Arab societies best able to combat radicalization. U.S. officials are focused at present on military action to eliminate the threat from the militant Islamic State, an effort in which the cooperation of regional allies is essential. But it is equally critical that the United States avoid certain pitfalls when cooperating with Arab allies... Washington needs to work collaboratively and cooperatively with its Arab allies to face the imminent threat from the Islamic State. But it needs to do so with attentiveness to the broader domestic trends inside Arab states that are not fostering the sort of durable social and political peace required to defeat the radicals’ narrative once and for all” *Michele Dunne is a senior associate in Carnegie’s Middle East Program, where her research focuses on political and economic change in Arab countries. Frederic Wehrey is a senior associate in the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He focuses on Gulf*

political and security affairs, Libya, and U.S. policy in the Middle East.

[The Tourniquet: A Strategy for Defeating the Islamic State and Saving Syria and Iraq](#)

Lynch, Marc. The Center for a New American Security. October 16, 2014 [PDF format, 36 pages]

"The Obama administration has laid out an ambitious strategy for defeating the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in Iraq and degrading it in Syria. It has assembled a broad coalition in support of airstrikes, training and advising missions, and the curtailing of the flows of fighters and support to jihadist groups in both Syria and Iraq. These efforts have helped stabilize the situation and galvanize political change in Iraq, but have struggled to gain traction in Syria. As these initial efforts prove unable to deliver decisive progress against ISIS, the pressure will likely grow to expand the military campaign and its mission. It is therefore vital that the Obama administration clearly articulate a strategic vision for translating its military and political efforts into a sustainable endgame. As the Obama administration addresses the pressing ISIS challenge, this report recommends that the United States: Use the ISIS crisis to create a sustainable regional accord; Support the reconstruction of Iraqi state legitimacy and authority; Force a strategic pause between Asad and rebel groups in Syria; Tighten the Syria tourniquet to translate this strategic pause into a political transition; Don't ignore human rights and democracy in the name of counter-terrorism." *Dr. Marc Lynch is an adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security; and a Professor of Political Science and the Director of the Institute for Middle East Studies at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University.*

[The Islamic State](#)

Barrett, Richard. The Soufan Group. November 2014 [PDF format, 60 pages]

"The Islamic State is a highly visible but clandestine organization. Despite the vast amount of publicity and analysis it has generated since 2011, verifiable facts concerning its leadership and structure remain few and far between. The picture is obscured by the misleading propaganda of the State itself and by the questionable accounts of people who claim to be familiar with it. It is a movement that has accelerated fast along the path from terrorism through insurgency towards proto-statehood, but it is also one that for all its bravado seems fearful that it could just as quickly be forced back underground. As a result, this paper relies on the group's own publications, the observations of defectors, and analysis by others who take an interest in its progress, despite the paucity of information... The rapid expansion of The Islamic State on both sides of the Iraq/Syria border after 2011 pushed it along the continuum from terrorism to insurgency. Its underground cells became military divisions and its hit-and-run tactics became campaigns to conquer and hold territory. These changes required leaders with different skills, and it was fortunate for The Islamic State that many in its top echelons were ex-Ba'athists who had held senior positions under Saddam Hussein." *Robert Barrett is Senior Vice President of The Soufan Group. The Soufan Group is headquartered in New York and provides strategic security intelligence services to governments and multinational organizations.*

[Cutting off ISIS' Cash Flow](#)

Lister, Charles. The Brookings Institution. October 24, 2014.

"Countering terrorist finance is an intensely complex and challenging effort. In the short-term, it can bring a combination of positive and negative consequences, but in the long-term, if done right, it can cripple a terrorist organization's capacity to operate and grow. ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra are two entirely different beasts in this regard, and they should be treated as such. In controlling such vast amounts of territory and resources, ISIS is more vulnerable in the immediate term, but its potential capacity to shift blame onto the international community for its reduced capacity to provide must be borne in mind. Though necessitating a gargantuan effort in minimal time, the

provision of large quantities of diesel fuel and oil for generators into opposition areas of northern Syria should be an immediate policy priority. In the long-term, rolling back ISIS will only come from a meaningful offensive by well-resourced and capable indigenous ground forces.” *Charles Lister is a visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center. He was formerly head of MENA at IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center.*

How this Ends: A Blueprint for De-Escalation in Syria

Rand, Dafna; Heras, Nicholas. The Center for a New American Progress. November 6, 2014 [PDF format, 15 pages]

The authors discuss the importance of focusing on a political framework for de-escalating the civil conflict in Syria. It offers a number of principles and practical steps that would build on U.S. train and assist efforts with the moderate Syrian opposition fighters, in an effort to integrate a political strategy for Syria’s future into current U.S. and Coalition military efforts. “As the United States and the Coalition train and assist the moderate Syrian military opposition, they should emphasize a clear end goal: the Syrian armed opposition factions must, ultimately, view themselves not only as warriors that are seeking to overthrow Bashar al-Asad (and the political-security syndicate that his father Hafiz built), but also, and mainly, as the nucleus of a national army that will uphold and protect an inclusive, multi-sect political compact governing Syria after Asad.” *Dr. Dafna Hochman Rand is the deputy director of studies and the inaugural Leon E. Panetta fellow at the Center for a New American Security. Mr. Nicholas A. Heras is the research associate in the Middle East Security Program at the Center for a New American Security.*

Political Transition in Tunisia

Arief, Alexis; Humud, Carla E. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. October 22, 2014 [PDF format, 20 pages]

“Tunisia is in its fourth year of transition after the 2011 “Jasmine Revolution,” and it has so far continued to avoid the types of chaos and/or authoritarian resurrections that have affected other “Arab Spring” countries... U.S. policymakers have described Tunisia as a key test case for democratic transitions in Arab states. Yet Tunisia’s path is far from certain, and Tunisia’s example may, in any case, be less influential than larger or more central states such as Egypt and Syria. Still, Tunisia’s experience highlights region-wide issues relating to the struggle between reformists and former regime elements; the role and influence of Islamism in state and society; and the difficult balance—for the United States and others—of pursuing potentially divergent policy goals, particularly as post-authoritarian transitions are often accompanied by political instability and weakened security forces. U.S. policymakers continue to debate the degree to which aid and bilateral contacts provide leverage in pursuing goals such as countering terrorism and encouraging certain democratic values... Stated U.S. policy priorities in Tunisia include encouraging a successful democratic transition, advancing trade and investment ties, and working with the Tunisian government to address terrorism and other security threats. The Obama Administration, in consultation with Congress, has allocated over \$570 million in aid since 2011”. *Alexis Arief is an Analyst in African Affairs at the CFR. Carla E. Humud is an Analyst in Middle Eastern and African Affairs at the CFR.*

Drivers of Long-Term Insecurity and Instability in Pakistan

Blank, Jonah; Clary, Christopher; and Nichiporuk, Brian. RAND Corporation. October 30, 2014 [PDF format, 89 pages]

Already one of the most urbanized nations in South Asia, Pakistan is projected to have a majority of its population living in cities within three decades. This demographic shift will alter Pakistan's politics and threaten its stability, but the political and security implications of Pakistan's urbanization remain under analyzed... Pakistan is the most urbanized nation in South Asia and has been growing steadily more urbanized for at least the past four decades. The

impact of urbanization on Pakistan's politics, stability, and security profile has been under examined by analysts and policymakers alike. This project attempts to fill a portion of this gap and to focus on how Pakistan's urbanization (and related demographic changes) might shape that nation's political parties, democratic development, and potential security challenges... The basic question this report seeks to explore may be summarized briefly: What are the most salient observations about Pakistan's urbanization, in relation to the nation's electoral politics, likelihood of governmental stability or reform, and security challenges directed at both domestic and global targets?". *Jonah Blank and Brian Nichiporuk are senior political scientists at RAND.*

[North America: Time for a New Focus](#)

Council on Foreign Relations. [Independent Task Force Report #71] October 14, 2014 [PDF format, 137 pages]

This Independent Task Force report asserts that elevating and prioritizing the U.S.-Canada-Mexico relationship offers the best opportunity for strengthening the United States and its place in the world. Chaired by David H. Petraeus, retired U.S. Army general and chairman of the KKR Global Institute, and Robert B. Zoellick, former president of the World Bank Group and chairman of Goldman Sachs's International Advisors, the Task Force is composed of a diverse and distinguished group of experts that includes former government officials, scholars, and others. "The Task Force's recommendations focus on four pivotal areas: capitalizing on North America's promising energy outlook by removing restrictions on energy exports and increasing investment in infrastructure; bolstering economic competitiveness through the freer movement of goods and services across borders; strengthening security through a unified continental strategy and support for Mexico's efforts to solidify democratic rule of law; and fostering a North American community through comprehensive immigration reform and the creation of a mobility accord to facilitate the movement of workers. The Task Force makes the case that a revitalized North American partnership is good not just for local reasons but also because it will strengthen the position of the United States and the continent in the world."

[Business As Usual: European Gas Market Functioning in Times of Turmoil and Increasing Import Dependence](#)

Boersma, Tim, et. al. Brookings Institution. October 2014 [PDF format, 36 pages]

"Ongoing turmoil in Ukraine has once again sparked debate about European energy dependence on Russia. That debate is not new and has been revitalized repeatedly since the first major supply disruption in 2006, which took place after several decades of fairly stable supplies...Our analysis suggests that the transformation of European gas supply as called for by politicians in light of the Ukraine Crisis will in fact not take place. In all scenarios in the period under study, remarkably modest changes in the European gas supply mix are observed, suggesting that indeed, as posed in the introduction of this paper, political preference will not enter the commercial lexicon. On the other hand, we do observe that in the halls of European institutions there is a deep-rooted desire to alter the existing balance of power between Russia and the European Union. In order to achieve that, one of the ideas that is floating around is active engagement with Turkmenistan, a country whose leaders do not wish to engage with private sector entities but instead wish to make deals with political establishments. This in turn raises all sorts of questions, as politically inspired projects in the past have not been successful (the most prominent example being the Nabucco pipeline), and, more importantly, a substantial share of natural gas in Turkmenistan seems to have been locked in by China." *Tim Boersma is a fellow in the Energy Security Initiative at the Brookings Institution.*

ARTICLES

[The Strategic Logic of Trade](#)

Froman, Michael B. *Foreign Affairs*. November/December 2014, var. pages.

“For much of the twentieth century, leaders and policymakers around the world viewed the strategic importance of trade, and of international economic policy more generally, largely through the lens of military strength. They believed that the role of a strong economy was to act as an enabler, supporting a strong military, which they saw as the best way to project power and influence. But in recent decades, leaders have come to see the economic clout that trade produces as more than merely a purse for military prowess: they now understand prosperity to be a principal means by which countries measure and exercise power... In a world where markets can have as much influence as militaries, any tension between the United States’ national security priorities and its economic goals is more apparent than real. Still, in considering new trade agreements, Washington must first and foremost evaluate their economic merits. Trade deals must promote U.S. economic growth, support jobs, and strengthen the middle class. Trade’s contribution to the U.S. economy has never been more significant than it is today. Trade supports higher-paying jobs, spurs economic growth, and enhances the competitiveness of the U.S. economy.” *Michael B. Froman is the U.S. Trade Representative.*

[The Roots of the Islamic State's Appeal](#)

Hamid, Shadi. *The Atlantic*. October 31, 2014, var. pages.

“The rise of ISIS is only the most extreme example of the way in which liberal determinism—the notion that history moves with intent toward a more reasonable, secular future—has failed to explain the realities of the Middle East. It should by now go without saying that the overwhelming majority of Muslims do not share ISIS’s view of religion, but that’s not really the most interesting or relevant question. ISIS’s rise to prominence has something to do with Islam, but what is that something? ISIS draws on, and draws strength from, ideas that have broad resonance among Muslim-majority populations. They may not agree with ISIS’s interpretation of the caliphate, but the notion of a caliphate—the historical political entity governed by Islamic law and tradition—is a powerful one, even among more secular-minded Muslims. The caliphate, something that hasn’t existed since 1924, is a reminder of how one of the world’s great civilizations endured one of the more precipitous declines in human history. The gap between what Muslims once were and where they now find themselves is at the center of the anger and humiliation that drive political violence in the Middle East. But there is also a sense of loss and longing for an organic legal and political order that succeeded for centuries before its slow but decisive dismantling. Ever since, Muslims, and particularly Arab Muslims, have been struggling to define the contours of an appropriate post-caliphate political model.” *Shadi Hamid is a contributing writer for The Atlantic, a fellow at the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World at the Brookings Institution's Center for Middle East Policy, and the author of Temptations of Power: Islamists and Illiberal Democracy in a New Middle East (Oxford University Press, 2014).*

The Media Strategy of ISIS

Farwell, James P. *Survival*. December 2014/January 2015, pp. 49–55.

“In June, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) made a dramatic entrance onto the global stage, aiming to establish its religious authority across the planet under a caliphate led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The group’s principal tool for expanding its influence has been brute force, but as it has attempted to build credibility and establish legitimacy, it has shown a deftness for propaganda, using social media and cyber technology to recruit fighters and intimidate enemies. ISIS is not the first set of violent extremists to use such means to drive home its messages or carry out operations. Al-Shabaab used Twitter during its September 2013 attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi to intimidate, mock and brag... Yet ISIS stands apart for its sophisticated use and understanding of social media to

achieve its goals. Its communication strategy aims to persuade all Muslims that battling to restore a caliphate is a religious duty. The group's narrative portrays ISIS as an agent of change, the true apostle of a sovereign faith, a champion of its own perverse notions of social justice, and a collection of avengers bent on settling accounts for the perceived sufferings of others.⁵ This narrative stresses that ISIS is gaining strength and amassing power, and that victory is inevitable. The use of cellular technology, along with the exploitation of the mainstream media (ISIS videos have appeared on Western broadcast outlets as well as extremist websites), means that these messages have reached audiences around the world." *James P. Farwell has advised the US Special Operations Command. He is the author of Persuasion and Power: The Art of Strategic Communication (Georgetown University Press, 2012).*

Turkey's Syria Predicament

Barley, Henri J. *Survival*. December 2014/January 2015, pp.113-134.

"Ankara finds itself on the horns of a dilemma. The Arab Spring, the Syrian crisis and the dramatic rise of ISIS in both Iraq and Syria have undermined years of effort in constructing a new foreign policy, upending its relations with states in the Middle East and the West, particularly America. Turkey also has to worry about how its own Kurdish population will be affected by both Kobane and the emergence of jihadist sympathisers within Turkish territory, some of whom have supplied ISIS with fighters and material. Ankara and Washington were for the first two years oblivious to the regional transformation caused by the war in Syria, which has spilled over into Iraq and Lebanon. The sectarian, ethnic and political conflicts precipitated in Turkey's neighborhoods will persist for years, if not decades. The Syria-Iraq border ceased to function as a meaningful boundary soon after the Syrian insurrection began. Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates added fuel to the fire by providing funds and other support to jihadist groups willing to take on Damascus. The Kobane crisis has added a new element, the Kurds, who have a presence in all of the countries in which the conflict is occurring, and whose nationalist aspirations have been boosted psychologically." *Henri J. Barkey is Bernard L. and Bertha F. Cohen Professor of International Relations at Lehigh University.*

Taking Stock in Ukraine

Pifer, Steven. *The American Interest*. October 28, 2014.

"The political crisis that began last November when then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich declined to sign an association agreement with the European Union has triggered conflict between Russia and Ukraine and a sharp deterioration in relations between the West and Moscow. Seven points provide key context for understanding what is happening... The Russia-Ukraine crisis will be with us for some time to come. It is critical that the West have a sustainable policy to support Ukraine and push back against Russia's aggression. The West should leave the door open for diplomatic engagement if Moscow changes its course. Unfortunately, however, signs of a course correction are not yet evident... The Russia-Ukraine crisis will be with us for some time to come. It is critical that the West have a sustainable policy to support Ukraine and push back against Russia's aggression. The West should leave the door open for diplomatic engagement if Moscow changes its course. Unfortunately, however, signs of a course correction are not yet evident." *Steven Pifer is director of the Brookings Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative and a senior fellow with the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence and the Center on the United States and Europe in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings.*

The Unintended Consequences of European Sanctions on Russia

Jones, Erik; Whitworth, Andrew. *Survival*. October/November 2014, pp.21-30.

“The argument that EU sanctions against Russia have unintended consequences is neither critical nor surprising. The design of the sanctions reflects political as well as diplomatic requirements. In addition to limiting Russia’s ability to destabilize European security, the targeted sectors – meaning trade as well as finance – were selected to spread the cost across EU member states as evenly as possible. This was done to foster a sense of fairness within the EU, but also to make sure that multiple EU countries would have a material interest at stake. Otherwise, divisions between post-communist Europe and Western Europe, and between countries dependent upon Russia for natural gas and those with easier access to other energy resources, would continue to complicate efforts to forge a common policy. The political complexity and large economic interests at stake explain why European policymakers have been slower to agree on sanctions than Barack Obama’s administration in the US and some more hawkish voices in the EU would have liked. That said, the implications of Europe’s deliberative process are not wholly negative. By proceeding cautiously and ratcheting up sanctions gradually, European policymakers created opportunities for Russia to de-escalate the situation (which Moscow did not take), while at the same time building consensus within and between member states and European economic sectors.” *Erik Jones is Director of European and Eurasian Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and a Contributing Editor of Survival. Andrew Whitworth is a PhD student in the European and Eurasian Studies program at SAIS.*

The International Order Faces a Fateful and Perilous Winter

Gvosdev, Nikolas K. *World Politics Review*. October 27, 2014.

“How three presidents—Barack Obama, Xi Jinping, and Vladimir Putin—and one institution—the European Union—grapple with and navigate the political challenges they will face this winter will have a profound impact in shaping global politics in the years to come. The decisions that are taken, or deferred, will determine whether current assumptions about the international order are reconfirmed or discarded. Those assumptions include the belief that most countries, including the rising and resurgent powers, still prioritize their relationships with Washington over bonding together to actively displace the United States from its position in the international system; the belief that the U.S. still retains sufficient heft to be able to shape regional economic and security orders, especially in East Asia; the belief that rivalries and mistrust among the rising powers will prevent them from coalescing into an effective counterweight to the Euro-Atlantic coalition, now presumed to be re-energized and united as a result of the crisis in Ukraine; and the belief that the EU will maintain its ability to engage its “wider neighborhood” both in Eurasia and the greater Middle East.” *Nikolas K. Gvosdev, a contributing editor at the National Interest, is a visiting professor at Brown University.*

More small wars: counterinsurgency is here to stay

Boot, Max. *Foreign Affairs*. November/December 2014, pp.5-14.

“If only a nation as powerful and vulnerable as the United States had the option of defining exactly which types of wars it wages. Reality, alas, seldom cooperates. Over the centuries, U.S. presidents of all political persuasions have found it necessary to send troops to fight adversaries ranging from the Barbary pirates to Filipino insurrectos to Haitian cacos to Vietnamese communists to Somali warlords to Serbian death squads to Taliban guerrillas to al Qaeda terrorists. Unlike traditional armies, these enemies seldom met U.S. forces in the open, which meant that they could not be defeated quickly. To beat such shadowy foes, American troops had to undertake the time-intensive, difficult work of what’s now known as counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and nation building. There is little reason to think the future will prove any different, since conflict within states continues to break out far more frequently than conflict among states. Although the world has not seen a purely conventional war since the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, more than 30 countries—including Colombia, Iraq, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, and

Ukraine, to name a few--now find themselves fighting foes that rely on guerrilla or terrorist tactics... Even if the United States does not send substantial numbers of ground troops to another war anytime soon, it will surely remain involved in helping its allies fight conflicts similar to those in Afghanistan and Iraq, and as has become clear in recent months, it will stay involved in Afghanistan and Iraq, too. Since Washington doesn't have the luxury of simply avoiding insurgencies, then, the best strategy would be to fight them better. Drawn from more than a decade of war, here are ten lessons for how to do so, which U.S. policymakers, soldiers, diplomats, and spies should keep in mind as they try to deal with the chaotic conflicts to come.” *Max Boot is Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow for National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare From Ancient Times to the Present (Liveright,2013).*

[The Myth of the Militarization of America's Africa Policy](#)

Erickson, Dane; Friend, Alice. *The National Interest*. November 17, 2014, var. pages.

After almost fifteen years of unprecedented political stabilization and economic development in Africa, the ravages of Ebola and a spike in military coups in places like Burkina Faso and Mali are ominous signs of a continent backsliding under the weight of corruption and political conflict. Pundits and reporters in the United States are framing these events with concerns about the “militarization” of U.S. Africa policy. But the modest level of American security assistance in Africa is not to blame for recent developments in West Africa. If we learn anything from recent civil-military conflicts, it should be that Africa needs more U.S. security assistance, not less. Since the 2008 establishment of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), alarmist voices have spun a popular narrative that the United States is blanketing Africa with military forces, and soon security activities will eclipse economic, development and humanitarian investments. This narrative also expresses concern that partner capacity-building efforts on the continent will over strengthen then military institutions, empowering them to play a dominant role in national-level politics. Scrutiny of the actual rate of U.S. security-related spending in Africa tells a different story. In this fiscal year, of the approximately \$7 billion of assistance designated by the State Department for sub-Saharan Africa, some 6 percent is security-related.” *Dane Erickson is a Lecturer at the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado, Denver and recently completed a yearlong analysis of political and security issues in West Africa in partnership with the Brookings Institution and a network of local research partners. Alice Friend is affiliated with the Center for a New American Security and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and was the Principal Director for African Affairs at the Pentagon from 2012 to 2014.*

[Revitalizing the Rebalance: How to Keep U.S. Focus on Asia](#)

Green, Michael J.; Cooper, Zack. *The Washington Quarterly*. Fall 2014, var. pages.

“When President Obama announced the rebalance, he promised to promote regional security, economic prosperity, and human dignity. Significant progress toward these goals has already been made. On the security side, the Navy has announced that it will shift 60 percent of its fleet to the Pacific; the Air Force will deploy most of its fifth-generation fighters to that part of the world; and the Army will realign the I Corps in Washington State for Asia-Pacific missions.⁵ The administration has worked with allies and partners to initiate a new Defense Guidelines review with Japan; revise plans for wartime Operational Command transition in South Korea at Seoul’s request; make a new Force Posture Agreement with Australia; and sign a new Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement with the Philippines. The administration has also emphasized that military assets are not necessarily the only, nor even the most important, component of the rebalance... Yet, each component of the rebalance—security, prosperity, and human dignity—has come under increased pressure in recent years. Regional allies’ and partners’ security concerns have grown since 2012 as the security situation in the East and South China Seas has deteriorated. China has

increased its mercantile and paramilitary pressure on Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines in pursuit of its territorial claims. Similar developments have unfolded in the frozen peaks of the Himalayas between China and India. Meanwhile, the U.S. response, or lack of one, to chaos in Syria, Iraq, and Ukraine have elicited concern that Washington might either “pivot” away from Asia, or somehow be shown to lack the underlying willpower or resources to manage new security challenges in the Asia–Pacific region.” *Michael J. 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. Zack Cooper is a fellow with the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a doctoral candidate at Princeton University.*

[The Top 5 Foreign Policy Lessons of the Past 20 Years](#)

Walt, Stephen M. *Foreign Policy*. November 18, 2014, var. pages.

“Today's world is filled with conflicting signals. On the one hand, life expectancy and education are up, the level of violent conflict is down, and hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty over the past several decades. Private businesses are starting to take human rights seriously. And hey, the euro is still alive! On the other hand, Europe's economy is still depressed, Russia is suspending nuclear cooperation with the United States, violent extremists keep multiplying in several regions, the odds of a genuine nuclear deal with Iran still look like a coin toss, and that much-ballyhooed climate change deal between the United States and China is probably too little too late and already facing right-wing criticisms. Given all these conflicting signals, what broader lessons might guide policymakers wrestling with all this turbulence? Assuming governments are capable of learning from experience (and please just grant me that one), then what kernels of wisdom should they be drawing on right now? What do the past 20 years or so reveal about contemporary foreign-policy issues, and what enduring lessons should we learn from recent experience?” *Stephen M. Walt is the Robert and Renée Belfer professor of international relations at Harvard University.*

The Unraveling

Haass, Richard N. *Foreign Affairs*. November/December 2014, pp. 70-74.

“Some contemporary challenges to order are global, a reflection of dangerous aspects of globalization that include cross-border flows of terrorists, viruses (both physical and virtual), and greenhouse gas emissions. With few institutional mechanisms available for stanching or managing them, such flows hold the potential to disrupt and degrade the quality of the system as a whole. And the rise of populism amid economic stagnation and increasing inequality makes improving global governance even more challenging. The principles informing international order are also in contention. Some consensus exists about the unacceptability of acquiring territory by force, and it was such agreement that undergirded the broad coalition supporting the reversal of Saddam Hussein's attempt to absorb Kuwait into Iraq in 1990. But the consensus had frayed enough over the succeeding generation to allow Russia to escape similar universal condemnation after its taking of Crimea last spring, and it is anyone's guess how much of the world would respond to an attempt by China to muscle in on contested airspace, seas, or territory. International agreement on sovereignty breaks down even more when it comes to the question of the right of outsiders to intervene when a government attacks its own citizens or otherwise fails to meet its sovereign obligations. A decade after UN approval, the concept of “the responsibility to protect” no longer enjoys broad support, and there is no shared agreement on what constitutes legitimate involvement in the affairs of other countries.” *Dr. Richard Haass is president of the Council on Foreign Relations. Dr. Haass is the author or editor of twelve books on American foreign policy and one book on management.*

U.S. DOMESTIC POLICY AND TRENDS

REPORTS

[Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Immigration](#)

The White House. November 20, 2014.

“When I took office, I committed to fixing this broken immigration system. And I began by doing what I could to secure our borders. Today, we have more agents and technology deployed to secure our southern border than at any time in our history. And over the past six years, illegal border crossings have been cut by more than half. Although this summer, there was a brief spike in unaccompanied children being apprehended at our border, the number of such children is now actually lower than it’s been in nearly two years. Overall, the number of people trying to cross our border illegally is at its lowest level since the 1970s. Those are the facts. Meanwhile, I worked with Congress on a comprehensive fix, and last year, 68 Democrats, Republicans, and independents came together to pass a bipartisan bill in the Senate. It wasn’t perfect. It was a compromise. But it reflected common sense. It would have doubled the number of border patrol agents while giving undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship if they paid a fine, started paying their taxes, and went to the back of the line. And independent experts said that it would help grow our economy and shrink our deficits.”

[Executive Actions on Immigration](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security. November 2014.

“On November 20, 2014, the President announced a series of executive actions to crack down on illegal immigration at the border, prioritize deporting felons not families, and require certain undocumented immigrants to pass a criminal background check and pay taxes in order to temporarily stay in the U.S. without fear of deportation. ... On November 20, 2014, the President announced a series of executive actions to crack down on illegal immigration at the border, prioritize deporting felons not families, and require certain undocumented immigrants to pass a criminal background check and pay taxes in order to temporarily stay in the U.S. without fear of deportation.”

[Women and Girls of Color: Addressing Challenges and Expanding Opportunity](#)

The White House Council on Women and Girls. November 2014 [PDF format, 54 pages]

This report highlights work the Administration has done over the last six years to reduce barriers to success for everyone including women and girls of color. From continuing to fight to increase the minimum wage, encouraging women to enter STEM-related fields, providing increased access to health screenings and much more, this report re-emphasizes the Administration’s commitment to helping all women succeed in every area of their lives. “In recent years, on indicators ranging from educational attainment to economic security to health and well-being, women and girls of color have made tremendous progress. The number of businesses owned by women of color has skyrocketed, and women of color have ascended to the upper ranks of workplaces across industries. Teen pregnancy rates for girls of color have plummeted, and high school and college graduation rates have risen. Yet, these achievements may obscure the very real challenges and disparities that persist for women and girls of color. Girls of color still lag behind in their performance on standardized tests, and they are more likely to be suspended from school. Women and girls of color still face higher rates of poverty and receive lower wages for their work than their white peers, and they are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system.”

[Exploring the Digital Nation: Embracing the Mobile Internet](#)

National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA), U.S. Department of Commerce. October 16,

2016 [PDF format, 64 pages]

“This report examines data from the 2012 Current Population Survey (CPS) describing Americans’ use of computers and the Internet. Data from this survey depict the accelerating popularity of mobile phone-based Internet use across American demographic groups... NTIA’s analysis of this dataset, summarized below, reveals a mobile Internet explosion, accompanied by narrowing but persistent disparities in computer ownership and Internet use overall. This report includes NTIA’s analysis of the demographic characteristics of home Internet users and the technologies they use to go online, as well as the alternative locations where they use the Internet. It also presents data on the primary reasons why some Americans do not access the Internet from their homes. These data can inform further research and policy that strives to eliminate disparities by increasing the availability of affordable broadband in the United States and promoting broadband adoption by all Americans.”

[Little Enthusiasm, Familiar Divisions After the GOP's Big Midterm Victory](#)

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. November 12, 2014 [Note: contains copyrighted material]

“After a sweeping midterm election victory on Nov. 4, the Republican Party retook full control of Congress. But the public has mixed reactions to the GOP's big win, much as it did four years ago, after Republicans gained control of the House though not the Senate. The post-election survey by the Pew Research Center finds that about half of Americans (48%) are happy the Republican Party won control of the Senate, while 38% are unhappy. That is almost a carbon copy of the public's reactions to the 2010 election: 48% were happy the GOP won control of the House, while 34% were unhappy. There was much greater public enthusiasm after the Democrats gained control of Congress in 2006, and after the GOP swept to victory in both the House and Senate in the 1994 midterm election.”

[Hispanic Voters in the 2014 Election](#)

Krogstad, Jens Manuel; Lopez, Mark Hugo. Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project November 7, 2014 [Note: contains copyrighted material]

“Democrats maintained a large edge among Latinos voting in Tuesday's midterm elections, but in some states, Republican candidates won more than 40% of the Latino vote, according to the analysis of National Election Pool exit poll data as reported by NBC News. Though Democrats comfortably won the Latino vote in nearly all states that had key Senate or gubernatorial races (and for which exit poll data is available), Republican candidates won many of those contests, and will take control of the U.S. Senate for the first time since 2007. In congressional races nationally, Democrats won the Latino vote by a margin of 62% to 36%. This is comparable to the last midterm cycle four years ago when six-in-ten (60%) Latinos voted for a Democratic candidate, but down from 2012 when Democrats took 68% of the Latino vote.” *Jens Manuel Krogstad is a writer/editor at the Pew Research Center’s Hispanic Trends Project. Mark Hugo Lopez is Director of Hispanic Research at the Pew Research Center.*

[Immigrants Continue to Disperse, with Fastest Growth in the Suburbs](#)

Wilson, Jill H; Svajlenka, Nicole P. The Brookings Institution. October 29, 2014.

“The number of immigrants living in the United States increased by 523,000 between 2012 and 2013, according to recently released data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. This represents an up-tick from the last two annual changes in which 422,000 and 447,000 immigrants were added to the population each year. There are now 41.3 million foreign-born residents in the United States and their share of the total U.S. population inched up from 13.0 percent to 13.1 percent. These small changes at the national level mask bigger changes in metro

areas across the country... In 2000, the 10 metro areas with the largest number of immigrants (New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, Houston, San Francisco, Washington, Dallas, Riverside, and Boston) accounted for 56 percent of all the foreign born living in the U.S. By 2013, that share had dropped to just over half (51 percent...This dispersion can be seen by looking at the increase in the foreign-born population at the metropolitan level. In 97 of the 100 most populous metro areas, there were more immigrants in 2013 than in 2000 (three metro areas in Ohio saw no statistically significant increase or decrease). But the size and pace of the growth varied considerably across the country. Atlanta and Seattle—neither of which rank among the top 10 largest immigrant destinations—each added more immigrants to their population between 2000 and 2013 than Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, or Los Angeles (all among the 10 largest in 2013).” *Jill H. Wilson is a senior research analyst and associate fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program. Nicole P. Svajlenka is a research analyst at the Metropolitan Policy Program.*

[The Shale Revolution and the New Geopolitics of Energy](#)

Manning, Robert A. The Atlantic Council. November 2014 [PDF format, 20 pages]

In this report, the author explains that the shale revolution affects everything from the makeup of the global energy market to America’s core strategic interests abroad. This new glut of supply has completely changed the conversation on energy supplies from one of peak supply to one of peak demand and has completely shifted the center of oil production from the Middle East to the western hemisphere. While oil prices will always be vulnerable to global instability, Manning foresees a far different geopolitical situation, where America has more leverage and independence in its foreign policy. For example, Asia’s booming demand for energy will require those nations (and China in particular) to share the burden of keeping shipping lanes secure. Manning recommends that the US embrace this revolution head on, working with all stakeholders to establish strong safety standards and best practices, and reforming institutions such as the International Energy Agency to reflect this fast-approaching new reality. *Robert A. Manning is a resident fellow at the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security.*

[Transportation Infrastructure: Moving America](#)

Markovich, Steven J. Council on Foreign Relations. October 14, 2014.

This backgrounder focuses on the status of the transportation infrastructure in the U.S. “Infrastructure is critical to economic growth, but the aging U.S. transportation system suffers from insufficient investment... U.S. transportation fell from fifth in the World Economic Forum's rankings in 2002 to twenty-fourth in 2011, passed by nations such as Spain, South Korea, and Oman. Making a U-turn will take some time since major infrastructure projects require several years to plan and execute... U.S. transportation infrastructure requires substantial capital investment because many of the highways and bridges built decades earlier are now reaching the end of their expected lifespan. For the last few decades, the nation has benefited from investments from the Eisenhower era through the 1980s. From the 1980s onward, transportation infrastructure spending as a share of U.S. GDP stagnated.” *Steven J. Markovich is a Contributing Editor at CFR.org.*

[Drones and Aerial Surveillance: Considerations for Legislators](#)

McNeal, Gregory. The Brookings Institution. November 2014 [PDF format, 34 pages]

“The looming prospect of expanded use of unmanned aerial vehicles, colloquially known as drones, has raised understandable concerns for lawmakers. Those concerns have led some to call for legislation mandating that nearly all uses of drones be prohibited unless the government has first obtained a warrant. Privacy advocates have mounted a lobbying campaign that has succeeded in convincing thirteen states to enact laws regulating the use of drones by

law enforcement, with eleven of those thirteen states requiring a warrant before the government may use a drone... The first drone-related legislation appeared in 2013 in Florida, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Texas. In 2014, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Utah, and Iowa also passed laws seeking to address the use of drones by law enforcement. As of the writing of this paper, the California legislature passed a drone-related bill that was vetoed by the governor, but the bill's sponsors have vowed to revisit the issue in the next legislative session. These legislative efforts have been aimed at restricting the government's use of drone technology, while largely allowing the government to conduct identical surveillance when not using drone technology." *Gregory McNeal is a professor at Pepperdine University School of Law and a contributor to Forbes. He is an expert in law and public policy with a specific focus on security, technology, and crime.*

[Beyond the Skills Gap: Making Education Work for Students, Employers, and Communities](#)

McCarthy, Mary Alice. New America Foundation. October 16, 2014 [PDF format, 38 pages]

"The persistence of large numbers of job openings have fueled claims that we are facing a skills gap – a mismatch between what American workers can do and what employers need. In survey after survey over the last decade, but particularly since the Great Recession, employers have complained of difficulty finding workers with the right mix of skills.¹⁸ In some surveys, employers cite a lack of soft skills like problem solving and teamwork; in others the focus is on job-specific technical skills. In all cases, the consensus among employers that graduates are not ready for work stands in stark contrast to the views of higher education leaders about their graduates. ..Rebuilding the American middle class will require new models for delivering postsecondary education that recognize the need for more targeted career education opportunities. Job seekers, employers, and whole communities are depending upon educational institutions like never before to help them develop the skills they need to thrive in today's fast-paced, competitive economy. Career education programs build strong linkages between educational institutions and the economy, but our education policies do too little to support them at the undergraduate level." *Mary Alice McCarthy is a Senior Policy Analyst in the Education Policy Program at New America Foundation where she examines the intersection between higher education and workforce development policy.*

[Beyond High School: Efforts to Improve Postsecondary Transitions Through Linked Learning](#)

Alliance for Excellent Education. October 9, 2014 [PDF format, 13 pages]

"More than 20,000 students in California participate in Linked Learning, an approach to high school redesign that transforms the traditional high school experience by integrating rigorous academics with real-world technical skills, workplace experiences, and wraparound support services for students. Evidence suggests that the Linked Learning approach is increasing the percentage of students who graduate from high school and enroll in postsecondary education with the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for the twenty-first century. This paper highlights how Linked Learning supports students' transition from high school to postsecondary education. The paper does so by describing the efforts and outcomes of one school district, two high schools in different school districts, and a regional program that are all implementing Linked Learning. In addition, the paper summarizes the postsecondary findings of two studies on Linked Learning. The paper concludes with recommendations for state and federal policy."

[Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach](#)

The Annie E. Casey Foundation. November 12, 2014 [PDF format, 20 pages]

"Nearly half of the nation's families with young children struggle to make ends meet. This policy report makes the case for creating opportunity for families by addressing the needs of parents and their children simultaneously. The

report describes a new approach to reducing poverty, which calls for connecting low-income families with early childhood education, job training and other tools to achieve financial stability and break the cycle of poverty — and recommends ways to help equip parents and children with what they need to thrive... In short, the 10 million low-income U.S. families with young children face considerable daily obstacles that can threaten the entire family's stability and lead to lifelong difficulties for their kids. For 25 years, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has documented how America's children are faring to spur action that lifts more kids out of poverty and opens doors to greater opportunities. Despite the efforts of many, however, the cycle of poverty persists."

ARTICLES

[Is New York the New Model for Startup Cities?](#)

Florida, Richard. *CityLab*. November 17, 2014, var. pages.

"New York's rise as a startup hub is a well-known. The Big Apple has gone from a place that had virtually no high-tech startups to one that hosts a sector attracting more than \$3 billion per year, less than the San Francisco Bay Area but ahead of Boston and all other U.S. tech hubs. But what are the key factors that have enabled its rise? And what kinds of lessons can New York provide for aspiring urban startup hubs? Those are the questions at the heart of a new report from the entrepreneurial non-profit Endeavor Global, "The Power of Entrepreneur Networks: How New York City Became the Role Model for Other Urban Tech Hubs." The report traces the evolution New York's startup hub ecosystem, compiling data from various industry and government sources. To do that, it maps the city's startup network of founders, venture capitalists, spinoff companies and support organizations based on interviews with more than 650 people involved in the city's startup scene." *Richard Florida is Co-founder and Editor at Large of CityLab.com and Senior Editor at The Atlantic. He is director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto and Global Research Professor at NYU.*

[How Green Riverfronts Transformed Pittsburgh](#)

Tierney, John. *The Atlantic*. November 20, 2014.

"Thirty years ago, Pittsburgh was an American urban nightmare: horrible air pollution, dirty rivers, fast-spreading decay, plummeting employment, and massive out-migration. Look it up. It's not a pretty story. But that was then... The City of Bridges is no longer an urban nightmare; in fact, it's an urban model. It's a city with clean air, beautiful riverfronts, an attractive downtown, a thriving arts scene, world-class universities, a vibrant tech sector, affordable living, and much more. In the days ahead we'll have more to say about the cultural arts and the tech sector there. Today's topic—the revival of this city's famous riverfronts—is a well-known story, but one worth reviewing, both in testament to how far Pittsburgh has come with its waterfronts and in tribute to its unrestrained ambitions for their future." *John Tierney is a contributing writer for The Atlantic and a former professor of American government at Boston College.*

[America's Most Internet-Connected Cities](#)

Maciag, Mike. *Governing*. November 13, 2014, var. pages.

"Despite the Internet's ever-growing social and economic relevance, a sizable number of Americans in select cities still aren't connected. For the first time, the Census Bureau collected data measuring Internet adoption in its most recent annual American Community Survey. The results depict disparities in connectivity and the current state of Internet connectivity at the local level, estimating numbers of households with access and how residents are

connecting. Nationwide, 79 percent of American households in 2013 had some form of Internet access --including mobile broadband and slower connections. Nearly all houses are hooked up to the Internet in some cities, but in other large jurisdictions, more than a third of households remain without access." *Mike Maciag is Data Editor at Governing magazine.*

[How universities can renew America's cities](#)

Katz, Bruce. *Fortune*. November 3, 2014, var. pages.

According to the author, by relocating graduate programs and research institutions into the core of cities, universities and colleges can spur metropolitan growth. "Over the past decade, businesses and research institutions that produce new discoveries and bring new products to market have, increasingly, moved into urban areas. This new geography of innovation, as I and my colleagues at the Brookings Institution call it, is coinciding with and benefitting from young workers shifting their residential preferences and revaluing city life. The implications of this trend have been well reported—from where jobs are located, to what kinds of housing are built, to how the benefits can be shared broadly within communities. Less reported is the impact that colleges and universities could have on America's cities, as they look to these areas to draw new ideas and talent." *Bruce Katz is vice president at the Brookings Institution and co-director of the Metropolitan Policy Program.*

[America After the Midterms: Blue Twilight and Red Dawn?](#)

Mead, Walter Russell. *The American Interest*. November 8, 2014, var. pages.

"Elections tell us less both less and more about the future than we think. Nothing, for examine, is more common in punditry than to overestimate the effect of a bad midterm on a president's political relevance. In 1946 pundits wrote off Harry Truman after the record setting Republican wave of that year, but almost all of Truman's historic foreign policy accomplishments came after that shellacking. Dwight Eisenhower didn't fade away after his midterm losses in 1954 and 1958; Bill Clinton came back from 1994 and so it goes. President Obama may or may not fade into premature lame duckhood, but history strongly suggests that the political obituaries we have been reading lately are at best premature. But if one election won't tell us who will win the next one, elections can be very informative about the state of the nation, and about where the country wants to go. This election in particular, in which Republicans did exceptionally well at the state level suggests that while the Democratic Party may well innovate and adjust, the core tenets of the blue model as a basic governing philosophy are in much deeper trouble than many of the operatives and thinkers of the Democratic Party are prepared to admit." *Walter Russell Mead is Editor-at-Large for The American Interest Online.*

[Introducing the 2014 Public Officials of the Year](#)

Governing. December 2014, var. pages.

"Innovation" is a word that gets tossed around a lot in public-sector circles these days. Government leaders at all levels right now are under constant pressure to innovate, innovate, innovate. But what exactly is innovation? Certainly it's about more than just saving money or developing the latest, most clever citizen app. True government innovation is about finding new solutions to our most persistent collective challenges. It's about taking risks and discovering new ways to make government more effective. Innovation is about leadership -- and it's the driving force for each of these nine Public Officials of the Year."

[A STEM Workforce Strategy for Nevada and Beyond](#)

Lee, Jessica A.; Muro, Mark. *The Avenue Blog*. November 13, 2014, var. pages.

“In 2012, still reeling from job losses in tourism and gaming and a housing market crash, the state of Nevada adopted its first ever economic diversification plan. Over the past two years, this strategy—which focuses on higher-tech growth industries—has begun to pay off, as evidenced most recently by the state’s successful bid for Tesla Motor’s gigafactory to manufacture lithium-ion batteries. However, the state faces an increasingly common problem. Growth in several of Nevada’s target sectors—especially IT, health and medical services, and advanced manufacturing—is already taxing the state’s supply of workers with at least some level of postsecondary training in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math).” *Jessica A. Lee is a Senior Policy Analyst and Associate Fellow, at the Metropolitan Policy Program of the Brookings Institution. Mark Muro is senior fellow and director of policy for the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings.*

[On Immigration, Obama Fulfills His Promise to Progressives](#)

Beinart, Peter. *The Atlantic*. November 20, 2014, var. pages.

“In his decision to act, by himself, on immigration, President Obama chose between two sides of his political self. It’s hard to remember now, but once upon a time, bipartisanship was near the heart of Obama’s political appeal. In the speech that introduced him to Americans, at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, Obama’s most famous line was neither a plea for universal healthcare nor a condemnation of the war in Iraq. It was a call for overcoming America’s political divide: “The pundits like to slice and dice our country into red states and blue states...[But] we are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America.” When Obama ran against Hillary Clinton, a key rationale for his candidacy was that he was not a combatant in the long-running Baby Boomer civil war over the 1960s. He was a liberal who conservatives didn’t hate. But, from the beginning, this side of Obama’s public persona sat uneasily alongside another. It wasn’t just that he promised both bipartisan reconciliation and progressive change. It’s that Obama understood American history well enough to know that progressive change only arrives through bitter, divisive, even ugly, struggle.” *Perter Beinart is a contributing editor at The Atlantic and National Journal, an associate professor of journalism and political science at the City University of New York, and a senior fellow at the New America Foundation.*

[How the U.S. Can Adapt to Climate Change](#)

Upton, John. *Scientific American*. November 18, 2014, var. pages.

“Climate change is being felt locally, through floods, heat waves and other meteorological maladies, but there’s little sense in leaving the mammoth task of climate adaptation to local communities to figure out for themselves. That’s why the Obama Administration convened a panel of local, state and tribal leaders last year to advise the federal government on how to guide and improve climate adaptation efforts and resiliency planning. On Monday, that panel presented a 46-page report containing more than 100 of suggestions to White House officials, ranging from a need for a compendium of adaptation case studies and best practices to changes in how the insurance industry works... Many of the panel’s suggestions focused on the need for improved data and information; a theme upon which the government had acted even before it started sending out the morning’s media alerts. The U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, aka the Climate Explorer, is a new online tool that can be used to assess coastal flooding risks, water shortfalls and other challenges associated with global warming.” *John Upton is part of Climate Central’s editorial team in New York. Climate Central is an independent organization of leading scientists and journalists researching and reporting the facts about climate and its impact on the American public.*

[7 Solutions to Climate Change Happening Now](#)

Biello, David. *Scientific American*. November 17, 2014, var. pages.

“Even though the U.S. is responsible for the largest share of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the country will not be able to take national legislative action on climate change anytime soon. Despite a president who avers that “those who are already feeling the effects of climate change don't have time to deny it — they're busy dealing with it,” the U.S. Congress seems content to let climate change languish as a priority. But, believe it or not, action on climate change is taking place in the U.S. “We don't have time for a meeting of the Flat Earth Society,” Pres. Barack Obama noted back in June 2013. So his administration has moved forward without Congress as a result, through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan and the new agreement to reduce pollution with China. Here are seven solutions to global warming that are advancing and gathering steam in the U.S.—and around the world.” *David Biello has been covering energy and the environment for nearly a decade, the last four years as an associate editor at Scientific American.*

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