



# précis

SPRING 2017



## in this issue

précis **interview:** Eric Heginbotham. 2

### briefings

MIT's experts in Asian Security. 6

Chemical attack in Syria. 11

MIT-Arab World Program. 14

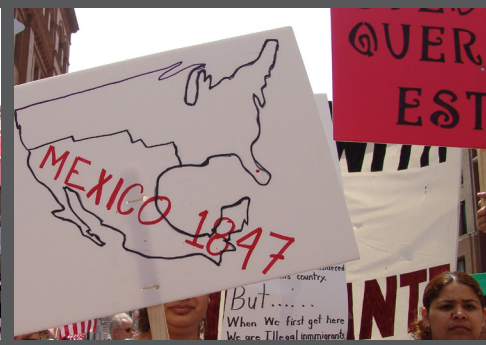
Brexit, Europe, & Trump. 17

faculty **feature:** Fight over foreigners. 20

student **feature:** Threat perception & immigration reform in the US. 25

cis **activities** 30

end **notes** 32



MIT CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



# précisinterview

## Eric Heginbotham



**Eric Heginbotham** PhD '04, a leading political-military analyst of East Asia, is a principal research scientist at CIS. Before joining the Center, he was a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, where he was the lead author of the recent book **China's Evolving Nuclear Deterrent** (2017) and **The US-China Military Scorecard** (2015).

### précis: What are the implications of Trump's election for US-China relations?

**EH:** It is too early to tell, but there is certainly potential for the relationship to be destabilized in fundamental ways. There has been extreme talk on the trade front—on the campaign trail, Trump called China's trade practices the "greatest theft in the history of the world." During the transition, Trump accepted a phone call from Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, during his confirmation hearing, said that the US should block China's access to the islands it has constructed from reclaimed land in the South China Sea.

All this suggests a willingness to discard some US historical positions. However, there is a clear pattern with regard to new US presidents and China: they tend to start off taking a tough line on Beijing, but revert to positions closer to those of their predecessors as the complexity of the China relationship becomes clear to them. Chinese leaders probably expect—or at least hope—that the Trump administration's policies will evolve quickly. They may also be reassured by Trump's decision to appoint James Mattis and HR McMaster to top positions in national security.

But these are clearly not "normal" times, and Trump's populism and lack of policy background have no parallels among recent presidents. Peter Navarro, the head of Trump's National Trade Council, tends to view trade relations in hyper-competitive terms, and he has singled out China for particular criticism. Navarro may confirm some of Trump's most extreme impulses in dealing with China.

All this said, I imagine there will be a high degree of path dependency in US foreign policy. Presidents can only deal with a certain number of simultaneous




---

Our Asian allies will first try to ensure that Trump remains committed to their defense. ...they understand that this will be a highly personalized presidency.

---

crises, and they often look to tamp down or even ignore problems in other areas. Therefore, we need to wait and see where the first major international crises of the Trump administration occur, and where the new administration might become heavily engaged first—it may not be in East Asia.

**précis: How will the US's allies in East Asia cope with the Trump administration?**

**EH:** During the campaign, Trump declared that we should not continue to underwrite our alliances to the extent that we have, and that one possible alternative might be for America's Asian allies to acquire nuclear weapons.

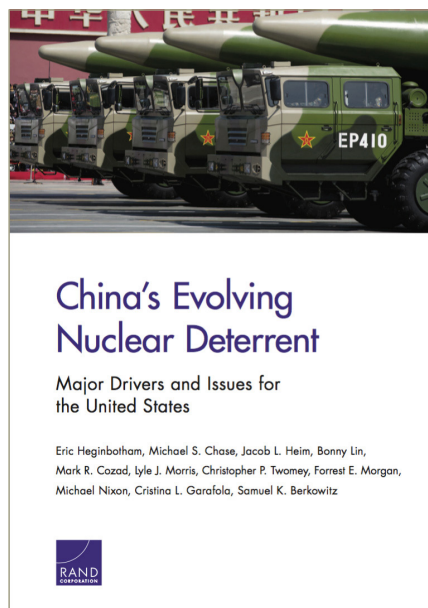
But, as we've seen, Secretary of Defense Mattis went to Asia and reassured our allies there that the US is still firmly committed to our alliances. He did not use any language suggesting that the US viewed those alliances as contingent upon dramatic change. While this seems to be a bit of a course correction, to put it mildly, we haven't heard anything on this from Trump himself.

Our Asian allies will first try to ensure that Trump remains committed to their defense. Given Trump's distrust of governing institutions, they understand that this will be a highly personalized presidency. And they will therefore try to establish personal rapport with Trump or others who have direct access to him. Japan's Prime Minister Abe Shinzo has already done this very effectively with his early visit to Washington and his golf outing with the president.

South Korea is a much greater concern. With South Korea's current leadership crisis, no direct connection can be created at the presidential level anytime soon. Korea's presidential election will be held in May. Progressive candidate Moon Jae-in is currently leading, and he is pushing a return to the "sunshine policy" of outreach to North Korea and China. Given that Trump has asked our allies to do more, rather than less, in the military realm to strengthen deterrence against potential aggressors, the two leaders might mix badly. Perceived belligerence on the part of Trump might encourage Moon or a similar Korean leader to distance him or herself further from the United States.

There are also questions about how US allies will reposition themselves economically. Trump's withdrawal from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) may encourage many in the region to migrate towards the Chinese-backed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) plan. TPP was one of the few clear political-economic success stories for the United States in Asia in recent years, and I fear the withdrawal from TPP already represents a major reversal for America's regional position.





Eric Heginbotham was the lead author of **China's Evolving Nuclear Deterrent** published by the Rand Corporation in 2017.

**précis:** Given that North Korea may soon acquire the nuclear capabilities that will allow it to strike the US, how would you recommend the new US administration handle the situation?

**EH:** For two decades, North Korean nuclear developments have presented US policy-makers with a set of famously bad policy options—the question being which is less bad than the alternatives. Despite years of sanctions, Pyongyang has made strikingly rapid gains in its nuclear and missile programs while simultaneously improving its economic position. It is inconceivable to me that North Korea would now negotiate away its strategic programs without being brought under extreme duress.

Ideally, this would come about through sanctions. The United States and others could tighten sanctions further, but China is the only country with sufficient leverage to bring North Korea around. Many China experts say that Beijing will never use its leverage because Beijing fears instability in North Korea, which could bring a flood of refugees to China. A complete regime collapse and reunification with the South could bring US forces to the Chinese border.

But I'm from the "never say never" camp. China has important interests working in the other direction, and we know that there's no love lost between the Chinese and North Koreans. Kim Jong-un has "cleaned house" internally, getting rid of senior officials who were close to China, and assassinating his older half brother, Kim Jong-nam, who was under Chinese protection at the time of his death.

North Korea has exacerbated China's security prospects by encouraging South Korea to host Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, more commonly referred to as THAAD. And it is developing a robust menu of nuclear options that could, in theory, be used against China. China has supported sanctions against North Korea in the UN Security Council. More importantly, it is now actually enforcing sanctions and has cut off imports of North Korean coal—one of Pyongyang's few major exports.

But China would have to do much more to bring North Korea to heel, and we don't know if it is (or will become) willing. Getting China to say "yes" to serious and sustained sanctions would require skillful US diplomacy. It's hard to imagine cooperation on the North Korea issue if the United States is involved in trade wars and other major disputes with China. The United States will have to pick its battles, and hopefully the Trump administration will think carefully before committing itself in one direction.

**précis:** You did your PhD in political science here at MIT. How did MIT prepare you, and what advice would you give to current students who want the option of working in policy?

**EH:** I feel incredibly lucky to have graduated from the program. It's unique in terms of having faculty who are at the top of the field in international relations, comparative politics, and security studies, and who are, at the same time, grounded in "policy realities. They are engaged in real-world issues and care about capabilities and other material realities.

Compared to when I was a student here, there seems to be a greater expectation that students will go on to academic jobs. However, MIT still seems to prepare students well for the opportunity to go into academia while also doing short-term stints in gov-




---

Japanese power and strategy is critical to understanding the US future in Asia. Japan is our most important ally in Asia.

---

ernment or policy work in think tanks. While I was at RAND, many academics spent their summers with us. I think it was a good experience for both parties.

Although I strongly recommend getting exposure to the policy world, timing is important. Policy work during summer breaks can be quite useful and does not necessarily disrupt an academic career. Shortly after graduating, I think the focus should be on one's academic career. The barriers to entry in academia are higher than those in the policy world. You can always go from the academy to a think tank or into government, but it's much harder to go in the other direction.

**précis: What made you decide to come to CIS, and how has your time here been so far?**

Coming to CIS offered a great opportunity to apply some of the technical knowledge I picked up at RAND to projects with larger scope. Returning to CIS was an opportunity to dig deeper than I could on a fiscal year schedule working on government-sponsored projects. It is also an opportunity to work within a program that brings together some of the top scholars on Asia—Japan, China, and India in particular—as well as on defense and strategic issues.

In many ways, I never really left MIT. I collaborated with former MIT teachers and classmates while at the Council on Foreign Relations and later RAND. Similarly, I now intend to remain engaged with the policy community and hope to bring former RAND colleagues to MIT for events and/or research projects. I think there is a lot of learning that can happen both ways.

**précis: What are you currently working on?**

**EH:** I have a three-part agenda that involves working on regional security dynamics, Japan's security options, and US military and grand strategy.

The three topics I am working on are inter-related. The academic debate on US grand strategy has largely revolved around Europe and the Middle East, and the lenses through which most of the participants view the world are taken from the European balance of power system. Asia is often treated as a lesser or exceptional case, even though a majority of the US military budget now goes to capabilities most relevant to Asia.

I would not necessarily argue (as some have done) that the logic of Asian international relations is fundamentally different from that of Europe, but the distribution of power most certainly is—as are the types of governing systems and the historical perspectives of the countries in question. While we might expect similar international outcomes under similar circumstances, the circumstances in Asia are so different that we should treat its prospects and implications independently—and, most likely, as the region that will shape the future international system.

Japanese power and strategy is critical to understanding the US future in Asia. Japan is our most important ally in Asia. It has gradually modernized its military forces, but improvements have not kept pace with those of China. Clearly, the United States now expects all of its allies to carry their weight militarily, and Japan will need not only to increase its defense budget but also overhaul the administration and strategy of its forces—hopefully without adversely affecting crisis stability. ■



# briefings

## Meet MIT's experts in Asian security

SHASS Communications



---

These are fraught times for scholars of security studies, perhaps even more so for those engaged with Asia. Just as the 20th century was proclaimed “the American century,” many observers today speak of the 21st century as “the Asian century.” Yet the Asian strategic landscape holds many potential dangers including nationalist rivalries, changes in the distribution of power, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

---

**MIT Asian security studies faculty** (left to right) M Taylor Fravel, Richard Samuels, and Vipin Narang train the next generation of scholars and security policy analysts; counsel national security officials in the US and abroad; and inform policy through publications and frequent contributions to public debates.

Photo: Jon Sachs/SHASS Communications

“It’s a moment when our ideas, training, and teaching seem more relevant than ever,” says Vipin Narang, the Mitsui Career Development Associate Professor of Political Science. “Given the uncertainties of the Trump administration’s foreign policy priorities, certain bedrock principles of American foreign policy that we thought were settled might not be, including a commitment to nuclear nonproliferation and US alliances.”

Narang, who specializes in South Asian security and nuclear security, is one of three principal faculty members with MIT’s Security Studies Program who focus on Asia. He works alongside Richard Samuels, the Ford International Professor of Political Science and director of the Center for International Studies, a specialist in Japanese national security; and M Taylor Fravel, associate professor of political science, who studies Chinese foreign and security policies.

Described broadly, the core mission of the trio “is to understand how the states in the region conceive their grand strategies and military postures,” says Samuels. In pursuit of this goal, the Asian security faculty train the next generation of scholars and security policy analysts; counsel national security officials in the United States and abroad; and inform policy, by publishing books and articles in scholarly and accessible journals and websites, frequently contributing to public debates on timely issues.

SHASS Communications had a conversation recently with Narang, Fravel, and Samuels about emerging security challenges in their domain, and opportunities for responding as scholars, public commentators, and teachers.

### **What hot spots should foreign policy makers, and the rest of us, be focused on?**

**Samuels:** There are three: China, China, and China. The balance of power in the region is shifting in China’s favor, and its rise and the measures it takes to provide for its security fashion the kinds of responses Japan and India—and the United States—make.

**Narang:** You can’t afford a trade war or a shooting war with China.

**Fravel:** The kind of great power competition you saw playing out in Europe in the 20th century is now starting to happen in Asia. So if you’re worried about the potentially devastating effects such competition can have, when the world’s greatest powers contend with each other and it gets violent, it’s much more likely to happen in Asia today than in other parts of the world.

**Narang:** It’s not just academic. There are active and ongoing conflicts with deep historical roots between China and Japan, South Korea and China and Japan, India and Pakistan, and you have an alley of nuclear weapons from Pakistan out to North Korea, which may expand.

**Samuels:** And a Japan and South Korea that could turn in that direction quite quickly.

### **What specific issues are of concern to you in your respective regions?**

**Fravel:** There are territorial conflicts in the South China and East China seas that have been escalating to high levels of tension. These conflicts variously involve China and

# briefings



Current conflicts in the East China Sea involve an ongoing dispute between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, which are claimed by both countries. “Territorial conflicts in the South China and East China seas have been escalating to high levels of tension,” says M Taylor Fravel. “This matters to the United States because these conflicts involve US allies, such as Japan or the Philippines, whom the United States is obligated to defend.”

Japan in the East China Sea and Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan in the South China Sea. Each time one nation takes action to enhance its control of disputed land or adjacent waters, another state responds in a similar way that creates a vicious cycle. This matters to the United States because these conflicts involve U.S. allies, such as Japan or the Philippines, whom the United States is obligated to defend.

**Samuels:** Despite US security guarantees, the Japanese feel insecure and vulnerable. They have highly capable naval and air forces, but their military doctrine has required them to commit to only the minimum use of force. That commitment is being strained by China’s rise and North Korean provocations, which is forcing a rethinking of Japan’s military posture. Prime Minister Abe visited the newly elected President Trump twice seeking reassurance on US security commitments.

**Narang:** South Asia is an unfortunate test bed for how new nuclear powers behave. The conflict between India and Pakistan is heating up right now, just as both are expanding their nuclear weapons arsenals. The big change involves attacks across what both countries define as the Line of Control, a fenced off position in Kashmir which the other side’s forces rarely cross. But both sides have attacked across this line in recent months, in one case burning over a dozen Indian soldiers alive, another involving beheadings and holding soldiers’ families hostage. India’s government has begun removing the restraints on retaliation, publicly crossing the Line of Control in response for the first time in over a decade. If the Pakistani attacks increase in intensity, India may not restrict its retaliation to the Line of Control. The US needs to understand these tinderboxes, and figure out how to craft incentives for Pakistan to stop supporting militancy as a strategic asset of the state and how to address growing nuclear risks between the two nations.

**Samuels:** And North Korea never goes away. Like a villain from central casting, it always seems poised to do the wrong thing—for its ally in Beijing, its neighbors in South Korea and Japan, and most of all, for itself.

**Narang:** China fears a collapse of North Korea and the threat of refugees more than it fears its nuclear weapons. This problem can’t be solved unless the US and China agree on a playbook.

## How do you see your role in helping keep the peace, or at least bringing understanding to issues in a way that doesn’t contribute to the volatility?

**Fravel:** I participate in several regular dialogues with US and Chinese experts, which try to develop recommendations for our respective governments. I also speak regularly with Western media to help them understand the stakes and dynamics in these disputes and am active on Twitter. Beyond my public engagement, I’m working on a project that explores ways to defuse tensions in the region’s territorial and maritime boundary disputes. For instance, the South China Sea is the perhaps most overfished fishery in the world, and fisheries competition elevates the importance of maritime claims. A joint fishing or environmental protection agreement among the claimants





could lower the importance of claims to the islands and adjacent waters and thereby decrease tensions and the potential for conflict. I'm also finishing a book tracing the evolution of China's military strategy since 1949, from being defensively oriented to acquiring increasingly potent offensive capability. Spinoffs of this research might offer policymakers a framework for assessing how China's military strategy may change in the future.

**Narang:** I have regularly written on the India's nuclear doctrine in its leading English language newspapers. I recently published a longer-form piece on how surgical strikes across the Line of Control could lead to a larger conventional war between India and Pakistan. Also, with my colleagues, I participate in government-sponsored exercises and dialogues intended to remind their national security establishments what's at stake in these conflicts. As subject matter experts, we provide specific assessments and reality checks in the scenarios, and they get to see the results of their decisions and just how quickly things can spiral out of control.

**Samuels:** We are all engaged in public discourse and are committed to trying to improve it. For instance, I have worked with the Aspen Institute to connect members of Congress with their Japanese and Korean counterparts. My colleagues and I have briefed the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the MIT Center for International Studies runs an annual program, Seminar XXI, for mid-career military, intelligence and NGO officials, which draws heavily on SSP [Security Studies Program] faculty and has had enormous impact. There is a competition among Pentagon employees and service branches for joining the seminar—usually at the level equivalent to Lt Colonel in the Army. Many become flag officers, and a disproportionate number have become chiefs of staff. I spend as much time talking to Japanese media and government officials as I do to the American media and officials. When they seek me out, it's for help to interpret US policy, and when I seek them out it's to understand Japan's. Two years ago, the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave us a \$5 million gift to endowment to support our research on Japanese politics and diplomacy. This is helping fund our graduate students, a principal research scientist who focuses on the Asian military balance, and my own project on the history of the Japanese intelligence community.

### What part does teaching play in your mission?

**Narang:** Our graduate students are grounded in political science as a discipline, and engaged with contemporary issues and problems. MIT is one of the few places where young scholars are actively encouraged to engage with the policy community.

**Fravel:** This is distinctively MIT. Many political science departments shun direct engagement with policy makers or downplay applied research. And there's not another academic department or research center at a major research university that has in one place expertise on security issues involving China, Japan, and India—the major powers in the region. So if you're interested in any one of these countries, or their interactions with each other and the rest of the world, MIT is an attractive place to be a graduate student.



# briefings

---

Our role as policy-engaged academics is to frame debates, provide information based on areas of expertise and insights to help avoid mistakes.

---

**Samuels:** We take our role of being public intellectuals very seriously, so this means that all of us, including graduate students, publish regularly in accessible journals, such as *Foreign Affairs*, *The National Interest*, and policy-relevant blogs, in addition to producing more scholarly work. Our current graduate students, almost all of whom are women, are publishing on topics from Chinese nuclear, space, and cyber strategies, to US-Japan alliance politics. And one graduate of our program, Eric Heginbotham, has returned to MIT from the RAND Corporation, and is publishing influential articles on Chinese and Japanese military and intelligence issues.

## **Do you have any final thoughts about your work at the start of this new political era in the US?**

**Narang:** Early in presidencies is when foreign actors and adversaries tend to test administrations to see how they will react. Our role as policy-engaged academics is to frame debates, provide information based on areas of expertise and insights to help avoid mistakes. That's what I hope we can do.

**Fravel:** The greatest challenge for all of us is uncertainty, and what might happen if a crisis or incident occurs in the region that engages US interests and demands a response. The Asia policy (and broader foreign policies) of the Trump administration remain uncertain and could go in several different directions. At the same time, China will be selecting a new Politburo Standing Committee this fall. South Korea will soon have a new president. It's more important than ever to be engaged publicly on the security issues in Asia, to help the public understand the issues at stake for states in the region and for the United States.

**Samuels:** We're here to help. ■

# briefings

## Jeanne Guillemin on the recent chemical attack in Syria

Michelle Nhuch/CIS



**Jeanne Guillemin**, a medical anthropologist and a senior fellow in the MIT Security Studies Program, recently answered a few questions on the attack. Guillemin is an authority on biological weapons and has published multiple books on the topic.

---

On April 4, a suspected nerve gas attack killed at least 80 in Khan Sheikhun, in Syria's Idlib Province. Nikki Haley, the US Ambassador to the United Nations and the current UN Security Council president, stated shortly after the incident that members "are hoping to get as much information" as they can about the event.

---

### What do we now know about the attack?

**JG:** The process of investigation will be difficult, given the ongoing war and secrecy on the part of Syria and others. It seems certain that the regime of Syria's President al-Assad or some element thereof not only violated treaty obligations regarding chemical weapons but could be complicit in a major war crime.

On a technical level, the chemical agent that caused more than 80 deaths and many injuries has been identified by the United Kingdom as sarin, which accords with medical records. The timing of the attack was April 4 at just before 7 AM local time, optimal for dispersal. Much less or nothing is reliably known regarding the munition and its source.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the operational arm of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in The Hague, is the lead agency for investigating the nerve gas attack. The OPCW can count on assistance from the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), created by the Security Council with all permanent members in agreement. OPCW investigations are kept secret until the final reports are released, which can take months, and their mandate does not extend to identifying perpetrators. The mandate of the JIM is broader and does extend to estimating perpetrators, which makes its eventual report important.

# briefings

---

The broader responsibility for what has happened in Syria and for the extreme vulnerability of its civilian population throughout the war lies with the international community.

---

## **Based on your expertise on the historical use of chemical weapons, why would Assad strike now? Is he likely to strike again?**

**JG:** The use of chemical weapons in war, starting in April 1915 with the German release of chlorine gas on Allied trenches at Ypres, has invariably been to break an impasse by targeting a defenseless enemy, those lacking protection such as gas masks or antidotes. For Syria, frustration with rebel holdouts in Idlib Province may have provoked the attack; one wonders, though, exactly what authorities reasoned that killing civilians with nerve gas could be carried out without controversy—and without jeopardizing the new potential for cooperation with the Trump administration.

The political furor created by the social media images of the victims make it unlikely that President al-Assad, if he ordered or permitted the attacks, would venture any more. For years, though, Syria has been getting a pass from the international community regarding its less-than-complete compliance with the CWC, to which it acceded in October 2013. In 2014, the belief that Syria's declaration of its chemical weapons contained gaps and inconsistencies prompted the Director-General of the OPCW to send a special team of technical investigators on 18 trips to Syria to do what proved impossible: to verify that Syria's declaration was in accordance with the CWC. The UN Security Council was fully advised of OPCW reports, but no action was taken to bring Syria in line.

Currently the Russian government is taking al-Assad's protestations of innocence at face value. At the same time, though, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has spoken strongly in favor of UN investigations and asserted that Syria will be forthcoming about its military activities in the region at the time of the April 4 sarin attack. If evidence points clearly to al-Assad's forces, which the US government has already publicly blamed, Putin will have to address the difficult problem of regime change in Syria—or risk his own legitimacy by supporting a Syrian president many feel is at best a loose cannon and at worst the murderer of his own people.

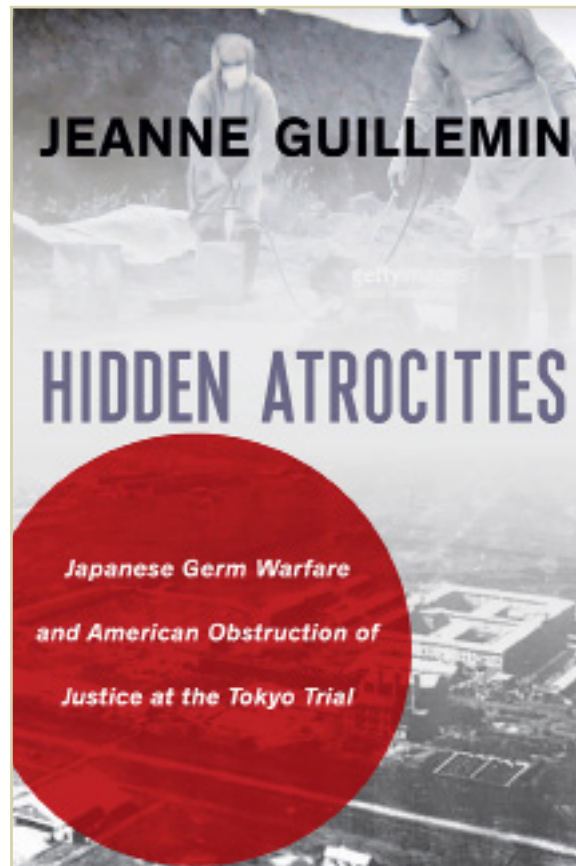
## **What are psychological and physical effects of this kind of attack, and how does one determine who was responsible?**

**JG:** Follow-up information from the 1988 chemical attack in Halabja, Iraq, and the 2013 chemical attack in Ghouta, Syria, illustrates the terrifying impact of aerial chemical attacks on defenseless populations already under siege.

In Halabja, the attacks with blistering mustard and with sarin, combined with conventional bombings, were part of Saddam Hussein's punitive objective to eliminate the Kurds from Iraq.

The unusual strikes on Ghouta and Khan Sheikhun seem more intended to terrify Syrian civilians, that is, to frighten survivors and witnesses (even those watching on the internet) into submission to the enemy aggressor, whose power to rapidly asphyxiate hundreds must seem mythic, especially when done with impunity, without legal repercussions.

Over time, the criminal responsibility for the April 4 sarin attack might be put on Syrian officials, who may well be prosecuted at the International Criminal Court (ICC). The court's statute contains language banning the use of poisons taken directly from the Geneva Protocol; the prosecution of murderous attacks on defenseless populations is, of course, central to the ICC mission, regardless of means. The broader responsibility for what has happened in Syria and for the extreme vulnerability of its civilian population throughout the war lies with the international community. This week, one hears the Chinese delegate to the United Nations calling for a political solution, rather than a military showdown between the United States and Russia. After this latest barbarism, is it too much to ask for international safe zones and a cease fire? ■



Jeanne Guillemin's **Hidden Atrocities: Japanese Germ Warfare and American Obstruction of Justice at the Tokyo Trial** will be published by Columbia University Press in September.

# briefings

## Building connections between the Institute and countries in the Arab world

Caroline Knox/MISTI



---

Launched in 2014, the MIT-Arab World Program—a part of MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI)—was created in an effort to strengthen ties between MIT and countries of the Arab World. Through student projects and faculty collaborations, the program offers opportunities for immersive and meaningful interaction in the region with the aim to empower participants to be bridges between MIT, the United States and the Arab World.

---

In 2016, **The MIT-Arab World Program** matched 19 MIT students with teaching and internship placements in Jordan, home of the archaeological city of Petra.

Photo: Kobey Mortenson/Flickr

---

MIT-Arab World  
strives to help its  
students develop  
intercultural  
skills through  
hands-on  
experience work-  
ing alongside  
international  
colleagues.

---

“At this pivotal time in the Middle East, the MIT-Arab World Program seeks to build critical scientific and cultural connections between MIT and the Arabic-speaking world,” says Philip Khoury, MIT Associate Provost, Ford International Professor of History, and the MIT-Arab World faculty director. Like his fellow MISTI faculty directors, Khoury sets the strategic path for the program in collaboration with the program’s managing director.

### Student activities

MIT-Arab World’s main activity is a 12-week student internship program for MIT undergrads and graduate students looking to experience the workplace in companies and universities in the Arab World. Over the past two years, 14 MIT students have been matched with professional internships in Jordan and Morocco. Building on their course of study, students worked with small startups, non-governmental organizations, and global companies rooted in the Arab World including Turath, Petra Engineering, Curlstone, Tamatem, OCP, and the University Hassan II of Casablanca.

Like all MISTI internship programs, MIT-Arab World strives to help its students develop intercultural skills through hands-on experience working alongside international colleagues. “I was relieved to discover that I could indeed cross the boundaries of language and culture to do good work with others,” shares MIT-Arab World intern Elisa Young, a senior in electrical engineering and computer science. At Jordanian host companies Curl Stone Entertainment, an animation studio that creates stories and heroes for young audiences in the Arab-speaking world, and Tatamen, a mobile gaming startup that produces games and apps for the MENA region, Young was immersed in distinctively Middle Eastern animation and gaming. “I felt like the Middle East gets little media and entertainment coverage that is not related to conflicts in the region,” Young says. “I wanted to more deeply understand their culture and learn about the reality of the people by living in their midst. During her time in Amman, Young not only learned to navigate a new culture and society in everyday life, but she also learned to incorporate cultural aspects—such as specific fonts, colors, and gameplay elements better suited to tastes in the region—in her work.

In addition to the internship program, MIT-Arab World offers teaching opportunities to MIT students through MISTI’s Global Teaching Labs (GTL) program. For 3-4 weeks over MIT’s Independent Activities Period in January, students teach STEM and entrepreneurship courses to high school students in Arab states. In 2016, the first cohort of 11 students traveled to Jordan, where they broke into three teams to teach STEM, entrepreneurship, and 3-D printing at King’s Academy in Madaba, Jubilee School in Amman, and the 3Dmena Maker Space in Amman. “I was teaching but I was also learning at the same time,” explains Evan Denmark, a senior in electrical engineering and computer science who taught physics to a 9th grade class at King’s Academy. “I had to learn how to engage my students and better understand how they learned most effectively.”

In January, another 17 students taught high school students and Syrian refugees in Jordan and Morocco through GTL. Excited for a chance to return to the region, Denmark traveled to Jordan this with this group to film peer MIT students teaching in the field.

---

## The MISTI Global Seed Funds supports early-stage collaborations between MIT researchers and their counterparts around the globe.

---

“Being a photographer and videographer, I wanted to make my own documentary about this region and MIT’s educational initiatives here,” he says. “Because of my own GTL experience, I had the confidence to explore my opportunities; to take my own project and technical skills I learned at MIT and then bring them to places across the world.”

As part of the MISTI program, MIT-Arab World interns and GTL students are required to participate in a series of cultural training modules covering topics such as cross-cultural communication, current events, technology, and innovation in the host country. These sessions, combined with MIT coursework, ensure that students have a rich experience that broadens their academic, professional, and personal horizons and prepares them to be global leaders in their field of study.

### Faculty funds

The MISTI Global Seed Funds (GSF), which support early-stage collaborations between MIT researchers and their counterparts around the globe, has supported faculty projects in the Arab world since 2014. Encouraged to include MIT students in their projects, MIT faculty grantees use the funds to meet and work with their international peers with the aim of developing and launching joint research projects.

The award allows the project to move forward as it gives the opportunity for the members of the two teams to meet and work together hand-by-hand and get to exchange their expertise,” explains MIT-Egypt Seed Fund grantee and MIT Professor Vladamir Bulović, associate dean for innovation in the MIT School of Engineering, MacVicar Fellow, and the Fariborz Maseeh (1990) Chair in Emerging Technology. Working in collaboration with Nageh Allam, assistant professor at the American University in Cairo, Bulović set out to construct high performance, affordable, and air-stable inorganic photoelectrochemical devices to enable long-term, scalable solar energy conversion and storage. “Our two teams shared their ideas about their work experience, and how they can mix their fabrication techniques in one single device. This cooperation revealed the capability to mix both techniques to build one single device based on the experience of the two teams to enhance the performance of the solar cell devices.”

Over the past three years, faculty from the Arab world and MIT faculty have received eight grants to work in Egypt and Jordan. Project topics include design modifications to refugee camps; water and energy; and health. The MISTI GSF 2016-2017 cycle has ended, but the 2017-18 call for proposals will launch this May.

### MIT-Arab world

This past year 24 students and five faculty collaborated closely with their counterparts through the MIT-Arab World Program. Going forward, the program’s leaders plan to develop more opportunities for MIT students to engage with the region, offer more faculty funds for collaboration in the region as a whole, promote the study of Arabic and strengthen the region-specific educational training.

MISTI is a part of the Center for International Studies, a program at the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (SHASS). ■



# briefings

## CIS Starr Forum: Brexit, Europe, & Trump

Philip Martin/CIS



**Jack Straw**, a former British foreign secretary, outlined the differences and similarities between the contemporary political climates in the US and the UK, and speculated on what these developments might entail for the prospects of a unified Europe.

---

What do the recent tides of populist sentiment in the UK and the US—culminating in the exit of Britain from the European Union and the election of Donald Trump to the US Presidency—imply for Europe’s political future? How did these two great powers arrive at this political moment?

---

On Thursday, April 6, John Whitaker “Jack” Straw, a member of parliament for Blackburn from 1979 to 2015 and the former home secretary and foreign secretary in the UK’s Labour government, offered a wide-ranging perspective on these questions. Straw outlined the differences and similarities between the contemporary political climates in the US and the UK, and speculated on what these developments might entail for the prospects of a unified Europe.

### The origins of Brexit

Straw began by arguing that one cannot understand the choice of the UK to leave the European Union in 2016 without appreciating the history of Britain’s position vis-a-vis European integration in the 20th century. The idea of “shared sovereignty” was highly contested in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, Straw reminded the audience, and many feared that UK membership in a unified Europe would effectively mean “the end of Britain as an independent state.” Straw admitted that he himself had initially opposed the European common market in the 1970s out of the fear that it could lead to an unwieldy political “superstructure”. This pronounced fear of a loss of British sovereignty persisted, and ultimately culminated in the 2016 referendum result.

Straw also noted the important changes in domestic sentiments within the UK over time, notably the positions of its smaller nations such as Scotland and Northern Ireland. While these nations were strongly “Euro-skeptical” in the 1980s when the UK voted to join the EU, they were among the staunchest supporters for “Remain” in 2016.

# briefings

---

The UK and US differ deeply in their domestic democratic institutions, particularly concerning the ability of politicians to influence redistricting decisions and the role of corporate financing in political campaigns.

---

## Brexit and Trump: similarities and differences

Although the Brexit referendum and US election differed in important ways, Straw noted a number of similarities between them. First, both the “Leave” and Trump campaigns often appealed to the “heart” of voters rather than their “head,” relying on emotional sentiments designed to inspire strong reactions of fear and anger. These scare tactics often relied on dubious facts, such as the rumour purveyed by the “Leave” campaign that Turkey was soon to join the EU, as well as misleading figures about the financial savings to Britain of leaving the EU. Added to this cauldron of fear was the perception, reinforced by the “Leave” campaign, that Europe had lost control of its borders and that the UK would soon be overrun by “the other.”

Straw argued that these tactics—which draw parallels to Trump campaign themes—left the “Stay” campaign in the difficult situation of continually reacting to the emotional appeals of their opponents. Moreover, unlike in a regular election among political parties, voters in the Brexit referendum often had little information to anchor their prior opinions, making rumours and exaggerated claims an especially potent tool of persuasion.

Straw also noted similarities in the voting bases for “Leave” and Trump. Both drew their strongest support in rural areas, and both skewed towards older voters. UK voters with lower incomes were more likely to vote Leave, although wealthier business owners who felt alienated by the country’s metropolitan elite and the unchecked expansion of European political integration also supported the Leave campaign. Straw emphasized that it was above all the sense of growing voter marginalization from the centers of political power, a fear shared Trump campaign supporters, that inspired the strongest motivation for Leave voters.

However, Straw noted important differences between domestic politics of the UK and the US as well. First, the Brexit referendum was not a regular political election but a one-off decision that would permanently alter the country’s relationship to Europe. Trump’s electoral victory, meanwhile, falls within the “normal” constitutional order of the US and thus is confined by institutional checks-and-balances. Second, the Leave campaign garnered a clear majority of the popular vote, whereas Trump did not. Finally, Straw noted, the UK and US differ deeply in their domestic democratic institutions, particularly concerning the ability of politicians to influence redistricting decisions and the role of corporate financing in political campaigns.

## Effects on the wider world?

Straw finally considered the impacts of Brexit and Trump for other states in Europe. Among the states most likely to be impacted is Germany. Germany, Straw observed, will now assume an unwanted position of dominance within the EU, while simultaneously losing an ideological ally on the European Council. This shift may inspire greater dissatisfaction on the part of other EU member-states, further straining European integration.



Moreover, the European economic market is likely to experience even greater stress in its effort to juggle its diverse component economies within a single monetary union. Europe's supranational political institutions, Straw argued, are poorly positioned to handle these challenges in a transparent and democratic fashion. The resulting state of uncertainty in Europe could open further avenues for influence and manipulation by other powers such as Russia and the United States.

However, Straw also stressed the resiliency and adaptability of both the UK and Europe. The dire predictions of economic collapse after Brexit have not yet materialized, and geographic realities ensure that Europe will continue to be an important trading partner with the UK for the foreseeable future. Britain's intelligence and security capabilities remain unparalleled on the continent, which will ensure the continued influence of the UK in other domains. Finally, the UK and Europe remain ideologically aligned on major foreign issues such as climate change and the Middle East. Thus, the UK is likely to continue to engage extensively with Europe despite the (disappointing for Straw) results of Brexit. ■

---

In the Q-and-A from the audience, Straw addressed several additional foreign policy questions raised by Brexit and Trump. These included the resiliency of the US-UK alliance, the role of China in the new Europe, the rise of information manipulation and misinformation in politics, and the US-Russia relationship in the age of Trump.

---



# facultyfeature

## Fight over foreigners: visas & immigration in the Trump era

Justin Steil



---

Currently there are more than 40 million foreign born residents of the United States, or comprising roughly 13% of the US population. That share is just less than the 15% of the US population that was foreign born a century ago, in 1910. When you add in the second generation, roughly one out of every four US residents today was either born abroad or is the child of a parent born abroad.

---



**Justin Stell** assistant professor of law and urban planning at MIT moderated the **CIS Starr Forum: The Fight Over Foreigners: Visas & Immigration in the Trump Era**. The talk was held on MIT campus on February 28, 2017.

Of the 40 million foreign-born residents of the US, it is estimated that roughly 11 million are undocumented. Nearly two-thirds of the undocumented have lived in the US for more than a decade and almost half are the parents of children under 18. At least 9 million people are estimated to live in mixed status families, with at least one family member who is undocumented and one who is a citizen.

Like the United States, MIT gains strength from being a global institution. More than 40% of our faculty, 40% of our graduate students, and 10% of our undergraduates have come here from other countries. Faculty, students, post-docs and staff from 134 other nations are part of MIT.

Since taking office, the Trump administration has passed three executive orders and issued two Department of Homeland Security memos directly related to immigration.

On January 25, the White House released the first two immigration related executive orders:

The first, *Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements*, ordered the construction of a physical wall on the southern border, expanded the number of immigrants arrested who will be held in detention, and ordered the hiring of 5,000 additional border patrol agents, among other things.

The second, *Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States*, expands the categories of removable aliens, orders the hiring of 10,000 more immigration officers, encourages local law enforcement to sign agreements to enforce federal immigration laws, reinstates the Secure Communities program, seeks to punish sanctuary cities, and orders Immigration and Customs Enforcement to publicize information about crimes committed by immigrants.

On January 27, the White House released another executive order, *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*, ordering the suspension for 120 days of the US Refugee Admissions Program and the suspension for 90 days of entry into the United States of persons from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and Libya. It also proclaimed that the entry of nationals of Syria as refugees is detrimental to the interests of the United States and suspended those entries indefinitely, and capped the number of refugees admitted through the US Refugee Program at 50,000. Many provisions of this executive order, including the seven country migration ban and the refugee ban have been enjoined by federal courts and are not being enforced.

The Department of Homeland Security also released two memoranda implementing the executive orders.

The first, *Enforcement of the Immigration Laws to Serve the National Interest*, instructed immigration agents to prioritize enforcement against a broad number of categories, including those who in the judgment of the officer have committed acts that constitute a chargeable criminal offense even without having been charged or convicted and those who in the judgment of an immigration officer, otherwise pose a risk to public safety or national security. The order gives agents broad discretion, and re-



**The Starr Forum event** included the following panelists: (l-r) Baher Azmy, legal director of the Center for Constitutional Rights; Laura Rótolo, lawyer and advocate at the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts; and Jia Lynn Yang, deputy national security editor at the *Washington Post*.

moves the exceptions that had been in place.

The second, *Implementing the President's Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvement Policies*, dealt with the wall, expanded expedited removal, and expanded immigrant detention.

That is a quick overview of the recent policies, which seem directed at expanding dramatically the deportation of unauthorized immigrants, reducing migration of Muslim immigrants, reducing immigration to the US overall, and associating immigrants with crime and threats to national security.

This is not the first time that we have seen anti-immigrant sentiments surge in the US. Despite the fact that most US residents are descended from either voluntary or involuntary migrants, all the way back to Benjamin Franklin there has been skepticism about the effects of migration. Franklin, for instance said "Why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a Colony of Aliens, who will shortly be so numerous as to Germanize us instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our Language or Customs, any more than they can acquire our Complexion." And in 1924, Congress enacted immigration quotas explicitly designed to return the US to the racial and cultural composition it had in 1890, to "maintain the racial preponderance of the basic strain of our people" and "keep[...] American stock up to the highest standard—that is, the people who were born here" by excluding immigrants from Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. This tension between the identity of the US as a nation of immigrants and a gatekeeping nation is not new, but is again in stark relief and we look forward to hearing the insights of our three guests about where these policies are coming from, where they are likely headed, and how lawyers and organizations are responding.

Our guest speakers are:

**Baher Azmy**, the legal director of the Center for Constitutional Rights. He directs CCR's litigation and advocacy around issues related to the promotion of civil and human rights. At CCR, he has litigated cases related to discriminatory policing practices such as the NYPD's stop and frisk policy, government surveillance, the rights of Guantanamo detainees, and accountability for victims of torture.

**Laura Rótolo**, a lawyer and advocate at the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts. She focuses on immigrant rights, freedom of information and outreach to the Latino community. She authored the ACLU report *Detention and Deportation in the Age of ICE*, and was part of the legal team that challenged the government's actions in one of the largest immigration raids in history in New Bedford.

**Jia Lynn Yang**, the deputy national security editor at the *Washington Post*. She worked from Hong Kong on the Edward Snowden story after he was identified as the leaker of NSA documents to *The Post* and *The Guardian* and worked as an editor with the *Post's* Wonkblog before becoming deputy national security editor.

**Justin Steil:** Could you tell us what one or two policy changes you are most concerned about and what your strategies are for addressing them?

**Baher Azmy:** Thanks for having me in this important conversation. For me, the most concerning policy changes are the ban on Muslims and the ramping up of deportations. I'd like to focus on why these policies seem so menacing to me, what the

---

The social science research is very clear that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than the native born.

---

underlying motivation is, and why it feels different as compared to immigration and domestic policy in the past 50 years.

I call it the racialization of immigration policy first and then the attempted consolidation of power. The Obama administration undertook a near record number of deportations. And the George W Bush administration wasn't far behind. The Obama administration was prioritizing the removal of criminal aliens, which wasn't always the reality. And then the Bush administration created a narrative around economic scarcity and kind of rule of law. Those certainly have racialized elements to them. But what's really stark about the Trump policy, with respect to controlling the border and the Muslim ban, is how overtly racialized the narrative has been. For example, the Southern threat requires a wall and the full militarization of the border, because immigrants are depicted as a menace and dangerous. The overwhelming majority of these immigrants are hardworking members of the community. Unfortunately, there's this deep sort of inculcation of terror, and threat, of migrants. It's striking not least because there's no evidence to support any of this. Criminality associated with immigrants is lower than crime committed by residents and citizens, lawful residents and citizens. As a result of that kind of narrative, the means of enforcement is amped up and justified, such as the use of militarized police forces to storm places of employment or homes, to build a border wall, to treat this as a national security threat. In contrast, previous administrations treated this as a more discrete problem.

Similarly, with the Muslim ban, this is cast in terms of terrorism and a unique terrorist threat, again, even lacking any evidence that there's an incidence of terrorism, domestic terrorism coming from these countries, let alone by lawful permanent residents, like student-visa holders, and those who have deep connections to the United States. It's further emboldened by the Islamophobic ecosystem that Trump has brought to the White House. The Trump administration has the ears of notorious Islamophobes, like Frank Gaffney and Steve Emerson, whose worldview is one that does not treat Islam as a religion like any others but as an existential, political, ideological threat, that has to be met through military means, and that doesn't distinguish one Muslim from another. And there's, of course, all of this rhetoric, about Sharia law and the Muslim Brotherhood, that are depicted as deep existential threats to our Nation's purity.

**Justin Steil:** One of the consistent themes in the administration's representations of its immigration policies has been the representation of immigrants as posing a threat to national security. The social science research is very clear that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than the native born. Research has also established that white supremacist, right-wing, and Christian fundamentalist terrorism is as or more common in the US than terrorism inspired by Islamic religious fanaticism, but this narrative about the criminality and threat of the foreign born is one that has been brought up again and again through US history. What's the role of the press in addressing these misrepresentations?

**Jia Lynn:** My role is to edit stories and I'm always trying to offer context. For example, on every story we have on the seven Muslim-majority nations, we try to have language about how this ban does not address Saudi Arabia, for instance, which actually did send 9/11 hijackers to the US! But it's hard, in this environment, because Trump is a constant firehose of disinformation, at this point. So again, it comes down to giving people the right context for stories, just understanding the history of this too, which I try to do with my work. For instance, the Kansas attack. I don't know if any of you have followed this but a legal Indian-born visa holder was shot and killed at a bar by



Pictured above is the poster from the **CIS Starr Forum: Fight Over Foreigners**. All Starr Forums are available on the Center's YouTube channel.

someone with clear racial animosity. It's an open question regarding how much coverage that act would have received if the assailant were Muslim. News organizations have to be incredibly vigilant about thinking about that. We also need to make sure we're covering what the Trump administration's going to do about white supremacist extremist groups. They are considered domestic terrorists. The FBI is technically supposed to be overseeing them as well, making sure that we are keeping tabs on that.

Still, it's been really gratifying to see people subscribing and supporting the press but it's obviously very difficult, when the president uses Twitter to speak directly and offer bad information. Everyone's choosing what facts they want to hear. That's one thing I do worry about.

**Justin Steil:** A group that has been on the forefront of the immigrants' rights struggle and who are scholars and leaders here at MIT and at universities all over the nation are the Dreamers. The president has sent different messages on his approach to these young people. Could you share any insights you have on what may happen with regard to DACA recipients?

**Laura Rótole:** DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. It was an executive order issued by the Obama administration after Congress failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform. It basically allowed people who came here as children and who didn't have a criminal record, who fit certain categories and requirements to get a temporary reprieve from deportation. It was a three-year status that allowed them to work legally in the country and to not fear deportation. It doesn't lead to permanent residence. It doesn't lead to citizenship. It is a temporary status, that has to be renewed every three years. The work permit, I believe, has to be renewed every two years. But it did allow people to go to college and pay in-state tuition, in many places. It allowed people to work. There's been research that shows the tremendous value that this has had. This is basically just a perfect group of people, that are going to contribute to the United States, who really just want to be here and work hard. The study has shown that it has had a really positive impact.

Trump had said that he was going to end DACA on day one. We were all afraid that was going to happen. Because it was an executive order, it could have been undone with the stroke of a pen. But it hasn't happened. Now he's saying that it's not going to happen. I'm unclear what is going to happen and everyone is scared. Lawyers have been saying not to apply after January 20 because you have to give over your own information, your address, your name, your biometrics, everything. If you are underage and live at home, you have to give the information of your parents, as well, who may be undocumented. It's a real risk. A lot of people stopped applying.

That said, the DREAMers are an incredibly powerful and inspiring group. There's our local group, the Student Immigrant Movement, which is here in Boston. If you'd like to get involved with them, I really encourage you to do that. They have created self-protection networks and allied protection networks and asked people to sign up. If you're an undocumented person, they put you into a team with two or three undocumented people, just to be in touch with constantly; if one of you gets detained, others will know, and there'll be a phone tree. There are other allies who join small networks, that will share their skills. For example, lawyers, journalists, doctors, who can be on call for this group of three people. They are really turning inward, right now, and protecting themselves, in addition to doing the strong advocacy that they've been doing all along. ■



# studentfeature

## Threat perception and immigration reform in the United States

Marika Landau-Wells



---

Immigration reform proved to be a particularly contentious issue in the US 2016 presidential election. In some respects, the attention appears justified by the continued relevance of immigration for American politics.<sup>1</sup>

---



**Marika Landau-Wells** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at MIT.

However, debate during the 2016 campaign centered on a set of policies, promoted by then-candidate Donald Trump, which had not previously been part of the national discussion. Perhaps the most notable of these was the proposal to construct a wall along the US border with Mexico.<sup>2</sup> The wall proposal drew both public support and incredulous criticism.<sup>3</sup> Other proposals included mass deportation of illegal immigrants and a travel ban on Muslims.<sup>4</sup> Most of Trump's campaign proposals are now official White House policy.<sup>5</sup> Three surveys conducted by Pew Research between March 2016 and February 2017 indicate stable public support for the wall specifically, with approximately 35% of respondents endorsing it.<sup>6</sup>

Existing theories of immigration policy preferences often highlight the role of threat perception in explaining the divide between individuals who would prefer inclusive reform proposals (eg, Path to Citizenship) and those who prefer exclusionary reforms (eg, the border wall, large-scale deportation, travel bans, hiring restrictions).<sup>7</sup> But these theories generally do a poor job of explaining the particular forms of exclusion that individuals support. That is, why build a wall instead of devoting more resources to homeland security or job protection measures? And why does such public support persist despite serious concerns of cost, feasibility, and efficacy?

To answer this question, it helps to realize that not all threats are alike. Existing theories tend to privilege certain types of danger (eg, realism's concern with the consequences of physical violence), or certain causal logics (eg, maximization of material wealth).<sup>8</sup> But humans are capable of discriminating between several different types of dangers and applying varied response strategies to mitigate each of them.<sup>9</sup> The threats we deal with in our contemporary environment—immigration, hostile ideologies, climate change—are complex. It is quite possible that two individuals will see the same threat as posing different kinds of danger and will prefer different strategies by which to mitigate it.

I find in my research that some individuals see immigration as primarily a threat to the physical safety of Americans, while others see immigration as a threat to jobs, and yet others see immigrants as social pollutants, posing a threat to American values and culture. I apply a new theory of threat perception—threat-heuristic theory—to test and explain the linkages between these different estimations of the threat posed by immigrants and individual-level variation in preferences for immigration reform. Using several survey experiments, I show that it is the contaminant concern—the perceived threat to values and culture—which uniquely predicts support for large-scale deportation and a border wall.

### Threat-heuristic theory

"Threat perception" refers to a subjective assessment that something in the world is likely to cause damage or be dangerous.<sup>10</sup> So a "threat" can be whatever an individual believes has the potential to cause bad outcomes. For some, immigration rises to this level of concern; for others, it does not. The same variation can be observed for issues ranging from nuclear proliferation, to hostile ideologies, to climate change. And while we may disagree with one another's assessment of a potential threat, the impulse to respond and mitigate threats in general is consistent with both observed behavior and our intuition.<sup>11</sup> This basic process of threat detection and response is species-typical—it takes place in human brains, both those of citizens and of policy-making elites.<sup>12</sup>

---

“I draw on findings from biology and cognitive science to develop a theory that provides insights into how and why individuals differ in their preferences for dealing with some of the more complex potential dangers in the world.”

---

I draw on findings from biology and cognitive science to develop a theory that provides insights into how and why individuals differ in their preferences for dealing with some of the more complex potential dangers in the world. These other fields have demonstrated that our evolved threat detection systems and reflexive response strategies are in some sense organized around avoiding very specific bad outcomes.<sup>13</sup> Three of these bad outcomes are especially relevant for political behavior: threats of physical harm, including death; threats of loss, both of material and non-material assets; and threats of contamination.

Threats are considered similar (and recruit the same cognitive systems) when they present the same potential bad outcome. For example, a threat of physical harm at the hands of another human recruits the same systems of threat detection and response in the brain and body as the threat posed by a deadly snake.<sup>14</sup>

The difficulty we face with contemporary threats—including immigration, global warming, and hostile ideologies—is that the “correct” classification of the potential bad outcome is not obvious. That is, while two people could agree that immigration poses a threat, they might well disagree on what kind. By measuring these threat assessments at the individual level, threat-heuristic theory does not assume one concern is inherently more correct or valid. Rather, variation is expected.

Threat detection and assessment is only the first step in avoiding bad outcomes; appropriate response is the other.<sup>15</sup> When humans are trying to avoid bad outcomes for large groups, response strategies are constrained. Threats of physical harm generate a small set of appropriate responses—physical protection and preventive aggression—where a vital contextual consideration is the inevitability of being attacked.<sup>16</sup> Threats of loss lead to protective behavior not confined to physical barriers.<sup>17</sup> Threats of contamination generate a preference for expulsion, isolation, self-monitoring, and even destruction of the contaminant.<sup>18</sup>

In the modern context, these response strategies may take the form of public policies. The theory expects variation in threat assessment to lead to variation in policy preferences for mitigating that threat. This individual-level variation can be observed on both large (electorate) and small (policy-making group) scales.

### Empirical evidence

In two large-N, online surveys of nationally diverse samples (Survey 1 N = 1,115; Survey 2 N = 985), I show that preferences for immigration reform policies are strongly correlated with specific threat assessments. That is, when immigrants are perceived as posing a threat to American jobs and opportunities—regardless of their region of origin—individuals endorse hiring restrictions. Similarly, when immigrants are perceived as posing a threat to the physical safety of Americans—regardless of their region of origin—individuals endorse allocating more money to homeland security and policing resources to monitor those immigrants. But, in a forced-choice task, when individuals perceive “immigrants in general” to pose a threat to the values and culture of Americans (i.e., the social contaminant threat), they are substantially more likely to choose the option of large-scale deportation (expulsion) and a border wall (isolation) than enhanced homeland security measures, and considerably more likely to choose deportation/wall over immigrant hiring restrictions.

---

Threat-heuristic theory offers an explanation for the link between threat perception and policy preferences within a wide domain of potential dangers.

---

I also find that a relatively subtle prime of contamination heightens the salience of perceived values threats as predictors of policy preferences. This effect was observed for the endorsement of policies directed specifically at immigrants from Central America, but not at immigrants from the Middle East. The pollution narrative with respect to Latino immigrants to the United States is well-documented and this prime appears to interact with that narrative specifically.<sup>19</sup> This finding suggests that both subtle primes and overt contaminant rhetoric might make values threats more salient.<sup>20</sup> Taken together with the finding that it is values threats specifically which affect support for large-scale deportation and border wall construction, such rhetoric may boost support for these policies over other options for immigration reform.

While it may be counterintuitive that a large physical barrier and disruptive deportation strategy are the preferred responses to an intangible sort of threat-social pollution—threat-heuristic theory clarifies the link between threat perception and these policy preferences. Elsewhere, I apply the theory to preferences of American foreign policy-makers, showing that often the perception of contaminant threats is a factor in more drastic policies.<sup>21</sup>

### Policy implications & conclusion

Threat-heuristic theory offers an explanation for the link between threat perception and policy preferences within a wide domain of potential dangers. The theory provides a framework within which to situate both well-interrogated threats (eg, nuclear proliferation) and relatively new ones (eg, climate change), without relying on a single, dominant causal logic to predict individual response preferences. Further, the theory explains why some policy preferences, which may strike observers as puzzling or infeasible, uniquely appeal to others who have classified the potential danger differently.

Finally, the quick, heuristic processing of threat assessment generates intuitive-feeling preferences, but the complexity of contemporary political threats also increases the probability that individuals will disagree on threat classification. This sets the stage for contentious debates because the dispute concerns the fundamental nature of the problem. Hopefully, threat-heuristic theory's efforts to pinpoint the underlying sources of such disagreements will advance these discussions more productively in policy-making and public discourse. ■

### References

- 1 John Tirman, *Dream Chasers: Immigration and the American Backlash* (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT Press, 2015). Daniel J. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009).
- 2 Trump Campaign, "IMMIGRATION REFORM THAT WILL MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN" (June 2015), available from <https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/Immigration-Reform-Trump.pdf>
- 3 Douglas Massey, "Donald Trump's Mexican Border Wall Is a Moronic Idea," *Foreign Policy*, August 18, 2015, available from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/18/donald-trump-immigration-border/>. Eugene Scott, "Poll: What Millennials Think About a Border Wall," *CNN*, December 10, 2015, available from <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/10/politics/millennials-poll-harvard/index.html>. Rob Suls, "Less Than Half the Public Views Border Wall as an Important Goal for U.S. Immigration Policy," Pew Research Center, January 6, 2017, available from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/06/less-than-half-the-public-views-border-wall-as-an-important-goal-for-u-s-immigration-policy/>.

4 Trump Campaign, 2015; Associated Press, "How Donald Trump's Plan to Ban Muslims Has Evolved," *Fortune*, June 28, 2016, available from <http://fortune.com/2016/06/28/donald-trump-muslim-ban/>.

5 Kelsey Snell, Damian Paletta, and Ed O'Keefe, "Trump Wants to Add Wall Spending to Stopgap Budget Bill, Potentially Forcing Shutdown Showdown," *Washington Post*, March 28, 2017, available from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/senate-republicans-show-resistance-to-trump-suggested-cuts-in-spending-measure/2017/03/28/ce3b97d0-13dc-11e7-ada0-1489b735b3a3\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/senate-republicans-show-resistance-to-trump-suggested-cuts-in-spending-measure/2017/03/28/ce3b97d0-13dc-11e7-ada0-1489b735b3a3_story.html).

6 Rob Suls, "Most Americans Continue to Oppose U.S. Border Wall, Doubt Mexico Would Pay for It," Pew Research Center, February 24, 2017, available from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/02/24/most-americans-continue-to-oppose-u-s-border-wall-doubt-mexico-would-pay-for-it/>.

7 Paul M. Sniderman, Louk Hagendoorn, and Markus Prior, "Predisposing Factors and Situational Triggers: Exclusionary Reactions to Immigrant Minorities," *American Political Science Review* 98 (2004): 35-49. Jens Hainmueller and Daniel J. Hopkins, "The Hidden American Immigration Consensus: A Conjoint Analysis of Attitudes Toward Immigrants," *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (2015): 529-48. Anna Maria Mayda, "Who Is Against Immigration? A Cross-Country Investigation of Individual Attitudes Toward Immigrants," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 88 (2006), 510-30.

8 For the emphasis of physical violence and extended analogies to bodily harm and death, see Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, ILL.: Waveland Press, 2010). For the logic of greed as a driver of conflict onset, see Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (2004), 563-595.

9 Steven L. Neuberg, Douglas T. Kenrick, and Mark Schaller, "Human Threat Management Systems: Self-Protection and Disease Avoidance," *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* 35 (2011), 1042-51.

10 Angus Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary of English* [Electronic Resource] (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2010). Note that in English, there is a second definition of "threat" which is a deliberate signal of the intention to inflict pain or take hostile action. The literature related to this meaning is not relevant here.

11 Mark Schaller, Jason Faulkner, Justin H. Park, Steven L. Neuberg, and T. Douglas Kenrick, "Impressions of Danger Influence Impressions of People: An Evolutionary Perspective on Individual and Collective Cognition," *Journal of Cultural and Evolutionary Psychology* 2 (2005): 231-47. T. Butler, H. Pan, O. Tiescher, A. Engelen, M. Goldstein, J. Epstein, D. Weisholtz, et al., "Human Fear-Related Motor Neurocircuitry," *Neuroscience* 150 (2007): 1-7. Daniel Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," *The American Economic Review* 93 (2003), 1449-75.

12 Neuberg, Kenrick, and Schaller, "Human Threat Management Systems," 143-147. Leda Cosmides and John Tooby, "Neurocognitive Adaptations Designed for Social Exchange," in *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, ed. David M. Buss (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons Inc.), 584-627. Arne Öhman, "The Role of the Amygdala in Human Fear: Automatic Detection of Threat," *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 30 (2005), 953-58.

13 Mark Schaller, Justin H. Park, and Jason Faulkner, "Prehistoric Dangers and Contemporary Prejudices," *European Review of Social Psychology* 14 (2003), 105-37. Daniel M. T. Fessler, "The Male Flash of Anger: Violent Response to Transgression as an Example of the Intersection of Evolved Psychology and

Culture," in *Missing the Revolution: Darwinism for Social Scientists*, ed. Jerome H. Barkow (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2006), 101-17. Michael E. McCullough, Robert Kurzban, and Benjamin A. Tabak, "Cognitive Systems for Revenge and Forgiveness," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 36 (2013), 1-15

14 Vanessa LoBue, "Deconstructing the Snake: The Relative Roles of Perception, Cognition, and Emotion on Threat Detection," *Emotion* 14 (2014), 701-711. Arne Öhman, Katrina Carlsson, Daniel Lundqvist, and Martin Ingvar, "On the Unconscious Subcortical Origin of Human Fear," *Physiology & Behavior* 92 (2007), 180-85.

15 Neuberg, Steven L., Douglas T. Kenrick, and Mark Schaller, "Evolutionary Social Psychology," in *Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. Susan T. Fiske, Daniel T. Gilbert, and Gardner Lindzey, 5th ed. (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010), 761-96. H. Allen Orr, "Fitness and Its Role in Evolutionary Genetics," *Nature Reviews Genetics* 10 (2007), 531-39.

16 For a review, see Ralph Adolphs, "The Biology of Fear," *Current Biology* 23 (2013), R79-R93

17 Fessler, "The Male Flash of Anger," 106-109. Paul Rozin, Laura Lowery, Sumio Imada, and Jonathan Haidt, "The CAD Triad Hypothesis: A Mapping Between Three Moral Emotions (Contempt, Anger, Disgust) and Three Moral Codes (Community, Autonomy, Divinity)," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 76 (1999): 574-86

18 For a review, see Megan Oaten, Richard J. Stevenson, and Trevor I. Case, "Disgust as a Disease-Avoidance Mechanism," *Psychological Bulletin* 135 (2009), 303-21. For the power differential argument, see Neuberg, Kenrick, and Schaller, "Human Threat Management Systems," 1048.

19 Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California's Proposition 187* (Philadelphia, P.A.: Temple University Press, 2002). J. David Cisneros, "Contaminated Communities: The Metaphor of 'Immigrant as Pollutant' in Media Representations of Immigration," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 11 (2009), 569-601. Dorothy Nelkin and Mark Michaels, "Biological Categories and Border Controls: The Revival of Eugenics in Anti-Immigration Rhetoric," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 18 (1998), 35-63.

20 Hunter Walker, "Donald Trump Just Released an Epic Statement Raging Against Mexican Immigrants and 'Disease,'" *Business Insider* July 6, 2015, available from <http://www.businessinsider.com/donald-trumps-epic-statement>.

21 Marika Landau-Wells, "Bringing the First Image Back In: An Exposition of Threat-Heuristic Theory" (paper presented at the Junior Scholar Symposium, International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland, February 22-25, 2017).



cis

# activities

---

## **Starr Forums : Foreign policy challenges in the Trump era**

The Center hosted a multiple talks focused on the Trump administration's foreign policy, including: National Security & Civil Liberties: 1942 & 2017; The Fight Over Foreigners: Visas & Immigration in the Trump Era; Racing to the Precipice: Global Climate, Political Climate; Brexit, Europe, and Trump; Solving America's and China's North Korea Problem; and US & Mexico in the Trump Era. All Starr Forums are available on the Center's YouTube channel.

---

## **Technology and national security expert joins CIS**

Dr David Edelman, an expert on technology and its impact on national security and the global economy, has been appointed a CIS research fellow. Edelman served for six years in the White House, first as national security staff director for International Cyber Policy, and then at the National Economic Council as special assistant to the president for economic and technology policy. Edelman will direct the Institute's new Project on Technology, the Economy, and National Security (TENS). He holds a joint appointment with the Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Lab (CSAIL). TENS is housed within CSAIL's Internet Policy Research Initiative. "His experience with shaping policy on technology and national security issues is of particular interest to us, and we look forward to his helping us continue to build the critical bridge between CSAIL and CIS," said Richard Samuels, Ford International Professor of Political Science and director of CIS.

---

## **Ban Ki Moon visits CIS**

Ban Ki Moon (former Secretary-General of the United Nations) visited CIS on May 4 to discuss the Korean peninsula crisis. The lunchtime conversation was attended by CIS faculty and scholars, the Japan Consul General Rokuichiro Michii, and the Korea Consul General Ohm Song-jun.

---

## **Nielsen receives Carnegie fellowship**

Richard Nielsen has been named a 2017 Andrew Carnegie Fellow by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The highly competitive fellowship selected just 35 scholars in the social sciences and humanities for the prestigious award. His project will focus on Islamic authority in the Internet age.

Visit our website and events calendar for a complete listing of spring 2017 activities. Many of our events are captured on video and available to view on YouTube.

## FEATURED

### CIS publishes report on cybersecurity

The digital systems that control critical infrastructure in the United States and most other countries are vulnerable to attack. The Center co-published a report with the MIT International Policy Research Initiative (IPRI), that identifies the most strategic of these challenges and proposes a policy and research agenda that has the potential to achieve significantly higher levels of security in critical networks.

The 50-page report, **Making America Safer: Toward a More Secure Network Environment for Critical Sectors**, outlines strategic challenges that would greatly reduce the risks from cyber attacks in the sectors of electricity, finance, communications and oil/natural gas.

Joel Brenner, the principal author of the report, is a senior research fellow at CIS and the MIT Computer Science & Artificial Intelligence Lab (CSAIL).

### MIT Day of Action

Dan Pomeroy gave a talk on "Impacting Congress Beyond Phone Calls and Emails: Engaging on Policy." It was held as part of the MIT Day of Action, along with several other sessions on similar themes. Pomeroy is the program manager for the MIT International Policy Lab.

### MISTI funds over 80 MIT faculty projects

MISTI Global Seed Funds (GSF) awardees help to solve the world's challenges through collaborations with their international peers. In just nine years, MISTI GSF has awarded \$13,343,951 to more than 540 faculty projects in over 42 countries around the world. This January, at the conclusion of the program's 2016-2017 grant cycle, MISTI GSF awarded more than \$1.6 million to 81 projects (out of 241 applications), representing five MIT schools and 24 departments across the Institute. MISTI GSF consists of a general pool of funds for projects in any country, and several country- or institute-specific funds.

### MIT-Israel welcomes new faculty advisor

MIT professor Eran Ben-Joseph, head of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, has joined the MIT-Israel Program's current faculty director, Christine Ortiz, the Morris Cohen Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, as the program's co-director. Working closely with MIT-Israel Managing Director David Dolev, Ben-Joseph has helped set up internships in Israel for MIT School of Architecture and Planning students; served on the MIT-Israel Seed Fund selection board; collaborated on practice-based research in Ashdod; and facilitated student presentations at the MIT Better World (Tel Aviv) event.

### SSP Wednesday seminars

The MIT Security Studies Program's lunchtime lecture series included: Making the Unipolar Moment: US Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order, featuring Hal Brands (John Hopkins University); America's Military and the Rise of Guardian Forces, featuring Paula Thornhill (Rand Corporation); Triggering Crises: Explaining the Onset and Political Escalation of Militarized Inter-State Crises in South Asia, featuring Sameer Lalwani (Stimson Center); and Getting Religion Right Redux: Hypotheses on Religion and Civil War featuring Monica Toft (Tufts University).



# end notes

## PEOPLE

---

PhD candidate **Fiona Cunningham** presented “Seizing the Initiative or Controlling Escalation? China’s Changing Approach to Cyber Deterrence” in February at the International Studies Association Annual Convention in Baltimore, Maryland. In April, she gave a talk on the same topic at the Cyber Security Project seminar series at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School. Cunningham also attended a conference in March on “US-China Relations: Cyber and Technology” organized by the Hoover Institution National Security, Technology and Law Working Group at Stanford University. She plans to join the Cyber Security Project at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School as a predoctoral fellow next year.

---

PhD candidate **Mayumi Fukushima** won a 2017 Smith Richardson Foundation World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship.

---

PhD candidate **Marika Landau-Wells** presented two papers at the annual ISA conference in Baltimore, “High Stakes and Low Bars: International Recognition of Governments during Civil War” and “Bringing the First Image Back In: An Exposition of Threat-Heuristic Theory.” She also presented “Disaggregating Danger: Preferences for Immigration Reform in the United States” at the annual Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago. In April, she was invited by The Future Society to discuss neuroscience and the future of conflict.

---

CIS visiting scholar **Shin-wha Lee**, professor of political science and international relations at Korea University, and UN Secretary-General’s advisory group member of the Peacebuilding Fund was a discussant at the Starr Forum on “Solving America’s and China’s North Korea Problem” in April. Also in April, she presented on “China’s Refugee Policy Divide and the Predicament on North Korean Defectors” at the Myron Weiner Seminar Series on International Migration.



---

PhD candidate **Renato Lima de Oliveira** presented “Petrobras: Innovation with Party Rent-seeking” in April at the Fourth Repal Conference and at the annual Latin American Studies Association meeting in Lima, Peru. Also in April, *MIT News* featured his dissertation research in a story called “Grounded in Geology.”

---

Professor of political science **Kenneth Oye**’s Program on Emerging Technology (PoET) worked with groups in Japan, the Netherlands, Yale, Harvard and MIT on assessment of technical measures intended to localize effects of gene drives and to limit fitness and reduce gene flow of genetically engineered micro-organisms. Kenneth Oye presented PoET work on biotechnology policy to governmental groups including the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, the International Experts Group on Biosecurity and Biosafety Regulation, and the Netherlands Ministry of Mines and Environment (RIVM) and to academic audiences ranging from humanists at the Harvard STS Circle and the Leiden Lorentz Center to biological engineers at Northwestern University, BU, MIT and HKUST.

---

PhD candidate **Philip Martin** presented two papers at the annual ISA conference in Baltimore: “The Wartime Origins of Civil-Military Relations in Insurgent-Ruled States” and “Unsafe Havens: Re-examining Humanitarian Aid and Peace Duration after Civil Wars” (with Nina McMurry).

---

Robert E Wilhelm fellow **Lourdes Melgar** taught a seminar at MIT on “Energy Policy in the Context of Climate Change” during IAP. In February, she delivered a talk on “Mexico’s Energy Reform: Foundations, Implementations and Challenges Ahead” at the MIT Energy Initiative. In March, she spoke at the Atlantic Council on “The Future of US-Mexican Energy Relations”, was a panelist in the Bipartisan Policy Center discussion on “Expanding North American Energy Trade”, and attended the annual meeting of The Trilateral Commission as a member. In April, Melgar was a speaker at the 22nd Brookings Energy Security Round Table, gave a talk on “Social Sustainability in Mexico’s Energy Reform” at the LAWG, and delivered a talk on Mexico’s political and economic reality sponsored by MISTI. In May, she will be a keynote speaker at the Latinas in the U.S. Conference, as well as at the CITI 2017 Global Energy and Utilities Conference. In July, she will be attending the Aspen Institute 2017 Energy Policy Forum.

---

PhD candidate **Andrew Miller** was awarded a Project Launch Grant by the University of Notre Dame’s Global Religion Research Initiative, an MIT GOV/LAB Research Seed Grant, and a CIS Summer Research Grant. In February, he presented two papers, “State versus Syndicate: Civilian Compliance in Contested Territory” and “Treaty Compliance through Assurance: Evidence from the International Criminal Court” at the International Studies Association Annual Convention in Baltimore.

# end notes

---

PhD candidate **Kacie Miura** presented “Protecting Business from Politics: Explaining Variation in Nationalist Protests in China” in January at a conference on “State-Mobilized Contention” organized by Harvard University and Hong Kong University. She presented the same paper, as well as “Campaign Rhetoric and Chinese Reactions to New Leaders” (with Jessica Chen Weiss) at the annual ISA conference in Baltimore.

---

Assistant professor of political science **Richard Nielsen** was awarded the Andrew Carnegie Fellowship from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

---

PhD candidate **Cullen Nutt** presented “What Do Leaders Ask of Intelligence? Theorizing Policymaker Demand for Intelligence During Crises” and “Seek, And Ye Shall Find: The Dynamic Effects of Previous Failure on Detecting Nuclear Programs” at the annual ISA conference in Baltimore in February.

---

PhD candidate **Rachel Esplin Odell** presented “Maritime Hegemony and the Fiction of the Free Sea: Explaining States’ Claims to Maritime Jurisdiction” in April at a Junior Scholar Symposium at the International Studies Association Annual Conference in Baltimore.

---

PhD candidate **Reid Pauly** presented “Nuclear Weapons in Wargames: Testing Elite Traditions and Taboos” in February at the International Studies Association Annual Convention in Baltimore. He also won a Smith Richardson Foundation World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship to support his dissertation research. He plans to join the Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs as a predoctoral fellow next year.

---

Ford International Professor of Political Science **Barry Posen** spoke on “Restraint and the New Administration,” to the Strategy Discussion Group in Washington DC in January. In February, he presented a Work in Progress Seminar, A Multipolar World and the Management of Civil War, at the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress. He spoke on the same topic at “The Responsibility to Protect” conference at Yale University in March. He also presented a keynote address on his book, *Restraint: A New Foundation for US Grand Strategy*, at the Conference

on Grand Strategy held at Yale University. Posen was awarded the MIT Frank E. Perkins Award for Excellence in Graduate Advising.

---

Ford International Professor of Political Science and director of the Center for International Studies **Richard J Samuels** received a grant from the Smith Richardson Foundation to support his field research in Japan and to work on his book project on the history of the Japanese intelligence community. In February, he delivered the Bradley Richardson Memorial Lecture at Ohio State University on the topic of "Japanese Foreign and Security Policy." He spoke in March at Middlebury College on the security and energy policy consequences of the March 2011 triple catastrophe in northeastern Japan. Also in March, he presented "Japanese Technonationalism Viewed through the 'Wayback Machine'" at a conference on "The US-Japan Bilateral Economic Relationship: Past, Present, and Future" at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC.

---

CIS Security Studies fellow **Jayita Sarkar** presented on "The Stakeholders Inside: Explaining India's Relationship with Israel and France," with Nicolas Blarel at the annual ISA conference in Baltimore in February. In April, she spoke on "Incongruities in the Indian Nuclear Narrative" at the "New Nuclear Imaginaries" conference at Harvard University's Program on Science, Technology and Society.

---

Associate professor of political science **David Singer** was the inaugural recipient of the MIT Change Maker Award for "challenging harmful attitudes, languages, and behaviors, and shifting the culture that perpetuates sexual violence." Singer chairs MIT's Presidential Committee on Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response.

---

PhD student **Rachel Tecott** presented "The Double-Edged Legacy of Obamawar" at the Naval Air Systems Command Leadership Development Program in April at the Navy Supply School on Naval Station Newport.

---

Senior research associate **Jim Walsh** spoke on the Iran nuclear deal and the nuclear nonproliferation regime at the World Affairs Council of the Charlotte Board & Community Leaders and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, as well as the Atlantic Council in January. He also spoke at the AAAS in February and testified before the House Oversight Committee in April. He gave talks on North Korea at the Center for Arms Control and Disarmament and to members of the House and Senate, and at the Korean Economic Institute. He also gave talks at MIT Lincoln Labs on "The Nuclear Weapon's Agenda for the Next Four Years" and on "Cross-domain Deterrence & Sanctions" at the University of California, Berkeley.



# end notes

---

PhD candidate **Ketian Zhang** plans to join the International Security Program at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center as a predoctoral fellow next year.

---

## PUBLISHED

---

Associate professor of political science **Taylor Fravel**, "Threading the Needle: The South China Sea Disputes and U.S.-China Relations," in Robert Ross and Øystein Tsunjo, eds., *Strategic Adjustment and the Rise of China: Power and Politics in East Asia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, June 2017.

---

Research affiliate **Stacie Goddard**, "Hiding in Plain Sight? The Not-So-Secret Constructivism of Relationalism," Symposium for *International Studies Quarterly*, April 2017.

---

Principal reserach scientist **Eric Heginbotham**, *China's Evolving Nuclear Deterrent: Major Drivers and Issues for the United States*, lead author, RAND Report, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_ (with **Richard J. Samuels**), "Smartening Up Japan's Defenses," *Nikkei Asian Review* (web), January 26, 2017.

---

CIS visiting scholar **Shin-wha Lee**, "Conflict-Refugee Dynamics: African Refugees as Humanitarian Crisis and Security Threats," *21st Century Political Science Review*, Vol 27, No. 1, March 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Complex Geopolitics of Population, Migration, and Refugee Security: Implication for the Korean Peninsula," *Asiatic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1, April 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_ (co-edited with Ku Hyun Jung), *The Wave of Grand Transformation and Korea's Strategic Choice*, Seoul: Cloud Nine Publisher, 2017.

---

Stanton fellow **Joseph O'Mahoney**, "Trump says that spoils belong to the victor. That's an invitation to more war", Monkey Cage at *The Washington Post*, 1 February 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Making The Real: Rhetorical Adduction and the Bangladesh Liberation War", *International Organization*, Online Firstview.

---

Robert E Wilhelm fellow **Lourdes Melgar**, "Mexico's Upstream Opening: Redefining the Oil and Gas Landscape", in Oxford Energy Forum, Oxford, UK: Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, June 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Consideraciones para entender la Revolución Energética Mexicana" in *El Nuevo Modelo Energético Mexicano*, Villahermosa, Tabasco: Fondo Editorial Universitario UJAT, Forthcoming.

---

Associate professor of political science **Vipin Narang**, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation: How States Pursue the Bomb," *International Security*, Vol. 41, No. 3, Winter 2016/2017.

\_\_\_\_\_ (with SSP alumna **Caitlyn Talmadge**), "Civil-Military Pathologies and Defeat in War: Tests Using New Data," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Online Firstview.

---

Assistant professor of political science **Richard Nielsen** (with Gary King and Christopher Lucas), "The Balance-Sample Size Frontier in Matching Methods for Causal Inference," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 61, No. 2, April 2017.

---

Ford International Professor of Political Science **Barry Posen**, "Syria Showdown: Will Trump be Pressured into Putting Turkey First, America Second?" *The National Interest*, March 16, 2017.

---

Ford International Professor of Political Science and director of the Center for International Studies **Richard J Samuels** (with Mike M. Mochizuki), "Japan's Energy Security: Strategic Discourse and Domestic Politics," chapter in Mike M. Mochizuki and Deepa Ollapally (eds.), *Energy Security in Asia and Eurasia*. London: Routledge, 2017.

# end notes

---

CIS Security Studies fellow **Jayita Sarkar**, "Managing Nuclear Risk in South Asia: An Indian Response," *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Global Forum Feature, Vol. 73, No. 1, January 2017.

---

Ford International Professor of Political Science **Ben Ross Schneider** (with Armando Castelar Pinheiro), "Markets and Hierarchies in Social Services: Incentives, Institutions, and Politics," In Guillermo Perry and Ramona Angelescu, eds., *Improving Access and Quality of Public Services in Latin America*. New York: Palgrave, 2017.

---

PhD student **Meicen Sun**, "A Bigger Bang for a Bigger Buck: What China's Changing Attitude Toward UN Peacekeeping Says About Its Evolving Approach to International Institutions," *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 13, No. 2, April 2017.

---

PhD student **Rachel Tecott**, "The Double-Edged Legacy of Obamawar," *War on the Rocks*, February 2017.

---

Senior research associate **Jim Walsh**, "Are Sanctions on North Korea Having an Impact? Perspectives from Washington and Cambridge," Washington: Korea Economic Institute, 2017, pp. 1-26.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Assessing the Iran Deal," Written Testimony. Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, US House of Representatives. April 5, 2017, pp. 1-12.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Will Trump's America be a Nation of Ugly Self-Interest and Ignorance?" *USA Today*. January 29, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_ (with Thomas Pickering), "Guess Who We Don't Talk About These Days? Iran," *Charlotte Observer*, January 15, 2017.





**précis** n. a concise summary of  
essential points, statements, or facts.

**précis** is published twice each academic year in order to familiarize readers with the work of the Center for International Studies at MIT.

**Center for International Studies**

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
One Amherst Street, E40-400  
Cambridge, MA 02139

+1 617.253.8093  
cis-info@mit.edu

Richard J Samuels, *Director*  
Stephen Van Evera, *Associate Director*  
John Timan, *Executive Director*  
Michelle Nhuch, *précis Editor*  
Laurie Scheffler, *précis Coordinator*  
Kacie Miura, *précis Student Editor*

