

## News

Keep up to date with the latest news and [events \(/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/events/index.aspx\)](#) from around the department and the wide-ranging projects our staff and students get involved with. [More news throughout the School of Government and Society \(/schools/government-society/news/index.aspx\)](#)

### Latest news

#### [The international media is failing to report the Syrian war properly \(http://theconversation.com/the-international-media-is-failing-to-report-the-syrian-war-properly-37290\)](http://theconversation.com/the-international-media-is-failing-to-report-the-syrian-war-properly-37290)



Written by Professor Scott Lucas. February 2015 has already seen some major developments in Syria's four-year conflict. At the start of February, rebels launched more than 100 rockets into Damascus and the Assad regime fired mortars on areas of its own capital, hoping to discredit the insurgents. At least six people were killed in the attacks.

Tuesday 10th February 2015

#### [Greek Election 2015 \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/perspective/greece-election.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/perspective/greece-election.aspx)



Dr George Kyris and Dr Sotirios Zartaloudis reflect on Syriza's victory in the Greek election and discuss what it might mean for the rest of Europe.

Thursday 5th February 2015

#### [The cyber threat to the United Kingdom \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/thebirminghambrief/items/2015/02/cyber-threat-uk-05-02-15.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/thebirminghambrief/items/2015/02/cyber-threat-uk-05-02-15.aspx)



Written by Gavin E L Hall (Doctoral Researcher in POLSIS). When the new government takes office in May 2015 one of the first tasks will be to initiate a Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR).

Thursday 5th February 2015

#### [Podcast: The Greek Elections: Results and Implications \(/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2015/02/greek-elections.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2015/02/greek-elections.aspx)



The Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS) Departmental Seminar. Speakers: George Kyris and Sotirios Zartaloudis (POLSIS)

Thursday 5th February 2015

#### [As its power grows, is the ECB overstepping its mandate? \(http://theconversation.com/as-its-power-grows-is-the-ecb-overstepping-its-mandate-36997\)](http://theconversation.com/as-its-power-grows-is-the-ecb-overstepping-its-mandate-36997)



Written by Dr Nicole Scicluna. The European Central Bank (ECB) symbolises the strange mix of politics and technocracy that marks EU governance. The bank was pushed to centre stage by the eurozone debt crisis and the unwillingness or inability of Europe's national governments to come up with timely solutions. Its rise as a political actor started while it was led by Jean-Claude Trichet, but it has become much clearer under his successor, Mario Draghi.

Thursday 5th February 2015

#### [Ed Balls pledges £30 billion to English regions – and that's not all \(http://theconversation.com/ed-balls-pledges-30-billion-to-english-regions-and-thats-not-all-37138\)](http://theconversation.com/ed-balls-pledges-30-billion-to-english-regions-and-thats-not-all-37138)



Written by Chris Game. Two noteworthy things happened in Milton Keynes on Monday morning. Ed Miliband chaired the first meeting of Labour's English Regional Shadow Cabinet – comprising mainly leaders of councils and combined authorities. And, as a curtain-raiser, shadow Chancellor Ed Balls announced that, if Labour forms the next government, it will transfer £30 billion-worth of funding for housing, transport, business support, employment and skills training to England's regions.

Thursday 5th February 2015

#### [How stable is Saudi monarchy after King Abdullah's death? \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/thebirminghambrief/items/2015/01/how-stable-is-saudi-monarchy-29-01-15.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/thebirminghambrief/items/2015/01/how-stable-is-saudi-monarchy-29-01-15.aspx)



Written by Professor Scott Lucas. On 23 January, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah died at the age of 90 and was succeeded by his half-brother Salman, 79, one of the last sons of Saudi Arabia's founder Ibn Saud. The regime is keeping a watchful eye on dissent, including in the mainly Shia Eastern Province, and on internal security amid concerns over returning fighters from conflicts such as the Syrian crisis.

Friday 30th January 2015

#### [Podcast: EU as an international security actor \(/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2015/01/eu-as-an-international-security-actor.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2015/01/eu-as-an-international-security-actor.aspx)



The Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS) Departmental Seminar. Speaker: Adrian Hyde-Price (Gothenburg), Discussant: Derek Averre (POLSIS/CREES).

Friday 30th January 2015

**Podcast: International Relations: All That Matters (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/conflict-cooperation-security/news/2015/01/international-relations-all-that-matters.aspx>)**



The talk introduced Professor Ken Booth's latest book, which seeks to provide an accessible but sophisticated understanding of international relations for those with no specialised knowledge of the field (which is almost everybody in the world).

Friday 30th January 2015

**Lebanon is cracking under the pressure from Syria and Iraq (<http://theconversation.com/lebanon-is-cracking-under-the-pressure-from-syria-and-iraq-36167>)**



Written by Dr Christalla Yakinthou. Lebanon has always been a complicated jigsaw, but despite years of war, regional conflict, and meddling in its affairs, it has displayed a tremendous ability to absorb tension. But the threads that hold this fragile country together are rapidly starting to fray.

Wednesday 28th January 2015

**Ukraine sliding towards all-out war despite mediation efforts (<http://theconversation.com/ukraine-sliding-towards-all-out-war-despite-mediation-efforts-36608>)**



Written by Professor Stefan Wolff. Over the past few days, Ukraine has taken a significant turn for the worse. Fighting between rebels and government forces has intensified, the civilian death toll has increased, and the war of words between Ukraine and Russia has further escalated.

Monday 26th January 2015

**Why the fight against Islamic State is not the success we're told it is (<http://theconversation.com/why-the-fight-against-islamic-state-is-not-the-success-were-told-it-is-36619>)**



Written by Professor Scott Lucas. Ministers from 21 countries gathered in London on January 22 to discuss the fight against Islamic State (IS). They had their photo opportunity and issued their statements. US secretary of state, John Kerry, told them that almost 6,000 jihadists had been killed, and almost 700 square kilometres of Iraqi territory retaken.

Monday 26th January 2015

**Oil crisis: can short-term pain lead to economic gain for Russia? (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/thebirminghambrief/items/2015/01/oil-crisis-22-01-15.aspx>)**



Written by Dr Richard Connolly. The recent crash in oil prices is causing much anxiety in oil-producing states. From Iran to Venezuela, many have come to rely on elevated oil prices to fuel economic growth and support government spending.

Friday 23rd January 2015

**Podcast: Ethnic minority political representation in Britain: the end of the Race Relations Paradigm? ([/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2015/01/ethnic-minority-political-representation-in-britain.aspx](http://schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2015/01/ethnic-minority-political-representation-in-britain.aspx))**



The Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLISIS) Departmental Seminar. Speaker: Maria Sobolewska (Manchester), Respondant: Dr Chris Allen (University of Birmingham).

Thursday 22nd January 2015

**Blog: Do Local Authorities Really Want Sustainable Construction Powers? (<http://polsis.org/2015/01/20/do-local-authorities-really-want-sustainable-construction-powers/>)**



Written by Max Lempriere, Third year PhD student in POLISIS. National planning policy and building regulations have undergone considerable reform in recent years. The latest incarnation is embodied in the Housing Standards Review, (HSR) published in 2014. The HSR sought to consolidate the plethora of standards into national building regulations whilst making it harder to local authorities (LAs) to introduce standards that supplement these national regulations in response to local needs or priorities. One area where local powers have been significantly curtailed by the HSR is in the sustainability and energy efficiency of homes.

Wednesday 21st January 2015

**Podcast: Trust, technology and salvation: An investigation of President Reagan's nuclear speech (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/conflict-cooperation-security/news/2015/01/investigation-of-president-reagans-nuclear-speech.aspx>)**



Laura Considine is a Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Leeds. She received her PhD in International Politics from Aberystwyth University in 2014 and was a John W. Kluge Fellow at the Library of Congress in Washington DC in 2011.

Wednesday 21st January 2015

**Obama's National Security Strategy: Predicting US Policy in the Context of Changing Worldviews (<http://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/obamas-national-security-strategy-predicting-us-policy-context-changing-worldviews>)**



While the National Security Strategy (NSS) is a good predictor of an administration's policy, its declared strategic priorities are necessarily tempered by external reality, writes Dr Adam Quinn in a recent paper published by Chatam House.

Tuesday 20th January 2015

**[Blog: Playwright, Prisoner and President: the Life of Vaclav Havel \(http://creesbham.blogspot.co.uk/2015/01/playwright-prisoner-and-president-life.html\)](http://creesbham.blogspot.co.uk/2015/01/playwright-prisoner-and-president-life.html)**



Written by Dr Tim Haughton, A review of Michael Zantovsky, Havel: a Life, London: Atlantic Books (2014). You only really appreciate someone when they have left. The death of Vaclav Havel in December 2011 provoked a week of mourning, warm and generous words from his political foes, and for many 'perhaps a rediscovery' of the man who had played so many different roles in his life: playwright, political prisoner and president (p. 14).

Tuesday 20th January 2015

**[Is Chechnya facing wave of jihadist violence? \(http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/30476381\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/30476381)**



On 19 December 2014 BBC Europe News published an article by Dr Galina Yemelianova on recent Chechen bombing.

Tuesday 20th January 2015

**[Research video: Dr Tim Haughton \(/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2015/01/research-video-tim-haughton.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/news/2015/01/research-video-tim-haughton.aspx)**



Dr Tim Haughton is a political scientist with a particular interest in electoral and party politics, the relationship between politics and government, the interaction between domestic and European sources of change, the relationship between Britain and the EU, the role of the past in the politics of the present and the domestic politics of Slovakia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic.

Monday 19th January 2015

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