

News in the departments

Keep up to date with the latest news and [events \(/schools/government-society/events/index.aspx\)](#) from around the school and the wide-ranging projects our staff and students get involved with.

[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 (POLISIS) Departmental Seminar. Speaker: Adrian Hyde-Price (Gothenburg), Discussant: Derek Averre (POLISIS/CREES).

Friday 30th January 2015

[Explainer: what is Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia? \(http://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-wahhabism-in-saudi-arabia-36693\)](http://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-wahhabism-in-saudi-arabia-36693)



Written by Dr Galina Yemelianova. The death of Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah has stirred debate about the future direction of the world's richest Arab state. That direction will be significantly coloured by how his brother and successor, King Salman, approaches Wahhabism – the religious sect that is at once an intrinsic part of the state and its biggest threat.

Friday 30th January 2015

[Podcast: International Relations: All That Matters \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/conflict-cooperation-security/news/2015/01/international-relations-all-that-matters.aspx\)](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 \(http://theconversation.com/lebanon-is-cracking-under-the-pressure-from-syria-and-iraq-36167\)](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

[Putin's plan to fight recession in Russia also increases Kremlin's control of the economy \(http://theconversation.com/putins-plan-to-fight-recession-in-russia-also-increases-kremlins-control-of-the-economy-36655\)](http://theconversation.com/putins-plan-to-fight-recession-in-russia-also-increases-kremlins-control-of-the-economy-36655)



Written by Dr Richard Connolly. The Russian rouble started 2015 in much the same way it finished 2014: badly. After losing nearly 50% of its dollar value between July and the end of the year, the rouble lost a further 7% in January. The primary cause of this continued decline is the falling price of oil: Brent crude has dropped from US\$53 dollars per barrel at year end to just under US\$48 per barrel, a decline of nearly 10% for the year so far.

Monday 26th January 2015

[Ukraine sliding towards all-out war despite mediation efforts \(http://theconversation.com/ukraine-sliding-towards-all-out-war-despite-mediation-efforts-36608\)](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 \(http://theconversation.com/why-the-fight-against-islamic-state-is-not-the-success-were-told-it-is-36619\)](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

Blog: Shuffling the decks: quick fixes versus long-term stability (<http://www.developmentprogress.org/blog/2015/01/22/shuffling-decks-quick-fixes-versus-long-term-stability>)



Development Progress Blog. Ahead of the launch of our case studies on security progress in Liberia and Timor-Leste, Suda Perera writes on the risk that 'quick fixes' to violent conflict pose to development in the long-term. Taking the example of the Democratic Republic of Congo, she outlines the pitfalls of empowering warring parties and the challenging reality that good elections do not necessarily result in good democracy.

Friday 23rd January 2015

Sociology Society Careers Conference 2015 (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/events/2015/02-04-sociology-careers.aspx>)



The Soc Soc Careers Conference is your chance to start thinking about your career post-graduation. Join us for the opportunity to speak to graduates from diverse fields of work to ask questions, network and enjoy plenty of free food!

Friday 23rd January 2015

IDD Guest seminar podcast: Local governance in the Commonwealth: Existing practices and emerging trends (</schools/government-society/departments/international-development/news/2015/01/local-governance-commonwealth.aspx>)



Speaker: Munawwar Alam, Commonwealth Local Government Forum

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>)



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

Thursday 22nd January 2015

Blog: The fairness (or otherwise) of the 2015-16 local government finance settlement (<http://inlogov.com/2015/01/21/the-fairness-or-otherwise-of-the-2015-16-local-government-finance-settlement/>)



Written by Chris Game. In choosing to announce the 2015-16 local government finance settlement just eight days before Christmas, ministers presumably hoped – as, indeed, I'd expected – that the argument about the presentation of funding and spending cut statistics for local authorities, both collectively and individually, would have died away by mid-January. However, it hasn't, which is why I too am returning to the topic, which had its importance re-emphasised several times over the past week.

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

The arrival (and departure) of the parliamentary single-termers (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/perspective/parliamentary-single-termers-game.aspx>)



Written by Chris Game. Chris reflects on those MPs leaving the Commons, adding to the standard categories of Seniority, Sin, or Stash.

Tuesday 20th 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>)



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>)



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

Tuesday 20th January 2015

At last, a show of force tips odds against Boko Haram (<http://theconversation.com/at-last-a-show-of-force-tips-odds-against-boko-haram-36448>)



Written by Professor Paul Jackson. Suspected Boko Haram militants have attacked Northern Cameroon in another escalation of their now regional war against Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. In a cross-border attack, the militants kidnapped around 80 people.

Tuesday 20th January 2015

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