



Middle East Alliances

By Augustus Richard Norton

From a proxy war in Yemen to an ongoing civil war in Syria, a number of ongoing conflicts have shaken the traditional alliances in the Middle East to their core. As alliances between state and non-state actors in the region are constantly shifting, the U.S. has found itself between a rock and a hard place. In a series of conflicts that are far from being black-and-white, what can the U.S. do to secure its interests in the region without causing further damage and disruption?

The Rise of ISIS

By Gregory Johnsen

Born out of an umbrella organization of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) burst onto the international stage after it seized Fallujah in December 2013. Since then, the group has seized control of a number of critical strongholds in the country and declared itself a caliphate, known as the Islamic State. Still, the question remains: What is ISIS, and what danger does it pose to U.S. interests?

The Future of Kurdistan

By Jenna Krajeski

Kurdistan, a mountainous area made up of parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, is home to one of the largest ethnic groups in region: the Kurds. Now, most in the West know them for their small, oil-rich autonomous region in northern Iraq called Iraqi Kurdistan — one of the U.S.' closer allies in the Middle East and a bulwark against the expansion of the so-called Islamic State. What does the success of Iraqi Kurdistan mean for Kurds in the surrounding region?

Migration

By Joseph Chamie

As a record number of migrants cross the Mediterranean Sea to find refuge in Europe, the continent is struggling to come up with an adequate response. Although Europe's refugees are largely fleeing conflicts in Syria, Iraq and parts of Africa, their struggle is hardly unique. Today, with the number of displaced people at an all-time high, a number of world powers find themselves facing a difficult question: how can they balance border security with humanitarian concerns? More importantly, what can they do to resolve these crises so as to limit the number of displaced persons?

The Koreas

By Scott Snyder

At the end of World War II, Korea was divided in two. The northern half of the Korean peninsula was occupied by the Soviet Union, the southern by the United States. Today, North and South Korea couldn't be further apart. The North is underdeveloped, impoverished and ruled by a corrupt, authoritarian government, while the South advanced rapidly to become one of the most developed countries in the world. With such a wide gap, some are asking if unification is possible, even desirable, anymore?

The United Nations

By Stephen Browne and Thomas Weiss

On the eve of the international organization's 70th birthday, the United Nations stands at a crossroads. This year marks a halfway point in the organization's global effort to eradicate poverty, hunger and discrimination, as well as ensure justice and dignity for all peoples. But as the UN's 193 member states look back at the success of the millennium development goals, they also must assess their needs for its sustainable development goals — a new series of benchmarks, which are set to expire in 2030. With the appointment of the ninth secretary-general in the near future as well, the next UN leader is bound to have quite a lot on his or her plate going into office.

Climate Change

By William Sweet

In the past few years, the American public has become more aware of the damage wrought by climate change. From droughts in the west to extreme weather in the east, a rapidly changing climate has already made its footprint in the United States. Now, it's expected that the presidential election in 2016 will be one of the first ever to place an emphasis on these environmental changes. What can the next president do to stymie this environmental crisis? And is it too late for these efforts to be effective?

Cuba and the U.S.

By Michael Shifter and Ben Raderstorf

The U.S. announced in December 2014 that, after decades of isolation, it has begun taking major steps to normalize relations with Cuba. The announcement marks a dramatic shift away from a policy that has its roots in one of the darkest moments of the Cold War — the Cuban missile crisis. Although the U.S. trade embargo is unlikely to end any time soon, American and Cuban leaders today are trying to bring a relationship, once defined by antithetical ideologies, into the 21st century.