



US ELECTIONS 2016

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An ORF Monthly Monitor

EDITORIAL NOTE

As the United States swings into election mode, ORF has begun to closely monitor the developments. We bring news updates; commentaries; opinion polls as well as statements, speeches and interviews by the Presidential candidates. We also look at role of the Indian Diaspora and its positions on various issues and explore the potential implications of the elections for India. We welcome your feedback and comments.

ANALYSES

God and the Ballot: Religion and Voting Patterns in America

Monish Tourangbam

The US Constitution builds a wall of separation between the church and the state, interpreted as prohibiting the state from meddling into the affairs of the church and vice versa. However, this constitutional provision cannot negate the church's influence in determining who gets elected.

The Iran Deal: Will it have an Impact on US Elections?

Uma Purushothaman

Whether Congress rejects or passes the Iran deal or not, it will loom large in the election debates because of its connection to American and Israeli national security though it is unlikely to be a real game changer in the elections.

Impact of the Same-Sex Marriage Ruling

Vidisha Mishra

Same-sex couples in the US now have the constitutional right to marry. Although the issue may have been settled legally, it remains politically divisive.

Where do Clinton and Sanders Stand on Issues?

Sylvia Mishra

Hillary Clinton's ratings are going down as Bernie Sanders stirs populism.

ORF EVENT

Report based on a talk by Mr. Brian Katulis, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress on "America's Evolving Foreign Policy Debate"

THE FIELD

A look at the Republican and Democrat candidates who are running for their party's nomination

THE POLLS

How popular are the presidential candidates? Analysis of the popularity ratings of the presidential nominees conducted by various news agencies

STATEMENTS/INTERVIEWS

Official statements and interviews by the candidates

DIASPORA WATCH

News about the Indian American Diaspora in the elections

MEDIA REVIEW

What the media is reporting on the issues

FURTHER READING

A list of readings based on commentaries, journal articles and reports on the elections

God and the Ballot: Religion and Voting Patterns in America

Monish Tourangbam

In the United States of America, one sees a highly developed country and at the same time, a deeply and widely religious country. This reality in many ways defines the lives of many Americans, who are church goers and look towards religious identification in their private as well as public lives. This, in turn, to a large extent, explains the impact that religious affiliation has on how Americans vote during the Presidential elections. The very genesis of the first colonies in the eastern seaboard of the United States cannot be devoid from the religious aspirations of the people who desired to practice Christianity their way. The iconic attachment to the 'Mayflower Pilgrims', the symbolisms of the 'city upon the hill' or the 'Manifest Destiny' have shown the acute identification of religious signposts to the course of the American nation. Moreover, the separation of the state and the church in the US constitution and the waves of immigration led to a rainbow of citizens following different religions. More significantly, it also allowed a number of denominations to emerge within protestant Christianity. A pattern has been discovered in the voting patterns of the major sects of the Christians in the United States that impact the results of the presidential elections.

Religious interpretations of social issues particularly have in many ways influenced how campaigns are run and how voters are either enticed or repulsed. One of the most memorable and significant questions raised on a presidential candidate because of his religion was during the campaign of President John F Kennedy (the only Catholic elected US president) who had to passionately emphasize his American-ness to a group of protestant ministers at the Greater Houston Ministerial Association on 12 September 1960. Kennedy emphatically [said](#), "...contrary to common newspaper usage, I am not the Catholic candidate for president. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for president, who happens also to be a Catholic."

Fast forward to June 2015, at the premier gathering of Christian activists, the annual conference of the Faith and

Freedom Council in Washington D.C., Republican presidential contenders were seen stressing the importance of Christian values in their private and public lives. They espoused the idea that people who were attached to faith made public policies that were attuned to what the people of the country largely believed, more particularly on social issues such as abortion rights. "My faith has guided me for my entire life, and I don't suspect that's going to change," [said](#) former Texas Governor Rick Perry. Presidential hopeful and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush [called](#) his Catholic faith "an organizing part of my architecture, if you will, as a person and certainly as an elected official."

Conferences of this kind are reflective of the influence that the evangelical wing of the Republican Party wields during primaries as well. According to [exits polls](#) taken during the 2014 midterm elections, 4 in 10 Republican voters were found to be white evangelical Christians, with nearly half attending religious services weekly. Among Democrats, a third was found attending services weekly and 11 percent were white born-again Christians. The [Faith and Freedom Council](#) was founded in 2009 by Ralph Reed (came to prominence in 1990s with the Christian coalition) who, in his own words, began assembling the "largest-ever database of reliably conservative religious voters."

Reed believes in micro-targeting religious voters, through phone calls, emails, text messages and volunteer visits. Besides identifying potential targets (religious voters) for micro-targeting, the council also engages in looking for those who have never registered to vote. Evangelicals are seen as a crucial voting constituency in the US presidential elections and Reed is often credited as helping George W. Bush win re-election in 2004, by ensuring evangelical turnouts. The [National Election Pool exit poll](#) recorded 78% of the vote among white evangelicals as having gone to Bush in 2004. Speaking of the mid-term election results in 2014, Reed stated that Conservative voters of faith were the largest constituency in the electorate in 2014. "...Religious conservative voters and the issues they care about are here to stay. They will be equally vital in 2016. Politicians of both parties ignore this constituency at their peril," he [contended](#).

The rise of Christian political activists like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson in the 1980s made a substantial dent

in the prominence of evangelicals in the voting patterns of America. President Ronald Reagan was associated with religious conservatives and his national popularity paved the way for increased conservatives' participation in the socio-political milieu of the United States. Falwell [proclaimed](#), "God is calling millions of Americans in the so-often silent majority to join in the moral majority crusade to turn America around." More importantly, Falwell was instrumental in [building coalitions](#) with Jews, Roman Catholics and Mormons. Pat Roberson, who belonged to a political family, unsuccessfully ran for the Republican Party's nomination in 1988. However, his candidacy significantly encouraged evangelicals to switch their party registration from Democrat to Republican in order to vote for him and is often seen as the forerunner of [evangelical-fueled candidacies](#) in the Republican Party.

According to a [Gallup poll](#), very religious Americans today tend to identify more with or lean towards the Republican Party than with the Democratic Party, with those who are moderately or nonreligious more likely to do otherwise. Though this relationship between religiosity and party identification is seen to be largely applicable to most demographic groups, African Americans tend to lean towards the Democratic Party, and the political orientation of very religious and nonreligious among them do not vary significantly. Though Hispanics and Asian Americans tend to identify with or lean more towards the Democratic Party, this "preference is significantly less pronounced among very religious Hispanics and Asians than among the others."

Another [survey by the Pew Research Center](#) has pointed to the growing number of adults, across regions and demographics, in the US population who do not identify with any organized religion. Although from a very low base, a growth has been registered in non-Christian religions, especially among Muslims and Hindus. Simultaneously, a drop has been seen in the Christian share of the population in recent times, owing largely to declines among mainline Protestants and Catholics. As a result, concerns have been expressed that this scenario could impact the conservatives' vote share in the country, hence affecting the support base for the Republican Party. However, Ralph Reed of the Freedom and Faith Council discounts this fear, arguing that those who do not identify with any religion, or the 'nones' as they are called, do not "gather in a single place weekly as evangelicals and Catholics do at church." "...it is a lot easier to organize

people who hold to what they believe is a transcendent and eternal truth than it is to organize people who don't believe in anything, or much of anything," [Reed said](#).

The publicness and privateness of the Christian faith in American lives have been a constant discourse at the local and national levels. Viewpoints might differ regarding the extent to which faith affects voting patterns in America. Nevertheless, regular churchgoers seem more inclined towards developing a group mentality that shape their views towards issues, and hence determine their party and candidate preferences. The US Constitution builds a wall of separation between the church and the state, interpreted as prohibiting the state from meddling into the affairs of the church and vice versa. However, this constitutional provision cannot negate the church's influence in determining who gets elected.

(The author is Assistant Professor at the Department of Geopolitics and International Relations, Manipal University (Karnataka))

The Iran Deal: Will it have an Impact on US Elections?

Uma Purushothaman

President Barack Obama might have concluded a historical deal with Iran, but rumblings of discontent against the deal can already be heard within the American political establishment. It appears that the deal with Iran will be the subject of much debate during the 2016 US elections. This election might see more focus on foreign policy on issues such as the US role in the world, the US-China relationship, the Iran deal and the continuing turmoil in the Middle East even though Americans have tended more often than not to vote on domestic issues than on foreign policy issues.

In fact, soon after the deal was officially announced, there was a [race](#) of sorts among the Republican Presidential contenders to be the first to condemn the deal and to sound tougher on Iran. Donald Trump, who has surprisingly emerged as the frontrunner in the GOP field, has called the deal an outrage and a win for Iran, saying the President [negotiated from desperation](#). [Jeb Bush](#) denounced the deal as a "dangerous, deeply flawed, and short-sighted" package and "appeasement". He argued that a comprehensive agreement should require Iran to "verifiably abandon – not simply delay – its pursuit

of a nuclear weapons capability". Marco Rubio felt that the Obama administration had given too many concessions in its pursuit of the deal. Given that President Obama has said that he will veto any resolution by Congress disapproving of the deal, [Rubio](#) asserted that "it will then be left to the next President to return us to a position of American strength and re-impose sanctions on this despicable regime until it is truly willing to abandon its nuclear ambitions and is no longer a threat to international security."

Scott Walker has described the deal as one of America's [worst diplomatic failures](#) and said that he will terminate the deal if he is elected president. Senator Lindsey Graham described the deal as a [nightmare](#) for Israel, the Middle East and the world and that it amounted to "[declaring war](#) on Israel and the Sunni Arabs". Mike Huckabee had even stronger words saying President Obama is [marching](#) Israelis to the "door of the oven", in a reference to the Holocaust. Huckabee's comments have sparked outrage from the Democratic Party with the head of the Democratic National Committee calling for an apology from Mr. Huckabee. Rick Santorum slammed the deal "[a catastrophic capitulation](#)" by the President, adding that it gives the Iranians "legitimacy" in the international community. Rand Paul, who has advocated a more isolationist America, found the deal "unacceptable" and announced that he would vote against it in Congress. [Ben Carson](#) called it a historic mistake with potentially catastrophic consequences while Ted Cruz felt that the deal would [legitimise](#) and perpetuate Iran's nuclear programme.

On the other hand, the Democratic frontrunner [Hillary Clinton](#) came out in support of the agreement saying it is an "important step in putting a lid" on Iran's nuclear programme while suggesting that it will have to be "enforced vigorously, relentlessly". Bernie Sanders welcomed the agreement calling it a victory for diplomacy as did Jim Webb who called it an important moment in American foreign policy. The voice of dissent from the Democratic Party came from Robert Menendez, a long time critic of the negotiations, who said that the deal will [preserve](#) Iran's nuclear capabilities and legitimises it as a threshold nuclear state. Domestic politics over the deal have already begun. On 26 July, Senator Ted Cruz tried unsuccessfully to add an [amendment](#) to a long term highway bill which would have prevented President

Obama from lifting some sanctions until Iran supports Israel and releases the three Americans being held in Iran.

The deal's supposed adverse implications for Israeli security and the influence of the Jewish lobby are the reasons behind candidates opposing the deal. Their positions are also meant to capture Jewish voters, who have traditionally voted for the Democratic Party.

However, what can queer the pitch are surveys showing that American public opinion is supportive of the deal. A [poll](#) by the *Los Angeles Jewish Journal* shows that 28 percent Americans support the deal against 24 percent who oppose it. Interestingly, American Jews support the deal 49 percent as opposed to 31 percent even though they believe that the deal will endanger Israel. 53 percent of American Jews want Congress to pass the deal against 35 percent who don't. At the same time, only 41 percent Americans want Congress to support the deal against the 38 percent who don't. The American Jews' stance is reflective of them thinking as Americans first and also their growing disenchantment with Israeli policies which they feel [perpetuate](#) civilian conflict, according to a study by the Jewish People Policy Institute. Moreover, Jews are [much more liberal](#) than the overall public, and liberals largely support the Iran deal. However, several Jewish organisations have already started lobbying against the deal. For instance, the [powerful pro-Israel lobby AIPAC](#) launched an advocacy group called 'Citizens for a Nuclear Free Iran', which will reportedly spend around \$20 million to persuade members of Congress to vote against the accord. Jewish federations in the Miami and Boston are doing the same. But there are organisations like J Street which has launched a campaign to lobby Congress to vote for the deal.

Thus, there is a [clear divide](#) between the Jewish people and their organisations on the issue just as there was during the Iraq War when the organisations supported the War and American Jews did not. So, based on these polls, it appears that American Jews' votes will not be affected by the Iran accord. In fact, some analysts even argue that if the debate over the accord [breaks along partisan lines](#) American Jews will support the Democrats because of their Democratic and liberal leanings.

In the days ahead, as Congress scrutinises the Iran accord, partisanship on Capitol Hill might reach new heights and it will capture headlines. Whether Congress rejects or

passes the Iran deal or not, it will loom large in the election debates because of its connection to American and Israeli national security though it is unlikely to be a real game changer in the elections.

(Uma Purushothaman is Research Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation)

Impact of the Same-Sex Marriage Ruling

Vidisha Mishra

On June 26, 2015, in a historic [5-4 Judgement](#) in the case of *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the US Supreme Court effectively settled one of the major civil rights issues in the country. Same-sex couples now have the constitutional right to marry. Although the issue may have been settled legally, it remains politically divisive. Since the ruling, [reactions](#) of the 2016 Presidential candidates (and assumed candidates) have been deeply polarised, indicating the potential of same-sex marriage to become a determining factor in the run up to 2016.

While the reactions from Democratic candidates indicated univocal support for the judgement, the Republican response showed variation, with some expressing stronger objections than others. Leading the Democrats, President Barack Obama, whose personal views on same sex marriage have shifted over the years, and has gone through a self-admitted “[struggle](#)”, stated that the Supreme Court ruling was a victory that would strengthen all communities in the American Union. The President’s official position on the issue has witnessed well-documented shifts from being pro same-sex marriages in 1996 to being against it in 2008.

Similarly, leading Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton’s personal [views](#) on same-sex marriage have evolved over the years. Clinton tweeted in strong support of LGBT Americans and advocates of equal rights. In 2008, Clinton had only supported civil unions for same-sex couples. Clinton’s closest competition in the Primaries, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who has long been a vocal proponent of gay rights, also hailed the Supreme Court decision as “equal justice under law”. Other Presidential hopefuls like Martin O’Malley and Lincoln Chafee also reacted positively.

On the other hand, even though all the GOP candidates showed disappointment over the ruling, some like Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee and Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal — issued strongly worded statements, urging conservatives to fight against the legislation that they found to be at odds with [religious liberty](#). However, others, such as former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and Florida Senator Marco Rubio, issued more moderate statements.

Republican candidates, who were quick to register their disapproval of the court’s 5-4 ruling, now find themselves in the tough situation of assuaging their conservative voter base while at the same time acknowledging that the next President will be ineffectual in reversing the judgement in any manner. This may explain why some prominent GOP candidates like Bush and Rubio chose to adopt relatively muted reactions in comparison. While they both established that the court had overstepped its boundaries and the final decision on same-sex marriage should have been left to respective states, they upheld the law of the land and spoke against discrimination.

Moreover, the ruling follows an unparalleled shift in the American public opinion. According to the [Pew Research Centre](#), in 2001, Americans opposed same-sex marriage by a 57% to 35% margin. But, data published days before the judgement in June 2015 demonstrated that support for same-sex marriage has increased dramatically in the last few years. Today, 39% of Americans oppose same-sex marriage while a majority of them (57%) support it. Most significantly, the data highlights that almost [3 in 4](#) people aged 18-35 support same-sex marriage, regardless of party affiliations.

Given the changing public and political atmosphere in favour of same-sex marriage, Republican candidates are likely to find themselves grappling with their approach to the Supreme Court ruling as well as to the issue of equal rights at large. The challenge in the Primaries and more explicitly in the 2016 Presidential face-off would be to balance the expectations of their core conservative base without estranging the general voters, many of them [young millennials](#), who largely support equal rights.

However, the Supreme Court ruling could also help the GOP. The judgement has left the older, conservative audiences feeling defensive. Therefore, the ruling could serve as the key consolidating issue that candidates can

rally around. The subsequent perception of threat to religious liberty and family values may even help bolster fund-raising campaigns for GOP candidates who are vocally critical of the ruling.

Additionally, the *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruling was accompanied by the judgement upholding Obamacare. This has resulted in strengthening calls amongst the Republicans against 'judicial activism'. It is likely that as a result of these judgements, the Supreme Court itself will be in focus during the 2016 elections. After the Obamacare ruling, [Sen. Ted Cruz](#), angrily noted that, "a handful of unelected judges had re-written the text to impose failed laws on Americans". Republican GOP hopeful [Carly Fiorina](#), said of the same-sex marriage ruling that it is, "only the latest example of an activist Court". The Republican discontentment with the bench could be a recurring theme. Growing frustration with the court may encourage conservatives to support presidential candidates who commit to place strong conservatives on the bench.

Since Hillary Clinton's nomination and her subsequent campaigns, it has been clear that gender issues will be playing a more significant role in the 2016 Presidential run than ever before. The SCOTUS ruling on same-sex marriage has only exacerbated that possibility, with LGBT rights thrust to the centre of the debate. The ruling has not only divided candidates along partisan lines, but has also generated different reactions within parties. It may not be a determining issue for Democratic candidates in the Presidential Primaries in 2014. But it remains to be seen how the Democrats leverage the ruling in 2016. Further, it remains to be seen how the Republican candidates balance their core conservative vote bank as well as a rapidly changing political landscape.

(Vidisha Mishra is Research Assistant at ORF)

Where Do Clinton and Sanders Stand on Issues?

Sylvia Mishra

More than a dozen Republicans and a handful of Democrats have announced that they are running for their party's 2016 presidential nomination. On the Republican side, if the competition between the presidential nominees is rife, the competition between the two front runners for Democratic presidential nominees is gathering steam. Hillary Clinton's ratings are going down as Bernie Sanders stirs populism.

A [Gallup poll](#) shows that Bernie Sanders' favourability ratings among American public has shot up to 24% in July from 12% in March this year. On the other hand, in the vortex of the email controversy, Hillary Clinton's ratings have slipped to 43% from 48%. The good news for Hillary Clinton is that her approval ratings are almost doubly ahead of Bernie Sanders. However, investigations looking into the 2012 attack on the US consulate in Benghazi and on a possible [Justice Department inquiry](#) into Mrs Clinton's controversial 'email-gate' severely threaten her campaign.

Meanwhile, Bernie Sanders' campaign momentum is picking up. Will Sanders be able to bridge the favourability gap between Clinton and himself by striking a chord amongst the non-white community rallying with his economic message of revolution against inequality? Or will the lack of foreign policy experience circumvent Sanders' growing popularity among the voters? This article highlights the differences in Clinton's and Sanders' positions on economic, social and foreign policy issues and showcases the vulnerabilities of both the candidates.

Hillary Clinton's [2016 economic plan](#) is focused on increasing middle-class incomes. She stands for giving a boost to the economy by giving tax cuts to the middle class and helping small businesses and enabling women to enter the workforce. Her other economic ideas include raising the minimum wage, making college, health and child care more affordable and support long term economic growth. On the other hand, self-declared 'democratic socialist' Sanders has recently launched a fiery campaign in Kenner, Louisiana, denouncing [inequality in America as 'grotesque' and 'immoral'](#). Economic issues have been the basis of his campaign and Sanders has frequently called for paid family leave, mandatory paid vacations and a raise in the minimum

wage. Additionally, Sanders has rallied to fix America's 'crumbling' infrastructure and has also blasted against pay inequalities based on gender and racial disparities in unemployment. Broadly, the economic messages of both candidates has converged on rebuilding the American middle class, market-led recovery, higher taxes on the wealthy and both strongly favour ObamaCare. However, what sets Clinton and Sanders apart in the economic realm is their position on international free trade, especially pertaining to the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). While Ms Clinton has [endorsed the trade deal as one which will produce jobs](#), raise wages and increase the prosperity of the American middle class, Sanders has been one of the staunchest critics of the TPP. Sanders has repeatedly argued that if the TPP is in place, multi-national corporations would [outsource millions of good paying American jobs to other low-wage countries](#) and would depress wages in the domestic market.

On social issues such as reforming education and gender equality, both the Democratic candidates' ideas broadly converge. Clinton has [advocated for women's rights](#) and family interests at the top of the domestic agenda along with healthcare reforms. On issues relating the environment, Hillary Clinton has promised to help people save money on their electricity bills by helping to install half a billion new solar panels. She has set a [goal of producing 33 percent of the nation's electricity from renewable sources by 2027](#) up from 7 percent today — a higher goal than the 20 percent that President Obama has called for by 2030. Ms. Clinton's [strategists](#) see climate change as a winning issue for 2016. They believe it is a cause she can advance to win over deep-pocketed donors and liberal activists in the nominating campaign. However, her rival Bernie Sanders too has a strong record on issues relating to the environment and climate change. Hence, Clinton's ambitious climate change agenda would earn her votes vis-à-vis Republican candidates than her immediate rival for the nomination— Bernie Sanders.

On issues relating to immigration, Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders has called for comprehensive immigration and a structured path to citizenship stating that "[Our job is not to divide. Our job is to bring people together.](#)" This claim has been in sharp contrast to the mainstream GOP agenda of advocating for tougher border security. One of the challenges for Sanders has been that his voter base is strictly confined to the white community. This is a challenge as Sanders hopes to win the nomination in a

party where nearly one-in-five members are black. Though, recently Sanders has touched on many [social issues of concern to civil rights groups](#) such as voting rights to police brutality to for profit-prisons, his campaign is yet to take off where he directly reaches to black voters beyond his mostly white base.

The United States' foreign policy is evolving and has seen a marked change from a sense of American exceptionalism during the Bush years to one of cautious restraint during the ongoing Obama presidency. So issues pertaining to foreign policy would loom large in the US Presidential elections of 2016. Being the former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton has a clear advantage over Bernie Sanders when it comes to foreign policy. Clinton has been one of the strongest proponents of President Obama's Rebalance to Asia policy. However, over time there has been a shift in rhetoric during the election campaign to prioritize the war in the Middle East and the immediate threat of the ISIS to the 'Rebalance to Asia' policy. On the other hand, Sanders has been criticised for his lack of foreign policy experience. One of the glaring shortcomings of Sanders' election campaign is the lack of a foreign policy vision. Sanders has been a [critic of large-scale military interventions](#) abroad, labelling them as expensive and counter-productive. He had opposed the Iraq War and had reservations about Obama's intervention in Libya. It is interesting to note, however, that Sanders is not against military action in all cases and had previously backed Bill Clinton's airstrikes in Kosovo and the Afghanistan War in 2001.

The Democratic election nomination tussle between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders is going through an exciting time as Sanders' far-left economic agenda is increasingly becoming more appealing to the party's base. While most thought that the Democratic nomination is going to be a landslide victory for Clinton, in reality the Democratic presidential front-runner is now labouring to find new avenues of leadership in campaign strategy in the backdrop of her sliding favourability ratings. In the long run, what could prove to be advantageous for her is her massive war chest compared to that of Sanders' and her expertise in matters of foreign policy.

(Sylvia Mishra is Junior Fellow at ORF)

America's Evolving Foreign Policy Debate

On July 21, 2015, the Observer Research Foundation hosted Mr. Brian Katulis, Senior Researcher from the Center for American Progress to speak on 'America's Evolving Foreign Policy Debate'. At the outset, Katulis mentioned that the United States is undergoing a structural change in its foreign policy engagements. American foreign policy decision making is becoming more realistic and pragmatic about the exercise of American power and influence in the world.

From the beginning of his Presidency, President Obama had a vision of forward engagement. President Obama has neither been hawkish nor dovish in his foreign policy engagements. Instead, President Obama's foreign policy has been pragmatic regarding the limits of American power and increasingly less dependent on ideological imperatives. In the seventh year in office, the Obama administration's foreign policy reflects this pragmatism of unbinding foreign policy to notions of democracies and human rights. Instead, his administration has focused on engaging adversaries like Iran and Cuba and expanding prosperity by working with allies and partners.

In the post-Cold War period, there was a sense of "American exceptionalism" as the United States entered the "unipolar moment". However by the end of the Bush administration, an overstretched economy and the quagmire of two wars demonstrated the limits of American power. Assuming office in 2008, President Obama sought to bring incremental changes to end the global war on terror, military actions against the Al-Qaeda and withdraw large-scale American forces.

Katulis opined that the limits of American power were seen in Iraq and Afghanistan which stressed the need for greater collaboration with partner countries. According to Katulis, the US needs to have a more practical approach combating the Islamic State and have realistic goals regarding Israel-Palestine reconciliation. With regard to the Islamic State, which poses a grave security challenge not only in the region, but also to the entire world, the US needs to collaborate with partner countries to end Islamic radicalism.

Katulis explained that the Obama administration has strived to chart a foreign policy that would outlive the administration and shape the contours of foreign policy making in the coming years. As part of his long-term strategy, President Obama has focused on developing robust partnerships with India, Japan and Africa. US-India bilateral relations serve as a template for foreign partnerships where two countries collaborate together on multiple issues. Katulis mentioned that the US is also heavily invested in the Rebalance to the Asia-Pacific policy and its economic arm trade agenda i.e. the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Katulis noted that the external challenges from authoritarian governments like Russia and China could lead the US into following a more hard-line foreign policy path. On account of transnational threats like climate change, cyber security and Ebola, Katulis said that the US needs to work with partners to resolve these crises which affect all the countries.

Speaking about burgeoning Chinese military power posing serious challenges for US security, Katulis noted that the US relationship with China is not defined by threats, rather it is defined by US objectives and goals. He also spoke about the possibility of a return to fear-based politics regarding American national security issues. There is hyper polarization and sharp divisions along party lines on foreign policy matters which continually impact America's security dynamics with its allies. Katulis gave example of the Iran nuclear deal which is intensely resisted by the Republicans. He also pointed out divisions within the Democratic Party on issues of international trade— the TPP and TTIP. This hyper-polarisation is increasingly becoming detrimental to American foreign policy making and according to Katulis, the Republicans are focusing more on rhetoric rather than coming up with strong alternatives.

Katulis' presentation was followed by a lively discussion and a Q&A session. Katulis said that American foreign policy making is undergoing a structural change in response to a question on whether US foreign policy is undergoing a structural change or a strategic adaptation. He mentioned that the sense of American exceptionalism has fewer takers in the US and there is a notion of restraint and humility of American power. A vast majority of the young population in the US is more

concerned with issues and long term threats like climate change, racial discriminations and gun-laws. Answering questions pertaining to Chinese military assertiveness and increasing presence in the Indian Ocean, Katulis mentioned that there is an overall consensus among the US policy makers that there is a need to engage China. He said while strengthening economic ties with China, the US also needs to have a firm policy on issues which negatively impacts relations such as cyber security. Katulis concluded his talk by stating that ever since President Obama was elected

the US foreign policy strategy and the instruments of power and influence have become progressively pragmatic. The goal of the Obama administration is to strike a new balance between defence and diplomacy.

The talk was chaired by Dr C Raja Mohan and attended by scholars and diplomats.

(This report was prepared by Sylvia Mishra, Junior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation)

The Field

Democratic Party

Bernie Sanders

In office: Senator, Vermont

Campaign Site: <https://berniesanders.com>

Government Site: [Office of US Senator Bernie Sanders](#)

Facebook (Campaign): www.facebook.com/FriendsOfBernie

Facebook (Official): www.facebook.com/SenatorSanders

Twitter: www.twitter.com/SenSanders

Lincoln Chafee

Former Office: Governor, Rhode Island; Senator, Rhode Island

Campaign Site: www.chafee2016.com/

Government Site: [Office of US Senator Bernie Sanders](#)

Facebook (Campaign): www.facebook.com/FriendsOfBernie

Facebook (Official): www.facebook.com/SenatorSanders

Twitter: www.twitter.com/SenSanders

Hillary Clinton

Former Office: US Secretary of State; Senator, New York

Campaign Site: HillaryClinton.com

PAC Site: [Priorities USA Action PAC](#)

Independent PAC Site: ReadyForHillary.com

Twitter: www.twitter.com/HillaryClinton

Martin O'Malley

Former Office: Governor, Maryland

PAC Site: [O'Say Can You See PAC](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MartinOMalley

Twitter: www.twitter.com/GovernorOMalley

Republican Party

Jeb Bush

Former Office: Governor, Florida

PAC Site: [Right to Rise PAC](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/JebBush

Twitter: www.twitter.com/JebBush

Chris Christie

In Office: Governor, New Jersey

PAC Site: [Leadership Matters for America PAC](#)

Government Site: [Office of Governor Chris Christie](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GovChrisChristie

Twitter: www.twitter.com/GovChristie

Ted Cruz

In Office: Senator, Texas

Campaign Site: TedCruz.org

Government Site: Office of US Senator Ted Cruz

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TedCruzPage

Twitter: www.twitter.com/TedCruz

Scott Walker

In Office: Governor, Wisconsin

<http://www.scottwalker.com/>

Bobby Jindal

In Office: Governor, Louisiana

PAC Site: [American Bridge](#)

Government Site: [Office of the Governor](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bobbyjindal>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/bobbyjindal>

Marco Rubio

In Office: Senator from Florida

Official Website: <http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/>
PAC Site: [Reclaim American PAC](#)
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MarcoRubio>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/marcorubio>

Donald Trump

Profession: Businessman
Official Website: <https://www.donaldjtrump.com/>
PAC Site: [Make America Great Again](#)
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DonaldTrump>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump>

Ben Carson

Profession: Neurosurgeon
Official Site: RealBenCarson.com
PAC Site: [American Legacy PAC](#)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/DrBenjaminCarson
Twitter: www.twitter.com/RealBenCarson

Rand Paul

Office: Senator, Kentucky
Official Site: <https://www.randpaul.com/about>
PAC Site: [Stand with Rand](#)
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RandPaul>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/randpaul>

THE POLLS

Table 1
2016 Democratic Presidential Nomination

Polling Data									
Poll	Date	Sample	Clinton	Sanders	Biden	Webb	O'Malley	Chafee	Spread
RCP Average	7/9 - 7/21	--	57.8	17.2	10.3	2.2	1.0	0.8	Clinton +40.6
PPP (D)	7/20 - 7/21	496 RV	57	22	--	5	2	3	Clinton +35
ABC News/Wash Post	7/16 - 7/19	RV	63	14	12	2	1	0	Clinton +49
FOX News	7/13 - 7/15	382 RV	59	19	8	1	1	1	Clinton +40
USA Today/Suffolk	7/9 - 7/12	434 LV	59	14	8	2	0	0	Clinton +45
Monmouth	7/9 - 7/12	357 RV	51	17	13	1	1	0	Clinton +34
All 2016 Democratic Presidential Nomination Polling Data									

Table 1 shows the leading candidates in the 2016 Democratic Presidential Nominations. In all the surveys conducted by Fox News, ABC News/Washington Post, USA Today/Suffolk, Monmouth and PPP (D), Hillary Clinton is leading by a wide margin. The polling data reveals that Clinton is followed by Bernie Sanders although there is a huge gap between Sanders and the far-and-away front runner, Hillary Clinton. This trend has remained stable in the last few months.

Source: www.realclearpolitics.com, 25 July 2015

Table 2

2016 Republican Presidential Nomination

Polling Data																	
Poll	Date	Trump	Bush	Walker	Rubio	Carson	Huckabee	Paul	Cruz	Christie	Kasich	Perry	Fiorina	Santorum	Jindal	Graham	Spread
RCP Average	7/9 - 7/21	18.2	13.4	12.0	7.0	6.4	6.2	5.6	5.4	2.8	1.8	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.2	0.0	Trump +4.8
PPP (D)	7/20 - 7/21	19	12	17	10	10	8	4	4	3	3	1	4	1	1	0	Trump +2
ABC/Wash Post	7/16 - 7/19	24	12	13	7	6	8	6	4	3	2	4	0	1	2	0	Trump +11
FOX News	7/13 - 7/15	18	14	15	7	6	4	8	4	3	2	1	1	2	0	0	Trump +3
USAT/Suffolk	7/9 - 7/12	17	14	8	5	4	4	4	6	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	Trump +3
Monmouth	7/9 - 7/12	13	15	7	6	6	7	6	9	2	1	2	1	2	2	0	Bush +2
All 2016 Republican Presidential Nomination Polling Data																	

Table 2 indicates the popularity of the 2016 Republican Presidential Nomination. The polling data reveals that on an average, Donald Trump has a lead cumulatively in surveys conducted by Fox News, USA Today/Suffolk, Monmouth, PPP(D) and ABC News/Washington Post. He is closely followed by Jeb Bush, Scott Walker and Marco Rubio. The Republican field has been shaken by the surge in the popularity of Donald Trump, who has taken a lead over Jeb Bush, who had been the frontrunner so far.

The tables together show that while the Democrats have a clear front-runner in Hillary Clinton, the Republican field has no clear-cut leading nominee. Also, the Republican field is much more crowded than the Democrat field. A clear picture of the leading nominees will emerge only towards the end of the year.

Source: www.realclearpolitics.com, 25 July 2015

STATEMENTS/INTERVIEWS

Excerpts from Scott Walker’s Interview to CNN’S Dana Bash, 19 July

Walker on doing away with the Iran deal, increasing sanctions and more: “Yes. And I think it's that bad of a deal. It's a bad deal for us. It's a bad deal for Israel. It's a bad deal for the region. I will not—it's not just the starting gun, it will accelerate the nuclear arms race, and it is a powering Iran to do what they're going to do by lifting the sanctions, giving them credibility in the world, not only emboldens the problems that we have in terms of the illicit nuclear infrastructure but this is the leading state sponsor of terrorism. ...I would seek to get the support of Congress not just to reinstate the existing sanctions, but to replace more crippling ones... I think if America would lead and make the case as to why these sanctions are needed and why we need to petition in

that regard”

Walker on if being gay is a choice: “Oh, I mean I think—that's not even an issue for me to be involved in. The bottom line is, I'm going to stand up and work hard for every American regardless of who they are, no matter where they come from, no matter what their background. I'm going to fight for people and no matter whether they vote for me or not.”

Walker on if Boys Scouts of America should keep its ban on gay leaders: “That’s up to the people who run the boy scouts. ...Sure. I said in this case that's what I thought. I thought the policy was just fine. ... I was saying when I was in scouts it was fine. You're asking what should the policy be going forward? It should be left up to the leaders of the scouts.”

Walker on legal immigration being limited: “What I specifically said is I think priority under legal immigration

should be given to the impact on American working families, on their wages in a way that will improve the American economy. That only means people like me who were born here, that means people like the woman I just met in Cedar Rapids, for example, who moved here many years ago, was a political refugee in the Congo and who went through the process to be a legal citizen. She is working here. And I believe for her and for others who were born here, there needs to be a priority given to say we're going to do things that makes sure we put priority on American working families and their wages. Doesn't mean there won't ever be legal immigration. It just says that's where our priority should be.”

For full transcript of the interview, see <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2015/07/19/cnns-dana-bash-gets-an-exclusive-interview-in-governor-scott-walkers-winnebago/>

Excerpts from Rand Paul’s statements on the Tax Code

Some of my fellow Republican candidates for the presidency have proposed plans to fix the tax system. These proposals are a step in the right direction, but the tax code has grown so corrupt, complicated, intrusive and antigrowth that I’ve concluded the system isn’t fixable.

So today I am announcing an over \$2 trillion tax cut that would repeal the entire IRS tax code—more than 70,000 pages—and replace it with a low, broad-based tax of 14.5% on individuals and businesses. I would eliminate nearly every special-interest loophole. The plan also eliminates the payroll tax on workers and several federal taxes outright, including gift and estate taxes, telephone taxes, and all duties and tariffs. I call this “The Fair and Flat Tax.”

...Here’s what I propose for the middle class: The Fair and Flat Tax eliminates payroll taxes, which are seized by the IRS from a worker’s paychecks before a family ever sees the money. This will boost the incentive for employers to hire more workers, and raise after-tax income by at least 15% over 10 years.

... Polls show that “fairness” is a top goal for Americans in our tax system. I envision a traditionally All-American solution: Everyone plays by the same rules. This means no one of privilege, wealth or with an arsenal of

lobbyists can game the system to pay a lower rate than working Americans.

... My tax plan would blow up the tax code and start over. In consultation with some of the top tax experts in the country, including the Heritage Foundation’s Stephen Moore, former presidential candidate Steve Forbes and Reagan economist Arthur Laffer, I devised a 21st-century tax code that would establish a 14.5% flat-rate tax applied equally to all personal income, including wages, salaries, dividends, capital gains, rents and interest. All deductions except for a mortgage and charities would be eliminated. The first \$50,000 of income for a family of four would not be taxed. For low-income working families, the plan would retain the earned-income tax credit.

... The immediate question everyone asks is: Won’t this 14.5% tax plan blow a massive hole in the budget deficit? As a senator, I have proposed balanced budgets and I pledge to balance the budget as president.

... And because the best way to balance the budget and pay down government debt is to put Americans back to work, my plan would actually reduce the national debt by trillions of dollars over time when combined with my package of spending cuts.

The left will argue that the plan is a tax cut for the wealthy. But most of the loopholes in the tax code were designed by the rich and politically connected. Though the rich will pay a lower rate along with everyone else, they won’t have special provisions to avoid paying lower than 14.5%.

The challenge to this plan will be to overcome special-interest groups in Washington who will muster all of their political muscle to save corporate welfare.

For full text of the statement, see <https://www.randpaul.com/news/rand-pauls-fair-and-flat-tax>

DIASPORA WATCH

Two Indian-Americans Raise US \$100,000 Each for Hillary Clinton's Presidential Campaign: Report

According to media reports, two prominent Indian-Americans have joined the club of 120 volunteers who have raised more than \$100,000 for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. Maryland Democrat Mahinder Tak and New York technology investor Deven J. Parekh are the first Indian-Americans to have raised \$100,000 each for the campaign. The two are being hailed as "Hillblazers", or "individuals who have helped raise \$100,000 or more in primary election contributions" by the campaign website. Ms. Tak is an Indian-American radiation oncologist and retired US Army colonel. She was co-chair of the Democratic National Committee's Indo-American Council during the 2008 Obama campaign. She is also one of the largest private collectors of Indian art in the US. Tak plans to raise around \$325,000 for Clinton during the primary. She stated, "America needs a woman now, she is the best candidate for Democrats".

Source: <http://www.ndtv.com/diaspora/2-indian-americans-raise-us-100-000-each-for-hillary-clintons-presidential-campaign-report-783490> , 21 July 2015

Polls Show Bobby Jindal Gaining Ground in Iowa, Nationally Low

The popularity of Indian-American Bobby Jindal, a Republican presidential aspirant, has increased significantly in the crucial swing State of Iowa, but his national popularity ratings remain abysmally low, latest opinion polls have shown. "It's worth noting that Bobby Jindal enjoys more support in Iowa than he does nationally. He is among the top ten candidates in Iowa, but his ranking in the national polls makes it unlikely he will gain entry to the first debate," Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute said after the release of latest polling data. Scott Walker emerged as the first choice of 22 per cent of the Iowa Republicans followed by Donald Trump at 13 per cent when they were asked who they would support in their local caucus.

Source: http://www.ndtv.com/diaspora/polls-show-bobby-jindal-gains-ground-in-iowa-nationally-low-783594?ndtv_nextstory , 21 July 2015

Which Presidential Candidates Are Winning the Money Race So Far?

This article provides an overview of the money generated by Presidential hopefuls through campaign committees and through the support of the outside groups (in the case of Republicans) like the super PACs. Hillary Rodham Clinton raised \$47.5 million through June 30, more than any other candidate so far followed by Bernie Sanders \$15.2 million and Ted Cruz \$ 14.3 million and Jeb Bush \$11.4 million. In terms of outside support, Jeb Bush has the most outside support, with a reported \$103 million raised by the super PAC backing him. Outside groups like super PACs are playing a larger role than ever in supporting candidates.

Source: *New York Times*, 21 July 2015

Forecasters Expect a Strong Economy for 2016 Presidential Elections

A wide range of political science research suggests that if you want to know who will win the presidency, the state of the economy—and especially how economic conditions are changing—matters a great deal, perhaps even more than how charismatic the candidates are or how much money they raise. The election is 16 months away, but knowing what we know now, what should we expect the economic backdrop to be when Americans choose their next president? To answer that question, *The New York Times* asked leading forecasters from economic consultancies, financial firms and universities for their predictions on where key economic variables will stand on November 8, 2016—Election Day. The seventeen who participated replied with a relatively strong consensus. They said they believed that unemployment would be the lowest it has been during an election since George W. Bush and Al Gore faced off in 2000, when it stood at 3.9 percent. The median forecast for the unemployment rate when voters go to the polls in November 2016 was 4.8 percent (which would be down from 5.3 percent last month).

Source: New York Times, 18 July 2015

Rand Paul Looks to Revive Stagnant Campaign

Rand Paul is resorting to political pyrotechnics to revive his stagnant campaign. His campaign released a video showing him destroying the 70,000-page federal tax code with a chain saw and feeding it into a wood chipper, saying that he wants to kill the tax code. Paul's popularity has decreased in the last few weeks though he still remains among the top ten GOP contenders. Foreign and domestic events have heightened the importance of the national security issue in the minds of Republican voters, a trend that doesn't help Paul according to Al Cross, a columnist for *The Courier-Journal*. Paul has also been conspicuously absent from interesting debates like the removal of the Confederate flag from Capitol grounds in South Carolina and hence has not been able to grab headlines.

Source: USA Today, 22 July 2015

Hillary Clinton Shows Weakness in Head-to-Head Polling against Top Republicans

According to a poll from Quinnipiac University, Hillary Rodham Clinton is showing some signs of weakness against potential Republican rivals in three swing states that could raise concern within the Democrat campaign. The survey found that Ms. Clinton is lagging behind Senator Marco Rubio, Governor Scott Walker and former Governor Jeb Bush in head-to-head matchups in Iowa, Colorado and Virginia, three swing states. Her favorability ratings have declined and voters are increasingly questioning her leadership abilities. Peter A. Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Poll, said in a statement, "She has lost ground in the horse race and on key questions about her honesty and leadership". Ms. Clinton performed better in a similar poll in April, suggesting that months of controversy over her use of a private email account and donations to the Clinton Foundation might have taken a toll on her popularity. But the survey does appear to contradict national polls that show Ms. Clinton outpacing her Republican counterparts.

Source: New York Times, 22 July 2015

Bernie Sanders's limited appeal—even to Democrats

A Washington Post-ABC News national poll shows that while Hillary Clinton is overwhelmingly popular across the Democratic Party, Bernie Sanders is less familiar and is weak among some key voting blocs. Nearly 23 percent of Democrats have an unfavourable view of Sanders as opposed to only 15 percent who have an unfavourable view of Clinton.

Liberal Democrats are the most favourable about Sanders. But Hillary Clinton shows little weakness among liberals as well. Sanders is liked better by college graduate but Clinton is liked by college graduates as well as those who are not graduates. Sanders is also better liked by Whites than by non White voters. Hillary Clinton, however, is overwhelmingly popular across both White and non White groups.

The survey reflects Hillary Clinton's persistent popularity across groups in the Democrat party and shows that Sanders has limited appeal.

Source: Washington Post, 16 July 2015

FURTHER READING

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