

## Communitarian Observations

*I often write about rather different matters, but in my mind they all deal with one core question: the guidance our shared values, especially the common good, provides to our public policies.*

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### Upcoming Events

The George Washington University's Institute for Global and International Studies, the Institute for International Economic Policy, and the Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies invite you to a discussion of ***Why Nations Fail***, featuring Professor James Robinson, David Florence Professor of Government at Harvard University, based on Professor Robinson's recent book of the same title. The lecture will be followed by a discussion with University Professor Amitai Etzioni and then with the audience. The event will take place on Tuesday, October 21, from 5:00-6:30pm at 1957 E Street NW, Room 602. (For additional details, please see the attached event flyer.) The event is free and open to the public, but **registration is required**. To register, send an email, with the subject line "Robinson Event RSVP," detailing your name and affiliation to [icps.gwu.events@gmail.com](mailto:icps.gwu.events@gmail.com).

Amitai Etzioni will deliver a keynote address at the opening session of the Beijing Forum on the morning of November 7, 2014, at Peking University in Beijing.

### Shorter Pieces

#### "Kissinger's Order"

"If you have a serious interest in Asia or in foreign policy in general—whether you're a policy wonk, an academic, or just a good citizen—I have a suggestion for you. Send an email to all of those to whom you owe service, such as employers and children, and ask for a three-day leave. Then take Henry Kissinger's remarkable new book, *World Order*, to a hilltop without cell phone or television reception and read it, nay, study it. I assure you that you will feast on it for years to come." (Read more of "Kissinger's Order" at the [ICPS blog](#) or at [The Diplomat](#).)

#### "Bob McDonnell's Corruption: The Real Scandal Is What's Legal"

"The conviction of former Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell and his wife Maureen on several corruption charges reveals yet again that Americans are more troubled by elected officials who pocket personal gifts than by those who accept large campaign contributions, sometimes from the same special interests. If it were otherwise, a considerable number of members of Congress would be on the docket right next to the governor—and on the way to jail." (Read more of "Bob McDonnell's Corruption" at the [ICPS blog](#) or at [The Atlantic](#).)

#### Coauthored with David Cohen: "To End One-Dollar, One-Vote"

"It is wrong to squander the public outrage. This is a particularly grievous error given that the public outrage about the flood of private monies into public hands is rather limited to begin with. Following several Supreme Court decisions, which removed most of the remaining limits to the amounts of money special interests can contribute to election campaigns, selling legislation has become even more

prevalent. We are moving from one-person, one-vote to a system that is centered around one-dollar, one-vote.” (Read more of “To End One-Dollar, One-Vote” at the [ICPS blog](#) or at [The Huffington Post](#).)

### Longer Articles

[“Air Sea Battle: A Case Study in Structural Inattention and Subterranean Forces.”](#) *Armed Forces and Society* 40(4). October 2014. *Abstract: In response to China’s military modernization and growing anti-access/area denial capabilities, the US military has adopted an “Air Sea Battle” concept entailing extensive strikes on the Chinese mainland. ASB has been embraced at the Pentagon and increasingly affects procurement decisions. Critics argue that ASB creates grave escalation risks and may incite an expensive arms race. Less discussed, but also of serious concern, is that ASB was adopted with little to no civilian oversight, in a case of “structural inattention.” This failure of civil-military relations derives from institutional factors such as the nature and composition of the White House staff, as well as from the administration’s pragmatic rather than strategic approach to China. It has also been facilitated by “subterranean factors,” including the interests of influential military contractors and the military’s own inclination toward conventional warfare.*

[“The Air-Sea Battle ‘Concept’: A Critique.”](#) *International Politics* 51(5). September 2014. *Abstract: In May 2013 the Pentagon released an unclassified summary of the top-secret Air-Sea Battle (ASB) Concept. ASB serves to focus the Pentagon’s efforts to organize, train and equip the armed forces against advanced weapons systems that threaten the US military’s unfettered freedom of access and action in the global commons. While officials claim ASB will merely improve service interoperability and could be applied in any number of conflict situations, this article argues that in fact the doctrine represents the Pentagon’s plan for confronting China’s increasingly capable and confident military. This raises two urgent questions: how does ASB fit into an overall US foreign policy toward China—and, if a military confrontation cannot be avoided, are there less risky alternatives, such as a marine blockade, that can achieve the same ends as ASB?*

[“Common Good,”](#) [“Communitarianism,”](#) and [“Community.”](#) In *Encyclopedia of Political Thought*. Ed. Michael T. Gibbons, Diana Coole, Elisabeth Elis, and Kennan Ferguson. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2014.

“Sozioökonomik heute.” In [Was ist und wozu Sozioökonomie?](#) Ed. Reinhold Hedtke. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer VS, 2015.

### I Read

Susan Pinker. [The Village Effect: How Face-to-Face Contact Can Make Us Happier and Healthier](#). New York: Random House, 2014. David Brooks. [“Startling Adult Friendships: There Are Political and Social Benefits to Having Friends.”](#) *The New York Times*. September 18, 2014.

### From My Diary

Will Rogers: “If you don’t scare Congress, they go fishing; if you do they go crazy.”

A 1992 article on [“The Evils of Self-Determination”](#) seems especially relevant, given recent events in Scotland and the ongoing situation in the Ukraine.

I [argued](#) that the United States' "pivot" to Asia—or "rebalance," as it is now called—is premature. "China may one day become a major power that will challenge the global role of the U.S. However, if such a development is to take place, it will be decades down the road—while the U.S. is challenged in the Middle East right now. Moreover, the way the U.S. deals with the Middle East has major consequences extending far beyond the region, including for the global stature of the U.S. and its position in the Far East." Recent developments in the Middle East seem to further support this position.

### Commentary

Roy Peled submitted an insightful note about communitarianism and the news media, in which he wrote, "Freedom of the Press' stems from the public interest. Like any other right, freedom of the press too bestows duties on others to respect it. The immediate suspect for bearing such duty is the government, which must not interfere in press operations. I wish to argue that another bearer of the duty to respect freedom of the press is the press itself. It is the news media (which I refer to here interchangeably with the press) which must adhere to standards of freedom and which must not subject itself to limitations and influences that limit its freedom to serve a democratic community in which it operates with the information it needs in order to thrive. The press is not essential only to the community as such. It is essential for an individual that takes seriously his own duties. In this regard I am referring to the duty of a community member to remain up to date on community affairs. The community's proper functioning is dependent on the engagement of community members in community affairs. This is another reason why the news media is so essential for a democratic community. A non-democratic community can survive without a news media. Surely it can survive without a free media. All that it needs is a government information agency to provide citizens with information deemed to be necessary for their daily functions. But in a democratic society, members must have access to vast and diverse information from various sources, in order to be actively involved in the community and the decision making processes within it, to have an opinion and to express it." His comment has been published in full on [the ICPS website](#).

### Videos

Watch the latest videos from the Communitarian Network, including video from [Kurt Campbell's lecture at the ICPS](#), a [recent interview with China Network Television](#), and "[You Don't Need to Buy This](#)" (which just surpassed 20,000 views) at our [YouTube Channel!](#)

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*For more about the communitarian project, please visit <http://icps.gwu.edu>. For more notes, please visit <http://blog.amitaiezioni.org>.*