

Saving Syrian Children; Social Security Endangered; Confronting Iran

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Zaatari refugee camp, 2013

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Editorials

[Long Knives out for Social Security](#)

The appointment of Mike Mulvaney as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget is one more reason for those who care about the integrity of Social Security to worry. Mulvaney is known as an anti-deficit hack, and was part of the 2010 Tea Party wave. He favored letting the government shut down rather than increasing the debt ceiling. How can his appointment and policy bent be reconciled with Trump's plans to spend a

trillion dollars on infrastructure and to increase military spending, and to give major tax cuts to corporations and individuals — all measures that will greatly increase the deficit? The answer lies in Mulvaney and his associates in Congress going after the only large pool of dough left: funds set aside for Social Security.
Published in *The Huffington Post*; click [here](#) for the full text.

[Congress should support bill to grant temporary visas to Syrian refugee children](#)

The act authorizes granting temporary visas to 25,000 Syrian refugee children, ages three to 10, to live in the U.S. until the civil war in their country ends. These children, to be chosen by their families or orphaned, will be able to live in the homes of American families who will volunteer to host them. The costs of their care will be covered by the host families themselves or by charitable organizations.
Published in *The Hill*; click [here](#) for the full text.

[How America Can Cut Off Iran's Poisonous Tentacles](#)

I join Michèle Flournoy, Hillary Clinton's would-be secretary of defense, who praised the nomination of Gen. James Mattis as secretary of defense. He seems to understand the Middle East, which is the second major threat to U.S. security (second to North Korea). He realizes the merit of confronting Iran directly, rather than contending separately with each of its poisonous tentacles in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.
Published in *The National Interest*; click [here](#) for the full text.

[The End of the TPP Will Not Upend America's Role In Asia](#)

Before the remarkable U.S. presidential elections, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) was promoted largely as a trade deal to benefit those nations that were included, though some held that it was also meant to isolate China (the TPP includes twelve countries, but excluded China). Since the election of Donald Trump, many commentators suddenly attribute enormous geopolitical import to the very likely demise of the TPP. However, there are many reasons to believe that the end of the TPP will have rather few implications for America's role in the region.
Published in *The Diplomat*; click [here](#) for the full text.

[Globalists Blind to Communitarianism](#)

As I see it, the rise of right-wing populism in the United States and in Europe can be attributed in no small extent to the profound misunderstanding globalists have of community and communitarian values. Globalists tend to view society as composed of free-standing individuals, each of whom has his or her own individual rights and is keen to pursue his or her own self-interest. The trouble with this view of society is that it ignores that human beings are social creatures, whose flourishing depends on lasting relationships and on the sharing of moral and social values.
Published in *The Huffington Post*; click [here](#) for the full text.

'Miracle on the Hill'

Eleanor Cift wrote about the Save the Children Act of 2016, a bill based on our proposal to place 25,000 Syrian children with American foster families until the war's end. [Click here to read "How Congress Can Still Save the Children of Syria."](#)

I Read

Research suggests that social isolation is not only bad for emotional health, but physical health too, writes Dhruv Khullar in the [The New York Times](#).

Workers in France will be able to negotiate when they must respond to email received after business hours, per a new French law (discussed in an [article by Chris Matyszczyk](#)). This is an excellent idea; work is encroaching on time that should be reserved for social activities with family and community, reflection, and spirituality.

Senator Murphy's heart is in the right place and his analysis of what went wrong in Syria is spot on (see his [op ed in The New York Times](#)). However, his prognosis does not take into account that the special conditions that existed after WWII, which allowed the Marshall Plan to succeed, are not available in the Middle East. For details see [COIN: A Study of Strategic Illusion](#).

The following quote by President Obama, appearing in David Remnick's [New Yorker article](#), draws attention to the potential of active citizens who become part of a communal force: "The thing that I have always been convinced of,' he said, 'the running thread through my career, has been this notion that when ordinary people get engaged, pay attention, learn about the forces that affect their lives and are able to join up with others, good stuff happens."

An [article in The New York Times](#) by Austin Frakt discusses how increased transparency of health care costs is doing little to help patients save money. For additional discussion of this topic, see [Is Transparency the Best Disinfectant?](#)

Video

Check out our video [The Five Minute Communitarian](#), and others, on our [YouTube channel](#).

Tweets You May Have Missed

Must read in [@NewYorker](#): Toobins on the 1st Amendment and the internet vs. print media <http://ow.ly/mqoC307cRnn>

Once upon a time, before Trump, it was a big scandal when a Congress member claimed that Obama told one lie. Now, we get a daily dose

IRS data show that the income of the top 400 wealthiest Americans rose by 20% in 2014. ow.ly/zqJa306KH0w

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