

BROOKINGS MOUNTAIN WEST

Spring 2015 Lecture Series

All lectures are held in Greenspun Hall Auditorium

Free and open to the public

Wednesday, February 11, 2015 5:30 p.m.**"Water Crimes: A Global Crisis on the Rise"***Vanda Felbab-Brown, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy*

Increasing urbanization, climate-change, deforestation, and poor agricultural, energy, and water-use policies are producing a severe scarcity of water in many parts of the world – a resource without substitutes. While the Middle East, South Asia, China, Central Asia, and SubSaharan Africa have long been known to be the loci of intense tensions over water, some potentially escalating to violent conflict and war, insufficient policy and scholarly attention has been paid to the proliferating smuggling of water within communities and potentially across international boundaries. It should be no surprise, therefore, to find that the smuggling of water and its illegal distribution are emerging as a new domain of organized crime.

Going beyond the use of water in excess of allocations, tampering with meters, or drilling of illegal taps, the organized smuggling of water will increasingly present a highly challenging problem from a regulatory and enforcement perspective as well as from a moral perspective (as when slum communities depend on organized crime groups for access to potable water obtained in violation of existing regulations and with negative environmental effects). Additional political, regulatory, and moral problems arise where state authorities manipulate access to water as a mechanism of political control over communities. Meanwhile, increasing industrial-scale privatization of water by companies and questionable "water grabs" will not only further complicate regulatory and enforcement policies toward water use, but also increasingly intersect with organized crime and water smuggling.

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 5:30 p.m.**"Climate Change, Natural Disasters, and Human Rights"***Elizabeth Ferris, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy*

This lecture examines trends in natural disasters, the effects of climate change, and their impact on human rights, including economic costs, the displacement/migration of people, and the likelihood that the poor and marginalized are most likely to be affected by natural disasters and climate change.

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 5:30 p.m.**"Mega-Regional Free Trade Agreements – Is the U.S. Gambling with the Global Trading System"***Joshua Meltzer, Fellow, Global Economy and Development*

This lecture will discuss the impact of the Trans Pacific Partnership negotiations and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations on U.S. economic competitiveness and leadership in Asia and Europe. This will lead into a discussion of large Free Trade Areas (FTA), or groups of countries that have few or no price controls in the form of tariffs or quotas between each other. FTAs allow the agreeing nations to focus on their comparative advantages and to produce the goods they are comparatively more efficient at making, thus increasing the efficiency and profitability of each country. We will explore the impact of FTAs on the World Trade Organization – whether they create a pathway towards a new global consensus on trade or will lead to the creation of competing trade blocs.

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Wednesday, March 25, 2015 5:30 p.m.**"Community-Level Action and Interventions to Improve Public Health – Tobacco Control, Obesity, and Community Dynamics"***Ross A. Hammond, Senior Fellow, Economic Studies and Director, Center on Social Dynamics and Policy*

There is growing recognition bottom-up, community-level action may be one of the most effective ways to address complex problems (especially in public health). "Whole of community" interventions offer the potential to break through gridlock that can derail attempts at higher levels of policy scale to coordinate action across multiple areas and sectors. In this lecture, I will present new research on the track record and potential of community-level changes to prevent obesity and tobacco use, covering both the promise and the potential challenges.

Wednesday, April 8, 2015 5:30 p.m.**"U.S. Military Intervention and the American Presidency"***Jeremy Shapiro, Fellow, Foreign Policy*

U.S. military intervention has long been among the most visible and dramatic manifestations of American leadership in global affairs. Even in a time of relative decline, U.S. military supremacy, and the willingness to use it, remains one of the most important pillars of U.S. power. And the Obama administration has not shied away from using military force. It launched a full-scale intervention in the civil war in Libya and has used drones and special forces in Pakistan and elsewhere with unprecedented vigor. President Obama has also shied away from using forces in some circumstances where his predecessors might have used that tool. It seems clear that as with other aspects of U.S. leadership, when and how the U.S. intervenes militarily must and is changing in response to a new global environment.

This lecture will describe the new U.S. approach to intervention by looking at military interventions in the Obama administration, particularly in Libya, the Drone Campaign, and Afghanistan, as well as "non-interventions" such as Syria and Iran. It will describe how the Obama administration has approached the use of force and explore whether this approach will persist in future presidencies or whether it is a result of Obama's policy choices.

Wednesday, April 15, 2015 5:30 p.m.**"Public Procurement: The Achilles Heel of Good Governance"***Jeffrey Gutman, Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development*

Development aid is defined as the financial aid given by governments and agencies to support the economic, environmental, social, and political needs of developing countries. With the government acquisition of goods, civil works, and services representing between 15-20% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for most countries, the value of procurement policy and its application are very high. Recent high profile cases in the news, ranging from the military purchase of clothing from foreign sources that raise human rights issues, to the criticism of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act website, to a range of corruption cases around the world, are bringing policymakers' attention to a field traditionally treated as equivalent in notoriety to the plumbing and wiring of government facilities. These cases, however, illustrate the range of objectives that public policy now places on the public procurement of goods and services, and the need for a broader dialogue. Reforms worldwide are being discussed through the World Trade Organization (WTO) Government Procurement Agreement and the European Union as well as by the multilateral development institutions. Underlying these reforms is a tension between a rules-based system with limited, if any, discretion to avoid fraud and corruption versus an outcome based focus that requires greater use of discretion and judgment to ensure better adaptation to circumstances. The lecture will focus primarily on the public procurement debate for development aid; but the issues have a resonance well beyond developing countries.