



AU Newsmakers

December 12 – December 19, 2014

Prepared by University Communications

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Top Stories

Bold U.S.-Cuba Thaw in Relations Closes 53 Year Cold War Chapter

Several American University experts found themselves in Havana when the release of Alan Gross took place. Domestic and international media outlets relied on AU experts in Washington and on the ground in Havana for discussion and analysis on the normalization of diplomatic relations.

The New York Times Eric Hershberg, director of the American University Center for Latin American and Latino Studies, spoke to the [New York Times](#) for [three](#) separate [articles](#) about the significance of normalized relations between the U.S. and Cuba. Hershberg also spoke to [BBC](#) online and [WBEZ](#), Chicago's NPR affiliate. (12/17 – 12/19) *listen to part 2 of WBEZ interview [here](#)



School of International Service scholar-in-residence **Johanna Mendelson-Forman** appeared on [Fox News Channel](#) to discuss the history of the embargo on Cuba and the Helms-Burton Act, referring to them as failed policies. **Mendelson-Forman** also spoke to the [Wall Street Journal](#) and appeared on [WAMU's The Diane Rehm Show](#) on NPR, [WTOP](#) and [WMAL](#) radio. (12/17 – 12/18) *link not available for WMAL



Government professor **William LeoGrande** appeared on [MSNBC's The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell](#), live from Havana, Cuba, to discuss President Obama's executive authority, the Helms-Burton Act and the reaction in Cuba. **LeoGrande** also spoke to [CNN](#), [USA Today](#), [CBS News](#) online, and the [Sun Sentinel](#) and [International Business Times](#). (12/17 – 12/19)

LeoGrande's Foreign Policy commentary [A New Dawn in Cuba](#), written from Havana, explained the scope of the thaw in U.S.-Cuban relations that Presidents Obama and Raul Castro announced after the release of Alan Gross earlier in the day. (12/17)



International service professor **Philip Brenner** spoke to [KABC](#) Los Angeles radio, live from Havana, Cuba, to discuss the U.S. economic benefits of normalized U.S. relations with Cuba. **Brenner** also spoke to [Al Jazeera](#) online and [Cuban News Agency](#). (12/17 – 12/18) *listen to part 2 of KABC interview [here](#)

Op-Eds/AU Authors

There Are No Ticking Time Bombs in Torture Law



In a [U.S. News & World Report](#) op-ed, government professor **Chris Edelson** explained why Supreme Court Justice Scalia's recent comments in an interview on the CIA torture report confused the fact that there is no justification for torture under U.S. law or international conventions. (12/16)

Dramatic Depictions of Torture Increase Support for It

The Washington Post

For the [Washington Post's Monkey Cage blog](#), international service professor **Joseph Young** and Department of Justice, Law & Criminology adjunct instructor **Erin Kearns** discussed their research on the public's perception of torture. **Young** and **Kearns** found that dramatic depictions of effective torture on television, such as those in "24," increased the public's belief in the tactics. (12/14)

Year-end Tax Planning Tips

THE HILL

In an op-ed for the [Hill](#), executive director of AU's Kogod Tax Center, **Donald Williamson**, offered five year-end tax-planning tips to help taxpayers better understand their liability and plan for filing in 2015 and beyond. (12/13)

Expertise

CIA Report Revives Legal Debate on Interrogation

AP Associated Press

For [Associated Press](#), law professor **Stephen Vladeck** spoke about the CIA torture report and prosecution of U.S. officials. **Vladeck** questioned the value of prosecution and encouraged a different approach to prevent torture in the future. The article syndicated more than 500 times. (12/14)

Threats, Ethics Fail to Deter U.S. Media on Sony Emails



For [Agence France-Presse](#), journalism professor **John Watson** spoke about the ethics of publishing the Sony emails, saying that journalists should not participate in stealing information. **Watson** argued that journalists are expected to balance the public interest against the potential harm that a piece of information might cause. (12/15)

#HashtagActivismMatters: Some Experts See Online-to-IRL Change in Police Protests

The Washington Post

For the [Washington Post](#), communication professor **Deen Freelon** spoke about the ongoing cycle of how social media and protests "fuel" one another. **Freelon** also spoke to [WUNC](#) radio, an NPR affiliate in North Carolina. (12/14, 12/17)

Asia's Fragile Caves Face New Risks from Development



In a [Yale Environment 360](#) interview, environmental science professor **David Culver** spoke about the diverse species of life found in Southeast Asia caves. **Culver** noted that caves, no matter where they are in the world, stand a chance of survival if they are part of a protected landscape. The story also ran in [The Guardian \(U.K. edition\)](#). (12/18)

Costly Missteps Mark U.S. Road to War

FINANCIAL TIMES

Foreign policy professor **Gordon Adams** spoke to [Financial Times](#) about the \$1 trillion bill for the 13-year war in Afghanistan, saying that, during wartime, it is common for "fiscal discipline to fly out the window." **Adams** also spoke to [Federal News Radio](#) about the Overseas Contingency Operations budget. (12/14)

Jamin Raskin on Atheist Ban



For [NPR](#), Law and Government Program director **Jamin Raskin** spoke about the provision in Maryland's constitution that bans atheist Americans from serving in several state offices, saying that the provision is "junk in our constitutional attic." (12/17)

How Will Putin Respond to This Economic Crisis?



For [CBS News](#) online, School of International Service dean **James Goldgeier** spoke about the effect of declining oil prices on Russia's economy and how Russian President Vladimir Putin's policies may be influenced. (12/16)

Why 2016 Will Be a Battle Between the Grassroots and the Donors



Candice Nelson, director of the Campaign Management Institute, spoke to [NBC News](#) online about the upcoming 2016 presidential race and the significance funding plays on the primary elections. (12/18)

As Jeb Bush Signals Bid, He Faces Skepticism from Conservatives



For the [Orlando Sentinel](#), School of Professional & Extended Studies professor **Richard Semiatin** spoke about Jeb Bush's potential entrance into the race for the GOP presidential nomination and the challenges he would face. (12/16)

DOJ Intervention May Help Conn. Police Regain Community's Trust



International studies professor **Cathy Schneider** spoke to [NPR](#) about racial profiling and the need for positive police outreach throughout minority communities. (12/17)

Putin Press Conference



For [CCTV-America](#), executive director of the Initiative for Russian Culture **Anton Fedyashin** provided analysis of President Vladimir Putin's public remarks on the Russian economy. **Fedyashin** talked about how the pressures could lead to Russia taking steps to diversify its economy. (12/18)

Bonus Clips

New Digital Editions Choose to Design Their Apple Newsstand Apps in Landscape



[Talking New Media](#) featured University Communication's [American Magazine](#) in an article about digital publications designed in landscape layout, praising AU magazine's Apple Newsstand app. (12/15)