

Looking Backward, Looking Forward: 2014 - 2015

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Theme: [Global Economy](#), [US NATO War](#)
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The balance sheet for 2014 and the prospects for 2015 provide us with a complex panorama of negative and positive outcomes. In most cases the advances, are not earth-shattering but open possibilities for further progress. The negative developments, however, have greater and more threatening systemic outcomes.

We will proceed in a telegraphic fashion to outline the positive and negative developments in 2014 and their real and potential symbolic and substantive impacts. In the second part of the essay we will sketch out some of the most important events and the way in which the positive and negative outcomes of 2014 will play out in 2015.

Positive Developments in 2014

While most leftist and progressive writers have emphasized the negative events of 2014, a more nuanced analysis will reveal ten important positive outcomes.

(1) The revelations that the US National Security Agency was engaged in a world-wide long-standing and continuous spying operations against hundreds of millions of Americans, allies and adversaries, citizens and leaders provoked deep distrust and questioning of Washington's claims of upholding democracy and respecting the sovereignty of nations. The revelations led to greater vigilance among countries and domestic demands for reform.

(2) The US Senate revelations that the CIA engaged in widespread and repeated torture of political suspects, documented the growth of a police state apparatus and provoked a world-wide demand to prosecute prominent US leaders for crimes against humanity.

(3) The growth of economic, political and military ties between Russia and China augurs a rebalancing of global power – fostering a multi-polar world, which can act as a deterrent to future western imperial aggression.

(4) China's President Xi's deepening anti-corruption campaign has led to the arrest of leading business and political leaders and has encouraged popular denunciations and demands for 'good government' and greater attention to social demands.

(5) President Putin's support for the Eastern Ukraine resistance to the Kiev puppet regime and for Crimean separatists, and his moves to restrict and, in some cases, prosecute criminal behavior among oligarchs has successfully countered Western efforts to encircle, undermine and revert Russia to a vassal state. US-NATO backed neo-liberals within Russia have been severely weakened Western sanctions may strengthen efforts to socialize the economy.

(6) The opening of a dialogue with Cuba, and Washington's recognition that its half century

blockade has only isolated the US in Latin America, is a step in the right direction. The increase in tourism and economic missions may increase demands for the end of the blockade.

(7) The growth and spread of the Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) against the Israeli occupation of Palestine has reached major trade unions, student and religious organizations, which in turn has influenced numerous political leaders to recognize Palestine, overcoming massive opposition from the Presidents of the 52 Major American Jewish organizations in the US and their counterparts overseas.

(8) The Iranian – US peace and nuclear negotiations have lessened the prospect of an Israeli promoted regional war. The ongoing negotiations have led to some advances, mostly concessions by Iran, but, at least, have favored diplomacy over US military aggression.

(9) Latin America witnessed a near sweep by ‘left of center’ regimes against US backed ‘hard right’ neo-liberals, in Brazil, Venezuela, Chile, Uruguay, Ecuador and Bolivia. While these election outcomes will not in any way challenge capitalism or lead to the expropriation of the agro-mineral and financial elite, they do indicate a relative degree of independence from US militarist foreign policy. The election of President Santos in Colombia, and the defeat of the far right opposition candidate, allowed for the peace negotiations with the FARC, the popular insurgency, to proceed toward a definitive agreement.

(10) The widespread dissemination of multi-media recordings of prominent scientists testifying to and documenting the evidence demonstrating that the collapse of the World Trade Center could only be a controlled demolition and not a result of the plane crashes, has led to widespread calls for a new investigation of 9/11.

Negative Events in 2014

Major events and policies in 2014 which have had a profoundly negative effect on the prospects for peace and social justice are equally numerous.

(1) The US and EU installation of a puppet regime in the Western Ukraine (Kiev) and its conversion into an economic vassal state of the European Union and NATO outpost on Russia’s border is a major blow against democracy and boost to Ukrainian neo-fascist political leaders. The militarization of the Ukraine, as an adversary of Russia, threatens a global nuclear war.

(2) The military coup in Egypt and the violent purge, jailing and torture of elected officials and secular dissidents, ensures the return of US influence in North Africa and reinforces Israel’s blockade of Gaza and colonization over the West Bank. Food and transport subsidies were ended in accord with the IMF. In 2014 as a result of the military dictatorship’s pro-business policies, the Egyptian stock market index returned 30% to foreign and domestic speculators. Between the coup in mid-2013 to the end of 2014, the MSCI stock index of Egypt doubled.

(3) The US re-entry in the Iraq civil war, its air war in Syria to counter the advance of ISIS, and the decision to retain thousands of troops in Afghanistan means that the militarist policies of the past decade continue to define US foreign policy in the Middle East. Civilian casualties are mounting and the wars are showing no signs of ending. The devastation wrought by the US-NATO military intervention in Libya continues to provoke Islamic

extremism and civilian flight.

(4) US repeatedly supported Israeli seizures and colonization of Palestinian land in the West Bank and Jerusalem and Israel's savage murder of 2000 Palestinians and 5 billion dollar devastation of property in Gaza. Under the prodding of Zionist multi-billionaires and AIPAC, the US blocked the PLOs effort to gain UN membership via arm-twisting of African representatives in the Security Council.

(5) The President and Congress's defense of NSA spying and CIA responsibility for torture has further weakened residual constitutional guarantees.

(6) The electoral victories by the hard right in the US legislative elections will present major problems in proceeding with peace negotiations with Iran, in ending the economic blockade of Cuba and lessening the Government's purge of immigrants.

(7) The Ferguson protest against the police assassination of a young black man grew into a nationwide protest ("black lives matter") against the police impunity and violence, and had all the makings of a popular movement to democratize the state. Instead the police officials and police unions launched a massive counter-attack and mobilization, defending police power, by exploiting the killing of two policemen in New York City by a deranged individual.

(8) The US success in imposing sanctions against Russia, with the backing of the European Union, the escalation of military exercises on Russia's Baltic frontiers and in the Caucasus, threaten a nuclear confrontation.

(9) Washington's promotion of Asian-Pacific economic pacts excluding China, the military base agreements with Japan, Australia and the Philippines, and the expansion of provocative air and sea surveillance of China's coastlines, has dimmed any prospect that Washington is willing to accommodate China's ascent as a world power.

(10) Economic policies continue to concentrate wealth in the upper 1%, while investment bankers escape jail sentences for on-going multi-billion dollar swindles and illicit operations, laying the bases for a new financial crisis.

Looking Toward the New Year

The prognosis for 2015 is not promising. For one thing the positive changes that took place in 2014 are not sustainable and will be under threat by the further rightward shift in US policy.

The likelihood is that the new rightwing majority in Congress will do everything possible to prevent the ending of the US economic blockade of Cuba. The powerful Israel power configuration in the Congress, mass media and in the Treasury will likely impose such onerous and unilateral demands on Iran as to undermine any meaningful agreement. In Israel far right neo-fascist parties are likely to take power, early in 2015, and accelerate the seizure and colonization of Palestinian land foreclosing any prospects of a negotiated agreement. The Zionist power configuration in Washington will guarantee continued US backing.

The Obama Administration, blinded by its success in securing EU support for sanctions against Russia, will push harder for a full scale economic war, in hopes of overthrowing the Putin government.

Incremental increases in troops and military commitments in South Asia, the Middle East and the Baltic regions will further heighten economic tensions with China and North Korea as well as Russia.

Obama will work with the new rightwing Congress to lower corporate taxes, to secure fast track passage of free trade agreements with Europe (excluding Russia) and Asia (excluding China) and to strengthen the arbitrary police power of the CIA, NSA, and FBI.

The police, organized and mobilized, will further subordinate civilian authorities, and launch a full scale war on the movement to curtail police violence against Afro-Americans. New York City's giant pro-police show of force is a dress rehearsal for 2015.

The US economy will become even more lopsided, unequal and subject to financial volatility. Middle and working class Americans will become further alienated from the parties, legislature and executive – abstention will increase. However, many Americans will struggle to elect popular representatives in local elections and initiatives.

Overseas the US will fail to secure any decisive military victory in any major theater of war. ISIS in Syria and Iraq is likely to continue to occupy wide swaths of territory and to sustain a long term war. The Taliban will eventually surround the big cities and garrisons in which US advisers are holed up. Libya will continue to be a failed state. The Ukraine will likely descend into economic bankruptcy. In southern Europe the left-socialist party SYRIZA will probably win the elections and attempt to impose a moratorium on debt payments and stimulate the economy. The neo-liberal political regimes in Italy, Spain and Portugal will continue to deteriorate. In France the Socialist regime's embrace of a pro-business agenda will provoke major conflicts with trade unions and may fracture. The National Front may become the leading party, adopting positions on the Right (anti-immigrant) and Left (anti EU austerity). Leftist, populist and far -right parties and movements are likely to increase support in eight scheduled elections in the EU this year.

Turmoil, wars, and sanctions will lead to new political alignments. Just as Russia and China move to realign, so too, political forces in North and South America, Asia and the Middle East may find new de facto alignments. Saudi and Israel, Iran and Iraq, Turkey and Russia, Brazil and Venezuela . . .

Unpredictable challenges may emerge from minor and major players: Greece's new Syriza government, by refusing to abide by Berlin's austerity agenda, may provoke a major crises in the EU. China's anti-corruption campaign could lead to heightened mass protests. North and South Korea may open long sought negotiations – excluding the US.

With the beginning of 2015 we enter a journey to the end of the night...

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