

Republicans go cold on Ted Cruz, gun control back on the agenda, and is Kansas running out of water? – US blog round up for 14–20 September.

Chris Gilson looks at the best in political blogging from the Beltway and across the States.

Syria and foreign policy

Last week saw a US/Russian agreement last week on a plan towards disarmament for the Syrian regime's chemical weapons. The *Monkey Cage* [comments](#) that we have seen this sort of thing before – i.e. increased multilateral cooperation, approved by the United Nations Security Council – and events are likely to play out in this fashion again in the future. Meanwhile, *Wonkblog* muses on whether or not President Obama's strategy on Syria was [brilliant, or lucky](#), now that given the agreement, he no longer faces potential defeat in Congress over military intervention.

Commenting on recent statements by military leaders that the US should not

Ted Cruz Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

intervene in Syria, *The Atlantic* says that it is [not the military's place](#) to weigh in on the debate, arguing that it is a decision for elected officials.

The *American Thinker* looks at Russian President Vladimir Putin's op-ed in the New York Times last week, where he gave advice to America on foreign policy. He agrees with Putin's statement that in both foreign and domestic policy, "[there's nothing exceptional about Obama's America](#)". *The Democratic Truth* [says](#) that some Republicans' who have defended Putin's comments show that bipartisanship is now a thing of the past.

Washington DC Naval Yard shooting

On Monday, a shooting took place at the Naval Yard in Washington DC, leaving twelve dead. In response, the *Monkey Cage* looks at how such shootings have been [reported](#) in the past, and suggests that the media are likely to lose interest in gun control relatively quickly. The *American Thinker* echoes this, saying that media reporting of the tragedy was following a [familiar script](#).

After the shooting, the *National Journal* argues that [stricter gun controls](#) won't eliminate gun violence given the problems in preventing criminals having access to guns as well as the unpredictability of mass shootings. Meanwhile, *The Political Carnival* says that [gun control is a passing fad](#), citing the example that in Iowa, the blind are allowed to buy guns – something that the state's legislature has little desire to change.

Government and the Beltway

Congress remained deadlocked this week over the budget, facing a potential government shutdown within a few weeks. According to the *American Thinker*, the Senate Majority Leader, Democrat Harry Reid, had a '[frightful day](#)' this week – frightened at the thought that the Republican-led House might succeed in its plans to defund Obamacare. The *National Journal* [reports](#) that the row over Obamacare is now so deep that even moderate bills are getting bogged down in procedure. As the week progresses, the Republican Speaker of the House, John Boehner put forward a bill linking the defunding of Obamacare to avoiding a government shutdown. *Roll Call* [says](#) that the bill has little chance of becoming law as Senate Republicans may feel that it does not go far enough. On Thursday, the *National Journal* has a helpful [explainer](#) on the feud over the debt ceiling, using football as a metaphor.

Rafael 'Ted' Cruz, the Junior Senator from Texas is considered by many to be manoeuvring for a Presidential bid in 2016. *The Political Carnival* says that the Republican Party is [tiring of him](#), as evidenced by the falling level of donations coming his way. On a similar vein, the *Monkey Cage* says that Cruz is [alienating](#) fellow Republicans.

The Atlantic [reports](#) on Congressman Phil Gingrey of Georgia, who recently complained that he is stuck making 'only' on a \$176,000 salary – more than three times the national average.

The Political Carnival looks at the Council of Revision, the [fourth branch of government](#) that could have been had James Madison gotten his way in 1787.

The economy and society

Wonkblog reports that most Republican Governors now want to [expand Medicaid](#), saying that this is down to the massive amount of Federal funding involved, and Republicans' leverage over the situation. Meanwhile, *Daily Kos* argues that House Republicans' desire to [delay Obamacare](#) is proof that they know the program will survive the budget feud more or less intact.

The Atlantic says that the US deficit is [falling much faster](#) than the Congressional Budget Office had previously predicted, but that this does not seem to matter to the debt hawks in Congress.

On Wednesday, the US Federal Reserve announced that it would delay its 'tapering' of its Quantitative Easing program. *Wonkblog* [says](#) that this decision to delay is mostly due to the current fiscal standoff in Congress, and the uncertainty around a potential government shutdown. The other main Fed-related news this week is Larry Summers' announcement that he would be withdrawing his candidacy to replace Ben Bernanke as Chairman. *The Atlantic* [says](#) that Summers' move is down to a small team of Democrats on the Senate's Banking Committee, who were reluctant to support him meaning that more votes from Republicans would have been needed for him to have been confirmed. The *Monkey Cage* looks at the [historical context](#) of Summers' withdrawal, writing that the last time something similar happened was in 1914. *Wonkblog* gives us [five reasons](#) why Obama should choose current Vice Chair of the Fed, Janet Yellen, to succeed Bernanke.

Across the States

Northeast

Dirigo Blue is [concerned](#) at Maine Congressional delegations' push for economic reforms, arguing that promoting skills training is not helpful if employers do not have jobs that need filling.

The *Hill's Congress Blog* [looks](#) at the national implications of Bill de Blasio's confirmation of the Democratic nomination in the New York Mayoral race last week. They say his win shows the need for more debate on workplace rights for women across the country. Meanwhile, New York's *State of Politics* [says](#) that New York's Democrats are 'giddy' at the possibility of a Democratic mayor for the city for the first time in two decades.

Looking at Governor Chris Christie's presidential aspirations, *Save Jersey* [says](#) that most people in the state don't think that they are getting in the way of his job performance. Vermont's *VTDigger* [says](#) that the state's Republicans are looking towards the 2014 Congressional elections, now with more support from the Republican National Committee.

South

Monoblogue [reports](#) that the former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland, Michael Steele is no longer considering entering the Governorship race in 2014, saying that he was not likely to be the strongest candidate, especially given his failed 2006 Senate bid. *Roll Call* [looks](#) at whether or not Republican South Carolina Governor, Nikki Haley, is in trouble in next year's elections. They argue that is likely to be a close race, and one worth watching.

The *Daily Kos* [reports](#) that a school in Jacksonville, Florida, is still named after the founder of the KKK, Nathan Bedford Forrest. This is despite an online petition calling for a name change that gained 75,000 signatures.

The Okie reports on the growing [tension](#) between Oklahoma's Supreme Court and Legislature over the state's civil justice code, which the Court recently ruled to be unconstitutional. The *Arkansas Times* [looks](#) at how the state's legislature violates the first amendment and punishes women, by bowing to pressure from anti-abortion protestors in not giving Planned Parenthood a contract to publicize the state's new healthcare coverage.

Mississippi's *Cottonmouth* [says](#) that the redevelopment of the Port of Gulfport in the state is not on track to deliver any of its job creation goals, and is made worse by the fact that money for the port was initially diverted from affordable housing. *Burnt Orange Report* [writes](#) that a lack of infrastructure funding in Texas means that 80 miles of rural roads will be replaced with gravel instead of making needed repairs.

Midwest

The *Daily Kos* says that Kansas is [running out of water](#) due to cattle production.

Caffeinated Politics [looks](#) at efforts by Republicans in Wisconsin to change the way that redistricting for the state legislature works, so that it is done in a non-partisan way.

Progress Illinois [reports](#) that Bill Daley has dropped out of the state's gubernatorial race for 2014. They say that the

departure of the former Chief of Staff to President Obama is 'shocking', and leaves a more open road for current Governor Pat Quinn.

Low levels in Kansas Reservoir in 2012 Credit: jolynne_martinez (Creative Commons BY NC ND)

West and Pacific

Last week saw legislative recall elections in Colorado, with two pro-gun reform Democrats beaten by Republicans. *Roll Call* [says](#) that these recalls are unlikely to alter next year's Senate race with Democratic Senator Mark Udall still heavily favored for re-election.

Blue Oregon says that a proposal to privatize liquor sales in the state would be [foolish](#), arguing that the current system works well, and costs would increase in a privatized system, as they have in other states.

California's *Fox and Hounds* [writes](#) that a recent threat by the state's Siskiyou County to secede shows that bad governance is actually something that unites the state's regions and communities.

Honolulu Civil Beat looks at [how much a Presidential motorcade costs](#) the local police department – \$600,000 over three years.

And finally...

The *National Journal* says that President Obama should be far more worried about his [sense of style](#) than he currently is.

The Political Carnival looks at a [massive molasses spill](#) in Honolulu that is threatening local wildlife.

The New Yorker examines [why women don't vote for women](#).

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Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USApp– American Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.

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