



The Daily Dish

# Unfinished Business

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On Tuesday the Pentagon announced that U.S. sales of military equipment and services to foreign partners reached \$33.6 billion for fiscal year 2016. According to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency \$25.7 billion of the sales were funded by partner nations. The 2016 figures are down from \$47 billion in 2015.

Last week the federal government proposed 44 new rules and finalized 71 rules bringing the total pages of regulation in 2016 to 78,020. So far in 2016 the federal government has imposed \$148.26 billion worth of final rules and an additional \$48.5 billion in proposed rules bringing the grand total of published compliance costs to \$196.8 billion. Additionally, 129.4 million net paper work hours have been added.

## *Eakinomics: Unfinished Business*

The day after an election generally contains a healthy mix of celebration and regret, along with a temptation to dwell on the events in the past that led to those outcomes. At the same time, there will be some — especially among the newly elected — focusing on the policy needs and their plans for 2017. But the reality is that this administration and Congress have not yet finished their job for 2016.

There are two things that should be done before closing the books on this Congress and presidency. The first is non-controversial: the federal government is funded only through December 9, and there must be put in place a funding law for the remainder of fiscal 2017. While the need to fund the government is non-controversial, the process to getting a funding bill passed often generates a lot of controversy and conflict as additional policy proposals get added to the basic budget items. So expect a few bumps before settling on the budget levels.

The second is tremendously controversial — passing the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). But in the aftermath of the election it is necessary to take a clear-headed second look at TPP. First, the domestic politics are not nearly as problematic as one might think. A majority of Americans support trade deals, TPP in particular. A vocal minority have had their reservations inflamed by shameless posturing by both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, but their real concerns are relatively easily addressed.

Second, the international politics are compelling enough to trump (one gets to use that verb again) domestic concerns. TPP is central to U.S. economic relations with the Pacific Rim countries, especially as compared to China's Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Its impact beyond narrow economics is probably the paramount reason to move forward. For the U.S. to fail to meet its end of the TPP bargain would be a diplomatic disaster.

There are lots of things that one might want to get done in 2016. But there are only two that must get done.