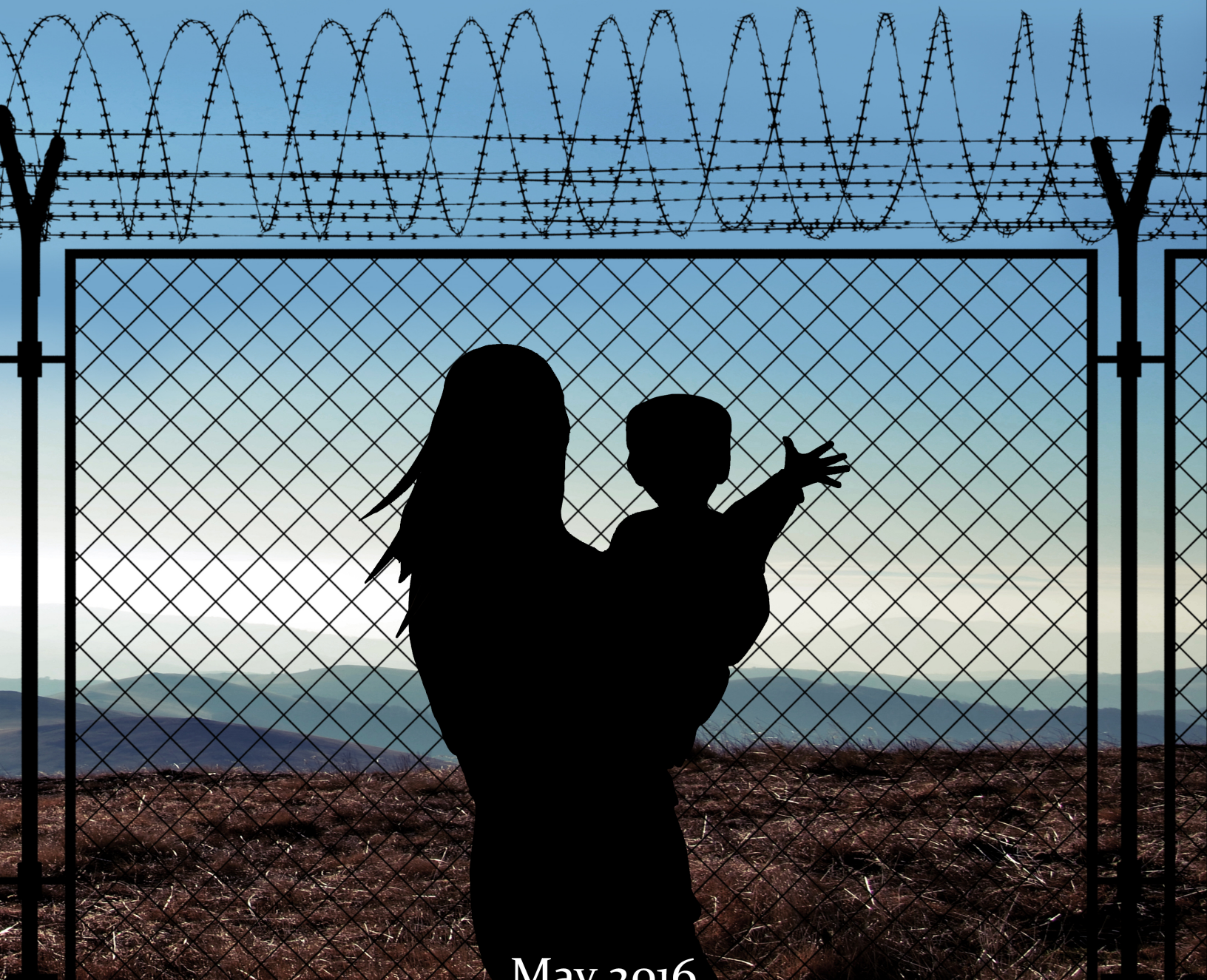


The Refugee Crisis: Humanitarian and Security Implications



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Introduction

Professor Yonah Alexander

Director, Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies, and Senior Fellow, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies

From time immemorial humanity has been challenged by a wide range of man-made calamities, usually resulting from criminality, corruption, political violence, and economic and technological disasters. These events have been labeled by historians and contemporary observers as dangers bringing fear, suffering, destruction, and death. Such misfortunes were also characterized as multiple forms of “humanitarian and security crises” facing all societies.

One of the most lingering and devastating manifestations of this reality is the “refugee crisis.” According to a popular definition “refugees are people who vote with their feet,” as described by *Berliner Illustrirte* on crowds fleeing from Communist East Germany in its 1961 Special Issue. A more “formal” articulation of the term is provided by Merriam-Webster dictionary, stating that a refugee is “one that flees; *especially*: a person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution.”¹

A legal definition, however, is codified in 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(42) as follows:

The term “refugee” means (A) any person who is outside any country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, or (B) in such special circumstances as the President after appropriate consultation (as defined in section 1157(e) of this title) may specify, any person who is within the country of such person’s nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, within the country in which such person is habitually residing, and who is persecuted or who has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The term “refugee” does not include any person who ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. For purposes of determinations under this chapter, a person who has been forced to abort a pregnancy or to undergo involuntary sterilization, or who has been persecuted for failure or refusal to undergo such a procedure or for other resistance to a coercive population control program, shall be deemed to have been persecuted on account of political opinion, and a person who has a well founded fear that he or she will be forced to undergo such a procedure or subject to persecution for such failure,

refusal, or resistance shall be deemed to have a well founded fear of persecution on account of political opinion.²

An early international definition of the term “refugee” is incorporated in Chapter 1, Article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V):

[applies] to any person who:

- (1) Has been considered a refugee under the Arrangements of 12 May 1926 and 30 June 1928 or under the Conventions of 28 October 1933 and 10 February 1938, the Protocol of 14 September 1939 or the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization; Decisions of non-eligibility taken by the International Refugee Organization during the period of its activities shall not prevent the status of refugee being accorded to persons who fulfil the conditions of paragraph 2 of this section;
- (2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term “the country of his nationality” shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national.³

Two related concepts are noteworthy: the refugee and the migrant. There is a difference between the terms “refugee” and “migrant.” That is, a “refugee” is a person who is forced to leave his homeland in order to escape, for instance, an “armed conflict.” The “migrant,” on the other hand, chooses to move to another country to improve his living condition rather than escape threats such as violence. The “refugee” status therefore offers special protections under international law.⁴

To be sure, the current “refugee crisis” and its humanitarian and security consequences that are discussed in this report must be considered against earlier historical experiences during the last century. For example, in the inter-war period, the main groups of refugees included Russians, Germans, Spaniards, Armenians, and Assyrians, for whom special international provisions were made. Clearly, the Second World War and subsequent armed conflicts around the globe resulted in even larger numbers of refugees from Communist countries, Pakistan, India, Palestine, Korea, Vietnam, the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

Of particular concern in the past five years are the waves of millions of refugees who have fled conflict zones in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, and elsewhere, thus contributing to the largest humanitarian crisis in over half a century. The Syrian refugee tragic saga is the major case in point.

More specifically, according to extensive press reports in 2016, more than four million Syrian refugees fleeing from their country's civil war found shelter mostly in camps in the Middle East and Europe. Turkey, for example, hosts some 2.5 million Syrian refugees. Other large refugee locations are in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.

In Europe, Germany pledged a quota of nearly 40,000 Syrian refugees in its humanitarian admissions program. Other countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary (known as the Visegrad Group) have decided that they will not accept any Syrian refugee quotas which the European Union (EU) might try to impose on them.

What complicates matters even further for the future relocation of Syrian refugees to Europe is the March 18, 2016, EU-Turkish agreement according to which Turkey will accept those refugees who crossed illegally into Greece after this date. The plan provides for one Syrian refugee to move from a Turkish camp to enter the EU legally for each refugee returned from the EU. As compensation for such a deal, Turkey will receive some \$6 billion from the EU. Additionally, Turkish citizens will be able to travel visa-free in Europe, and negotiations regarding Turkish membership at the EU will resume. But by May 2016, doubt was cast on the continued progress of the EU-Turkish deal when Turkey demanded that the EU provides it with 3 billion euros in return for all the refugees being hosted in its country.

Meanwhile, the United States in response to the humanitarian crisis has announced plans to “surge” admissions of some 10,000 Syrian refugees during 2016. By the end of May 2016, the United States had admitted only 1,800 people. Nevertheless, the Homeland Security Committee of the U.S. Congress's House of Representatives, in a special report on the “Syrian Refugee Flows: Security Risks and Counterterrorism Challenges,” concluded that “the Administration's proposal will have a limited impact on alleviating the overall crisis but could have serious ramifications for U.S. homeland security. Additionally, widespread security gaps across Europe are increasing the terrorism risk to our allies and present long-term implications for the U.S. homeland.”⁵

The report provided the following preliminary findings:

“Finding 1: Islamist terrorists are determined to infiltrate refugee flows to enter the West—and appear to already have done so in Europe...

Finding 2: While America has a proud tradition of refugee resettlement, the United States lacks the information needed to confidently screen refugees from the Syria conflict zone to identify possible terrorism connections...

Finding 3: Despite security enhancements to the vetting process, senior officials remain concerned about the risks and acknowledge the

possibility of ISIS infiltration into U.S.-bound Syrian refugee populations...

Finding 4: Surging admissions of Syrian refugees into the United States is likely to result in an increase in federal law enforcement's counterterrorism caseload...

Finding 5: Europe's open borders are a 'cause célèbre' for jihadists...

Finding 6: European governments face substantial obstacles to information-sharing and are stymied by a lack of internal border checks in their efforts to keep track of terrorist suspects...

Finding 7: Glaring security gaps along refugee routes into Europe—especially lax security screening of travelers—make the pathway highly susceptible to terrorist exploitation...

Finding 8: Mediterranean and Balkan countries risk becoming a new "terrorist turnpike" into the West due to particularly poor information sharing and weak vetting systems...

Finding 9: Syrian refugee populations in Europe have already been directly targeted by extremists for recruitment, and in the long run certain communities in which they resettle are likely to become 'fertile soil' for violent radicalization...

Finding 10: America's security is put at risk when partner countries fail to conduct adequate counterterrorism checks on refugees and are unable to cope with the radicalization challenges created by mass migration."⁶

Finally, the "Syrian Refugee Flows" report submits the following seven recommendations:

1. Immediate action must be taken to temporarily suspend the admission of Syrian refugees into the United States until the nation's leading intelligence and law enforcement agencies can certify the refugee screening process is adequate to detect individuals with terrorist ties.

2. The Government Accountability Office should initiate an end-to-end review of the refugee screening and vetting process, with a particular focus on the integrity of the current procedures for conducting national security checks on Syrian refugees.

3. The President should act immediately to implement the recommendations of the bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel to enhance America's security posture to prevent terrorist infiltration into the United States.

4. The U.S. intelligence community and law enforcement should launch a concerted effort with our European partners to review all data already

collected from refugees and migrants—and to screen it against counterterrorism and intelligence databases to find any possible extremist connections.

5. U.S. government departments and agencies should ramp up efforts to assist our European partners in building the capacity to conduct robust, consistent counterterrorism vetting of refugees and migrants going forward.

6. U.S. government departments and agencies must also work with European and Middle Eastern partners to close information-sharing gaps and improve intelligence and law enforcement cooperation related to Syrian refugees.

7. Ultimately, the threat posed by terrorist exploitation of refugee routes can only be addressed at the source through decisive action to roll back and defeat ISIS, to expedite the removal of the Assad regime, and to keep Syria from remaining an Islamist terror safe haven. Accordingly, the President must work with our allies to lay out a credible strategy for victory and long-term stability in Syria.”⁷

But the “refugee crisis” invariably includes not only Syrian refugees but also other massive flows of fleeing individuals and families from Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere. Aside from the grave humanitarian aspects, ranging from the increasing number of deaths at sea of would-be arrivals to the illegal facilitation or smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, the perceived or real security threats are, indeed, extensive. Such dangers consist of refugee links to criminal networks, usage of fraudulent travel documents, and the mobilization of refugees to take part in terrorist missions to destabilize host countries.

These and related concerns have been on the agendas of numerous national and international meetings such as the first World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul, May 23-24, 2016. This latest gathering included 9000 participants from 173 member states as well as hundreds of private sector representatives and thousands of participants from civil society and non-governmental organizations.⁸

This global event, which officially took place under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, underscored the grim reality of the human suffering from ongoing armed conflicts and other disasters. It noted that nearly 60 million people, half of them children, have been forced from their homes because of internal violence in their home countries. This endeavor sought to reinforce the global responsibility to save lives, to alleviate suffering, and to uphold human dignity in crisis situations.⁹

This report on “The Refugee Crisis: Humanitarian and Security Implications” is therefore only a small academic effort to focus on this critical area of national, regional, and global concern. The material incorporated in this modest study is based on a seminar held the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies in Arlington, Virginia, on March 9, 2016. The event was co-sponsored by the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies, the International Center for Terrorism Studies, the Inter-University

Center for Legal Studies, and the Center for National Security Law at University of Virginia School of Law. The presentations were made by Mark Krikorian, (Executive Director of the Center for Immigration Studies), Olga Olikier (Senior Adviser and Director, Russia and Eurasia Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies), Burcu Keriman Erdoğan Tunçer (Counsellor, Embassy of Turkey), and Abraham Stein (former Deputy Secretary for Multidimensional Security and Senior Advisor to the Secretary General on Defense and Hemispheric Security, Organization of American States). They deserve deep gratitude for their contributions.

Appreciation is also due to Michael S. Swetnam (CEO and Chairman, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies) and General (Ret.) Alfred Gray (twenty-ninth Commandant of the United States Marine Corps; Senior Fellow and Chairman of the Board of Regents, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies) for their continuing inspiration and support of our work. Professor Don Wallace, Jr., (Chairman, International Law Institute) also deserves special thanks for his cooperation. Our spring and summer 2016 internship team, ably managed by Sharon Layani (Research Associate and Coordinator at the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies), provided most useful research and administrative assistance. The team includes Iakovos Balassi (University of Wisconsin), Matthew Brenner (University of Maryland), Brandon Cordero (State University of New York at Albany), Jacob T. Fuller (University of Oklahoma), Matthew Leger (State University of New York at Albany), Nicholas Norberg (Georgetown University), Faith Pollard (University of Mary Washington), Kathryn Schoemer (Purdue University), Robert Stephens (Carnegie Mellon University), Robert Akira Watson (University of St. Andrews), and Joel Wickwire (University of Oregon School of Law).

As always, the contributors as well as the individuals and the institutions mentioned in this report cannot be held responsible for any errors or any other consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this publication.¹⁰

¹ *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “refugee.” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/refugee>

² U.S. Government Publishing Office, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(42). <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title8/pdf/USCODE-2011-title8-chap12-subchapI-sec1101.pdf>

³ “Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.” Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/StatusOfRefugees.aspx>

⁴ “UNHCR viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘migrant’ - Which is right?” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. August 27, 2015. <http://unhcr.org/55df0e556.com>

⁵ “Syrian Refugee Flows: Security Risks and Counterterrorism Challenges.” House Homeland Security Committee, November 2015. https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/HomelandSecurityCommittee_Syrian_Refugee_Report.pdf

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 2-9.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 9.

⁸ World Humanitarian Summit, May 24, 2016. <https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/>

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ A personal note is in order. First, this report is only one of numerous academic activities that I have undertaken on various refugee tragedies around the world during nearly half a century. Second, members of my family who survived the Holocaust and World War II were refugees. Their victimization and the historical lessons for future generations will always be remembered.

Mark Krikorian*Executive Director of the Center for Immigration Studies*

I am going to talk about U.S. policy, specifically with regard to Syria. Syrians are obviously the largest refugee group in the world right now, with four million people outside their home country and many millions more dislocated within Syria. Likewise, it is the main focus of the U.S. debate over refugee policy.

The starting point for consideration of the issue needs to be that resettlement in the United States cannot and will not be an option for any meaningful share of the refugee population. There has been almost a bidding war as to how many refugees different politicians think the United States should take. They call that “virtue signaling” in psychology; in other words, displays of how good you are by how big the number of Syrians you want to take into the United States is. The United States, this year, has a target of 10,000 Syrian refugees being resettled. (For those of you who are more familiar with the European context, the way the law works, or the terminology works, in the United States is that an asylee or an asylum seeker is somebody who is already in the United States, almost all of them illegal aliens. A refugee under our law is someone who we have actually plucked out from abroad and brought here under our own power. The distinction between those two is not necessarily the same in different countries’ refugee laws.)

So, the Administration’s target for the fiscal year is 10,000 Syrian refugees. The target overall is 85,000 refugees, but they are from Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Latin America, etc. Of that 85,000, 10,000 are supposed to be from Syria. We are almost halfway through fiscal year 2016; I have neglected to look up the number, but I do not think we are at 5,000 Syrian refugees yet. It is an entirely possible, and I would even say likely, that the 10,000 target will not be met because of the vetting and screening requirements. The administration has not submitted the formal request – well not request really, they kind of just tell Congress what they are going to do, and Congress says “Yes sir” – but the likely request, the likely target for FY2017 refugees is said to be 100,000 total, the increase from the current year mostly being Syrian. So let us say maybe 25,000 Syrians might be the target for next year. There have been politicians talking about much high numbers, 100,000 Syrians admitted, that sort of thing. It does not seem likely, and even if it were the case, there is no way that it would address even a small fraction of the refugee issue. If we suspended all refugee resettlement other than Syrians and doubled the overall number, it still would not deal with any significant share of the population. So resettlement has to be seen as a last resort solution, only in the most extreme cases, rather than a routine part of addressing the refugee crises around the world, as unfortunately it has been.

There are a number of reasons I wanted to go over why resettlement cannot be the first, or even, I would submit, among the menu of options, except in the most extreme cases.

The first thing – and this kind of matters in a democracy – is that communities around the country are pushing back. This is something that there is deep resistance to in the country. In fact, there has been increasing push back among communities across the country and states. The State Department – in what can only be described as its high-handed approach to resettling refugees and cooperating with the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement – it basically says “Here you go! Here is a bunch of people coming to your town! Have a nice day.” The support from federal coffers only lasts several months, after which the local communities are left holding the bag, and this has created intense, and increasing, and increasingly organized resistance across the country. In fact, the State Department has started calling these communities that are resisting “Pockets of Resistance.” This is an actual term in some report and the communities have actually taken up this term and it has now become their rallying cry, they are Pockets of Resistance. There is no way that any number of significant resettlement is going to happen, if only for reasons of democratic opposition.

The second point is the security aspect of it. The administration has been quite effusive in its praise of its vetting process, its screening process for refugees; refugees in general, but refugees from Syria in particular, saying that it is 18-24 months devoted to the screening process. First of all, it is 20 minutes of screening and 18 months of waiting around for your turn to come up, so there is no 18-24 months of vetting. Secondly, vetting is, I would not say an entirely meaningless term, but it is virtually meaningless because, how are going to vet them? I mean, if Assad had a directory of terrorists that we could then check against his database, well that might be easy, but it doesn't work that way. It is literally impossible – not Joe Biden “literally,” but literally literally – impossible to do meaningful vetting of people coming from what is now an utterly failed, disintegrated state.

On top of that, under this issue of security and terrorism, it is not just that people who we know are terrorists are going to get in, and this has been happened – there were a couple of Iraqis we admitted, they turned up in Kentucky, who turned out were bomb makers, were IED makers, in Iraq. And Iraq is a place where we actually had a decent amount of data, a decent amount of human intelligence when we were occupying the country and we still ended up letting them in. So the idea that we are going to successfully screen out Syrian bad guys is a fantasy. But on top of that, what about people who were not involved in terrorism and become radicalized here? Lone-wolf terrorists or what have you, people inspired by ISIS or others on the internet. This is not a refugee issue, but this is what we saw with the San Bernardino shooter and his wife, herself an immigrant. So, first of all, there is no way, there is literally no way to meaningfully screen out security threats when we are resettling refugees from this kind of chaotic situation.

The next concern that I think a lot of people have is that terrorism itself – in other words, actual people strapping a vest on themselves or bringing rifles and shooting people – is only one of the concerns, because there is also the concern about admitting large numbers of people from what we frankly have to say are benighted and backward

cultures, where what happened to the ladies of Cologne on New Year's Eve is not considered a problem. This is why the German authorities attempted to cover that up because it is the kind of thing that really concerns people, and should concern people. As part of that issue is that our resettlement process is essentially initiated by the UNHCR. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees gives us the list of people from whom we then pick out resettled refugees, and, almost without exception, Syrian refugees resettled in the U.S. have been Muslim. It is something like 97 percent Muslim because the UNHCR picks people from its camps in Turkey and elsewhere and Christians cannot live in those camps because the Muslim refugees drive them out. So that what you have is an almost exclusively Islamic refugee flow from a country with a pre-war population something like 10 percent Christian, and the four million people or so who are outside Syria are guaranteed to be more than 10 percent Christian.

Another reason I think for concern, for the resistance to large-scale resettlement in the United States, is that the countries that should be participating in providing initial haven for people are not doing so. Turkey is – Turkey has something like half the Syrians who fled Syria; makes sense, it shares a long border with Turkey. Likewise with Jordan, likewise with Lebanon. Iraq and Egypt even have smaller but significant numbers of Syrian refugees. Saudi Arabia, though, and the other Gulf monarchies, do not. They are providing a lot of money, which is nice, but these are big empty countries that have lots of money and frankly have lots of foreign workers whom they could send home and replace with Syrians. Now they do not want to do it, I understand that they do not want to do it, but we do not have responsibility to pick up the slack that they simply refuse to take up.

And, finally, as far as the critique of large-scale resettlement goes, it is massively more expensive to resettle refugees in the West than it is to care for them or provide for them in their countries of first asylum in the region. We actually tried to tease out the numbers. There was a number out of Norway, which I am not sure how reliable it was, I never found the backup for it, but it was cited in the New York Times that resettling a Syrian in Norway is 26 times more expensive than taking care of him or her in the Middle East. So that kind of piqued my interest; my top researcher spent some time and actually looked into it and the proportion was much lower for here. But what we found, and we published our results at our website www.CIS.org, is that the five-year cost of resettling refugees from the Middle East in the United States is 12 times greater than the cost of providing for them in the region. People quibble at the number, so let's say it's 10 times more, 5 times; how much more does it have to be when it becomes an issue? Not just of dollars and cents, but I would submit it is a moral issue. That it is actually morally wrong to be spending the inevitably limited resources devoted to refugee care for bringing one person here, essentially one person wins the lottery and moves to Sioux City, Iowa, while 11 other miss out. The analogy I use is there are 12 people floundering in the water, what do you do? Do you throw them 12 life preservers or do you send them a luxuriously appointed one-man yacht? Resettlement is the one-man yacht rather than 12 life preservers.

The question is what should the United States's response be to the refugee issue? The first point to keep in mind with regard to the Middle Eastern refugee issue is that the United States is blessed in many ways, but it is blessed in this sense also, that we face many of the same problems Europe faces with regard to refugees, but ours is the decaffeinated, low-calorie version of that problem. The oceans protect us and make it impossible to get on a rubber raft for two hours and get here. Our own refugee issue (which one of the later speakers will speak about) or quasi-refugee issue is essentially the same kind of thing: instead of walking through Turkey to get to Europe it is to walk through Mexico to get to the United States, but is much more manageable for us. It is smaller – I am talking about Central American refugees, from the northern three countries of Central America – the numbers are dramatically smaller, the cultural differences are much narrower, and the comparison between Mexico and Turkey, which essentially play the same role in the two hemispheres with regard to these flows, is very different, because Mexico is actually much more cooperative in limiting the ostensible refugee flow from Central America than Turkey is in keeping Syrians and Iraqis and others from getting to Europe.

I am not here to come up with solutions because I do not know whether establishing safe zones in Syria is the way to go. Maybe it is. In Jordan, I think they have now started, I forget what the term is but essentially kind of enterprise zones, where refugees within their zones can work, so they do not go to the town and compete with Jordanians for work, but there are efforts to create opportunities for employment and earning money and giving structure to people's lives. And calls for additional resources from American tax payers are perfectly plausible and justified. But large-scale resettlement in the United States, which is the first bullet item that when this issue is discussed, cannot and will not be a viable part of the solution to the refugee problem.

Olga Oliker

Senior Adviser and Director, Russia and Eurasia Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies

I am going to start with a personal note, which is to say that I am a refugee. I came to the United States in the Seventies. I was processed in Europe, coming from what was then the Soviet Union. My family was helped with re-settlement, both by the government, which let us in in the first place, and by communities that welcomed us. All these things that are so difficult for Syrians to get were possible for the several hundred thousand Soviet Union Jews who made it into the United States in the Seventies. It was also possible for a million Vietnamese after the Vietnam War. A lot of the difference comes down to choices we have made as a country since that time about how we vet, what we look for, and what we do in regards to refugees.

But I have been asked to talk about Russia. I am not Russian; I study Russia, I spent a lot of time looking at Russia and Russian perspectives. And Russia, unlike the United States, is not a country with a long history of resettling refugees. There have been people who have settled in Russia during wartime; a decent number of Afghans during and after the Afghan War did end up in the Soviet Union and stayed, but nothing like the sorts of numbers the United States has resettled, and nothing like the Syrian crisis. Right now, some figures I have seen indicated that there are about 200,000 refugees in Russia. Estimates of how many of them are from Syria vary. About 2,000 Syrians have gotten asylum in Russia since the start of the war. I do not know how this compares to U.S. numbers; that would be something worth looking up. I have spent some time looking at U.S. efforts to resettle Afghans and Iraqis who had worked with the U.S. in those countries, and that was hard enough. So I imagine our numbers are low but, like Mark, I have not looked at them recently.

A lot of the refugees in Russia, according to Russian sources, are coming from Ukraine. I had one Russian colleague tell me there are about 5,000 people a day entering Russia from Ukraine--I have no idea if that is accurate or not and what time period it covers. In regard to Syrian refugees, the big question that relates to Russia is the extent to which Russia is part of the problem. We have had a NATO leader say that Russia is weaponizing the refugee crisis. And if Russia is weaponizing the refugee crisis, if Russia is doing horrible things such as striking civilian targets intentionally to make things worse for civilians and force the war to continue, then that is a war crime. It should then be prosecuted as such with the evidence to support the case. But I am not sure that is what is really going on. I do think Russia benefits in some ways from the refugee crisis. I think it can point to it on the one hand as a failure of other states to both resettle refugees, and to settle the conflict. It also is a helpful reminder to the Europeans that there are dangers, threats, and worries much greater than those posed by Russia, so perhaps they should pay a little less attention to Ukraine and a little more attention to themselves. But whether Russia is exacerbating the problem intentionally, that I am not sure of. I think what Russia is doing is trying to prop up the Assad government, and its argument for propping up the Assad government has consistently been one of stability. It benefits from the continuing conflict but it also benefits from the seat at the table it has regarding Syria: it has bombed its way from just a regular seat at the table to a seat at the head of the table and now plays a part in the resolution of the problem, which I think it is very happy about. So to the extent that Russia can stay there and this feeds into Moscow's

narrative of being a global great power that is important to every issue around the world, I think the Russians are pretty happy with it.

You know Russians will also tell you they have been supplying humanitarian assistance all along. Certainly the ceasefire that was negotiated at the end of February and seems to be holding has facilitated more humanitarian assistance. You hear different reports on the extent and reach of Russia's direct support. I have actually had a very hard time of figuring out what goes through where, and from whom.

And it is also important to recognize that the story we get here in the West about civilian casualties caused by Russian airstrikes, weaponization of refugees, etcetera, is very different from narratives Russians get and Russians read and hear, which are about Russia being in Syria to stabilize the situation. Russians describe the conflict as one caused by U.S. support for people who sought to overthrow a regime that maybe was not the nicest regime but which was holding things together. The result was this current mess, and Russia is now working with the U.S. to help solve that mess.

A few words on Russian humanitarianism, in a general sense. As I said it is not a big destination country for refugees. It is not a huge humanitarian assistance provider globally. It is not that wealthy a country, so if you are looking for countries that are going to finance the resettlement of refugees elsewhere in the Middle East, remember that most Syrian refugees are in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. The number of people coming to Europe is very small compared to that--I would not count on the Russians.

The Russians are also in the midst of a fight with the Norwegians because there are some folks who are trying to transit Russia to get to Norway and the Norwegians are sending them back. The Norwegians are complaining some of them are not even Syrian, some of them are Afghans. They may have lived in Russia all this time and now they are using this as an opportunity to go somewhere else. From here in the United States it seems like a somewhat strange debate and neither country looks as good as it might as a result.

But the bottom line here is that Russia's interest in Syria is only very tangentially related to the refugee crisis. The refugee crisis has some benefits for Russia in the sense that country can use it symbolically. But other than in the sense of resolving the conflict, Russia is not going to be a huge player in resettling refugees or responding to them. On the other hand, if you can settle that conflict, an awful lot of people will be able to go home. You know, in my other life with another hat on, I have done some interviews with refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, and I can tell you they want to go home. Resettlement is a second choice for most of these people. What they would really like is peace in their country and to go home. Russia has a role here in its contribution to the overall settlement. The rest of us have more of a role in helping keep people who have had to flee their homes alive in the interim.

Burcu Keriman Erdoğan Tunçer
Counsellor, Embassy of Turkey

Thank you, Professor Alexander. Actually, this has been a *fait accompli* for me to be a panelist, but I am glad that you gave us this opportunity to express Turkey's views. And particularly after listening to Mr. Krikorian's speech, I would like to express a few points.

First of all, for my country, for the country that I represent, the refugee crisis and the overall security implications of the political crisis in Syria are not a theoretical exercise. It is very real. Along our 911-kilometer, which is almost 600 miles, long border with Syria, we are faced with the repercussions and the impacts of the crisis in Syria on a daily basis. And in Turkey today, there are more than 2,750,000 Syrian refugees and only 272,000 of those are residing currently in camps. The number of camps in Turkey is 26; we call them Temporary Protection Centers, not camps, because they are not like the camps that you are generally used to seeing in these kinds of refugee situations. The standards are really high there. But our main problem is the refugees that are not in the camps but are living in un-camped situations, the so-called urban refugees. You can imagine the huge burden 2,750,000 people add onto Turkey's security, social, economic apparatus and humanitarian aid system.

So, I listen to Mr. Krikorian with bewilderment when he says that the resettlement of 10,000 Syrian refugees, which is the target of the U.S. administration, would cost ten times more to the U.S. administration than the burden on neighboring countries that host refugees. I find that very interesting, and I really would be happy to hear his researchers' cost analysis in that respect, because Turkey so far, during the last four and a half years, has spent ten billion dollars only for those refugees that are residing in camps. I am not adding medical expenses, because free health care is extended to the Syrian refugees, be it in the camps or not, and also educational opportunities are provided to them. So I am not counting the expenses in that regard. Just for the camp refugees, Turkey has spent ten billion dollars so far. And as a matter of fact, the majority of assistance that Turkey extended to the refugees on its territory has been purely from Turkey's own resources. The international and bilateral assistance, multilateral and bilateral assistance that we have received has been very limited, and I can provide you with some numbers. Turkey is a part of the UN Regional Refugee and Resilience plan, which is 3RP, and in 2015, the total amount requested for Turkey was 624 million U.S. dollars, and only 46 percent of that was funded. The amount of contributions we received bilaterally and multilaterally from the international community so far have been limited to 455 million US dollars, so you can compare the 10 billion dollars with the 455 million dollars.

But money is not the issue. Turkey, since the beginning of the crisis, has approached this problem from a purely humanitarian and humane manner, and this is why we kept our doors open to the refugees who seek protection in Turkey, who flee the war in Syria, who flee the terror in Syria, and who just want to feel the safety and protection that has been provided in Turkey. So, we have kept our doors open all the

time, and we also strictly abide by the non-refoulement principle towards the Syrian refugees. We re-worked our emergency response capacity, took it to the next level, exceeding international standards, and we did all these things mainly by ourselves. Of course, some of our colleagues in the international community--United Nations, UNHCR, and World Food Program--have helped, but, as I said, it was mainly from Turkey's own resources.

Speaking of the population aspect of the problem, in some southeastern towns of Turkey, such as Kilis, for example, the number of the refugee population exceeds the local population. The number of refugees in Kilis is 137,000, whereas the whole population of Kilis is 120,000. But, it has not been an issue for Turkey, nor for the people living in Kilis, nor for the overall Turkish general public opinion, that we are having those numbers of refugees.

When Mr. Krikorian mentioned that it is very hard to make vetting and also that the 18 months screening process is actually just 20 minutes, and it is literally impossible to do meaningful vetting, I think Turkey does not have that luxury, and we have never had that luxury at all. When people came to our borders fleeing the bombardments of the Syrian regime or the terrorist attacks of Daesh, we could not tell them, "Just stay there, we are not allowed to let you in because, first of all, we have to screen you thoroughly to learn, to understand, whether you are a terrorist, whether you are someone with bad intentions, or not." We did not have that luxury, but still we did that. Not just because of the humane manner that our main policy approach was based on, but because it was our international responsibility; and it is not just Turkey's or the neighboring countries' responsibility to do so, that is the global community's responsibility to do so.

Another point I would also like to emphasize is that, Professor Alexander, when you showed that poor toddler's photo, that was the breakthrough in how the international community approached the issue of Syrian refugees. After four and a half years, finally that was the moment when global public opinion recognized the existence and the magnitude of this problem. Unfortunately, we human beings suffer from short-term memory loss, because we are still putting security issues and concerns, and our fears, before humane and protection-related issues.

Yes, the majority of Syrian refugees are Muslims. There are also Christians, and, as a matter of fact, in Turkey, for the Christian Syrians, we have established separate camps, because they did not want to stay in the same camps with other Sunni Muslim refugees. So, we set up special camps, in Mardin, which had a 5,000 person capacity, and also in Kilis again. So we also took into account the special needs of certain groups, religious groups, coming from Syria. So when you say that "We will not allow Muslims, and we will only get Christians," you aggravate the security problem, the security concern that you very much fear because that is the very basic pretext of extremist organizations - Daesh, and other radical extremists. They are saying that "They don't care about you, the West doesn't care about you. See? They're not letting you in purely on the basis of that you are Muslim or you are from Syria." I think this

is more of interest than letting people in because you, in a way, help this extremist ideology flourish.

So, I would like to briefly finalize my comments. How we approach the problem, from our point of view, the refugee crisis is not a stand-alone problem. It is like the other implications of the crisis in Syria, actually part of the bigger problem, which is the political crisis in Syria. So, without addressing that root cause, all other measures that we will take to mitigate the effects of the humanitarian crisis, or the refugee crisis, will be null. It will not give results. However, there is the absence of the political solution, but the humanitarian and refugee crisis is still going on, and, as a matter of fact, is getting worse and worse each and every day.

Then, there is another kind of approach needed, required. And this is what we propose, and advocate for, a multilayered approach to the refugee crisis. First of all, we believe that we should aim to prevent an IDP (Internally Displaced Person) inside Syria from becoming a refugee, in order to limit the burden on neighboring countries. So we should, first of all, aim towards providing protection and humanitarian assistance to the Syrians inside Syria. And for that, we have to have some type of civilian or humanitarian zone, be it under the name of a “no-fly zone,” “no-bombardment zone,” whatever, but there should be a civilian, humanitarian zone. And unfortunately, we have not been able to get across this message to have an impact at the UN Security Council, but we hope that this message will be heard by certain circles.

The second step is to prevent the refugees’ fall into despair, or into the hands of terrorist or extremist crime networks. And how can we do that, by providing sustainable humanitarian aid to those refugees in their communities, where they have found refuge? We should improve their living standards. The Syrian humanitarian crisis has become a protracted humanitarian crisis, so no longer can we sort out this problem with the traditional means of humanitarian assistance. There should also be the development aspect of this problem. It has been five years, and unfortunately the prospects are dim, so the crisis will linger for quite some time, so there should also be the element of developmental assistance to the host countries where refugees are living.

We should create livelihoods for those refugees. Turkey has taken that initiative. As of January 2016, a new by-law came into effect that allows access of Syrians to the labor market in Turkey, so that would create, I believe, new incentive for the Syrian refugees to earn their livings in Turkey and to have a proper way of life there.

The third layer is to prevent illegal trafficking by creating new legal venues for migration and asylum. This issue falls under the category of the deal that we have reached with the European Union. By creating legal venues for migration to Europe, the European Union would also help prevent the illegal trafficking of refugees. And resettlement opportunity, we believe must also be extended to the refugees, and those programs should become more functional and efficient, and to this end we expect all

members of the international community to act responsibly, not just the countries of the region.

And the fourth layer is absolutely international cooperation. We have to strengthen international cooperation on security, plus refugee-related issues, and this is what is missing; there is not enough cooperation on that issue. We expect the international community to act more in line with the principles of burden-sharing and solidarity.

Finally, on the security side of the problem, I could not find time to talk about the terrorism threat that is targeting Turkey from Syria. This is the major concern that we have, but as I said, we separate the terrorism from the refugee issue because both are byproducts and symptoms of the bigger problem, so this is why they have to be dealt with separately in our view. But on terrorism, we believe that we have to speak the same language. There is no such concept like there is good terrorist and bad terrorist. For us, be it the PYD, YPG, PKK, al-Nusra, or Daesh, they are all terrorists, and “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” of course, is very dangerous for the region.

Last but not least, I would like to say that we also expect the allied solidarity to be strengthened more on issues that are affecting Turkey and the region because there are several other factors that increase the threat perceptions of Turkey and countries of the region, and we have to work more on those issues and for the solution of the political crisis.

Abraham Stein

Former Deputy Secretary for Multidimensional Security and Senior Advisor to the Secretary General on Defense and Hemispheric Security, Organization of American States

The situation in Central America is obviously not the same as what we heard about in Syria or Iraq, but it has a very big impact in the United States.

From the middle of the 1960s to the end of 2015, more than 16 million Mexican nationals migrated to the U.S. in one of the largest mass migrations in modern history. But over the past 10 years, Mexican migration to the USA has slowed down.

Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, known as the Northern Triangle countries in Central America, have emerged as one of the most dangerous areas on the planet outside of active war zones. The growing presence of sophisticated criminal organizations, the endemic corruption and impunity at all levels of law enforcement and government, not to mention the violations of human rights, have created unprecedented security challenges from very aggressive and dangerous gangs and organized crime cartels.

These challenges are not new, but they are growing in intensity and visibility. As the risk to human security increases, so does the vulnerability of migrants who cross the region, moving northward toward the United States. The dangers have become particularly vivid in Mexico, where unknown numbers of Mexican, Central American, and South American migrants have been killed or gone missing, presumably at the hands of criminal actors or corrupt public officials. Many more are victims of extortion, kidnapping, rape, and other crimes.

The resurgence is a product of grave levels of violence in the region. The Northern Triangle countries registered some of the worst homicide rates in the world by the end of 2015. El Salvador had the highest rate with 104 per 100,000 people. That's almost twice as many as Honduras, which registered 57 per 100,000, and Guatemala at 36 homicides per 100,000.

Today, Mexico (with the help of the USA) serves as a land bridge for Central American immigrants traveling to the U.S.

After the finding of 72 bodies at a ranch in northeast México belonging to migrants who were making their way toward the United States in 2010, the Mexican government committed to increase the enforcement at its southern border.

All of the immigrants were from Central America and Ecuador. The motive for the killings was that Mexico's drug cartels have expanded their activities to include extortion and kidnapping of immigrants, as well as recruiting them to force them to become part of their group of hit men.

In 2015, the Mexican government carried out about 150,000 deportations of unauthorized immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, a 44 percent jump over the previous year. These three Central American countries alone accounted for nearly all (97 percent) of Mexico's deportations in 2015. (Pew) 46,000 more were

deported from the United States, according to the UNHCR statistics from the same office show that requests for asylum in the United States by displaced people from the Northern Triangle region rose from 8,052 in 2010 to 41,124 in 2014.

From October 2015 through January 2016, U.S. border patrols apprehended 20,455 unaccompanied children from nine crossings in the U.S. southwest, a 100 percent increase over the same period a year earlier. Another 24,616 Central American migrants were apprehended in the same time period—a 171 percent increase over the last year.

More Cubans are also traveling through Mexico to reach the U.S. The number of Cubans migrating through Mexico to reach the U.S. spiked dramatically last year after President Barack Obama said the U.S. would renew ties with the island nation. In fiscal 2015, 43,200 Cubans nationals entered the U.S. via port of entry, a 78 percent increase over the previous year. Two-thirds of these Cubans arrived through the U.S. Border Patrol's Laredo Sector in Texas. (Cubans who pass an inspection can enter the U.S. legally under the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966.)

On February of this year, before Vice President Joe Biden got on a plane to Mexico, he met in Washington with the presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to discuss plans for the Alliance for Prosperity, an initiative between the four countries aimed at boosting security and economic support in an effort to stem a refugee crisis. The U.S. Congress approved \$750 million dollars in the 2016 budget for development assistance for Central America—down from \$1 billion dollars. The same 750 million dollars figure is included in the 2017 budget proposal the executive submitted on February 9.

The \$750 million appropriated for the alliance for 2016, which launched in November 2014 after the migrant crisis peaked that summer, is a significant increase from previous U.S. assistance to the region. From 2008 to 2015, Washington disbursed 1.15 billion through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI).

The Northern Triangle countries will have to prove they are working to reduce migration and human trafficking, combat government corruption, and decrease poverty—just some items among a considerable list. The U.S. State Department and Agency for International Development, which are jointly in charge of administrating the money, will have to report to Congress by September 30 on whether sufficient progress has been made, and if not, funding could be suspended. These countries are also required to cooperate with the United States to stem the flow of migrants.

Honduras has made its own commitment of \$965 million to the alliance.

The Obama administration's decision to launch deportation raids at the start of 2016 (on New Year's weekend 121 Central American migrants were flown out of the country) triggered a counter-reaction. Given another boost in migration from the Northern Triangle, the White House responded by the end of January, announcing the expansion of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program to accept more Central American migrants. The president did not specify how many more would be allowed to stay in addition to the 3,000 slots already planned for 2016.

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Established in 1994, the activities of IUCTS are guided by an International Research Council that offers recommendations for study on different aspects of terrorism, both conventional and unconventional. IUCTS is cooperating academically with universities and think tanks in over 40 countries, as well as with governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental bodies.

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