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White Paper



Mass migration, the movement of large groups of people from one geographical area to another, is of increasing relevance to global economic, political, social, and diplomatic leaders and systems. In the past five decades, global migration has steadily increased to the point that today over 281 million people (roughly one in every 30 people), or 3.6% of the world's population, are not living in the country where they were born. At the national level, these numbers are staggering. This is not only a challenge for the United States. Last year 1.2 million people moved to the United Kingdom, immigrants to Australia has doubled since COVID, and Spain's rate is the highest on record.

The United States is the world's top destination for migration, home to more immigrants than any nation in the world. From 1783 to 2019, more than 86 million people have immigrated to its shores. Recently, these migrants are often illegal, with current numbers increasing at alarming rates. Just this year, according to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) statics, over 2.8 million migrants have encountered U.S. authorities at the borders, and illegal border crossings in the United States have risen to over 12,000 per day, the highest numbers recorded. As current legislation is under consideration to address this issue, Senate Minority Whip John Thune has qualified the situation as a "national security crisis." At a local level, a city spokeswoman from El Paso, Texas recently reported that the flow was continuous as the city was receiving over 1,800 migrants a day, causing its shelters to exceed capacity.

Key Points:

- Today, common source and destination nations are:
 - Source Nations: India, Mexico, Russia, China, and Syria have the highest number of emigrants.
 - Destination Nations: Countries with the highest number of foreign-born residents are the United States, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the United Kingdom.
- Three examples of ongoing migrations:
 - Ukraine-Russia War: Over 6 million Ukrainian refugees are registered in Europe and over 5 million have been displaced within Ukraine.
 - Israel-Hamas War: Even before the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas terrorists, there were over 3 million Palestinians in Jordan and approximately 100,000 Palestinians in Egypt, along with perhaps 1.1 million that recently moved from North to South Gaza.
 - The Americas: In Dec 2023, daily records of illegal immigrants across the southern border areas were broken, sometimes exceeding 12,000.
- World-wide instability is growing: a recent global pandemic, two major land wars, political instability in many nations, a disruptive Russia, a rising and coercive China, more elections in 2024 than in history, and a technological revolution related to artificial intelligence – this is a preview of the future:
 - Boosts in immigrant populations in the United States significantly increased GDP, or at least allowed for sustained, modest growth. According to Forbes: "Immigrants promote economic growth by moving to areas where businesses are forming or expanding and need more workers...Immigrants enable the U.S. economy to add more businesses and jobs and help it to grow continuously and change instead of stagnating."
 - U.S. immigration policies are increasingly hotly debated, with competing priorities such as border security, economic, and humanitarian concerns.



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Key Definitions: In addressing mass migration, it is helpful to define some of the key terms that are often used in relation to migration to clarify our understanding, and at times, misunderstanding of this critical issue. In the history of mass migration, particularly recent history, both push and pull factors catalyze migration with both negative and positive ramifications. Here are some of the key terms and examples of migrations:

- **Mass migration:** the migration of large groups of people from one geographical area to another.
- **Economic migrant:** someone who leaves their home country primarily to seek economic opportunity abroad, whether legally or illegally.
- **Refugee:** as defined by the UN Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, someone who has fled conflict or persecution in their home country, has a reasonable fear that returning would be unsafe, and is protected by international law. In many countries, the term refugee also refers to someone who has sought and received asylum in a new country; individuals granted asylum are often legally recognized as refugees by host countries, allowed to remain, and given certain rights.
- **Asylum seeker:** a protective status granted by national governments to individuals, called refugees or asylum seekers, who have been internationally displaced, cannot return home, and seek resettlement abroad. Asylum status often officially recognizes a displaced person as a refugee and grants them corresponding protections, such as the right to remain in a country or access to education and health care.
- **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** flee due to war, violence, persecution, or natural disasters, and face devastating hardships due to displacement. IDPs leave their homes. But, unlike refugees, they stay in their home country—often remaining close to conflict zones.
- **Regular migration:** migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit, and destination.
- **Irregular migration:** movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit, or destination.

Push and Pull Factors: Again, migration can be seen as a function of both “push and pull” factors: Key push factors include conflict, natural disasters, climate, persecution, lack of opportunity, and overpopulation. In contrast, pull factors can often be remedies such as secure and stable societies and environments, open borders, and governmental and educational systems availing better economic or social prospects for themselves and often their families. Most global migration occurs due to the pursuit of greater economic and educational opportunities in destination countries.

Migration has both pros and cons: According to Paul Collier, a leading scholar on mass immigration, the productivity of immigrants “rockets upwards” since they are “escaping from countries with dysfunctional social models.” Immigrants tend to meet labor demands that complement and enhance labor markets rather than compete for existing jobs. Of note, 40% of Fortune 500 companies were started by immigrants. Similarly, over 50% (50 out of 91 total) of all Unicorns (startups valued at over \$1B) were started by immigrants with a combined value of \$248B (which is greater than Finland’s GDP), and on average these organizations employ an average of 1,200 people. It appears that the pros of migration are usually a function of time; the longer and better that a group assimilates and integrates within a society, the more positive the outcome. Further, migration begets migration; when one person migrates to a nation, they often make a way for family and friends to follow. They can also make wages that far exceed their previous wages, which they can then send back to family and homes of origin, which in turn enhance those countries’ GDP. The Philippines is a prime example of this dynamic. Immigrants can also increase the percent of working aged people that can enhance tax income and mitigate the impacts of an aging labor pool. The IMF advises that advanced economies like the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan should increasingly open their borders to avoid being overwhelmed by aging populations.

Migration can create cons. Certainly, for the migrants, there is the disruption of moving to a new location, in some cases with only minimal possessions. There is the hardship of the journey and the unknown of the challenges yet to come. Meanwhile, the nation of origin is often losing its own labor capacity and sometimes in very significant numbers resulting in “brain drain,” as a nation loses its leadership and intellectual strength. At the same time the receiving nation must assimilate and integrate migrants. At a minimum there are almost always language barriers, as well as cultural resistance to new nationalities and ethnicities. This can be perceived as a potential threat. According to Collier, “A large unabsorbed diaspora may cling to cultural norms that made its country of origin dysfunctional and spread them to the host country.” Additionally, wealthier countries with welfare systems, particularly European systems, do not require migrants to work, so those who have paid into the system can be arguably paying for a ‘free ride’ for those who have not paid into the system. In the United States it is estimated that federal, state, and local governments spend \$135 billion per year on undocumented immigrants.

Examples of mass migrations in history with estimated numbers of people impacted:

- Great Migration in the United States, 1910-1970: 6 million Black Americans moved from the South to Northern, Midwestern, and Western states.
- India-Pakistan, 1940-1950s: 15 million.
- China to Taiwan and world, 1948-1950: 2 million.
- Europe after WWII: 12 million Germans alone.
- Rural China to Urban Centers, 1960 to present: 160 million.
- Europe and World to Israel, 1887 to present: 3.6 million.
- Vietnam, 1970s: 1-2 million.
- Afghanistan to Pakistan, 1980s: 2.56 million.

Understanding Migration: According to the United Nations International Organization of Migration (IOM), is the idea that migration is not a problem that can be solved. Although migration narratives are often associated with negative points related to significant threats and societal instability, migration is a phenomenon of human history that, in the aggregate, has brought about significant positive economic, social, and cultural impacts for communities and nations.

The key challenges to regional stability are due to migration that has to do with the roughly 70 million migrants that are categorized as refugees, internally displaced, and stateless persons that are the result of armed conflicts, crime, religious or social repression, and natural disasters. In addition to the speed and scale that such migration occurs, migrants can quickly overwhelm local resources in receiving nations and pose social risks in cultures that see the influx as a threat to ethnic homogeneity, stress limited social program resources, and are a source of undesirable economic competition with the domestic workforce.

When migration is managed effectively by destination nations, migration has proven to be a boost to GDP, social, and demographic advancement. The successful integration into the destination society also provides significant income for families still residing within nations of origin by means of remittances that the World Bank estimates amounted to around \$1 trillion in 2022 in formal and informal payments.

Source Nations: India, Mexico, Russia, China, and Syria have the highest number of emigrants totaling over 59 million people. Although most migration occurs as a matter of personal choice to seek greater economic, educational, religious, and social opportunities, the type of migration that presents the greatest challenge to stability and security comes in the form of refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless persons.

The War in Ukraine: According to estimations within the UN Refugee Registry, 6.2 million refugees have been registered in Europe with 5.1 million displaced within the country. The EU has been extremely supportive of Ukraine even though there have been some political and social tensions with border nations. Although initial integration costs for most nations, particularly in the EU, create short-term drag on economic growth, the net gain has benefited most recipient nations. In Poland, for example, expenditures for education and integration subsidies in 2022 were around \$1.2 billion (USD equivalent); whereas tax revenue paid by integrating Ukrainian refugees into the workforce generated \$1.5B billion (USD equivalent). It is estimated that Ukrainian refugees will add .2 to 3.5 percent to Poland's GDP each year for the first five years. On a different note, Russia is attempting to use migration as a weapon. This tactic begins with transporting emigrants from various places, especially Africa, and then pushing them into the Baltics and Finland to attempt to destabilize the destination locations.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Before the Oct. 7, 2023 attack by Hamas and Israel's response, there were over 3 million Palestinians in Jordan and approximately 100,000 Palestinians in Egypt. In Gaza alone, a population of 1.1 million in the north has, of necessity, moved to southern Gaza, doubling the population there and making it arguably the most densely populated area in the world per capita, all within a war zone.

Migration in the Americas: As of this week, approximately 12,000 people are migrating into the U.S. Southern Border daily, the highest rate in recent history, a problem that our legislative branch is currently litigating with no clear solutions or simple remedies. While the United States' southern border has seen historic migration volumes of migrants from Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba, China, Russia, Turkey, and India, the problem has expanded to become a hemispheric challenge. Destination countries in addition to the United States also experiencing high migration volume include Columbia, Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Panama, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. Although the root causes appear to be global migration antecedents such as economic opportunity and escaping persecution, the migration has also spawned increased promotion of human trafficking, guns, and drugs by transnational criminal organizations.

Myanmar: Six years into the mass exodus of the Rohingya people from Myanmar to Bangladesh, nearly one million Rohingya refugees find themselves living in the Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar. The refugees are completely reliant on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. Unlike the EU, Bangladesh has no integration mechanisms and repatriation is the only plan, which is more of a concept as political and social instability is expected to continue to exacerbate the crisis.

Burkina Faso: has been in crisis since 2018 and again experienced two coups in 2022. According to Refugee's International, over 360,000 people are trapped under siege, qualifying this situation as the most neglected displacement crisis in the world.

Destination Nations: Countries with the highest number of foreign-born residents are the United States, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Of note, with over 50 million immigrants, the United States has about as many foreign-born citizens as the next four top nations hosting immigrants. Destination nations are attractive to migrants due to the labor market, education, increased opportunities, as well as religious and cultural freedoms.

Migration Governance: A function of supply, demand, reception, and integration: National and regional instability and threats to sovereignty and culture vary depending on the source, scale, and speed of migration. Detering supply has been ineffective as authoritarian source nation actions continue to incentivize emigration. Destination national risk often depends on the ability and propensity to receive and effectively integrate incoming migrants into the economy and culturally into communities.

Climate, hunger, and war: Climate, hunger, and war are constant factors in migration with increasing impact over time. Over 1 million people have been displaced in Africa due to the worst drought in over 40 years. Additionally, food prices have drastically increased due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Climate disasters such as flooding have also led to over 3 million displaced in Pakistan, 1.4 million in Nigeria, and 2 million in South Sudan. Additionally, steadily rising global temperatures are causing sea levels to rise incrementally, portending implications for future migrations. The global heat index has steadily risen 1.1 to 1.3 degrees Celsius since 1850, and UN planners project that current projections could get to three degrees Celsius by 2100. Since 10% of the world lives in locations where rising water levels will threaten their habitation, this threat could have massive implications for future mass migration in ways that many nations are not yet planning.

Implications and Forecast:

- Migration will continue to accelerate as a normal aspect of global human behavior. Wherever there is mass migration at any level, there will be a resultant demand on impacted nations economically, politically, socially, and diplomatically.
- The speed and scale of regular and irregular migration will continue to be critical friction points in the ability of nations to receive and integrate migrants. Integration of immigrants, while potentially overwhelming in the short-term, can have significant long-term benefits for nations and the related economies, both for receiving nations and nations of origin.
- Labor shortages in Australia, the European Union, and North America will continue to serve as a "pull" for migrants from source nations.
- Nations with traditionally restrictive migration policies that have labor shortages will likely ease restrictions temporarily to help stabilize labor markets.
- Nations maintaining restrictive integration policies will likely see greater political, economic, and social friction with migrants entering and staying in receiving countries.
- Climate is a slow evolving yet accelerating factor that in the long term has significant implications for mass migration globally.
- Multilateral agreements such as the Los Angeles Declaration are a step forward to managing migration in the Americas and a global example of collective approaches in migration governance. However, execution policies and plans in destination nations will still be driven by individual national interests.

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