Safe Haven: The Case for Refugees

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce its restrictions on legal immigration to the United States.***

Summary: Pres. Trump dramatically reduced the quota for resettling refugees in the United States and also added impossible levels of vetting, such that very few refugees can be relocated legally into the U.S. any more. This is a bad policy because lives are at risk, and admitting these people into America is often their only hope. Many face certain death if they are sent home, and even for those who never migrate here, our example will motivate other nations to step up and save more lives abroad. Far from being a net drain on our social resources, refugees will assimilate quickly, work hard, and make America great again.

Safe Haven: The Case for Refugees 2

OBSERVATION 1. INHERENCY 2

FACT 1. Growing crisis 2

Displaced population worldwide is growing, while the US response declines 2

FACT 2. Lower quota 2

Trump has cut by more than half the number of refugees to be admitted into the US 2

FACT 3. Vetting standards 2

New vetting standards block refugees fleeing war and persecution 2

OBSERVATION 2. HARMS 3

HARM 1. Families harmed 3

Tightened refugee policy hurts families and children 3

HARM 2. People die 3

Sick refugees waiting for resettlement die while waiting 3

OBSERVATION 3. We offer the following PLAN to be implemented by Congress and the President 3

OBSERVATION 3. ADVANTAGES 4

ADVANTAGE 1. Lives saved coming to America 4

A. Refugee safety is important enough to justify American acceptance of more refugees 4

B. Many face certain death if sent home 4

ADVANTAGE 2. Lives saved overseas 4

Setting the quota to 110,000 would improve the treatment of refugees abroad, even those who never migrate here, by motivating other countries to step up 4

ADVANTAGE 3. Net social cost benefit 4

Refugees become net contributor to society, generating billions more in revenue than they cost 4

ADVANTAGE 4. American society improves 5

Admitting refugees refreshes our society, prevents social decadence and stops ignoring atrocities 5

Works Cited: Refugees 6

Safe Haven: The Case for Refugees

Please join us as we affirm that:Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reduce its restrictions on legal immigration to the United States.

OBSERVATION 1. INHERENCY

FACT 1.  Growing crisis

Displaced population worldwide is growing, while the US response declines

NEWSWEEK 2017 (journalist Matthew Cooper) 12 Oct 2017 " REFUGEE POLICY: TRUMP'S AMERICA TURNING AWAY THE MOST IN 37 YEARS" <http://www.newsweek.com/trump-closing-refugee-door-682879>

While the number of displaced persons around the world is growing, the United States is resettling fewer refugees. Because of conflicts in the Middle East, Afghanistan, Africa and southern Asia, the worldwide refugee population has grown by more than 50 percent in the last four years. But the U.S. is taking in a smaller percentage of refugees than at any time since 1980. The U.S. has settled 28,000 refugees in 2017 versus a high of 132,000 in 1992, the last year when worldwide displacement was comparable to current levels. “We’re not resettling at the rate we used to,” Phillip Connor of the Pew Research Institute told *Newsweek*.

FACT 2. Lower quota

Trump has cut by more than half the number of refugees to be admitted into the US

WASHINGTON TIMES 2017. (journalist Stephen Dinan) 26 Sept 2017 "Trump cuts Obama’s refugee target in half, takes more Christians than Muslims" <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/sep/26/donald-trump-cuts-barack-obamas-refugee-policy-in-/>

President Trump, in just eight months in office, has succeeded in upending U.S. refugee policy, cutting by more than half the 110,000-refugee target that the Obama administration had bequeathed him and dramatically shifting the demographics of who is accepted. Gone is President Obama’s overwhelming focus on Muslims, and particularly on Syrians fleeing a civil war that his administration facilitated. Under Mr. Trump, the rate of Syrian refugees has been cut by more than 80 percent, and Christians have overtaken Muslims in total refugees resettled.

FACT 3. Vetting standards

New vetting standards block refugees fleeing war and persecution

Leila Miler 2018 (journalist) FRONTLINE 23 Jan 2018 Public Broadcasting Service For Refugees in the Trump Era, a Tougher Path to the U.S. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/for-refugees-in-the-trump-era-a-tougher-path-to-the-u-s/>

The new cap reflects a dramatic shift in U.S. refugee policy that began a year ago this week with President Trump’s [executive order](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states/) suspending the entry of all refugees into the country for 120 days, temporarily banning travelers from seven predominantly Muslim nations, and indefinitely halting the admission of Syrian refugees. While President Trump has said his policies are aimed at preventing terrorism, critics worry the new vetting standards risk costing many refugees their opportunity for safety from war, persecution and economic insecurity. During a global refugee crisis, they say, the administration is shutting the door on people seeking resettlement as a last resort.

OBSERVATION 2. HARMS

HARM 1. Families harmed

Tightened refugee policy hurts families and children

Caleb Gates 2017 (refugee resettlement case manager) CEDAR RAPIDS GAZETTE Human cost of Trump's refugee policy <http://www.thegazette.com/subject/opinion/guest-columnists/human-cost-of-trumps-refugee-policy-20171230>

Refugee arrivals dropped precariously as a direct result of Trump’s actions and policies toward refugees. Refugee bans and onerous security measures forced resettlement agencies to lay off staff. Because of these policies and actions, in September 2017, the State Department ordered all programs resettling less than 50 refugees this year to close. Closed programs mean jobs eliminated. In December 2017, again because of low arrivals, the State Department ordered all programs resettling less than 100 refugees this year to close. More programs are closing. More people are losing their jobs, myself included. Candidate Trump ran as a job creator. In his refugee policy, President Trump is a job destroyer. Beyond people losing jobs, these policies affect families — families we promised to resettle in Cedar Rapids. I field the calls asking, “Have you heard anything about my sister? Where are my parents? How long until my uncle arrives? What about my wife?” My heart breaks as I respond, “No” and “I don’t know.” I see the pain and the strain sunder families. Children grow up without parents. Marriages fray due to long separations. These families bear the human costs of Trump’s refugee policies.

HARM 2. People die

Sick refugees waiting for resettlement die while waiting

WASHINGTON POST 2017 (journalist Kevin Sieff ) 26 Dec 2017 " Trump’s new suspension of refugees leaves some at risk of dying, doctors say" <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/trumps-new-suspension-of-refugees-leaves-some-at-risk-of-dying-doctors-say/2017/12/26/b4aa2f0e-e1b6-11e7-b2e9-8c636f076c76_story.html?utm_term=.5f527ea19e00> (brackets added)

Not a single Somali refugee from Dadaab has been resettled in the United States since late October, refu­gee officials say. On [clinical service coordinator with the Islamic Relief aid group, Aden Hassan] Abdi’s desk, the number of medical emergencies is growing. He keeps the cases in a bulging blue binder labeled “Resettlement.” Last month, one of the children who had been waiting for his flight to America — a 3-year-old boy with a treatable congenital heart condition — died, Abdi said. More than 50 other cases have been designated as life-threatening. “For so many of them, without resettlement, it’s a death sentence,” Abdi said. “Trump’s policy is like a bomb that exploded here.”

OBSERVATION 3. We offer the following PLAN to be implemented by Congress and the President

1. Quota of refugee acceptance is restored back to 110,000 per year.

2. Vetting standards are reverted back to 2016 rules before the Trump standards took effect.

3. Enforcement through US Citizenship and Immigration Services

4. Funding from general federal revenues.

5. Plan takes effect the day after an Affirmative ballot.

6. All Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 3. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Lives saved coming to America

A. Refugee safety is important enough to justify American acceptance of more refugees

Jessica Brandt and Robert McKenzie 2016 (Brandt – Fellow in Foreign Policy with Brookings Institution. McKenzie – Brookings Institute Expert, Visiting Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 16 Dec 2016 "Addressing the Syrian refugee crisis" <https://www.brookings.edu/research/addressing-the-syrian-refugee-crisis-recommendations-for-the-next-administration/>

Yet since the Syrian uprising began in 2011, the United States has resettled a fraction of the nearly 5 million Syrians in need—only 10,000 to date. The overwhelming majority will not have the opportunity for resettlement in Western countries. Less than 1 percent of the world’s 21 million refugees will be resettled. However, the resettlement of even this small number of refugees is important. First, it provides a pathway out of frontline states for those who are particularly vulnerable and cannot safely be accommodated there.

B. Many face certain death if sent home

Krishnadev Calamur 2017 (senior editor) 25 Oct 2017 THE ATLANTIC "Trump's New Refugee Policy Targets These 11 Countries" <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/us-refugees-11-countries/543933/>

While the Trump administration might justifiably cite security as its reason for the additional screening of refugees from the countries affected, the security situations in those countries is precisely why people are fleeing. In the last fiscal year, for example, many of those admitted from the 11 countries were non-Muslims, and in some cases, particularly vulnerable to persecution by Islamist groups. Others, including Muslims, are, of course, fleeing oppressive regimes and face almost-certain death if they return home.

ADVANTAGE 2. Lives saved overseas

Setting the quota to 110,000 would improve the treatment of refugees abroad, even those who never migrate here, by motivating other countries to step up

Jessica Brandt and Robert McKenzie 2016 (Brandt – Fellow in Foreign Policy with Brookings Institution. McKenzie – Brookings Institute Expert, Visiting Fellow, Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy) 16 Dec 2016 "Addressing the Syrian refugee crisis" <https://www.brookings.edu/research/addressing-the-syrian-refugee-crisis-recommendations-for-the-next-administration/>

Second, resettling refugees has a symbolic importance. It demonstrates solidarity within the transatlantic relationship and makes it clear that the United States supports rights and refuge for all. Third, the United States will not be able to encourage other countries to step up their efforts if it does not shoulder its share of responsibility. For these reasons, the United States should neither pause nor discontinue its refugee resettlement program but instead reaffirm its commitment to it. The next administration should maintain course on America’s commitment to resettle 110,000 refugees in fiscal year 2017 (a 30 percent increase from 2016).

ADVANTAGE 3. Net social cost benefit

Refugees become net contributor to society, generating billions more in revenue than they cost

Joel Rose 2017 (journalist) 27 Sept 2017 Trump Administration To Drop Refugee Cap To 45,000, Lowest In Years, National Public Radio <https://www.npr.org/2017/09/27/554046980/trump-administration-to-drop-refugee-cap-to-45-000-lowest-in-years>

That fits with what researchers at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found. They prepared an internal report this summer that showed refugees brought in $63 billion more in revenue than they cost between 2005 and 2014. The White House never released that report, which was leaked to The New York Times.

ADVANTAGE 4. American society improves

Admitting refugees refreshes our society, prevents social decadence and stops ignoring atrocities

Leon Wieseltier 2016 (Isaiah Berlin Senior Fellow in Culture and Policy, jointly appointed in the Governance Studies and Foreign Policy programs at Brookings Institution ) Syrian refugees and Western inaction 16 Sept 2016 <https://www.brookings.edu/podcast-episode/syrian-refugees-and-western-inaction/>

“It’s astonishing how much one can know and not act because it really is not just about the mind; it’s also about the will,” Wieseltier asserts. “And for various reasons we have lacked the will to act. One of those reasons is the president, probably the primary reason, who is dogmatic and even proud about his policy in Syria. The other is that the repeated imagery of atrocity has the unfortunate and darkly ironic effect of anesthetizing people to it as well.” “It is a matter of national honor; it has to do with the very essence of this country and its public philosophy that we offer refuge to the oppressed and that we welcome immigrants because they refresh our society in every way and they are our strongest barrier against social decadence.”

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