U.S. Foreign Policy & Conflict Resolution:

Fostering Regional Stability

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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY & CONFLICT RESOLUTION: Fostering Regional Stability

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Countries are becoming increasingly interdependent, creating new challenges for the stability of the global community. The United States, through its economic, military, political, and diplomatic resources, is committed to respond to conflicts that pose a threat to national security. This report analyzes three ongoing conflicts, and outlines strategies to address them according to U.S. interests.

THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

The Syrian Civil War has been called the “worst humanitarian disaster” since the end of the Cold War.\(^1\) To date, approximately 162,000 people have lost their lives, including over 53,000 civilians.\(^2\) Violent conditions have led to the exodus of 3 million Syrian refugees and have fostered an environment ideal for radical ideologies like those of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to take hold.\(^3\) These conditions pose a threat to U.S. national security and U.S. allies. This report focuses on ways in which military and humanitarian methods can be used to reduce current political, economic, and humanitarian insecurity in the region, and prevent further expansion of terrorist organizations.

NIGERIA AND BOKO HARAM

Violence and armed conflict in Nigeria, a key trading partner with the United States and the most populated nation in Africa, has deeply undermined the country’s young democratic institutions. Rising economic and political inequality between Nigeria’s northern and southern regions has created unrest amongst the population, and has spurred the growth of terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram. The U.S., in partnership with the Nigerian government and relevant non-governmental agencies, must provide military, economic and judiciary technical assistance to address this crisis.

UKRAINE CRISIS

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\(^3\) Ibid.
Russia’s recent occupation and subsequent annexation of Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula is both a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and a threat to international norms. The standoff over Crimea is the greatest crisis in the West’s relationship with Russia since the height of the Cold War. The U.S. needs to cooperate closely with its European allies to resolve the crisis, protect the U.S. national interests at stake, and create a stable and secure Ukraine.
Glossary of Terms: Nigeria

AQIM Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BH Boko Haram
CIA Central Intelligence Agency
CPS World Bank Country Partnership Strategy
EFCC Economic and Financial Crime Commission (Nigeria)
IBRD International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
GDP Gross Domestic Product
ICC International Criminal Court
IDA International Development Association
IMF International Monetary Fund
YISA Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture
Executive Summary: Nigeria

Violence and armed conflict in Nigeria, a key trading partner with the United States and the most populated nation in Africa, deeply undermine the country’s young democratic institutions. Nigeria, Africa’s largest oil exporter and its leading economy, is expected to have a larger population than the United States by 2050.4 This demographic trend has important implications for the United States’ economic and political relations with Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Rising economic and political inequality between Nigeria’s northern and southern regions has created unrest amongst the population, a division that has spurred the growth of terrorist organizations in the region. Approximately 50% of the Nigerian population is Muslim, while 40% are Christians who live mostly in the south.5 This religious split has only compounded Nigeria’s social divides, with religious extremists taking advantage of the population’s grievances to grow support for their causes.

Boko Haram (meaning “Western education is sin” in Hausa), a particularly ruthless group that originated in northern Nigeria, has called for Nigeria to become an Islamic state. In pursuit of their goal, they have burned schools, kidnapped hundreds of children, and have left casualties numbering in the thousands. Their suspected ties to al-Qaeda in the Maghreb and al-Shabaab in Somalia make containing Boko Haram a major U.S. national security concern.

Nigeria’s government has a history of corruption and human rights violations. To prevent such violations in the future, the United States must assist Nigeria by reframing its judicial system to create a more responsible and accountable government. The U.S. must also provide military training to contain Boko Haram, technical assistance to promote economic

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development, and assist the Nigerian government in addressing the nation’s human rights violations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Provide** logistical, surveillance and intelligence support for Nigeria’s military to contain Boko Haram. Support cross-border security coordination among Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Benin and Niger.

2. **Strengthen** the role of the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in promoting sustainable economic development through strategic governmental and non-governmental partnerships.

3. **Assist** Nigeria to establish a judicial framework to investigate and prosecute human rights violations, including supporting the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation into crimes against humanity committed by Boko Haram.
Recommendation 1:

*Provide* logistical, surveillance and intelligence support for Nigeria’s military to contain Boko Haram. Support cross-border security coordination among Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Benin and Niger.

**BACKGROUND**

Nigeria’s population has become increasingly frustrated with its government in recent years, which has led to violent conflicts, especially in the northern region. Previous attempts by the Nigerian government to end these conflicts have relied upon force. The focus has been on state security, while the root economic and sociopolitical causes of the turmoil have been largely ignored. Members of Boko Haram (BH) see the police and military’s use of force as evidence of repression by the government. Further use of force is likely to grow sympathy for the group, and may lead to its political and membership base growing.

Many of the stated grievances are due to inequitable distribution of resources between the impoverished North and wealthy South. Those in the North perceive unequal influence in the national government, with preference being given to those in the oil-rich southern region. Ongoing corruption in the Nigerian government has led to growing resentment amongst the populace and calls for increased accountability.

There is speculation that BH was formed in the 1990s under the name *AhlulSunna wa’i’jama’ah hijra*. The group’s most prominent leader was the Salafist teacher Mohammed Yusuf, who led the group from 2002 until his death in 2009, purportedly at the hands of Nigerian police officers. Yusuf called for an Islamic State in Nigeria that would operate

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8 Ibid.
under Islamic Law. He believed that Western education and culture were a form of neo-colonial cultural imperialism meant to undermine Islam and the purity of the Muslim people. Yusuf died during a military crackdown on BH, in response to the group’s refusal to abide by motorcycle helmet laws. After Yusuf’s death, BH began to use violence in an attempt to overthrow the government. Their attacks have only increased in scale and prominence, especially under current leader Abubakar Shekau.

BH itself is not a homogenous entity. Its internal factions have differing levels of religious extremism, grievances, and goals. While some are religious extremists who desire the creation of an Islamic State, others are sociopolitical activists who want to end the corruption, bad leadership, and inequality that plague the Nigerian government.

Boko Haram is evolving, technologically and strategically. They are well-armed from overtaking security outposts and possibly due to outside assistance, particularly from Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Shabaab in Somalia. The continued implementation of terrorist tactics that have been effective elsewhere, combined with BH’s notable ruthlessness, has allowed the group to expand from the northeast region towards the center of the country.

Expanding the United States’ current levels of assistance to Nigeria is necessary to prevent BH’s further growth. The U.S. has provided $3 million for counterterrorism training in the past year, but further aid is necessary to end the growing threat of BH. An extension of the U.S. drone presence would provide the Nigerian military with a level of surveillance

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13 Ibid.
capabilities that they could not reach on their own, which would be particularly useful for identifying BH operations and command posts.\textsuperscript{15}

Until the April 2014 abduction of over 200 schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria’s sole strategy was to use force to fight BH. In May 2013, Nigeria declared a “state of emergency” and deployed a joint task force of police and military personnel in the states of Yobe, Borno, and Adamawa. The expansion of military forces in the Northeast was successful in pushing BH out of the cities, but it did not stop the group from attacking local villages. Military officials in Cameroon reported that members of BH have consistently crossed their borders to seek safe haven from attacks in Nigeria. This spillover has caused an increase in bombings and kidnappings in these areas.\textsuperscript{16} Since May 2014, Nigeria has diversified its approach to BH, but military force remains a central component of its efforts.

\textbf{PROPOSAL \& IMPLEMENTATION}

With 200,000 troops and 300,000 paramilitary personnel, Nigeria’s military is large enough to fight BH.\textsuperscript{17} However, Nigeria’s military is poorly equipped and lacks strong surveillance and intelligence services. A training program for Nigerian forces that emphasizes ethical protocol and a focus on human security will improve their public perception. Legitimization amongst the public is necessary for effective operations and rebuilding in the conflict zones. A more disciplined force will limit BH’s ability to use governmental repression and victimization as a means of gaining support.

- The U.S. should provide intelligence training and surveillance equipment that enhances Nigeria’s capability to locate BH forces and prevent them from initiating attacks. An expansion of the United States’ usage of drones in the region will allow

for greater surveillance and intelligence gathering than what the Nigerian government is currently capable of performing.

- Cameroon, Chad, Benin, and Niger have pledged to help fight BH by providing military personnel. The U.S. cannot provide military assistance due to the Leahy Law, but it should provide technical support and personnel coordination assistance. Efforts must also be made to increase border security with those nations to stop the flow of weapons, resources, and human transport.

- The U.S. should provide contractual support to strengthen the institutional capacity of Nigeria’s Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). It is recommended that the EFCC establishes a department that monitors foreign aid flows to fight BH. Additional emphasis should be on making the institution more autonomous from government interference and more transparent to the public.

**CHALLENGES & COSTS**

Nigeria’s strong military and economic capabilities limit the cost of U.S. intervention. However, the nation’s widespread corruption and poor governance require strict oversight of how resources are distributed and managed. The U.S. faces significant challenges in ensuring the military aid is used for its intended purposes.

Congress may oppose these recommendations due to the mistaken idea that Nigeria is not relevant to U.S. national interests. However, the prospect of a terrorist group with anti-Western sentiments in a country with a considerable youth unemployment problem should be a major concern for the U.S. Emphasizing Nigeria’s role as the United States’ preeminent trading partner in Africa, its position on the U.N. Security Council, and the dangers of a growing anti-Western movement is essential for navigating those political discussions. The significant public awareness within the U.S. of Boko Haram’s kidnappings of the Chibok schoolgirls should minimize political opposition to these aid proposals.\(^\text{18}\)

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Recommendation 2:

**Strengthen** the role of the U.S.-Nigeria Binational Commission, the World Bank, and the Internationally Monetary Fund (IMF) in promoting sustainable economic development through strategic governmental and non-governmental partnerships.

**BACKGROUND**

The Nigerian economy is the 24th largest in the world, and the largest in Africa with a 2013 overall GDP of $510 billion and an average 7% annual growth.\(^\ast\) Despite the growing economy, GDP per capita and standards of living for the majority of the population remain low. It is estimated that around 68% of the population lives in poverty.\(^2\) Moreover, the richest 20% of Nigerian households share around 54% of the country’s GDP, while the poorest 20% only share 4.4%.\(^3\)

Armed conflicts and development are closely connected. Violence, instability and terrorist operations are extremely costly for the Nigerian economy, resulting in low business confidence, reduced investment and high unemployment. Similarly, poverty and inefficient governance create a fertile environment for violence. In Northern Nigeria, the area most affected by the extremist group Boko Haram, the poverty rate is above the national average at 76.3% (See Appendix).\(^4\) The Africa Review reported that numerous BH foot soldiers are people displaced by severe drought and food shortages in Niger and Chad.\(^5\) Some 200,000 farmers and herdsmen had lost their livelihoods and, facing starvation, crossed the border

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\(^{19}\) The Nigerian economy ranks first, over South Africa’s, after a revision of Nigeria’s GDP base year announced on April 6th of this year. “Nigeria GDP: Step change,” *The Economist*. April 12th, 2014.  


\(^{21}\) Ibid.


to Nigeria. "While a good number of these men were found in major cities like Lagos, pushing water carts and repatriating their earnings to the families they left behind," said Africa Review, "others were believed to be lured by Boko Haram."  

According to the World Development Report on Conflict, Security, and Development, peaceful countries have low rates of poverty. Conversely, poverty is largely concentrated in countries with high levels of violence, organized crime and ethnic conflict.

**Proposal & Implementation**

If Nigeria and the U.S. prioritize economic and human development, it will facilitate the stability of the country. The U.S., through the Binational Commission and the IMF, should continue to provide Nigeria with technical assistance to improve its economic performance and trade competitiveness. Because the U.S. is the largest foreign direct investor in Nigeria, improving the business environment will be beneficial for both countries. In addition, strategies that focus on non-oil sectors such as agriculture and direct services will foster sustainable growth.

It is estimated that around 38% of young people (ages 16 to 24) are unemployed. The implementation and expansion of youth employment initiatives in Northeast Nigeria will allow at-risk youth to benefit from vocational training and join the labor force, particularly in the agricultural sector. Partnerships between the US government and local non-governmental organizations have proven to be effective. This is the case for the Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture (YISA) which operates in approximately fifteen states...

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24 Ibid.
with the partial sponsorship of the US Embassy in Nigeria. YISA educates at-risk youth on “best agro-business practices” to strengthen local markets and increase employment.

The World Bank, through the 2014-2017 Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), should continue to build capacity among non-governmental and governmental actors to achieve poverty alleviation goals beyond the scope of four years. The CPS, which focusses on job creation, social service delivery and governance, is a joint effort between the Nigerian government and the World Bank Group. In that context, its implementation and subsequent evaluation will strengthen the role of Nigerian institutions in achieving development and fostering stability.

**Challenges & Costs**

The World Bank has increased its loan assistance to Nigeria to $2 billion per year for the next four years through the International Development Association (IDA) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) financing. One of the greatest challenges for the Nigerian government is the financing of sustainable growth and development beyond this time frame. The Nigerian government needs to carefully assess effective approaches to poverty alleviation that can be financed partially or entirely through government spending in the future. This will require the implementation of structural reforms that may not be politically feasible.

The World Bank-CPS approach to Northern Nigeria includes a specific plan for achieving developmental goals in areas of conflict. However, Boko Haram’s violent operations in Northern Nigeria will affect the establishment, expansion and operations of certain projects. Hence, the success of the CPS will depend upon the establishment of strategic alliances with local authorities and civil society actors. Building capacity at the local level is crucial to promote stability, and in the long-term decrease incentives to join extremist groups.

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Corruption is one of the greatest challenges that development initiatives face in Nigeria. Transparency and accountability should be prioritized to continue fostering successful partnerships with the Nigerian government. In the short-term, establishing accountability mechanisms may be costly. However, they are necessary to guarantee the efficiency and continuity of development initiatives.
Recommendation 3:

Assist Nigeria to establish judicial framework to investigate and prosecute human rights violations, including supporting the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation into crimes against humanity committed by Boko Haram.

BACKGROUND

In the last six months, over 2,000 deaths have been attributed to Boko Haram. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has determined that there is a “reasonable basis to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in Nigeria,” and are now investigating whether the national authorities are conducting the appropriate proceedings to prosecute these crimes. Nigeria is a party to the Rome Statute, which obligates Nigeria to take action against “crimes against humanity,” which is defined as violence “committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack”. The United States is not a party to the Rome Statute, but the Obama Administration has begun engaging with the ICC to support their proceedings.

In addition to the crimes against humanity committed by BH, Nigerian security forces have also been implicated in human rights violations, including multiple counts of indiscriminate arrests, torture, and killings of suspected insurgents. These unpunished violations of human rights have a two-pronged negative impact on security in the region: first, if BH’s crimes against humanity are not investigated and prosecuted, they will continue to operate...
with impunity. Second, if the abuses committed by Nigerian security forces continue, it will increase anti-government (and thus pro-BH) sentiment, further undermining the stability in the region.

**Proposal & Implementation**

The ICC is still determining whether or not Nigeria is conducting adequate proceedings to investigate and prosecute crimes. Longstanding flaws in the Nigerian court system increase the likelihood that the ICC will step in to prosecute.\(^{34}\) The U.S. should support the ICC’s proceedings in Nigeria. Members of Boko Haram should know that they will be held accountable for violations of human rights, if not by the Nigerian state, then by the ICC.

Additionally, the abuses committed by members of Nigerian security forces must be addressed. As of now, the ICC is mainly investigating “acts of murder and persecution attributed to Boko Haram.”\(^{35}\) It is unlikely that the ICC would prioritize the prosecution of members of Nigerian security forces. Therefore, as former Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson suggests, the U.S. should press Nigeria to establish a special fast-track court to deal with cases against members of security forces, ideally a mixed civilian and military court.\(^{36}\) If such a court could not be formed, then the U.S. should encourage the ICC to investigate abuses committed by Nigerian security forces, in addition to those committed by BH.

**Challenges & Costs**

If the ICC does step in to investigate and prosecute Boko Haram’s crimes against humanity, there may be some political opposition from Nigeria. The anti-Western sentiment of


supporters of BH may be exacerbated by U.S.-backed ICC involvement. Even opponents of BH may prefer Nigerian courts to prosecute the crimes in accordance with local law.

Furthermore, even with a special fast-track court, it will be a challenge to prosecute members of Nigerian security forces, considering the historical lack of accountability and widespread corruption.\textsuperscript{37} To encourage compliance with these measures, the U.S. should negotiate the aforementioned military and security aid based on proven accountability within Nigeria’s security forces.

Glossary of Terms: Syria

CBSP Community Based Support Program
EU European Union
FSA Free Syrian Army
IAF Iraqi Armed Forces
IMTF International Maritime Task Force
ISIS Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
OFAC Office of Foreign Assets Control
PRM Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration
SOC Syrian Opposition Coalition
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees
UN United Nations
Executive Summary: Syria

The Syrian Civil War has been called the “worst humanitarian disaster” since the end of the Cold War. The conflict started in 2011 in the southern city of Deraa, when protesters opposed to “the detention and torture of school children who spray-painted anti-government graffiti” encountered a violent police response. After continued human rights violations and violent governmental repression, President Obama publicly opposed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s regime, but Syrian unrest has only rapidly expanded. To date, approximately 162,000 have lost their lives, including over 53,000 civilians. Violent conditions led to the exodus of 3 million Syrian refugees and fostered an environment where radical ideologies like those of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) expanded. These conditions pose a threat to U.S. national security and U.S. allies. This section focuses on ways in which military and humanitarian methods can be used to 1) reduce current democratic, security, and humanitarian insecurity and 2) prevent further expansion of terrorist organizations.

Through non-lethal military aid to moderate opposition groups, including the Syrian National Coalition (SNC), the Supreme Joint Military Command Council (SMC), and the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the U.S. can provide capacity training to help stabilize the current civil strife. To prevent the crisis from escalating further, the U.S. should also support a Syrian-led negotiated political solution between Assad and opposition forces, represented by SNC, SMC and FSA. The U.S. should seek to establish a ceasefire by January 2015 and have Syria’s opposition leaders and the Syrian government attend a third peace conference in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations and the U.S. government.

41 Ibid.
Through humanitarian measures, the U.S. must focus on national security threats represented by the refugee crisis. Oversaturation of refugee camps has resulted in the unmanaged spillover of millions of refugees into urban centers. Adults and youth gathered in these urban centers and overpopulated camps are rapidly becoming a recruitment target for extremist groups. Therefore, the U.S. must invest in camp infrastructure and prevent the continued unmanaged overflow into cities. Additionally, targeted humanitarian aid should focus on vocational education in refugee camps, which would provide individuals with the necessary skills and self-sustainability to thwart accession to terrorist groups. Unless humanitarian support to the refugees and camps increases, further instability driven by extremist groups may ensue in the Middle East.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strengthen** U.S. diplomatic relations with key actors in the Syrian crisis.
2. **Prevent** ISIS expansion by providing financial support and military advisors to U.S. allies in the region.
3. **Secure** the flow of refugee populations, through increased financial support to camp expansion and border security.
4. **Provide** vocational training for young Syrian refugee males to counteract terrorist recruitment.

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Recommendation 1:
*Strengthen* U.S. diplomatic relations with key actors in the Syrian crisis.

**BACKGROUND**

Bashar al-Assad has been in power since 2000, and was recently re-elected to another seven-year term. The U.S. did not consider the election valid. Since December 2011, the U.S. has recognized the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SNC) as a legitimate representative of the Syrian people and, since May 2014, as a U.S foreign diplomatic mission. As the crisis in Syria deteriorated, a UN-backed international conference in June 2012 called for the establishment of a transitional governing body, as outlined in the “Geneva Communiqué.”

The same document served as the basis for the Geneva II talks in January/February 2014, which also failed to solve the crisis. In June 2014, an International Maritime Task Force completed the mission of removing the final declared chemical weapons from Syria, a major accomplishment in the crisis. Despite the removal of chemical weapons, the ongoing crisis in Syria poses major threats to U.S. national security and interests.

In May 2014, the U.S. announced a $27 million increase in non-lethal assistance to opposition-held areas, such as food rations and medical supplies.

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assistance since the beginning of the crisis has reached more than $2 billion.\textsuperscript{50} In June 2014, Obama presented a $58.8 billion overseas operation request for the 2015 fiscal year.\textsuperscript{51} If approved, it stipulates that $500 million will “be used to train and equip appropriately vetted elements of the moderate Syrian armed opposition.”\textsuperscript{52, 53}

**Proposal & Implementation**

For the past four years, the U.S. has prioritized the push for regime change in Syria. This is no longer a viable option, as extremist rebels such as ISIS have been gaining greater influence in the country and across the region. The integrity of the Syrian government and the country’s borders remain fragile, and the U.S. cannot risk a failing state. The U.S. must focus on preventing the Syrian crisis from escalating, rather than setting an ambitious agenda for regime change.\textsuperscript{54} Obama’s funding of Syria’s opposition represents less than 1% of the total Department of Defense’s overseas operation request for the 2015 fiscal year, and should only be used for non-lethal aid (medicines, vehicles, communication equipment).

The U.S. has limited ability to screen Syria’s opposition members and monitor the use of weapons supplied by the U.S. The U.S. should provide non-lethal aid to the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) and the Supreme Joint Military Command Council (SMC, SNC’s effective armed wing), and to the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which is an armed insurgency.\textsuperscript{55} These moderate groups are the best available partners for the U.S. on the ground. The U.S. should


\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.


express a renewed determination to support opposition groups, with the primary objective of fighting the expansion of extremism groups. The U.S. should seek to partner with the U.K. and other European countries that share U.S. security concerns and are willing to provide non-lethal aid as well.

The U.S. should also strongly support a negotiated political solution between Assad and opposition forces, represented by SNC, SMC and FSA. Ultimately, this political process should be inclusive and Syrian-led but the immediate establishment of a transitional government should not constitute a priority for the U.S. The U.S. priority is to intensify dialogue with the groups involved in the conflict, namely the Syrian government and the aforementioned moderate groups, to prevent the crisis from escalating further. The U.S. should seek to establish a ceasefire by January 2015 and have Syria’s opposition leaders and the Syrian government attend a third peace conference in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations and the US government.

**Challenges & Costs**

Given the United States’ vital interest in fostering stability in the Middle East and fighting extremism and terrorism, the costs of exerting a greater role in the Syrian Civil War are reasonable. The proposed amount of direct aid to Syria’s opposition should be used for non-lethal aid. If the administration seeks Congress’s authorization to use the funds to supply arms, it will face a strong Congressional opposition. The U.S. should continue seeking the possibility of a negotiated solution to the crisis, although bringing the parties involved in the conflict remains a very challenging task. The Assad government has not expressed readiness to cooperate, but the U.S. should continue to pressure Syria’s government to engage in dialogue and negotiations, especially through resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

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Another complicating factor is that the U.S. does not have solid and reliable partners within Syria. While backing moderate rebels remains a feasible yet complex option, the opposition is fractured in hundreds of competing groups. Uniting moderate groups to pursue an agenda consonant to that of the U.S. and preventing U.S.-supplied equipment from being taken by extremist groups within the opposition are two major challenges that the U.S. faces. Given the complexity of the situation, the U.S. should exercise caution and move forward only with allied states such as the U.K.
**Recommendation 2:**

*Prevent* ISIS expansion by providing financial support and military advisors to allies in the region.

**BACKGROUND**

ISIS is a growing jihadist caliphate that has exacerbated tensions in Syria and Iraq.\(^{57}\) It emerged as a Sunni insurgent group and has executed planned attacks on government and military locations. ISIS is among the myriad of Sunni opposition groups in Syria that are opposed to the Assad regime. However, they are less aligned with the U.S. goal of destabilizing Assad, and increasingly focused on domination and expansion to further regions. ISIS gains control by occupying less populated regions and violently implementing a strict interpretation of Sharia law. They have killed 5,500 civilians and wounded 11,000 this year alone.\(^{58}\)

Some of ISIS’ tactics include targeted kidnappings, planting explosive devices, public executions, sexual assault, and car bombings.\(^{59}\) They control borders at check-points, where they check for violations of Sharia law, and perform brutal punishments on the spot.\(^{60}\) ISIS also gained control of oil in Mosul, making over $1 million dollars a day from sales.\(^{61}\) These profits allow them to recruit an increasing number of militants. Furthermore, ISIS has been successful in over-powering moderate opposition groups in Syria and Iraq, such as the Free Syrian Army and Al-Nusra. ISIS, and the presence of many rebel forces in Syria, poses a

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threat to U.S. national security. Recruitment efforts for global jihadist groups have expanded to regions beyond Syria, such as, Libya, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia. ISIS also has a broad outreach to Jihadists who are not of Middle Eastern descent. For example, an Albanian member of ISIS planted a car bomb in Turkey on March 20, 2014. This exemplifies the potential for ISIS to influence the international diaspora of Jihadists. To prevent the expansion ISIS, alongside other extremist groups, the U.S. must continue to provide financial and military support to its allies, particularly Iraq.

**Proposal & Implementation**

The U.S. should make use of its regional allies, including Iraq and Turkey, to counter the Islamic radicalization of the Middle East. ISIS has defeated the Iraqi army in the North and taken over Mosul, the second largest city in the country. If the Iraqi Armed Forces are well-trained and equipped, they can stop the expansion of ISIS and the destabilization of Iraq. The weak Iraqi military needs urgent training and advice to combat the rebels. To support the military advisors it has already sent to Iraq, the U.S should send additional military personnel to Baghdad to consult with the government. By providing security and services, the Iraqi government will be able to retain support of Sunni citizens and prevent ISIS from recruiting that sector of the population. The Iraqi Armed Forces would also benefit from expanded U.S. training in counterinsurgency warfare and detecting improvised explosive devices. In addition, intelligence gathering has posed significant problems for the Iraqi military.

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The U.S. can offer Iraq valuable intelligence by providing unarmed and unmanned reconnaissance flights. The members of the assessment team will be suited to gather intelligence and give the U.S. a clear assessment on the complexity of the situation on the ground. That would not only help the Iraqi army with their operation but also provide President Obama with a better sense of the conflict.\textsuperscript{67}

**Challenges & Costs**

The Iraqi forces must protect their citizens if they wish to ensure cooperation against ISIS and other extremist groups. If this strategy fails, then Iraqi Sunni citizens are more vulnerable towards coercion into ISIS and other extremist rebel groups.\textsuperscript{68} The U.S. should express its strong support to the Iraqi government, but should proceed with caution. The U.S. has already spent significant resources in Iraq so a proposal to further support a partially failed project will likely face opposition in Congress. The current budget sent to Congress for overseas operations for the 2015 fiscal year includes $140 million for non-operational activities in Iraq, which represents only 0.002\% of the total budget. The U.S. should consider a reallocation that would allow for expanded expenditures in Iraq.


SECURING REFUGEE POPULATIONS

Recommendation 3:

*Secure* the flow of refugee populations, through increased financial support to camp expansion and border security.

**Background**

Growing refugee flows and rebel presence constitute a threat to Syria, its neighbors, and the interests of the United States and allies. Since the onset of the Syrian Civil war in 2011, increased fighting and military factions have resulted in nearly 9 million internally displaced persons and 3 million refugees. Of these 3 million refugees, the majority has sought safety in the bordering countries of Iraq, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. The refugee population has outgrown designated refugee camps in neighboring countries and has been forced to seek safety in urban areas.

Growing rebel forces, such as ISIS, have gained territory in Syria and the greater region. Existing evidence shows potential for mobilization among diaspora and refugee groups, and terrorist groups have been known to recruit from refugee camps. The mass exodus of Syrian refugees, coupled with the spread of extremist views, will continue to pose security concerns for the greater Middle East and U.S. interests if refugee populations are not contained.

Exhausted host countries lack capacity to shelter and care for millions of refugees, and fear the security concerns associated with unmanaged migration. The refugee spillover could pose multiple security threats in a time when crime and illegal activity is difficult for governments to manage. Regional authorities worry that armed fighters, regime intelligence agents, and smugglers hide among the refugees. Furthermore, insurgents in Syria may attempt to exploit the situation and infiltrate the refugee camps. This fear is coupled with the sporadic and random daily entry of thousands of refugees from unofficial border crossings, many of which ISIS already controls.
Proposal & Implementation

Currently, refugee camps have surpassed capacity with thousands of refugees still awaiting basic registration.\textsuperscript{69} Humanitarian aid should focus on securing the location of these vulnerable populations through the expansion of current camp infrastructure and development of new camps in critical areas, like Iraq and Jordan, where thousands of refugees have yet to find safety.\textsuperscript{70} Through initial needs assessments conducted by UNHCR, the International Rescue Committee and other refugee agencies, regional NGOs will gain a sense of the most pressing needs in each location and will be able to better meet immediate concerns through a concerted effort.

In addition to funding camp expansion and development, this aid should also be used to secure both camp borders and international checkpoints. To stabilize the security concerns of the region, assistance to local governments and neighboring countries will help secure borders and better manage the flow of individuals, which will contain the refugee population and deter refugees from urban resettlement.

Challenge & Costs

The UN has made a $6.5 billion appeal for humanitarian assistance in the Syrian refugee crisis, the largest appeal in history. To date, the U.S. has provided $2.5 billion in aid, but the additional 60 percent remains largely unfunded. The greatest challenge would be rallying the international monetary support for the unfunded appeal. The U.S. should use various bargaining chips and multilateral relationships to call for a UNHCR-sponsored donor conference. At this conference, nations will be able to discuss humanitarian and security concerns and call for donor contributions to fill the gap.

Failing to provide enough humanitarian support for Syrian refugees by the end of 2014 could result in dramatic consequences for refugees and regional stability, and allow for increased security threats. The largest of these threats is the spread of ISIS, which will continue to be a growing concern if governments do not have the support and assistance of the international community to secure refugees from terrorist influence.
COUNTERACTING TERRORISM RECRUITMENT

Recommendation 4:

Provide vocational training for young Syrian refugee males to counteract terrorist recruitment.

BACKGROUND

Recruitment of refugees for terrorist organizations is a serious national security concern for the United States. Past Al-Qaeda research shows that refugee flows are correlated to transnational terrorism, but specifically emphasizes the vulnerability of young males. These men, who are typically heads of households, are expected to provide food, support, and shelter for their families despite living conditions that make these expectations nearly impossible. In high-conflict areas and refugee camps that lack basic necessities, opportunities to join terrorist organizations grow. Because many of these young men lack the basic skills for jobs that require vocational training, one of the best options for support is turning to terrorist organizations, which prey on the young men’s vulnerabilities. If the United States can deter these young men from these joining terrorist groups, they will decrease the influence of these organizations that pose a significant threat to U.S. national security.

PROPOSAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

Providing vocational training to young, male, Syrian refugees is one way to lessen the incentive for them to join terrorist groups. Vocational education will provide an

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opportunity for them to learn technical skills for employment in specific trade sectors. For instance, the Community-Based Support Program (CBSP) funded by the Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM) recognizes the importance and successes of vocational programs for refugees. To date, this program states that it is largely successful because it has addressed “the widespread need among the majority of refugees to take part in community-based socialization and livelihood skills building activities that will enable them to generate income and reduce stress associated with extreme social isolation and economic hardship.”\textsuperscript{75} The United States is capable of establishing similar programs for young male refugees in camps. Opportunities such as these will provide young male refugees tangible benefits that qualify them for work in their host-countries, allow them to become economically independent, and deter them from incentives terrorist groups offer.

**Challenges and Costs**

According to the UNHCR, although over 1.2 billion has been provided to Syrian refugees displaced in Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, a 2.4 billion gap in funding still exists. Of the funds currently available for refugees, the United Nations and UNHCR should hold meetings with the ministries of education in the five countries to assess the amount of funding needed to implement vocational programs.\textsuperscript{76} UNHCR can also continue to work with its European partners, who are currently providing resources, to share the costs of program implementation.

The main challenge to implementing vocational programs for young male refugees in these countries is funding. If adequate funding is not available, facilities, curriculum, teachers, and materials cannot be provided. In addition, if this program is solely targeted towards young male

\textsuperscript{75} United States Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, Record to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights, The Syrian Refugee Crisis, January 7, 2014.

males, friction and dissent could arise in the camp settings. Women, for instance, may believe they are facing discrimination.

Providing jobs for the refugee males after completion of the programs is another challenge. U.S. and EU non-profits and nongovernmental organizations can work with local governments to map out ways in which young refugee males can find employment following the completion of vocational training.
Glossary of Terms: Ukraine

EU European Union
G-8 Group of Eight
GNP Gross National Product
IMF International Monetary Fund
MH17 Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UN United Nations
WTO World Trade Organization
Executive Summary: Ukraine

On March 21, 2014, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin signed a decree that formalized the incorporation of the Crimean Peninsula into the Russian Federation. Russia’s occupation and subsequent annexation of Crimea is both a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and a threat to international norms. The standoff over Crimea is the greatest crisis in the West’s relationship with Russia since the height of the Cold War. The U.S. needs to cooperate closely with its European allies to resolve the crisis and to protect the U.S. national interests at stake, creating a stable and secure Ukraine and, consequently, a stable and secure Europe.

To resolve this crisis, the U.S. should utilize a broad array of diplomatic, political and economic tools. These tools aim to:

- Stabilize Ukraine militarily and politically.
- Counter Russia’s aggressive posturing.
- Redefine US relations with European NATO members.
- Reinvigorate Ukraine’s economy and energy sector.

The U.S. should pressure Russia to withdraw from Crimea through economic and diplomatic efforts. Furthermore, the U.S. should limit Russia’s international influence by reprimanding it via prominent international organizations. The U.S., through its diplomatic representatives abroad, should promote active non-recognition of Crimea’s annexation. This international crisis has revealed that the U.S. needs to reevaluate its understanding of Russia’s foreign policy, and draft strategic plans to address possible scenarios that may emerge from the crisis and Russia’s aggressive tactics.

Stabilizing Ukraine, especially the restive Southeast, is a priority for reducing broader regional tensions. The U.S. can do this by providing military aid, promoting democratic institutions and minority rights, and observing the upcoming elections. In addition, the U.S. should reinforce its commitment to NATO allies in Europe and pressure them to fulfill their
military spending commitments. Finally, the U.S. should prevent France from selling two Mistral-class warships to Russia to demonstrate NATO’s unity.

The U.S. should incentivize foreign investment in Ukraine by establishing financial transparency to help economic recovery. In cooperation with Ukraine, the U.S. should develop capital markets and trade relations to lessen Ukraine’s dependency on Russia. This is especially true for the energy sector, where the U.S. should facilitate debt repayment to stabilize Russia-Ukraine energy tensions and ensure Ukraine’s energy security.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Pressure** Russia to withdraw from Crimea, and reevaluate the U.S.’s foreign policy towards Russia.

2. **Stabilize** Ukraine with military, political, and judicial support, and investigate potential Russian involvement in the MH17 plane crash.

3. **Stress** the U.S. commitment to NATO’s Article 5 in Ukraine’s near neighborhood, pressure European NATO members into fulfilling their military spending commitments, and prevent France from selling two Mistral-class amphibious warships to Russia.

4. **Incentivize** foreign investment in Ukraine by establishing financial transparency within commercial banks and companies, and develop capital markets and trade relations to enhance Ukraine’s economic sovereignty.

5. **Facilitate** debt repayment plan to stabilize Ukraine-Russia energy tensions and ensure regional energy stability, and provide aid to alleviate current debt burdens and assist with Ukraine’s natural resource and economic development.
DIPLOMACY AND STRATEGY

Recommendation 1:

**Pressure** Russia to withdraw from Crimea, and reevaluate the U.S.’s foreign policy towards Russia.

BACKGROUND

Russia’s aggressive role in the ongoing Ukrainian crisis came as a great shock to both the U.S. and its allied countries. Russia’s hostility intensified with the illegal invasion and subsequent unilateral annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol on March 21, 2014. The crisis deepened with Russia’s backing of a separatist, pro-Russian movement in Ukraine’s eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. Pro-Russian militants in these regions proclaimed a breakaway Federal State of Novorossiya and engaged in hostilities against the government and security forces. The crisis escalated with the downing of the Malaysia flight MH17 above rebel territory on July 17, 2014, for which there are strong indications that pro-Russian militants, armed by Russia with heavy weapons, are responsible. All 298 civilian passengers and crew members lost their lives, including citizens from the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Canada, and other NATO countries.  

Multilateral negotiations in Geneva between the U.S., the EU, Ukraine, and Russia resulted in the Geneva Statement on Ukraine, which was never fully implemented due to Russia’s obstinacy. Insurgency in the eastern provinces and Russia’s occupation of Crimea has put Ukraine in a dire situation, and it is now on the edge of an energy and economic disaster. The U.S. must help Ukraine to emerge from this crisis, but must also counter Russia’s hostile foreign policy and goals of creating a multipolar world. By countering Russia, the U.S. would minimize the risk of spillover effect in post-Soviet states, and thus help stabilize Europe.

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**Proposal & Implementation**

The U.S., in coordination with the EU and other allies, should pressure Russia to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine in accordance with Budapest Memorandum of 1994 by withdrawing from Crimea. Multilateral meetings can help improve the dialogue and find a negotiated solution to the crisis. Still, because of Russia’s violation of international law, the U.S. must act assertively, but conscientiously, in resolving the crisis. To accomplish this, the U.S. needs to coordinate economic sanctions with its allies and partners. Furthermore, the U.S. and its allies should use their influence to chastise Russia in international organizations, such as the UN and WTO. Expelling Russia from organizations such as the G-8 will send a message that the world will not tolerate aggression and annexations of Ukrainian territory. The U.S., through its diplomatic representatives abroad, should prevent further recognition of Crimea as a part of Russia. Finally, following the success of the State Department’s “Setting the Record Straight” releases, The U.S. should create a task force in the State Department to draft memos and press releases to counter Russian propaganda.

The U.S. must reevaluate its understanding of Russia’s foreign policy objectives. It should draft strategic plans to counter possible scenarios that might emerge from increasingly hostile Russian foreign policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Moreover, the U.S. and its allies should organize simulations to aid preparation and response to possible Russian aggressions in Ukraine and the region. Through these publicized plans and simulations, the U.S. would signal to Russia that 19th century style great power politics cannot be exercised today, and that the U.S. stands ready to protect the integrity and interests of the transatlantic alliance.

**Challenges & Costs**

There are minimal financial expenses for the aforementioned recommendations. The U.S. has a strong and effective diplomatic apparatus that can exert pressure on Russia at low cost. Furthermore, after the downing of MH17, our allies, especially the EU countries whose
citizens died in the incident, are more likely to follow the U.S. in imposing tougher economic sanctions on Russia. Persuading the EU as a whole to increase sanctions and diplomatic pressure will be difficult because of some member states’ economic ties with Russia. There will not be significant costs for the U.S. to condemn and even expel Russia from some international organizations. Finally, the cost of drafting strategic plans, organizing simulations, and creating a task force will represent only a fraction of the overall U.S. defense budget and is easily justifiable given the seriousness of the situation.

There will likely be financial burdens on U.S. companies operating in Russia, but their burden will not be great due to having purchased political risk insurance. Russia will probably counter the United States’ sanctions with its own, but the U.S. economy will not be considerably affected by Russian sanctions. The sanctions will impose significant financial loss on Russia in the long run. Finally, Russia might try to challenge the U.S., but the sympathy of the world is not on the Russian side, especially since the downing of MH17. The fact that China, Russia’s traditional ally, condemns the annexation of Crimea indicates that China might support the U.S.’ course of action against Russia. Russia cannot match the U.S. diplomatically, and further aggression will only lead to more sanctions, isolation, and internal unrest.
STABILIZING UKRAINE

Recommendation 2:
*Stabilize* Ukraine with military, political, and judicial support, and investigate potential Russian involvement in the MH17 plane crash.

BACKGROUND

Pro-Russian rebels control the majority of Eastern Ukraine’s Donbass region, which includes the two major cities of Donetsk and Luhansk. Following Russia’s illegitimate annexation of Crimea in March, the Kremlin has increased military presence along the Eastern Ukrainian and Russian border. NATO possesses ample evidence that Russia has been supplying the rebels with a wide array of military equipment and possibly soldiers.\(^{79}\)

The fighting between pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian government has increased in recent weeks, and tensions have reached new heights since July 18\(^{th}\), 2014, when Malaysian civilian airliner MH17 was shot down in Donetsk.\(^{80}\)

There are several overlapping political, historical, and ethnic groups in Ukraine. They include pro-Western advocates of EU integration and pro-Russian separatists, Ukrainian and Russian speakers, and other ethnic minorities such as Tatars, and Turks.\(^{81}\)

In June 2014, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko was elected into office. Poroshenko is pro-EU and has put forth a peace plan for Ukraine. Although Poroshenko was elected democratically, much of Eastern Ukraine was unable to participate in the election, which increased tensions in the region. In December 2014, Ukrainian parliamentary elections will take place.

Pro-Russian separatist militias have largely denied international observers access to the MH17 crash site. Separatist soldiers have also been seen tampering with the site and

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moving bodies. President Obama confirmed that the SA-11 missile could have only come from Russia due to its advanced technology. Following the crash, pro-Russian separatists were seen attempting to move the Moscow-supplied advanced military equipment back into Russia. President Putin has publicly denied such involvement.

**Proposal & Implementation**

Russia's policy of covertly fomenting anti-governmental fighting in Eastern Ukraine must be stopped. The U.S. should continue sending military equipment to the Ukrainian army and provide military training so that the government in Kiev can reestablish control over the Donbass region. It should continue to support President Poroshenko in moving Ukraine towards further European integration, and send observers to the upcoming parliamentary elections to guarantee the inclusion of Eastern Ukrainian voters. Due to the complex social groups that comprise Ukraine, it is extremely important that the U.S. supports the Ukrainian government's establishment and enforcement of laws protecting minority rights and interests. As a prerequisite for further aid, the U.S. must ensure that Ukrainian government implements a law that explicitly grants rights to Ukrainians speaking Russian and other minority languages.

Pressure must be put on Russia to use its influence over the pro-Russian forces, which currently control the MH17 crash site, to allow complete access for international observers and investigators. To that end, the U.S. should urge the Ukrainian government, Russia, and pro-Russian separatists to rapidly agree on a cease-fire around the crash site.

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The greatest challenge for the U.S. will be combating misinformation and Russian propaganda. Russia has denied its support to pro-Russian rebels, although there is substantial evidence of its involvement in arming the rebels.\textsuperscript{84} Likewise, it has denied supplying the missile that brought down the MH17 flight. Therefore, combating propaganda should be the U.S. priority, which can be accomplished by the task force mentioned in Recommendation 1.

THE U.S. AND NATO RECONSTRUCTION

**Recommendation 3:**

_**Stress**_ the U.S. commitment to NATO's Article 5 in Ukraine’s near neighborhood, pressure European NATO members into fulfilling their military spending commitments, and prevent France from selling two Mistral-class amphibious warships to Russia.

**Background**

Ukraine is not a member of NATO, but it borders the member countries of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. Russia’s annexation of Crimea on the false grounds of protecting Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine also deeply unsettled NATO’s three Baltic members (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), each of whom has significant Russian-speaking minorities. Following large unannounced Russian military exercises at the beginning of March 2014, Poland and Lithuania jointly called for an emergency consultation meeting under Article 4 of NATO’s Washington Treaty, which is raised when “security of any of the Parties is threatened.”

The fact that this was only the fourth time in NATO’s history when this clause was invoked underscores the seriousness of the situation. Clearly, a number of European NATO members feels threatened by Russia’s aggressive posturing. However, France, an important NATO member, signed a $1.6 billion contract in 2011 with Russia, to sell two Mistral-class French warships. The first ship is due to be delivered at the end of 2014.

European NATO members are seriously falling behind on their military spending commitments. In 2013, only three NATO countries (U.S., Great Britain and Greece) maintained their levels of defense expenditure above 2% of GNP, even though in 2006 all NATO members pledged adherence to this target. Today, the U.S. provides 22% of NATO’s

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common-funded budget, and U.S. military spending represents 73% of the combined NATO member expenditures. Such high levels of U.S. commitment are not sustainable in the face of domestic budget constraints: “Sequestration [...] would represent about an 18 percent decline in the inflation-adjusted defense base budget between 2010 and 2014.” In addition, the focus of U.S. foreign policy has been shifting away from Europe to other regions of the world, most notably Africa and East Asia.

**Proposal & Implementation**

President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry should explicitly stress American commitment to Article 5 of NATO, which stipulates that an attack on one member is an attack on all. This should be done both publicly through press and conference appearances, and privately through personal assurances to the representatives from European NATO members. Moreover, U.S. officers in NATO should lead an effort to draft and publish contingency plans for the Baltic states and Poland should they be attacked. As a signal of commitment, the U.S. should permanently deploy several hundred troops to each of the Baltic states.

Moreover, the U.S. should promptly capitalize on the renewed sense of insecurity among European NATO members. It is evident that the security of European NATO allies is far from guaranteed and the U.S. needs to strongly emphasize that it cannot continue being the chief guarantor of transatlantic security. U.S. diplomatic representatives should relay to the European NATO members that raising the military spending to the 2% pledge is essential. This new approach should be applied to the case of the Mistral warships. While the U.S. should insist that NATO buys the ship instead of Russia, the costs ought to be shared by all member countries.

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**Challenges & Costs**

The major challenge to this proposal would be if Russia attacked any NATO member in Europe. While this is still unlikely, due to the immense escalation potential, the U.S. needs to be prepared to put NATO troops on the ground to protect any member state. The principle of collective defense is a cornerstone of NATO and the post-Cold War paradigm of transatlantic security would collapse without its unconditional enforcement.

The U.S.-led effort to redirect the $1.6 billion sale of the two French warships to NATO, would have to be substantial and would be unpopular domestically. However, this course of action has rare bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate. While financially costly in the short-term, the increased military spending by European NATO allies would ease the pressure on the U.S. military and, consequently, the U.S. budget.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Recommendation 4:**

*Incentivize* foreign investment in Ukraine by establishing financial transparency within commercial banks and companies, and develop capital markets and trade relations to enhance Ukraine’s economic sovereignty.

**Background**

In March 2014, the U.S. gave a $1 billion loan to Ukraine.\(^1\) This included administrative expertise to help Ukraine reform its financial system, and recover the assets stolen by former President Viktor Yanukovych. In addition, the IMF passed a 2-year $18 billion agreement to stimulate economic reform in Ukraine.\(^2\) Under this arrangement, Ukraine pledged to manage a flexible exchange rate, preserve confidence in the financial system, fulfill near-term fiscal obligations, steadily reduce its economic deficit, and achieve a self-sustaining energy sector.

Ukraine is currently facing a substantial trade deficit, with many elements contributing to its current economic crisis. These factors include an overvalued exchange rate, commercial losses in state-owned gas companies, loose fiscal policy, obstacles in foreign financing, increasing debt, and depletion of international reserves.\(^3\) The combination of these factors made Ukraine extremely vulnerable to economic and political shocks that ultimately led to its current economic woes.

**Proposal & Implementation**

Ukraine must focus considerable attention to financial transparency. To feasibly attain this, the government of Ukraine must enact fiscal regulations that include management of

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\(^3\) Ukraine Overview
solvency, strengthening of balance sheets for both banks and business, providing investors with access to full disclosure of financial information, and providing insurance contracts to increase foreign investor confidence. Due to Ukraine’s present political strife, international insurance policies such as political risk-insurance must be provided to ensure interest of investors, and to mitigate potential loss due to political hazards.94

To absolve inefficiencies and to encourage competitive markets, the U.S. should assist Ukraine in developing capital markets since they are a crucial catalyst towards economic stability. This would give Ukraine leverage such as buying and selling their equity and debt instruments while facing current economic turmoil. As Ukraine deregulates its market under IMF guidance, it must also seek trade relations to boost its retrenchment. Therefore, the U.S. and the EU should help Ukraine implement trade relations, which would entail mutual opening of Ukrainian and EU markets. These trade partnerships would strengthen Ukraine’s economy and, by increasing Ukrainian exports to prominent foreign markets, reduce its current trade and foreign reserves deficits. Expanding trade alliances would also tap into Ukraine’s agricultural market potential, given its abundance in natural resources.

**CHALLENGES & COSTS**

Because of the current political and economic crisis, it will be difficult to draw initial investors to Ukraine. Though the U.S. advocates for political risk-insurance, many investors will still be wary of investing in a country currently indebted to the IMF. The rate at which Ukraine develops and deregulates its market is crucial. To properly restore its economy, financial transparency must be the Kiev government’s primary objective. Because Ukraine has many underutilized resources in its economy, such as the aforementioned agricultural potential, it is important to ensure that the opening of Ukraine’s trade relations does not lead to the exploitation or depletion of its profitable resources.

ENERGY SECURITY

Recommendation 4:
Facilitate debt repayment plan to stabilize Ukraine-Russia energy tensions and ensure regional energy stability, and provide aid to alleviate current debt burdens and assist with Ukraine’s natural resource and economic development.

BACKGROUND
For over twenty years, Ukraine has depended on Russia’s exports of natural gas. However, the Ukraine-Russia energy relationship has been filled with conflicts and disputes since its inception.\(^95\) Despite frequent disagreements over subsidies, gas rates, and other energy concerns, the two nations have maintained close ties, chiefly because Ukraine depends on Russia to meet its energy demands, and also because Russia uses Ukraine as a primary transit country.\(^96\) Given Russia’s dominant supplier position and Ukraine’s rising debt and growing dependency on natural gas, Russia has controlled the trade relationship. Now that their relationship has eroded by Ukraine’s ties to the EU, the major concern for their economy is the $5 billion debt to Russia for unpaid natural gas deliveries.

Energy security is vital for Ukraine’s economic security and stability. Hence, re-establishing communication with Russia and achieving a peaceful resolution of this dispute is essential for Ukraine’s success. However, these objectives can only be achieved after Ukraine has paid its debts to Russia, and the Russian military has withdrawn from Ukraine.

PROPOSAL & IMPLEMENTATION
To assist in reducing Ukraine’s energy dependency, the U.S. should consider two short-term and two long-term goals. For the first short-term recommendations, the U.S. and the EU should jointly help Ukraine in negotiating a repayment plan or settlement with Gazprom,


\(^{96}\) Ibid.
the Russian state-owned gas company. Reducing the possibility of supply fluctuations and energy security threats reduces the power and influence that Russia can exercise over Ukraine. Therefore, establishing dialogue and a stable relationship between the two countries is essential for the economic and political stability of Ukraine.

The U.S. should provide Ukraine with loans to alleviate its upcoming fuel shortage. Regardless of whether political and economic tensions continue to persist, Ukraine will need viable sources of fuel for the upcoming winter, when it might be short of up to 6 billion cubic meters of gas. There are tentative plans to overcome the country’s gas shortage by reducing consumption and using reverse flow supplies from the EU. However, these options will not be sufficient and are not economically feasible in the long run. The policy of reverse flow supplies could potentially result in legal repercussions for involved countries.

The aid provided by the U.S. and its allies should be used to purchase coal and liquefied natural gas. In the long-term, the U.S. should focus on helping Ukraine gain at least partial energy independence from Russia. To achieve this aim, the U.S. should provide financial and technical assistance to promote the development of Ukraine’s gas and other natural resources. The second U.S. long-term objective is helping Ukraine develop its ability to independently negotiate more advantageous energy deals as a strategically positioned transit country. While Ukraine will remain dependent on Russia’s energy, improving the Ukrainian-Russian relationship and increasing Ukraine’s energy self-reliance will allow it to negotiate more assertively.

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**Challenges & Costs**

Ukraine needs significant financial support to meet its short-term energy needs and reduce its energy dependency on Russia. Providing this funding and ensuring that it is used properly will be costly for the U.S. With $5 billion owed to Russia, any payment plan reached will be expensive to Ukraine and the countries that offer support during the repayment period. Ukraine will also need financial support to address the gas shortage it may face in the winter. The U.S. has already given a $1 billion loan to Ukraine, and more investment will be necessary. However, the aid from the EU and IMF will lessen the amount of funding the U.S. will have to provide. U.S. involvement with negotiations and development in Ukraine will not be received well by pro-Russian activists in Ukraine or by Russia. While this may raise regional tensions, these are necessary actions to ensure energy security and the stability of Ukraine.
WORKS CITED

NIGERIA


SYRIA


UKRAINE


APPENDIX

Figure 1: Geographic Distribution of Wealth in Nigeria

Source: Canback Dangel C-GIDD 2007
Figure 2: Refugee Crisis in Syria

Source: UNHCR
Figure 3: Ethno-linguistic Map of Ukraine
Figure 4: NATO Countries in Europe
Figure 5: Russia’s Oil Export Network