Redefining What It Means to be a Refugee
Policy of the Year Nominee

10 IDEAS for DEFENSE & DIPLOMACY
10 Ideas for Defense and Diplomacy
2013

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10 IDEAS FOR DEFENSE AND DIPLOMACY
Congratulations to
ARIEL SMILOWITZ
author of
REDEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A “REFUGEE”

Nominee for
POLICY OF THE YEAR
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The Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network was established in 2004 in response to the deep and pervasive sense that young people were overlooked in the policymaking process – that we could put boots on the ground and donate what little money we had to support leaders that promoted our progressive values, but our ideas, opinions, and priorities were not represented in our public discourse or electoral system. It was this realization and subsequent rejection of the status quo that led to the founding of what is now the nation’s largest student policy organization.

That original purpose has endured as the Campus Network has grown to over 100 chapters. Yet at a recent gathering, one of our top leaders noted that the challenges we face in the wake of the 2012 election are similar to the ones that first brought us together. We are increasingly powerful actors in our public debates, but despite the bold ideas and ambitious agendas we’ve envisioned, designed, supported, and fought for, we are still beholden to a political process more focused on scoring partisan points than moving our country forward.

What emerged from that moment of collective reflection was the recognition of our unrealized potential as a movement. While our members’ student-generated ideas and solutions-oriented action have redefined youth participation in the political process, it will take constant renewal and commitment to fresh ideas, rigorous engagement, and long-term action to achieve what we know is possible.

The 2013 10 Ideas series represents that ongoing effort to build the infrastructure, communities, and platforms that will allow us to realize the vision that was first laid out in dorm rooms across the country eight years ago. This year, our premier journals represent unique ideas from 83 authors at 30 different schools. As they go to press, our members are already translating those ideas into action by initiating petitions, collaborating with local partners and stakeholders, and lobbying on Capitol Hill.

Last year, we proudly presented the 10 Ideas series as a powerful reminder that this generation is not only willing to build a better future, but has already begun. This year, we put these solutions forward to demonstrate that members of this generation are in it for the long haul as part of an initiative that is always growing, always evolving, and always looking toward the future in the pursuit of progress.

Taylor Jo Isenberg
National Director
Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network
We are pleased to share the fifth edition of the Roosevelt Institute | Campus Network’s flagship 10 Ideas series. These journals, encompassing the best student ideas from our six policy centers, are filled with game-changing public policy suggestions that we can and must implement now.

We are in desperate need of these ideas. Rising healthcare costs, increasing inequality, global climate change, and a government that often seems unable or unwilling to address the things that matter most are challenges that require the very best and the very brightest.

At the same time, we are told that Millennials are checked out, have lost interest, and are waiting for someone else to solve our problems. These journals are an answer to that narrative, making the clear case that we are engaged and active citizens, putting forward ideas to change the problems we see in the world around us. We believe in the power of people working together to solve problems.

Each year, the 10 Ideas journals provide a vision for change that addresses the needs of our neighborhoods, our cities, and our country. Working with community members, local nonprofits, professors, and lawmakers, these student authors have identified the policies that can make the most difference. Yet this journal represents just the tip of the iceberg, with many hours of organizing, researching, fundraising, and developing public campaigns hidden below the surface.

This year’s Defense & Diplomacy journal reveals a real concern over our military tensions with China, and our students suggest several innovative ways to approach this potential hotbed. There is also a common theme of efficiency and improving the mechanisms through which defense and diplomacy function by tackling the ways we pay for and reward success within our systems. Finally, Millennials believe in the power of diplomacy and mediation in foreign conflict zones and are actively pursuing new pathways to peace.

Taken on its own, each idea is a simple solution. These journals and the 10 Ideas series taken together are a library of ideas that can help us build toward a more equal, accessible, and community-minded world.

Join us in seeing these ideas realized.

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Reducing Veteran Unemployment: American Heroes Education Institute

Mohammed A. Alam, The City College of New York

The U.S Department of Veterans Affairs should engage in comprehensive career support for veterans by working with non-profit organizations and sponsoring an interactive 15-week educational training program.

Over 2.4 million veterans have returned to civilian life since 9/11. The national unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans was 10 percent as of November 2012. While Veterans Affairs offers a program known as the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), roughly two-thirds of veterans receive this assistance and less than half find it useful. TAP does not keep records of progress, and it provides general non-specific services, making it difficult for veterans to identify their individual skills. The roots of the problem lie in ineffective programs and poor use of resources. Veterans Affairs had a budget of $968 million in 2012 for employment and rehabilitation services. Yet a large number of veterans are unable to translate their military skills into civilian jobs. This proposal would create a more structured and results-oriented program.

Analysis

A 15-week program – undertaken upon completion of active duty – can reduce veteran unemployment. Veterans Affairs indicates that the G.I. Bill allocates approximately $18,000 per veteran. However, many do not claim these benefits. The 15-week “institute” could use a portion of the funding from veterans entered into the program as educational expenses and would be able to track the progress of the assistance. Nearly 1.6 million veterans receive TAP benefits, which costs an annual $9 million. In addition to costing less, the institute will also provide a more effective and personalized program. It can deliver assistance to the nearly 900,000 veterans that are still unemployed.

The institute can be broken down into four parts. First, veterans will be assisted with a rehabilitation counselor to work one-on-one in transitioning back into civilian life. Second, veterans will receive educational seminars, which will highlight different career choices and how to pursue a college degree. Third, veterans will receive training in professional skills such as networking and writing a job application, resumes, and cover letters. Fourth, veterans will learn how to take the skills and knowledge they gained through military service, determine their transferability, and match them to civilian jobs. Those with concentrated skills, for example a medic, will receive specialized career and educational assistance to convert them into civilian services.
Next Steps
The institute would be implemented by a partnership of government agencies, veteran agencies, and non-profit organizations. In addition to federal and non-profit resources, the Department of Labor issues grants for up to $1,250,000. It can then be housed in community centers, federal offices, and public universities across the country. A program structure can be provided on the national level and administered by local efforts to address problems that are specific to each community. Toward the end of the institute, partner organizations can work together to set up and host career fairs across the country. Veterans can then use the skills and tools they have recently gained to find suitable employment.

Endnotes
2. Ibid.
Combined Task Force as a Catalyst for US-Chinese Cooperation

Jon Buchleiter, University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill

Tensions are rising between the United States and China in the South China Sea. Creating a joint anti-piracy task force comprised of the U.S. Navy and the People’s Liberation Army Navy vessels would alleviate tensions, strengthen ties, and help avoid strategic miscalculation.

Escalating tension between the U.S. and China compels a careful reexamination of U.S. policy in East Asia. Recent territorial disputes and rising piracy rates in the South China Sea demonstrate the need for more effective Chinese and U.S. maritime policy. This coming year offers a tremendous opportunity to negotiate with China under newly elected Xi Jinping, and maritime alliances should be one topic broached during these discussions. An anti-piracy taskforce would serve as a catalyst to further strengthen Sino-American relations and would be more politically feasible than traditional alliances, as it is less formal and comprehensive.

Analysis

President Obama’s strategic “pivot” has enhanced relations with East Asian partners, but it comes at a cost. Many Chinese defense analysts perceive it as an effort to contain China’s rise and U.S. statements to the contrary have not allayed Beijing’s fears. Meaningful steps should be taken to improve relations, including an express willingness to cooperate on naval matters. In 2008, China joined international anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. This represents a break from its previous reluctance to become involved and provides an opportunity to expand naval cooperation.

The need for improved relations is clear: over one-third of international trade passes through here and “to the extent the world economy has a geographical center, it the South China Sea.” Unilateral anti-piracy operations are underway, yet sea lanes in the South China Sea remain among the world’s most dangerous.

Maritime incidents, such as the collision between Soviet warships and the U.S.S. Walker, demonstrate how collisions may potentially spiral out of control. Naval communication can be challenging and high risks for miscommunication exist in areas of high maritime traffic such as the South China Sea. A combined taskforce would help prevent miscalculations.

The U.S. Navy already conducts patrols in the area, and this coalition would not increase costs. Because both navies would contribute vessels, the number of ships from the U.S. may actually shrink, thus reducing costs.

Key Facts

- In monetary value, over one-third of world trade travels through the South China Sea and the Malacca Straits.
- The South China Sea has the second highest rate of piracy in the world, with an average of over 70 pirate attacks per year.
The force should have a parallel command structure to facilitate military-to-military communication and simplify logistical integration between ships from different navies. Parallel command is easier to accept politically and allows nations to opt out if goals diverge from their own. Many Chinese policymakers are wary of binding commitments because of other longstanding disagreements, so this force should remain rooted in responding to security threats affecting both states.

**NEXT STEPS**
Mobilizing support within different parts of the U.S. and Chinese governments is key. Discussing this task force in a summit between Mr. Jinping and President Obama would give it legitimacy and could exemplify efforts to improve military-to-military communication. The Obama administration should publicly present the idea to gauge popular support in both China and the U.S.

Securing military support should emphasize mutual benefits, which include increased safety for trade goods and reduced operational costs for both navies. Ultimately, this joint task force can serve as a model to foster increased cooperation and reduce tensions between China, the U.S., and other Southeast Asian states.

**ENDNOTES**

10. Ibid. 130
11. Dutton, 22
12. Cronin et al., 7
14. Chalk, 95-96
15. Dutton, 11
Eliminating Sexual Assault in the United States Military Using Individualized Attention on Bases

Sarah Estrela, Wheaton College and Liza Ponomarenko, McGill University

In the upcoming efforts to combat rape and sexual assault in the United States military, a more personal and individualized connection between the Department of Defense and soldiers should be implemented to prevent future assaults.

Since 2006, more than 95,000 service members have been sexually assaulted, though the Pentagon estimates that reported cases make up only 15 percent of sexual assault incidents. Although the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) has responded to cases of sexual assault with awareness videos, leaflets, briefings, and posters, these efforts have made no significant progress. Congress developed the Sexual Assault Training Oversight and Prevention (STOP) Act (H.R. 3435) that creates a new office within the Department of Defense composed of a majority of civilians who would deal directly with cases of sexual assault, as opposed to the previous method of remanding cases to a soldier’s chain of command. This department is charged with developing programs to educate soldiers about sexual assault and rape, as well as realistic preventative techniques. While this is an excellent first step, this program is so far removed from the soldiers it affects that it may not be effective enough to truly mobilize change. There should be a special point person (or a group of point persons) from this department that deals with specific problems unique to each military base or service academy. Dissolving SAPRO’s ineffective efforts, as well as the forthcoming drawback of troops in Afghanistan, will leave room in the defense budget to make this necessary change possible. Through detailed research, targeted programs and training, and the ability to respond rapidly in cases of sexual assault, positive changes can be made and sexual assault can be prevented and dealt with appropriately. These steps will lead to a culture of respect and will ultimately result in greater unit cohesion, trust, and safety.

Analysis

Designating a point person will give soldiers access to unbiased professionals trained in dealing with cases of sexual assault. Although the military has its own culture, subcultures of toleration exist within many bases. A specialized professional, as opposed to a far removed bureau, can respond effectively and develop programs that can dissolve the tolerance of sexual assault. Because these individuals will be civilians separate from the Chain of Command, conflicts of interest will be virtually nonexistent.

Key Facts

- A woman serving in Iraq or Afghanistan is more likely to be raped by a fellow service member than to be killed in the line of fire.
- More than 86 percent of service members do not report their assault, either out of fear of ruining their military careers or because the individual responsible for handling these cases is either the accused or a friend of the accused.
- Men are also victims. In 2010, nearly 50,000 male veterans screened positive for “military sexual trauma” at the US Department of Veterans Affairs.
**Next Steps**
The SAPRO should designate a group of professionals to the bases or service academies that have prevalent and persistent problems with sexual assault to identify and solve problems. These bases should have more hands-on and intensive training for soldiers and cadets, rather than the usual briefing soldiers receive in Basic Training. While it cannot be said for sure whether or not this program will need to be a permanent fixture in the military, it will at least incorporate intolerance for sexual assault into the values system the military holds deeply.

In addition, to make this effort more unified across the armed forces, there should be an annual or bi-annual forum for victims and families, the professionals who work on these bases, and the Council and Office. Working with specific bases in this way and conducting an annual or bi-annual forum will hopefully eradicate the tolerance in military culture of sexual assault and rape and will make this issue one that can be spoken about openly and seriously.

**Endnotes**
4. Ibid.
5. Invisible No More, “Policy.”
6. Ibid.
7. Al Jazeera, “United States Military Scandal: A Culture of Rape?”
Adapting to China’s Rise as a Significant Naval Power

Derrick Flakoll and Chang Sun, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

To recognize the claims of all parties to disputes in the South China Sea and prevent an outbreak of conflict in the disputed areas, the United States should establish a code of conduct with ASEAN.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China have long contested each other’s territorial claims in the South China Sea. China claims to control a region of the sea far beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone it is entitled to under the U.N. Law of the Sea.1 Recently, claims have come to a head as China has sabotaged efforts by the Philippines and Vietnam to search for oil and gas in these territories. Left unchecked, these disputes could potentially escalate into a broader regional conflict. It is in the U.S.’s best interest to take steps towards averting a potential crisis, as it could disrupt American trade, valued at $1.2 trillion, currently passing through the South China Sea. Moreover, if the Philippines and China went to war over territorial conflicts, the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 between the U.S. and the Philippines would force the U.S. to either enter a destructive war with China or nullify the treaty and jeopardize its relationships with other regional allies. Because of these economic and political incentives, the U.S. should use its clout as the world’s preeminent naval power to negotiate a code of conduct that will govern interactions between the navies of the nations involved in the South China Sea dispute.

Analysis

If the U.S. could broker a deal between ASEAN and China that encompasses exclusive economic zones, oil exploration rights, and other related issues, it could ensure a more peaceful and stable future for the South China Sea area. A binding code of conduct agreed to by all parties would provide certainty that no nation would attack another’s assets, considerably reducing tensions between China and ASEAN. China has proven willing to engage in multilateral agreements in the past, so it could be expected to obey the rules of the code.2 This is particularly true if the U.S. agrees to accommodate China’s desire for influence in surrounding waters by conducting joint American-Chinese naval patrols. This would allow the Chinese to monitor their claimed waters, while the presence of American ships would assure U.S. allies like the Philippines that their own territorial rights are being protected. Sharing naval patrol costs with China should also be an attractive proposition for the cash-strapped U.S. government. Nobody involved in this conflict wants to disrupt the $5.3 trillion worth of trade that flows annually through the South China Sea.3 In the end, the transaction costs of establishing a code of conduct would be far less than the costs incurred by further increases in military tensions. Such tensions would jeopardize the integrity of international shipping lanes in the South China Sea, which are pivotal for the region’s economic vitality.
Next Steps

The creation and implementation of a code of conduct for the South China Sea will be a slow and difficult process. Before anything else, the State Department should create a prototypical “ideal” treaty that would represent the best policies for containing conflict in the region and serve as the model for the U.S. bargaining position. Meanwhile, the U.S. Navy should plan a joint patrol of the South China Sea with the Chinese Navy. This would require an understanding of the logistics involved, the specifics of Chinese naval protocol, and training naval personnel to cooperate with Chinese sailors. The diplomatic community should privately relay these ideas to U.S. allies in the region to be sure that they would support the deal. Once diplomats are sure that a code of conduct would be viable, they should announce a summit in which China, ASEAN, and the U.S. would draw it up. The American diplomats at the conference should have clear priorities beforehand, including a list of policies that they would be willing to compromise on and policies that are nonnegotiable. If the conference succeeds, the next step would be ratification by the involved parties and implementation. The U.S. diplomatic community and the Obama administration should go to the media to publicize the benefits of the code and use this as leverage with the involved parties to make sure they sign and obey the code of conduct.

Endnotes

4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

Talking Points

- Disputes between China and ASEAN in the South China Sea could lead to war.
- War would jeopardize the economies of the South China Sea region and the U.S.
- A code of conduct would prohibit disputants from antagonizing each other.
Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in the Middle East

Amy Frieder, Cornell University

A policy providing incentives for investing in companies run by Arab women in the Middle East would result in a more pluralistic Middle East and encourage new post-Arab Spring democracies to develop. Aiding the economic growth of countries in the region would also improve U.S. foreign relations with Arab countries, and both sides would reap the benefits of an improved business relationship.

As a result of the Arab Spring, the people of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya democratically elected their leadership for the first time in recent history. As these newly elected regimes contemplate different means of reform, we must encourage them to develop their democracies, and thus the degree of political rights and civil liberties in the region. “International support is critical,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton remarked at the UN in September. It is in the U.S.’s interest to “help countries in transition find the right path forward.”

A large discrepancy between the number of educated Arab women and the number Arab women in the workforce currently hampers the economy and political plurality of the countries in the region. In Qatar, for example, where women constitute 63% of the university population, they make up only 12% of the workforce and 7% of legislators, senior officials, and managers, according to CNN citing the UN Statistics Division. Women participate in the economy informally through handicraft production, bread baking, “petty commodity trading, selling articles at weekly markets and acting as the middle-woman in transporting goods between rural and urban areas.” An increase in female labor participation rates in accordance with education levels in the Middle East could raise household earnings by 25% and allow per capita GDP rates to reach their full potential.

Most of the U.S. government funding from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation is not located in Arab countries experiencing a post-revolution transition. The National Endowment for Democracy, however, has given grants to organizations in Arab transitional democracies, and several have been beneficial to women. They include an association for women’s political participation in Tunisia, a feminist studies center in Egypt, and a women’s rights advocacy campaign in Iraq. Women, according to The Economist, are the world’s most underutilized resource, and an increase in women’s participation in the workforce would simultaneously further advance equal gender rights and support economic development.

Analysis

President Obama’s FY 2013 budget includes funding that “responds to the Arab Spring by supporting the aspirations of people in the Middle East and North Africa, with more than $800 million to assist countries in transition and create incentives for long-term economic, political, and trade reforms.” This spending, the OMB report states, fosters “stability around the world to protect our national security,” and supports economic growth both abroad and domestically, opening new markets for U.S. businesses and increasing trade. If the U.S. were
to allocate some of this funding to encourage investment in businesses run by Arab women, it would help offset the damage inflicted by oil booms on women’s advancement in the region. Indeed, studies have shown that “when a nation’s oil soars, the number of women in the workforce invariably declines the next year.” This has profound consequences on women’s political engagement, as “leaving home and entering the workplace produces greater political awareness and participation among women” as well as a force to fight patriarchal norms and restrictions on women’s rights that limit developing democracies.

**Next Steps**

A policy incentivizing investment in companies run by Arab women - supplemented by increased funding from the National Endowment for Democracy and expanded OPIC projects in post-Arab Spring countries - would encourage democracy development and “help solve critical world challenges and in doing so, advance U.S. foreign policy.” OPIC should expand its projects to include nations with new democracies - and perhaps refer to the US government’s Millennium Challenge Corporation’s indicators tracking countries’ social and economic progress. These women-run, eligible businesses would be obligated to employ a high percentage of other Arab women and, in doing so, be dedicated to furthering women’s political rights and civil liberties.

**Endnotes**

The United States: The Arsenal of Peacekeeping

Daniel Irvin, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

To make peacekeeping more effective, the United Nations, with funding from the U.S., should increase reimbursement payments. This would encourage peacekeeping and improve the quality of peacekeepers.

U.N. peacekeepers have a long and controversial history, with successes as well as failures. In Professor Virginia Page Fortna’s study, “Does Peacekeeping Work?,” she concludes that peacekeeping has been mostly successful.¹ Currently, the $7.23 billion² U.N. peacekeeping budget is not enough to effectively cover all of its obligations. One aspect of the budget in need of more funding is the compensation to countries that volunteer soldiers. Nations that volunteer soldiers receive $1,028 per soldier.³ As many of the nations that provide peacekeeping (India, Bangladesh, Nigeria etc.⁴) become wealthier—and their militaries become more expensive and sophisticated—the $1,028 reimbursement will become less attractive. This means that the burden of peacekeeping will fall upon even poorer states. These states’ militaries are less well equipped and trained, and the performance of peacekeeping missions will reflect that. Increasing the reimbursements would encourage middle-income nations to contribute their soldiers. With higher quality soldiers, U.N. peacekeeping missions would be much more effective.

Analysis

Increasing the reimbursement by 20 percent, to $1,233, would cost $205 per soldier. With 97,199 soldiers and policemen currently in the field,⁵ this would cause reimbursement costs to go from $100 million to $120 million. In the current climate of international concern about deficits, it may seem wasteful to increase funding to the U.N. However, compared to the $3.7 trillion⁶ cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, peacekeeping operations are cheap. Aside from humanitarian benefits, like preventing the deaths of civilians and avoiding the lawlessness that arises in war-torn areas, investing in peacekeeping will yield returns in the long run. One study found that spending $100 million on a peacekeeping initiative reduces the risk of conflict from 38 percent to 16.5 percent.⁷ Given that each percentage point of risk is worth about $2.5 billion to the world,⁸ a $100 million peacekeeping operation would have a payoff of $53.75 billion. If this $20 million investment leads to just a few more peaceful nations, future trade relationships alone would pay back that investment. For example, in 2001, the final year of the Sierra Leone Civil War, American exports to Sierra Leone totaled $27.8 million. Eleven years of peace later, American exports were worth $96 million.⁹ A more successful peacekeeping regime would aid in the transition from a unilateral strategy in international affairs to a more multilateral one, in which international conflicts would be solved through multilateral institutions.

Key Facts

- Third-party peacekeeping has proven to be a cost-effective way to bring peace to states around the world.
- If the reimbursement rate for states that provide U.N. peacekeepers does not increase, there is a danger that they will stop providing troops.
- A $100 million investment in peacekeeping can save the world $53.75 billion.
**Next Steps**
The U.S. should increase its funding allotment to U.N. peacekeeping at the next opportunity. It should ensure that these new funds go to the reimbursement of nations providing peacekeepers. One impediment to implementing this policy is the perceived reluctance to act through and fund the United Nations. In the U.S., traditionally seen as the most unilateral Western nation, one poll found that 86 percent of the population support the U.S. having an active role in the organization, with 64 percent saying the U.S. should pay its dues fully and on time. Currently, the United States provides 27 percent of the U.N. peacekeeping budget. This may seem costly, but this $1.95 billion investment is approximately 474 times smaller than the U.S. defense budget. Additionally, from a fiscal perspective, investing in peacekeeping is a short-term cost that will pay off in the long run. Every $1 million invested pays back $538 million. Citizens may at first be suspicious of spending more money on other countries, but this policy can be framed as a short-term cost that will have long-term societal and economic benefits.

**Endnotes**

**Talking Points**
- Peacekeeping has been successful at bringing peace, which brings economic development. The U.S. gains from economic development in all parts of the world, as every nation is a potential trade partner.
- Peacekeeping is more successful when there are better trained troops serving. To raise the incentives for wealthier nations to contribute troops, the reimbursement rate should be raised.
- The cost of this raise is far outweighed by the economic benefits from trade and stability.
A Child’s War: Settler Violence in the West Bank

HANNA MADSSEN, UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Community Dispute Resolution Centers created by community leaders in the West Bank will not only create a culture of collaboration, but will ultimately decrease settler violence.

Contemporary settler violence is a deliberate campaign by a committed core of young settlers targeting communities where Palestinian youth are the majority. It is, indeed, a child’s war. Hilltop Youth use a strategy called “price tag” that involves grass roots retaliation against efforts challenging the settlement enterprise. A loosely organized group of young settlers, their efforts include blocking traffic, setting fields on fire, throwing rocks, and other acts of small-scale violence against local Palestinians and members of the Israeli security forces. In February 2012, a mosque was attacked, prayer mats were burnt, insults sprayed and war declared on the walls of a Palestinian village called Burka in what is considered one of the most ‘provocative’ acts of violence in Israel this year. The youth are often noted for establishing illegal outposts outside existing settlements and are protected by the Israeli military due to their Israeli citizenship.

Political and security officials pledged to implement several measures to curb and punish these violent attacks. However, Israeli security services have generally maintained their lax movement and access policies in the West Bank despite this “homegrown terror”.

As the occupying power, the Israeli military maintains public order and protects the safety of Palestinian residents in sectors B and C. In a ruling regarding the security forces’ duty to enable the olive harvest to be carried out undisturbed, B’Tselem (2012) quotes the Supreme Court ruling which maintains that the military must “allocate forces to protect the property of the Palestinian residents.” Yet while Israeli military forces are required by law to protect both Palestinian and Israeli residents of the West Bank in sectors B and C, the current system of jurisprudence fails to create a mutual sense of security and cooperation.

ANALYSIS
Research from UNDP Ghana, UNDP Nepal, and USAID indicates that local mediation effectively cultivates peace in post-conflict regions. There have been numerous mediation initiatives in post-conflict countries including Guyana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Timor Leste.

Key Facts
- Extremist settlers launched almost 300 attacks on Palestinian property in 2011 alone, which resulted in over 100 Palestinian casualties and caused extensive property damage for Palestinian farmers, who lost approximately 10,000 trees.
- Settler attacks on Palestinian residents tripled between 2009 and 2011.
- Rule of law has proven to be ineffective in resolving the ongoing violence in the West Bank. Of the documented investigations concerning crimes against Palestinians, 87% of assault offenses and 92% of the criminal trespass cases were closed without indictments being filed against suspects.
There are many advantages to using mediation as it is a non-adversarial process with low bureaucratic costs and an assurance of neutrality. But more importantly, mediation provides disputants an opportunity to find solutions to their own conflicts. The process therefore ensures acceptance of the outcome by both parties and subsequently a framework for sustainable peace.

In lieu of hybrid jurisprudence, the Central Command should establish local Community Dispute Resolution Centers to mediate disputes between settlers and Palestinians. By acting in partnership with the Hilltop Youth, YESHA Council, the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian community leaders, and the UN, mutual investment will be ensured.

The initiation and maintenance of any project between these historically contentious interest groups is not an easy task. Equitable terms concerning municipal level issues create a localized perspective that breaks down the larger conflict into smaller aggressions affecting everyday life. Opposition to dialogue is inevitable yet manageable if mutual respect and investment are achieved.

CDRC’s will not address the macro conflict but rather the micro cases of aggression on both sides through neutral mediation. The UN will temporarily hire, train, and evaluate mediators from both Israeli settler and Palestinian communities in accordance with international standards and strategies to ensure this neutrality.

**Endnotes**


**Talking Points**

- Both B’Tselem and Shin Bet warn that contemporary settler violence is a deliberate campaign by a committed core of youth settlers targeting communities where Palestinian youth are the majority.
- The current policy of non-action will foster a radicalized generation that could undermine West Bank peace and create a secondary front of resistance, further threatening Israeli security.
- While CDRCs will not address the macro conflict, responding to cases of micro aggression de-escalate contemporary tensions and re-define “the other” as human.
- The careful integration of key community leaders from all sides in the construction of CDRCs creates a sense mutual investment and legitimacy for future CDRC efforts but creates a counter history of cooperation.
The current promotion system in the military, codified in the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) of 1980, is organized around the principle of “up or out.” After a certain number of years, officers are eligible for promotion to the next grade level of ranks. If the military passes them over for selection twice (once at higher levels), officers are required to leave the service. This system has become outdated and costly. Most officers who are forced out by this system still receive generous pension benefits, and with pension costs currently consuming 20 percent of the defense budget, reducing them would allow for reductions in defense spending without any damage to America’s military capability. By changing the promotion system for the armed services, savings can be realized while simultaneously improving the quality of American military officers.

ANALYSIS
Promotion currently becomes less likely at higher ranks, just as officers reach middle age and are most financially vulnerable. This has led many officers to leave for more secure jobs in the private sector. Many of these officers leave after 20 years of service or more, meaning they receive benefits under the military’s pension plans. As a result, the military spends over $100 billion a year on retirement pay, and spending is projected to double by 2034. Much of this money is paid to officers who retire in middle age when they could still serve for up to 20 more years. Many military thinkers have also come to believe that the current promotion structure contributes to what Thomas Ricks has called a “culture of mediocrity” within America’s officer corps. Officers are encouraged to strive for a “risk-averse middle” instead of showing initiative so that they are not forced out.

The “up or out” system should be adjusted so that fewer officers stay through their first few years of service. Higher ranking officers should have higher promotion rates and longer promotion periods. Under this system, the military can both save money and increase the quality of its officer corps. The savings from implementing this system have been estimated at $100 billion over the next decade. Although private sector jobs offer better pay on average, job security is a major factor that drives successful officers to leave the military. This system would increase job security, making the military a better long-term option and causing fewer officers to leave in the prime of their careers. Additionally, longer promotion periods would make senior officers more experienced and thus more effective.
**Next Steps**

Military leaders may claim that this policy would be unfair to soldiers who have made sacrifices for their country. It should be emphasized, then, that this policy would only change the promotion system and those who choose to leave after 20 years would still receive pensions. This policy would benefit the military by freeing up money for other uses and making the officer corps more effective. Given that this policy would strengthen our military while saving money, both parties should support this policy.

**Endnotes**

4. Schirmer, Peter, Harry J. Thie, Margaret C. Harrell, and Michael S. Tseng.
5. Ibid.
6. Korb, Lawrence J., Alex Rothman, and Max Hoffman
7. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Hauser, William L.
12. Korb, Rothman, and Hoffman
14. Hauser, William L.
Training 21st Century Leaders to Handle 21st Century Global Governance

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We should hold an annual summit for college students from pivotal states to foster focused student engagement and improve bilateral relations in the changing 21st century global landscape.

From the unprecedented youth uprisings that characterized the Arab Spring to the assertive political pronouncements of a Russian rock band, youth political engagement is proliferating around the world. Nearly half of the world’s population is under 25, but the potential of this immense demographic is not fully utilized in current global policy discussions. The world’s leading economies, the G8 and G20, created a conference to foster these kinds of discussions among the youth of participating countries. While participating in the Youth G8 and G20 summits could increase the power of their voices, these forums are ill equipped to deal with the specific challenges of 21st century global governance, such as the role of social media in diplomacy and changing global power centers.

**Key Facts**
- Currently, 3 billion people (nearly half of the world’s population) are under 25, yet policy discussions to address global issues often exclude their voices.
- The composition of the Youth G8 and G20 does not include pivotal, emerging actors or other significant members of the global community. This reflects its focus on building entrepreneurial relations rather than versatile diplomatic channels.

**Analysis**
A summit could be hosted by the U.S. State Department’s American Council on Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) in tandem with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to bring a wider array of actors than the traditional hierarchy into the process. Using the 10 Ideas framework to shape this constructive dialogue, the summit would result in effective policy solutions that could increase the voices of a marginalized global youth population without resorting to extreme measures. In addition, the relationships made during this summit could lay the groundwork for improving or establishing relations with pivotal actors by focusing on common problems rather than national interests.

The exclusivity of the Youth G8 and G20 summits has led other influential actors to feel marginalized. The proposed summit avoids this problem by including Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Russia, and Brazil in its first round of attendees. Inclusion is not based solely on economic prosperity, but rather on other influential features, such as Brazil’s strength in the energy sector and Turkey’s increasing geopolitical importance. Egypt and Iran are not members of the Youth G8 and G20 conferences, yet their influence is evident. If this first summit is successful, it could include other actors in the future, such as Sweden and Finland in particular. Both countries are leaders in a region that consistently receives
high ratings in education, healthcare, and environmental consciousness on The Better Life Index published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.\(^4\)

The partnership between AYCPL and UNESCO is beneficial for both parties, improving relations between the U.S. and UNESCO, which declined in 2011 over disagreement on Palestinian statehood.\(^5\) Since then, UNESCO's budget has suffered, causing the organization to reduce personnel and restrict its operations. Working on this joint project could pave the way for provisional funding. Improving relations with UNESCO would improve the international community's perception of the U.S.

**Next Steps**
Support from the ACYPL and UNESCO alleviates much of the financial burden from attendees. If the summit is effective, donors (such as influential think tanks and media groups) could provide additional funding. The delegates for this summit would be chosen with help from the International Institute for Higher Education. The host, who would provide housing, would rotate in to dispel fears of one voice dominating the conference. This rotation also ensures that one country does not have to continuously provide housing. Featuring a live Twitter feed, the program would culminate in a multimedia presentation via live stream, increasing the summit’s audience, scope, and efficacy.

**Endnotes**
1. Weiss, Kenneth R., “Fertility rates fall, but global population explosion goes on”, Los Angeles Times
2. Council on Foreign Relations, Global Brazil Initiative
4. Better Life Index, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

**Talking Points**
- Youth participation could reduce the likelihood that young people will resort to violent forms of political participation such as terrorist activity.
- Connections made could lay groundwork for increased multilateralism in American foreign policy without being interventionist or overtly reactive.
- As students learn more about issues of governance, their knowledge of their government will increase, mitigating the decline of civic education in the American K-12 educational system.
Redefining What it Means to be a “Refugee”

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In order to better alleviate refugee crises around the world, the UNHCR Statute and 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees should redefine the term “refugee” to include contemporary trends of forced displacement.

In 1950, following World War II, the U.N. General Assembly created the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in order to protect refugees and alleviate their plight.1 The creation of the UNCHR coincided with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as well as a Statute that defines a “refugee” as someone who, due to their fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion, is unable or unwilling to return to his country of residence. In addition, the statute specifies a refugee as a victim of the events that occurred before January 1, 1951.2

As the decades have progressed since the UNCHR and Statute were created, states around the world have come to see refugees and their prolonged presence as a security concern and a threat to social cohesion and national identity, as well as a burden on local and national economies.3 Thus, the purpose of the UNHCR and Statute is to work with states to ensure that these people receive protection from persecution, reintegration within their original country or integration within a new country, or humanitarian aid so that global refugee crises are effectively mitigated.

Over the years, the UNHCR has had to work around its limited mandate in order to navigate the changing political environment. For the past 60 years, the global refugee regime has revolved around agreements and definitions that are obsolete, especially after the end of the Cold War. As a result the UNHCR is in a constant state of adaptation and expansion of both its core mandate and the scope of its work in order to achieve its goals within the context of a changing political landscape and changing dynamics of forced displacement.4

Analysis

Since the end of the Cold War, the nature of forced displacement has changed, intertwining with wider trends in world politics that include climate change, international migration, urbanization, food insecurity, state fragility, and terrorism.5 Furthermore, only about 10 million of the 47 million people who have been forcibly displaced worldwide receive aid from the UNCHR.6 Thus, rather than force the UNHCR to work within an archaic framework, the UNHCR Statute and 1951 Convention should be updated to redefine what it means to be a “refugee” in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 world, so that the
UNCHR and states around the world can legitimately provide protection, aid, integration, reintegration, and other durable solutions to several million of the world’s forcibly displaced population.

**Next Steps**
The UNHCR should update its Statute and 1951 Convention and in its new definition of the term “refugee” include people who not only have a fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality or political opinion but also people who have been displaced due to trends like climate change, international migration, urbanization, food insecurity, state fragility, and terrorism. With this change, the current global refugee regime will reshape itself within a contemporary context of political and international affairs and will ultimately maximize the alleviation of contemporary refugee crises around the world.

**Endnotes**
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid, 133.
6. Ibid, 1.

**Talking Points**
- The UNHCR continually has to work within the limited scope of its 60-year-old statute in order to effectively alleviate contemporary refugee crises.
- At the beginning of 2011, the UNHCR estimated that there were 43.7 million forcibly displaced people worldwide and among this number only 10.55 million refugees were under the office’s care.
I'm a Roosevetter because... creative problem solving is key to any growth in society.