



ENQUIRY

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Free thought and discourse

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United States Should Pause Refugee Resettlement

WILL SWETT
STAFF WRITER

The Syrian refugee crisis has sparked a heated debate over what role America should take and whether or not we should accept refugee applicants. President Obama has pledged to resettle 10,000 Syrians, but he has met strong opposition among the states and a bipartisan majority in Congress.

According to a Bloomberg poll, just 28 percent of Americans support the plan to resettle the refugees under the normal screening process—without accounting for religious beliefs—and over half would not take any refugees at all. Most are concerned that after the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, it would be prudent to pause the resettlement in the interest of national security.

It would make more sense to shift our aid towards the countries neighboring Syria who could take in refugees.

To counter the concern that inviting refugees might allow extremists to enter this country undetected, many refugee proponents point to the number of detailed screenings and background checks of our national security agencies as a safety net against such incursions. Yet, senior officials from the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security have warned that even with the vast array of resources at the disposal of these agencies, there is still a significant risk to our national security in taking in Syrian refugees. Accurately checking the background of refugees only works if there is information available on the person's background.

The shattered government infrastructure in Syria, the lack of reliable government documentation, and the absence of criminal or terrorist databases has made vetting for potential threats nearly impossible.

Even Syrian passports are effectively worthless as identification because of the thriving black market. For about \$250, migrants can buy a fake Syrian passport that can fool border guards. Without reliable Syrian databases with which to cross-check these documents, the fraud goes unnoticed. That is, until terrorists

with fake passports pretending to be Syrian refugees snuck into Europe and attacked Paris.

Several Syrians have been arrested trying to illegally cross the border into America. Five Syrians with doctored Greek passports were arrested in Honduras, and eight more were arrested on the Texas border. Considering that about 1,000 illegal immigrants enter the country per day, it is entirely possible that some Syrians, perhaps even terrorist sympathizers, have already illegally entered the United States. Considering the Paris attacks and the problems of screening and documentation, the calls to pause the resettlement of 10,000 Syrian refugees are reasonably justifiable.

President Obama has criticized resettlement opponents for being “scared of widows and orphans coming into the United States of America,” but data shows that he should not dismiss their concerns so quickly. According to a Pew Research Center review of Eurostat data, 72

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Refugee Panel at Hamilton

By **SAM BENEVELLI**
STAFF WRITER

Before Thanksgiving recess, students and professors filled the Red Pit to capacity to attend a discussion panel hosted by Professor Erol Balkan (Economics), Professor Heather Merrill (Africana Studies), and Professor Alan Cafruny (Government) regarding the global refugee crisis.

In the wake of terror attacks in Paris, politicians and candidates have engaged in a public debate over how the U.S. should handle Syrian refugees. Professors Balkan, Merrill, and Cafruny did not focus on whether or not to take refugees, but on the context surrounding the assumption that thousands of Syrians will be accepted into the US.

Professor Balkan began by giving context to daily struggle of displaced civilians. Almost 4 million refugees have fled their homeland as a result of the bloodshed perpetrated by ISIS and Assad. The burden of housing refugees has fallen predominately on surrounding countries like Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon.

According to the UN Refugee Agency, the Syrian Civil War has displaced 11.5 million people. Balkan showed the haunting and widely published photo of a young Syrian

This Week's News in 140 Characters

EDITORIAL REPORT

Will Antonin @Will_Antonin · Nov 24
Is there any clearer sign of the Left's weird daddy issues than the spate of articles on how to stand up to one's uncle over the holidays?

David Frum @davidfrum · Nov 24
Ah ok. Now about those assurances you were offering on refugees ...

Jim Acosta @Acosta
Obama on whether intel failed in France: "You had eight individuals with light weapons. That's a hard thing to track."

Bernie Thoughts @berniethoughts · Nov 27
IN ANCIENT TIMES BEFORE IT SPLIT INTO DOGS AND CATS THERE MUST HAVE BEEN JUST ONE PERFECT ANIMAL

J. E. McBride @jelliotmcbride · Nov 25
This Thanksgiving, I am thankful I am not a character in a Houellebecq novel.

Joe Simonson @SaysSimonson · Nov 26
Crazy how before social media we all just had to assume everyone else ate turkey and stuffing on thanksgiving with no photographic evidence

Political Math @politicalmath · Nov 26
The best mascot for capitalism is Mr. Peanut: a peanut in a top hat & monocle who became rich selling other peanuts to be devoured

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REFUGEE PANEL AT HAMILTON *cont.*

boy who drowned while attempting to cross the Mediterranean. The image sparked a desire to find a quick solution to the refugee crisis. Regrettably, such a solution does not exist.

Millions of refugees need assistance and we have a moral imperative to do what we can.

The demographic composition of refugees is deeply concerning. According to Professor Balkan, for every five adults fleeing Syria there are six children. This not only presents a problem for host countries to provide education, healthcare, and other necessities, but also for the future generations of Syria. As the “lost generation” ages, these children have lost any semblance of normalcy, jeopardizing the future social and economic development of their country. Moreover, because of increasing uncertainty in resettlement programs in European countries, their future is more unstable.

Professor Merrill gave a history of other refugee crises.

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Cost of Dermatology Drugs Rising

By **PHIL PARKES**
GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

In 2009, Steven Rosenberg, a practicing dermatologist from West Palm Beach, Florida joined forces with his daughter, currently a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania, to survey the cost of popular prescription skin-care medicines. They wanted to educate local dermatologists about the prices of drugs they were prescribing to patients on a daily basis.

Six years later, their study has revealed uncharacteristically large price increases in prominent dermatologic drugs, a trend the researchers say could have significant implications in the healthcare marketplace.

The Rosenbergs analyzed surveys of four national chain pharmacies from 2009 to 2015, eventually honing in on 19 prescription drugs and several generic options. The mean prices of these drugs, which range from typical acne medications to cancer treatments, increased by 401 percent, with the biggest chunk of price increases occurring after 2011

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percent of asylum applicants are male and 54 percent are between the ages of 18 and 34. Welcoming thousands of military-aged men into a population with which they share few cultural values is not a responsible immigration policy and, as Europe is witnessing, does not promote stability or quality of life for either population.

Many supporters of refugee resettlement have humanitarian motives for acting, often assuming that America is the only wealthy country not paying some supposed debt to the rest of the world. They forget that Americans pay almost twice as much in foreign aid as the second leading country.

No one has a right to move to any country he or she wishes at any time. Europe's experience has shown that the fantasy of a borderless world is unsustainable and dangerous, not only for Europeans, but for the countries from which they drain populations. While the struggle of the Syrians is lamentable, American immigration policy, which includes asylum, should put Americans' safety first.

It would make more sense to shift our aid towards the countries neighboring Syria who could take in refugees. Those who struggle with the West's values of secularism and individual liberty may feel more at home under Sharia law.

Many refugee proponents falsely believe that refugees are fleeing everything that we in the West find objectionable about Islamic society in the Middle East, from its abhorrent treatment of women to its theocratic governments. But Pew Research studies have consistently shown that more than two-thirds of Muslims in Middle Eastern countries believe that Sharia law should be the official law of the land. Among supporters of Sharia law in North Africa and the Middle East, about half say it should apply to Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

It is difficult for many highly educated Westerners to understand sincere religious belief, but when more than half of Sharia supporters in the Middle East and North Africa say they want the state to execute people who leave Islam, it might be helpful to take them at their word.

Only the most naïve idealist can believe that the cultural differences between Western countries and Islamist immigrants will not cause tension, and even radicalization, which has been especially concerning among *second-generation* Islamic immigrants in Europe. And there's no screening process for *second-generation* immigrants.

REFUGEE PANEL AT HAMILTON *cont.*

She questioned the relative lack of attention to African refugees. Every year, thousands of African refugees attempt to cross the Mediterranean, often unsuccessfully, to find new life,

mostly in Italy. Yet, they have never garnered as much media attention as Syrians. She placed blame specifically on imperialist attitudes in the Middle East from the US, UK, and Italy. Countries that impose government or social systems on foreign countries only prolong conflicts that displace thousands.

She continued by describing the social stigma under which African refugees live in Italy. They are regarded as criminals and illegals and are generally pushed to the periphery of society.

Professor Cafruny said that the global refugee problem will only be solved when we address the causes of the crisis. Imperialist intervention and rivalry by western countries only further destabilizes a delicate power balance in the Middle East and Africa. Professor Cafruny drew examples from U.S. intervention in Iraq, Libya, and Syria. He also expressed future concerns in Yemen.

Focused on the removal of Assad, the United States, as Cafruny contended, inadvertently led to the rise of ISIS. "The U.S. created ISIS... ISIS would not exist without our intervention and invasion." Cafruny further criticized U.S. foreign policy by describing it as, "a cat that wants to eat a fish, but doesn't want to wet its feet." We want an advantageous government installed in these countries, but we don't want to deal with the fallout of a failed initiative.

Cafruny concluded with a strong policy recommendation: the United States needs to cease its military intervention in the Middle East (particularly its ties with Saudi Arabia) and give support to Kurdish troops to help with a constitutional transition in Syria.

We have yet to see the fallout of refugee acceptance since the Paris attacks. While everyone is on high alert in Europe and the United States, it is important to keep in mind that millions of refugees need assistance and we have a moral imperative to do what we can.

Outdated UN policies from 1951 can do little to assist refugees fleeing for their lives today. The United States needs to update refugee policies to alleviate already overly burdened countries like Turkey, while keeping an eye on national security concerns.

COST OF DERMATOLOGY DRUGS RISING *cont.*

according to the study.

Take Tazorac, a low-risk cream that helps children 12 and over control acne. The drug cost less than \$300 in 2009 only to rocket up past \$700 by 2015. Of the 19 drugs reviewed, seven more than quadrupled in price over the six year period.

Much like how auto-dealers almost always undercut a car's "sticker price" to sweeten a deal, most patients do not pay for drugs at retail price. But major pharmacies, like auto-dealers, ultimately choose a sale price in

response to the retail price. So while the retail prices surveyed by the study do not necessarily represent the end cost of a drug to most consumers, the researchers say, the increase in prices will almost certainly affect monthly insurance premiums, typically seen as the gold standard for evaluating the true cost of healthcare.

The price increases would be a minor problem if patients had consistent protection from retail prices, but the safety net has shown signs of weakness on multiple fronts. Baby boomers, who continue to surpass previous generations in life-expectancy and therefore place an ever-greater strain on the Medicare system, face some of the biggest challenges.

One important implication of Medicare enrollment is the automatic exclusion from pharmaceutical coupon savings, reserved for customers without access to government assistance. With little evidence to suggest that Medicare can sustain coverage of expensive drugs on its own, the price changes only increase the likelihood that patients insured by the government get locked out of certain drugs altogether. Many elderly Americans face and will continue to face the seemingly absurd but increasingly familiar scenario of paying expensive retail prices for drugs while enrolled in a health insurance plan.

As the formulas used to calculate insurance become increasingly narrow in their coverage of more expensive drugs, many with private insurance face the same problem. More expensive drugs fall outside of coverage areas or trigger high deductibles, a one-time fee attached to drug purchases.

As one might suspect, less-expensive generic drugs provide some relief. But there may not be sufficient market incentives to keep those prices down, either. Some of the generic drugs surveyed by the Rosenbergs remained stable in price through 2015, but the overall mean price increased by 279 percent after

2011.

Many are quick to draw connections between fluctuations in healthcare and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, but those connections are not yet clear. The tightening of private health care formulations could have a multitude of causes, and Medicare was already on the decline.

Nevertheless, the ACA's distinctive approach to healthcare could have implications for consumers if prices continue to rise. For while the ACA has proven itself capable of expanding healthcare coverage, the quality of that coverage remains a key variable.

If the narrowing coverage options of Medicare and private insurance are any indication, government subsidies may fall prey to the same rising costs.

If the narrowing coverage options of Medicare and private insurance are any indication, government subsidies may fall prey to the same rising costs. Expanded coverage will do little good if it leaves essential drugs beyond the reach of those it purports to assist.

Lastly, rising prices will inevitably raise the specter of potential price caps on U.S. pharmaceutical companies, a route other countries have already pursued. Many are uneasy with the idea that cold, mechanical market forces dictate the fate of potentially lifesaving drugs, but while slowing down markets with regulation may make healthcare more affordable, it may not necessarily make it better.

For now, expect researchers to map out the costs of other kinds of drugs with increased thoroughness. The day will come when we can no longer kick the Medicare can down the road, and rising prices may bring that day sooner than Washington would like.

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