



"It is not the passive millions or the temporary majorities which shape events, but the militant few."

Howard Phillips, founder, the Constitution Party

VICTORY REPORT

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Refugee Resettlement: the High Cost of Good Intentions

By Peter B. Gemma

The Refugee Act of 1980 created the official United States Refugee Admissions Program. The US did admit refugees prior to 1980, but they were largely cared for by private individuals and churches – refugees from Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War, for example – and they were not the same burden on taxpayers as refugees are today. Those refugees assimilated because they were taken under the wing of Americans for much longer than a couple of months. Today, refugees are flown into unsuspecting towns and cities, given over to federal contractors, and then placed in local communities. Refugees are quickly signed up for all forms of welfare.

America's refugee resettlement program has become another bureaucracy, where government and non-profit agencies, work to protect their jobs and expand "services." And like any other government-funded industry, they have forgotten their original mission.

To give an idea of the staying power of the refugee program, consider this: when the US began taking Southeast Asian refugees in the late 70s, the refugee agencies hired temporary workers, thinking the program would only go for a few months. Now, 40 years after the last American left Vietnam, the US is still taking refugees from Southeast Asia. At least 1.5 million have come in as refugees alone, and it has detonated a chain of non-refugee immigrants.

Currently, legitimate refugees must prove they are persecuted for one of several reasons: political persuasion, religion, race etc., but efforts are underway by the refugee industry to expand the definition to anyone moving anywhere for any reason. Most migration worldwide is due to economics: Central American kids are not escaping persecution, they are escaping crimes and desperate poverty. Running from a crime-ridden country does not make one a refugee. The latest designation is the "climate refugee:" people escaping a changing weather pattern where they live are now "refugees" too.

One of the greatest misunderstandings the general public has about the US Refugee Admissions Program is that anyone getting to the US as a refugee or anyone who was granted asylum (after getting here on their own) becomes a legal permanent resident on track to citizenship. Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and other nations take many more refugees than the US, but there is no comparison – in those countries, refugees are only hosted temporarily and will never be voting citizens.

In the US, they are permanent and ultimately become voting citizens. In fact, the US takes the largest number of permanent refugees of any country in the world. Those who don't have a firm handle on legal immigration policies sometimes confuse the refugee program with temporary protected status of immigrants.

In 2007, there were about 48,000 refugees allowed in; by 2013, that number rose to 70,000. Last year, 85,000 were welcomed to our shores. Over the last 10 years, more than 700,000 refugees have come to America and settled here permanently.

Every year the President sets a ceiling for refugee admissions. He sets that figure based on the number of refugees those federally-sanctioned private contractors tell him they can handle in towns and cities across America.

There are many federal refugee contractors – paid with tax monies – making resettlement plans for hundreds of towns and cities. The list includes church-related groups such as the Episcopal Migration Ministries, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. There are secular agencies too, like the Ethiopian Community Development Council and the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants.

These contractors send their wish list – created

in virtual secrecy – to Washington in the summer, and by September the US State Department puts together what is called a Presidential Determination. The President sends his determination with a ceiling number and a report on where the refugees will be coming from to Capitol Hill. Congress' only role is to "consult" – and appropriate money.

The President may set the ceiling, but now the United Nations is mostly identifying and selecting refugees, many from UN camps.

The Department of Homeland Security is supposed to screen refugees abroad, and then the US State Department, working with private contractors, decides where in America the refugees will be sent.

In recent years, up to 95 percent of the refugees coming to the US were referred by the UN High

Commissioner for Refugees or were the relatives of UN-picked refugees. Until the late 90s, our government picked the large majority of refugees for resettlement in the US. Considering that the refugee influx causes increases in all legal and illegal immigration expenditures – as family and social networks are established in the US – the UN is effectively dictating much of US immigration policy.

The contractors' job is to help refugees find work and housing, sign them up for welfare, get them their medical care, and get the kids enrolled in school, before the contractors move on to a new set of paying "clients." Refugees are the most desirable category of entry to the US because they are immediately eligible for welfare and they have someone to hold their hand while they are signed up for services.

According to Ken Tota, Deputy Director at the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Congress has never in his 25-year tenure questioned the refugee quota proposed by the administration. By law, Congress is supposed to consent to the annual quota but obviously refuses to take this role seriously.

There is simply no logic to US refugee policies. In July, a State Department report named Somalia as "a safe haven for terrorists who used their relative freedom of movement to obtain resources and funds, recruit fighters, and plan and mount operations within Somalia and in neighboring countries." In 2016, a total of 2,775 Somali refugees arrived in the United States. That rate is more than

30 percent higher than the previous record during the same period of time in the last 14 years. Some 130,000 Somalis refugees have entered into the US since 1983.

Steven Camarata, Director of Research at the Center for Immigration Studies, found that in their first five years in the US, each refugee from the Middle East costs taxpayers about \$65,000 – 12 times what the UN estimates it costs to care for one refugee in neighboring Middle Eastern countries. The cost of resettlement includes heavy welfare use by Middle Eastern refugees: 91 percent receive food stamps and 68 percent receive cash assistance. Costs also include processing refugees, assistance given to

New refugees, and aid to refugee-receiving communities. Given the high costs of resettling refugees in the US, finding them a place in other Middle East countries may be a more cost-effective way to help.

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The Trump Administration has slowed the flow of refugees and there are reports that the administration has beefed up security screening. However, nothing has been done about the negative impact on communities and the secrecy by which refugees are placed in unsuspecting locales.

President Trump had an opportunity in September to simply stop the program altogether when he submitted his first full year Presidential Determination for FY 18. He did not.

Just recently, President Trump announced that the United States is withdrawing from the Global Compact on Migration. The non-binding pact coordinates international migration and refugee issues and was meant to boost international cooperation on migration issues, but it is not some longstanding agreement. It was created in 2016 by President Obama, and has little weight.

President Trump has yet to put his own person at the head of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, which has resulted in "deep state" bureaucrats undermining the White House at every turn. If the administration does not get a handle on the intricacies of the US Refugee Admissions Program, no wall building will stop the flow of vaguely defined "refugees."

Because next year is another election cycle, there is only a slight chance for Congress to re-make the Refugee Admissions Program into an America First policy, unless conservatives make it controversial.

