



CLIENT BRIEFING

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Key Judgments: Drivers of Migration

The heightened migration flows from the Northern Triangle in 2014 can be directly attributed to the following “push” and “pull” factors:



- **Income and power disparities driven by social exclusion encourage migration.** Historic oligarchies in all three Northern Triangle countries hold a monopoly on political and economic power, while marginalized groups suffer disproportionately and face discrimination which inhibits social mobility.
 - Elites take an active role in maintaining these disparities by the avoidance of direct or indirect investment, most notably in terms of failure to pay taxes.
 - Inequality is most evident in border regions, which, historically underserved and populated by marginalized portions of society, are most prone to migration.
- **Greater economic prospects in the U.S. than in Central America encourage migration.** Poverty and lack of social services pressure the poor to seek opportunity in the low-skill and relatively high-wage jobs offered by the U.S. economy. The inability of Northern Triangle governments to develop industry, collect taxes effectively, eliminate corruption and extortion, establish effective regulation, ensure security, and attract domestic and international investment have resulted in poor opportunities both for job-seekers and existing and potential businesses. Lack of institutional support and reliance on foreign income have created precarious macroeconomic conditions predicated on the strength of the global economy.
 - In particular, outsized reliance on remittance flows to the region resulted in increased economic pressure when the Great Recession shrunk those flows.
 - Meanwhile, NAFTA and CAFTA-DR have undermined the profitability of key agricultural products, such as corn, while failing to create jobs.
- **Lack of effective governance institutions in each Northern Triangle country drives migration.** Weakness and corruption of law enforcement and justice systems allow for an atmosphere of impunity, frequent extortion, low prosecution rates, and system backlogs. Social services, private property laws and business regulations, tax collection, public education, absorption of FDI and aid revenues, environmental resource management, and every other essential government function suffer as a result of institutional lack of capacity, causing migrants to flee.
 - There is a positive feedback loop between the narcotrafficking operations that are responsible for much of the corruption and violence undermining governance, and the weak rule of law, which fails to address them.
- **Civil Society weakness spurs migration by undermining democratic avenues to action.** Civil society has historically been weak in the face of oligarchy, dictatorship, rampant corruption, foreign intervention, and general political turmoil. Violence and poverty prevent unified support for social movements, and continued corruption prevents feelings of empowerment and belief in true democracy. Poverty increases vulnerability to clientelistic practices, making those with the most reason to act against the status quo often the least likely to do so.
- **Violence pushes migration from Northern Triangle countries to varying degrees.** As narcotraffickers and gangs vie for power over drug trafficking routes, violence impacts every aspect of society. In Honduras, it is the primary impetus to leave, with migration

rates correlated to increasing homicide and violence rates. In Guatemala and El Salvador, violence exacerbates pressure from low employment rates, poor education, and family separation. Disintegration of traditional family relations in the face of violence and economic turmoil have left children and youth vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, gang recruitment, and murder or kidnapping. Thus, many Central American migrants can be best understood as refugees from an epidemic of gang and family violence.

- **Central American social networks and the desire for family reunification have spurred this migration flow.** Previous waves of legal and illegal immigration since the 1980s have established millions of transnational families and complex social networks which beget immigration flows, in part via remittances. Notably, a large majority of so-called ‘unaccompanied’ youth in the recent migration wave have been placed with family members in the U.S.
- **Inconsistent U.S. immigration policy drives migration.** Frequent revisions of immigration policy create confusion and allow opportunistic smugglers to spread misinformation. That information flows quickly through migrant social networks and is legitimized when individuals reach the U.S. safely and even temporarily remain.
 - Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border also discourages return migration due to fears of being unable to re-enter to the U.S., turning undocumented seasonal workers into undocumented permanent residents.
- **The difficulty of migrant reintegration following deportation from the U.S. encourages further migration.** Opportunity-seeking migrants who are deported have stronger ties to the U.S. than their home countries, and face social exclusion, poor employment prospects, and increased vulnerability to exploitation upon return, which pressure them to attempt to re-migration.
 - Northern Triangle countries also lack the institutional and legal capacity to reintegrate and control deported criminal offenders, who have replaced social networks with criminal networks. These criminal deportees become the members of organized crime groups.
- **Migration to the U.S. is often motivated by food insecurity and economic hardship caused by environmental factors.** Climate change has reduced crop yields and caused extreme droughts, which primarily impact the region’s poorest citizens. Extreme weather events like Hurricane Mitch tear apart communities and demonstrate the state’s inability to respond to environmental crises.
- **A demographic youth bulge in Guatemala and Honduras is a driver of migration from Central America to the United States.** The bulge is due to the highest population growth and fertility rates in the region, resulting from a reduction in infant mortality rates and better health care, combined with a lack of effective family planning and low prevalence of contraceptive use. These youth, faced with a lack of economic prospects and gang violence, constitute the fastest growing group of immigrants to the United States.
 - Notably, El Salvador has not followed the same path.

Build Civil Society Capacity

Problem:

- Illegal migration will continue until the sending nations are able to build just societies with economic opportunities for their citizens.
- Money given to governments for implementation of civil society projects is often mismanaged or misused.
- The social programs in place lack the scale or financial support to make a meaningful impact in country.

Key Judgment(s): Civil society weakness.

Recommendation: The United States government should establish an annual civil society funding competition to draw out and support the best ideas that advance the goal of building just and equitable societies in the Northern Triangle and Mexico. The money should be given directly to the programs to avoid an intermediary having the ability to misdirect any funds. Winners will be given program management training to increase their ability to manage larger operations.

Comments:

- The fund would be set aside to sponsor civil society projects with a broad mandate to improve capacity in a wide array of areas.
- The goal is to reward those who can demonstrate—with a minimum of two years of prior results—that their approach impacts local communities. This will not be a forum to pitch theoretical projects. The applicant must demonstrate results are being produced prior to USG providing funding.
- USG would provide program management training for the duration of the program to enable winners to grow their capacity to manage growing programs.
- Evaluation will be conducted through the embassies and consulates in country, replicating the assessment process of the International Leaders Visitor Program (ILVP).
- The winners would receive financial sponsorship for five years, which should be gradually allocated and reduced in the last three years of the program: 75% in the third year, 50% in the fourth year, and 25% in the final year. This will give the projects the opportunity to become self-sufficient over time.
- The recipients should be required to report bi-annually on their progress.
- If civil society organizations mismanage or waste funds, the USG should reduce or eliminate funding.

Outcomes: The selection of established projects will ensure the promotion of sustainable projects with the greatest potential for providing the most long-term results. Over the years, this project would strengthen civil society, which is essential for creating stable, secure, and prosperous societies. As a result, more citizens' needs will be met at home and fewer will seek to migrate illegally to the United States.

Collaborative Network for Families: Ensuring Family Integration

Problem:

- Family disintegration perpetuates the cycle of poverty, violence, and migration.
- Long workdays in the informal sector cause parents to be absent.
- The lack of counseling and mentorship programs push children, adolescents and adults to join gangs and engage in criminal activities as a source of income, leaving them vulnerable to drug and alcohol consumption, early pregnancy, and delinquency.

Key Judgments: Violence; income and power disparities driven by social exclusion; civil society weakness.

Recommendation: The governments of the Northern Triangle should create Collaborative Networks for Families (CNF) to empower families and the greater communities. Civil society organizations, such as religious institutions, will be important partners. USG should promote CNF as a way to help civil society foster safe spaces for families and society.

- CNF should provide a safe space for family counseling, domestic violence prevention, sexual education, drug and gang prevention, educational resources, and employment workshops for all ages.
- The governments can recover community centers or rehabilitate other facilities to create safe spaces.
- CNF programs should promote active participation in society, the economy, and political life.
- CNF should create a mentorship program available to all members of the family under the guidance and counseling of social workers to provide direct support to individual families in vulnerable communities.

Comments: Organizations such as Jóvenes Contra la Violencia, Alianza Joven, Glasswing International and Children International successfully provide vulnerable youth in the region tools for employment. However, these programs must engage families and the greater community to build stronger networks for social and emotional support. Using a multi-dimensional approach will build trust especially within gang dominated communities that have little confidence in the government.

Outcomes:

- Enhance community support and civic participation in rural and urban communities.
- Reinforce values and trust among family members to prevent family distrust and disintegration that leads to migration.
- Increase education and employment alternatives in rural and urban communities to deter violence.
- Foster healthy family relationships by promoting dialogue, cooperation and support.

Combat Climate Change with Cross-Country Collaborations

Problem: Environmental factors reinforce economic and social drivers of migration.

Key Judgment(s): Food insecurity and economic hardship caused by environmental factors; greater economic prospects in the United States; civil society weakness; income and power disparities driven by social exclusion.

Recommendation: The United States should pursue bilateral environmental strategies such as Border 2020 that cultivate good governance, promote civil society, and encourage sustainable development. Promoting regional social and economic integration through natural resource management will help curb migration flows. Some previous successes include:

- Border 2012 collaborated with DOD Northern Command to enhance readiness and improve emergency response in the event of a border environmental disaster for fifteen sister cities.
- Under the EPA's Border Environment Infrastructure Fund and with assistance from agencies in the United States and Mexico, an estimated 54,000 homes were connected to safe drinking water systems and more than 500,000 homes were connected to wastewater treatment services.
- A series of community cleanups resulted in the removal of an estimated 673,300 tons of solid waste from illegal dumpsites, watersheds, and public drain systems in the United States and Mexico.
- Greenhouse gas emissions inventories were completed for each Mexican border state.

To help expand the program even further, an advisory board from DOS, EPA, DOD, international environmental NGOs, local governments and tribal representatives, and environmental scientists should be formed.

Comments: There are effective environmental strategies already being implemented at the U.S.-Mexico border that would be of long-term benefit in other parts of Mexico as well as the Northern Triangle countries. Expanding the Border 2020 initiative to the Mexico-Northern Triangle border will have a positive impact in the areas of security, prosperity, and governance, which in turn should reduce migration. The advisory group would facilitate country partnerships with organizations like Heifer International that can provide vocational training in sustainable industries in locations where climate change or natural disasters have already impacted the local economy.

Outcomes:

- Create an open, collaborative, and trust-building atmosphere between local stakeholders, environmental professionals, and governments.
- Mitigate the effects of climate change while also preparing for future natural disasters.
- Increase the capacity of local civil society to play a more prominent role and work to erase the distrust with the government.
- Encourage opportunities for regional cooperation and sustainable economic development.

Combat Employment Discrimination Based on Socio-Economic Factors

Problem:

- Social exclusion of marginalized groups, which drives income disparities and unemployment, is a central driver of migration from the Northern Triangle.
- Residents of *zonas rojas* (red zones) have difficulty gaining employment due to strongly held prejudices against them. Additionally, employers fear that persons from poorer neighborhoods are more susceptible to extortion by neighbors involved in organized crime. The inability to find a job, combined with poor social services in such areas, convince many to migrate.

Key Judgment(s): Income and power disparities driven by social exclusion; greater economic prospects in the United States; lack of effective governance institutions.

Recommendation: Legal protections already exist to prevent employment discrimination; however, they are widely ignored and easy to circumvent. The Northern Triangle countries should implement stronger strategies to combat employment discrimination based on social status through:

- Legislation preventing employers from asking for employees' addresses on applications or other hiring documentation.
- Encourage NGOs, such as Glasswing International, to work with employees who suspect such discrimination has taken place.
- Expand the "My First Job" programs, which exist in various forms in all three Northern Triangle countries. These programs offer vocational training, capacity building seminars, and scholarships to young people who are often neither in school nor employed.
- Expand tax deductions and other incentives for companies that engage in the program and agree to hire marginalized persons.
- Offer subsidized insurance for extortion to employers who hire a certain quota of persons from marginalized groups.

Comments: The frameworks for programs to reduce employment discrimination based on social class are already in place. Also, there are a number of NGOs that, with USAID support, perform similar functions. These programs have been largely successful, although on a small scale; the cost of scaling them up would be comparable or less than the cost of the social services (police, healthcare, etc.) that have not been provided in the *zonas rojas*. For these programs to work, the legal apparatus of all three countries must be strengthened to sanction employers that discriminate, and NGOs should be more directly empowered to bring complaints against employers who violate these rules.

Outcome: Ending employment discrimination based on socio-economic status will decrease income disparities, improve social mobility, and discourage migration. Programs to integrate marginalized groups into the workforce are key to ending the ongoing stratification of the region's societies.

Creation of Early Warning Migration Detection System through Greater Data Analysis

Problem: The intake process of illegal migrants at detention centers to enter the United States immigration system does not include a focus on investigating the underlying push and pull factors that motivate the migrants to come to the United States.

Key Judgment(s): Greater economic prospects in the United States.

Recommendation: The United States should expand its intake process database to incorporate migrants' motives for crossing the border. The ultimate purpose of this data is to:

- Create stronger awareness among sending countries and pressure them to improve the socio-economic conditions of their countries.
- Create an early warning system that predicts future surges of migrants.

Comments:

- Each month this database should generate statistics illustrating the number of foreign nationals detained and their motives of migration.
- The embassies/consulates of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras should not have direct access to the database, but receive statistical and demographic information illustrating the apprehensions.
- Information that the sending countries receive may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Number of citizens detained
 - b. Gender
 - c. Age
 - d. Motive for migration
- Embassies/consulates should be denied access to information of migrants fleeing for political reasons and seeking asylum.
- Each sending country must make an effort of good faith to address the drivers that motivate its citizens to migrate.
- If governments do not demonstrate any effort of good faith, U.S. aid should be reduced.

Outcome: This database will allow the USG to gain insight into migration trends that can be used for data analysis comparing migration and economic trends, specifically within the employment sector. This analysis could predict when the United States can expect a gradual or sudden influx of attempts at illegal migration, which will allow the USG to adjust its immigration policy at these times.

Enhance Economic Development through Public and Private Partnerships

Problem: Northern Triangle countries and Mexico have poor environments for business growth and development. Furthermore, the local workforces lack technical capacities and knowledge to assist business in growth. Lack of economic opportunity drives migration from Central America and Mexico to the United States.

Key Judgment(s): Greater economic prospects in the United States; civil society weakness; income and power disparities driven by social exclusion.

Recommendation:

Northern Triangle states should create a Northern Triangle Advisory Board to:

- Identify key recommendations on economic policies for Northern Triangle governments that will boost human capital development, economic growth, and a more favorable business environment for foreign direct investment.
- Oversee a joint public-private capital fund, backed by U.S. federal government loans, to fund economic investment.
- Overcome limitations in attracting investment and developing partnerships with the private sector to develop strategic projects that are critical to the countries' development at the municipal level.

Comments: The advisory board should meet regularly to produce a key set of deliverables that Northern Triangle countries would use for implementing improved economic policies. Participants in the advisory board should include:

- Key leaders in foreign investment from the private sector
- Government leaders from the Northern Triangle charged with economic development
- U.S. government economic advisors
- Union and labor leaders
- Community organizers and civic leaders
- Non-governmental organizations
- Business leaders from Northern Triangle countries

Outcomes:

- Foster an environment of collaboration between key stakeholders and produce a set of policy recommendations to create favorable economic growth.
- Strike a balance between private sector gain and quality labor standards that allow for a prospering middle class.
- Attract new foreign stakeholders to invest in economic development projects within Northern Triangle countries.
- Improve fiscal capacity of municipalities and optimize their credit quality.
- Provide funding for projects that focus on economic development, governance, and workforce development within Northern Triangle countries, including:
 - Economic centers built into communities that train local populations on the basics of entrepreneurship, provide funding and loans for start-up small businesses, and provide comprehensive skills and workforce training programs.
- Funding apprenticeships and workforce training for companies operating in Northern Triangle countries.
- Share best practices for building and establishing companies that promote Corporate Social Responsibility programs that respond to community needs.

Expand the Central American Minors (CAM) Program to Increase Accessibility to Refugee Status for Northern Triangle Victims

Problem: Violence and persecution within Northern Triangle countries drive both minors and adults from their homes to the United States to reunite with their families and escape violence.

Key Judgment(s): Violence; Central American social networks and the desire for family reunification; lack of effective governance institutions.

Proposal: The Central American Minors Program (CAM) demonstrates the goodwill of the United States to accept asylum seekers from the Northern Triangle. The United States should better coordinate the CAM program with the Northern Triangle institutions as well as expand the parameters to better aid and defend those who seek protection from violence.

Recommendations:

- DHS and DOS should coordinate more directly with the sender countries to better accommodate the realities of asylum seeking citizens.
- DHS and DOS should create relationships with local-level activist groups that work with asylum seekers in order to identify candidates.
- Create options for those citizens that face violence and persecution to seek and receive justice and protection.
- Create adequate shelters to house the CAM program recipient children while they wait for DNA testing and their IOM interview for personal safety.
- Consider further measures to keep families together.
- Expand program to include adults seeking asylum from all types of violence.
- Increase CAM program quota.
- While it might be difficult to alter section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the United States should invoke *Jus Cogens* for the protection of certain peoples who seek refugee status as an escape from the violence that threatens their human rights.

Comments: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that 72% of the unaccompanied children detained and interviewed in the United States from El Salvador, 38% from Guatemala, and 57% from Honduras, raised asylum concerns. The CAM program should expand to accommodate such statistics and protect migrants through the whole process. Moreover, women are increasingly filing for asylum and refugee requests as a consequence of violence, and their cases are being thoroughly reviewed by immigration lawyers and officials in the United States.

Outcome: Better provide services and representation for those adolescent females who are subjected to sexual slavery in exchange for protection; for the youths who are recruited into warring gangs for economic livelihood; for the business owners who face violence and are extortion for security; and for families that fear for their lives due to affiliations with criminal elements.

Incentivize Participatory Budgeting Practices to Promote Good Governance

Problem: The lack of transparency and accountability in Northern Triangle institutions undermine public trust in the government; effective governance cannot take root if people do not exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Key Judgment(s): Income and power disparities driven by social exclusion; civil society weakness; lack of effective governance institutions.

Recommendation: The U.S. Government should incentivize and support the practice of participatory budgeting (PB) at the municipal level for the express purpose of community development and the strengthening of local institutions. Premised on the Porto Alegre model where it was first institutionalized, PB works by engaging community members in the discussion, development, and implementation of public works projects.

- Encourage PB practices at the municipal level: community identification of spending priorities; establishment of a Budget Delegation with representatives from various neighborhoods; Budget Delegation translation of priorities into concrete project proposals; civil servant appraisal and recommendations; community vote on projects; municipal government, or relevant contractor, implementation of approved projects.
- Work with the International Budget Partnership to identify civil society organizations that can facilitate and monitor the process to minimize elite capture.
- Ensure transparency at all stages of project development by requiring public disclosure of expenditures, including but not limited to: local procurement procedures; fund allocation and disbursement; material cost; and daily wage rate.
- Provide additional funds to demonstrate support, but do so on a matching basis to complement local resources and absorption capacities. The primary funding should come from the municipal budget and host countries' development ministries.

Comments:

- A necessary condition for the success of PB is the availability of a “safe space” where citizens can discuss community priorities without fear of repercussion.
- Voting mechanisms need to incorporate privacy concerns to avoid voter intimidation and vote buying.
- Citizen Report Cards can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of projects before and after implementation.
- This proposal is intended to be complementary to USAID's decentralization efforts.

Outcome: Decreasing the distance to government officials will deter corruption and promote social inclusion of vulnerable groups; successful implementation will result in better service delivery and a vested stake in one's community that would deter future migration flows.

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Measures to Improve Messaging on U.S. Immigration Policy

Problem: U.S. immigration policy is inconsistent and subject to frequent changes, which serves as a pull factor by creating confusion and perceptions of flexibility of the policies. It also creates the opportunity for profiteers in the smuggling industry to spread misinformation. This misinformation is supported by the reality of long wait times for immigration determinations, high levels of employment among undocumented immigrants, and poorly understood provisions for routes to legalization. In the absence of comprehensive immigration reform, better messaging to potential emigrants can help combat this problem.

Key Judgment(s): Inconsistent U.S. immigration policy.

Recommendations: The U.S. Department of State should undertake measures to create the appearance of a definitive and unified front on immigration, which would decrease rates of attempted migration.

- Speed up the hearings and deportation process.
 - Increase dedicated legal staff and adjudicators for immigration until a hearing can be scheduled within 4 months of processing for all individuals.
- Continue to carry out extensive, targeted strategic information campaigns to educate vulnerable populations in Central America of existing U.S. immigration policy.
 - Discontinue ineffective “scare tactic” deterrent campaigns.
 - Hire an external consulting agency to evaluate the efficacy of existing messaging and identify new dissemination methods.
 - Create a one-page, simply worded explanation of U.S. immigration policy and aim to put it in view of every citizen of Northern Triangle countries within one year.
 - Use existing infrastructure for radio campaigns of similar nature.
 - Create a system of mobile customs units staffed by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol or Department of State representatives that can operate along major transit routes and in heavily migration-prone rural areas in the Northern Triangle.
 - The units will address immigration questions, handle temporary work and other visa applications for the rural poor, and correct misinformation.
- Increase fines for businesses that violate labor laws with respect to the employment of undocumented immigrants.

Comments: These three measures require the collaboration of varying agencies, including but not limited to: the federal courts system, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the U.S. Congress, and consultants from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Outcome: As perceptions of the flexibility of U.S. immigration policy decrease, and general understanding rises, rates of attempted migration will fall.

Northern Triangle Reintegration Initiative (NTRI)

Problem: Upon deportation from the United States, many migrants find reintegration very difficult. This creates a twofold problem:

- 1) Disconnected and vulnerable deportees have difficulty accessing economic opportunities and building strong social networks, and are prone to future migration attempts.
- 2) Deported migrants who are ex-offenders are especially prone to participation in organized crime groups, leading to further social destabilization and migration country-wide.

Key Judgment(s): The difficulty of migrant reintegration; greater economic prospects in the United States; income and power disparities driven by social exclusion; violence.

Recommendation: A partnership of several U.S. federal government departments, including the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S. Department of State (DOS), and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) should begin a Northern Triangle Reintegration Initiative (NTRI) to help guide deported migrants into legal economic and social activity upon reentry. The Initiative should coordinate with civil society programs in the Northern Triangle that do similar work.

Comments:

The Initiative will:

- Identify those scheduled for deportation and conduct six months of “reintegration training”:
 - Non-criminal deportees will be provided voluntary counseling and vocational training.
 - Ex-offender deportees will spend the final three months of their prison sentence in specialized facilities for mandatory counseling, evaluation, and vocational training.
- Convene a working group for representatives from the United States, Mexico, and Northern Triangle countries to discuss best practices for deportation, including but not limited to advance notification requirements, information sharing, and the presence of specified personnel, such as social workers, in the deportation process.
- In partnership with international and domestic nonprofits, build a network of reintegration centers in the Northern Triangle that will administer funding to incentivize deportee hiring, carry out continued job training and counseling, and coordinate “deportee mentors” recruited from within the church or other community organizations.
- Incentivize a private-sector role in the reintegration and employment of deportees, including ex-offenders.

A good model of the private-sector offering reintegration services exists at the U.S. company League Collegiate Outfitters branch League Central America, which intentionally hires and helps to reintegrate ex-gang members by partnering with educational and religious institutions to provide vocational training and other social services.

League Central America’s community-centric model for the rehabilitation and employment of ex-gang members has been successful on a small scale, and is worth attempting to replicate in the context of deportees.

Private-sector models can be supported by partnerships with business councils, e.g. Council of the Americas.

A good model for independently-operated reintegration centers exists in Jamaica's Family Unification and Resettlement Initiative (FURI), a nonprofit staffed by social workers that aims to assist deported migrants in adjusting to life upon reentry.

Outcome: Improved reintegration of deported migrants will strengthen social networks, encourage formal-sector participation in the economy, and slow the growth of organized crime, subsequently reducing future security costs in the region.

Public Service Announcements to Denounce Violence and Discourage Illegal Activity

Problem:

- The Northern Triangle countries experience some of the highest global levels of violence including within the family and society.
- Weak institutions and the lack of enforcement of laws exacerbate violence.
- Lack of public understanding of laws and mistrust between civil society and governmental institutions foster environments of violence.

Key Judgment(s): Violence; lack of effective governance institutions; civil society weakness.

Recommendation: The U.S. Department of State (DOS) should fund advertising space for public service announcements (PSAs) to air on local radio and television broadcast stations as well as appear in popular print media. While PSAs already exist regarding migrating north, these PSAs do not appear to be effective and the new PSAs would specifically condemn the various forms of violence and illegal activities in the Northern Triangle countries.

Comments: DOS should partner with local public relations, advertising, and marketing firms, as well as media networks, to create these PSAs. This supports the local economy and ensures culturally appropriate messaging.

Popular culture is influential on perceptions and attitudes regarding violence. For example, *telenovelas* (soap operas) glamorize violence by featuring characters associated with organized crime or using violence against others. Because viewers are increasingly desensitized to violence, PSAs can emphasize the fictitious nature of these productions.

Furthermore, popular culture can be used strategically in PSAs to shift attitudes. PSAs can incorporate local celebrities, athletes, and other civil public figures as spokespeople. Prominent and trusted community leaders from multiple sectors, including moral centers and public offices can also be featured as advocates against domestic and criminal violence and illegal activity. This can make messages more mainstream and improve their effectiveness in combating violence and illegal activity.

PSAs could lead to localized multimedia productions created by youth, children, and other civil society organizations, including education, religious and community-based centers, to challenge public perceptions on violence and criminal activity. For example, DOS could fund university short films, national *telenovelas*, theatrical representations, and other creative productions portraying messages about strengthening non-violent relationships within families and society.

PSAs in the form of shorter radio spots and commercials also can raise awareness on the causes and consequences of violent and criminal offenses. Additionally, the PSAs can promote organizations that offer tools and resources for victims of violence and crime.

Outcome: Positively shift public perceptions and attitudes regarding violence and illegal activities so that levels of each decrease; curb emigration from the Northern Triangle by addressing root causes of violence and crime.

Renew and Replicate CICIG and Implement Tactics to Address Corruption in Judicial Systems

Problem: The justice systems in the Northern Triangle are plagued by extortion, bribery, and institutional weakness that compromise effectiveness. The lack of accountability and efficiency sustains a cycle of corruption and impunity that further weakens rule of law and governance within each country.

Key judgment(s): Lack of effective governance institutions; violence.

Recommendation: The U.S. Department of State should encourage and support the renewal of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala, or CICIG). CICIG also should be replicated in Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico. The U.S. Department of State also should encourage certain security measures to curb corruption such as promoting the anonymity of judges— which was used in Colombia 1990s.

Comments: CICIG is due to expire on September 4, 2015. Vice President Biden and the White House support CICIG and encourage Honduras and El Salvador to consider adopting this or a similar model. In March 2015, four U.S. House Representatives wrote a bipartisan letter advocating the renewal of CICIG as part of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle. The Washington Office on Latin America's report on CICIG calls the outcomes "transcendental."

A key to CICIG's success has been that the United Nations lends the Guatemalan government both international authority and credibility to address corruption and impunity; in effect this creates a layer of protection for Guatemalan judges, prosecutors, officials and others against those who seek to illicitly influence the judicial system.

Since the Northern Triangle and Mexico are now experiencing extensive narcotrafficking, gang, and criminal organization influence in the judiciary system as Colombia did in the late 1980s and early 1990s, tactics implemented in Colombia to mitigate extortion and bribery can serve as a model for the region. These tactics included:

- Paying judges hazard pay to combat the temptation of bribes;
- Placing judges behind a one-way mirror or judges wear opaque hoods for anonymity;
- Guaranteeing witnesses and prosecutors anonymity;
- Assigning judges randomly to cases using computerized systems that separate the identity of the judge from the case records.

Outcome: Renew CICIG in Guatemala and implement similar programs in El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico; lessen, with the goal to eradicate, the influence of criminal organizations over the judicial process; improve judicial systems so that in the future they will no longer require international assistance or supervision.

Revitalize Seasonal Guest Worker Programs and Build Technical Skills of Laborers to Replicate and Utilize in Their Home Economies

Problem: Migrants find jobs in the United States illegally, and, fearing future non-reentry, remain in the United States.

Key Judgment(s): Greater economic prospects in the United States; Central American social networks and the desire for family reunification; increased U.S.-Mexico border enforcement.

Recommendation: Make necessary adjustments to the current H-2A and H-2B visas; enforce regulations on the hiring of illegal immigrants; collaborate with Northern Triangle countries' Ministries of Work to create and promote work options for the migrant workers who gain new skills through a seasonal workers' program; and create a program initiative similar to that of the W-visa program proposed to Congress in 2013.

Comments:

- Partner with DOL and DHS in order to push through more H-2A and H-2B petitions on behalf of companies with seasonal worker needs in both agricultural and nonagricultural industries.
- Create an initiative with DHS and the Secretary of State that designates Northern Triangle citizens as preferable employees, rank the current published list.
- Subsidize recruitment firms to place H-2A and H-2B migrant workers with employers.

Replicate the W-visa program model with the following modifications:

- Help employers to “demonstrate that there are not sufficient U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available to do the temporary work.”
- Offer tax benefits or incentives to enrolled employers.
- Tighten laws and penalties on businesses that hire illegal immigrants.
 - Stress such penalties in public campaigns in order to deter migrants from seeking jobs in the United States.
- Create a system to assess and monitor the rights, safety, and legality of the working conditions.
- Monitor services provided to the workers on behalf of the companies (e.g. travel, housing, tools, meals, insurance, hourly wage, and recruitment).
- Partner with Northern Triangle Directorates of Migration in order to spread awareness of the opportunities that exist and expedite the process.
 - Local governments will run campaigns to expand awareness of legal job opportunities in the United States.
- Create a job database that will display all available positions with each participating business to both foreign nationals and U.S. citizens to ensure that jobs are not taken from willing Americans.
- Treat the program as an exchange to not only provide employment but also as an opportunity to foster the development of technical skills that can be replicated and utilized in migrants' home nations.

Outcome: Many U.S. companies are dependent on the labor, both skilled and un-skilled, that migrant populations provide; there is an undeniable supply and demand relationship. A program that allows migrants to enter the United States with temporary work visas would in turn help to decrease the number of illegal immigrants in the United States as they have options to seek legal employment and would support economic growth and stability. A seasonal workers program as outlined would ensure the safety of migrant laborers and encourage future economic partnerships between Northern Triangle countries and the United States.