



IDEAS

DEFENSE & DIPLOMACY

POLICY OF THE YEAR NOMINEE

*Ensuring Gender
Sensitivity in
Climate Finance*

10 IDEAS

DEFENSE & DIPLOMACY

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Who We Are

The Roosevelt Institute, working to redefine the rules that guide our social and economic realities, is home to the nation's largest network of emerging doers and thinkers committed to reimagining and re-writing the rules in their communities to create lasting change. Our members, organizing in 130 chapters in 40 states nationwide, partner with policy makers and communicators to provide them with clear, principled ideas and visionary, actionable plans. Our members are actively influencing policy on the local, state and national level – from introducing legislation on protections for LGBTQ youth to consulting with local governments on natural disaster flood prevention.

What You're Holding

Now in its eighth year, the *10 Ideas* series promotes the most promising student-generated ideas from across our network. This journal, which includes submissions from schools located from California to Georgia to New York, stands as a testament to the depth and breadth of our network of innovators.

Our *10 Ideas* memos are selected for publication because they are smart, rigorously researched, and, most importantly, feasible. We want to see these ideas become a reality.

How You Can Join

As you explore these ideas, we encourage you to take special note of the “Next Steps” sections. Here, our authors have outlined how their ideas can move from the pages of this journal to implementation. We invite you to join our authors in the process. Contact us on our website or by tweeting with us @VivaRoosevelt using the hashtag #RooImpact.

Thank you for reading and supporting student generated ideas.

Together we will design the future of our communities, from towns to countries and all that lies in-between.

Dear Readers,

Young people are incredibly important to the American political process. Millennials and Generation Z now make up the same portion of eligible voters as the Baby Boomer generation. This emerging generation is also the most diverse in our nation's history: Half of all eligible Latino voters in 2016 are between the ages of 18 and 35. We're told we can make the difference every election, and candidates and elected officials ask for our votes, time, and money—but they don't ask for our ideas.

Young Americans continue to transform our economy and culture. Now it's time for us to disrupt our political system.

The *10 Ideas* journals, one of our oldest and most competitive publications, elevate the top student-generated policy ideas from across the country. In this year's journals, you will find solutions to problems in places ranging from South Dakota to North Carolina to Oregon to New York. Whether seeking to make Pittsburgh an immigrant-friendly city or to reduce recidivism in the state of Massachusetts, the following proposals take a creative and locally focused approach to building opportunity for all.

Rooseveltians are also committed to turning their ideas into action. Whether that means meeting with decision-makers, writing opinion pieces in their local papers, or organizing actions in their communities, we intend to see the solutions we propose become reality.

Why? As the generation that will inherit the world shaped by today's decisions, we have the most to lose or gain. Involving the emerging generation in the policy process will lead to outcomes that benefit everyone. We believe it matters who rewrites the rules, and we have ideas for how to change them.

I hope you enjoy reading the proposals in this journal as much as we did.

Onward,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joelle Gamble', with a long, sweeping underline.

Joelle Gamble

National Director, Network, Roosevelt Institute

Table of Contents

**Addressing Somalia's Mental Health Challenge:
Peacebuilding through a National Strategic Plan**

6

**Togolese Prayer Camps: A Stepping Stone
Toward Effective Mental Healthcare**

9

**Allocating Defense Spending to Repair and
Maintain the National Highway System**

12

**Enforcing Academic Principles: Proscribing
Weapons Research for the Military**

14

**Building Infrastructure: The Strategic and
Economic Benefits of Paved Roads in Nigeria**

17

Ensuring Gender Sensitivity in Climate Finance

20

**Advancing U.S. Economic Interests and National
Security through International Maritime Law**

23

**Cosmic Risk Management: A Fiscally Solvent Proposal for
Detecting and Eliminating Near Earth Asteroids**

26

**Restructuring the Conduct of Private
Military and Security Companies**

28

**Building Security Relations through Multilateral
Naval Exercises in the South China Sea**

31

Addressing Somalia's Mental Health Challenge: Peacebuilding through a National Strategic Plan

By Asha Athman, *George Mason University*

Thesis

The Somali federal government should implement a strategic mental health plan to mitigate community and provisional limitations that perpetuate Somalia's mental health epidemic. This plan would scale up effective strategies practiced by the General Assistance and Volunteers Organization (GAVO), a Somali NGO.

Background and Context

The collapse of the Siad Barre regime ushered Somalia into civil conflict in 1991, and the nation's last two decades of weak governance have devastated health and welfare infrastructure.^{1,2} These contextual factors severely impact the psychological health of Somalis. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that "one [Somali] out of three," has suffered from some form of mental illness, and mental illness is a leading cause of disability in Somalia.³ ⁴ The documentation of illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder, psychosis, drug abuse and addiction, and depression relate to mental stress induced by conflict and instability.⁵ Mental health issues affect a significant portion and diversity of individuals because war trauma is a widely shared experience among Somali communities. Those particularly at risk for mental illness include ex-combatants, women, children, drug abusers, the poor, and the displaced.⁶

Despite this major burden, the Somali government failed to prioritize the creation of mental health policies.⁷ Somalia reportedly has only eight facilities that offer mental health services, none of which are primary healthcare providers.⁸ These institutions are limited in their reach, inappropriately staffed, and remain underused due to stigma.⁹ The large scale of the mental health epidemic and the lack of action to address it both accentuate the importance of amending Somalia's public health policies to include a national mental health plan.

Talking Points

- ▶ Community mental health education can combat stigma and build cooperative support for the mentally ill at the local level in Somalia.
- ▶ Leveraging existing health infrastructure to deliver mental health care

is cost-effective and will create an opportunity for mental health to be incorporated into primary care.

- ▶ Home-based care is both sensitive to patient's privacy and rectifies the inaccessibility of health infrastructures for certain communities.
- ▶ Implementing a national mental health plan encourages greater universality and equality in standards and availability of mental care throughout Somalia.

The Policy Idea

A strategic mental health plan that introduces community-level education and expands access to mental healthcare services is required in Somalia. The execution strategy for this plan will draw on the best practices of GAVO. The three GAVO policies suitable for scale up are: community-based mental health education, in-home visits, and bolstering service delivery through existing health infrastructures. These investments are cost-effective, and address socio-structural barriers to mental health delivery by combatting stigma and the absence of accessible care.

Policy Analysis

GAVO created a sustainable health delivery framework in Somalia using community education and advocacy efforts, which was funded by local merchants, and inter- and non-governmental agencies. GAVO prompted organic community mental health self-help group initiatives. The NGO also improved facility sanitation, health administration, and personnel training. Through GAVO's program, ex-combatants treated at home experienced a 58 percent improvement in health outcomes.^{10 11} Funding the scale up of GAVO's initiative is possible through grant applications submitted by Somalia's Ministry of Health to private and public international organizations such as the Global Mental Health Program under Grand Challenges Canada.¹² This system can be sustainably supported by voluntary, township-based public

KEY FACTS

- ▶ One in three Somalis has suffered from some form of mental illness.¹⁵
- ▶ Mental illness is a leading cause of disability in Somalia and has long-term negative effects on quality of life.¹⁶
- ▶ There are only eight reported facilities in Somalia that offer mental health services, none of which are primary healthcare providers.¹⁷
- ▶ Introducing a national strategic mental health plan would rectify the absence of federal legislation that addresses mental healthcare in Somalia.¹⁸

fundraising monitored by a committee of local stakeholders and government officials. By introducing mental health education, capacity building, and in-home health delivery efforts nationwide, affected Somalis will achieve the community support and accessible services they need.

Political instability, competing policy priorities, and coordination challenges among Somalia's states represent hurdles to implementing a national mental health program. Many proponents of Somali health sector reform reject proposals for disease-specific health plans, namely because domestic capacity and political will to enact health system reform is lacking.¹³ GAVO has demonstrated that mental health care needs can be met, to some degree, through medical personnel training and primary care integration within a wider health reform framework.¹⁴ However, addressing Somalia's mental health epidemic cannot be achieved through investment in clinical resources alone. The epidemic is a biosocial phenomenon; it developed within the context of conflict, stigma, and poverty. To address the economic and social barriers to mental wellness, an effective policy must provide community-level mental health education to government officials, Islamic religious figures, health professionals, and citizens as well as bring health resources into the home.

NEXT STEPS

The institution capable of designing and implementing a national mental health plan in Somalia is the Somali Federal Government. It has a national focus, and a federally designed policy would support implementation throughout Somalia's regions, which will result in greater universality and equality in standards and availability of care. GAVO and other private Somali mental health institutions such as the Puntland region-focused Somali Mental Health Foundation are potential allies in advocating for a national mental health plan. These organizations are dedicated to improving mental healthcare access in Somalia, and are based domestically, which makes them capable of organizing health professionals and affected communities to lobby the regional and federal governments. Targets for the plan's implementation include: the Somali Ministry of Health, its regional counterparts, and United Nations satellites dispersed throughout Somalia. These organs can manage technical organization, coordinate with regional and local facilities, and identify appropriate personnel.

Togolese Prayer Camps: A Stepping Stone Toward Effective Mental Healthcare

By Ariel Avgi, City College of New York

Thesis

Togo's limited access to mental healthcare has led to the increasing reliance of mentally ill Togolese on abusive prayer camps. With the help of the Togolese Red Cross and the NGO BasicNeeds, an educational campaign should be initiated to transform camps into community-based healing centers.

Background and Context

West Africa has historically struggled with high-risk infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, sidelining the awareness and treatment of mental health illnesses.¹ However, patients' experiences with these highly infectious diseases often lead to post-traumatic stress associated with mental health disorders including depression and psychosis. With Togo's single mental health hospital and three practicing psychiatrists concentrated in the capital, Lomé, there are not nearly enough resources to address the nation's mental health needs, particularly in rural areas.²

With limited services and accessibility, central and northern Togolese families are forced to turn to traditional healers and prayer camps as a solution for relatives suffering from mental illness. These prayer camps are largely unequipped to handle patients suffering from mental health disorders. Documented practices of prayer camps include chaining patients against their will, forcing week-long fasts, and isolating them outdoors with nothing but a Bible.³ Human Rights Watch observed similar abuses in prayer camps in neighboring Ghana and suggested the government develop voluntary community-based mental health services as a part of its Mental Health Act of 2012.⁴ Because legislation dedicated to mental health does not exist in Togo, an alternate approach is needed. Implementing BasicNeeds' model of pairing medication with psychosocial support in partnership with local ministries of health on a nationwide scale would provide a more immediate solution to Togo's mental health crisis by transforming prayer camps into community-based healing centers. Evidence of BasicNeeds' past success in Ghana could potentially dictate mental health treatment reform across West Africa.

Talking Points

- ▶ Implementing an educational campaign to raise awareness for those suffering from mental illness will facilitate the gradual introduction, by NGOs, of psychiatric drugs to treat mental health disorders and soften the reaction of the Togolese people to new treatment options.
- ▶ Prayer camps across Togo provide makeshift psychiatric wards that lack evidence-based medical treatment, and instead resort to using prayer and the shackling of unmanageable patients as treatment.⁵
- ▶ Government regulation and transformation of Togolese prayer camps would create a decentralized delivery system for mental health services and overhaul abusive practices that affect nearly one million people.

KEY FACTS

- ▶ Only 0.2 percent of Togo's health budget is allotted to mental healthcare despite the hundreds of thousands of Togolese people suffering from mental illness.¹³
- ▶ For the 7.5 million inhabitants of Togo, there are only three practicing psychiatrists and one mental hospital. budget.¹³

Policy Idea

To expand the geographic reach of mental health services, BasicNeeds should treat Togo similarly to how it treated Ghana and work with the government to institute community-based healthcare, with transformed prayer camps providing mental healthcare.⁶ In addition, the Togolese Red Cross, which has worked previously with the Togolese Ministry of Health, should reduce the stigma around mental health disorders by initiating a public educational campaign to additionally facilitate the progress of BasicNeeds' prayer camp reform.⁷

Policy Analysis

Despite its status as a low-income country, Togo is among the top fifty countries in health expenditures as a percentage of GDP. However, as of 2012, only \$1.5 million out of a total \$780 million for healthcare was allotted to mental health.⁸ Malaria, HIV/AIDS, and poor maternal healthcare have heavily impacted much of West Africa and have been the focus of medical spending in Togo.

Mental illness receives less attention and resources because it is not viewed as a traditionally preventable disease. Lobbying for increased mental health expenditures to train psychiatric nurses and build additional,

centralized mental health facilities would be a slow and costly undertaking.⁹ Additionally, pervasive stigma surrounding mental disorders has increased reliance on traditional, often inhumane, practices.

An educational campaign to reduce stigma and increase public awareness of effective treatment for mental illness would create greater public demand for mental healthcare. BasicNeeds' effective, community-oriented mental health programs would help the government regulate prayer camps as a means of expanding mental healthcare inexpensively. Since BasicNeeds began working in Ghana in 2002, over 34 projects have been implemented, transforming the lives of more than 128,000 mental health patients.¹⁰

Mental health disorders not only impair the lives of those who suffer from them but also impact Togolese economic growth by negatively affecting labor supply and participation.¹¹ Sixty-five percent of the labor force works in agriculture and one million people suffering from mental illnesses are dismissed from unskilled work.¹²

NEXT STEPS

The President of the Togolese Ministry of Health, Mr. Komlan Kally, will be responsible for contacting BasicNeeds' leadership and both will be held accountable for working together to implement change and reorganize prayer camps. The Ministry of Health should provide medical resources and authority to administrate and regulate prayer camps to begin community-based service development by BasicNeeds. The Togolese Red Cross, which has previously worked with the Togolese Ministry of Health, should work with the ministry to begin an educational campaign to prepare the Togolese public for BasicNeeds' mental health reforms.

The highly infectious diseases plaguing West Africa, such as HIV/AIDS, cause neurological complications often "treated" in prayer camps—including anxiety disorders, depression, hallucinations, and mood swings.¹⁴

Allocating Defense Spending to Repair and Maintain the National Highway System

By Julia Christensen and Brigid Kennedy, *Michigan State University*

Thesis

The federal transportation budget falls \$32 billion short per year of the amount needed to fully maintain and repair the National Highway System (NHS).¹ Because the NHS has significant national defense implications, funding should be provided in the Defense Appropriations Bill.

Background and Context

The NHS includes the Interstate Highway System (IHS) and the Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET). The IHS was originally conceived as national defense infrastructure to allow the efficient movement of troops across the U.S.,^{2,3} and STRAHNET is a system of roads necessary for emergency mobilization and peacetime movement of military materials.⁴ However, these highways are currently in disrepair due to lack of funding. The federal gas tax, the main source of highway funding, has not been raised or adjusted for inflation in more than 20 years due to Congressional gridlock.

Congress has not passed a transportation funding bill lasting longer than two years since 2005.⁵ In some cases, Congress has only provided funding a few weeks at a time, preventing repairs, maintenance, and improvements. The result is that one fifth of the nation's interstates and major roads are in need of repairs, and a quarter of its 600,000 bridges are in such poor repair that they are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete.⁶

Talking Points

- ▶ The NHS is critical to national interests including defense, border control, and economic growth,⁷ but is dramatically underfunded and falling into disrepair.
- ▶ An amendment should be added to the Defense Appropriations Bill to fund the repair and maintenance of the NHS.

Policy Idea

The NHS is desperately in need of long-term funding, and the defense budget could easily cover the deficit in transportation spending as this deficit is equal to only 5 percent of that budget. Incorporating this crucial funding into the Defense Appropriations Bill would avoid the deadlock in Congress. It would

not introduce a new appropriations bill to be passed. Moreover,, there is precedent for Congress overfunding the defense budget; for example, in 2012, Congress funded tanks that the Pentagon said it did not need.⁸

Policy Analysis

The NHS needs to be maintained so it can serve its national defense purposes, including border security and troop mobility. Investment in the NHS would cause widespread positive economic impacts because federal highway grants have a multiplier effect of two, which is larger than most federal spending. Each dollar of federal highway spending leads to a two-dollar increase in the state’s annual economic output—doubling the impact of these expenditures.⁹

In December 2015, for the first time since 2005, a bill was signed into law providing funding for longer than two years. This law, called “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation” or FAST, allocates \$300 billion over 5 years. However, this amount is only about one quarter of what government transportation researchers estimate is needed.¹⁰ Furthermore, it does not raise the gas tax, and thus does not address the root of the problem. Additional funding for the NHS is still vital.

KEY FACTS

- ▶ The transportation budget is short \$32 billion per year¹¹ because the federal gas tax has not been raised since 1993 and is not indexed to inflation.¹²
- ▶ The NHS is critical national defense infrastructure and is not being maintained sufficiently to serve that purpose.
- ▶ The \$32 billion needed for transportation is only 5 percent of the defense budget.¹³

NEXT STEPS

The first step is to meet with experts on transportation funding and legislative affairs, such as professors and state transportation officials, to begin building an effective coalition. The next step is work with national allies, such as the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHTO), who can convey the policy to Members of Congress, including the ranking members of the Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense.

Enforcing Academic Principles: Proscribing Weapons Research for the Military

By **Julia Eddy**, *Carnegie Mellon University*

Thesis

Carnegie Mellon University should end all weapons research. It is contrary to our academic policies and the values of the university's founder, Andrew Carnegie, one of the foremost advocates for peace in his time.

Background and Context

Carnegie Mellon University prides itself on being a world-renowned research institution. Research funding at the university includes millions of dollars in government contracts, some of which is used to research weapons, or technology that can be weaponized for the U.S. military.¹ For example, in 2014, the Software Engineering Institute contributed to research on drones, which have been used by the U.S. military to destroy both military and civilian targets.² This is clearly contrary to the university's policy on Academic and Individual Freedom that states, "Intentional acts threatening personal safety... will not be tolerated."³ Weapons research includes research on technology and devices that threaten personal safety. The U.S. military has demonstrated the cost of the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) on civilian lives⁴ and the impact of research advancing these technologies is in conflict with Carnegie Mellon's academic ethics.

Weapons research is also contrary to the values of the university's founder, Andrew Carnegie, one of the foremost advocates for peace in his time. At the dawn of World War I, he became the president of the New York Peace Society. He also met with world leaders and lobbied countries—including the U.S., Great Britain, Germany, Russia, and France—to promise not to go to war with one another.⁵ It seems likely that he would not support any of the university's contracts with the military, especially those that aid armed conflict.

Talking Points

- ▶ Weapons research violates Carnegie Mellon's policy on Academic and Individual Freedoms.
- ▶ Carnegie Mellon's founder, Andrew Carnegie, was an advocate for peace and diplomatic solutions to international conflicts.
- ▶ Carnegie Mellon has the power to end weapons research and set an example for other academic institutions.

Policy Idea

The university administration should proscribe all future weapons research on the grounds that it violates the policy on Academic and Individual Freedom, and specify in the policy that it applies to this type of research. Any current contracts would be allowed to continue, but no contracts may be renewed or created if they involve weapons research. Thus, no contracts would be violated and the administration would not impose undue financial hardship to the programs that are currently receiving funding for weapons research.

Policy Analysis

Carnegie Mellon University has an ethical obligation to end its weapons research. The primary concern with such a change would be the massive loss in funding dollars, given that the Department of Defense provides about a third of total sponsored projects at the university, valued at about \$128,117,417.⁶ This may seem daunting, but about half^{7,8} of this funding goes towards the Software Engineering Institute (SEI), a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC). The SEI primarily focuses on cyber security and other software solutions for the military that do not involve weapons. Some research at SEI involves networking unmanned vehicles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), more commonly known as “drones,” but this is a very small portion of the organization’s work.⁹ By only preventing new weapons research contracts from being formed, no current funding streams will be affected.

The community would benefit from awareness of the weapons research at Carnegie Mellon. Many community members do not realize that organizations such as the SEI or the National Robotics Engineering Center exist or are primarily funded by the Department of Defense. The community will also benefit when Carnegie Mellon resources are not used for unethical research to which the university’s founder would have had moral objections. The university community should be critical of the work done in Carnegie’s name and hold the university to the highest ethical standards.

KEY FACTS

- ▶ Nearly 90 percent of the people killed in drone attacks in Afghanistan were civilians.¹⁰
- ▶ In 2014, Carnegie Mellon received \$128,117,417 from the Department of Defense, which is 33.3% of the university’s total sponsored projects funding.¹¹
- ▶ In 1910, Andrew Carnegie founded the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which is still in operation.¹²

NEXT STEPS

Carnegie Mellon University has the power to impose this policy as an institution. Rallying support from various faculty, staff, students, and community members will be key to pressuring the administration to make this change. Faculty and students who believe in the values of Andrew Carnegie and the necessity of Academic and Individual Freedom will support a move to enforce existing policies. In addition, there are many community groups, especially the Thomas Merton Center, which have missions that support peace and social justice.

Building Infrastructure: The Strategic and Economic Benefits of Paved Roads in Nigeria

By Jake Hall and Kieran Doyle, *University of Denver*

Thesis

Nigeria has struggled to effectively deal with the terror group Boko Haram, which has been a significant destabilizing force in the north of the country. U.S. voters concerned about terrorism and foreign development should pressure their government to assist Nigeria in developing paved roads in the north, providing services to civilians in the region and a strategic advantage to the Nigerian military.

Background and Context

Over the last six years, Boko Haram's insurgency has terrorized Nigeria and neighboring nations. The number of fatalities from terrorism in Nigeria to explode by 300 percent.¹ The military has been unable to neutralize the insurgency because of the lack of infrastructure in Nigeria. Only 15 percent of Nigeria's 193,200 km of roads are paved; this number includes nearly all rural roads, which are often impassable during the rainy season.² Helping develop much needed infrastructure to allow the military to have a greater combat presence is critical for effective counterterrorism.

The best way to prevent terror is to address the underlying conditions that lead to terrorism.³ In many cases, reducing the marginalization of certain groups can be more effective when fighting a terrorist or insurgent group than military action.⁴ Although Nigeria is an oil-rich country with great potential to use its resource wealth to the advantage of its citizens, the CIA estimates that 62 percent of Nigeria's 170 million people live in extreme poverty.⁵ This wealth disparity has led many frustrated Nigerians to turn to violence to provide for their families.⁶

Talking Points

- ▶ Marginalization of populations directly correlates to a willingness to use violence.⁷
- ▶ Addressing the underlying conditions that lead to marginalization is the most effective way to combat terrorism.⁸
- ▶ Paved roads provide services to local citizens, give a strategic advantage to national militaries, and weaken local support for the groups who destroy the roads.⁹

- ▶ Infrastructure development can aid counterterrorism efforts in a sustained way by helping to address underlying and systemic issues that lead to terrorist group recruitment.

The Policy Idea

The U.S. should work through international institutions such as the World Bank to help the Nigerian government to construct paved roads in Northern Nigeria in provinces—including Borno, Yobe, and Gombe—directly threatened by Boko Haram. Building paved roads helps develop physical and economic infrastructure and will strengthen the Nigerian military’s capacity to combat armed violence.

The Nigerian government would receive financial help from international institutions that can provide oversight and help to avoid corruption. If terrorist groups destroy these roads to retain their strategic advantage, they will turn local communities against themselves, causing them to lose their power and recruitment base.

Policy Analysis

Paved roads would allow the Nigerian military to more easily address terrorist threats and respond more quickly in places experiencing violence. Paved roads would also address major infrastructural problems and allow for the expansion of commerce and ideas throughout the country, unifying the nation.¹⁰ Terrorists and insurgents thrive where there is no government presence because they can more easily convince locals to follow them and protect their interests.¹¹ Disconnected areas also act as excellent places to recruit marginalized groups who see hope in Boko Haram’s mission.¹² If the country is more interconnected, communication and trade will proliferate and the countryside can assimilate and modernize. The Nigerian military would protect the roads during their construction in order to ensure that these benefits are realized.

Nigeria’s population is 50.4 percent rural (2011 est.), and a handful of urban centers contain most of the nation’s paved roads.¹³ It is nearly impossible for the Nigerian military to transport an armed force efficiently to the site of terrorist attacks on poor roads, leaving towns to deal with terrorists and insurgents on their own.

KEY FACTS

- ▶ Nigeria’s population is 50.3 percent rural (2011 est.) and 62 percent live in extreme poverty.
- ▶ Nigeria has 56,451 villages, towns, and population centers, but only 6 major urban areas of 1 million+ populations.
- ▶ Nigeria contains 193,200 km of roads, but only 15 percent are paved.

NEXT STEPS

The Nigerian government is primarily responsible for implementing this policy, and has expressed political will to do so by offering tax breaks for infrastructure development and working to secure international support for its efforts.¹⁴ The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has recognized the importance of sustainable industrial development, demonstrating the widespread support for infrastructure initiatives among UN-member countries.¹⁵ UNIDO, the Nigerian Government, and the World Bank must work together to implement this policy. In 2008, the World Bank proposed a \$365 million road building project (not yet fully funded), but this figure is insufficient to properly address counterterrorism and development in Northern Nigeria.¹⁶ International nonprofits such as BuildingAfrica must also join this international coalition to improve infrastructure in Nigeria.

Ensuring Gender Sensitivity in Climate Finance

By Beverly Harp, *George Mason University*

Thesis

Climate change disproportionately affects women in the developing world. To address this reality, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) should revise its Climate Change Strategy to require the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data.

Background and Context

Climate change is one of the most important global challenges of our time, but its effects vary significantly across regions and cultures. In rural areas of the developing world, women bear the primary responsibility to secure access to food, water, and fuel for their families.¹ The effects of climate change will seriously inhibit access to these basic needs. Severe drought, changing temperatures, and natural disasters have already devastated the lives of rural women in many places.²

The United Nations reports that two-thirds of the female labor force in developing countries works in the climate-sensitive field of agriculture. In some rural areas, this figure soars up to 90 percent.³ Even though women do the majority of agricultural work, they have limited access to land rights and are consequently underrepresented in their political systems. Globally, only 17 percent of cabinet and 19 percent of parliament members are women.⁴ Yet, rural women have extensive knowledge of natural resource management and conservation.⁵ Climate finance structures have been slow to respond to these findings. The majority of existing climate finance mechanisms reference gender only as an afterthought.⁶ If women are considered, they are conceived as passive victims, and not as potential community leaders or sources of valuable information for local sustainability programs. Many climate mitigation and adaptation programs fail to account for gender, since initial data was not sex-disaggregated.⁷ If these structures remain unchanged, climate change will reverse years of progress in gender equality.

Talking Points

- ▶ Climate change disproportionately and severely affects women in the developing world.
- ▶ USAID has the capacity to mitigate this effect through strategic climate finance. In failing to consider gender, current U.S. climate finance is

failing to channel funds in the most efficient way.⁸

- ▶ Women are crucial to climate change mitigation and adaptation in rural communities; they have extensive knowledge of natural resource management.

The Policy Idea

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) should revise its Climate Change Strategy to require the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data on all projects reported as climate finance to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).⁹ USAID should partner with Data2x, a United Nations gender data gap initiative, to better collect and use data.¹⁰ USAID can efficiently compile this data by refocusing on country-owned collection mechanisms that have proved effective.¹¹

Policy Analysis

Improving the climate work at USAID is the most direct and effective way the U.S. can integrate gender considerations into its climate finance. The U.S. mobilized nearly \$12.8 billion in climate finance from 2010 to 2014.¹² Congressional appropriations to USAID accounted for \$300-400 million of climate finance per year.¹³ Despite recognizing evidence that climate change will disproportionately affect women, USAID still lacks a comprehensive approach to integrate gender into its climate work. The brief mention of gender in USAID's climate change policy is factual rather than directive, and consequently very few of USAID's major climate initiatives focus on gender.¹⁴ The collection and purposeful use of sex-disaggregated data will lead to the creation of effective and equitable climate finance projects, as well as gender-equitable administrative decisions, like the inclusion of women in project design and implementation.¹⁵ The agency has partnered with 24 countries to finance low-carbon development, and 37 countries receive information from USAID's climate information program.¹⁶ If sex-disaggregated data is used, gender will move to the forefront of deliberation in these projects.

KEY FACTS

- ▶ The U.N. reports that two-thirds of the female labor force in developing countries works in the climate-sensitive field of agriculture.
- ▶ Severe drought, changing temperatures, and natural disasters have already begun to inhibit women's access to food, water, and fuel.
- ▶ The U.S. mobilized nearly \$12.8 billion in Climate Finance from 2010 to 2014.¹⁸

USAID's influence goes beyond its congressionally appropriated funds. With its connections to local governments, businesses, and civil society, USAID mobilized an additional \$1.3 billion in climate finance through the end of fiscal year 2014.¹⁷ The climate work of USAID is the model that local governments and nonprofits will follow. The U.S. has the chance to combat climate change in an effective and empowering way, but full impact is unlikely without comprehensive gender data collection and use.

NEXT STEPS

The primary target of this policy is the Global Climate Change Coordinator at USAID. The Climate Change Office at USAID works with the Policy, Planning and Learning Bureau to update the Climate Change Strategy. USAID's Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment will be a key secondary target. Organizations such as the Heinrich Boell Foundation and Oxfam International address the intersection of climate change and gender in their programming and will be influential allies. Groups including Climate Action Now, 350.org and Earth Justice will support the policy's promise of effective climate change mitigation, while women's organizations such as the Center for Health and Gender Equity and Gender Action will identify with its goal of gender equality and inclusion.

CTF = Clean Technology Fund, FIP = Forestry Investment Program, IP = Investment Plan, PPCR = Pilot Program for Climate Resilience, SREP = Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program

Source: *Asian Development Bank*

Advancing U.S. Economic Interests and National Security through International Maritime Law

By **Brian Hart**, *Wake Forest University*

Thesis

For years, conservative Senators have blocked ratification of UNCLOS, an international treaty that promotes maritime cooperation and peace. The president should create a UNCLOS Task Force to inform the public about the issue and ensure ratification in the next post-election season.

Background and Context

In the second half of the 20th century, countries around the world began discussing how to equitably use the resources of the world's oceans. These discussions resulted in the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS), which finally came into force in 1994 with the purpose of establishing clear legal guidelines for resource extraction, defining territorial claims, and ensuring safe passage for vessels. Since its inception, 167 nations have signed onto the treaty, including the U.S.'s closest allies. Yet the U.S. has failed to ratify UNCLOS.¹

Ratification of UNCLOS has received wide bipartisan support from the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations.² It is also supported by the defense establishment and the business community, especially oil and energy industries. As well, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce notes that UNCLOS will provide large economic benefits for American companies. Despite this, 37 Republican senators have held up ratification during election seasons, claiming that it infringes on U.S. sovereignty and will put financial burdens on American companies to adhere to new international regulations.

Talking Points

- ▶ Ratifying UNCLOS would put the U.S. on firm legal ground in the case of a dispute in the South China Sea.
- ▶ Republican and Democratic administrations, military leaders, pro-business groups, and environmental protection groups support UNCLOS.
- ▶ Ratifying UNCLOS will allow the U.S. to play a more active leadership role within the international community and reaffirm its commitment to sustainable global governance.

Policy Idea

In order to overcome opposition in the Senate, the president should create a Task Force that brings together foreign policy experts, military leaders, and industry leaders to put pressure on oppositional senators and bring the issue into the public view. The task force should specifically include representation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to counter claims that UNCLOS is harmful to American businesses, and also representatives from the Environmental Defense Fund, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Ocean Conservancy, and other environmental protection groups in favor of UNCLOS.³

KEY FACTS

- ▶ One hundred and sixty-seven countries, including all major U.S. allies, have ratified UNCLOS.¹⁰
- ▶ About 95 percent of all U.S. foreign trade travels by sea, totaling over 2 billion tons of freight.¹¹
- ▶ One-third of global maritime traffic travels through the South China Sea.¹²

Policy Analysis

UNCLOS would bring substantial economic benefits to American businesses by ensuring the legal right to manage mineral and other resources within America's 3.65 million square mile Exclusive Economic Zone, while also allowing for better environmental protection policies.⁴ It would also give the U.S. and other arctic countries the exclusive rights to extract resources from the arctic.⁵ Leaders in various industries including oil, minerals, natural gas, fisheries, and telecommunications say that under UNCLOS they would benefit from legal access to new exclusive zones.⁶

Even more importantly, ratifying UNCLOS is fundamentally important to the U.S. "rebalancing" toward Asia, where the South China Sea is a hotbed of territorial disputes and regional tension. Because one-third of global maritime traffic goes through the South China Sea, it is crucial that the U.S. is able to protect its interests in the region, especially against an increasingly assertive China.⁷ Given that China is a signatory of UNCLOS, the U.S. is at a disadvantage and on weak legal standing in the case of a maritime dispute in the South China Sea.⁸

NEXT STEPS

The president should create a UNCLOS Task Force that includes representatives from relevant industries, think tanks, and government agencies. Including groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and American Petroleum Institute will be particularly helpful in encouraging conservative, pro-business senators to support ratification. The task force should also include representatives from the Environmental Defense Fund, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Ocean Conservancy, and the World Wildlife Fund who support UNCLOS for its benefits for environmental protection.⁹ The Task Force should call for a new analysis of the convention's economic benefits from the Congressional Budget Office, as well as an updated military assessment of the convention's strategic benefits to U.S. naval operations, particularly in the South China Sea. Finally, the Task Force should push for a widely publicized hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in which these findings are presented by the aforementioned organizations and agencies.

Cosmic Risk Management: A Fiscally Solvent Proposal for Detecting and Eliminating Near Earth Asteroids

By Jack Robbins and Ridoy Majumdar, *Cornell University*

Thesis

The U.S. Federal Government should increase funding for NASA's Near Earth Object (NEO) program to identify 90 percent of NEOs. Unique funding will come from an auction of non-voting stock in a newly formed Asteroid Revenue Trust (ART).

Background and Context

Nearly 1,500 people were injured by a meteor soaring above Chelyabinsk, Russia, in 2013. A Serbian asteroid explosion in 1908 detonated with nuclear force.¹ Asteroids pose a real threat to global security and millions of NEOs currently in our solar system could be dangerous.² A large asteroid could pose an existential threat to millions, perhaps billions, of people. Yet, NASA's NEO program is insufficiently funded.³ Compared to the \$496 billion spent on the U.S. military in 2015, NASA received only \$4 million—or 0.0008 percent of the military budget—to research NEO security.⁴ In 2005, Congress instructed NASA to meet a benchmark of identifying 90 percent of all large NEOs, yet NASA estimates this goal won't be met until 2030, given current budgetary constraints. With sufficient resources, however, NASA can improve its NEO detection to meet Congress' benchmark.

Talking Points

- ▶ The federal government's lack of funding for NASA's NEO program significantly limits its ability to detect asteroids on a collision course with Earth.
- ▶ Asteroids pose a greater risk than the public perceives.
- ▶ Creating an ART creates an innovative funding structure that allows NASA to secure funding.
- ▶ Establishing an Earth-orbiting fleet of kinetic interceptors reduces the time needed between detecting an incoming asteroid and successfully eliminating it.

Policy Idea

The U.S. government should raise NASA's NEO detection funding to \$450 million. The priority should be to identify 90 percent of NEOs within five years, with a longer-term goal of creating Earth-orbiting kinetic interceptors to deflect any dangerous NEOs identified. Funding would come from DARPA grants (estimated \$100 million), at least \$50 million from non-voting stock

sales in ART, and Congress, who recently appropriated \$300 million in new discretionary NASA funding.

Policy Analysis

Asteroid defense is similar to counter-terrorism; both have a low probability of being necessary, but have potentially high costs if ignored. Recent statistical analysis suggests that the likelihood of any one person dying in a terror attack is almost equal to the likelihood of them being killed by an asteroid.⁵

Discretionary funding should be shifted to reflect the similar probability of danger. The new \$300 million in NASA funding⁶ should be transferred from proposed satellite technology that can be replaced by the private sector.⁷ DARPA has a classified budget, but, in years past, has allocated ~\$100 million for projects of similar scope to the NEO program.⁸ The rest of the funding will be collected, similarly to an IPO, from the creation of an ART. NASA would create a public-private partnership that will operate as a subsidiary of NASA. Revenue would come from asteroid excavation and debris collection. The Asteroid Belt has a potential value of \$600 quintillion in natural resources⁹ and NASA will procure its first asteroid by 2025.¹⁰ This partnership will be made up of a non-voting shareholder class and ART's profits will be returned to them via dividends.

KEY FACTS

- ▶ Currently, NASA is unable to detect 10 to 20 percent of asteroids that are larger than 1 km in diameter, a size that would vaporize its immediate surroundings and cause local environmental devastation.¹³
- ▶ Proximal motion analysis shows that kinetic interceptors are a feasible method for re-directing asteroids away from earth's orbit.¹⁴
- ▶ Achieving the goal of detecting 90 percent of NEO's would lower predicted annual asteroid fatality rates by 97.7 percent.¹⁵

NEXT STEPS

Once NASA finds NEOs, eliminating them is still a problem. It would currently take 10 to 20 years to prepare for and destroy an asteroid.¹¹ Establishing a fleet of Earth-orbiting kinetic interceptors in advance shortens preparation time and allows for a more targeted response. Kinetic interceptors are small devices that can quickly ram into incoming asteroids and shift their trajectory away from Earth. Cost-effective methodologies for constructing individual kinetic interceptors have already been proposed to NASA¹² but have no potential to be funded due to the current lack of resources. Once asteroids are detected, the NEO budget will be significantly less expensive—most of the cost is non-recurring—and funding can be shifted from detection to the production of kinetic interceptors.

Restructuring the Conduct of Private Military and Security Companies

By Jaclyn Williams, *City College of New York*

Thesis

In collaboration with UN bodies and NGOs, national governments should ensure that transnational Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) instill professional guidelines for properly registered and licensed personnel. Establishing articulate protocols will hold PMSCs accountable for their actions and reinforce international human rights standards.

Background and Context

Nation-states wary of putting their own armies in harm's way have found a cost-effective alternative in "shadow soldiers."¹ At the height of the counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. employed many PMSCs to augment a formal military presence. PMSCs are semi-autonomous entities operating within a paradoxical system: their personnel are not civilians because they fulfill essential military functions, nor are they soldiers because of affiliations with different nation-states. They are not mercenaries because they act in foreign countries under legally registered companies.² PMSCs are independent and act with impunity, often leading to human rights violations including torture and extrajudicial killings. The most notorious case of illicit conduct by a PMSC occurred in 2007 when Blackwater agents escorting a convoy of U.S. State Department vehicles opened lethal fire on citizens in Baghdad.³ The incident strained relations between the U.S. and Iraq and revealed systemic flaws in PMSC conduct in Iraq. Partially in response to the incident, the U.N. Human Rights Council (UNHRC) established The Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries to address the poor accountability of PMSCs and to bring any violators of human rights laws to justice by means of improved surveillance. The UNHRC proposed the creation of a system to track weapons transfers and the development of an intelligence-sharing network that collects records on PMSC employees to better apprehend offenders.⁴

Talking Points

- ▶ In Afghanistan and Iraq, the two countries with the largest PMSC presences, the public often can't distinguish employees of different PMSCs and local forces, which leads to unnecessary casualties.⁵
- ▶ PMSCs are "faster and cheaper" than local forces, but a greater reliance on PMSCs weakens state institutions in countries that already suffer from failing bureaucratic organization.⁶

- ▶ Countries such as Yemen, Libya, and Syria are now at risk of large PMSC presences given a need to stabilize these states and U.S. constraints on deploying ground forces.

The Policy Idea

An effective national system for selection of personnel via background checks and standardized training will guarantee that employees abide by international human rights laws. This system should exist under sovereign nations' legislation that maintains open records of all employees to keep track of violators when they cross borders.⁷ As a leading global power, the U.S. is best suited to usher in this policy. PMSCs should also implement training for employees that includes language/dialectal and human rights law to ensure that innocent people are not harmed.

Policy Analysis

There have been several attempts to control the use of mercenaries and regulate the functions of PMSCs in sovereign nations. Many international endeavors—such as the International Convention on the use of Mercenaries ratified under the Geneva Convention in 2001—were ineffective because they had an obscure definition of “mercenary.” Unlike previous resolutions, this policy proposal is reminiscent of The Montreux Document of 2008. This is the first significant document that defines how international law applies to the activities of PMSCs in conflict zones.⁸ According to the document, PMSCs have the freedom to operate so long as they “promote respect for international humanitarian law whenever their personnel are engaged in armed conflicts.”⁹

This policy proposal emphasizes professional standards to prevent human rights violations by encouraging PMSCs to certify their staff in proficient language and communications training so they can properly file tracking

KEY FACTS

- ▶ The U.S. Commission on Wartime Contracting estimated that between \$31 billion and \$60 billion was lost to contract waste and fraud in contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2013.¹⁴
- ▶ G4S, a PMSC, has 618,000 employees, more than \$25 billion in annual revenues, and operates in at least 110 countries.¹⁵
- ▶ Between 2001 and June 2010, 5,531 troops and 2,008 civilian contract workers have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. While a majority of the contract workers contributed to the war effort, others were innocent victims of violence.¹⁶

documentation for their weapons and ammunition as well as safely interact with local citizens. Where armed groups are prevalent, weapons and ammunition logs could prevent violence by making it more difficult for these militant factions to buy arms. Overall, fewer weapons reduce the likelihood of instability and state failure.¹⁰ Additionally, this policy focuses on instituting better standards to eliminate miscommunication and faulty record-keeping that allow offenders to evade justice.¹¹ The U.S. employs similar guidelines when it trains foreign military and police, and these methods have been found to be effective in reducing the likelihood of human rights abuses. To be truly effective, this policy must be adopted by the international community at large, particularly post-conflict states. These areas are especially volatile and subject to exploitation by PMSCs, especially when foreign forces withdraw while the central government is still weak. These states will benefit the most from this policy because PMSCs can no longer claim negligence or impunity as an excuse for human rights violations.

NEXT STEPS

Professional standards should be mandated by individual PMSCs across the world in accordance with their respective nations. Additionally, these private companies should ensure that their personnel follow a code of conduct similar to that outlined in the Montreux Document. PMSCs should collaborate with organizations such as Amnesty International USA, which has attempted to improve oversight and accountability in this industry via corporate engagement and multi-stakeholder initiatives.¹² As the presence of untrained personnel could indirectly (or directly) undermine state sovereignty, it is imperative that states work in concert with the UNHRC's Working Group to present possible complementary and new proposals aimed at filling existing gaps in the policy.¹³

Building Security Relations through Multilateral Naval Exercises in the South China Sea

By Cedric Kenney and Noosha Uddin,
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Thesis

The United States, Vietnam, and the Philippines should conduct multilateral naval drilling practices in concert with the prevalent bilateral exercises in the South China Sea to strengthen security relationships and develop a unified strategy towards Chinese territorial claims.

Background and Context¹

Overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea

Tensions in the Asia-Pacific region are growing.¹ Much of the unease stems from overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea, with Vietnam, Malaysia, China, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Brunei in competition with one another for dozens of islands.² The South China Sea is a vital transit route for the world economy, with 30 percent of maritime trade passing through the region, \$1.2 trillion of which is bound for America.³ The sea is also responsible for over 10 percent of global fisheries production⁴ and is known to have significant undersea oil and natural gas reserves.

China is by far the biggest and most aggressive of the claimants, asserting vague claims of sovereignty within its so-called nine-dash line over more than 90 percent of the South China Sea.⁵ To the alarm of observers, these claims have been reinforced by China's building of artificial islands in the region, some of which have been equipped with military-grade airstrips and listening posts.⁶ Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, such artificial islands do not allow for the territorial claims afforded to natural islands, rendering China's claims illegal under international law.⁷ China's actions have angered Vietnam and the Philippines, both of which have large overlapping claims with China and have historically had antagonistic relations with China.⁸ In response to the disputes, Vietnam and the Philippines have been conducting naval exercises with one another⁹, and on a bilateral basis with the United States, Japan,¹⁰ and Australia.¹¹ These naval exercises demonstrate solidarity, and build security relationships among the actors involved as tensions persist. Such exercises would be consistent with the U.S.'s broader policy of rebalancing toward the Pacific region, providing security integration in complement to the

economic integration to be brought by the upcoming Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Talking Points

- ▶ The South China Sea is a vital trade route for the world economy and is home to substantial natural resources.
- ▶ China has been expanding aggressively in the South China Sea region, constructing militarized artificial islands and claiming territory against the protests of Vietnam, the Philippines, and other Pacific Rim states.
- ▶ Multilateral drill exercises will strengthen relationships between Pacific Rim nations and the U.S. in a joint effort to uphold international law, enforce regional security, and press China on their territorial claims on the South China Sea.

The Policy Idea

To promote security cooperation and solidarity in the face of rising tensions, the U.S. should work to establish annual multilateral naval exercises involving the U.S., Vietnam, and the Philippines. As all three of these nations already conduct drills with one another in bilateral formats, introducing multilateral drills is a natural evolution which would bring the actors involved closer together and present a unified strategy towards the regional challenge posed by Chinese territorial claims.

Policy Analysis

Currently, there are bilateral exercises between Vietnam and the Philippines, the U.S and the Philippines, and the

KEY FACTS

- ▶ The Spratly Islands cover roughly 160,000 square miles in the waters of the coasts off the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan and China—all of whom have claims on various regions of the islands.¹⁴
- ▶ Since the 1940s, Beijing has claimed sovereignty over almost the entirety of the South China Sea. The Paracel and Spratly island chains were regarded as territories of the Chinese nation, solely on the basis of a segmented line that appeared on Chinese maps at the time.¹⁵
- ▶ Roughly \$5.3 trillion in trade passes through the South China Sea annually, 23 percent of which consists of U.S. trade, which could increase substantially after the implementation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.
- ▶ The South China Sea holds nearly 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas of the 6.7 quadrillion cubic feet worldwide.¹⁶

U.S. and Vietnam. By doing away with these drills and instead uniting the U.S., Vietnam, and the Philippines into a shared naval exercise would strengthen the relationships among all three nations, especially with regards to the shared security challenges posed by China's actions. Bolstering security integration through naval drilling would effectively complement the economic integration spurred by the upcoming Trans-Pacific Partnership. Reducing the total number of drills should also reduce costs for all participants, trimming military budgets. The themes of such multilateral exercises could focus on objectives that are common to all three participating nations, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, or coastal patrol.¹²

Demonstrating unity through multilateral drills would force China to reconsider the costs of its actions. On December 21, 2015, China refused to recognize the authority of a U.N. tribunal on the South China Sea established at the request of the Philippines.¹³ Where bilateral negotiations fail, multilateral ones might succeed, aided by the multilateral military pressure generated by shared naval drills in the area. For the U.S., upholding international law and promoting peaceful and fair resolutions of territorial disputes is critical to maintaining order and preventing conflict, especially in a region with internationally vital sea lanes. Keeping these sea lanes open and neutral is crucial for the health and stability of the world economy, and multilateral exercises in the region would display the commitment of the U.S. to preserving local and global freedom of navigation.

NEXT STEPS

The U.S. Department of State, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, should signal its interest in conducting multilateral exercises with Vietnam and the Philippines. If all three nations express interest, the United States Pacific Command (PACOM) should begin coordination with the Vietnamese People's Navy along with the Philippine Navy to plan a multilateral drill to be held in late 2016. For maximum impact, the drill should be conducted in the South China Sea in waters held by either Vietnam or the Philippines, and involve a U.S. Navy carrier group.

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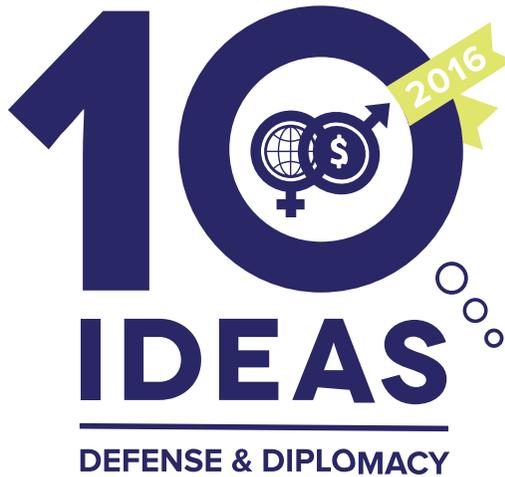
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