



U.S. immigration policy is senseless

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David Bier for [the Cato Institute](#): Immigrants from India waiting to receive residency in the United States may die before they receive their green cards.

The line is disproportionately long for Indians because the law discriminates against immigrants from populous countries, skewing the immigration flow to the benefit of immigrants from countries with fewer people. This policy, a compromise that resolved a long-dead immigration dispute, is senseless and economically damaging.

In the 1920s, Congress imposed the first-ever quota on immigration, but rather than just a worldwide limit, it distributed the numbers between countries to give preference to immigrants from "white" countries.

In 1965, Congress repealed this system with one that allowed immigrants from any country to receive up to 7 percent of the green cards issued each year. This was an improvement, but is an anachronism today and it is causing its own pointless discrimination ..

The entire system is an absurd relic of a bygone era. It was a compromise that enabled Congress to overcome its prior racial bias, but the explanation made sense in 1965, not today.

Nation-based quotas are governmental discrimination that is every bit as useless — if not as malicious — as racial discrimination.

The per-country limits make employers think twice about hiring the best person for the job due to the disparate waits. This means lost productivity for the United States and a less competitive economy. It can separate families for such a long period of time that would-be legal immigrants attempt illegal entry rather than wait decades for a legal visa.

Libya isn't done with the U.S.

Beverly Minton-Edwards for [the Brookings Institution](#): The chaos in the Middle East today is thought to have a clear epicenter: Syria.

But as diplomats and policymakers in the United States, Europe and Russia direct their energies there, including specifically on containing the threat posed by the Islamic State, Libya's downward spiral has serious implications for the same actors. As such, Libya should be kept within strategic sightlines.

There is a risk that the Syria diversion makes the United States and the world more vulnerable to the dangers brewing in Libya, which in many ways are as equally pressing as Syria's.

While the U.S. campaign season has highlighted discord over whether America should play a greater or lesser role in the world, these threats continue to grow, and they'll affect U.S. policy options in the wider Middle East in any case ...

U.S. strikes speak to the seriousness of the Libyan situation, and the truth is that recent developments in the country have important consequences for the West. Europe, in particular, is already contending with a terror threat and an ongoing surge of migrants and refugees from Libyan waters — and a worsening humanitarian crisis in Libya could destabilize its North African neighbors.

No matter how much the leaders of the 2011 intervention in Libya console themselves that they acted correctly, the United States and its allies must account for the consequences of that decision.

For the foreseeable future, Libya will only implode further, animating strategic debates in many Western capitals. At present, much of this debate focuses on whether to engage or disengage (from the Middle East or even more broadly), but this is the wrong debate.

Under the Obama administration, disengagement was the goal (and in many cases became a reality), but the United States found itself intervening anyway, with significant security consequences at home and abroad for its citizens. Re-thinking intervention is surely the challenge ahead.

Entitlements vs. the military

Douglas Holtz-Eakin and Patrick Hefflinger for [the American Action Forum](#): Donald Trump laid out his foreign policy agenda, "Peace through Strength," in a recent speech in Philadelphia. It was instructive from three perspectives.

First is its recognition that the world is a dangerous place, and that requires American leadership, not retrenchment. Second, at its core was an indictment of the recent trajectory of defense resources:

"In the current year, we are spending \$548 billion — a cut of 10 percent in real inflation-adjusted dollars. This reduction was done through what is known as the sequester, or automatic defense budget cuts. Under the budget agreement, defense took half of the cuts — even though it makes up only one-sixth of the budget. As soon as I take office, I will ask Congress to fully eliminate the defense sequester and will submit a new budget to rebuild our military." ...

Analysts quickly pointed out that the plan would add \$150 billion to the deficit over 10 years, even though Trump promises to offset his spending by "cutting unauthorized appropriations, reducing improper payments and underpaid taxes and shrinking the federal workforce through attrition."

The real lesson is that there simply isn't enough money there. The real money in the federal budget is in mandatory spending — the entitlements of Medicare, Medicaid, Affordable Care Act subsidies and Social Security. Over the next 10 years, these programs will grow at annual rates ranging from 5.5-9.2 percent, swamping revenue growth of 4.3 percent.

Until entitlement reforms produce a safety net that is both adequate and sustainable, national security will continue to be pushed out of the federal budget and federal debt will continue to threaten the growth of the economy. The entitlement spending explosion is the real threat to national security.