The Global Migration-Security Nexus
Date: June 21st, 2018
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Key Events

On June 21st, 2018 the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies (CASIS) Vancouver hosted its fifth roundtable meeting themed by a presentation on "The Global Migration-Security Nexus." The following presentation and question period focused on managed migration systems, and the re-thinking of the security and migration relationship, while envisioning transitioning to a next-generation managed migration regime. The subsequent roundtable discussion centred around the changing attitudes in British Columbia towards migrants and visible minorities and the plausibility of a security risk posed to these groups. This question was further discussed in regards to how B.C. communities can work towards keeping vulnerable communities safe, as well as different approaches to addressing aggressors.

Nature of Discussion

The presentation examined the current migration-security relationship and how migration policies can be advantageous regarding national security measures but may have unintentional second and third consequences in emigrant countries. The presentation illustrated these concepts through its three main focuses. The first examined the Canadian immigration advantage in relation to Canadian policy and society. The

second was based on current security measures and the unintended consequences of deterrence policies. The final topic of the presentation focused on how Canada can adapt and manage government, intelligence, and policy to better integrate new immigrants into Canadian society while continuing to secure its borders, and communities.

Background

The complex issues of international security and global mobility are not mutually exclusive, therefore managed migration systems have created equal opportunity for the legitimate circulation of people, as well as for exploitive criminal modes of migration. Global migration flows have more than tripled in recent decades. For example, the 2018 global refugee figure reached 68.5 million people, with migrants becoming 3.4% of the total population, therefore, resulting in an increased amount of people who are interacting with different cultures, exchanging novel ideas, and contributing to productive knowledge exchanges. Canada has an immigration advantage based, in part, on its global reputation for welcoming newcomers. Canada's open and tolerant society, as well as its geographic advantages in relation to space and unpopulated areas, means that Canada is able to manage the demand and supply factors of immigration, which is reflected in Canadian policy. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) revised immigration targets in 2017, a policy shift which meant that Canada was no longer seeking annual targets, and immigration policy became enveloped in long-term thinking, which resulted in a three-year rollout plan of accepting one million immigrants to Canada by 2020.

As traditional migration management continues, re-thinking current security measures creates a comprehensive outlook towards the global migration-security nexus. Thus, preventing policymakers and governments from being unprepared during mass migration movements. While undocumented immigration has become a central topic in international relations, the countermeasures towards combatting illegal

immigration could be seen to produce severe second and third-level consequences. Countermeasures are conducted through new policy action, as well as sharing "best practices" with allied nations by enhancing border controls. Furthermore, deterrence via strict borders does not necessarily equate to guaranteed security against clandestine movements. It has been suggested that increasing deterrence has created economic opportunities for "crimmigration." A process which promotes human smugglers because if the borders are heavily guarded, economic opportunity can arise for finding unorthodox channels to smuggle illegal goods. However, while the IRCC implements immigration policies, and the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) enforces these policies, the two operate as separate entities. Therefore, it has been argued this separation has been a vulnerability to Canada's security.

Transitioning from a managed migration system to a next-generation managed migration regime could pose challenges to Canada's governance, policy, and strategic security. Security challenges arise from intelligence demands exceeding the capabilities of the intelligence services. Strategic culture should lead to an orderly transition by focusing on facilitating low-risk migrants from high-risk countries. The government should adapt policies and transition its power as newcomers to Canada settle in cities and local communities. Cities will arguably need to assume more responsibilities as their populations increase, in which case the relationship between the government and its municipalities will need to develop into becoming full partners. Lastly, policy development should arguably move away from the drivers of political cycles and focus on long-term trends, as migrant demands are increasing exponentially and unpredictably. Canada needs to be able to adapt to an influx of persons while protecting its borders and reducing second and third-level consequences in other nations.

Key Points of Discussion & West Coast Perspectives

- It could be argued that targeting hate speech in Canada, and in B.C. specifically, is becoming increasingly difficult. With the use of social media and the rise of "free speech" movements, B.C. could focus on strengthening community resilience amongst vulnerable/targeted communities.

- The migration-development nexus should become a focus in policy discourse, as it is often overlooked that remittances are a key driver in why migration and irregular migration exists.

- Decentralization from Ottawa needs to focus on building caps— realistic limits on how many Canadian immigration applications are processed. These caps should account for people moving away from rural areas for the economic opportunity in cities like Vancouver and Toronto, fraudulent cases, and those who seek permanent residence, yet return to their countries of origin.

Key Takeaways of Event

- Irregular migration (for instance, the moving across borders without proper travel documentation) comprises 10-15% of global migration and is a persistent phenomenon driven by supply and demand factors, in both the origin and destination countries.
- It could be argued that Canada should adopt an appropriate mix of strategic foresight, social-intelligence, creative thinking, and risk-taking while an influx of global immigrants continues over a three-year planning cycle.
- Cities are the economic drivers of the national economy and a focus on urban design is critical to the safety and security of migrant communities within Canada.