Improving the U.S. Immigration Vetting Process

Bailey R. Cox – Eastern Kentucky University
Bluegrass State Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence

EKU
HOMELAND SECURITY

Summary

Public concern and recent media attention has brought the immigration vetting process to the forefront of policy analysis. Terrorism around the world, especially acts perpetrated by refugees and ISIS, have generated a need for changes in the current policy. Even though the U.S. process is the most rigorous in the world, there are still many vulnerabilities to be mitigated.

Alternatives → Evaluation Criteria ↓	Intelligence Collection	Enhance U.S. Agency Collaboration	Increase Collaboration with Allies	Implement Extreme Vetting Procedures	Moratorium of the Immigration Process
Cost Effectiveness	2	3	2	1	1
Ethical Implications	2	3	2	1	1
Legality/ Practicality	4	3	2	2	1
Politically Accepted	3	4	3	1	1
Policy Sustainability	4	3	3	1	1
TOTAL:	15	16	12	6	5

Analysis

The matrix to the right displays the overall evidence obtained through this research. After each alternative was developed, the evaluation criteria was developed through critical and creative thinking techniques. The supported alternatives, in order, are Intelligence Collection, U.S. Agency Collaboration, and Collaboration with Allies.

The Current Problem

Multiple agencies and a myriad of databases are employed to vet incomers to the U.S. The geopolitical issues happening have led to heightened security to better thwart attacks to the homeland. However, while hoping to maximize security, the U.S. also wants to maintain its humanitarian causes that often lead to foreigners claiming refuge in the U.S.

Enhance U.S. Agency Collaboration

Since 9/11, an increase in U.S. agency collaboration has been a major priority, but there is still much more to be done. This alternative would greatly benefit the vetting process, as it could connect agencies and databases to knowledge that was not available in the past.

Intelligence Collection

The Intelligence Community has been very effective at foreign vetting in the past, and could greatly enhance the vetting process. Increasing information collection, and generating actionable intelligence enables agencies to make more informed decisions of incoming foreigners. This alternative hinges on non-partisan leadership and action.

Recommendations

The United States should increase information collection of immigrants / non-immigrants, enhance U.S. agency collaboration, and increase collaboration with allies abroad. These alternatives will improve the overall vetting process, enabling more informed decisions of incoming foreigners to the U.S.