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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

Padraig O'Malley

Since the last volume of the *New England Journal of Public Policy*, the issue of migrants making their way to Europe along treacherous routes, many not surviving the perilous journey, has befuddled the countries in the European Union (EU). As the situation became more desperate and the influx accelerated, hospitality began to wear thin. European leaders began to close their national borders, threatening the foundations of the EU itself—the Schengen agreement—free travel across national borders. The blitz of bombings in Paris by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in November 2015 brought a new frenzy of hand-wringing: what if there were ISIL cells or even lone wolves coming from Syria or Iraq among the teeming crowds? In the United States people terrified themselves into hysteria, vehemently opposing the prospect of allowing twenty thousand Syrian refugees who would undergo security checks over a two-year period before they would qualify for entry into the country. Most of the current flow of refugees that has created a crisis among the EU's member states are fleeing the brutal ravages of the Syrian civil war, the ongoing war in Iraq, and the Afghanistan quagmire that appears as much beholden to the Taliban as ever. Hence this editor's note that focuses on migration and conflict.

From the time *Homo sapiens* began to explore the limits of planet earth, conflict and migration have been inextricably intertwined, beginning with conflict over resources to survive, later for control of territory. In the first half of the twentieth century two devastating world wars scattered migrants in any direction they thought they might find refuge; after a postwar lull, migration became more pronounced in the latter years of the twentieth century and inexorably so since the opening decades of the twenty-first.

Wars are no longer waged by nation-states against one another; they are intrastate conflicts. They are waged by warlords, by governments against their own people, by authoritarian rulers clinging to power, by ethnic groups settling historical scores, by minorities within nation-states demanding self-determination; they are caused by religious differences and clashing ideologies; they erupt in weak or failing states where a concatenation of factors has eroded the authority of the state. We now include rape as a weapon of war, food as a weapon of war, and the acts of child-soldiers as part of our definition of war. Often more die fleeing war than in war itself.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the ratio of combatants to civilians killed in war was 8:1—eight combatants for every civilian. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the figures were reversed; the ratio was 1:8—eight civilians were killed for every combatant. In the space of a hundred years, war had been redefined—people with weapons of war now kill unarmed civilians, not each other. Today you are safer being a soldier in one of the competing armies or militias than being a civilian. Armies no longer “fight” on behalf of people; they kill people. And the people flee.

Africa's World War

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)—an oxymoron if ever there were one—the largest and deadliest war since World War II was fought in the mid-1990s between coalitions of African nations (at one point nine African nations were involved), ethnic tribes, communal groups, and meandering gangster marauders. More than 1 million people—almost all civilians—

were killed in “combat”; another 1.5 million died fleeing shifting battlegrounds or psychotic plunderers.

In Rwanda another million were butchered by Hutu attacks on Tutsis in the genocide overlooked by the West. Over two million civilians fled into neighboring Uganda, Tanzania, and the DRC. (Many returned after normality settled in.)

African refugees died of thirst and lack of food and shelter, victims of hostile environments in unforgiving terrain. Most of those fleeing became either internally displaced persons (IDPs)—people who are effectively “internal refugees” within their own country—or refugees, crossing porous borders from one poor country to a neighboring poor country. But there were no television cameras to record the indescribable horrors of these hazardous routes from one country to another, and what does not exist on videotape has not happened. In the West the mention of the DRC merely raises quizzical looks. The West pays attention to the global crisis of migration only when the West itself comes under threat from massive inflows.

Population upheavals intensified in Africa during the 1990s. About 13.7 million Africans remained uprooted (IDPs and refugees combined) at the end of the 1990s compared with about 12 million in 1990. But in the next fifteen years the number of IDPs increased dramatically. Although the number of refugees declined by about one-third during the 1990s, the number IDPs jumped from 7 million to about 10 million.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the total number of refugees estimated for all of Africa as of June 2015 is 2,561,564. The countries hosting the largest number of refugees are Ethiopia (highest), Kenya, Chad, Uganda, Cameroon, Sudan, and South Sudan; the countries from which most refugees flee are Somalia, Central African Republic, DRC, Eritrea, Sudan, and South Sudan, and smaller but significant numbers are from Burundi, Mali, and Nigeria. All are war-driven refugees.

The highest displacement numbers are IDPs. As of June 2015 there are 11.4 million IDPs in Africa, 4.5 million of whom were newly displaced in 2014. Not included in these figures is an additional 3.3 million IDPs in Nigeria. Nigeria currently hosts the highest number of IDPs in Africa.

Boko Haram spreads chaos and fear in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad. The Lake Chad Basin is the fastest-growing displacement crisis in Africa; 2.7 million people, 1.5 million of them children, have been uprooted by Boko Haram terrorists. In Kenya and Somalia, al-Shabaab performs a similar function; Niger, desperately poor, shares troubled borders with Algeria, Chad, Libya, and Mali. Libya is in freefall and also a destination for refugees fleeing other parts of Africa and seeking hazardous sea routes to Europe; al-Qaeda has tentacles across the region, in Niger, and the fingerprints of ISIL in a dozen countries sow fear in their populations and set in motion the march of refugees after their random attacks.

Kenya “hosts” the largest refugee camp in the world. The UNHCR set up Dadaab in the desert in 1991 for 90,000 refugees escaping Somalia’s civil war. The camp now has over 350,000 residents, who live in a space of less than fifty square kilometers, “roughly as if the entire population of Cleveland, Ohio, were forced to live in an area smaller than the Ohio State University campus.”¹ Kenya claims that members of al-Shabaab, the Somali terrorist group, have infiltrated the camp and have repeatedly threatened to shut it down. Were it to do so, a humanitarian disaster would follow.

The living conditions of the displaced vary among and within the countries listed earlier. Conditions also vary by shelter type, whether overcrowded formal camps or makeshift shelters where refugees endure multiple displacements and frequent attacks by armed fighters. Common

among all are water shortages, poor medical care, severe malnutrition and risk of famine, and hygiene and exposure to water-borne diseases. Women and children are vulnerable to sexual violence, and children have little access to education and risk being taken as child soldiers. In addition to armed violence, they remain vulnerable to climate-related exposure, to droughts and sudden floods. Many fear returning home or have no home left to return to. The uncertainty of finding a passage to Europe, risk-ridden as it may be, outweighs the absence of a future that awaits them if they continue to live in the camps, and many follow well-trodden routes: either the western route, the main route for refugees and IDPs from Mali, Gambia, and Senegal, or the western route in the Sahel that frequently crosses and connects with the central route, for which the source countries are Nigeria, Ghana, and Niger. The eastern route, the preferred route for refugees and IDPs from Somalia, Eritrea, and Darfur in South Sudan, cuts north through Sudan and Egypt and extends along the northern coast of Africa. All routes converge in the Maghreb, and in recent years mostly in Libya, where the refugees attempt a sea crossing to Italy.

A Global Glance

In 2002, there were twenty-one major armed conflicts in nineteen locations around the world. By 2008, according to the Armed Conflict Survey (ACS), there were sixty-three armed conflicts around the world producing 56,000 fatalities, whereas in 2014 there were only forty-two armed conflicts producing 180,000 fatalities. Though “the number of armed conflicts around the world has been progressively declining since the Armed Conflict Database was launched, . . . the decline in the number of conflicts has been more than compensated for by an inexorable rise in the intensity of violence associated with them.” But, the ACS asserts, “the impact of conflict cannot simply be judged by the number of fatalities and injuries to which it gives rise. The conflicts being covered are generating ever higher levels of refugees and IDPs, leading the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to observe that 2013 was the first year since the end of the Second World War when the global number of displaced persons had exceeded 50 million.”²

In 2016, the number is 60 million.³

In 2014, according to the United Nations, some 14 million people were forced from their homes in armed conflicts worldwide, and much of the huge increase was due to the wars in Syria and Iraq, with Afghanistan lagging not far behind. In Syria, more than half of the prewar population of 22 million is now uprooted, as either new refugees or IDPs. In the first four months of 2015 alone, another 700,000 fled, many to nearby countries, the highest rate of any time during the war. In the countries that border Syria, the flow of refugees into stuffed camps threatens the stability of the states themselves: in Turkey, over 2.5 million refugees; in Lebanon, over 1.3 million—more than 25 percent of Lebanon’s fragile confessional balance; in Jordan, over 750,000.

The most dramatic increase occurred in the number of IDPs. At least 38 million people were internally displaced at the end of 2015, compared with 21.2 million at the turn of the century. In a report published in 2015, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center writes: “Never . . . from the peak of the Darfur crisis in 2004 and the sectarian violence in Iraq in the mid to late 2000s to the uprisings of the ‘Arab spring’ in 2011 and the ensuing crises in the Middle East have we reported such a high estimate for the number of people newly displaced in a year. Today there are almost twice as many IDPs as there are refugees worldwide.”⁴

The growing number of IDPs is a problem with which the international community has not come to grips. The displaced are often cut off from international humanitarian aid and protection

because of a lack of security, difficult logistics, or restricted access imposed by the country's government. IDPs are usually trapped in some of the world's most dangerous places, non-people in their own countries, where marginalization is usually the common condition of most. Hence, displacement is a springboard for migration.

David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee, referring to IDPs worldwide, said it is "very, very important . . . to recognize that those 40 million people are tomorrow's refugees."⁵

Europe: Fear and Loathing

The period 2010–2015 brought a series of new realities. While African refugees continued to account for over 50 percent of the world's refugees, the migration was mainly among African countries themselves and never a matter of much concern to the West—a humanitarian disaster in its eyes but not an issue that affected its national security interests.

Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, however, post-Arab Spring upheavals in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco, the civil war in Syria and the emergence of ISIL and other Islamic groups, some with fealty to ISIL and others to al-Qaeda, resulted in a fundamental change in the relationship of the EU to its migrant populations that threatens to change the character of the EU itself and may be the death knell for border-free travel across the EU. Adding to the desperation, the World Food Program has run out of money in Syria and UNCHR has cut allowances to refugees in the camps in Jordan and Turkey by half, to the edge of subsistence. In the absence of adequate security, an increasing number of UN agencies, the Committee of the Red Cross, and NGOs will withdraw, at least temporarily, from particularly dangerous humanitarian operations.⁶ Hence, the flow of migrants to EU shores is ceaseless, despite the hazards for refugees from Bodrum, Izmir Smyrna, and Mersin in Turkey who make the crossing in dinky, overcrowded rubber boats to the Greek islands of Kos, Lesbos, and Leros, or for refugees from poverty-ridden camps in African countries who undertake the hazardous journey to reach Tripoli and Benghazi in the hope of securing a passage to Malta or Italy.

"Many of these frail, artificial states [in the Middle East and Africa]," *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman observes,

don't correspond to any ethnic, cultural, linguistic or demographic realities. They are caravan homes in a trailer park—built on slabs of concrete without real foundations or basement—and what you're seeing today with the acceleration of technology, climate change stresses and globalization is the equivalent of a tornado going through a trailer park. Some of these states are just falling apart, and many of their people are now trying to cross the Mediterranean—to escape their world of disorder and get into the world of order, particularly the European Union.

Mid-year 2015, 1.2 million migrants, mainly from Syria and Iraq had entered the EU—a fourfold increase over the previous year. Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that Germany was prepared to give asylum to one million refugees. But as the rate at which refugees were arriving overwhelmed the country's abortive capacity to process them, Europe's welcome turned sour. The outer-perimeter countries erected barriers; some sealed their borders. Public support in Germany for Merkel's "open door" policy eroded and rebellion in the ranks of her own party—

the Christian Democratic Party—forced her hand, and Germany imposed constraints in January 2016.⁷ In mid-January 2015 Austria suspended the Schengen agreement. Announcing the measure, Chancellor Werner Faymann said: “If the EU does not manage to secure its external borders, Schengen as a whole is put into question. . . . Then each country must control its own national borders.” He added, “In the event of their not being controlled in the near future, the whole EU [will be] in question.”⁸

What is the refugee crisis in the EU? Surely, it cannot be the numbers—the absorption of slightly more than 1 million refugees into a population of 372 million. The interaction of many factors creates an iterative process that feeds on itself. No differentiation was made between economic migrants and migrants fleeing terror and persecution. Huge inflows of Muslims inspired fear that the social fabric of nation-states will change. These refugees were seen as threats to national labor markets in a Europe that had not fully recovered from the 2008 recession and where unemployment rates remained stubbornly high. The impacts of the Paris bombings by ISIL in October 2015 reverberated across the region. Some countries refused the quota of refugees the European Commission proposed. In the absence of vetting, who could tell who was a genuine refugee and who might belong to an extremist group? Muslims and terrorism were conflated; Muslim xenophobia became contagious and thus Europe’s conundrum: Muslims as potential terrorists; Muslims as needed labor in an aging Europe. Brussels is stymied. The quintessence of the EU is the surrender of part of national sovereignty. Now the interests of national sovereignties are suddenly taking center place. The sprawling, labyrinthine bureaucracy that holds the EU together is fragile at the seams. It works when an agglomeration of national interests can produce consensus, no matter how opaque. It creaks to a halt when national interest takes precedence.

There are no antidotes to the suicide bomber, the lone-wolf terrorist, the indigenous radicalized or sleeper terrorist cell—all prepared to die or even knowing that they will be killed carrying out their terrorist attacks; no safeguards against those who place no value on human life, least of all their own. They do not need advanced technology to carry out their acts, putting at some disadvantage countries that rely on advanced technologies to secure their safety; the acts of terror that elude them take place beneath the most sophisticated security threshold. They have mastered the ways to communicate among cells in several sovereign states. They are not only extraordinarily elusive; they are recombinant. This is the new reality, for which the affluent developed countries have no safeguards other than to slam closed the doors of refuge for incoming migrants, guilt by association rapidly displacing reason. Right-wing xenophobes began gaining traction in 2015. Right-wing parties, once considered peripheral, were starting to swell their ranks and win elections. Faced with an EU at loggerheads with itself over how to simultaneously act collectively and act on individual sovereign-state definitions of security, the latter prevailed. Member states failed to agree on a migrant-distribution quota system; Chancellor Merkel tiptoed to Turkey offering President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan three billion euros to keep the teeming hordes at bay. In line with the adage that in the event you cannot solve a problem, it’s best to throw money at it, the EU convened a plethora of conferences and commissioned a slew of studies. While ISIL and like-minded extremists are unlikely to achieve the caliphate they dream of, it may be one of several factors that become instrumental in the unraveling of the EU.

Interventions to Slow the Flows of Migrants from the Conflicts That Are Their Bedrocks?

No matter how we view history, especially in the post-millennial era, the mindless brutality of psychotic dictators, the mass elimination of political opposition in nondemocratic states, internal dispositions for ethnic cleansing, and internal conflicts escalate into mass atrocities that cause people to flee and set in motion displacement and migration. In the case of the Syrian civil war there is a need to develop criteria for just intervention. No sovereign state has the right to murder its own citizens.

How, then, do we balance the rights of sovereign states in a global world that has redefined sovereignty and the rights that sovereign states have in a world of increasing interdependencies that recognizes the international primacy of human rights? When does oppression reach a point where international intervention on humanitarian grounds should give way to forceful intervention? There is no single context. It is difficult to make a forceful case for a military intervention in Iraq on the ground that Saddam Hussein was ruthlessly exterminating Kurds and Shiites. Why stop with overthrowing one ruthless dictator? Besides the destabilization such an intervention would bring by triggering perhaps even more repression in neighboring countries, it would have required a prior debate to reach consensus on grounds that would justify such an intervention, one that would henceforth be universally applied. The major redefinitions of international law would have ramifications, difficult to apply and impossible to enforce.

We are faced with what Kofi Annan once referred to as “problems without passports,” which require a serious review of the existing framework for the just use of force. In Syria, the case for just intervention is more compelling.

The United Nations is ill equipped to carry out the very task that is its founding mandate—the prevention of war. It has tried in various ways to adapt to a post-Cold War era, a unipolar world, to a post-9-11 era, a multipolar world, and now to the rise of global jihadist extremisms. Member states have been unable to agree that there should be a permanent UN international army, thus requiring it to improvise ways to deal with wars. Peacekeeping—never mentioned in the charter—had to be invented. For sixty years the United Nations has been the proxy battleground for competing ideologies. It is still locked into the decisions or the lack of decision by the Security Council. Because the Security Council is unable to agree on any matter that would seem to diminish the international standing of one of its members or take any action that might be construed as a threat to a member’s national security interests or that might undermine the proxy conflicts it supports for strategic interests or upset the balance of power among them, it is for the most part moribund and next to useless for accomplishing much in the way of deterring intrastate conflicts.

The UN Charter expressly declares the sanctity of the principle of nonintervention. The Security Council has now set limits on that sanctity. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) sets out the principles for international military intervention in failed, about to fail, or rogue states where conflict is ready to erupt or has already erupted. These principles are the right intention, the last resort, proportional means, and reasonable prospect.⁹ Most important, ICISS was unambiguous in two regards: the principle of nonintervention yields to the principle to protect and with intervention comes the principle to rebuild. Thus, one of the major consequences of our interdependence is to recognize that a threat to peace must now include “the feared adverse international consequences of civil conflicts involving humanitarian catastrophes.”¹⁰

Unfortunately, while the goal is high-minded, no state has taken upon itself to intervene in another state’s internal conflict no matter how compelling the evidence that one party or another

or all parties engage in acts contrary to the Geneva conventions. Nor is an intervention likely unless the permanent Security Council countries are on board. In Syria, Russia's military intervention in support of the effort to degrade and destroy ISIL—in reality more of an attempt to prop up the Assad regime—a client state hardly meets these criteria. Neither, for that matter does the US-led coalition airstrikes on ISIL targets. The United Nations has also addressed the question of accountability.

The projections of most expert institutions suggest that the current migration crisis is only the beginning. There is not a European crisis, there is a global crisis. At some point the rich North will have to direct its attention to the countries at the ladder's lowest rung. The commitments must be long-term no matter how faltering and difficult partnerships with the countries at the lowest rungs may be; otherwise they will fail. Marginalization incubates itself. Globalization that leaves billions of people in perpetual freefall is a prescription for violent conflicts, out of which will emerge new terrorist groups with agendas of hate and access to the technologies and weapons—to give lethal expression to that hate.

Troubling Question: An Uncertain Future

One critical issue that has largely gone unaddressed is the relationship between poverty and violent conflict, the relationship between terrorism and poverty, and the interrelationship between the two. Even though we hear the figures frequently, we remain disconnected from their far-reaching implications: an estimated nine hundred million people in 2012 were living on less than \$1.90 a day—the new international poverty line; the projected number for 2015 under the new line is seven hundred million people. Poverty also is becoming increasingly concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa. Globally more than eight hundred million people are still living in extreme poverty.¹¹

By 2030 the world population will reach 8.5 billion people,¹² most of them in the developing world, countries of poverty and extreme poverty. An aging West will face an explosion of young people elsewhere who face lifetimes of poverty and have little prospect for better lives. Relative deprivation and resource deprivation will affect social cohesion among developed and developing countries, within and among developing countries, and also within developed countries, fostering alienation, exploitation, and dependency—the accoutrements of violence.

The phenomenon of growing inequality accompanying global economic trade between the developed countries in the Northern Hemisphere and the developing countries in the Southern Hemisphere and the perception within developing countries that the developed countries (read the West) are using trade agreements to advance their interests at the expense of their poorer neighbors. A World Bank report argues that “an unequal distribution of wealth exacerbates societal tensions,” “increases the perception of relative deprivation,” and “leads to perceived grievances and potential strife.”¹³ Global television feeds the feelings of envy and resentment that disparities in income levels generate. Violent conflicts are most likely to occur within countries with weak social cohesion, that is, countries where the informal sectors of the economy are most pervasive, where surviving and protecting one's meager assets require guile, alliances with gangs, and frequently a resort to violence. In poor and extremely poor countries the informal sectors of society are expanding; adherence to such things as the rule of law is a misnomer since there is no rule of law, only the excessive consumption of the elites and the petty corruption that survival in the informal world necessitates.

The link between poverty and terrorism is less demonstrable, but it exists nevertheless. Terrorist groups exploit conditions of poverty to expand the political appeal of their cause and find fertile ground for nurturing recruits. Yet, the countries most in need of aid for development rarely receive it. The limited resources that developed countries are prepared to allocate to development aid is given to countries where the infrastructure offers the prospect for a high return on the aid they receive, that is, countries already some significant way up the developmental ladder. Those countries at the lowest rungs lack the basic capacity to use aid or the aid ends up in the coffers of corrupt officials. They have been written off. And therein lies the blind eye.

Unless national security analysts include in their security calculus the link between poverty and violent conflict and how poverty creates conditions that are breeding grounds for terrorist groups, their analyses of possible terrorist threats will be incomplete and possibly wrong. Military power will not “defeat” terrorism; developmental power may. But that calls for a reordering of the West’s thinking. Having the populations of the West believe that their countries can somehow horde the wealth of the earth without consequence in the face of increasing abject poverty among the majority of the world’s population is an invitation to fiddle with apocalypse.

Along with two literary essays, the articles in this issue of the journal address local, national, and international public policy questions. On the literary level, one article discusses whether arguments from an older era over a white writer’s presumption that he can accurately articulate black voices and experiences, itself an unconscious bias, can throw light on racial issues roiling college campuses and other arenas of public discourse today; the second, more mellow and reflective, ponders the incongruities and congruities that surface when the author explores how the meaning of the word *home* depends on one’s personality as he prepares to move his family back to Massachusetts, where he grew up. Three examine questions germane to Massachusetts: one on media bias leading up to the referendum in Massachusetts on bilingual education, a second on equality of compensation among teachers in different communities in the state, and a third on racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the workplace. On the national level, one article looks at biases that explain why black women enlist in the U.S. military at higher rates than other ethnic and racial groups. And, finally, two articles on the international level. One discusses the urgent need to reorient long-term U.S. foreign policy objectives; the other makes an important contribution to understanding what might lie ahead in Iraq, if ISIL is defeated—sobering and rarely discussed.

Notes

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² “Armed Conflict Survey 2015 Press Statement,” International Institute for Strategic Studies, May 19, 2015, <https://www.iiss.org/en/about%20us/press%20room/press%20releases/press%20releases/archive/2015-4fe9/may-6219/armed-conflict-survey-2015-press-statement-a0be>.

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⁶ Jon Stone, “Half a Million Syrian Refugees to Stop Receiving Food Aid When the Money Runs Out Next Month,” *Independent*, July 1, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/half-a-million-syrian-refugees-to-stop-receive-food-aid-when-the-money-runs-out-next-month-10358632.html>; Harriet Grant, “UN Agencies ‘Broke and Failing’ in Face of Ever-Growing Refugee Crisis,” *Guardian*, September 6, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/06/refugee-crisis-un-agencies-broke-failing>.

⁷ Justin Huggler, “Angela Merkel Faces Outright Rebellion within Her Own Party over Refugee Crisis,” *The Telegraph*, November 9, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/angela-merkel/11984378/Angela-Merkel-faces-outright-rebellion-within-her-own-party-over-refugee-crisis.html>; Justin Huggler, “Angela Merkel Faces New Rebellion over Refugees,” *The Telegraph*, January 13, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/12097762/Angela-Merkel-faces-new-rebellion-over-refugees.html>.

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¹¹ “Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015,” United Nations, accessed February 10, 2016, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>.

¹² *World Risk Report 2015* (Berlin: Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft; Bonn: United Nations University, 2015), http://www.worldriskreport.org/fileadmin/WRB/PDFs_und_Tabellen/WRR_2015_engl_online.pdf; “UN Projects World Population to Reach 8.5 Billion by 2030, Driven by Growth in Developing Countries,” UN News Center, July 29, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2015/07/un-projects-world-population-to-reach-8-5-billion-by-2030-driven-by-growth-in-developing-countries/>.

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