

Slum in Mumbai, India, in shadow of city's high-rise buildings



AP/Wide World Photo (Rajesh Nigude)

The Defense Implications of Demographic Trends

By JENNIFER DABBS SCIUBBA

Because of its perceived association with national power—economic, military, and even ideological—population has weighed heavily on the minds of state leaders throughout history. Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu once declared, “Anyone who avoids having children is a deserter who abandons the laws of national continuity.”¹ Ceausescu felt that his goal—to make Romania a world power—required increased population to meet labor demands and catapult the country to a new status as an economic and military powerhouse.² Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Russian president Vladimir Putin recently echoed Ceausescu’s sentiment.³ Though Ahmadinejad was not open about his reasons, he likely promoted his pronatalist policy in hopes of increasing national power in a region plagued by demographic tensions (Shiite, Sunni, Persian, Arab, Israeli). Putin, in his May 2006 address to the Russian nation, expressed similar concerns when he said that Russia’s declining population is the number one problem facing the state.⁴ Obviously, key states—not only Iran and Russia but also Japan and those in Europe—are concerned with

their demographic futures and the way population trends will affect their global positions. Because population plays such a prominent role in other states’ planning, U.S. policymakers and planners must understand the effects of demographic trends and the way allies and rivals perceive these effects in order to develop coherent and successful strategies.

Developments in three key demographic trends will characterize the next 10 to 20 years—the north-south divide in age structure, international migration, and urbanization. Key questions policymakers should consider in relation to these trends are:

- How might demographic trends influence the security environment?
- What challenges and opportunities for states may arise as these trends unfold?
- What strategies and military capabilities will be necessary to operate in this environment?

By answering these questions, planners can develop more robust strategies for the U.S. Government to plan to minimize risk and maximize opportunities associated with demographic trends. This article examines the defense policy implications of the three key demographic trends and their accompanying challenges to begin to address the above questions.

Demography is a useful lens for understanding national security because population is intimately linked to resources, and resources are related to both capabilities and conflict. Additionally, demographic projections can be more useful for contingency planning than economic or technological projections because there is less uncertainty; we know what population profiles will look like several decades from now. For example, the U.S. Armed Forces have used demographic projections to determine the pool of available recruits over the next several decades. By looking at the number of 5-year-olds today, the military can

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anticipate the number of 20-year-olds 15 years from now. The further the time horizon, the more uncertainty can affect projections. But for contingency planning, which may look 10 to 15 years out, the robustness of demographic projections is reasonable.

Key Trend 1: North-South Divide

Age structure matures as states go through the demographic transition—the shift from high fertility and high mortality to low fertility and low mortality. One of the major demographic phenomena today is the split between those countries in the global north that have gone through this transition and whose populations are now growing older (and possibly smaller) and those in the global south that continue to have young and booming populations. The latter category is mainly composed of states from less developed regions,⁵ which will account for 99 percent of the expected increase of 3 billion people in the world population through 2050. For instance, 42 percent of Iraq’s population was under age 15 in 2006, and because the total fertility rate is still high—at almost 5 children per woman—the population will stay very youthful in coming decades. Japan’s age structure, on the other hand, is skewed toward the other end of the spectrum, with 20 percent of its population over age 65, and only 14 percent under age 15.⁶

If current trends continue from 2000 to 2100, the split will deepen; Europe’s share of the world population will be halved, from 12 to 6 percent, while Africa’s will almost double, from 13 to 25 percent.⁷ Each pattern—boom and bust—brings a host of political, economic, and social implications, some positive and some negative. On the diplomatic level, this sharp divide has the potential to shift the way states perceive national security and international relations—that is, how states see themselves vis-à-vis potential enemies and allies. In turn, it affects how enemies and allies see other states as well. As important as trends themselves are, often more important is the perception that a population trend is occurring. An additional issue to keep in mind about demographic trends is that despite the weight of numbers, population alone is not enough to drive change. Policy decisions and the political leadership who manage populations are equally important and should be included in assessments of these trends.

Aging Allies. Due to decades of low fertility, the populations of Europe and Japan have been aging and are projected to continue this

trend indefinitely. Europe’s old age dependency ratio—the percentage of the population aged 65 and over as a percentage of the working population ages 15 to 64—will rise from 37 percent to 48 percent by 2025.⁸ This increase means that there will be far fewer workers supporting the growing ranks of the elderly. Policies that limit future public benefits to the elderly are unlikely to be popular given the

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tenor of the current political debate in Europe, so the projected payout of these pension and healthcare benefits as a percentage of gross domestic product is likely to rise, potentially at the expense of defense spending. Because of population aging, the European Commission expects public spending on pensions, health care, and long-term care to increase by about 4 percent between 2004 and 2050 for the members of the European Union (EU) known as the EU15.⁹ If Europe and Japan fail to develop policies that account for their changing demographics, the resulting economic crunch could limit their ability to be geopolitical leaders and support key U.S. goals and operations, such as the war on terror. In particular, European priorities could shift to “security” over “defense” spending, meaning that Europe may concentrate more on internal stability than on promoting stability outside of the continent. European defense spending is already

low relative to the United States, yet European policy may increasingly constrict the conditions under which military force is deemed legitimate. The secondary effects of demographic change may even reduce participation in humanitarian expeditions, which Europeans have typically favored.

Another potential effect of European demographic trends is that security priorities may shift from preparing for conventional contingencies to protecting southern borders from an uncontrolled influx of refugees and migrants. Partly because of the social ramifications, large-scale immigration will not be a viable long-term solution to population decline in developed countries. The number of migrants needed to keep dependency ratios more balanced is too large for the vocal xenophobic segments of European society to accept, as many segments are already worried about the “Islamization” of Europe. In order to keep the current ratio of workers to dependents in Europe, migration would need to increase to an average of 25 million annually. According to demographer David Coleman, this high rate of migration “would treble Europe’s population by 2050 from 754 million to 2.35 billion, and so on at an accelerating rate.”¹⁰ Migration on this scale would change the political landscape of Europe dramatically, and leadership would not agree to such a large-scale opening of Europe’s borders. The growth of anti-immigrant parties and candidates across Europe reflects this impediment to immigration. For example, French President Nicholas Sarkozy has advocated measures to halt illegal immigration and favors deportation. He also



Soldier talks with local boy during patrol in Baghdad

9821 Combat Camera Company (Jeffrey Alexander)

plans to block Turkey's bid to join the EU and thus prevent those Muslim immigrants from entering the union. Given the difficulty of both choices—acceptance of aging or large-scale migration—waning European support for U.S. operations is plausible. Europeans may have neither the political will nor the physical resources to support stability operations or any other traditional defense mission.

The Challenges of Youth. On the flip side, many challenges are associated with youthful age structures, primarily the risk of increased conflict. There is a robust correlation between youth bulges and armed conflict, especially under conditions of economic stagnation.¹¹ In 2000, 300,000 soldiers younger than 18 were involved in 30 conflicts around the world.¹² Additional factors such as relative deprivation, historical/cultural grievances, and pervasiveness of extremist ideology could ignite tensions and mobilize youth, and the potential for discontent is high. There are 1.3 billion 12- to 24-year-olds in developing countries—roughly 30 percent of these countries' total population and 86 percent of youth worldwide.¹³ Unlike their Western counterparts, these youths face few positive prospects. To begin, individuals aged 15 to 24 are the fastest growing segment of the newly infected HIV/AIDS population. Of this age group, women fare even worse than men, and 57 million of these young women cannot even read or write.¹⁴ As many observers of international trends note, the sad prospects for these individuals can make them suscep-

tible to radical ideologies and even incite them to full-blown violence.

One area of the world with a preponderance of youth but a dearth of opportunities is the Middle East/North Africa region. Because of a lack of institutional ties, many of these approximately 120 million youths have little to lose and are not socialized to become productive citizens. They are absent from social institutions because many never marry, from economic institutions because many are unemployed, and from political institutions because many cannot participate under authoritarian rule. According to the 2006 World Bank annual report on the Middle East and North Africa, about 100 million new jobs would need to be created in this region to keep pace with the high number of new labor entrants and those already unemployed.¹⁵ Though the region has seen a slight upswing in economic growth, current rates are not robust enough to put the region on task for creating this large number of jobs, and these youth will look for other, potentially negative, ways to spend their time and energy.

Resource Competition. Many states will be driven to innovate and seek resources because of their demography. These are the states that will have the greatest potential to compete with the

United States, though they may be limited by a lack of political and social cohesion. More lax ethical and legal codes will create conditions for these states to eclipse the United States in areas such as nanotechnology and to forge relationships with resource-rich regimes that America shuns for political and human rights violations.

The potential for Asian giants such as India and China to participate in globalization (not only through new products, but also through new business models) means that the West may have to compete with these states for influence in Latin America, Africa, and Central Asia—a modern-day version of the

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Locals gather at U.S.-supported youth center in Goma, Republic of Congo

UN (Marie Frechon)

“Great Game.” Competition for influence is most apparent in Latin America. For example, China, Iran, and Russia have forged ties over energy interests in South America, particularly with Venezuela. Of all the foreign powers with hands in the Western Hemisphere, China appears to concern the United States most. Driven by population growth and increased standards of living, China has looked to Africa and Latin America in its global search for energy. Beijing has invested almost \$4 billion in infrastructure projects in Bolivia and Venezuela since 1999, partly to secure access to energy.¹⁶ In January 2007, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation announced that it planned to spend \$2.21 billion for a 45 percent stake in an offshore Nigerian oil field.¹⁷ As Phillip Saunders has written, “China’s [foreign direct investment] and development assistance efforts are modest compared with U.S., European Union, and Japanese programs, but China uses them effectively and strategically to advance its interests.”¹⁸ Saunders cites the relative U.S. deprioritization of Latin America as part of the reason why China’s modest efforts at securing ties have been successful.

Window of Opportunity. Although part of China’s motivation for reaching out to Latin America is its own population-driven need for resources, demographic trends within Latin America suggest that other major global players may be drawn to the region for what its population can offer. Most states within Latin America are in or are entering the demographic window of opportunity, or demographic bonus. During this time, the age structure shifts so there are more workers relative to dependents, both old and young. This age structure emerges when a state has had an extended period of lowered fertility, but not for so long that there are too few new workers entering the workforce (as in Japan today). The bonus comes from the fact that throughout this age structure, the state receives more in productivity from workers than it pays out to dependents in benefits—when people produce more than they consume. Experts argue that between a quarter and two-fifths of the rapid economic growth in East Asia between 1965 and 1990 was a result of favorable demography, when the working-age population of these states grew around four times faster than the youngest and oldest cohorts.¹⁹ Now, China, Japan, and South Korea are all global powers in their own right. But age structure is not enough; states need sound policies to capitalize

on working-age population growth. According to the United Nations:

*If societies invest in health and education and job creation, the resulting economic gains will improve the overall quality of life and reduce the burden of supporting older populations in the future. But failure to create new jobs for growing populations, and to reduce existing unemployment, may lead to social unrest and instability.*²⁰

South Korea and China have capitalized especially well on their demography. According to an assessment by the Population Reference Bureau, “Strong educational systems and greater international trade enabled several national economies to absorb this ‘boom’ generation into its workforce.”²¹ States with an abundance of workers and favorable political climates attract investment and boost a state’s standing in the international system. Though Latin America has not yet shown the same promise as East Asia during its boom time, it has the potential to be strategically important, and greater attention and investment there now could yield benefits—such as increased

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coalition contributions—in the future. The United States should try to capitalize on and promote these states’ economic, political, and social capacities in order to foster regional growth and stability.

U.S. Options. As mentioned, the United States has the ability, with foresight, to position itself to strengthen its relationships with rising powers that will have greater future capabilities. Demography is an influential driver of those capabilities and is thus a useful tool for assessing alliances. With most of the Western and East Asian powers aging on the horizon and Latin America and the Middle East continuing to grow, centers of economic growth and productivity could shift to more populous states, with younger labor pools, if the domestic investment climate is favorable. The United States has been focusing on China’s growth, but over the next several decades, India’s influence is likely to grow relative to China’s as the latter ages after 2025. This assumes that India is able to seize the opportunities of its anticipated favorable demographic future: lowered fertility and a greater number of workers relative to dependents.²² For India, success requires solid governance and an ability to capitalize on opportunities by developing solid policies.

At a minimum, the United States can choose to view the development of Asia and Latin America as aiding economic globalization and welcome the increases in standards of



living likely to accompany them. These states will have a greater capacity to fight poverty and disease in their own countries and defend their own borders and, as integrated members of the global economy, will have a greater stake in the continuation of a peaceful economic system.

Military Manpower. The military is directly affected by changes in fertility and mortality rates because these rates drive both allies' and adversaries' available military manpower. States facing demographic problems in the next couple of decades generally fall into one of three categories that characterize their manpower issues: too sick, too many, or too few. Some states have populations that will be too sick—for example, Russia and most African states will face a shortage of healthy males.

In Russia, the number of males turning 18 is projected to decrease by 50 percent over the next 10 to 15 years.²³ More importantly, those cohorts in their 20s and 30s, who are normally some of the most productive members of a society, are experiencing extremely high death rates from accidents, alcohol, and heart disease. Even within the Russian military, from January to September 2003, 1,200 soldiers died in noncombat situations, mostly from accidents, carelessness, bullying, and suicide.²⁴ The implications of a sick Russian force are unclear, but this decline could cause a restructuring of the military, which has historically boasted strong ground forces. At one end of the spectrum of responses, Russian leadership may feel the need to overcompensate for personnel weaknesses by relying more on nuclear weapons and on nonmilitary means of wielding power, like leveraging energy resources. On the other end, a militarily weakened Russia may be powerless against fissures, as in Chechnya, or exploitation of its resources, perhaps by China. The ascendant economic and political strength of the latter could shift the regional balance of power even further away from Russia. Putin, while recognizing that Russia's declining population is a problem, seems to be focusing on raising the birthrate, which only addresses half of the problem; the high death rate of the working-age population is equally detrimental.

HIV/AIDS has been the primary culprit of Africa's weakened military-age population. According to researchers at the Worldwatch Institute, "Soldiers are among the most vulnerable to the disease, and in many countries HIV infection rates are several times higher in the military than among civilians."²⁵ In Zimbabwe and Cameroon, infection rates are three to

four times higher for the military than for the civilian population.²⁶ Several factors make the military community particularly vulnerable to high rates of infection: lengthy periods away from home and family, a risk-seeking culture, preponderance of personnel within the greatest at-risk ages of 15 to 24 years, and access to money for prostitutes and illicit drugs.²⁷ One security implication is that these rates could affect military preparedness. Especially concerning to the United States is the potential effect on African peacekeeping forces. Another consequence is that a high rate of HIV/AIDS in the military can affect state stability. Radhika Sarin states, "For nations that are already politically unstable, even the perception of a weakened military can make them susceptible to an internal coup d'état or enemy attack."²⁸

A separate manpower issue is that some states will have too many people to deal with adequately. Several Middle Eastern states will face an overabundance of youth, with the military one of the few outlets for employment. In these states, the military is often an extension of the welfare state. For example, the problem of "too many" has been acute in Iraq. Before disbanding in 2003, the Iraqi military was the primary employer of young men. Today, without that guarantee of employment, those young men are susceptible to insurgent recruitment. As the *Washington Post* reported, "U.S. and Iraqi officials acknowledge that every

posture, which thus far has realigned the Armed Forces from their traditional locations within Germany, requires aging states to supply more of their own ground forces as their recruiting pools shrink. South Korea and Japan, for instance, will be relying more on their own manpower in lieu of U.S. forces even as they age. Technology can fill part of the gap, but these militaries will still feel the effects of fewer soldiers.

Key Trend 2: Migration

As with the youth bulge, understanding the implications of migration can help defense planners anticipate future conflicts. Mass migration can alter a country's religious, ethnic, gender, age, and cultural landscape within a much shorter time than can birth and death cycles. The ability of mass migration to change a country's status quo means that it has the potential to instigate conflict, or at least create divisions. This conflict, in turn, drives migration. In Central Asia and the Middle East, movement of people potentially upsets a delicate demographic balance among tribes and religious sects. For example, the United Nations Refugee Agency reports that over 2,000 Iraqis seek refuge in Syria every day and estimates that there are over 2 million Iraqi refugees in the Middle East.³¹ The large influx of Iraqis has increased competition for scarce resources—jobs and services—and strained the

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young man without work is a potential recruit for insurgents who pay as little as \$50 to people who plant explosives on a highway or shoot a policeman."²⁹ Unless the state has the capacity to absorb and provide for the working-age population, that population can be a threat rather than an asset.

Finally, some states will have too few young people. As discussed earlier, Europe and Japan will face a smaller pool from which to recruit. According to the European Defence Agency, Europe's armed forces recruiting pool, which consists of those between ages 16 and 30, will fall 15 percent by 2025.³⁰ Though this is only a small contraction, recruitment will likely be more expensive at a time when defense budgets are already threatened by entitlement promises made to an aging population. A higher recruiting expense might mean that aging states increasingly turn to technology instead of manpower. The new U.S. global

capacity of states to meet the needs of their citizens and the refugees within their borders. In a worst-case scenario, the change in religious and ethnic balance, coupled with competition over resources, could spark conflict and destabilize regimes.

An oft-cited example of the security implications of migration and fertility is that of Israeli Jews and Arabs. The differential growth of these two groups is partly due to a near cessation of migration to Israel, combined with low birthrates of most Jewish Israelis and high birthrates of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs. Some argue that differential growth is projected to make Israel a majority Arab state in the next couple of decades, placing Israel's identity as a Jewish homeland at risk. Such a transition would not likely be peaceful, as the Jewish Israelis in power would almost certainly resist this shift, leading to an escalation of the current conflict.³²

Another challenge associated with large-scale migration is that refugee camps often become sanctuaries for militia groups and deeply radicalized communities (for example, Pakistan). An article by Kenneth Pollack and Daniel Byman described some of these challenges in the context of current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to the authors, former tribal leaders often incite their followers to violence to compensate for the loss of their traditional base of power.³³ Experiences in Afghanistan demonstrate that just removing tribal leaders from official positions does not guarantee that their influence and ability to cause havoc will be blocked.

Immigration to the United States has gained international attention as well. While Americans debate the extent to which Muslim immigration and integration in Europe will change European domestic and foreign policy, Europeans are debating similar questions in the context of Latin American immigration into the United States. Many allies wonder whether a growing Latin American minority in the United States will influence U.S. foreign policy southward and away from Europe. Their reservations underline that the United States needs not only to look at others' demographic patterns, but also to consider how its own demographic trends are perceived and analyzed abroad.

Despite the connection of migration to conflict under some circumstances, migration driven by economic factors tends to be beneficial to both the sending and receiving countries.³⁴ Migration fuels the global economy by efficiently distributing labor and provides opportunities for citizens to gain skills, receive education, and provide remittances to family back home. Immigration also has helped mitigate the effects of population aging in the United States. Historically, conflict and economic change are the greatest drivers of mass migration. Mapping turbulent regions can help planners anticipate future waves of migration and their potential impact on the landscape of sending and receiving countries. Additionally, we can expect that push-and-pull economic factors, enhanced by globalization, will continue to drive south-to-north migration as well as population shifts between rapidly and slowly developing states in the global south as migrants seek a better way of life.³⁵

Key Trend 3: Urbanization

Urbanization—movement of people from sparsely settled rural to densely

populated urban areas—is one trend likely to define the next 30 years. The number of urban residents worldwide is expected to rise from 2.9 billion in 2000 to 5 billion by 2030, with virtually all growth occurring in developing countries. Humanitarian disasters associated with or exacerbated by urbanization can result in disarray. The United States or its allies could be asked to provide stability in either case. U.S. defense planners should be aware of the likely increased demand for stability operations and humanitarian assistance arising from the vulnerability of massive coastal urbanization to natural disasters. Additionally, the squalor of contemporary urban slums brings a greater death toll than even large-scale weather or seismic-related natural disasters. According to the United Nations, “1.6 million people die annually as a result of poor sanitation and hygiene—a number 5 times greater than the deaths in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.”³⁶ One of the biggest problems is that most cities, especially in the developing world, lack the structural, political, and social capacity

lives in areas that were affected at least once by a natural disaster such as a drought or an earthquake between 1980 and 2000.³⁸

By 2015, the world may contain as many as 22 megacities, defined as cities with populations of over 10 million.³⁹ While Tokyo will remain the largest, Mexico City, Mumbai (India), and Lagos (Nigeria) will grow rapidly. But urbanization will take different forms. For some states, it will bring technology, education, and health care to the masses. For others, it will take the form of ever-expanding slums around city centers. The United Nations concludes, “If no preventive or remedial action is taken, [slums] may indeed come to characterize cities in many parts of the developing world.”⁴⁰ The most affected areas are sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Asia, and Western Asia. In its report, *State of the World's Cities 2006/7*, the United Nations argues that the locus of poverty is actually shifting from rural to urban areas as a general trend, and the assumption that rural dwellers are comparatively worse off than their urban counterparts is incorrect.

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to meet challenges associated with natural disasters.³⁷ The frequency of these calamities—combined with the migration trend—means that defense planners are wise to prepare for those contingencies. For example, at least 75 percent of the world's population

Urban dwellers are especially disadvantaged because of the prevalence of urban slums. For example, the growth of Lagos, the world's fastest growing megacity, is outpacing urban planners and leaving the city rife with corruption, sewage, and pollution.



Nicaraguan children wait to receive meals as part of country's "Zero Hunger" program

AP/Wide World Photo (Esteban Felix)

One of the challenges of urbanization for the defense community is increased internal instability. Urbanization in states with a preponderance of youth is dangerous because these states' proclivity for violence and rebellion can be exacerbated by unmet expectations in overcrowded cities. For the Department of Defense, this instability could challenge the ability of the United States to build partnership capacity, one of the key goals articulated in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review. If America wants to build the capacity of partners in the Middle East, Africa, and West Asia to protect their own sovereignty (and thus decrease their vulnerability to insurgents and terrorists), urbanization poses a problem because of its destabilizing effects. Urban instability also translates to a greater requirement for U.S. forces to operate in urban environments and means that police and military functions will increasingly overlap.

Rural-Urban Tension. Slums are not the only security problem associated with urbanization. Increased competition between urban and rural interests over uneven distribution of state resources can also be internally destabilizing by causing fissures within the state. In China, "in 2001, per capita disposable income for urban residents was \$829 compared to \$278 for rural residents. In 1987, the income of the average urban household was almost twice that of the average rural household; today it is almost three times higher."⁴¹ These urban-rural fissures are partly responsible for China's increasing internal unrest, including protests over the lack of rural services. The Chinese government has recently acknowledged this connection and, seeing it as a threat to the regime, has begun several initiatives to raise the rural standard of living.⁴²

Another result of urban-rural differences is that city agendas may increasingly diverge from those of the state as a whole, creating a sort of city-state system similar to present-day Hong Kong. For example, within Mexico, the extreme imbalance in wealth between the rich north and the poor south has fomented internal strife that is at times violent. In the southern state of Chiapas, per capita income was only 18 percent of that in Mexico City in 2000.⁴³ These overt inequalities have fueled the Zapatista movement.⁴⁴ Given that China and Mexico are two key states for U.S. foreign policy, an understanding of how demographics are likely to affect their stability is essential for defense planners.

Connections to Terrorism. As another unintended consequence, urbanization can

facilitate terrorism in two ways. First, since urbanization concentrates people and centers of business and productivity, it allows terrorists to create a big impact with one violent stroke. The economic aftershocks are often the most damaging. According to the United Nations, "New York City lost an estimated \$110 billion in infrastructure, buildings, jobs and other assets in the wake of the World Trade Center attacks. . . . Global gross domestic product . . . dipped by 0.8% and some 10 million more people joined the ranks of the world's poor."⁴⁵ Second, the deprivation of urban slums can breed discontent and motivate terrorists; the ungoverned areas of urban slums can be an excellent place for radicals to hide and plot.

If, as suggested above, urbanization does lead to civil strife, it can burden governments, strain their administrative capacity, and erode public support for weak or unresponsive regimes.

Despite challenges, urbanization is not inherently bad. Its effects are highly dependent on the context in which it takes

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place. When states have the capacity to build infrastructure, citizens in urban areas tend to be better educated and have greater access to health care. Urbanization has helped make the Chinese economy one of the most competitive in the world. On the other hand, urbanization in Sudan has contributed to pervasive violence and aided the spread of disease. This disparity demonstrates that the effects of urbanization can be mitigated by increased state capacity.

Recommendations

Because of the way demographics—combined with other trends—will have the potential to change politics at both the great power and the substate levels, the Department of Defense must plan for multiple demographics-related contingencies. Four recommendations are outlined below.

Continue to Plan for Both Traditional and Irregular Warfare. States with weak demographic futures may rely on nuclear weapons

or other weapons of mass destruction to secure national interests, altering U.S. deterrence capabilities. Traditional interstate conflict remains viable because economic development, combined with population pressures, will increase competition between states over resources. Yet the same competition domestically could lead to greater intrastate violence, with the potential to draw in the United States and its allies. Increased likelihood of civil conflict in youthful or urban slum areas will sustain the U.S. requirement for stability and counterterrorism operations in a wide range of environments.

Use Demography to Identify Future Hotspots. Demography can allow the United States and others to preposition humanitarian relief assets near unstable regions, giving ample time for personnel to acquire the linguistic and cultural expertise needed to operate in these regions. America should also be aware that instability stemming from demographic tensions could damage our partnerships in the Middle East. For example, the diplomatic and financial support that Saudi Arabia and Qatar offer the United States could be hampered by the projected near-doubling of their populations.

Increase Awareness of Domestic U.S. Demographic Trends. Demographic change within America could affect defense planning as well. While it is possible that a growing Latin minority in the United States could drive political change that orients U.S. foreign policy away from traditional areas such as Europe and toward Latin America, the perception that it could do so may be even more important. U.S. demographic trends could cause American allies to question the Nation's resolve or ability to fulfill its alliance and other defense commitments. Other states are watching demographic trends in the United States for their own defense planning. By incorporating analysis of U.S. demographic trends, and understanding how states perceive those trends, American defense planners can develop the right assumptions to enhance strategic planning.

Use Demography to Help Direct Foreign Assistance. While demography is useful for pointing out potential problems, it also highlights contemporary issues that demand urgent attention. Countries dealing with problems stemming from urbanization would benefit from foreign assistance to help manage slum areas and prevent these areas from becoming terrorist breeding grounds. Likewise, Latin American states in the

window of opportunity would benefit from assistance designed to help them capitalize on their favorable demography.

It is not only individuals who bear the costs or reap the benefits of their fertility decisions; the externalities affect society as a whole, as well as neighboring states and even the international system. Given the power of age structure changes, migration, and urbanization to shape capabilities and instigate conflict or cooperation, the United States should account for the potential influence of these population trends in its strategic planning to secure its privileged position in the global community. **JFQ**

NOTES

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²¹ Kent and Haub.

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²⁴ Stephen Dalziel, "Death Rate High in Russian Army," BBC, September 13, 2003.

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²⁹ Jonathan Finer and Omar Fekeiki, "Tackling Another Major Challenge in Iraq: Unemployment," *The Washington Post*, June 20, 2005.

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³¹ UN Refugee Agency, "Syria and Jordan Still Wait for Help Despite Pledges Made at Iraq Meeting,"

available at <www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/iraq?page=news&id=468e56124>.

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³⁴ UN, "International Migration and Development: Report of the Secretary-General," 2006, 13, available at <www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/>.

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⁴⁴ Howard and Homer-Dixon.

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