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Policy Memo Three: Climate Refugee Challenge

(740 Words)

Summary

The potential refugee movement caused by the rising sea levels is a genuine concern that we must be prepared for. Due to our proximity to the island nation of Maldives, we may face various problems in dealing with the waves of refugees. Although a humanitarian approach may improve our international image, we firmly believe that securing our nation's interests must be our top priority. To guarantee our interests in preparing for a global climate crisis, we believe the possible policies are: accepting an equal amount of refugees as other nations or develop a program to selectively accept migrants. Of the two, the best policy is to develop a program that will selectively accept migrants based on their background. In the case of a climate disaster, Maldives is not going to be the only nation receiving the impact. We would work with the international community to hopefully reduce the damage, but we will need to ensure our citizen's safety and wellbeing, pushing to preserve stability.

Background

Due to the rising sea level, The nation of Maldives could be the first to submerge(Mengel et al.). India is one of the closest neighbors adjacent to the Maldives, and we are expected to see an influx of Maldivian refugees. The Maldives has already started a campaign to raise international awareness. However, the sea level is still

increasing at an alarming rate(UNHCR,2020). The UNHRC ruled that countries may not return climate refugees, but the precise terms still need to be defined.

Analysis

The collective effort of the international community is required to prevent or delay the problem with the rising sea level. Despite our need for industrialization, we are still trying to work along with an environmental protectionism agenda. Especially in southern India, we have incorporated the "low-carbon rural development" strategy(EDF). We are actively working with international funds to improve our sustainability. With our effort in place, we clearly show our willingness for international cooperation to limit climate change. However, we can not rely on cooperation; liberalism may have faith in cooperative actions, but in a realism perspective, each nation is looking out for their security and benefit(Stephen M. Walt, 1998). If the collaborative efforts failed, we must have plans prepared to deal with massive waves of refugees.

Option One: Receive the refugees to our quota. We will aim to receive as many refugees as other nations, but no more than the quota. We are not the only nation that contributed to global warming, and our proximity will not be a reason for us to take more. We will, however, help facilitate transferring the refugees to other nations. We will allow refugees that are out of status to safely use our airports, docks, and other means of transportation to reach their destination country. We will avoid providing facilities for refugees that are in the process of obtaining resettlement. Allowing such an area to exist will risk destabilizing the local community.

We may suffer public opinion damage from exercising this plan. We are one of the only destinations that Maldivians can reach in a short period. The displaced refugees will likely come to us for help; refusing them when our quota is full may be accused of inhumane by the international community.

Option Two: Allow selected Maldivians to live and work in India. We hope to launch the program before the submergence of Maldives. The program will look into the applicants' background and select skilled workers to bring to our nation. By starting this program ahead of time, we could reduce the total amount of refugee influxes later. The selected Maldivians will have time to assimilate into our culture, giving both the newcomers and the locals time to adapt. Moreover, allowing Maldivians to apply for work in India will show our goodwill for helping them, which can be maneuvered into our extended influence over the Maldives in times of need.

Although the relationship between us and the Maldives have been close, this program can be perceived as a way to steal the skilled workers from the Maldives. Additionally, the population movement between India and the Maldives already exists and an additional program may feel redundant.

Recommendation

The submergence of the Maldives is a future event. Until it happens, nothing is guaranteed. In the meanwhile, we look into how we can maximize our interest in this situation. Absorbing the skilled workforce and establishing more influence over the Maldives fits our priority of securing our national interests.

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