

Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)

By Kelly M. Greenhill

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At first glance, the U.S. decision to escalate the war in Vietnam in the mid-1960s, China's position on North Korea's nuclear program in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the EU resolution to lift what remained of the arms embargo against Libya in the mid-2000s would appear to share little in common. Yet each of these seemingly unconnected and far-reaching foreign policy decisions resulted at least in part from the exercise of a unique kind of coercion, one predicated on the intentional creation, manipulation, and exploitation of real or threatened mass population movements.

In *Weapons of Mass Migration*, Kelly M. Greenhill offers the first systematic examination of this widely deployed but largely unrecognized instrument of state influence. She shows both how often this unorthodox brand of coercion has been attempted (more than fifty times in the last half century) and how successful it has been (well over half the time). She also tackles the questions of who employs this policy tool, to what ends, and how and why it ever works. Coercers aim to affect target states' behavior by exploiting the existence of competing political interests and groups, Greenhill argues, and by manipulating the costs or risks imposed on target state populations.

This "coercion by punishment" strategy can be effected in two ways: the first relies on straightforward threats to overwhelm a target's capacity to accommodate a refugee or migrant influx; the second, on a kind of norms-enhanced political blackmail that exploits the existence of legal and normative commitments to those fleeing violence, persecution, or privation. The theory is further illustrated and tested in a variety of case studies from Europe, East Asia, and North America. To help potential targets better respond to?and protect themselves against?this kind of unconventional predation, *Weapons of Mass Migration* also offers practicable policy recommendations for scholars, government officials, and anyone concerned about the true victims of this kind of coercion?the displaced themselves.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Weapons of Mass Migration simply altered the way I viewed the flow of peoples. Countries with lower standards of behavior can use the threat of forcing their people to leave, which would send a flow of unwanted migrants/refugees to democracies that would then have to deal with them. It is very much an asymmetric approach for weaker authoritarian regimes to mess with advanced democracies. Is this policy relevant? You betcha, as democracies such as the United States have to figure out how to react to these kinds of threats. It certainly pressured France and Italy in different ways when Qaddafi was threatening to send refugees to Europe."--Stephen M. Saideman, Foreign Policy*

"IR theorists, foreign policy analysts and migration, security studies, and human rights scholars will all find this book a valuable addition to their scholarship."--*Political Studies Review*

"A new, authoritative look at forced displacement, skillfully linking politics to migrations. This combination moves beyond migration as a single focused topic and connects it to choices within foreign policy. Any student of demography, conflict, and politics will be well served by this exploration of the interaction between government control, migration, and the willingness of populations to move."--*Political Science Quarterly*

"*Weapons of Mass Migration* is the most theoretically developed and well-researched study of the strategic uses of emigration to date. It not only is a valuable contribution to the literature on forced migration but speaks to broader themes in IR. Greenhill highlights how weak actors use forced migration as a coercive tool, how humanitarian norms interact with tangible costs, and how actors use political discord within their targets to their advantage. This book places the study of migration squarely within the field of IR."--*International Studies Review*

"An innovative and beautifully written analysis of how, and to what extent, refugee flows are exploited by states in order to affect policy options taken and decisions made by their counterparts."--*Journal of Refugee Studies*

"Greenhill explains the use of state-engineered migration as a tool of coercive statecraft in the post-World War II era. She rightly points out that this rather insidious means of political suasion has been used numerous times over the relatively short period examined, and with a striking degree of success. *Weapons of Mass Migration* is innovative, well written, rigorously researched, and timely. It is both theoretically innovative and policy relevant, and will likely spur several new paths for IR research and migration studies."--*Perspectives on Politics*

"Kelly M. Greenhill's *Weapons of Mass Migration shines a bright light on strategically engineered migration. And this is, unfortunately, no minor issue. The reader is astounded by how many times states have engaged in such violent action. Greenhill gives the subject the attention it deserves, skillfully unpacks why some states engage in forced migration while others do not, discovers interesting theoretical twists, and derives tractable policy recommendations."--Michael Barnett, Harold Stassen Chair at the Hubert H. Humphrey School, University of Minnesota*

"Kelly M. Greenhill's fine analysis gives a double meaning to the notion of weapons of the weak: tin-pot dictators try to get bargaining leverage over neighboring democracies by threatening to swamp them with refugees. This has happened on average once a year over the past half century. Those interested in refugees or in creative bargaining tactics will be fascinated by this tale."--Jack Snyder, Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Relations, Columbia University

"Weapons of Mass Migration is a truly valuable contribution. This incisive book highlights an unconventional and nonmilitary method of state-to-state coercion--why and how weak states increasingly deploy the threat or reality of 'strategic engineered migration' to achieve political goals that would otherwise be unattainable. The book argues convincingly that this underappreciated form of interstate 'political blackmail' is both more frequent and more effective than commonly supposed
. Its most likely targets are liberal democracies whose human rights commitments and diverse political interest groups can be exploited to impose what the author terms 'hypocrisy costs' upon any government that resists such coerced outmigration. Yet even authoritarian states such as modern China are vulnerable, as the North Koreans have shown. This book unveils an effective weapon of asymmetric statecraft that has been 'hiding in plain sight.' It deserves attention from all those interested in emerging patterns of international relations and human rights."--Michael S. Teitelbaum, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and Harvard Law School

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About the Author
Kelly M. Greenhill is Associate Professor at Tufts University and Research Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. She is author of Weapons of Mass Migration (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)--winner of the 2011 International Studies Association's Best Book of the Year Award--and co-author and co-editor of Sex, Drugs and Body Counts: The Politics of Numbers in Global Crime and Conflict (Cornell University Press) and The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics, 8th ed. Greenhill's research has also appeared in a variety of other venues, including the journals International Security, Security Studies, Civil Wars, and International Migration, in media outlets such as the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Foreign Affairs, the International Herald Tribune, and the British Broadcasting Company, and in briefs prepared for the U.S. Supreme Court and other organs of the U.S. government. Greenhill is currently completing a new monograph, a cross-national, multi-method study that explores why, when, and under what conditions, contested, "extra-factual" sources of political information--such as rumors, conspiracy theories, myths and propaganda--materially influence the development and conduct of states' foreign and defense policies. Outside of academia, Greenhill serves as a consultant to agencies of the US government and to other governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations.

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