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Intelligence Squared U.S.**The U.S. should let in 100,000 Syrian refugees**

For the Motion: Robert Ford, David Miliband

Against the Motion: David Frum, Jessica Vaughn

Moderator: John Donovan

AUDIENCE RESULTS**Before the debate:****52% FOR****12% AGAINST****36% UNDECIDED****After the debate:****72% FOR****21% AGAINST****8% UNDECIDED**

Start Time: (18:46:45)

So, let's please now welcome to the stage the co-founder of Intelligence Squared U.S., Mr. Bob Rosenkranz.

[applause]

So, Bob, you know, it occurs to me, and we were chatting a little bit about it before, the city in which we're doing this debate, where several -- not very many miles in one direction -- we have the Statue of Liberty. Not very far from that, we have the World Trade Center towers that are not there anymore. And then we have a debate in which those two things are emblems, in a way and some people's minds, from opposite polls, of what we're talking about tonight.

Robert Rosenkranz:

Well, I -- that's a very interesting analogy. And obviously, the Statue of Liberty is -- resonates enormously with me personally. My grandparents came to this country in the 1890s. They were welcomed at Ellis Island. And I've had a life in America that I never could have had in any other country

18:47:45

So, I'm extremely grateful personally. And I think many people in the audience have had this experience of being of immigrant background, in one, or two generations, or three, and feeling that the welcoming arm of America has just been fantastic. On the other hand, the World Trade Center does conjure up some of the risks associated with, you know, terrorism. And a lot of that terrorism, of course, is associated with certain countries in the Middle East.

John Donovan:

And as you listen in tonight's debate, what are you listening for the debaters to try to get into?

Robert Rosenkranz:

Well, I come at this from a couple of aspects of my own background. So, I run an insurance company as my day job. And I'm very, very cognizant about risk and about statistics. And while obviously there are risks associated with the admission of any group of refugees, I'm going to be listening to hear those risks quantified and put in the perspective of other risks that we take every day.

18:48:58

I also have a background as an economist. And -- which, for me, means that I'm going to be listening with a view toward efficiency as well.

John Donovan:

[affirmative]

Robert Rosenkranz:

Because it's clear that there are going to be very substantial costs incurred if we were to admit a large number -- 100,000 -- Syrian refugees. And from an efficiency standpoint, I'm going to wonder if whatever the costs are could produce better -- greater benefits if applied in some other fashion. In other words, whether the benefit should go to just those 100,000 people who are lucky enough to get here or whether there might be a more cost-effective way of using those same financial resources to produce a better result than otherwise.

18:49:53

John Donovan:

The last thing is this number, 100,000. We picked this number, 100,000, to be emblematic of a meaningful target. In other words, the debaters are not required to argue 99,000 versus 101,000. But it's our way, really, of saying a lot more than we now have on the books.

Robert Rosenkranz:

Yeah. Well, I think it was also kind of -- it seemed like a division. I mean, there were people who are going to feel like it's way too many.

John Donovan:
Right.

Robert Rosenkranz:
And there are people who are going to feel like it's not nearly enough. But it seemed like a useful point to draw a line between the pro and the con.

John Donovan:
All right. I thought that was sharing. Thanks, Bob Rosenkranz. We've got four great debaters, so let's welcome them to the stage.

[applause]

Robert Rosenkranz:
Thank you.

[applause]

John Donovan:
All right, this is one of those moments when I will right away ask for your spontaneous applause to begin the program.

18:50:57

[applause]

Morally, legally, historically, politically, it has always been the case, since this great nation began, to regulate the passage of people across its borders. But the central question asked by our immigration policy has come down to just three words, "Who gets in?" And now we are asking it again as we all see a wave of men, women, and children departing Syria by the millions, a Syria that, no question, is a hell right now -- all of these people looking to get someplace else and someplace safe. And should the United States be that place for some of them? We have said, "We will take 10,000," but is that enough when there are so many more. Or is that too many already for a nation fearful of terrorism rooted in the Middle East?

18:51:55

Well, this sounds like the makings of a debate. So let's have it, "Yes," or, "No," to this statement, "The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees," a debate from Intelligence Squared U.S. We are at the Kaufman Music Center in New York City with four superbly

qualified debaters who will argue two against two for and against this motion, "The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees." As always, our debate will go in three rounds and then our live audience here in New York City votes to choose the winner. And only one side wins. Let's meet our debaters with the motion being, "The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees." Welcoming the team arguing for that motion, first, ladies and gentlemen, greet Robert Ford.

[applause]

And, Robert Ford, you're a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute.

18:52:49

You have had a long career in the Foreign Service, including this very relevant fact for us in this debate: You were the last officially named full U.S. ambassador to Syria. You arrived there in 2011, three weeks before the uprising began. Did you have any sense at that time what was coming?

Robert Ford:

We expected that there was going to be a conflict, but the initial demonstrations in 2011 were, for the most part, very peaceful. There were only a few scattered incidents of violence. But the numbers were swelling very rapidly. We soon had hundreds of thousands of peaceful marchers in cities across Syria. So we knew that the country was hurtling towards major change.

John Donovan:

Thank you very much. And please tell us who your debating partner is.

Robert Ford:

It's my pleasure, my honor, to be on a team with David Miliband.

18:53:47

John Donovan:

Ladies and gentlemen, David Miliband.

[applause]

David, you are also arguing for the motion that "The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees." You are a former United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I know everybody here knows that, but I'll say it anyway, that is the equivalent of the Secretary of State. You are now president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee. The IRC oversees humanitarian relief operations in more than 30 countries

afflicted by war. IRC is also involved in settling refugees here in the United States. David, how many Syrians have you been able to assist?

David Miliband:

We've helped 415 Syrians over the four years of the Civil War out of the 10,000 a year that we resettle from all countries across the U.S.

John Donovan:

Okay, interesting and relevant data point for us. Ladies and gentlemen, the team arguing for the motion.

18:54:46

[applause]

That motion again, "The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees," two debaters arguing against the motion. First, please welcome David Frum.

[applause]

David, you are a senior editor at *The Atlantic*. You're chairman of the board of trustees of the U.K. think tank, Policy Exchange. You wrote speeches for George W. Bush. Last fall, in an interview discussing the refugee crisis itself, you said that we were going through what you called a "Princess Diana moment," which means what?

David Frum:

A Princess Diana moment is a moment of intense emotionality that can override reason and judgment, and it has a kind of subtly coercive element against those who might otherwise be moved to say something different. I think I want to add one other element to that generous introduction you gave me, which is that I was born in Toronto, Canada, and I'm a naturalized U.S. citizen. So, I have seen the migration system from the inside, as well as as a policy analyst.

18:55:48

John Donovan:

Well, may I say welcome to America.

David Frum:

Thank you very much.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

Ladies and gentlemen, David Frum. And your partner?

[applause]

David Frum:

I am so pleased to be here with Jessica Vaughan, who is one of America's leading authorities on the costs of migration and resettlement.

John Donovan:

And ladies and gentlemen, Jessica Vaughan.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Also arguing against the motion The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees, you are right now Director of Policy Studies for the Center for Immigration Studies. You also had a career in Foreign Service, but to the centers work. Based on its research, it holds a policy it calls low-immigration, but pro-immigrant and how does that vision translate to the Syrian situation?

Jessica Vaughn:

Oh, well, I think it does translate well because it's a reminder that we care about the people, but the numbers are also important, particularly the number of people and the number we admit is not necessarily the best yardstick for evaluating the success of a program.

18:56:50

John Donovan:

Okay. A little look ahead at your argument, I think. Ladies and gentlemen, the team arguing against the motion.

[applause]

Now this is a debate. You, our audience here in New York City will be asked to act as our judges by voting your position on this motion and what we want to do is register your opinion now as you come in off the street, so to speak, by going to the keypads at your seat and taking a look at key numbers one, two, and three and taking a look at the motion: The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees. If you agree with this motion at this point, we'd like you to press number one. If you disagree, push number two. And if you're undecided, which is a perfectly reasonable position, push number three. You can ignore the other keys and just -- you have to hold that keypad down until the screen lights up with the number that you've chosen. And you can correct an incorrectly

pushed button just by updating yourself and it will lock in your last vote by the time we lock out the system.

18:57:52

I dropped some papers so I am very briefly going to be right back.

[laughter]

I'm back.

[laughter]

[applause]

I just want to check that we can lock out the votes. Are we good with that? Okay. Good. The votes are locked out. Now I want to explain what happens with that vote. Later in the evening, after you have heard all of the arguments, we're going to ask you to vote again and what we do is we give victory to the team whose results have proved most persuasive. So victory goes to the team whose numbers have moved the most in percentage point terms between the vote we just registered with you and the closing vote. So, again, I just want to make it clear it's the difference between the two votes. So you want to remember how you voted and I'm sure that you will. Okay. Let's move on to round one.

18:58:46

Round one are closing statements by each debater in turn. The motion is this: The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees. Speaking first in support of the motion I want to welcome David Miliband. He is a former U.K. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Now president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee or IRC, a term you'll hear a lot tonight, where he oversees humanitarian relief operations in more than 30 war-affected countries. Please welcome, ladies and gentlemen, David Miliband.

[applause]

David Miliband:

Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank Intelligence Squared for bringing us together tonight and I want to thank you and our opponents for coming here tonight to debate this vital topic. Our case for the motion rests on three pillars: that admitting 100,000 Syrian refugees to the United States is the right thing to do, that it's a practical thing to do, and that it's a smart thing to do.

18:59:45

It's the right thing to do not just because these are people in great need, but because the history of this country speaks to refugee resettlement as a core part of the American story. It will also transform obviously 100,000 lives and bring wider benefits to the U.S. Secondly, we will argue that it's a practical thing to do, because the U.S. has a proven, secure and effective system for refugee resettlement -- far, far better than the chaotic scenes you see in Europe at the moment. We will show tonight that there is no parallel between the boat loads of people arriving in Europe and the pipeline of admissions that exist in the United States. And the third thing is that we will show you it's a smart thing to do to support this motion, because the last thing that ISIS and other hatemongers around the world want is for the U.S. to be a beacon of hope and inclusion and a beacon of tolerance for the world.

19:00:41

The battle against extremism is fought not just by bombs and special forces. It's a battle of ideas and it's a battle of examples. And our greatest weapon is the living reality of communities that show how to cross boundaries of race, religion, and color. Support the motion and you will do what is right, what is practical, and what is smart. I want to explain how Ambassador Ford and I are going to share the work tonight. The International Rescue Committee has 2,000 staff working inside Syria today. We have 1,500 staff in the neighboring states of Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey. We also have 400 staff now in Greece, welcoming refugees as they come off the boats. And we also have 800 staff in 26 U.S. cities organizing refugee resettlement. Because of that, I'm going to use my opening statement to explain why refugee resettlement is a core part of a comprehensive approach to the Syrian catastrophe. And then we have the genuinely unique advantage of Ambassador Ford using all of his insight into the Middle East to show why significant refugee resettlement is secure, how refugees are the most vetted population to arrive in the United States, and also how refugee resettlement is an important part of the battle against ISIS.

19:02:02

Now, the Syria war shows few signs of ending. And the refugees desperately need help. Most of them are in the Middle East. And that's where most of the help is going. But for a minority, refugee resettlement is an essential part of the response. Let me explain why. Refugee resettlement in richer countries, safer countries, offers unique benefits. For those who are most vulnerable, for the kids with autism, for the people who have had their limbs blown off by barrel bombs, the care that is on offer in countries like this has no parallel. Secondly, and importantly, resettlement is essential, because countries like Lebanon and Jordan simply cannot cope with the millions of refugees that they have. Jordan is your second closest ally in the Middle East. It's a country of six million people. It has 650,000 refugees.

19:02:53

That is like the whole of Poland coming to America in the space of four years. They're dealing with it alone at the moment. And thirdly, resettlement is needed now, because an organized, legal route to hope in the U.S., as well as in Canada and Australia, will disempower the smugglers who are currently charging 1,200 euros for desperate people to get the six kilometers from Turkey to Greece. Now, no one is saying that the majority of Syrian refugees will end up coming to the U.S. No one is saying that refugee resettlement is an alternative to aid in the Middle East or will bring the war to the end. But resettlement of 100,000 refugees is important. And for goodness sake, if Australia can take 18,000, if Canada can take 25,000, if France can take 35,000, then the United States, 10 times the size of Canada, can take 100,000 refugees.

19:03:46

I can say this as a foreigner in this country who's working here. The U.S. has shown the world how to make refugee resettlement work. Get the kids into school. Teach the parents English. Get them a job. Get them on the path to citizenship. And you have patriotic and productive citizens. Don't just ask me. Ask Madeline Albright. Ask the founders of great companies around the country. Ask Elie Wiesel. Ask them and think of the contribution that they've made to the United States. The direct federal cost of services and benefits associated with resettling 100,000 refugees in this country -- let me tell you what it is. It's 1.4 cents per American per day. That's the direct federal cost of services and benefits. It's true that that doesn't include health care costs or school costs. But nor does it include the taxes that Syrians pay when they work. And let me give you figures from my organization. 415 Syrians resettled by the IRC. Our services show that last year, 8 out of 10 Syrians who we resettled were in work within six months of getting to the United States.

19:04:51

And there's one other unique resource of this country: Syrian-American communities across the country who are successful. The business people in San Diego, the doctors in Cleveland, the shopkeepers in New York -- there are Syrian-American communities ready to welcome and integrate more Syrians who come here. Our opponents will ask you tonight to shatter the American dream for 100,000 people in desperate need of hope. And we ask you to keep that dream alive. These people are sitting in Beirut, and they're sitting in Amman, and they're sitting in Istanbul. And they're asking themselves a simple question: "Does America stand for anything anymore?" We say it does. The motion affirms America's historic contribution to a world defined by respect, not retribution.

And ask yourself: Do a limited number of Syrian refugees need help and a fresh start in life? We say, "Yes." Has America got a good record of making a success of refugee resettlement? We say, "Yes."

19:05:53

And doesn't the battle against extremism require our countries to set an example of inclusion and integration? We say the answer to all these questions is a resounding "Yes." we don't say the policies are easy. They're not. They're not simple or easy. But they are clear. We urge you to support the motion with your head and your heart. Thank you very much indeed.

John Donovan:

Thank you, David Miliband.

[applause]

And that motion is: The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees. And here to make his opening statement against this motion, David Frum, Senior Editor at *The Atlantic* and Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Policy Exchange. Ladies and gentlemen, David Frum.

[applause]

David Frum:

Tonight, we debate how to respond to one of the most terrible humanitarian disasters of the post-Cold War era -- perhaps the very most terrible disaster of them all.

19:06:50

Human beings are at risk, are suffering, are dying, have died. As we convene tonight, the forces of Hezbollah and the Assad Regime are deliberately starving thousands of besieged people in the town of Madaya. All sides of this debate take these grim issues deeply and seriously to heart. What is to be done? At the time when this debate topic was proposed, in October, President Obama was mocking concerns about the Syrian refugees as fear of widows and orphans. Since then have come the coordinated mass sexual assaults by migrants and refugees in Cologne and other German cities. This past weekend, three Syrian refugees were arrested in Munich for attacking two German girls at a public school, raping one. The victims of sexual abuse by refugees and migrants in Germany, and Austria, and Sweden -- since the turn of the year -- now number nearly 1,000. The giddy mood of the fall has faded.

19:07:48

Almost two-thirds of Germans say their country has accepted too many refugees. And here in the United States, too, a new sobriety about Syrian refugees is taking hold. Jessica and I welcome tonight's debate as a step toward this new sobriety. Here's our

plan for tonight. I will open by arguing that mass resettlement of refugees in the Middle East is not in the American interest. When I say "mass," I mean mass. Clearly, there are individuals and families who need to be in the West, who have family connections, who belong to the small but real former Syrian urban elite. Many of them have actually already resettled themselves with friends and family here in the West. That is not who we are talking about tonight. Tonight we are talking about what is to be done with the very, very large numbers of Syrian refugees who do not have prior connections to the West, who are not -- who have no family, who are not connected to people here, and who lack the aptitudes and skills that would normally qualify them for the usual immigration processes.

19:08:54

Jessica will then continue the argument by demonstrating that mass resettlement isn't in the refugees' interests either, for one simple economic reason. It costs about 13 times as much to resettle one refugee family in the United States as it does to resettle them closer to home. We hope, tonight, that we can reason together. Yet, there are people -- not our opponents -- distinguished men of great accomplishment. But there are people urging mass resettlement of refugees to the West, who relied heavily on bullying and name-calling to make their case. Those who don't agree are cowards, or racists, or worse. The memory of the victims of the Nazi Holocaust has been invoked to justify policy that actually puts at even greater risk than already is the case the desperately imperiled last Jewish communities of Europe.

19:09:46

When Jessica and I speak to your reason and judgment, it is not because we lack compassion for those in danger and need. We'll show you policy alternatives for the crisis in Syria that meet every call of conscience. But policy must not be -- policy that is supported by untruths, by concealments, and epithets is no compassion at all. So, here are some truths. Despite the posters that remind us that Albert Einstein was once a refugee, the social, economic, and cultural gap between the global South and the global North, between the Middle East and the Middle West, is extremely wide and very difficult to cross. Before the Syrian Civil War began in 2010, the average Syrian had less than six years of formal schooling -- less even than Egypt, according to the -- less even than in Egypt, according to the U.N. Development Index. About one-fifth of Syrians made their living as agricultural laborers. Women were harshly subordinated.

19:10:44

Only about 13 percent of Syrian women worked outside the home, and their literacy levels were significantly lower than those of men. Pre-war Syria was a tribal society characterized by lawlessness, high levels of religious fundamentalism, and deep, deep sectarian animosities. It's often suggested that because the Syrian population has been

caught in the crossfire between ISIS and the Assad Regime, that, that population must, therefore, be unsympathetic to radical Islam. But rejecting ISIS, the demented and murderous ideology of ISIS, is not the same thing as accepting liberal democracy or the equality of women and gays or coexistence with Christians and Jews. We've seen in the reception centers of Germany that Syrian-Sunni Muslim refugees have violently attacked Christians, the Yazidis, and people they perceive as gay. *The New York Times* reported on January 2nd on the brutal abuse of Syrian refugee women by their husbands and family members, including the unwillingness of many refugee men to allow their wives to attend classes unsupervised or even to go out once a week for a walk in an all-female group.

19:11:51

We may be told that migrants to the United States will be screened more carefully than the no-questions-asked approach taken in Germany and across Europe. As Jessica will show in her remarks, this talk is empty. But what needs to be stressed even more is that screening is impossible. Radicalization is increasingly something that happens in the West among the second generation of Middle Eastern migrants, those who will be born here. It was people born in the West who carried out the Paris massacres, who murdered the editorial staff at *Charlie Hebdo*, and the shoppers at Paris's Kosher Hyper Cacher, who shot up the Brussels Jewish Community Center and a Jewish School in Toulouse. It was a man born in Chicago, Illinois, who committed mass slaughter in San Bernardino. To date, the United States has suffered far less from this internal self-radicalization than Europe has suffered. Americans owe their greater security to a very practical fact.

19:12:49

While the United States has experienced a large surge of low-skilled migration from countries in this hemisphere, its migration from the greater Middle East has been more carefully selected. Migrants who bring with them the skills and values that lead to success in the United States are likely to raise successful and well-integrated children. Those who don't, won't. We have a very relevant precedent for what's proposed with the Syrians, America's experience with Somalian refugees. Since 1990, the United States has admitted the same -- about the same round number of Somalian refugees that is proposed for Syria tonight, about 100,000 people. A quarter century onward, unemployment amongst Somali Americans exceeds 20 percent, and the second largest Somali community in the country, in the state of Maine, half the men never worked at all in the five years before the Great Recession started. Almost all Somali Americans, to this day, receive some form of cash or food assistance.

John Donvan:

David Frum, I'm sorry, your time is up.

19:13:46

Thank you very much. You can continue your argument during the middle round of the debate. Thank you.

[applause]

And a reminder of what's going on, we are halfway through the opening round of this Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate. I am John Donovan. We have four debaters, two teams of two, fighting it out over this motion, "The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees." You have heard the first two opening statements, and now on to the third, welcoming to the lectern, Robert Ford, the senior fellow at the Middle East Institute and former U.S. ambassador to Syria, who will be arguing for the motion. Ladies and gentlemen, Robert Ford.

[applause]

Robert Ford:

John, thank you very much. And thank you, all, for attending. Syria is a huge human tragedy.

19:14:40

I think it's worth remembering this little statistic, which I came across yesterday when I was doing some reading, the Syrian conflict, which has been going on now for four years, has affected more people than Hurricane Katrina, the Indian Ocean tsunami, and the Haitian earthquake, combined. This is not a normal situation. This is not a normal situation. And in an abnormal situation, people look to the United States. That's what global leadership is about. We are special that way. And I have to tell you, having served as an American ambassador in Algeria and having served as an American ambassador in Syria, it's a huge honor to represent a country that is known for its humanistic values and is known for its willingness to make hard decisions and to lead.

19:15:49

And so what David and I are asking tonight of you, as you think about this motion, is not to let your fear dominate, but rather to let both your reason and your hearts dominate. I want to say a few things about security since David raised some of the issues that have come up in Germany. Yes, there have been problems in Germany. We can discuss that in greater detail, David, if you'd like. The process by which people are brought into the United States is completely different from what's going on in Germany and other countries in Europe. It is a very orderly process. Is it perfect? No. No human endeavor is perfect, but it's quite, quite good. How many of you have seen a terrorist incident by a refugee here in the United States? Anybody seen one?

19:16:48

785,000 refugees, 115,000, more than 115,000, Iraqi refugees have come into the United States. Has anybody seen any of them commit a mass shooting? Terrorist incident at a mall? No. There have been some Iraqis arrested for terrorism, that is true. I think the latest number, given events last week, is five out of roughly 115,000. That is actually a small number and in each of these cases federal authorities were able to intervene before they did any damage. By the way, out of those five arrested, three of them were arrested for activities outside the United States that were not targeted at Americans. So I ask you to sort of put in relative context the security risk, but I want to add also what U.S. government agencies do to help bring that risk down. I won't go into all of the detail now, although I would be delighted if David and Jessica want to do that.

19:17:51

I would just say this. The process of screening is very long. It takes 18 to 24 months for the average Syrian refugee to get through the security screening process. Multiple U.S. government intelligence agencies, including the CIA, the National Counterterrorism Center, the FBI, the Defense Department, the State Department, and other intelligence agencies are involved in building a dossier for each refugee case. Let me say that again. Each refugee case has an intelligence community driven dossier. That's why it takes 18 to 24 months. So we can bring them in with an assurance of very good safety, and the record shows that. The record shows that safety. Now I want to talk also because I was in the Middle East, yesterday I was in front of the Congress talking about the Islamic State and our efforts to battle and to eliminate the Islamic State.

19:18:56

I want you to understand that the Islamic State wants the Americans to reject refugees from Syria. The Islamic State wants the United States to say we don't want Syrian refugees. We don't want Muslims coming to the United States. The Islamic State wants to paint this as a battle between the Christian West and the Muslim world. That helps their recruitment. That helps their recruitment. It's not an accident that a terrorist organization with links to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Somalia called Al-Shabaab put a Donald Trump spot in some of their online recruitment materials. It helps them recruit. And so as we think about how to pursue the battle against the Islamic State, which involves military operations, diplomatic efforts to build a coalition, efforts to cut off their finances and other things, our policy on refugees must fit into that broader policy context. Otherwise, our right hand is undermining what our military diplomatic treasury department-led financial efforts are doing. We don't want that. We don't want that. Finally, I just want to conclude with one remark about what David said. I lived in Syria for a bit over a year and I visited it as a tourist several times. I never saw

that Syria was lawless. I never saw that Syria was particularly tribal. Most Syrians are not tribal because they live in big cities. Damascus, Homs -- they did before the conflict. They're big cities, very urban. And they're exceptionally sophisticated.

19:20:49

And in fact, if you look at the Syrian immigrant population here in the United States, the Syrian-American communities here in the United States, you will see that as well. Doctors, business owners -- here in New York City, many, many Syrian-American-owned businesses. It is an urbane culture. It is not a lawless culture. And it is most certainly not a radical Islamic culture. Definitely not. And so, again, I ask you to think about the security, think about the safety, think about our values. And vote for the motion. Thank you so much.

John Donovan:

Thank you, Robert Ford.

[applause]

And that motion, once again, is: The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees. Here's our final debater in opening statements, speaking against the motion. Jessica Vaughan, the U.S. -- sorry, Jessica Vaughan, Director of Policy Studies for the Center for Immigration Studies. Ladies and gentlemen, Jessica Vaughan.

19:21:52

[applause]

Jessica Vaughn:

Thank you. And thank you, John. So, David very eloquently outlined the big picture around -- surrounding the reasons why we are opposed to this motion to bring in 100,000 Syrian refugees. And I'm going to fill that in with some details. This motion is irresponsible in the extreme. I'm going to explain the two main reasons why 60 percent of the American public is opposed to this proposal and why you should be too. The main reason is that it's simply an enormous and unacceptable security risk to our country. It's also an enormous and unacceptable financial burden on the communities where these refugees will be placed, and on American taxpayers. 100,000 is a huge number.

19:22:47

It's two times the current annual flow of refugees, two times the number that we've been bringing in in recent years. It's five times the number -- annual number of Iraqis that we've been bringing it. It's so large and disproportionate to our agency's capacity to process them that one top State Department official, the woman who's in charge of

managing the refugee program, said -- and I'm quoting -- "The notion that we could get to 100,000 refugees from Syria just isn't possible." And it's not that it's a question of a will to do something or, you know, organizing logistics. The security situation today is really different from other times in our history. And this population of Syrians is really different from some of the other refugee populations that we admit. The main thing is that -- I mean, we know that terror groups are trying to infiltrate the refugee flow.

19:23:51

I'm willing to take them at their word. They've told us that. They're seeking to exploit it. It has -- it's -- we need to pay attention to what's happening in Europe, not just Paris and other -- but other places. But these refugees have all -- who were terrorists have already succeeded in infiltrating our flow. There have been 15 instances, just since 2014, of either refugees who were terrorists, who were admitted, mistakenly. We didn't catch them. Or people admitted as refugees who later became terrorists. And this is not a small problem. Right now, the FBI has something like 900 ongoing investigations into people who are associated with ISIS. But there has been more than a dozen -- probably more like 15 instances -- of people who really were terrorists. They were training people to make bombs so that they could attack American soldiers. They had already attacked American soldiers overseas.

19:24:53

It's real. It's a risk. And it's just not a couple of people. We've -- when you hear these stories of actual terrorists who came in as actual refugees, and then we hear the president and his allies, who are pushing for this 100,000 Syrian refugees to be admitted -- and talk about the 18 to 24-month vetting period, which is really, you know, more of a waiting period than -- no one spends 18 to 24 months investigating refugees. We hear that they have three interviews. We hear that they're fingerprinted. We hear that we check databases. The truth is that even our fabulous screening system, which is supposedly better than anyone else's in the world has made some mistakes before. And that's why -- don't believe me -- believe the Director of the FBI, who, with his top staff, has testified before Congress to say that it simply can't be done.

19:25:50

We don't have the assets there to vet them against. As he says, we can check databases until the cows come home. But we have no information from the government, no one we know that we can talk to about these individuals. And we have to remember -- these are -- these refugees are chosen by U.N. employees who are hired locally. You heard it. We actually outsource the selection of refugees and the first two most important interviews to U.N. staff from the -- this region. They're, I'm sure, great, hardworking people. But their mission is to help people, not to worry about what's going to happen

once that refugee arrives in the United States. That job is done by our government officials. But they simply don't have the tools to do it. It's an impossible task.

19:26:45

Now, even if we were able to overcome the very real security concerns and risks, and even if we were to find a machine that could read people's mind or, you know, see into the future whether or not they're going to become a terrorist, there's another huge reason to vote -- to say no to this proposal, to admit 100,000 Syrian refugees. And that is the huge fiscal cost to taxpayers and to the communities where they're going to be placed. The U.N. has two options to help refugees. One is integration near where they are. And the other is resettlement. And resettlement is definitely the luxury option, for sure. 100,000 Syrian refugees, quite simply, will break the bank of many communities. My organization has added up the cost of -- both the federal costs that David referred to -- cash, housing assistance, job training, health care, language training, special education -- but also the local costs. According to the federal government, 91 percent of refugees from the Middle East are on food stamps.

19:27:44

68 percent of them are qualifying for cash assistance. The total five-year cost for one Syrian refugee is going to be \$64,000. That figure is, as David said, 12 times the cost of what the U.N. spends locally helping Syrians in Syria. And as is typical in these programs that cost money, the cost is going to be borne by the communities where people are -- that are forced to absorb these individuals, not by the people who were talking the loudest and trying to push it on these communities. They're not going to Stanford, Connecticut and Short Hills, New Jersey. They're going to Springfield, Massachusetts, and Idaho, and Allentown, Pennsylvania, where there are lower costs of living. High unemployment. People already there who need services. Schools are already overwhelmed. Let's be clear. We have to acknowledge that our compassion has to be backed up by our wallets.

19:28:49

And if we don't provide the problems that David -- the services that they need, the problems that David so eloquently articulated are going to be something that we have to deal with in the future. And that's why the better, responsible thing to do is to say "No" to the proposal to bring in 100,000 Syrian refugees.

John Donovan:

Thank you, Jessica Vaughan.

[applause]

And that concludes Round 1 of this Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate, where our motion is: The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees. Now, we move on to Round 2. And in Round 2, it's looser. The debaters address one another in turn and take questions from me, and from you, our live audience here in New York City. Our motion is this: The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees. We have debating for the motion David Miliband and Robert Ford.

19:29:45

We have heard them argue that letting in 100,000 refugees -- it's right, it's practical, and it's smart, that the terrorist threat is extremely exaggerated, that, in fact, the screening process -- the vetting process works. The United States is good at it. They also argue that not to accept these 100,000 refugees shatters the American dream, and in such a way, does so as a propaganda gift to ISIS. The team arguing against the motion, Jessica Vaughan and David Frum, argue that this -- letting in 100,000 Syrian refugees simply is not in America's interests -- that the costs would be enormous, both from a security point of view and from a financial point of view, enormous and unsuccessful. But they will break the bank. They point already to experiences that Germany is having, a population, they say, where two-thirds of the German population regrets its decision to let in a large number of refugees from the area. They say, "100,000 is simply not a question, simply not a number of refugees that the United States can absorb without an enormous impact of a negative kind on the communities that accept them."

19:30:55

So we have a lot of ways to slice this up, I'm delighted to say, and we're going to work through some of them. I want to go to the point that we -- that both sides -- that this side, sorry, has argued, the propaganda issue. And I do -- I will -- I want to promise that I'm going to get to all of the other arguments. So don't keep changing the subject to your talking points because I will get to them. I want to see what your responses are to their points. So I want to go back to David Miliband, this issue of the propaganda argument, your argument that this -- our decision of no vote, for example, tonight on the part of the audience would play into the hands of ISIS. Can you elaborate on that a little bit more? And then I wanted your opponents to respond to it.

David Miliband:

I think there's a really important piece of understanding for people. The jihadists threat we face, the threat of violent jihadist extremism, is very strategic in the actions that it takes, it seeks to sow fear among civilians, not just among armed forces, and it seeks to propagate what it calls, "a clash of civilizations," borrowing from a Western book of that name.

19:31:59

And the whole purpose of their terrorist activity is precisely to foment the kind of fear that would lead people to say, "America should admit no refugees," from Syria. And the reason is very, very simple. They want -- their narrative is explicit, and it is that the Muslim world, one and a half billion Muslims around the world, are in the situation they are because of Christians and Jews. That is the essential heart of the jihadist message. And by saying, "No Syrians should come to this country," you confirm all the prejudice at the heart of their message. It's a very, very, simple point, and we must look --

John Donovan:

David, just -- David --

David Miliband:

[inaudible]

John Donovan:

-- I think that your opponents -- your opponents are not saying, "No Syrians should come to this country." They are very explicit about that.

David Miliband:

Well, how many are they saying? I mean, please ask them how many Syrians would be the right number?

John Donovan:

Okay, we'll get to that, but I -- I will get to that, but I first want to have you respond --

[laughter]

-- I first want to have you respond to your opponent's point on the propaganda point.

19:32:52

[applause]

David Frum:

Well, let's look at Westerners who actually have been recruited to ISIS, and let's see what their grievances were. We do many things that ISIS doesn't like. We don't force women to wear veils, we don't subordinate Christians and Jews, and we don't allow young men opportunities to engage in massive gratuitous violence.

[applause]

That is what attracts people to ISIS. Imbedded in what David Miliband just said is an assumption that I urge you to reject, which is that ISIS's grievance -- "ISIS is a kind of civil

rights organization that has a -- that responds to rational grievances about job discrimination and exclusion." That is not true. It is a cult that, in fact, delights in violence in its own [unintelligible]. That's why they recruit by showing videos of burning people alive and drowning them in cages. Most people would be repelled. The people they know they want are attracted. At some level we have to do -- this argument is a debater's point in the worst sense of the term, it's not true.

19:33:49

John Donovan:

You think it's not true that it would play -- be used and played by ISIS that says -- to --

David Frum:

Allowing women to go about unveiled --

John Donovan:

No, no, no.

David Frum:

-- not enslaving people, those things also they use.

John Donovan:

Okay, but I'm not asking about the other things. I'm asking about their actual point, that they can turn a no vote tonight into a campaign poster for them, does it -- do you think it's true?

David Frum:

I think the people in this room can vote no with impunity, knowing that what they are doing is enhancing the safety of their society. And if this argument is right, you are crediting ISIS as a kind of global Islamic civil rights organization, and I really urge you to reject that idea.

John Donovan:

Robert Ford.

Robert Ford:

Thank you.

[laughter]

First, everybody -- none of us here like the Islamic State, and I certainly wouldn't for a minute -- no, I mean --

[applause]

-- they murdered -- I mean, I know one of the people they murdered. And he was a wonderful man, was a journalist, Jim Foley.

19:34:45

So it's not that they're a civil rights organization and they have facts. It's all about perception. It's all about perception. And the Islamic State -- I mean, I'm sure many of the people in the audience, many all of you, have seen these videos they do. It's all about perception. It's Hollywood in an Islamic jihadi kind of way, and they play on that. It has nothing to do with facts. It has everything to do with perception. That's why this group in Somalia, Shabaab, is using Donald Trump now to help with its recruitment.

John Donovan:
All right.

Robert Ford:
It has nothing to do with the facts. It has to do with the perception.

John Donovan:
Jessica Vaughan.

Jessica Vaughn:
Look, clearly ISIS is not having any trouble recruiting with or without Donald Trump. "They hate us," as some clever writer recently said, "not because of what we do, because of who we are." And they're not going to be any nicer to us if we accept even 500,000 refugees from Syria. That's just a fact.

John Donovan:
So your point is that maybe in fact that dynamic is in place, but it's just not top of mind for the debate that we're having, that there are so many other reasons that ISIS is an enemy and this is not that much gasoline on the fire?

19:35:58

Jessica Vaughn:
I don't think it's relevant to the debate because the question is what should the United States government do and the primary responsibility of our government is to look after our national interests and to look after Americans and the people who are living here, --

John Donovan:
Okay. Let me go to --

Jessica Vaughn:

-- and not to base what we do on what ISIS might do.

David Frum:

Germany has admitted more than a million Syrian refugees in the past 12 months. Just a few days ago an ISIS Syrian bomber targeted German tourists in Istanbul. You don't get a thank you note.

John Donovan:

What does the German experience tell us?

[applause]

David Miliband.

David Miliband:

I've actually sat in the chair that oversees the intelligence agencies in the U.K. and I can tell you exactly what the Jihadist threat is designed to do. It's designed to foment the argument that western values are inimical to Muslim values and by saying we don't want your people in our country you are confirming exactly the point that they are making and it's really wrong to underestimate the importance of the battle of ideas.

19:37:00

The core element of our argument of this part of the argument is that we will not win the argument against violent extremism through military means alone. You've got to win the battle of ideas as well.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Jessica Vaughan. Jessica Vaughan, your opponents say that the vetting is pretty darn good. In your opening statement you challenged that somewhat as a matter of assertion and their's right now is a matter of assertion. Go a little bit into the weeds for us and tell us what's wrong with American vetting. You said 18 months of waiting, not 18 months of vetting. Well, what goes on when vetting really happens?

Jessica Vaughn:

Well, what we're told is that our vetting system is absolutely fabulous, the best in the world, and that refugees get more vetting than any other type of immigrant, but the fact is number one, Syria and Syrians are different because we do not -- unlike in Iraq and Somalia there's no one there that we can call on the phone to ask about whether what an applicant has put on their application is true.

19:38:02

John Donovan:

That wouldn't happen in another setting.

Jessica Vaughn:

It could, yeah. If you really are serious about vetting, that is what is done. You verify the claims that are made by applicants who, by the way, have a huge incentive to do whatever it takes to accomplish what they want if what they want is to either infiltrate our flow as an ISIS operative or simply get the heck out of Syria. We don't -- you know, there's -- we don't have any information to vet against in the case of the Syrians and, again, we've outsourced these critical interviews to U.N. employees whose mission is to try to help people and to want to believe what they say. It's basically an honor system.

19:38:48

John Donovan:

Okay.

Jessica Vaughn:

Even if we have great databases, though, they've failed before. We've already -- you know, even the vetting of Iraqis and Somalians was supposedly better. There have been terrorists, people funding terrorism, people committing terrorism who were admitted from Iraq and from other countries as refugees.

John Donovan:

All right. Let me bring in --

Jessica Vaughn:

So we've made mistakes before, even when it was supposedly easier.

John Donovan:

To your opponent Robert Ford. And, first of all, to clarify for the audience that in the process in Syria that the United Nations high commissioner on refugees has staff that takes a sort of first crack at choosing people and then after that American vetting gets involved. So that's what your opponents were referring to, but Robert Ford, can you give a little more education as well as debate with your opponents?

Robert Ford:

Sure. When I was in Syria I oversaw a refugee operation of the United States government. It was in our embassy in Damascus and when I was deputy ambassador in Iraq we had a similar refugee office for Iraqi refugees coming to the United States.

19:39:55

So, a couple of points I'd make. Number one. Yes, your government's job is to protect your security, job one. Believe me, people in the United States government do know that. Number two. The question is how best to guarantee American security. Is it to have a coordinated policy or to have different hands working at cross purposes? Number three, no one in the United States government ever allows the United Nations to decide who comes in to the United States.

[applause]

Period. I feel pretty strongly about that and, Jessica, if you want to discuss it further we can. Number four, number four, we do have information -- and it doesn't come from the Syrian government. But you know what? The Syrian government lies.

19:40:53

I've seen that firsthand. The Syrian government -- not only does it starve people and use chemical weapons against them, and drop barrel bombs on them, but it smears people. It smeared me personally. I'm frankly happy that we don't have to depend on the Syrian government for the information we use --

John Donovan:
Okay.

Robert Ford:
-- to bring refugees here.

John Donovan:
Okay. We're --

Robert Ford:
A last point --

John Donovan:
I have --

Robert Ford:
No. I'm not finished.

John Donovan:
No. Robert -- [laughter] -- Robert --

Robert Ford:
Last point.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Robert --

Robert Ford:

My last point.

John Donovan:

Robert, Robert, you're going to have to hold it. David Frum. Hang on to that point.

You're going to need it.

[laughter]

David Frum.

David Frum:

In the past decade, about 50 Somali Americans have traveled to Somalia to fight for Al-Shabaab, a terror organization. About 10 Somali Americans in the past two years have been charged with plotting to assist ISIS. One just in December. Now, they weren't refugees. They were the children of refugees. When you admit somebody, you are admitting their posterity. And one of the ideas that is important to keep in mind is that the problems of admitting a mismatched population tend to show up in the second generation, not the first.

19:41:56

One more point. The Boston Bombing -- Marathon bombers, the Tsarnaev brothers -- they're not refugees. They were asylum seekers. In the immigration world, that technical legal distinction has a lot of importance. But in real life, I'm not sure it should matter so much.

John Donovan:

David, I'm just helping you because I -- again, I do want to let you get to these points. But we were still on this issue of the vetting process. And Robert just made a very spirited defense -- even without one of his best points.

David Frum:

Yeah.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

So, I want to hear your response to that.

David Frum:

But -- this is something Jessica knows much more about than I do --

John Donovan:

Okay.

David Frum:

-- but --

John Donovan:

[unintelligible] Jessica. No. I'll give it to Jessica --

David Frum:

Let's understand what he said. Just one sentence and I'll turn it over -- that what he said is we don't rely on the Syrian government, which is great. Don't do that. But what do you rely on other than the word of the person himself --

John Donovan:

All right.

David Frum:

-- or herself?

John Donovan:

Jessica, take the response --

Jessica Vaughn:

Okay.

John Donovan:

-- to Robert.

Jessica Vaughn:

Sure. And again, it's important to understand -- it's the U.N. that decides whether someone is a refugee.

19:42:51

And they're selecting people from the population who, by the way, are among the poorest of the poor in that country. The people -- anyone with any education and get up and go already went -- got up and went. So, it is a different population. The U.N. is deciding who is a refugee and the U.N. is deciding who will be resettled to the United States. And only then are these cases turned over to the United States government to

guess whether or not the person has something of concern in their background, has beliefs of concern --

John Donovan:
Okay.

Jessica Vaughn:
-- is likely to succeed. So, they're created -- the U.N. is deciding which pool of refugees are -- that the United States can review --

John Donovan:
Okay. You --

Jessica Vaughn:
That's a fact.

John Donovan:
-- this side took a spontaneous two-fer [spelled phonetically], which is fine. This side gets a two-fer too. Starting with Robert, to make your final point. Then I want to bring David back into the conversation.

19:43:48

Robert Ford:
The last point I wanted to make -- I -- before I was interrupted --

John Donovan:
There you go.

[laughter]

Robert Ford:
-- is that this is -- let's be frank. This is partly an intelligence operation. A friend of mine who is working on this actually sent me a detail about it. So, we have CIA. We have the FBI. National Center for Counter-Terrorism. Defense Department. There's even biometric data that is first collected from the refugees by the United Nations, a screening process that Jessica mentioned. Then it's checked back with biometric data that our intelligence agencies have. Several different offices of Homeland Security. Now, none of these are infallible. Let me say that again. None of these are infallible. However, there are lots of failsafe mechanisms.

19:44:43

And maybe these-- the two most important -- they don't rely on one single source of information. They certainly don't rely only on the interview or the interviews that the refugee applicants have. They collect other information from other sources about where they come from, their town, their neighborhood, their neighbors. A lot of people have been disqualified from coming to the United States because they developed information through other sources that they sold a falafel sandwich to a Free Syrian Army soldier. That --

John Donovan:
Okay.

Robert Ford:
-- is not -- so, last --

John Donovan:
I mean, that was your last point.

David Miliband:
Let me just make two points.

[laughter]

John Donovan:
Well, I mean, David Miliband -- if you can do this in 30 seconds, because I want to move on to something else with you, because I would like to change subjects.

David Miliband:
Two points. One, biometrics means iris scanning. So, the biggest danger in intelligence is that someone is impersonating someone else. The iris scanning makes it impossible for people to impersonate each other. Second, absolutely key point. Jessica says the U.S. has to guess whether or not someone is going to be okay.

19:45:47

The boot is on the other foot. The refugee has to prove that they are no threat to America. There's no responsibility on America to take them. The refugee has to prove that they're going to be a responsible resident of this country, and hopefully then become a citizen.

John Donovan:
Okay. I was going to move on. I want to give you 15 seconds to respond to that, Jessica, because I do want to move on.

[applause]

Jessica Vaughn:

Sure. Well, while we all worked for our respective State Departments, obviously, my esteemed opponents over there never worked behind a visa window, because people just lie to you all day long down there. And it is an honor system. And I've -- but I want to ask, you know, by extension of your logic, you admit we're going to make mistakes. How many terrorist mistakes would be acceptable for us to admit to our refugee [unintelligible]. How many is acceptable?

Robert Ford:

Can I answer that real quick? First --

John Donovan:

Real quick. Yeah.

Robert Ford:

I did work behind a visa window in two Middle Eastern countries.

[laughter]

And of course they lie to you. I mean, that's what professionals do. You sort of figure out who's telling the truth and who's not. Please. Second point.

[laughter]

Over 115,000 Iraqi refugees have come in from Iraq.

19:46:54

It's a country not so different from Syria. Some differences. I've lived in both. But I would say they are roughly comparable. 115,000 allowed in. Five, including two last week, have been arrested on terrorism charges. Refugees arrested on terrorism charges. And as I said, three of them arrested for working with terrorist groups not related to the United States but involved in the fight --

John Donovan:

Okay. Okay.

Robert Ford:

-- in the Middle East.

John Donovan:

Robert, you -- as an ambassador, you didn't often have people telling you it was time to stop talking, did you?

[laughter]

I realize this is a new and shocking experience. But I want to --

Robert Ford:

I should --

John Donovan:

I --

Robert Ford:

-- never have resigned.

John Donovan:

I think if we have a --

[laughter]

-- if there's a clock on you speakers tonight, I think you're way out front. So, when I ask you to try to bit -- tighten it a bit, please do it, because I want to give David Frum a chance to respond. You had brought up both in your opening statements, when I had to cut you off -- and very briefly -- the issue of Somalian refugees, and what we learned.

19:47:54

How do you respond to your opponent's point that he judge made, that really, the numbers are not that suggestive of a huge terrorist threat? David Frum.

David Frum:

Terrorism is not the only kind of security problem. There are other kinds of delinquency. There are other kinds of criminality. The thing I would really want people to focus on is popular -- this -- we are not arguing for zero. And we're not -- we are arguing for selection. We are arguing that people who have -- who are likely to succeed here, who have deep family contacts, and who really are at risk, because of their liberal democratic views, inside the Middle East -- yes, they can -- they belong in the West. But understand. We're talking about a population that, although many of it is urban, it's one-fifth agricultural population. It's a population median or -- typical levels of education are six years, less for women. High levels of religious fundamentalism.

19:48:48

And although they have higher levels of human development than we experience in Somalia, this is not like the people in Iraq, many of whom had worked with the U.S.

armed forces. And that really was the urban elite of Iraq. Different populations succeed in different ways or fail in different ways. And one of the things that has been disturbing about this debate -- especially from -- not so much our opponents here, who have been very candid -- but from the president and others -- is that there really has been a selling job that refuses to deal with the real dangers and problems. And they show up not just in the first generation. But it is not acceptable to say that refugees are no problem. All the terrorist incidents involved their children. That is not, in my mind, a good answer.

John Donovan:

All right. David Miliband, to respond.

David Miliband:

A very famous American senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, said, "You're entitled to your own opinions. You're not entitled to your own fact." And --

John Donovan:

Do you know how many times that phrase is used in our debates?

[laughter]

David Miliband:

I'm a newcomer to this country, so I'm allowed to use it. The --

John Donovan:

[inaudible] -- We're going to run the tape --

David Miliband:

It's --

John Donovan:

-- of all previous debaters.

David Miliband:

It's really important that we hold onto the facts here.

19:49:54

785,000 refugees since 2001. 115,000 Iraqis. Five arrested for terrorist offenses. None of them committing terrorist acts. Three of them out of the country. How many Syrian refugees have been arrested in the United States for terrorist-related offenses? The answer is zero. Zero Syrian refugees have been arrested for terrorism-related offenses. Now, when we put those facts, David says, "Yeah, ah, it's not just about terrorism. They're likely to be delinquents." And so, we're then on to another argument, where he says, "Don't worry about the terrorism. That's not my main point. I'm worried that

they're going to become -- they're not going to be employed or that their sons and daughters are not going to be employed." The responsibility, then is -- what is the integration system? And the integration system that I can speak to about, from 26 cities in which we work, is one where 80 percent of people from Syria are in work within six months. Now, the way in which you achieve that is by insuring that you do give people the help. As it happens, 31 percent of Syrians arriving in the United States have got upper secondary or university education, not all of them.

19:50:54

Some of them have only got six years of education. Those who have six years of education need a lot of extra help. The man who was in the box at the State of the Union last night was a surgeon with three Ph.D.s. He doesn't need extra education. He needs a chance to restart his life. And I would say to you that it's very, very important that you hold us to account for facts and separate them out from opinions. And I do want to follow up one point because you said I could earlier.

John Donovan:
I did.

[laughter]

David Miliband:
Right. So I asked the question earlier, "How many?"

John Donovan:
How many?

David Miliband:
If not 100,000, how many?

John Donovan:
To your opponents, all right. And after this, I want to go to audience questions. So we're going to move on to that, just so you know, get ready for that. David Frum.

David Frum:
My answer is qualitative, not quantitative, and that's important. So the fact that you have had such good success with your 415 people tells me that you have chosen very well people who are going to integrate in the West.

David Miliband:
We don't choose them.

[applause]

We don't choose them.

David Frum:
Congratulations.

David Miliband:
David, we don't choose them. We don't choose them.

David Frum:
But this is like -- we all saw the movie, "The Big Short." This is like saying, "The triple A bonds came in great, and, therefore, we're going to keep going through each tranche."

19:51:52

What -- we have the example. I mean, it is -- today is, what, the 13th of January -- we have the example of what has just happened in Germany. We have seen what large scale unchecked migration of not the 415, the urban elite, but what you are -- what has been done to that country over the past 30 years. Syria is a country with a population of, what, two million, in the years after World War II. It's got a population before the war started of 23 million. This is a deeply rural society. It is a sectarian society. I don't know the answer to the question, "How many?" I would say, "Few," and, "The few and the right ones." And most of them should be settled near where they live where, as Jessica pointed out, it is phenomenally economically cheaper. "If we had a program," I said, "where I can do something badly for a dollar or do it well for seven cents, and you are insisting on doing it badly for a dollar and we can do it well for seven cents, you'd say, "That is a very poor choice of resources. That's --" I think Bob Rosenkranz said at the very opening at this debate.

19:52:50

And that is really the choice, spend seven cents to resettle somebody close to where they live in a compatible society where their skills are relevant, where they can speak the same language, where they can be consistent with their religious traditions, where they're not going to see ways of life that they find offensive, maybe so offensive they resort to violence or their children will, or spend a dollar to resettle them badly in the United States where not the best, not the 415, not the most compatible, but the others will be chronically unemployed, chronically dependent on assistance as the Somalis are, and where you may have some terrorist mistakes in the first generation, and a lot of delinquency and criminality problems in the second.

John Donvan:
All right. You know, that was one sentence with many commas. That --

[laughter]

David Frum:

[inaudible] our friends.

John Donovan:

I was looking for the period to jump in. I want to go to audience questions. Now, the way this works is if you raise your hand, microphones will be brought to you. I'll ask you to stand. I'll ask you to say your name. If you are representing a news organization, please tell us the name of the news organization. And then I'd ask you to ask -- actually ask a terse question. Please do not debate with the debaters.

19:53:49

Really ask a question that will get them to debate better with one another, and that it has to be on this motion. In other words, this is not going to be a debate about the history of immigration or about the current administration's policy. It's about this policy choice right now, "Should we let in 100,000 Syrian refugees or not?" So think in those terms -- right over here. And if anybody wants to ask the question that I still was going to get to, which I didn't, which is the against side's argument about the financial cost on communities, I would look favorably upon that.

[laughter]

Female Speaker:

Thank you very much. Kaitlyn Connelly [spelled phonetically]. Hi, thank you so much to all of you. My question is can you engage more with the values aspect of the debate? I've heard some comments about looking for urban elite and poverty being a disqualifier as an immigrant coming to the United States. Give me your poor. So how -- can you engage with that a little bit more?

19:54:45

Why should we be targeting skilled immigrants? Shouldn't we actually be helping those who are most in need of it?

John Donovan:

Let me go first to Robert Ford because we have not heard from him in a while --

[laughter]

-- and it is his turn. Robert Ford.

Robert Ford:

Kaitlin, thank you for that question. As I said when I opened, to me it means everything as an American that we are a leader on humanistic values and that the United States, through foreign aid programs and through immigration programs, reaches out to people around the world. And Syria, as I mentioned, the scale of the conflict is just enormous. And so I don't think that we would discriminate and say, "Well, if you're an uneducated farmer from eastern Syria, you shouldn't ever come to the United States." But, frankly, most Syrians are not uneducated farmers from the eastern part of Syria.

19:55:46

The statistics that David has used are very skewed because the eastern part of Syria, which is actually a smaller population, educational levels there are abysmal, but in the western part of the country in the big cities, education levels are much better. I think in the end what we really want is we want a mix of Syrians consistent with security screening who organizations like David's can resettle here in the United States successfully.

John Donovan:

Okay. Let's let your opponent, Jessica Vaughan, respond.

Jessica Vaughn:

Sure. I would first say that we cannot predict or judge what the success of refugees is going to be based on the people who have already been admitted necessarily, because the population that the U.N. is selecting for resettlement is very different from those Syrians who came here -- who had the means to come here on their own.

19:56:42

But secondly, I don't think it's inconsistent with our values at all to proceed prudently and carefully in low numbers in admission of Syrian refugees because, as I said in my remarks, we have options in terms of wanting to help people and assist the people displaced by this conflict and our government is obligated to use the limited resources that we have to act on that desire to help in the most cost effective, efficient way that helps the most people and it just so happens that that option is not resettlement, but by providing assistance to more people in the region.

John Donovan:

Thank you. And the question was an excellent example of a great question for tonight. So thank you for that. Someone else. Down front here. If a mic can come all the way down to the second row. And, again, if you can just tell us your name. First name is fine.

Male Speaker:

My name is Sergio and the question is the primary fear of the United States for letting 100,000 Syrian refugees is a possibility of terrorist attacks.

19:57:51

By that regard, would the United States be more inclined to accept 100,000 non-Muslims in the country even though the majority of terrorist attacks in the country are done by non-Muslims? Or is xenophobia the primary cause of the hesitation?

[applause]

John Donovan:

I'm going to go counter-intuitively to the against side first and take it to David Frum, because you addressed some of what's implied in that question you addressed in your opening statement. Then I'll go to David Miliband.

David Frum:

I welcome that question. It's a very important question. This tonight is not a debate about theology. It's a debate about sociology. There's no claim that anybody would make that there's something inherently dangerous about the Middle East or any particular faith, but it is an observation that under today's circumstances it does objectively happen to be true that there are dangers from some people in the Middle East that are different and in many ways greater than dangers from people elsewhere.

19:58:47

I think both Jessica and I are advocates of generally a tighter screen on admission to the United States and a lower level of immigration, but I don't think we do any service to anybody to say let's ignore what happens to be true right now, even though I agree with you. I don't think it is inherently true. I don't think it will necessarily be true 100 years from now and it certainly wasn't true 100 years ago.

John Donovan:

David Miliband.

David Miliband:

Look, I'm someone who works in your country, but I'm not a citizen of this country. And when I hear that there are 3,500 Muslims in the American armed forces, when I look at the diversity of this country and the strength that's come from the diversity, when I meet a young man, a refugee who spent the first 15 years of his life in a refugee camp, and then after three years he's been resettled and he's the valedictorian in his high school and he's going to the New York School of Film and Design, what I think is that this country has a genius for bringing people together across lines of race and religion and

color and creed, and that is something that is incredibly precious and you should be shouting about that from the rooftops.

19:59:53

You should be saying to Europe get your act together. Have a properly organized system. Make sure there is education. Make sure they are taught English. Make sure they are on the path to citizenship. Make sure there is a check after a year for a green card. Make sure that after five years they are checked out to see how they are doing. And I would like to see this country more proud of what it's achieving by being this great beacon to the world, because the truth is you've got a lot to offer.

[applause]

John Donovan:

Okay. Fifth row. If you could just -- yes, sir. If you could just stand up and a mic's coming from your right-hand side. Another great question, by the way. Thank you.

Male Speaker:

Thank you very much. My name is Omar. I'm an American Muslim and this is for David Frum. I'm the second generation child of immigrants. You mentioned and I quote, "problems show up in the second generation."

[laughter]

I consider myself to be fully and proudly American.

20:00:52

I coach basketball, and I play basketball, and I attend -- I work for corporate, actually. I'm an IT government consultant in D.C. And could you explain where and why you problems problems which show up in the second generation of Syrian refugees?

[applause]

David Frum:

Omar may I ask you a question. May I ask you a question? What does your mother do?

Male Speaker:

She worked at a public school. But she works [unintelligible] school.

David Frum:

And where was she educated?

Male Speaker:

She was educated in her country, Pakistan.

David Frum:

And what level of education does she have?

Male Speaker:

She attended community college at our local community college in Hart County [spelled phonetically].

David Frum:

And she works here as a teacher?

Male Speaker:

She was -- worked as a guidance counselor. She worked with the bookkeeping.

John Donovan:

Okay. Let's see where you're going.

20:01:43

David Frum:

Okay.

John Donovan:

So --

David Frum:

Because, as I hope you'll recall, what I said in my remarks about first and second generation is the United States has not, to date, had this problem, precisely because in - to date it has been true that when the United States has taken people from the greater Middle East -- and this is why there's such a stark difference between the American experience and the European experience -- we have selected for people like your parents. And when the parents -- and especially the mothers -- are educated, and integrated, and succeed, the children succeed. Though, as I said, those who have what it takes to succeed in the Western world -- their children will flourish. And the American experience is testament to that. Europe is the counter-example. What is going on -- one of the things we were debating from that is, should American refugee policy -- should continue to reflect what has been successful about the particular American experience with Muslim immigrants, which has been hugely successful in the United States. They are -- Muslim Americans are better educated than the American norm. They have higher incomes than the American norm. And they have been -- as David Miliband says, they have been active in the Army.

20:02:47

And a lot of what is done in the name of counter -- a lot of counter-intelligence services simply could not function without them. They have been a hugely successful community. And the question is, are we going to continue that approach? Or are we going to change to the approach that Europe has taken, that has created these banlieues around European cities, where, in the second generation -- because the parents are poor -- and I keep saying, this is about sociology, not theology. Because the parents are poor, because the parents are not integrated, and these 100,000 Syrian refugees like the 100,000 Somalis -- who happen to be Muslim, but that's not what's important about them -- are going to not -- the likelihood that they are not going to be a success --

John Donovan:
Okay.

David Frum:
-- and their children are then going to be attracted to whatever is around. And in 30 years from now, if it's Islamic extremism, it may be that.

John Donovan:
Robert Ford, interested to hear your response. Again, and I'm not the joking about -- but briefly, because I want to go on to some more questions. But David gave his best explanation just then about how we select, who should get in. The opening question: who gets in. Do you have any objection to his criteria?

20:03:48

Robert Ford:
I think it's important that the Syrian -- the 100,000 Syrian refugees that come in be screened for security, obviously. I've emphasized that tonight. Second, I think it's important for the audience to understand that the vast majority of Syrian refugees that are coming in -- the vast majority -- are women and children under the age of 17. So, David's argument about the second generation I do find interesting. I do. I keep thinking, however, of people like Steven Jobs, who was a second-generation Syrian refugee from the city of Homs. I keep thinking about comedians, Seinfeld show. Seinfeld himself was second-generation Syrian refugee. Paula Abdul. It's not to say that every Syrian refugee is going to become -- or their children are going to become entertainers and brilliant --

[laughter]

-- no, but I'm making a serious point.

20:04:51

But America is not just a humanistic country, in terms of our values, but it's also a place of opportunity. And so, I know what David said about the Somalis in Maine. Well, you know what? I live in New England now. And Maine in general -- the economy in Maine is pretty depressed. And the Somalis didn't cause that. Forces well outside the control of the local Somali community caused the problems in Maine. So, in a sense, I don't think that David's argument about second generation or third generation makes a lot of sense unless you look at a bigger context.

John Donovan:

Okay. I want to remind you that we are in the question and answer section of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate. I'm John Donovan, your moderator. We have four debaters -- two teams of two debating this motion: The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees.

20:05:48

John Donovan:

A question right down here, sir. If you can stand up. Folks, I just wanted to say, if you're raising your hands upstairs, I literally can't see you. So, I apologize for not going upstairs at all. But if somebody wants to come downstairs, and I -- you know, I see that effort made, and you walk through the doors in the back, I'll try to call on you. Go ahead, sir.

Male Speaker:

Hi. My name is Max. I have a "what if" question, and it's, what if the motion had the word "or" at the end of it? So, what if the motion was The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees or -- and what do you think would --

John Donovan:

I'm --

Male Speaker:

-- happen [inaudible] --

John Donovan:

I'm going to have to pass. It's a --

Male Speaker:

Okay.

John Donovan:

And I'm not -- it's a very creative question. But I think we're going to spend a lot of time trying to parse it to understand it. So, thank you for the try. Ma'am in the back there?

The -- I'm looking at you, and you -- yeah. Thanks. And if anybody wants to ask the question about the impact on communities, I would like to hear that.

20:06:44

[laughter]

Because it's a piece of it we didn't get to.

Female Speaker:

Hi. My name is Sherry. I'm a native New Yorker. And it's wonderful to be a beacon and it's wonderful to have all these idealistic things. But what about taking care of the indigenous people, like Pine Ridge Reservation, the natives of this country? People that are starving and freezing because we don't have enough money to take care of them, let alone taking in, you know, these refugees.

John Donvan:

Okay. That's a great question. And it actually comes a little bit back to where I wanted to go, anyway. David Miliband, let's take it. And I want to hear from Jessica Vaughan after that.

David Miliband:

Well, maybe this is an area where Europe has got something to teach America. I think America has a lot to teach Europe about how it can bring in refugees. I think when it comes to bringing up the floor in society, many people would see that in Europe, there's a lot to be taught the other way.

20:07:40

And I think that the -- anyone who's traveled across the U.S. or anyone who's followed American politics and followed the debate over 50 years about the so-called war on poverty can see that the case you make for attention for incredibly large numbers of people in the U.S. -- frankly, a lot of people in New York. I lived in New York for two years. I'm shocked by the number of people on the streets. I walk my kids to school every morning. I'm shocked by how many people are on the streets. I don't think those -- you should ask the refugees to pay the price of sorting out those people. I think America can deal with its own social problems at home while spending, frankly, a minuscule amount of money, relatively speaking. America spends 0.21 percent of its national income, 0.21 percent of its national income on overseas aid. The sums that we are talking about, 1.4 cents per person, per American per day to resettle 100,000 refugees -- I think it allows you to say those social problems can be addressed. They don't have to be addressed at the expense of the role that you play in the world and the example that you can play, and the contribution that these people can make.

20:08:47

John Donovan:

Okay. Jessica Vaughan?

[applause]

Jessica Vaughn:

Well, the problem with that analysis is that it doesn't reflect the reality of -- I mean, you can say, "Okay. We're going to aggregate the cost across every American in the country." But that's not the way refugee resettlement happens. They're not going to zip codes that can afford it. They're going to zip codes that have the lowest cost housing, already high unemployment rates, struggling schools. And these communities have no say in how many, what kind, or when refugees will be placed in their community. And it is -- these refugees are not coming with an increase in federal grants or any other programs to help them shoulder the cost. And it's not that there's -- there's no moral failing on the part of the refugees.

20:09:44

The fact is they really do need a significant amount of services so that they can survive here. But the cost of those services is borne primarily by the local community --

John Donovan:

All right.

Jessica Vaughn:

-- not by Uncle Sam.

John Donovan:

I don't want -- I wanted to hear your opponents respond to that very point, which is why I was inviting that question. David Miliband, do you want to -- all right. Robert, you can go ahead. Robert Ford.

Robert Ford:

Thank you.

John Donovan:

Sure. The clock has just started.

Robert Ford:

Jessica said reality. So, here's another reality. Their idea of giving more money to Jordan, to Turkey, to Lebanon to pay for refugees -- you know what the reality is? Those countries don't want more refugees. Let me say that again. Those countries don't want

more refugees. One out of every five people living inside Lebanon right now is a refugee. 10 percent of the population of Jordan now are refugees. The fifth largest city in Jordan is the Zaatari Refugee Camp. King Abdullah of Jordan was just here yesterday, does not want more refugees. They don't want our money. What they want is for the world, including the United States, to take more refugees.

John Donovan:

But you didn't -- you didn't go to the -- you didn't go to the juicy part of her point which was about the effect on communities here.

Robert Ford:

Okay, well, let me -- I will.

John Donovan:

Okay.

Robert Ford:

So --

[laughter]

-- Jessica wrote a very interesting assessment, and there was a link in it to a Health and Human Services Department report about Iraqi refugees in the United States. Jessica is right that refugees when they come here do depend heavily at the beginning on government assistance. That is -- I would not argue that at all. What I would also say though is America is a land of opportunity. In the case of Iraqis, according to HHS, Health and Human Services statistics, 13, 1-3 percent of Iraqis in 2009 depended only on their own income to live. Everybody else, the other 87 percent, depended to some extent or another on public assistance.

20:11:52

However, four years later, which is the last year of data for HHS, the number had gone from 13 percent to 40 percent. And the conclusion of the analysis was over time Iraqi refugees become less and less dependent on public assistance. Does it require more resources up front? Yes, it does. But they're talking about more resources, too. They just want to give it to governments that the reality is won't take it because they don't want more refugees. By the way, today --

John Donovan:

Okay.

Robert Ford:

-- there are 16,000 Syrian refugees --

John Donovan:

Robert, I -- Robert -- Robert --

Robert Ford:

-- waiting at the border to go into Jordan --

John Donovan:

We're going to have to take a commercial break now, Robert, and --

[laughter]

-- the last thing we want to do -- we usually conclude these rounds with what we call a "volley round" in which we try to boil down to some degree the essential arguments of each side into short 30-second bites. Robert?

20:12:50

[laughter]

There will be a large clock behind you so that everyone knows how close you are to the 30-second limit, at the end of which I will do this -- [bell rings] -- "Your time is up." And the question we want to put to two -- to the two sides, it actually comes -- it's actually been voiced by both sides, "What is in America's best interests in regard to this question, 'Would letting in 100,000 Syrian refugees be to America's interest or would it be detrimental to America's interests?'" We'll go back and forth. Each side gets 30 seconds, seriously. They'll see a clock in front of them. And I'll start -- since this side had the last word, I'm going to start with the against side and I'm going to start with David Frum. Again, the question is this, "Is it in America's best interests or not to allow in 100,000 Syrian refugees?" Your 30 seconds starts now.

David Frum:

I would say we should learn from our most recent experience with this kind of resettlement, the Somali case, 100,000 people there, again. It's not just in Maine. It's also in Minnesota, a very prosperous state, where the unemployment rate among Somalis is triple that of the rest of the state.

20:13:52

The people -- the results of the policy -- the migration depend on the people you take. It is not always the same. Sometimes you have success. Sometimes you fail. Choose wisely.

John Donovan:

Thank you. Your time is up. David Miliband.

David Miliband:

America is stronger when it lives up to its values. And when there is dissonance between its values and its actions, then it causes trouble for itself and it causes trouble around the world. America's values point absolutely clearly to retaining this as a society that isn't a free-for-all. The people come here under conditions, that they obey the rules, that they live up to the social regulations that exist, but they're able to make their way. And you build the most productive and patriotic citizenry as a result. It's hugely in America's interest to make this, 100,000 Syrians, a home for them.

John Donovan:

Jessica Vaughan.

20:14:41

Jessica Vaughn:

Not only is it not in our national interests because of the enormous and unacceptable security risk and enormous and unacceptable cost of taking in 100,000 Syrian refugees, it's not in the best interest of the Syrian population either, because taking on that responsibility means that we are turning our back on so many other Syrians in Syria.

John Donovan:

Robert Ford.

Robert Ford:

It's in America's interest. We can do it safely, we can do it securely, and the record shows that. It's in America's interest because we are locked in a really tough battle against the Islamic State and Islamic terrorism, and we need to fight the perception that we are against Muslims. And, finally, both sides in this debate are saying there are going to be costs, but we're saying that the costs will work better --

[laughter]

-- doing it this way and bringing in the 100,000 refugees.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

How did you do that?

20:15:46

[laughter]

[applause]

I [unintelligible]

Robert Ford:

John, who gave your grandparents a visa. That's --

[laughter]

John Donovan:

Robert, I have to tell you what you don't know is that at the five second mark the clock froze on you.

[laughter]

Robert Ford:

Oh, really?

John Donovan:

Yeah.

Robert Ford:

Oh, I was looking at that clock.

John Donovan:

So, I have no idea how long you spoke.

[laughter]

John Donovan:

That concludes round two of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate.

[applause]

Where our motion is The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees. And now I'm told by our official timekeeper you had in fact went for 30 seconds. That was pretty good. Okay. Round -- it was excellent. It was superb.

[laughter]

We're going to have you back.

[laughter]

Now we go on to round three. Round three is our closing statements by each debater in turn.

20:16:47

Our motion is this, The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees. Speaking in his closing remarks for this motion, David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee and former U.N. foreign secretary. I'm sorry. That's the wrong organization. You are not the former U.N. secretary.

[laughter]

Let me do that again. Making his closing statement in support of the motion, David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee and former U.K. --
[laughter]

[applause]

It's the beauty of editing and reality. None of this happened.

[laughter]

Making his closing statement again -- making his closing statement --

[laughter]

Making his closing statement for the motion, David Miliband, president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee and former U.K. foreign secretary.

20:17:44

[applause]

David Miliband:

We heard a lot of statistics tonight, but actually this motion is about people. It's about family's who've lost husbands and sons. It's about children who've lost parents. And it's about families who've lost the hope that they'll ever be a chance for them to rebuild their lives. I meet these families. We serve them every day, including those who are trying -- who arrive in the United States destined for a state and the governor -- a state in the U.S. and the governor says they can't go there. They stop in New York City. I saw -- I met that family last month. That family was running a realty business in Deraa where the civil war started. One of the cousins got hit by an Assad barrel bomb. The daughter is still in Deraa and the day before I met that family the Russians had dropped a bomb next door to her. If you are going to vote against the motion tonight, you're

going to have to be willing to tell that family that you don't want them in your country and I think those people have a right -- deserve the opportunity to come to this country.

20:18:45

I believe that in the course of what has been a very good discussion, the case against the motion has crumbled. Has a Syrian ever been arrested on terrorism charges in the United States? A Syrian refugee. No. Can the U.S. choose who it takes? Yes. Is the U.S. situation comparable to that in Europe? No. And does a vote against the motion play into division hatred and fear? Of course it does. It's obvious. And as a father of two young boys, as a leader of a charity that works to help boys just like them escape from terrorism, and as a great admirer of America, I ask you to support this motion not because it will make you feel good, but because it's right, because it's practical, and because it's a smart thing to do, just the same qualities that make America great today and the qualities that will make America great tomorrow. So with head and heart support the motion that will give 100,000 people a chance to rebuild their lives.

20:19:43

[applause]

John Donovan:

Thank you, David Miliband.

[applause]

And that is the motion, The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees. Here making his closing statement against the motion, David Frum, senior editor at the Atlantic and former special assistant to George W. Bush.

[applause]

David Frum:

I end as I began. By reminding us of the terrible humanitarian crisis that the planet faces. And we have offered you a choice of how to respond to it. One way multiplies your purchasing power by 12 or 13 times. Every dollar you spend in the United States is worth 12 or 13 dollars if spent in the region. That is a miraculous return. What you are being asked to do by those who urge you to vote for this resolution is to ignore that fact, but that's not the only fact they're asking you to ignore. They're asking you to ignore what is going on right now in Germany. That's not relevant.

20:20:42

They're asking you to ignore the experience of the Somalis, which were the last large scale resettlement from this part of the world. That's not relevant. They're asking you to look only at the 400 -- the examples of the 415 Syrians that David Miliband's group has so well resettled, and to ignore what is likely to happen as the population grows bigger. They are saying what is happening with asylum seekers is not relevant to thinking about what happens with refugees. They're saying, "Don't think about the next generation. Don't think about what is going to happen with the adjustment policy. Don't think. Feel. Look at the image. See what's on TV and act accordingly." You know, I strongly believe we owe a duty to humanity. And I think we ought to act on it. I believe Americans also owe their first duty to their country and their fellow citizens, and what they need. But what I believe, most fundamentally, in every decision, is that we owe our highest duty to reason and judgment. If you are making decisions because of something you saw, a picture you saw -- something you saw on TV, you are making decisions wrong. You're doing violence to the whole idea of democracy and the reasoning process. I ask you to think. I ask you to say, "I can multiply my good deed by 12 or 13."

20:21:55

I can see what is happening in Germany. I remember our experience." And therefore, I ask you to vote no to this resolution.

John Donovan:

Thank you, David Frum.

[applause]

The resolution is The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees. Here making his closing statement supporting the motion, Robert Ford, Senior Fellow at the Middle East Institute and former U.S. Ambassador to Syria.

[applause]

Robert Ford:

Please remember, we're not talking about a process like in Germany. It's a very different thing. There aren't boat people coming to the United States from Syria the way they are in Europe. So, the German example is very different. This is a controlled pipeline of people that are given security screenings even right before they got on the airplane.

20:22:46

David and Jessica have said, "Well, we need to pay the countries where the refugees are now, out in the region, to stay there." The reality is -- let me underline this -- Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq do not want to keep taking more, and more, and more refugees. They want help with resettlement. That's where American leadership comes in. We

don't take all of them. But we take 100,000. We leverage that to get the Europeans to take more. Let's try to get Gulf countries to take more. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates. Let's get some Asian countries to take some. This is about leadership. I want to emphasize that over time, the experience with Iraqis is that they become less and less dependent on public assistance. I'm sensitive to the argument they make.

20:23:44

But again, this is about values. America is a land of opportunity. Will there be more resources expended when we're bringing refugees? Yes, there will be. But they're talking about trying to spend more in the region. I'm telling you, that won't work. And so, it's better to bring them here. And over time, they will become less and less dependent. Finally, as Kaitlyn mentioned -- I'm so glad this debate was in New York -- the Statue of Liberty is out in New York Harbor. If you believe what's written on the Statute of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your homeless, your tempest tossed" -- if you think that's what America is -- and I do -- then please vote for the resolution.

John Donovan:

Thank you, Robert Ford.

[applause]

And that resolution is, "The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees."

20:24:43

And here, making her closing statement against it, Jessica Vaughan. I'm sorry. I've missed my page -- for one second, Jessica -- speaking her statement against the motion, Jessica Vaughan, Director of Policy Studies at the Center for Immigration Studies.

[applause]

Jessica Vaughn:

Thanks. We've heard some passionate and compassionate arguments from both sides tonight. But we need to remember -- I don't want our government -- and I don't think you want our government to make policy on the basis of a poem. I want it to make policy on the basis of a real sound analysis of the situation and our options, okay? In addition our debate on the facts and costs, we've also heard people talk about people. And I want to close and ask you to think about a person that I read about today on my way here. Her name is Serena. She's a Syrian woman. Lives there.

20:25:45

The headline of the article about Serena is "Woman Recalls Week Surrounded by Starvation and Suffering in the Syrian Town." It's not correct to say that the U.N. only wants us to resettle refugees. It is desperately seeking money it's in the midst of a fundraising campaign to try to raise \$9 billion to help the millions of Syrians who are in Syria. The story talks about the lives of people and how they're literally starving. People are literally dropping dead because there is no food. Serena's husband was killed. He was fighting for an Islamist radical group. She lives with her daughter, her grandparents, her brother's family, and her mother in an apartment. And what I want to ask you is, should we pluck Serena out of Syria and help just her? Or would it be better to help her entire family in Syria?

20:26:43

Which makes more sense, for the money that we can allocate to this problem? To help 100,000 Syrians by bringing them here or to help 1.2 million Syrians in Syria by giving the U.N. the money that it is asking for and desperately needs to help more Syrians in Syria. Think about that. That's why you need to say, "No" to bringing 100,000 Syrian refugees here.

John Donovan:

Thank you, Jessica Vaughan.

[applause]

And that concludes Round 3 of this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate, where our motion is: The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees. And now, it's time for you to determine which side was most persuasive. We're going to ask you to go again to the keypads at your seat and vote a second time. Remember, it's the difference between the two votes. Whoever has the most movement in percentage point terms will be declared our winner. Again, look at the motion: The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees. If you agree with this motion after hearing the arguments, push Number 1. If you disagree with the motion after hearing the arguments, push Number 2. If you're undecided, push Number 3.

20:27:48

So, while we're doing that, I learned -- when you saw me floundering around about two or three minutes ago, I also learned that when I introduced David at the very beginning for his opening statement, I referred to it as his closing statement. And that's because I went into the future very briefly.

[laughter]

And I can -- I know who won. No. I don't. Honest to God, I don't. So, I want to re-record that so that it can be edited in, because it's going to be confusing to our audience. So, if you can just hold on -- and no applause or anything like that is needed for this -- even though, of course, I've earned it.

[laughter]

The motion is this: The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees.

20:28:46

Arguing first in support of the motion -- The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian Refugees -
- David Miliband, President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee and former
U.K. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I meant -- I pronounced his name wrong.
What did I say?

[laughter]

What did I say?

David Miliband:
"Milibrand."

John Donovan:
I put the R in? I was so proud of not doing that all night.

[laughter]

People always call me "Donovan," and I really resent it.

[laughter]

Here, speaking first in support of the motion -- The U.S. Should Let In 100,000 Syrian
Refugees -- David Miliband, President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee
and former U.K. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Everybody good?

[applause]

All right. I don't usually, you know, fall apart that much as I did tonight. So, I'm --
everybody who's new, this doesn't always happen. I do want to say this, though -- that
what did happen tonight was a fantastic debate. I thought we actually saw a very, very
strong dichotomy of views from four debaters who actually agree in fundamental ways
on so much. The -- what's best for this country.

20:29:57

They both -- that's their highest priority, for both sides. The destruction of ISIS is a goal for both sides. But what they also brought to this debate was a respect for the process of a debate, civil dialogue, civil discourse, bringing facts, bringing ideas. We need a lot more of that. Our congratulations to the spirit [unintelligible] argued tonight.

[applause]

And also, to everyone who got up and asked a question -- including the question with the "or" -- fascinating idea. I just think it would have taken us a little bit off course. But I don't want you to feel disrespected for the pass on the question at all. I actually was quite impressed by it. And everyone else who got up and asked a question, they were really on target tonight. So, thank you. You made the program better by doing that.

[applause]

So I want to mention this about Intelligence Squared U.S., and some of you have heard me say this before, but we have so many new people in the audience tonight.

20:30:52

We are a nonprofit organization, and when we put this podcast out there into the world -- and it's doing very, very well, getting bigger all of the time. YouTube downloads are getting into very, very serious numbers. Our program is actually used in thousands of classrooms across the nation now as a teaching tool. We do it for free -- we give it away for free. We don't do it for free. It costs a lot, and the ticket prices don't come anywhere close to covering the costs, nowhere near. We get nearly 60 percent of our funding from people -- individuals who are supporting the program, like you, many of whom are in the audience tonight. And we are so, so grateful for these contributions, for being able to make this program. And we're getting bigger. We're -- we -- we're doing many, many more debates per year as the years go by. And we're growing. So thank you. First, I want to say, "Thank you," to everybody who's given us support, and a round of applause for all of them.

20:31:47

[applause]

And also I just want to say that if you would like to make a contribution, to keep this thing moving -- you knew I was going to get there -- to go to our website, you can do it. You can be part of putting this out into the world. So our voting system is new, and it's presented some glitches to us including tonight in the second vote. So we're going to do it again.

[laughter]

But now you know how to do it.

Male Speaker:
John, people left.

John Donovan:
Did people leave?

Male Speaker:
Yes.

John Donovan:
You can start voting now. The system's open again. Can somebody go out to the street and find those people?

[laughter]

I'm going to just -- yeah, you have a question? Sure. Okay, great question.

20:32:48

If you're with -- basically, if you're with this side, they are number one, they are number two, and undecided. And the motion -- if you are for the motion, "The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees," just as they are for the motion, that's number one. If you are against, this is the against side, that's number two.

Jessica Vaughn:
I'm starting to worry about hanging chads or something.

John Donovan:
Yeah, yeah.

[laughter]

Are we good to lock out? Okay, we are locked out. I bet it works this time. I want to talk about our upcoming debates very briefly as the results come out. They'll be out in about 90 seconds. Next month, Wednesday, February 3rd, we are going to be back here debating the motion, "Lifespans Are Long Enough." The question is, you know, "Even if we could find a cure to aging, is that a good thing or should we just let go when the time comes --"

[laughter]

"-- peacefully and contentedly?" The rest of our spring season will include debates on campus speech, on artificial intelligence, on corporate subsidies, and on hunting.

20:33:52

For more information and to purchase tickets, you can go to our website, iq2us.org. And if you can't join our live audience, and folks who are watching the livestream know this, you can watch us on a livestream through our website, iq2us.org. We also -- all of these debates exist as videos on our app on Apple and Android Mobile. Search for iq2us in the iTunes Store or on Google Play. And we're also on [unintelligible]. And, as I said, we are heard on public radio stations across the country so you can look in your local area. One more little bit of business, we've just started working with a very cool organization called newsy.com. And what they've started to do with these debates, and it actually works remarkably well, is they've been boiling them down into two-minute debates. And their website, newsy.com, shows a lot of the -- our recent debates done in this format, and it's a taste of how the debate went. And I was personally skeptical that it could happen so successfully, but they really -- they really have learned how to nail it.

20:34:54

They also put up data on the screen that informs what the debaters are saying. So it's worth taking a look at newsy.com at the IQ2 U.S. debates. And the last thing is you can go to our website for all of the information and follow us on Twitter and Facebook. So now I'm going to dance while I wait for the results to come up.

[laughter]

We're 30 seconds away. I won't even talk about my upcoming book --

[laughter]

-- tempting as that may be.

Male Speaker:

That would be a unique thing.

John Donovan:

Yes, that somebody at a podium would talk about his upcoming book. No, I won't. I won't.

Male Speaker:

-- you would refrain.

John Donovan:

I'm going to refrain. This is about you guys tonight. Okay, here it comes. Okay. Through all of the glitches, two thirds of which were my vocal cords, we have come to the conclusion of tonight's debate.

20:35:47

You have been asked to vote twice, once before you heard the arguments and once again after you've heard the arguments and remember the team whose numbers move the most in percentage point terms between the two votes will be declared our winner. Let's look at the first vote on the motion The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees. Before the debate 52 percent agreed with that, 12 percent were against, 36 percent were undecided. Those are the first votes. Let's look at the second result. In the second result the team arguing for the motion they went from 52 percent to 72 percent. That's a 20 percent --

[applause]

-- 20 percent gain, so 20 percent is the number to top. The team against the motion their first vote was 12 percent. Their second vote was 21 percent. They only went up 9 percentage points. That means the team arguing for the motion The U.S. Should Let in 100,000 Syrian Refugees has clearly won this Intelligence Squared U.S. debate. Congratulations to them.

20:36:49

[applause]

And from me, John Donovan, Intelligence Squared U.S., we'll see you next time.

20:36:52

[end of transcript]