**The Drivers of Grievance and Unrest in the World’s Populations: Understanding Instability, Terrorism & Migration**

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Great power competition is as much over the hearts and minds of populations as it is about strategic force and control of natural resources. People’s grievances and frustrations lead to social unrest, acts of terror and politically destabilizing migration. This brief reviews a series of statistical models that were conducted for the 2019 SMA Great Power Competition project to understand and anticipate where destabilizing forces arise and why. The study began with existing academic models that were developed for government use and extended them by adding newly emergent factors like climate change and adding new measures of population risk sensitivity. The results anticipate hot spots and their effects on US interests for strategic planning, and identify factors potentially influenced by inter-agency efforts. The findings can be summarized as follows:

* **Political instability**is driven by hunger, risk acceptant elites, the interaction of fuel export and corruption, weak democracy, mountainous terrain, economic isolation, and ethnic division.
* **Terrorism**is fueled by large populations, ties to MENA oil producers, the interaction of fuel export and corruption, economic isolation, and a risk acceptant middle class.
* **Migration from undeveloped countries**is driven by hunger, a youth bulge, homicide and political oppression, and
* **Migration to developed countries**is driven by permissive immigration policies and the attraction of national wealth.

Country-specific statistical analyses revealed several patterns of stability and instability based on the inequality and risk sensitivity of their populations:

* Countries with **low inequality** are **stable**, such as Finland.
* Countries with **unusually high levels of inequality** are characterized by extremely **high levels of interpersonal violence**, such as Honduras and South Africa. Interpersonal violence is a driver of **illegal migration**.
* **Agrarian countries** have extremely **high levels of inequality** and consequently **experience unrest**in rural areas, which in turn is exacerbated by rural/urban inequalities. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Honduras, Nigeria and Ethiopia are good examples.
* Countries where some **sectors have lost wealth and status**, or perceive an external threat to their status, have **seen nationalist and populist parties gain power**. Examples include Pakistan, Germany, Italy, UK, and to a lesser extent Iran.