According to The Guardian, UK, the administration had a chance to dump Assad in 2012 and turned it down because the president and his crackerjack national security team figured Assad would fall anyway. Walter Russell Mead comments;  
... If true, this was a staggering missed opportunity. The President’s string of misjudgments on the Middle East—on the peace process, Erdogan, withdrawal from Iraq, Libya, ISIS as the “J.V. team”, and Syria—is one of the most striking examples of serial failure in the annals of American foreign policy. Generally speaking, what the President seems worst at is estimating the direction in which events are flowing. He thought Erdogan was taking Turkey in one direction; Erdogan was going somewhere else. He thought there was a transition to democracy in Egypt; there never was a prospect of that. He has repeatedly been caught flatfooted by events in Syria. And Putin keeps running rings around him.  
Understand the intentions and estimating the capabilities of people who don’t share his worldview are not our President’s strong suits.

The Pope is coming to town. The Weekly Standard's Irwin Stelzer greets him.  
In eleven days the much-travelled Pope Francis will set foot on American soil for the first time: Unlike his two immediate predecessors, he did not visit this country before rising to the papacy. His baggage will include the mind-set typical of Latin American anti-U.S. populists, in his case the Argentine variety, numerous vitriolic attacks on our economic system, and support for many of the positions being taken by the Democrats’ left wing. And he will be unpacking that baggage before a joint session of Congress, the UN, a school in East Harlem (NYC), a prison, and a variety of other groups, as well as before television cameras covering his visit on channels devoted to it on a 24/7 schedule. ...  
... Pope Francis, or the more egalitarian “Bishop of Rome,” as he prefers to be called, is unambiguously opposed to the American system of “savage capitalism”. He has famously quoted a fourth century Doctor of the Church, St. Basil of Caesarea, who called money “the devil’s dung”, has railed against the “anonymous influences of mammon” and a “new colonialism” that includes “free trade treaties … [and] imposition of austerity,” and stated a preference for “cooperatives.” Throw in Francis’ views that we are witnessing “a disturbing warming of the climatic system … due to the great concentration of greenhouse gasses”, and that “there is an urgent need of a true world political authority”, and you have positions that it will take more than a spoonful of the Pontiff’s charm to make go down the throats of many Americans. Including rich, philanthropic Catholics. Politico reports that donors such as billionaire Ken Langone, working to raise $180 million for the restoration of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, are so upset by the Pope’s attacks on capitalism, and on the rich, that they might just stop giving to the Church. ...  
... Final on the list of ironies is that there is a sense in which Pope Francis is the world’s über capitalist. The church he heads and controls owns 20 percent of Italy’s real estate, 25 percent of all the real estate in Rome, and has worldwide real estate assets that, counting no other assets, are valued at $2 trillion. The English-speaking MBAs hired by Francis to sort out the Church’s finances (pre-Francis, Italian was the official language in the Vatican counting house, limiting the available labor pool) told New Yorker magazine’s Alexander Stille that they recently discovered $1.2 billion in financial assets not previously on the Vatican’s balance sheet. Financial manager
Danny Casey and fellow Australian, Cardinal George Pell, Francis’ appointee to the job of Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy, told Stille that assets not devoted to the Church’s central mission – helping the poor and elderly, for example -- “should be considered commercial assets, from which the Vatican should try to gain the best possible monetary return.” Oh.

Ed Driscoll of Instapundit spotted this Thomas Sowell nod to Eric Hoffer's explanation of the psychological underpinnings of the left's urge to control others.

But as Thomas Sowell once told an interviewer:

"There’s something Eric Hoffer said: “Intellectuals cannot operate at room temperature.” There always has to be a crisis — some terrible reason why their superior wisdom and virtue must be imposed on the unthinking masses. It doesn’t matter what the crisis is. A hundred years ago it was eugenics. At the time of the first Earth Day a generation ago, the big scare was global cooling, a big ice age. They go from one to the other. It meets their psychological needs and gives them a reason for exercising their power."

Driscoll's post also led us to Robert Zubrin's National Review look at a Yale historian's inadvertent attempt to explain a rational basis for Hitler's lebensraum. In my 2012 book, Merchants of Despair, I exposed the role that Malthusian thought — the belief that the world cannot support a growing human population — has had in motivating most of the worst atrocities of the past two centuries, notably including those of Nazism and more recent antihuman movements operating under the “population control” and “environmentalist” banners. Now prominent Yale historian Timothy Snyder has written Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning, which also lays out the Malthusian ideology behind the Holocaust.

But instead of forcefully rejecting the axioms of Malthusianism and the claims of its modern adherents, Snyder argues there’s something to them. The world faces catastrophe from the overconsumption of fossil fuels, anthropogenic global warming, and impending food and resource shortages, he says — echoing similar pernicious claims of the 1930s — and for this he blames the U.S. ...

... But Snyder has it horribly wrong. Competition for scarce resources (land, food, energy) is effective as a demagogic myth, but it is not reality. There was no ecological crisis in the 1930s, any more than there is today. What there was then, as there is today, was ideological insanity. The Nazis’ war had no rational basis. Germany never needed more “living space.” Germany today has much less land per person, but a far higher living standard, than it had under the Third Reich. The problem was all in their heads.

Similarly, today there is no resource crisis. There are far more resources available per capita today than ever before in human history. That is because resources are defined by human creativity. Thus, contrary to Malthus and all of his followers, the global standard of living has continuously gone up as the world’s population has increased. The more people — especially free and educated people — the more inventors, and inventions are cumulative.
In this respect, America has been the most productive of nations. It is an anti-American — and anti-human — lie to say that we are destroying the world’s resources. The opposite is true. ...

... The real lesson of the Holocaust for our time is this: **We are not threatened by there being too many people. We are threatened by people who say there are too many people.** ...

... The fundamental question boils down to this: Are humans destroyers or creators? If the idea is accepted that the world’s resources are fixed, with only so much to go around, then each new life is unwelcome, each unregulated act or thought is a menace, every person is fundamentally the enemy of every other person, and each race or nation is enemy of every other race or nation. The ultimate outcome of such a worldview can only be enforced stagnation, tyranny, war, and genocide. ...

More unintended consequences of the policies of our betters are reported as we learn rural residents in Botswana not only are missing income from trophy hunters, but also are in danger of losing crops and their lives as their villages are invaded by lions, elephants, and the like. [NY Times](https://www.nytimes.com) has the story.

**SANKUYO, Botswana —** Lions have been coming out of the surrounding bush, prowling around homes and a small health clinic, to snatch goats and donkeys from the heart of this village on the edge of one of Africa’s great inland deltas. Elephants, too, are becoming frequent, unwelcome visitors, gobbling up the beans, maize and watermelons that took farmers months to grow.

Since Botswana banned trophy hunting two years ago, remote communities like Sankuyo have been at the mercy of growing numbers of wild animals that are hurting livelihoods and driving terrified villagers into their homes at dusk.

The hunting ban has also meant a precipitous drop in income. Over the years, villagers had used money from trophy hunters, mostly Americans, to install toilets and water pipes, build houses for the poorest, and give scholarships to the young and pensions to the old. ...

... Zambia recently lifted a two-year-old ban on hunting leopards, and lion hunting is likely to resume next year. In 2013, Zambia curbed trophy hunting and imposed a blanket ban on hunting the big cats, also in an effort to replace trophy hunting with photographic tourism.

But that brought little income compared to hunting, Ms. Kapata said, while lions increasingly stalked villages for livestock. During the hunting ban, a local councilor was killed by a lion, she said.

“We had a lot of complaints from local communities,” Ms. Kapata said. “In Africa, a human being is more important than an animal. I don’t know about the Western world,” she added, echoing a complaint in affected parts of Africa that the West seemed more concerned with the welfare of a lion in Zimbabwe than of Africans themselves. ...
American Interest
Fecklessness 101
by Walter Russell Mead

Apparently the Obama administration turned down a Russian offer to dump Assad... because the Administration was sure he was going to fall on his own. The Guardian reports:

[Former Finnish president and Nobel peace prize laureate Martti] Ahtisaari held talks with envoys from the five permanent members of the UN security council in February 2012. He said that during those discussions, the Russian ambassador, Vitaly Churkin, laid out a three-point plan, which included a proposal for Assad to cede power at some point after peace talks had started between the regime and the opposition.

But he said that the US, Britain and France were so convinced that the Syrian dictator was about to fall, they ignored the proposal. “It was an opportunity lost in 2012,” Ahtisaari said in an interview.[..]
At the time of Ahtisaari’s visit to New York, the death toll from the Syrian conflict was estimated to be about 7,500. The UN believes that toll passed 220,000 at the beginning of this year, and continues to climb. The chaos has led to the rise of Islamic State. Over 11 million Syrians have been forced out of their homes.

If true, this was a staggering missed opportunity. The President’s string of misjudgments on the Middle East—on the peace process, Erdogan, withdrawal from Iraq, Libya, ISIS as the “J.V. team", and Syria—is one of the most striking examples of serial failure in the annals of American foreign policy.

Generally speaking, what the President seems worst at is estimating the direction in which events are flowing. He thought Erdogan was taking Turkey in one direction; Erdogan was going somewhere else. He thought there was a transition to democracy in Egypt; there never was a prospect of that. He has repeatedly been caught flatfooted by events in Syria. And Putin keeps running rings around him.
Understanding the intentions and estimating the capabilities of people who don’t share his worldview are not our President’s strong suits.

Weekly Standard
Francis in the Land of Savage Capitalism
by Irwin M. Stelzer

In eleven days the much-travelled Pope Francis will set foot on American soil for the first time: Unlike his two immediate predecessors, he did not visit this country before rising to the papacy. His baggage will include the mind-set typical of Latin American anti-U.S. populists, in his case the Argentine variety, numerous vitriolic attacks on our economic system, and support for many
of the positions being taken by the Democrats’ left wing. And he will be unpacking that baggage before a joint session of Congress, the UN, a school in East Harlem (NYC), a prison, and a variety of other groups, as well as before television cameras covering his visit on channels devoted to it on a 24/7 schedule.

There are some 70 million Catholics here in America, about 25 percent of them foreign-born, most Hispanic. That overstates their electoral significance, since none of the 13 states in which Catholics represent 30 percent or more of the population are swing states: most are reliably Democratic, a few equally reliable Republican. Still, in key swing states such as Florida (26 percent), and Ohio and Colorado (24 percent each), Catholics far outweigh the importance of Jews (3.3 percent, 1.3 percent and 2 percent, respectively), whose influence in elections is the stuff of which some folks’ nightmares are made. So they matter. And the Pope’s visit comes at a time when the battles for both parties’ presidential nominations are well under way, and involve economic and social issues to which he attaches great importance.

Which brings us to the contents of his baggage. Pope Francis, or the more egalitarian “Bishop of Rome,” as he prefers to be called, is unambiguously opposed to the American system of “savage capitalism”. He has famously quoted a fourth century Doctor of the Church, St. Basil of Caesarea, who called money “the devil’s dung”, has railed against the “anonymous influences of mammon” and a “new colonialism” that includes “free trade treaties … [and] imposition of austerity,” and stated a preference for “cooperatives.” Throw in Francis’ views that we are witnessing “a disturbing warming of the climatic system … due to the great concentration of greenhouse gasses”, and that “there is an urgent need of a true world political authority”, and you have positions that it will take more than a spoonful of the Pontiff’s charm to make go down the throats of many Americans. Including rich, philanthropic Catholics. Politico reports that donors such as billionaire Ken Langone, working to raise $180 million for the restoration of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, are so upset by the Pope’s attacks on capitalism, and on the rich, that they might just stop giving to the Church.

President Obama can live with the Pope’s attack on free trade deals. He believes that he can get the two now being negotiated through the Republican congress, over the opposition of most of his own party. But the President relishes papal support for the tough regulatory measures he will be carrying to Paris in December as part of his plan to reduce CO2 emissions, counting on what Churchill called the Pope’s “invisible legions” to pressure their governments to follow the American delegation’s lead.

Most directly on the firing line are the five Catholic candidates for the Republican presidential nomination: Messrs. Bush, Jindal, Pataki, Rubio and Santorum. “He’s definitely aiming to influence the political process and doing so by stressing the moral implications of this issue and the urgency of this issue,” said Tomas Insua, founding movement coordinator at the Global Catholic Climate Movement. “Pope Francis is a hugely influential voice…” So far Rick Santorum and Jeb Bush have invited the Pope to stay out of the climate change debate, Bush adding, “I’m a Catholic and try to follow the teachings of the Church. … [But] I don’t go to Mass for economic policy or for things in politics.” Fortunately, we have come a long way from 1928 when Democrat Al Smith was swamped by Herbert Hoover, in part because the country was not ready to elect a Roman Catholic, and from 1960, when John F. Kennedy had to assure the voters that he believed “the separation of church and state is absolute, where no Catholic prelate would tell the president (should he be Catholic) how to act….”. Besides, the Republican candidates will have ample opportunity to further inter the specious “dual loyalty” charge by voicing their disagreement with the Pope on the substance of the issues he will raise.
Climate change is not the only issue that will inevitably be brought up during the Pontiff’s tour. Like many others, Francis worries that our society is too unequal. But the Republican solution – more rapid economic growth – runs counter to the papal view that America already consumes too much of the world’s resources. So if the plight of the world’s poor is to be alleviated, income must be redistributed from rich to poor. Which Democrats will quite reasonably cite as support for raising the minimum wage and increasing taxes on “the rich”.

When all is said and done, to the extent that the Pope galvanizes any part of the electorate sufficiently to affect their actions some 15 months hence, it will be lower income groups, those Hispanic immigrants who are legally able to vote, and perhaps women who find the Pope’s more relaxed views on abortion and post-divorce remarriage less off-putting. These groups already lean heavily towards Democrats, but the first two often do not turn out in the numbers that Democrats would prefer and that a papal nudge might induce.

There is an irony in all of this. Three, in fact. The first is that this anti-American Pope was elected with the help of a solid contingent of 14 American cardinals, allegedly disgusted with the Vatican’s financial corruption and the failure of the its Italian bureaucracy to move determinedly against priests who sexually molested children. The second irony is that the liberal supporters of the economics of Pope Francis are the very same politicians who defend the provisions of Obamacare that require all businesses to insure the costs of contraception, and Obama-administration regulations requiring Catholic business owners to bake cakes and take wedding pictures of participants in same-sex marriages. And it is the opponents of the economic nostrums the Pope proposes, explicitly or implicitly, to cure the world’s ills, who are fighting in court to allow Catholic businessmen and others to refuse to obey laws that they say compel them to violate their faith.

Final on the list of ironies is that there is a sense in which Pope Francis is the world’s über capitalist. The church he heads and controls owns 20 percent of Italy’s real estate, 25 percent of all the real estate in Rome, and has worldwide real estate assets that, counting no other assets, are valued at $2 trillion. The English-speaking MBAs hired by Francis to sort out the Church’s finances (pre-Francis, Italian was the official language in the Vatican counting house, limiting the available labor pool) told New Yorker magazine’s Alexander Stille that they recently discovered $1.2 billion in financial assets not previously on the Vatican’s balance sheet. Financial manager Danny Casey and fellow Australian, Cardinal George Pell, Francis’ appointee to the job of Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy, told Stille that assets not devoted to the Church’s central mission – helping the poor and elderly, for example -- “should be considered commercial assets, from which the Vatican should try to gain the best possible monetary return.” Oh.

Instapundit

**YALE PROFESSOR EXPLAINS HITLER’S MALTHUSIANISM, THINKS THERE’S SOMETHING TO IT:**

by Ed Driscoll

In contrast, as Bob Zubrin writes at NRO, “The real lesson of the Holocaust for our time is this: We are not threatened by there being too many people. **We are threatened by people who say there are too many people:**"
The fundamental question boils down to this: Are humans destroyers or creators? If the idea is accepted that the world’s resources are fixed, with only so much to go around, then each new life is unwelcome, each unregulated act or thought is a menace, every person is fundamentally the enemy of every other person, and each race or nation is enemy of every other race or nation. The ultimate outcome of such a worldview can only be enforced stagnation, tyranny, war, and genocide.

But if we choose instead to have faith in the power of unfettered creativity to invent unbounded resources, then every new life if a gift, and every person, race, and nation becomes ultimately the potential friend of every other, and, rather than suppression, the fundamental purpose of government must be to protect human liberty at all costs.

Only in a world of freedom can resources be unlimited. Only in a world of unlimited resources can all men be brothers.

But as Thomas Sowell once told an interviewer:

There’s something Eric Hoffer said: “Intellectuals cannot operate at room temperature.” There always has to be a crisis — some terrible reason why their superior wisdom and virtue must be imposed on the unthinking masses. It doesn’t matter what the crisis is. A hundred years ago it was eugenics. At the time of the first Earth Day a generation ago, the big scare was global cooling, a big ice age. They go from one to the other. It meets their psychological needs and gives them a reason for exercising their power.

Malthusianism provides the perfect mechanism for what William James dubbed at the start of the 20th century “The Moral Equivalent of War” — or war itself, in the case of post-Weimar Germany.


In my 2012 book, Merchants of Despair, I exposed the role that Malthusian thought — the belief that the world cannot support a growing human population — has had in motivating most of the worst atrocities of the past two centuries, notably including those of Nazism and more recent antihuman movements operating under the “population control” and “environmentalist” banners. Now prominent Yale historian Timothy Snyder has written Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning, which also lays out the Malthusian ideology behind the Holocaust.

But instead of forcefully rejecting the axioms of Malthusianism and the claims of its modern adherents, Snyder argues there’s something to them. The world faces catastrophe from the overconsumption of fossil fuels, anthropogenic global warming, and impending food and
resource shortages, he says — echoing similar pernicious claims of the 1930s — and for this he blames the U.S.

In an op-ed in yesterday's New York Times promoting his book, Snyder makes his case. Snyder starts out well enough, with the historical facts:

The quest for German domination was premised on the denial of science. Hitler’s alternative to science was the idea of Lebensraum. Germany needed an Eastern European empire because only conquest, and not agricultural technology, offered the hope of feeding the German people. In Hitler’s “Second Book,” which was composed in 1928 and not published until after his death, he insisted that hunger would outstrip crop improvements and that all “the scientific methods of land management” had already failed. No conceivable improvement would allow Germans to be fed “from their own land and territory,” he claimed. Hitler specifically — and wrongly — denied that irrigation, hybrids, and fertilizers could change the relationship between people and land.

The pursuit of peace and plenty through science, he claimed in “Mein Kampf,” was a Jewish plot to distract Germans from the necessity of war.

Moving his attention to the present day, Snyder then offers this insight: “Climate change threatens to provoke a new ecological panic.” For example:

Climate change has . . . brought uncertainties about food supply back to the center of great power politics. China today, like Germany before the war, is an industrial power incapable of feeding its population from its own territory, and is thus dependent on unpredictable international markets.

This could make China’s population susceptible to a revival of ideas like Lebensraum. The Chinese government must balance a not-so-distant history of starving its own population with today’s promise of ever-increasing prosperity — all while confronting increasingly unfavorable environmental conditions. The danger is not that the Chinese might actually starve to death in the near future, any more than Germans would have during the 1930s. The risk is that a developed country able to project military power could, like Hitler’s Germany, fall into ecological panic, and take drastic steps to protect its existing standard of living.

But then, having warned about such “panic,” he proceeds to promote it:

China is already leasing a tenth of Ukraine’s arable soil, and buying up food whenever global supplies tighten. During the drought of 2010, Chinese panic buying helped bring bread riots and revolution to the Middle East. The Chinese leadership already regards Africa as a long-term source of food. Although many Africans themselves still go hungry, their continent holds about half of the world’s untilled arable land. Like China, the United Arab Emirates and South Korea are interested in Sudan’s fertile regions — and they have been joined by Japan, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia in efforts to buy or lease land throughout Africa.

Nations in need of land would likely begin with tactfully negotiated leases or purchases; but under conditions of stress or acute need, such agrarian export zones could become fortified colonies, requiring or attracting violence.

So we are looking at the grim prospect of world war and genocide over resources. And it’s all America’s fault:
By polluting the atmosphere with greenhouse gases, the United States has done more than any other nation to bring about the next ecological panic, yet it is the only country where climate science is still resisted by certain political and business elites. These deniers tend to present the empirical findings of scientists as a conspiracy and question the validity of science — an intellectual stance that is uncomfortably close to Hitler’s.

The full consequences of climate change may reach America only decades after warming wreaks havoc in other regions. And by then it will be too late for climate science and energy technology to make any difference. Indeed, by the time the door is open to the demagoguery of ecological panic in the United States, Americans will have spent years spreading climate disaster around the world.

But Snyder has it horribly wrong. Competition for scarce resources (land, food, energy) is effective as a demagogic myth, but it is not reality. There was no ecological crisis in the 1930s, any more than there is today. What there was then, as there is today, was ideological insanity. The Nazis’ war had no rational basis. Germany never needed more “living space.” Germany today has much less land per person, but a far higher living standard, than it had under the Third Reich. The problem was all in their heads.

Similarly, today there is no resource crisis. There are far more resources available per capita today than ever before in human history. That is because resources are defined by human creativity. Thus, contrary to Malthus and all of his followers, the global standard of living has continuously gone up as the world’s population has increased. The more people — especially free and educated people — the more inventors, and inventions are cumulative.

In this respect, America has been the most productive of nations. It is an anti-American — and anti-human — lie to say that we are destroying the world’s resources. The opposite is true. Through our inventiveness we have played, and are continuing to play, an outstanding role in creating the world’s resources. Since the dawn of the republic, America has been a powerhouse of invention, responsible for, among other things, the lightning rod, the steamboat, the telegraph, petroleum drilling and refining, recorded sound, the telephone, electric lighting, centrally generated electric power, airplanes, motion pictures, mass-produced automobiles, television, nuclear power, computers, communication satellites, modern agriculture, the Internet, laptop computers, mobile computers, and shale fracking, to name just a few. The United States may use more oil than any other country, but if not for us, no one would have any oil, because we invented the petroleum industry. Other countries would not be richer if America did not exist. On the contrary, they would be immeasurably poorer.

Similarly, America would not benefit by keeping the rest of the world underdeveloped. We are 4 percent of the world’s population but are responsible for half the inventions. We can take pride in that, but in fact we would be much better off if the rest of the world were contributing inventions at the same rate we do. The world needs more Americans.

The real lesson of the Holocaust for our time is this: We are not threatened by there being too many people. We are threatened by people who say there are too many people.

Snyder, of all people, should be aware of this, because he follows developments in Russia and Eastern Europe closely and has written articles warning of the danger posed by the growth of the anti-American, anti-freedom “Eurasianist” movement led by Russian fascist ideologue Aleksandr Dugin. It is the contention of the Duginites that the world would be better off without America. Indeed, I was present at a conference on global issues held at Moscow State University, Dugin’s home turf, in October 2013, when one of his acolytes got up and gave a fiery
speech denouncing America for using up all the world’s resources, including its oxygen supply. Such words amount to a call for war. It is appalling that Snyder, along with many others of today’s politically correct set, should essentially embrace their underlying logic.

The fundamental question boils down to this: Are humans destroyers or creators? If the idea is accepted that the world’s resources are fixed, with only so much to go around, then each new life is unwelcome, each unregulated act or thought is a menace, every person is fundamentally the enemy of every other person, and each race or nation is enemy of every other race or nation. The ultimate outcome of such a worldview can only be enforced stagnation, tyranny, war, and genocide.

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NY Times
A Hunting Ban Saps a Village’s Livelihood
by Norimitsu Onishi

SANKUYO, Botswana — Lions have been coming out of the surrounding bush, prowling around homes and a small health clinic, to snatch goats and donkeys from the heart of this village on the edge of one of Africa’s great inland deltas. Elephants, too, are becoming frequent, unwelcome visitors, gobbling up the beans, maize and watermelons that took farmers months to grow.

Since Botswana banned trophy hunting two years ago, remote communities like Sankuyo have been at the mercy of growing numbers of wild animals that are hurting livelihoods and driving terrified villagers into their homes at dusk.

The hunting ban has also meant a precipitous drop in income. Over the years, villagers had used money from trophy hunters, mostly Americans, to install toilets and water pipes, build houses for the poorest, and give scholarships to the young and pensions to the old.

Calls to curb trophy hunting across Africa have risen since a lion in Zimbabwe, named Cecil by researchers tracking it, was killed in July by an American dentist. Several airlines have stopped transporting trophies from hunts, and lawmakers in New Jersey have introduced legislation that would further restrict their import into the United States.
But in Sankuyo and other rural communities living near the wild animals, many are calling for a return to hunting. African governments have also condemned, some with increasing anger, Western moves to ban trophy hunting.

“Before, when there was hunting, we wanted to protect those animals because we knew we earned something out of them,” said Jimmy Baitsholedi Ntema, a villager in his 60s. “Now we don’t benefit at all from the animals. The elephants and buffaloes leave after destroying our plowing fields during the day. Then, at night, the lions come into our kraals.”

In early 2014, this sparsely populated nation became one of a few African countries with abundant wildlife to put an end to trophy hunting, the practice at the core of conservation efforts in southern Africa. President Seretse Khama Ian Khama of Botswana, a staunch defender of animal rights, stated that hunting was no longer compatible with wildlife conservation and urged communities like Sankuyo to switch to photographic tourism. The decision was cheered by animal welfare groups in the West.

But Botswana is an outlier. Government officials and conservationists in most African countries staunchly support trophy hunting, including Zambia, which is going back to hunting after a short-lived suspension.

“Zambia has always hunted from time immemorial,” Jean Kapata, Zambia’s minister of tourism, said in a phone interview. “Zambia is a sovereign nation, and therefore people should respect the rules we have in our country.”

Zambia recently lifted a two-year-old ban on hunting leopards, and lion hunting is likely to resume next year. In 2013, Zambia curbed trophy hunting and imposed a blanket ban on hunting the big cats, also in an effort to replace trophy hunting with photographic tourism.

But that brought little income compared to hunting, Ms. Kapata said, while lions increasingly stalked villages for livestock. During the hunting ban, a local councilor was killed by a lion, she said.

“We had a lot of complaints from local communities,” Ms. Kapata said. “In Africa, a human being is more important than an animal. I don’t know about the Western world,” she added, echoing a complaint in affected parts of Africa that the West seemed more concerned with the welfare of a lion in Zimbabwe than of Africans themselves.

Zambia’s quick reversal points to the central role that trophy hunting has played in managing wildlife in southern Africa, where the industry’s emergence in the 1960s helped restore degraded habitats and revive certain species.

In South Africa, the biggest market, hunting occurs on private game ranches. But in the rest of the region, it takes place mostly on communal lands where villages like Sankuyo are supposed to receive a cut of the fees paid by trophy hunters.

Sankuyo, a village of around 700 people, sits just east of the Okavango Delta in northern Botswana, which has one of the richest concentrations of wildlife in Africa. In 1996, Sankuyo signed on to a community-based natural resources program that focused on hunting and was supported by the United States government.

In 2010, Sankuyo earned nearly $600,000 from the 120 animals — including 22 elephants, 55 impalas and nine buffaloes — that it was allowed to offer to trophy hunters that year, said Brian
Child, an associate professor at the University of Florida, who is leading a study on the impact of the ban. Botswana’s wildlife officials, who set the annual quotas, last allowed a lion to be hunted in Sankuyo in 2006.

Among the benefits to the community, 20 households chosen by lottery received outdoor toilets, all painted in pastel colors that stand out in a village turned brown in the dry season. Standpipes were installed in courtyards, connecting 40 families to running water.

“That’s what made people appreciate conservation,” said Gokgathang Timex Moalosi, 55, Sankuyo’s chief. “We told them, ‘That lion or elephant has paid for your toilet or your standpipe.’ ”

Where trophy hunting benefits communities, locals are more motivated to protect wild animals as a source of revenue, experts say. But in most places without trophy hunting, they are simply considered a nuisance or danger, and locals are more likely to hunt them for food or to kill them to defend their homes and crops.

Dr. Child, an expert on wildlife management in Africa, said trophy hunting had failed to benefit many communities because of mismanagement and corruption. But in the countries where trophy hunting had worked well — Botswana, until the ban; Namibia; and Zimbabwe, until its economy collapsed in the past decade — it had accomplished the twin goals of generating income and protecting wild animals.

“When hunting was introduced, we actually ended up killing less animals,” Dr. Child said. “That’s the irony.”

With hunting now banned, there are growing signs that more wild animals could be killed, experts say. Lions, which used to feast on the meat of elephants left behind by hunters, are increasingly entering villages looking for livestock. In the past two years here in Sankuyo, villagers have killed two lions that wandered into residential areas.

Botswana’s swelling population of elephants, accounting for a third of the total in Africa, is clashing increasingly with a growing human population. Poaching rings trafficking in ivory to East Asia have targeted elephants elsewhere on the continent. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s Red List of Threatened Species, African elephants are classified as “vulnerable,” below “endangered” and “critically endangered,” and their population is increasing.

“We’re experiencing an exponential increase in conflicts between animals and human beings,” said Israel Khura Nato, the head of the Botswana Department of Wildlife’s problem animal control unit in Maun, a town two hours from here.

According to the department, such conflicts recorded nationwide rose to 6,770 in 2014 from 4,361 in 2012. Poaching incidents increased to 323 in 2014 from 309 in 2012.

More poisoned vultures have been found in this area, possibly killed by poachers seeking to conceal their hunts, said Lucas Rutina, an ecologist at the University of Botswana’s Okavango Research Institute near Maun. Residents of communities that used to derive an income from trophy hunting no longer attend conservation workshops at the institute, he said.

“Now they are going back to hating animals,” Dr. Rutina said.
Galeyo Kobamelo, 37, said he had lost all 30 goats in the kraal just outside his family compound to lions and hyenas since the hunting ban. Elephants had destroyed his fields of sorghum and maize.

With the hunting ban, his family no longer receives the free meat that hunters left behind. His mother, Gomolemo Semalomba, 58, no longer receives a pension, about $100 twice a year.

“Now we don’t eat meat anymore,” she said, pointing to a table with plates of cabbage, beans and maize meal.

Mr. Moalosi, Sankuyo’s chief, said he hoped to bring back some of the benefits after his village made a successful transition to photographic tourism.

But experts say that sightseeing tourists gravitate to prime areas with dense concentrations of wildlife, like the Okavango Delta’s Moremi Game Reserve west of here. They rarely venture to peripheral areas like Sankuyo, or even more remote corners, which do, however, draw hunters.

“Photographic tourism is not that viable in those areas,” said Joseph Mbaiwa, the Okavango Research Institute’s acting director.

In Sankuyo, William Moalosi is one of dozens of people that the hunting ban has left jobless. Many have left Sankuyo to seek work in Maun.

Mr. Moalosi, 40, worked for eight years as a tracker and driver, earning about $100 a month. He used some of the money to replace his old house, made of branches and the mud from a termite mound, with a modern structure. He lost his crops of maize and watermelons to marauding elephants a few months ago.

Villagers, including the chief, identified Mr. Moalosi as the man who had shot and killed a lioness last month. The animal had climbed a tree to jump down into a kraal with goats; unable to get out of the enclosure, the lioness posed a danger to the village, which gave the community the right to kill the animal.

But sitting outside his house, flanked by neighbors, Mr. Moalosi denied he was the shooter. He said he knew nothing about the circumstances of the animal’s death, a statement that drew knowing smiles from his neighbors.

“We are living in fear since lions and leopards now come into our village,” he said. “Elephants cross the village to go to the other side of the bush. The dogs bark at them. We just run into our houses and hide.”
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