Study: 0.00000001% Chance of Being Killed by Illegal Immigrant Terrorist

Kevin Batts

September 18, 2016

The chances of you being killed by an illegal immigrant terrorist in the United States is 1 in 10.9 billion per year. This is according to a new study by Alex Nowrasteh, Immigration Policy analyst for the Cato Institute. The study which looked at terrorism committed by immigrants is touted as the first terrorism risk analysis of the visa categories that terrorist used to enter the US. The study looked at terrorist attacks spanning the last 40 years and included those lost in Sep. 11 attacks.

U.S. Deportations Over Time | InsideGov

The study makes the argument that although the American government plays a crucial and important role in vetting for potential threats, it's important that any change in new immigration policy is conducted with a proper *"cost-benefit calculation."* Federal resources should be allocated to the most efficient means to combat these kinds of attacks. Terrorist who came in as tourists or immigrants accounted for 88 percent of murders committed by a terrorist in the US, but as the study makes clear, our policy prescriptions may be out of step with logical immigration policy.

In the study, Alex Nowrasteh said, *"This policy analysis identifies 154 foreign- born terrorists in the United States who killed 3,024 people in attacks from 1975 through the end of 2015. Ten of them were illegal immigrants, 54 were lawful permanent residents (LPR), 19 were students, one entered on a K-1 fiancé(e) visa, 20 were refugees, 4 were asylum seekers, 34 were tourists on various visas, and 3 were from Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries. The visas for nine terrorists could not be determined."*

The numbers presented by themselves are utterly stunning. For example, 1.14 billion visas were granted from 1975 thru 2015. Of that 1.14 billion, 154 foreign-born terrorist were able to enter. Only 0.0000136 percent of visas granted by the US went to a terrorist. That means there was one terrorist for every 7.78 million non-terror visa recipient. The stats, in regards to you being killed by a terrorist is even worse; you have a 0.00000001 percent chance of being killed by an illegal immigrant terrorist, or a 0.00000004 percent chance of being killed by an asylum seeker. These numbers are incredible, to say the least. They're a testament to our stringent vetting process no matter how flawed it may be.

The analysis covered a 41-year period from 1975 thru 2015. This time period includes the mass of Cuban refugees in Florida during the seventies and eighties, and it also included Vietnamese immigration of the seventies as well. Leaders in Washington, including the two top candidates for president, use terrorism as a justification for increasing the surveillance state, but it's important that we keep things in perspective while we have that debate. For example, 9/11 attacks aside, 426 people have been killed in all terrorist attacks in the last 40 years. Of that 426, 41 people have been murdered by foreign-born actors and of those only 24 were killed after 9/11. Native born Americans killed 385 people with 168 being killed in the OKC bombing in 1995. This isn't to say we shouldn't take precautions. The argument isn't about whether we have a surveillance state or nihilism, but that's primarily how people tend to frame it.

The study also looks into the idea of a moratorium on all immigration entering the US. This, of course, would have a disastrous financial outcome for the economy as a whole. The study says, "the economic cost of a moratorium on all future immigration is tremendous. Professor Benjamin Powell of Texas Tech University estimated the economic cost of a complete immigration moratorium at _"$229 billion annually"_. Looking at the cost of just banning all tourist from coming into the US could also be in the billions. In 2014, tourism added _"$194.1 billion directly and indirectly to the US economy."_ With a topic surrounded by so much rhetoric and economic fallacies, a study like this may offer a new perspective.