



Donald Trump Eyes Nukes to Eradicate Terror

The president's shills say he's keeping his campaign promises. Remember just how apocalyptic those promises were.

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Let's step back and take a calm look at President Donald Trump's executive order banning travel to America by residents of seven predominantly Muslim countries and giving preference to religious minorities in those countries, specifically Christians.

As the libertarian Cato Institute has pointed out, since 1975 the number of Americans slain here in terrorist attacks by people from those seven countries is zero.

The questions to focus on are:

- 1) What are Trump and his nationalist advisors trying to achieve, and
- 2) How does the ban advance their stated goals?

The purpose of the order was not to protect Americans from radical jihadists hell-bent on murder, as the order states. Trump's subsequent conduct confirms this, as we shall see.

The order justifies itself by declaring that increased vetting of immigrants, refugees, and visitors after the 9/11 attacks "did not stop attacks by foreign nationals who were admitted to the United States."

Yet it does not apply to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, or Lebanon, the countries where the 9/11 attackers came from, nor to Pakistan or Afghanistan. It does not apply to any of the predominantly Muslim countries where Trump is known to have significant business dealings, with profits hidden in his still-unreleased tax returns here and through his crony state connections there.

What the order unquestionably did was give aid and comfort to ISIS and other apostate Muslim organizations. Even if you believe that Trump and Steve Bannon—his modern Rasputin—had no

such intent, the result is what matters. Presidents don't get a pass for being ignorant or bigoted. Presidents are accountable for their actions.

Trump's and Bannon's public statements show they want us to all be in dire fear for our lives. That fear enhances their power. They want to drive from government anyone who does not support their radical agenda, which Bannon has said is to destroy the existing order in line with his self-proclaimed Leninist views.

When 100 State Department officials used an official channel to express their concerns that the executive order would put Americans in danger, the White House response was retaliatory. Sean Spicer, the press secretary, said they should get in line behind Trump or quit. Never mind that these diplomats acted properly, expressing their concerns under a policy that promises no retaliation. Never mind that American presidents are not dictators, at least not yet.

That Trump acted with disregard for the safety of Americans—soldiers in Iraq, tourists in Britain, executives in Indonesia—became evident Monday night when he fired Sally Q. Yates, a career federal prosecutor who was serving as the acting attorney general.

Yates was the only Justice Department official with authority to obtain surveillance warrants vital to protecting Americans by intercepting terrorist telecommunications.

What makes the firing revealing is that it was gratuitous.

Yates said that—until someone convinced her that the travel ban was lawful—her department would not defend it in court. So far every judge who has heard challenges to the legality of the executive order has ruled against Trump.

If Trump cared about the safety and security of Americans, he could have used his authority to hire outside counsel to represent the government in defending his order while keeping Yates in place so new surveillance warrants could be obtained when needed until the Senate confirms a new attorney general.

While Trump demands "extreme vetting" of people from Muslim-dominated countries, his order was so poorly vetted that it is unlikely to survive appeals, and an experienced lawyer like Yates knew that.

In reply, the White House said Yates, who it called "very weak," has "betrayed the Department of Justice."

Ironically, when Yates was up for confirmation, she was asked: "Do you think the attorney general has the responsibility to say no to the president if he asks for something that's improper?"

Yates answered that she would always act to ensure the integrity of the Justice Department by defending the Constitution.

The person asking her that? Senator Jeff Sessions, Trump's attorney general nominee who at his own hearing made a similar pledge to be independent.

Trump's surrogates keep saying he is just keeping the promises he made to the American people. His executive orders so far make it very clear how far he intends to go to keep those promises, regardless of what actually fulfilling them could mean to the nation and the world.

So let's take a closer look at some of those promises, which are cause for more fear than the terror threat Trump keeps insisting he will somehow solve.

Let's turn to what Trump surrogates keep telling us: that the president is now faithfully carrying out what he promised on the campaign trail. So what else did he promise that's relevant to this ill-considered executive order?

In his inauguration address Trump promised to "unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the earth."

Bombs can kill. Drones and assassins can take out jihadi leaders. But only nuclear weapons can wipe something from the face of the earth.

What has Trump said about using nuclear weapons? Candidate Trump repeatedly told voters that, if he became president, he would use nuclear weapons. Trump told voters that he "loves war" and he meant "including nukes, yes, including nukes."

What more insight is needed? The man whose skills are bragging now about how he keeps his promises said again and again as a candidate that he will use nuclear weapons. Barely a minute into his presidency he promised to wipe jihadis "from the face of the earth."

That the whole point of nuclear weapons is to never use them is lost on Trump, whose ignorance on many issues I documented in my book *The Making of Donald Trump*. The man does not know a Shia from a Sunni or even a Sikh, nor the reasons those differences matter. The executive order shows that he does not understand that banning people from Iraq and Sudan—including those who worked with American soldiers, spies, and diplomats at great personal risk—can only put Americans in more danger.

Reviving blind and murderous hatred of America until there are new terrorist attacks helps Trump draw more power into the Oval Office. Think about the travel-ban executive order in relation to Trump's elevating the nationalist Bannon—whose avowed goal is "to bring everything crashing down"—to his national security meetings while the Joint Chiefs at the Pentagon henceforth can attend only by invitation.

These are not the actions of a servant of the American people temporarily imbued with authority to act in our name, but of a know-nothing hell-bent on doing whatever he wants.

So, don't be surprised if an American tactical nuclear weapon gets used against ISIS. I expect that he will at least try to get the military to do so—and I hope the generals say no.

But whether Trump sticks by that campaign promise or not, expect more official actions designed to inflame the world, to turn annoying minor problems like the dwindling ranks of ISIS into conflagrations that can serve as an excuse for ever more White House power.

As for fear, don't be afraid of pipsqueak ISIS so much as our president misusing our government to make us ever less safe and then offering himself as our only protection.

