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Trump Administration Lies Again

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It seems that U.S. President Donald Trump has been misspeaking – to put it mildly – more often than not – since at least the presidential election times. Many political analysts assumed that once elected he would modify his positions and behave more responsibly as a president. But old habits die hard, esp. for someone like a 70-year old Trump who continues to prove all those pundits wrong.

After winning the presidential race, Trump has surrounded himself with many hateful provocateurs in the White House – for example, guys like Steve Bannon, Sebastian Gorka, Stephen Miller and Michael Flynn – who see themselves as modern-day crusaders to settle their old scores with the world of Islam. “We must acknowledge that we are at war,” Flynn told Bannon during a discussion of terrorism in July 2016 in his Breitbart News Daily radio show. “Our enemies have declared war on us and we have to take this on with all the resources that the United States of America can bring to bear,” Flynn said. “There is no doubt.”

It is no coincidence that these advisers seem to be bent upon opening new frontiers with countries like Iran, much like what the neocons tried to do with Bush Jr.’s perennial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Like their new boss, they see immigration of Muslims to the USA as a threat to its security. So, a travel ban was imposed by Trump that singled out seven Muslim-majority countries (including Iran). We are told that his travel-ban came as a result of his consultation with Rudy Giuliani (ex-mayor of NY) – the immoral, greedy and hateful provocateur. That explains why it did not include any of the countries that produced the 9/11 radical Muslims.

Thanks to the Attorney General and Solicitor General of the Washington State, the Trump executive directive on travel ban has been found to be illegal by successive federal judges – from judge James Robart to the judges of the 9th circuit federal appeals court. A big part of the pushback over controversial travel ban is the idea that it’s a solution in search of a problem — that terrorism caused by refugees and immigrants is oversold, and especially from those seven Muslim countries.

According to a recent Cato Institute report, out of more than 3 million refugees admitted to the U.S. from 1975 to 2015, three committed terrorist acts that killed Americans. They were Cuban refugees in the 1970s and not Muslims.

Contrary to the unsubstantiated claims of the hatemongers some of the terrorist acts since 9/11 were foiled by Muslims before those attempted terrorist acts could harm anyone.

Trump and his advisors and staffs have been trying their best to propagating lies to justify his travel ban. At MacDill Air Force Base in Florida, President Trump complained on February 6 that “radical Islamic” terrorist attacks are “not even being reported” by the “very, very dishonest press.” He said, “Radical Islamic terrorists are determined to strike our homeland as they did on 9/11; as they did from Boston to Orlando, to San Bernardino. And all across Europe, you’ve seen what happened in Paris and Nice. All over Europe it’s happening. It’s gotten to a point where it’s not even being reported and, in many cases, the very, very dishonest press doesn’t want to report it. They have their reasons and you understand that.”

As usual, it was a lie. The media had widely covered all such matters of Muslim radicals. What they often ignore, however, are the acts of white supremacists and white nationalists committing hate crimes and planning attacks on Muslims, Jews, African Americans and other marginalized communities.

When confronted, the White House provided a list of 78 attacks that were carried out by terrorists or suspected terrorists from September 2014 onward (of course, it did not include any of the White supremacist and militia attacks against Muslims). A search in Nexis, a news database, for coverage of all 78 incidents, found tens of thousands of news articles, TV news transcripts and news wire accounts of the attacks and subsequent stories related to these attacks. [It should be noted that the vast majority of the victims of terrorism have been Muslims.]

Kellyanne Conway, Trump’s campaign manager and now an adviser to the president, on Thursday did nothing to rebut that line of argument, citing a nonexistent “Bowling Green massacre” as an example of the kind of attacks Trump’s executive order would root out.

Here’s the exchange with MSNBC’s Chris Matthews:

CONWAY: It’s the seven countries that were previously identified by President Obama as being high risk as being states that either harbor, train or export — and/or export terrorism. These are nations very narrowly proscribed and also temporary.

MATTHEWS: Sure.

CONWAY: I bet there was very little coverage — I bet — I bet it’s brand-new information to people that President Obama had a six-month ban on the Iraqi refugee program after two Iraqis came here to this country were radicalized and they were the masterminds behind the Bowling Green massacre.

MATTHEWS: Let’s ...

CONWAY: (INAUDIBLE) don’t know that because it didn’t get covered.

Well, the so-called Bowling Green massacre didn’t get covered because it didn’t happen; there was no Bowling Green massacre.

As The Washington Post’s Samantha Schmidt wrote, there were Iraqi citizens, living in Bowling Green, Kentucky, who were attempting to send weapons to al-Qaeda in Iraq, in 2011, but it never came to fruition. They were arrested, and their arrests were covered plenty.

Later Conway recanted her story saying that she meant to say “Bowling Green terrorists” and not massacre.

What Conway and Trump advisors didn’t mention is about the real terrorist plan to massacre Americans by a white supremacist in Bowling Green, Ohio. As the New York Times reported lately, the year was 2012. A federal raid had uncovered what the authorities feared were the makings of a massacre. There were 18 firearms, among them two AR-15 assault rifles, an AR-10 assault rifle and a Remington Model 700 sniper rifle. There was body armor, too, and the authorities counted some 40,000 rounds of ammunition. An extremist had been arrested, and prosecutors suspected that he had been aiming to carry out a wide assortment of killings.

“This defendant, quite simply, was a well-funded, well-armed and focused one-man army of racial and religious hate,” prosecutors said in a court filing.

The man arrested and charged was Richard Schmidt, a middle-aged owner of a sports-memorabilia business at a mall in town. Prosecutors would later call him a white supremacist. His planned targets, federal authorities said, had been African-Americans and Jews. They had found a list with the names and addresses of those to be assassinated, including the leaders of N.A.A.C.P. chapters in Michigan and Ohio. They wrote in a sentencing memo filed in court that Schmidt planned to assassinate “members of religious and cultural groups based only on their race, religion and ethnicity.” His cache of weapons, added prosecutors, had only one purpose: to start a “race war.” Other court documents suggest that he planned to videotape his killing spree and email the video clips to his fellow white supremacists.

Beefy, thick-necked, standing 6-foot-4 and weighing about 250 pounds, Schmidt had spent years in the Army as an active-duty soldier and a reservist. His military service ended in 1989 when he got into a fight and shot three people, killing one of them, a man named Anthony Torres. As a result, Schmidt spent 13 years in prison on a manslaughter conviction and was legally barred from owning firearms. And yet, he had acquired all those firearms!

After searching Schmidt’s property, the government came to believe he was involved with the National Alliance, a virulent and long-running extremist group, which was once among the nation’s most powerful white supremacist organizations. They also suspected him of an affiliation with the Vinlanders, a neo-Nazi skinhead gang.

Founded by William Pierce, who died in 2002, the National Alliance has long been linked to terrorism. Pierce, who started the group in 1970 and ran it for many years from a compound in West Virginia, wrote “The Turner Diaries,” an apocalyptic novel that basically lays out a blueprint for unleashing a white supremacist insurgency against the government. The novel was described by Timothy J. McVeigh as the inspiration for his bombing in 1995 of a federal office building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people.

Schmidt wound up being sentenced to less than six years in prison, after a federal judge said prosecutors had failed to adequately establish that he was a political terrorist, and he is scheduled for release in February 2018. The foiling of what the government worried was a credible plan for mass murder gained little national attention.

Schmidt's case isn't the only one involving terror threats by a white supremacist that received little coverage by mainstream media. On Monday, February 6, the trial of Christian minister Robert Duggart began in Tennessee federal district court.

Undercover FBI agents allege that Duggart was plotting to travel to upstate New York to kill Muslims there, using explosives, an M-4 assault rifle and a machete. According to a federal investigation, Duggart saw himself as a religious "warrior" and wanted to kill Muslims to show his commitment to his Christian god.

Many political observers opine that had Schmidt been a Muslim, surely his crime would have been called an act of terrorism and he would have been sentenced for a life term imprisonment. So, sadly, justice is not color (or more properly, religion) blind here, or so it seems. People's religion does matter in the flawed system that we have in the USA!

There is little doubt that Republicans and the Trump administration have been guilty of inflating perceived terrorism from Muslims while ignoring home-grown terrorism by non-Muslims, esp. the white supremacists.

In Ohio, around the same time that Schmidt was going to trial, there was another incident, where a gentleman was angry about something he saw on Fox News, went to a mosque in West Toledo, Ohio, set it on fire, did \$1.4 million damage to the mosque. As A.C. Thompson said in the Democracy Now, "And that case, again, is another one that's gotten very little attention."

Nor should one ignore the crime of Glendon Scott Crawford, a man sentenced to 30 years to life in December, for building a radioactive weapon of mass destruction to kill Muslims. The guy was a U.S. Navy veteran and a member of the Ku Klux Klan, another white supremacist. In September, three men called the Crusaders, were captured plotting to kill Muslims, Somali refugees, in Kansas. Just this week, a man who was a self-professed Trump supporter had burned down a mosque in Orlando, got 30 years to life—it was a hate crime—because he had prior convictions.

At the Southern Poverty Law Center, Ryan Lenz who has been tracking racist and extreme-right terrorists said that so far he's seen little from the Trump administration to suggest it will make a priority of combating political violence carried out by American racist groups.

"It doesn't seem at all like they are interested in pursuing extremists inspired by radical right ideologies," said Mr. Lenz, who edits the organization's HateWatch publication. Indeed, Reuters reported last week that the Department of Homeland Security is planning to retool its Countering Violent Extremism program to focus solely on Islamic radicals. Government sources told the news agency the program would be rebranded as "Countering Islamic Extremism" or "Countering Radical Islamic Extremism," and "would no longer target groups such as white supremacists who have also carried out bombings and shootings in the United States."

A.C. Thompson of the ProPublica, which is an independent, nonprofit newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest, writes, "It wouldn't be the first time the Department of Homeland Security chose to look away. In 2009, Daryl Johnson, then an analyst with the department, drafted a study of right-wing radicals in the United States... The report

predicted an uptick in extremist activity, particularly within “the white supremacist and militia movements.”

“Response to the document was swift and punishing. Conservative news outlets and Republican leaders condemned Mr. Johnson’s report as a work of “anti-military bigotry” and an attack on conservative opinion,” Thompson writes. “Janet Napolitano, the head of Homeland Security at the time, retracted the report and closed Mr. Johnson’s office, the Extremism and Radicalization Branch.”

Terrorism of any kind – whether committed by a Muslim or a non-Muslim – is pure evil and must be defeated. President Trump has every right to take prudent actions that would secure the lives of ordinary Americans. However, if his administration blames Muslims for the crimes of Daesh (or ISIS), it is like holding all Christian groups accountable for the Jonestown massacre (by Rev. Jim Jones) in Guyana or for the heinous activities of Joseph Kony’s Christian militia in Africa.

Hate crimes against the Muslim community have increased significantly since Trump has come to power. A mosque in Victoria, Texas, was burned down last month, and another in Quebec, Canada was attacked (by an anti-immigrant, white supremacist who claimed to support Trump) killing some six worshippers. None of these are good signs for western democracies.

President Trump simply cannot let the hard-core racists and bigots inside the White House to dictate government policies that would only breed hatred and intolerance. Neither can he afford to close his eyes to the crimes of the white supremacists and neo-Nazi terrorists here inside the USA. If he does, he would only encourage terrorists like Dylann Roof (a 21-year-old white supremacist who shot 9 Afro-Americans during a prayer service in the African Methodist Episcopal church in Charlestown, South Carolina), and Richard Schmidt, to start the race/ethnic/religious war – the real Bowling Green massacre that never happened. And that would be the end of America that we know about. His anti-Muslim policies are stupid and counterproductive providing oxygen to Daesh to survive and recruit.

For the USA to survive in this difficult time of dissension, it must continue to promote inclusion and multi-culture and shun exclusion, racism, intolerance and bigotry of any shade and form. The sooner Trump understands it the better it is for his administration, and the country – the land of the immigrants.