Tures: Even if temporary, travel ban a bad idea

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As the (temporary) travel ban executive order hit the news, it seemed like a no-brainer victory for the White House, I suppose. Muslims from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Sudan and Yemen would not be allowed to enter the United States for a period of time. It was sure to please the conservative base, and divide the Democrats between progressives who would oppose it, and moderates unwilling to oppose it, in the hopes of winning in 2018 and 2020.

Well that didn't go according to plan. You saw protests erupt across the United States airports. A majority of Americans (55 percent) oppose the plan. If anything, the ban helped unify the Democrats in a way that had not happened since before the 2016 election. And it has divided the Republicans so that not only have GOP moderates decried the executive order, but also hard core conservatives like TEA Party Star Congressman Justin Amash, a Michigan Republican. What went wrong for the White House?

First of all, those who crafted the executive order rushed it through the first week of the Trump Administration, without giving it a lot of thought as to what it would say, or why those countries were on the list. As the conservative Cato Institute pointed out, these are not the countries where attackers are from. Critics were quick to point out that many of the countries where 9/11 hijackers came from or lone wolves have emerged weren't on the list, and that these are places where Donald Trump does business.

Second, it was not written in consultation with key members of Congress on relevant committees, or even those in government who would be in charge of enforcing the ban. Those were the people who would not only be in charge of implementing the confusing order, but could have also provided expert advice that a team of bloggers and low-level congressional staffers clearly lack.

Third, there's something you should know about these countries that should seem pretty obvious once you think about it. The Afghan government is our ally in the battle against the Taliban, who you may remember provided the base for Al-Qaeda to attack us. It's the same for the Iraq government, that we helped build, which is working with us to rid the region of ISIS. Libya's in a similar position against an ISIS ally. It's the same with Yemen, locked in battle with the Houthis and an Al-Qaeda affiliate that we clashed with just last week in a commando raid.

Imagine our teammates in the war on terrorism explaining this order to their people, trying to convince them that America still supports them. Frankly, this represents a pre-9/11 mindset.

Had our military and intelligence community been consulted, they could have pointed out these serious drawbacks to the plan. Had Congress been consulted, they could have offered experience on the matter. Lawyers could have defended the plan in court better with consultation, which is why supporters of the ban are losing so badly in the judicial arena. And for a party that campaigned against Executive Orders, offering a flurry of them just means they think Americans aren't smart enough to catch on to the contradictions.

The architect of the plan, Steve Bannon, fancies himself as a Sun Tzu expert, claiming that sowing confusion is all part of the Chinese military expert's grand plan for success. So I'll leave him with a Sun Tzu lesson to think about: "If the words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, then the general is to blame."