



Why we need to calm down about terrorism

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Donald Trump is taking a page out of the Republican playbook to use the threat of terrorism to scare — and, therefore, try to control — Americans. This may have worked during the campaign, but now that he is actually president and can act on his inflamed rhetoric, Trump is learning that there are, thankfully, checks and balances in our system of government.

An executive order issued Jan. 27 that temporarily prevented citizens of seven Muslim countries from coming to the United States has been the focus of intense scrutiny. Almost immediately, federal judges stayed the order, which also banned all refugees and Syrians from entering the U.S., because it is likely unconstitutional. Federal officials, however, defied the court orders by continuing to revoke visas and barring people from flying to the United States.

Late last week, a federal judge in Washington issued a nationwide stay to the order, allowing hundreds of travelers from the seven countries to finish their trips to the U.S. Trump attacked the judge almost immediately. “The opinion of this so-called judge, which essentially takes law-enforcement away from our country, is ridiculous and will be overturned!” he tweeted Saturday morning.

First of all, there is no such thing as a “so-called judge.” Judge James Robart has all the requisite legal requirements and was appointed to the federal bench by President George W. Bush in 2003. He was confirmed by the Senate with a 99-0 vote. He is regarded as a conservative judge.

Second, courts have long served as a needed check on executive power. We do not live in a police state. When government officials overreach their authority, it is up to courts to rein them in. Likewise, courts must ensure that government officials — including the president and his staff — follow the law and the U.S. Constitution, just as our Founding Fathers intended.

Trump took his hysteria a step further Sunday, when he told Americans to blame Robart if there were any terrorist attacks in the U.S. “Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such

peril,” the president tweeted on Sunday. “If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!”

It sounds really scary, but reality doesn't back of Trump's fears.

The Cato Institute, which was founded by the Koch brothers who fund dozens of conservative and Republican causes, did an extensive analysis of the risk of terrorist attacks. It concluded that the chance of an American being killed in an attack by a refugee is 1 in 3.6 billion per year. The probability of being killed by an “illegal immigrant” is 1 in 10.9 billion per year.

You are more likely to be killed by a toddler with a gun, a lawnmower or falling out of bed than by an Islamic terrorist.

“The hazards posed by foreign-born terrorists are not large enough to warrant extreme actions like a moratorium on all immigration or tourism,” the report concluded.

With not enough real terrorist attacks to bolster their agenda, the Trump team made up an attack and used it as justification of the travel ban. White House counselor Kellyanne Conway has repeatedly cited the Bowling Green Massacre as a reason to be wary. However, there was no massacre in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Two Iraqi men living in Bowling Green pled guilty to federal charges of trying to send weapons and money to al-Qaida in Iraq to kill U.S. soldiers. The men admitted to using improvised explosive devices to kill American soldiers in Iraq, before the men came to the U.S. Their plot was disrupted by the FBI, and they did not kill anyone in the United States.

Trying again to inflame terrorism hysteria, the Trump team, including the president himself, blamed the media for not covering terrorist attacks without any evidence to back this claim. The White House then provided a long list of attacks to show that the media had not covered them. Nearly every attack on the list had been reported by the media, with many getting extensive coverage. The fact checking website PolitiFact rated the president's claim a “pants on fire” lie.

It is no lie that Trump has said nothing publicly about last week's terrorist attack on a mosque in Quebec, where a young white gunman opened fire, killing six men.