



## The White House just admitted that Trump's Muslim ban has nothing to do with national security

*The president is undermining his own rationale for the ban.*

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After his first attempt at a Muslim travel ban was blocked by a federal judge on constitutional grounds, President Trump originally planned to sign a new executive order toward that end on Wednesday.

According to Trump's logic, it made sense for him to do this as soon as possible, as his Muslim ban—which barred nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S. and suspended refugees from entering the country for 120 days—is a matter of urgent national security concern.

Consider the tweets Trump posted after his first effort was blocked. He made it sound as though a terror attack might happen imminently without a ban (the White House never provided any evidence that was the case, however).

But plans changed after Trump's first speech to Congress on Tuesday night. With a number of pundits praising the speech merely because of the subdued tone Trump used, the White House has apparently decided to delay signing of the new executive order in order to lap up all the positive coverage.

Following the speech, CNN, citing a senior administration official, reported that Trump “has delayed plans to sign a reworked travel ban in the wake of positive reaction to his first address to Congress.”

More from CNN:

*Signing the executive order Wednesday, as originally indicated by the White House, would have undercut the favorable coverage. The official didn't deny the positive reception was part of the administration's calculus in pushing back the travel ban announcement.*

*“We want the (executive order) to have its own ‘moment,’” the official said.*

David Martosko, U.S. political editor for the Daily Mail, heard the same thing.

But if Trump truly believes implementing a Muslim ban is an urgent national security concern, it seems odd to delay it simply because of a positive news cycle. After all, he'd have you believe that the security of the country is at stake.

Though the details are subject to change until Trump signs it, his second attempt at a Muslim ban will reportedly look much like the first. The Wall Street Journal reports that unlike the original version, the new one "is likely to apply only to future visa applicants from targeted countries, according to people familiar with the planning," not current visa holders. Other reports indicate nationals from Iraq are likely to be exempted from the new ban.

Last week, White House senior adviser Stephen Miller said that only "minor technical differences" will differentiate the new ban from the original.

"Fundamentally, you're still going to have the same basic policy outcome for the country," Miller said during a Fox News appearance. "But you're going to be responsive to a lot of very technical issues that were brought up by the court."

The ACLU indicated Miller's comment about the new ban having "the same basic policy outcome" means they'll present the same constitutional argument against it.

Miller went on to claim that "people joining ISIS, joining terror groups, joining al Qaeda and committing or attempting to commit acts of crime and terror against our nation" are "serious problems." But a Cato Institute study found that going back to 1975, people from the seven countries affected by Trump's original Muslim ban have committed zero fatal terrorist attacks in the United States.

Cato's findings are echoed in a new Department of Homeland Security internal document that concludes "citizenship is unlikely to be a reliable indicator of potential terrorist activity." And the DHS document comes on the heels of bipartisan group of top senior U.S. diplomats and national security officials, including two former secretaries of state, filing a affidavit in federal court arguing that Trump's Muslim ban will do "long-term damage to our national security and foreign policy interests."

"We view the Order as one that ultimately undermines the national security of the United States, rather than making us safer," the affidavit says. "In our professional opinion, this Order cannot be justified on national security or foreign policy grounds. It does not perform its declared task of 'protecting the nation from foreign terrorist entry into the United States.'"