



NYT Opinion: President Trump Should Target Guns Rather Than Muslim Terrorists

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A February 11 *New York Times* opinion piece claims President Trump missed the mark with his executive order on immigration, suggesting he would have kept Americans safer by targeting guns instead of Muslim terrorists.

The author tries to support this suggestion by pointing to things that have caused more American deaths than have been caused by Muslim terrorists. However, this deductive process is ruined by fact that the author does not bother naming all the things that cause more American deaths than have been caused by guns.

For example, the *NYT* piece says,

In the four decades between 1975 and 2015, terrorists born in the seven nations in Trump's travel ban killed zero people in America, according to the Cato Institute. Zero. In that same period, guns claimed 1.34 million lives in America, including murders, suicides and accidents. That's about as many people as live in Boston and Seattle combined. It's also roughly as many Americans as died in all the wars in American history since the American Revolution, depending on the estimate used for Civil War dead.

It's true that Muslim Americans — both born in the United States and immigrants from countries other than those subject to Trump's restrictions — have carried out deadly terrorism in America. There have been 123 such murders since the 9/11 attacks — and 230,000 other murders. Last year Americans were less likely to be killed *by* Muslim terrorists than *for* being Muslim, according to Charles Kurzman of the University of North Carolina. The former is a risk of approximately one in six million; the latter, one in one million. The bottom line is that most years in the U.S., ladders kill far more Americans than Muslim terrorists do. Same with bathtubs. Ditto for stairs. And lightning.

Although the author's propositions are questionable—the number of Americans killed in the Civil War and World War II alone actually exceeds one million—his argument can be summed up thus: Guns pose a greater threat than Muslim terrorists, and ladders, bathtubs, stairs, and lightning

pose a greater threat than Muslim terrorists as well. However, the author does not continue with the deduction, and perhaps that is because doing so would quickly undermine the attempt to present guns as the predominant threat to American lives.

For example, for Americans 10 and under, the threat of accidental death by fire is seven times greater than threat of an accidental shooting death, and the threat of an accidental drowning death is 16 times greater. Moreover, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), drugs and cars pose a greater threat than guns. DEA numbers for the year 2013 show there were 33,636 gun-related deaths, intentional and accidental combined. But these were surpassed by 35,369 car-related deaths and a whooping 46,471 drug-related deaths.

And if we want to get more specific, looking at the mass public shootings on which the left seizes in order to fight for gun control, it is worth noting that Centers for Disease Control and Prevention numbers—together with FBI figures—show that more Americans are killed via bicycles and falls than are killed mass public shootings.

So is President Trump also wrong for targeting immigration from suspected terrorist countries instead of targeting bicycles?