



Trump's Travel Ban Does Nothing To Stop The Most Deadly Form Of Terror In The U.S.

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President Donald Trump has repeatedly attempted to restrict travel into the U.S. in the name of national security, yet none of his administration's travel bans would have prevented an attack like the one that took place in Las Vegas on Sunday night.

At least 58 people were killed and over 500 were injured after a shooter opened fire at a music festival outside Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino — the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history. The alleged shooter, 64-year-old Stephen Paddock, was found dead near the scene. He lived in Mesquite, Nevada, a small town northeast of Las Vegas.

The FBI said it has found “no connection” between Paddock, a white retiree, and an international terrorist group.

The latest iteration of Trump's travel ban, announced last week, is set to place new restrictions on travel to the U.S. from eight countries beginning later this month. The new ban removed earlier restrictions on Sudan, while adding Chad, North Korea and Venezuela to the list. Restrictions remain in place for Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, however.

President Donald Trump's travel ban would restrict travel into the U.S. in the name of national security, but many more people are killed by gun violence than by foreign-born terrorists.

The American Civil Liberties Union is once again challenging the ban in court, calling the new version just as xenophobic as the earlier versions, which faced legal challenges as to whether the policies unconstitutionally discriminated against Muslims. As a presidential candidate last year, Trump called for a “total and complete shutdown” of Muslims entering the U.S.

Trump's travel ban reflects his primary focus on conventional acts of terror as opposed to mass shootings, which studies say are becoming more frequent and deadly in recent years. The previous deadliest shooting in modern U.S. history occurred at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, just last year. The Pulse shooter, Omar Mateen, was born in the U.S. to Afghan parents.

Between 1975 and 2015, foreign-born terrorists — including immigrants and tourists — killed a total of 3,024 people on U.S. soil, according to a 2016 Cato Institute report. All but 41 of those deaths came on Sept. 11, 2001, and in the following days. More than 30,000 people in the U.S. are killed by firearms each year.

As a legal matter, it's difficult to prove in court that a mass shooting constitutes an act of terror. In the most basic definition of the term, however, a mass shooting inflicts terror on a population, whether it be at a school, a church, a movie theater or a baseball field. If the goal is to prevent casualties of U.S. citizens, mass shootings such as the one that occurred in Las Vegas deserve as much attention from lawmakers as conventional terror attacks.

“This was a horrific event to say the least,” Nevada’s Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson said Monday, as casualty numbers continued to rise. “This was a classic WMD. This is a weapon, and a man, of mass destruction.”

Addressing the shooting in remarks Monday morning at the White House, Trump called the attack an “act of pure evil.” He talked of finding comfort in Scripture and said Americans will join together. The president did not, however, mention terror or guns — notable for someone who frequently criticized Democrats for refusing to use the phrase “radical Islamic terrorism.”

Trump’s rationale for curtailing immigration and admission of refugees into the U.S. is also weakened by the likelihood of American citizens losing their lives at the hands of foreign-born terrorists and refugees. According to a 2016 study by the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, foreign-born terrorists pose a very small risk to U.S. citizens — far lower than dying by shark attack or asteroid strike. Moreover, according to Cato, the probability of being killed in a refugee-perpetrated terror attack is 1 in 3.64 billion per year.

The threat of Islamic terrorism to Americans also tends to be exaggerated. Between the Sept. 11 terror attacks and the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, right-wing terror attacks — defined by the government as motivated by principles of racial supremacy and embracing anti-government or anti-regulatory beliefs — actually claimed more lives than those reportedly motivated by Islamic extremism, according to a recent study by the New America Foundation.

Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), who pushed for gun control legislation after a 2012 attack by a gunman in his home state in which the victims included 20 children, blasted his colleagues on Monday for refusing to take action to curb gun violence.

“This must stop. It is positively infuriating that my colleagues in Congress are so afraid of the gun industry that they pretend there aren’t public policy responses to this epidemic,” he said in a statement. “There are, and the thoughts and prayers of politicians are cruelly hollow if they are paired with continued legislative indifference. It’s time for Congress to get off its ass and do something.”