

DAILY NEWS

President Trump's Muslim ban excludes countries linked to his sprawling business empire

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President Trump's most recent executive order effectively bans citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S. for at least 90 days — but some Muslim countries were spared from the order's blacklist, even though they have deep-seated ties to terrorism.

Conspicuously, Trump doesn't hold any business interests in any of the countries on the list, but holds major stakes in several of those excluded from it, records show.

Friday's executive order, signed at the Pentagon, suspends the issuing of U.S. visas or travel permits to people from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Not a single American was killed on U.S. soil by citizens from any of those countries between 1975 and 2015, according to statistics tallied by the conservative-leaning Cato Institute.

However, the same set of statistics show that nearly 3,000 Americans were killed by citizens from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt in the same time period — with the bulk of those killed being victims of the 9/11 attacks. Yet, people from those three countries are still welcome to apply for U.S. visas and travel permits.

In a striking parallel, Trump's sprawling business empire — which he has refused to rescind ownership of — holds multi-million dollar licensing and development deals in all of those countries, raising potential conflict of interest concerns and alarming questions over what actually went into the decision process behind Friday's executive order.

SAUDI ARABIA

Not much is known about Trump's connection to the Saudis. Yet, the little bit of information that is available raises a number of questions.

Trump registered eight companies tied to hotel interests in the country shortly after launching his campaign in August 2015, according to The Washington Post. The companies were registered under such names as THC Jeddah Hotel and DT Jeddah Technical Services; company names The Post reported bore striking resemblance to ones Trump has registered in other foreign countries.

During a campaign rally in Alabama last year, Trump expressed his admiration for the Saudis.

“They buy apartment from me,” he said. “They spend \$40 million, \$50 million. Am I supposed to dislike them? I like them very much.”

Those comments could cock a few eyebrows, since most of the 9/11 attackers were from Saudi Arabia.

Further, a declassified U.S. intelligence report known as the “28 pages” claims the Saudi government and its wealthy citizens actively funded Muslim radicalism through mosques and charities in the U.S. around the time of 9/11 attacks. The 19 hijackers were in close contact with Saudi nationals before carrying out the terror attack, which became the worst one in U.S. history.

In total, Saudi citizens killed 2,369 Americans between 1975 and 2015, according to CATO.

EGYPT

In Egypt, Trump’s business holdings are characteristically vague. His latest Federal Election Commission filing lists two companies in the country, Trump Marks Egypt and Trump Marks Egypt LLC, both of which are most likely connected to a development venture.

The State Department, meanwhile, strongly discourages Americans from traveling to Egypt since “terrorist attacks can occur anywhere” due to the presence of ISIS-affiliated groups.

Egyptian citizens killed a total of 162 Americans between 1975 and 2015.

The Trump Organization has a licensing and management deal in Dubai for two golf courses and a whole neighborhood of luxury villas currently under construction. The second golf course was designed by Tiger Woods.

Trump has traveled frequently to the Middle Eastern nation with his daughter, Ivanka, and the two have been seen in numerous photographs over the years, playing golf and shaking hands with affluent sheiks.

While the UAE ranks as the sixth richest country in the world, a widespread presence of ISIS- and Al Qaeda- affiliated groups persists in the area and poses a serious threat to American citizens, according to the State Department.

“Both historical and current information suggest that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Qaida, and affiliated organizations continue to plan attacks against Western targets,” states a safety notice on the department’s website, using alternate spellings for the groups.

A total of 314 Americans were killed by UAE citizens between 1975 and 2015, according to CATO.

TURKEY

Trump also currently licenses his name to two luxury towers in the Turkish metropolis of Istanbul.

He received as much as \$5 million from the deals last year, according to his latest financial disclosures. Furthermore, since the election, Trump’s development partner, Dogan Sirketler Grubu Holding, has seen its shares surge by nearly 11%.

Meanwhile, Turkey is a hotbed for terrorist activities, with the State Department issuing a travel alert advising U.S. citizens not to travel to the country because of “increased threats from terrorist groups” just this Wednesday.

“An increase in anti-American rhetoric has the potential to inspire independent actors to carry out acts of violence against U.S. citizens,” the alert states.

Trump is seen with his Indonesian business partner Hary Tanoesoedibjo and his wife Liliana in a recent Twitter photo. The couple was also pictured in a tweet with Damac Properties chairman Hussain Sajwani at a post-inauguration party at the Trump Hotel in Washington.

In addition to Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, President Trump holds extensive business interests in the Muslim majority nations of Indonesia and Azerbaijan. Both have documented ties to Islamic terrorism — yet neither is included on the executive order's blacklist.

White House press aides did not immediately return a request for comment from The News.

Immediately after the Pentagon signing ceremony on Friday, Trump was harshly rebuked by people of varying political persuasions from across the world.

Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said “tears are running down the cheeks of the Statue of Liberty tonight” upon learning of the order.

“This is one of the most backward and nasty executive orders that the President has issued,” he added.

Trita Parsi, the co-founder and president of the National Iranian American Council, told The News early Saturday that he’s been bombarded with phone calls from concerned friends and family in his home country.

“This has been a nightmare,” he said. “We knew something was coming, but we did not expect this... We definitely did not expect this.”

Trump, meanwhile, claimed before signing the order that the “new vetting measures” will make it much harder for terrorists to enter the country.

“We don’t want them here,” he said. “We only want to admit those into our country who will support our country and love deeply our people.”