

Ben Carson and Donald Trump

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November 23, 2015

Trump also continued to express bewilderment that Carson was succeeding in Iowa, where polls released last month showed the retired neurosurgeon leading Trump handily.

"And then he threw himself out there to test the proposition that had been announcing, and sure enough he's getting 20,000 showing up to hear him so good on him", he said. He did not expound on just how an administration would determine what constitutes "radicalization" or "anti-American". He said the agency now can only afford to monitor "30 to 60 people", numbers he did not explain before aides steered him away from reporters.

In the Bloomberg Politics poll, 53 percent of Americans say refugees should not be admitted at all; 28 percent say the program should be kept as is; and 11 percent favored only accepting Christians - which has been proposed by Jeb Bush and Ted Cruz, and vociferously denounced by President Obama.

Cruz's rise came as the Texas senator picked up large ground among very conservative voters, with 40 percent supporting him, compared to just a quarter at the end of October.

"I'm a big fan of Donald Trump's, but I'm not a fan of government registries of Americans citizens", he said when asked about Trump's remarks on the need for a Muslim-tracking database.

"Well, I'm going to have to see what happens", Trump said. The reporter asked if that was something Trump would put in place as president.

"When the NY Times says, from his top adviser and a couple of others, he's essentially incapable of learning foreign policy, I mean that's pretty sad", Trump said at a rally Wednesday night.

He tried in another interview to clarify that position, suggesting a "watch list" for the Syrian refugees admitted to the U.S. I want a database for the refugees that - if they come into the country. When you're especially angry at jihadis and looking for revenge, go figure that the guy who's telling audiences he'll "bomb the sh*t out of ISIS" (profanity included for extra I'm-not-a-politician cred) gets a boost.

His rivals have vacillated in how they have handled other inflammatory comments from Trump, apparently wary of alienating his supporters while increasingly concerned that he has held his grip on the race deep into the fall. "When I did this, I said I have to be treated fairly". "I want surveillance of certain mosques, OK".

"There's no such thing as political correctness when you're fighting an enemy who wants to destroy you and everything that you have anything to do with", Mr. Carson told ABC. "We've had it before and we'll have it again". The bill would also impose a 30-day waiting period for people to want to enter the U.S. to allow for a background check to be completed.

Civil liberties experts said a database for Muslims would be unconstitutional on several counts, while the libertarian Cato Institute's Ilya Shapiro said the idea also violates basic privacy and liberty rights.