



The Dangerous Stupidity of Trump's Travel Ban

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In his neverending quest to 'make xenophobia great again', President Trump released his revised travel ban on Monday. Although the revised executive order does include changes to the original ban, such as leaving Iraqis off the list as well as green card holders and dual citizens, most in the media agree Trump's travel ban remains a discriminatory Muslim ban, albeit a watered-down version.

On the revised travel ban, Secretary Rex Tillerson declared, "It is the president's solemn duty to protect the American people and with this order, President Trump is exercising his authority to keep our people safe."

John Kelly, Secretary of Homeland Security added,

We must undertake a rigorous review and are undertaking a rigorous review of our immigration vetting programs to increase our confidence in the decisions we make relative to visitors and immigrants that travel to the United States. We cannot risk the prospect of malevolent actors using our immigration to take American lives.

Brownie points for fear mongering, Mr. Kelly, but unfortunately what you say is false: In "Finding Refuge," a 60 Minutes special report which originally aired on October 16, 2016, Gina Kassem, a Foreign Service Officer for the Department State who oversees the refugee resettlement program in North Africa and the Middle East, told CBS News Americans can have faith in the vetting process because,

...they (Syrian refugees) undergo so many steps of vetting, so many interviews, so many intelligence screenings, so many checks along the way. They're fleeing the terrorists who killed their family members, who destroyed their houses. These are the victims we are helping through our program.

Considering all the fuss, refugees and immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries have done little in the way of terrorism on U.S. soil.

In fact, after extensive research, Alex Nowrasteh, immigration expert at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, discovered the number of Americans killed on U.S. soil between 1975 and 2015 by any national of the seven countries Trump included in his original ban was exactly zero.

Yes, zero.

According to Nowrasteh's research, during this period six Sudanese, six Iranians, two Iraqis, two Somalis and one Yemeni were convicted of either plotting or carrying out a terrorist on U.S. soil, which in the end did not result in casualties.

Seventeen cases in 40 years.

And the number of terrorists plots or attacks on U.S. soil committed by Libyans and Syrians between 1975 and 2015? Again, a big fat zero.

Nowrasteh's stated in the *Atlantic* that, "Foreign-born terrorism is a hazard, but it is manageable given the huge economic benefits of immigration and the small costs of terrorism."

The United States is a country of immigrants, including this patriotic father and son. [Image by A Katz/Shutterstock]

With numbers like this, Trump's Muslim ban is not only discriminatory, it's also a case of dangerous stupidity which will likely put more American lives at risk: The two most recent terrorist attacks carried out on U.S. soil, the San Bernardino attack and Orlando nightclub shooting, were carried out by "homegrown violent terrorists" who became radicalized by Islamic extremists over the internet.

One group of individuals likely to be celebrating Trump's Muslim ban? Recruiters for radical Islamic groups. Thanks to Trump, recruitment probably just got a whole lot easier.

Sadly, Trump's policies towards Muslims and immigrants is in some ways just another case of history repeating itself: In the 1920s, the U.S. was gripped by a similar xenophobic fervor, which gave rise to the Immigration Act of 1924, a federal law which limited the number of immigrants admitted annually to 2% in an attempt to "preserve the ideal of American homogeneity". The country also went through two "Red Scares," the second giving way to McCarthyism.

Back in high school history class, very few of us would have thought or said, "Demonizing and scapegoating the Jews was maybe not the nicest thing in the world, but Hitler had his reasons," or "Sending Japanese women and children to internment camps was necessary because they were a threat to our safety." It's unlikely many of us count Senator McCarthy among our personal heroes.

Because of this, we need to clearly call Trump's travel ban out for what is actually is: A case of fear mongering xenophobia, which actually puts the country in greater danger.

The travel ban is unconstitutional and, frankly, downright un-American. To support or even tolerate such orders will someday put us on the wrong side of history.

Let's make sure that never happens.