

POLITICO

Trump cites questionable data to blame foreigners for U.S. terror attacks

Isaac Arnsdorf

February 28, 2017

"According to data provided by the Department of Justice, the vast majority of individuals convicted for terrorism-related offenses since 9/11 came here from outside of our country."

According to data compiled by the New America Foundation, every "jihadist" who carried out a lethal attack in the U.S. since 9/11 was a citizen or legal resident. Counting non-lethal attacks, the vast majority of perpetrators were citizens or permanent residents. Forty-eight percent (192 out of 399) were U.S.-born citizens. Another 86 were naturalized citizens and 46 were permanent residents. Only eight were illegal immigrants and 16 were refugees or asylum seekers.

Trump appears to be citing a 2016 report from Jeff Sessions, Trump's attorney general, who was then an Alabama senator, claiming that "at least 380 of the 580 individuals convicted of terrorism or terrorism-related offenses between September 11, 2001, and December 31, 2014, were born abroad." But, as Alex Nowrasteh of the Cato Institute pointed out, only 40 of those convictions were in fact for terrorist attacks planned on U.S. soil, and 241 were not even for terrorism offenses.