

Islam: One Size Does Not Fit All!
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Both extreme ends of the political spectrum have a problem with their assessment of Islam, the religion, and Muslims as a global community of people. They are talking over each other, and the most serious consequence was the hasty, ill-considered initiative of President Trump to ban entry of people from seven Muslim-majority countries. Unless Americans of all political stripes understand the real nature of militant Islam, which by its own admission has declared war on the world, even against other Muslim societies, we will not win this one. By not understanding the real enemy, we are making more enemies than we might not have had.

Islam is a religion, a religion with many different ways of observing it. Muslims are people who may or may not be practitioners of any particular form of Islam. In today's world, there are people with Muslim ancestors who do not practice the religion at all. They are secular, just as are most of the people in the modern world. Muslims are also subjects of a variety of countries, which, even when Muslim-majority, have different ways of life. Muslims in Saudi Arabia have different religious practices than Muslims in Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, India, or Indonesia. Some Muslims are our allies in the war against Militant Islam (Jihadis). Others say they are our allies (Saudi Arabia and Pakistan), but support with money, armament, and brainwashing schools at war with the world. One size does not fit all Muslims!

Jihadi fanatics are waging a war, murdering people for political purposes. This is a fact, with daily attacks in the Muslim world itself: suicide bombers in marketplaces, reopened sex slave markets doing brisk business in Africa and wherever ISIS rules, and assaults on peaceful civilians in Bali, Istanbul, Berlin, Paris, London, Madrid, and the US. These are equal-opportunity murderers, and they are actually killing more fellow Muslims than non-Muslims.

So what was wrong with President Trump's ban on a select kind of Muslims from seven countries in the Muslim world? For one thing, he had the wrong countries, having omitted Saudis, Egyptians, and Afghans, all of which have harbored and were birthplaces of people who actually attacked us. How about Chechens? The Boston bombers were immigrants, given every benefit of American life, yet were passionately murderous to their fellow citizens. Mr. Trump has picked on the wrong people.

Also wrong with this Trump initiative: refugees are fleeing for their lives. The attacks are not coming from them. The vetting process of immigrants since 9/11 has grown increasingly rigorous. We are not being inundated by floods of dangerous refugees. The danger comes from some of their children and grandchildren, some born here, who have been radicalized by the internet and the global propaganda machine of Militant Islam. The danger is internal.

The Trump administration has avoided the issue of religious bias against Muslims by not banning all Muslims on the basis of their religion. As noted, many Muslim countries were spared. But they have badly explained why they are making an exception to admit Arab Christians. It is not Christianity that they are defending, but persecuted minorities. They did not say this! They did not include Muslim Shiites persecuted by Sunnis, or vice versa. They did not say secular Muslims persecuted by fanatical religious states. They did not say the Yazidis, neither Muslim nor Christian, who have been horrifically persecuted. Had they done this, they could have made a point that in triage, they would quickly accept people fleeing persecution from countries that cannot, or will not, protect them. People fleeing such duress, for the most part, are not going to turn on their benefactors.

There is a widespread view by good-hearted liberals that Islam is a religion of peace. They ignore the powerful campaign of the fascist wing of Islam to wage war against the modern world and to use our institutions and amenities against us. This is real. We need vigilance to protect us, but President Trump's lack of nuance is destructive. Nuance is needed, as is critical thinking.

675 words

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