

Vetting Immigrants and Refugees
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Our country has every right to vet the flood of immigrants trying to come to this land. But one size does not fit all. This is why a blanket Muslim ban is without nuance, to say the least! President Trump is not going about this process with subtlety, unlike our current vetting process, one that is the result of continued refining.

It does make sense to sort through the refugees, first admitting those least likely to be a danger to us, and then vetting the rest. The Trump administration has recognized that refugees fleeing religious persecution should be admitted first. This is our tradition as a correction over our earlier rejection of Jewish immigrants fleeing Nazi Germany. The excuse then was that Nazis could slip in among the Jews. This unlikely excuse hid the real reason: anti-Semitism. The consequences of this vetting shamed us.

If refugees are fleeing because they are persecuted for their religion in their home country, the vetting should include all those persecuted, not just one favored group. The lack of subtlety of President Trump's changes makes him favor Christians in the Middle East and South Asia.

For a half century now, the increasing radicalization of Islam has caused many Christian Arabs and Christian Pakistanis to flee for their lives. But they are not the only ones. Being a Sunni in Shiite-ruled countries is deadly (Iraq), as is being a Shiite in Sunni-ruled countries (Saudi Arabia and Pakistan). Yazidis and Assyrians (non-Muslim ancient faiths) are attacked by ISIS, which is trying to exterminate them. It is not difficult to identify such refugees and admit them. They will be loyal to us.

Iran is another case that calls for sophistication in vetting. The Iranian government is an authoritarian Islamist regime that took over in an ill-conceived revolution in 1979. They threatened Iran's ancient community of Jews, most of whom fled to Israel and Los Angeles early in the revolution. Bahais, a modernizing reform of Islam, have suffered horrible persecution and deserve refugee status. In a clandestine revolt against the Revolutionary Islamic government, many Iranians have converted to Christianity and if caught will be executed. And the adherents of Zoroastrianism (Parsis), Iran's ancient religion, who resisted the violent Arab Muslim conquest and conversion, are persecuted again.

Iranians (Persians), it should be noted, are not Arabs, and for many, Islam is only pro forma, just enough to keep the authorities away. When Iranians travel outside of Iran, women immediately dump the enforced headscarf. I noted a group of Iranians who were first banned by the Trump order and then admitted on a court order were not in hijab (headscarves), which means not pious, and most had pre-Islamic Persian names themselves, along with their children, not the Muslim names favored by the pious. One little girl who greeted her mother, returning from visiting an ailing parent in Iran, was named Khorshid, which means "sunshine" in Farsi. There has never been a terrorist in this country from Iran.

If any sort of triage is needed in addressing this flood of refugees, it should be to people who have never been terrorists, who are obviously not pious, thus not subject to radicalization, and have a justifiable fear of death in their homeland. Iranians should be on that list.

The majority of terror attackers and those apprehended before doing harm in the US were here legally, and some were not even born Muslim, but were converts. Profiling males (even citizens) with multiple trips to those seven countries makes sense.

If we can learn anything from Europe's serious problems with Islamic radicalization, we can see that professionals and middle class refugees from Syria, for example, are not candidates for Islamic radicalization. Europe's largest pool spawning radicals come from Pakistan, Somalia, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Turkey; and even then, the majority are no threat. But young alienated males may be.

The Western world and even the Muslim world itself are under attack from a modern Muslim cult, Islamo-fascism. We need to focus on our real mutual foes, not on ill-conceived "one size fits all."

678 words

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