



## Are We Importing Middle East Terrorism to the United States?

On September 17, our nation saw violent attacks by natives of two countries where terrorism has a strong presence — the bombings in New York and New Jersey by Ahmad Khan Rahami, a native of Afghanistan, and a knife attack on nine shoppers in a St. Cloud, Minnesota, mall by Dahir Adan, a Somali immigrant.

Following the latter incident, Amaq Agency, the news agency for ISIS, released a statement that read:



The executor of the stabbing attacks in Minnesota yesterday was a soldier of the Islamic State and carried out the operation in response to calls to target the citizens of countries belonging to the crusader coalition.

Following the Minnesota attack, FBI spokesman Richard Thornton said in a news conference on September 18: “We are currently investigating this as a potential act of terrorism.”

ISIS has not claimed responsibility for the bombings in New York and New Jersey. However, ISIS is less prominent in Rahami’s homeland of Afghanistan and his wife’s native country, Pakistan, than other terrorist groups such as Pakistan’s Tehreek-i Taliban, the Afghan Taliban, and al-Qaeda.

In his notebook, recovered at the scene of his arrest, the suspected bomber referred to previous terrorists, such as the Boston Marathon bombers, and Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, who was a spokesman for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula before a CIA drone strike killed him in 2011.

As was noted by writer Bob Adelman in [an article posted by \*The New American\*](#) recently, Rahami’s father, Mohammad Rahami, told the FBI back in 2014 that his son was a terrorist. The elder Rahami recently told the *New York Times*:

Two years ago I go to the FBI because my was doing really bad, O.K.? But they check almost two months [and] they say: “He’s O.K., he’s clean, he’s not a terrorist.”

This account infuriated Indiana governor and Republican vice presidential candidate Mike Pence, who said on September 20 on Fox News’ *The O’Reilly Factor*:

I give law enforcement a lot of credit for less than 24 hours, apprehending Mr. Rahami.

But to find out his father had reported him to the FBI several years ago that he thought his son was a terrorist, and his son was apparently not put on a terrorist watch list and not given more additional attention — is really frustrating.

Adelman observed in his reporting of Rahami’s terrorist inclinations that if “lone-wolf” jihadists are to be stopped, at least two things must happen:

Non-jihadist Muslims must not remain silent when terrorists exist in their midst, plotting, planning, and carrying out their acts of terror. If they don’t, then every Muslim in the country will be painted



with the same brush: You're all terrorists!

And investigations such as the [FBI] "assessment" that revealed nothing must go deeper and reach further in order to identify those who would harm U.S. citizens. Without at least these two changes, more lone-wolf attacks by disaffected Muslim terrorists posing as Americans can be expected to maim and kill innocents.

Of course, the "lone wolf" is but one type of potential terrorist, but whether operating as individuals or as part of an organized terrorist organization, most of these terrorists have come into the United States from areas where terrorism has a strong presence, especially the Middle East and parts of North Africa. A sampling of major terrorist attacks in the United States since 1993 shows that this pattern holds true:

- The 1993 World Trade Center bombing on February 26, 1993, which failed to bring down the towers but killed six people and injured more than a thousand others, was planned by a group of terrorists including Ramzi Yousef, Mahmud Abouhalima, Mohammad Salameh, Nidal A. Ayyad, Abdul Rahman Yasin, and Ahmed Ajaj. They received financing from Yousef's uncle, Khaled Sheikh Mohammed, a native of Pakistan who was a member of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization. Yousef was born in Kuwait and spent time at an al-Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan. He escaped to Pakistan several hours after the bombing.
- The 1993 attacks were, of course, overshadowed by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, which succeed where the 1993 bombings had failed, in bringing down the World Trade Center towers, as well as inflicting severe damage on the Pentagon and killing all aboard the fourth hijacked airliner that crashed in Pennsylvania. Those attacks killed 2,507 civilians, 343 firefighters, 72 law-enforcement officers, 55 military personnel, and the 19 terrorist hijackers. Of the 19 hijackers, who were affiliated with al-Qaeda, 15 were citizens of Saudi Arabia, two were from the United Arab Emirates, and one each were from Egypt and Lebanon.
- On December 2, 2015, a mass shooting occurred at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California, resulting in 14 people killed and 22 injured. Two suspects, Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik, fled in an SUV, but were later killed. Malik was born in Pakistan and Farook was born in Chicago to Pakistani parents. FBI Director James B. Comey said the bureau's investigation revealed that the perpetrators were "homegrown violent extremists" inspired by foreign terrorist groups.

Starting in 2014 and 2015, what has been described as a European migrant crisis or European refugee crisis began as large numbers of people fled political and economic turmoil and violent conditions resulting from the civil war in Syria and the growing power of ISIS terrorists in that part of the world. The migrants traveled first to Turkey and then on to EU nations. More refugees came across the Mediterranean Sea from North African nations such as Tunisia and Libya. On September 9, 2015, Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission (the executive branch of the European Union), asked EU members to each accept 160,000 migrants. But some EU leaders balked at this request. The most outspoken leader objecting to this large-scale resettlement was Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who criticized efforts by European Union leaders to impose immigration quotas before the continent's borders were made secure.

Just days after Juncker asked EU members to accept 160,000 migrants, the November 13 terrorist attacks took place in Paris, causing many Europeans to become more wary than ever of resettling in their midst refugees from areas where terrorist activity was rampant.

These fears became even more justified after more terrorist attacks linked to Islamic jihadists (either



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connected to or sympathetic to ISIS) occurred. These included the March 2016 bombings in Brussels and the July 2016 stabbing of a priest at a church in Normandy, France.

When the Obama administration announced plans to begin admitting large number of Syria refugees to the United States, many Americans also objected on the grounds that it would be impossible to vet all of these refugees to identify potential terrorists among them. The history of persons of Middle Eastern origin among those responsible for terrorist attacks in the United States confirms that such fears are justified.

As we noted in [an article last November](#), as a result of the then-recent violent terrorist attacks in Paris, more and more U.S. governors had openly opposed allowing refugees from Syria to settle in their states. Governor Rick Snyder of Michigan made a statement in which he made note of Michigan's "rich history of immigration," before saying: "But our first priority is protecting the safety of our residents."

"It's also important to remember that these [Paris] attacks are the efforts of extremists and do not reflect the peaceful ways of people of Middle Eastern descent here and around the world," Snyder continued.

On November 16, five more governors (all Republicans) joined Snyder and Bentley in issuing similar policy statements. These included Greg Abbott of Texas (shown above), Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas, Mike Pence of Indiana, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, and Phil Bryant of Mississippi. Abbott, the governor of the nation's second largest state in both area and population, sent an open letter to President Obama that stated, in part:

As governor of Texas, I write to inform you that the State of Texas will not accept any refugees from Syria in the wake of the deadly terrorist attack in Paris.

Further, I — and millions of Americans — implore you to halt your plans to accept more Syrian refugees in the United States. A Syrian "refugee" appears to have been part of the Paris terror attack. American humanitarian compassion could be exploited to expose Americans to similar deadly danger. The reasons for such concerns are plentiful.

The FBI director testified to Congress that the federal government does not have the background information that is necessary to effectively conduct proper security checks on Syrian nationals, Director Comey explained: "We can query our database until the cows come home, but there will be nothing show up because we have no record of them."

However, the Obama administration had already begun to put a plan into place to dramatically increase the number of refugees from Syria. During a joint press appearance in Berlin with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier on September 20, 2015 Secretary of State John Kerry revealed the Obama administration's plan to drastically increase the flow of refugees into the United States, citing specifically refugees from Syria. "We are now going to go up to 85,000 with at least, and I underscore the 'at least' — it is not a ceiling, it's a floor — of 10,000 over the next year from Syria specifically even as we also receive more refugees from other areas," said Kerry

"And in the next fiscal year, we'll target 100,000, and if it's possible to do more, we'll do [more]."

The number of terrorist attacks in both Europe and the United States where migrants from the Middle East have taken responsibility has not dissuaded the Obama administration from its plans. An article posted by the White House press office on September 20 made it clear that the increase in refugees being admitted was still in effect, terrorist attacks or not:



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President Obama announced that the United States will welcome more refugees from around the world, increasing the number of people we receive by 40 percent over the next two years, to 100,000 in 2017.

No one would claim that most of these 100,000 refugees are terrorists. But realistically speaking, how many terrorists does it take to inflict tragic results? On 9/11, a small handful of terrorists, 19, were responsible for the deaths of almost 3,000 Americans.

And so, to answer the question presented in our headline, yes, the Obama administration's policies do amount to importing Middle East terrorism to the United States.

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