



## Trump “Reshapes” His Transition Team With Focus on Immigration

With the departure of New Jersey Governor Chris Christie as head of Donald Trump’s transition team, those whom Christie brought in to assist him are also gone. Replacing many of them [are several whose focus is on the immigration problem](#) the country faces and how to deal with it, beginning on the very first day of the Trump administration.



It starts with Trump’s call for “a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on” expressed in his December statement “On Preventing Muslim Immigration.” He wrote:

It is obvious to anybody [that] the hatred [by Muslims] is beyond comprehension. Where this hatred comes from and why we will have to determine. Until we are able to determine and understand this problem and the dangerous threat it poses, our country cannot be the victims of horrendous attacks by people that believe only in Jihad, and have no sense of reason or respect for human life.

For months before Trump’s stunning upset in the national election last week, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach participated in regular conference calls with a dozen of Trump’s immigration advisors. Those calls concentrated on just what executive actions Trump could take early on “so that,” as Kobach told Reuters on Friday, “Trump and the Department of Homeland Security [can] hit the ground running” once he is inaugurated on January 20.

Kobach helped design the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) following the September 11 attacks. Until it was shut down in 2011 as being “redundant,” it focused on immigrants entering the United States from “high risk” countries such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and Syria. In the first six months the program identified more than 13,000 of those “high risk” individuals who were immediately placed in deportation proceedings.

Kobach helped draft an Arizona law that required state and local officials to check the immigration status of individuals stopped by police. He helped design a law in Kansas in 2013 requiring voters to provide proof of citizenship documents, such as birth certificates or passports, when registering for the first time. Courts stripped away much of those requirements.

During those conference calls, Kobach and Trump transition team members studied ways of overturning Obama’s 2012 executive order that granted deportation relief and work permits to more than 700,000 illegals. They discussed reinstating a national registry of immigrants and visitors who enter the United States on visas from countries where terrorist groups are active. They planned how to complete construction of the wall on the country’s southern border by using existing budgeted funds of the



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Homeland Security Agency.

According to Stephen Yale-Loehr, professor of immigration law at Cornell University, “Any president has wide discretion when it comes to enforcing our immigration laws because immigration touches on national security.” Trump could, with a phone call, redirect the actions and focus of the 20,000 ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents. He could, with a memo, revoke every DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) immigrant that Obama put in place with an executive order from the new secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. He could end the refugee program which Obama, on his own, increased from 70,000 in 2015 to more than 110,000 next year. He could ban Muslims under powers granted in the Immigration and Nationality Act if they are deemed “detrimental to the interests of the United States.”

Assisting Trump on the immigration issue are three other highly skilled and experienced individuals intimately familiar with the problem: Rep. Devin Nunes (Republican from California and chairman of the House Intelligence Committee), Frank Gaffney (founder of the Center for Security Policy) whom Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz said he would name as one of his own national security advisors, and Rep. Pete Hoekstra (former ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee).

Donald Trump appears to be deadly serious about solving the immigration problem that has grown during the Obama administration. Not a politician, Trump is taking his campaign promises, at least as far as immigration is concerned, very seriously.

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