



FACT SHEET

# Trump's Dangerous Terrorism Blame Game

## Trump Is Emboldening Terrorists and Laying the Groundwork to Deflect Blame 'If Something Happens'

By Ken Gude, Corey Ciorciari, and Anna Perina February 8, 2017

Three weeks into the most erratic and reckless start to a presidency in modern American history, a dangerous theme is beginning to emerge: While emboldening terrorists with his dangerous policies and divisive rhetoric, President Donald Trump is seemingly laying the groundwork to blame a future attack on the very American institutions that attempt to check his power. The question needs to be asked: To what end?

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Trump's actions have strengthened terrorists and adversaries

Trump's Muslim ban has strengthened the Islamic State and Iran, fueling radicalization

The Muslim ban plays right into the hands of the Islamic State and Iran, allowing them to push the narrative that America is provoking a war with Islam in order to gain credibility and radicalize new recruits.<sup>1</sup>

- Jihadist groups have already applauded Trump's ban as a victory on social media, with one commenter writing that the ban "clearly revealed the truth and harsh reality behind the American government's hatred towards Muslims."<sup>2</sup>
- The ban has compromised U.S. efforts in Iraq to work with local forces against the Islamic State. An Iraqi army counterterrorism commander said: "If America doesn't want Iraqis because we are all terrorists, then America should send its sons back to Iraq to fight the terrorists themselves."<sup>3</sup>
- Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei thanked Trump, saying the ban revealed the "real face of America" and proved "what we have said for more than 30 years—that there is political, economic, moral and social corruption in the ruling system of the US."<sup>4</sup>

## Trump's embrace of strongmen and promises to violate international law provide fodder for terrorist recruitment

Trump's embrace of strongmen, such as Russian President Vladimir Putin, and his belief in illegal tactics, including torture, provide recruitment tools for the Islamic State and other terrorist groups.

- Trump has fully embraced Putin, aligning America with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, whose atrocities against the Syrian people have enabled and emboldened the Islamic State.<sup>5</sup>
- Trump may resurrect CIA "black sites" and send new prisoners to camps such as Guantanamo Bay.<sup>6</sup>
- Trump has repeatedly advocated for the use of torture and said he would intentionally kill the children of suspected terrorists.<sup>7</sup>

## Trump has sparred with America's allies, undercutting the bulwark against terrorism

Trump has alienated key partners in the fight against terrorism even though more than 60 nations currently contribute to the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State.

- Trump has eroded confidence in America's commitment to defend its NATO allies, even though many member states are active participants in the anti-Islamic State campaign.<sup>8</sup>
- Trump scuffled with the prime minister of Australia, the third-largest contributor to the U.S. coalition against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.<sup>9</sup>

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## Meanwhile, he is laying the groundwork to blame a future attack on those who attempt to check his power

Trump threatened a judge that blocked his Muslim ban, telling the American people to blame him and the courts if there is a terrorist attack

Since the decision, Trump has sent at least nine tweets about the judge to his 24 million followers:

- "Just cannot believe a judge would put our country in such peril. If something happens blame him and court system. People pouring in. Bad!"<sup>10</sup>

- “The judge opens up our country to potential terrorists and others that do not have our best interests at heart. Bad people are very happy!”<sup>11</sup>
- “Because the ban was lifted by a judge, many very bad and dangerous people may be pouring into our country. A terrible decision”<sup>12</sup>

Trump falsely accused the media of not covering terrorist attacks and implied they are doing so to invite another attack to boost their ratings

In a speech at MacDill Air Force Base, Trump said: “You’ve seen what happened in Paris and Nice. All over Europe, it’s happening. It’s gotten to a point where it’s not even being reported. And in many cases, the very, very dishonest press doesn’t want to report it. They have their reasons, and you understand that.”<sup>13</sup>

Trump blamed NATO for not ‘taking care of terror’

Trump said that NATO had become “obsolete” because it is not “taking care of terror”—a comment later welcomed by the Kremlin.<sup>14</sup>

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## Endnotes

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