

Former U.S. National Security and Military Leaders Oppose Refugee and Immigration Ban

On January 27, 2017, President Donald Trump signed an executive order titled, “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States.” The order bans the resettlement of Syrian refugees indefinitely, blocks entry of citizens of seven predominately Muslim countries for 90 days, suspends U.S. resettlement of refugees for 120 days, and bars and slashes the resettlement program in half. The entry ban currently blocks nationals of Syria, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, and Yemen. The order not only contradicts American values, but also threatens American security.

The Executive Order Makes America Less Safe

☑ Calling for the order to be rescinded, former National Security Advisor to the President Susan Rice, former Director of Central Intelligence Agency Gen. Michael Hayden, former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and 115 other senior national security officials and former military leaders who served both Republican and Democratic administrations issued a [letter](#) on January 30 stating that the “[o]rder not only jeopardizes tens of thousands of lives, it has caused a crisis right here in America and will do long-term damage to our national security...Blanket bans of certain countries or classes of people is inhumane, unnecessary and counterproductive from a security standpoint, and beneath the dignity of our great nation.”

The letter states that the order gives “ISIS a recruiting tool and propaganda victory...that the United States is engaged in a religious war,” when instead the U.S “need[s] to take every step

we can to counter violent extremism, not to feed into it by fueling ISIL propaganda.”

- ☑ Top former CIA officials also issued individual statements on the security threat posed by the order, including General Hayden, who served as CIA director under former President George W. Bush. General Hayden [stated](#) that the executive order has “inarguably” made the U.S. “less safe.”
- ☑ In reference to the ban, former CIA Director and U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta [stated](#), “We’ve fed ISIS a major argument that I think will help them in recruiting and that increases the chances of a potential attack in this country...It doesn’t lessen that possibility. It increases that possibility.”
- ☑ Former Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Matthew Olsen [noted](#) that suspending the admission of refugees “doesn’t protect the United States—in fact, it plays into ISIS’s false narrative that we are at war with all Muslims, instead of terrorist organizations.”

- ☑ Former senior official at the CIA's Counterterrorism Center Paul Pillar asserted that the order "is not targeted at where the threat is, and the anti-Islam message that it sends is more likely to make America less safe."
- ☑ Former Deputy Director and acting Director of the CIA Michael Morell stated that the order not only "make us less safe," but "is going to make the threat worse." He noted that the order "[plays] right into the ISIS narrative...[and] is going to be a recruitment boon for ISIS."
- ☑ Former Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security Juliette Kayyem stated that "There is nothing about President Donald J. Trump's executive order on refugees that makes us safer or more secure...if anything, it has made us less safe by inflaming the religious war."
- ☑ Former U.S. Ambassador to Syria and Iraq, who served under both Democratic and Republican administrations, Ryan Crocker stated that the order "threatens American security by making the ISIS case that we are at war with Islam."
- ☑ The January 30 letter written by senior governmental officials noted that the order is harming years of work with allies that the U.S. relies on "for vital counterterrorism cooperation," as allies are "already objecting to this action and distancing themselves from the United States."
- ☑ Former Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence at the Department of Defense Marcel Lettre specified that the order could affect intelligence-sharing and law enforcement cooperation with allies, stating that "The political and policy environment might make it such that their publics will insist that they distance themselves."
- ☑ A recent dissent letter signed by more than one thousand U.S. Foreign Service Officers and consular officials argued that the ban was "counterproductive" and would "not achieve its aim of making our country safer" or prevent terror attacks. Instead, the order will increase "hostility towards the United States" and "immediately sour relations with...much of the Muslim world," including many of whom are important U.S. allies "in the fight against terrorism." The letter argues that as a result, the U.S. will lose access to intelligence and resources needed "to fight the root causes of terror abroad, before an attack occurs within our borders." ■

The Executive Order Harms U.S. Relations with Key Counterterrorism Allies

- ☑ Officials also expressed serious concern about the damaging impact that the order has on U.S. relations with key counterterrorism allies in the Middle East and Europe. General Hayden told *The Washington Post* that the order could force U.S. military commanders and diplomats serving abroad into damage control, and that the order "has already created an irretrievable cost...and makes it harder for our allies to side with us."