

TWO MEN WITH WEAPONS BUT NO PASSPORTS IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

The more I think about this story, the more ridiculous it appears.

WSJ's sources are concerned, apparently, that US counterterrorism officials did not have prior knowledge of two men who each killed a Canadian soldier this week.

Neither of the two Canadian men who attacked soldiers and Parliament this week were on a terror watch list in the U.S.—one because of privacy laws in Canada—raising concerns among American officials about possible intelligence gaps close to home.

On Monday, Martin Rouleau used his car to strike and kill one Canadian soldier and injure another outside Montreal, before being killed by police. On Wednesday, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau used a rifle to kill a soldier in Ottawa, then stormed Parliament where he died from shots fired by security personnel, including the sergeant-at-arms.

Neither were marked in U.S. databases of security threats, according to a person familiar with the investigation.

The concern is particularly crazy given that neither man had a passport, in the first case because it had been taken away; in the second because he had not yet obtained one.

In Mr. Rouleau's case, that was especially alarming because Canadian authorities say they had taken away his passport and put him on a watch list because he had attempted to travel to

Syria to join fighting there.

[snip]

Canadian investigators say Mr. Zehaf-Bibeau didn't have a passport, but had come to Ottawa in the hopes of getting one so he could travel to Syria.

Canadian officials have said that while they were aware of Mr. Zehaf-Bibeau, he wasn't on their watch list.

Sure, either of these men could have snuck across the border in the wilds of Minnesota and then attempted what they attempted in Canada. Which, had they succeeded in our more vigilant society, would make them less lethal than the latest school shooting.

Doesn't the US have more dangerous things to worry about than every single disgruntled man in another country who happens to have a gun – or a car? I mean, if these guys start actually plotting – making them a much bigger threat – then their very act of plotting would be likely to bring greater scrutiny.

The disproportionate nature of this concern is all the more apparent when you consider Mexico, where authorities – authorities that often have ties to our DEA – can disappear 43 students without immediate alarm. Shouldn't we be more concerned that lethal DEA allies will walk across the southern border and start disappearing students here? US authorities seem perfectly complacent about the often officially sanctioned violence in that adjoining country.

ISIL is a threat. Angry men armed with guns are a threat, whether they're Muslim or not.

But a drive for omniscience divorced from any real awareness of how the failure of governance – not just the vacuums we've contributed to in the Middle East, but increasingly here – fosters threats yoked to fear blown entirely out of proportion will not eliminate the threat, and it will suck the life out of our country in so many

other ways.

Perhaps we'd be far better served offering an ideology that can compete with ISIL's rather than simply dragnetting everyone?