

TRUMP'S WAR ON SOME TERROR DIRECTED ONLY AT WHITE EUROPEAN CHRISTIANS

Yesterday, Trump told a bunch of military service members that the press doesn't cover terrorist attacks.

We're up against an enemy that celebrates death and totally worships destruction – you've seen that. ISIS is on a campaign of genocide, committing atrocities across the world. Radical Islamic terrorists are determined to strike our homeland as they did on 9/11; as they did from Boston to Orlando, to San Bernardino. And all across Europe, 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.

When the press called him on that claim, the White House released a batshit crazy list of 78 attacks; the Guardian offers an excellent compilation and contextualization here. (Update: CNN matches the list to how many stories reported out each attack.)

As many have observed, there are a slew of problems with the list. There are numerous spelling errors, including a page where the attackers were labeled "ATTAKERS," other spelling errors including "San Bernadino," and a remarkable scope. The list appears to include just those attributed to or inspired by ISIL, leaving out even the Charlie Hebdo attack while listing associated Paris attacks. It leaves out attacks in Sub-Saharan Africa; as Micah Zenko

noted on Twitter, those make up the vast majority of mass casualty attacks. The list also leaves out other attacks – even those rare white supremacist attacks charged as terrorism – that don't involve Muslims (here's a list of those attacks). Which of course means it leaves out the attack on a mosque that self-described Trump supporter Alexandre Bissonnette carried out in Quebec last week, leaving 6 dead and 19 wounded.

The list also sometimes, though not always, describes perpetrators as "US persons" rather than by name. That may suggest it is based off a real list put together by a foreign intelligence agency, which would have to minimize the names of US persons. If so, that would explain why domestic terror attacks aren't included, as FBI does, inconsistently, include those in its list of terror attacks. (See my analysis of a 2012 FBI list used as a prop by Dianne Feinstein here.)

Of course, the list also doesn't include random gun deaths, the casualties of which dwarf the casualties of terror attacks.

In short, the list is a shit show. And rather than proving a point (at least to anyone outside of his followers), Trump instead got a lot of media genuinely pissed that he had claimed they ignored stories they covered for months, like San Bernardino or Paris. He even got a few in the media to report on that Quebec terrorist attack, which has received spotty attention amid all the Trump craziness.

Trump claimed the media isn't making us fearful enough, and instead he performed a caricature of obsession about terror against white European Christians.

For years, the US has obsessed about Islamic terrorism, dedicating all our resources towards killing that off, while doing nothing about the more pressing threats to the US. Trump will only make that worse – as his limitation of Countering Violent Extremism programs to Islamic terrorism already has (a move that JM Berger

criticized here).

But that was built on bipartisan insider consensus that that was the right standard. Trump, because he is so obviously wrong, may finally change that.

Or, he may wield the power of the state against Muslims as scapegoats for all his own failures.

That's the choice before us.