

IN ATTEMPTING TO JUSTIFY TRUMP MUSLIM BAN, PROPAGANDA OUTLET PROVES INANITY OF IRAN, SUDAN INCLUSION

WaPo did this [fact check](#) on Trump senior advisor Stephen Miller's claim that, "72 individuals, according to the Center for Immigration Studies, have been implicated in terroristic activity in the United States who hail from those seven nations, point one." It awards his claim three stars, stating,

[U]pon closer examination of the cases on the list, it becomes clear that his statement went too far. In fact, this is pretty thin gruel on which to make sweeping claims about the alleged threat posed to the United States by these seven countries, especially because the allegations often did not concern alleged terrorist acts in the United States.

[snip]

Regardless of the direct or tangential ties that investigators believe each individual may have to terrorist activities, these charges need to be proven in a court of law. Suspected or potential terror links involving these 72 individuals do not confirm Miller's claim that they were "implicated in terrorist activity."

Moreover, some people on this list entered the United States – many of them naturalized – decades before they were charged with any of the crimes. That makes Miller's use of this list to

defend Trump's executive order quite questionable.

There are other methodological problems with the [list Miller references](#) that WaPo doesn't consider. For example, it includes people, like Ahmed Warsame, who got extradited or rendered to the US, so it's not like their presence in the US can be attributed to visa screening (though there is some concern that the Muslim ban will make it more difficult to extradite and coerce cooperation from similarly situated defendants, thus making it harder to round up threats overseas).

Just as strikingly, the list affirmatively undermines the claim that these seven countries are all a threat. Of the CIS' list of 72 individuals, just four are from Iran, two from Libya, just one from Sudan. And the claims implicating these people mostly fall apart when you look closer. Most of them arise from the efforts in the early 2000s to prosecute Muslim charities, and several of those cases eventually fell apart, rather spectacularly in a case associated with Al-Haramain. Plus, in at least two cases, these defendants got caught in the middle of America's changing views on which terrorists it criminalizes and which it partners with.

Sudan

Abdel Azim El-Siddig: CIS claims that El-Siddig was found guilty of conspiracy to fail to register as a foreign agent and was sentenced to 58 months. That's an error. El-Siddig plead just to conspiracy to violate FARA. He was sentenced to probation and has served that sentence. El-Siddig was largely charged in an effort to coerce his cooperation in prosecuting former Congressman Mark Deli Siljander, who pursued the interests of the Islamic American Relief Agency. Ultimately, even Siljander was only

sentenced to a year; it looks like this may have been one of the cases that fell apart based on crummy intelligence.

Libya

Ali Mohamed Bagegni: One of the Libyans listed is Ali Mohamed Bagegni, who was on the board of IARA and got wrapped up in the case against Siljander. He served 6 months of probation.

Emadeddin Muntasser: Muntasser was [convicted](#) in another charity case – for lying to get tax exempt status for Care International and also for lying about having met Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who has gone on and off America's list of favored terrorists for twenty years now. Judge Dennis Saylor overturned the tax charge, finding it was not supported by the facts presented. The First Circuit [reinstated](#) guilty verdicts on tax charges, but Saylor just sentenced him to time served.

Iran

Siavosh Henareh: As WaPo notes, one of the Iranians listed is Siavosh Henareh. He was [busted](#) for conspiracy to import heroin that others allegedly were going to use to raise money for Hezbollah. But he was not charged with any ties to terrorism.

Pete Seda (Pirouz Sedaghaty): Seda's case is a particularly problematic charity case, as we know the government illegally spied on him under Stellar Wind (though they probably did with all the other charity defendants as well). Ultimately, though, the charge that he tried to funnel money to Chechen fighters was [overturned](#) by the 9th Circuit, and he pled guilty to tax fraud. The case fell apart in part because the government had to pay off witnesses to implicate him and withheld

other information. See [this post](#) for more details about how HSBC got off for a far bigger scale of crime associated with this case.

Zeinab Taleb-Jedi: Taleb-Jedi was prosecuted in 2006 for material support for MEK, the anti-Iranian group that a good chunk of DC has also [materially supported](#), including Howard Dean, Elaine Chao, John Bolton, Fran Townsend, and Newt Gingrich, a group which had been a big source of often flimsy intelligence on Iran. She stalled out that prosecution and in 2009 ultimately pled guilty to violating an executive order. She was sentenced to time served.

Manssor Arbabsiar: I've written about the Scary Iran Plot extensively (for example [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)). It is the one case where someone really was convicted of plotting an attack in the United States – in this case, to assassinate then Saudi Ambassador to the US Adel al-Jubeir. Arbabsiar plead guilty to the charges, so there's no doubt he did act on his Revolutionary Guard cousin's orders to find someone to kill the Saudi Ambassador. But most of the details about the plot – Arbabsiar's likely prior role as an informant and his efforts to resume that role, DEA's great craft in making the plot as scary as possible (even targeting a restaurant favored by Senators), the circumstances surrounding Arbabsiar's interrogation and mental competence, and even hints that the cousin may have been a mole for another government – raise questions about how serious Iran was about actually conducting this attack.

In short, just one of these cases can really be construed as an attempted attack, and that was pretty remarkable for the fiction and other handiwork the DEA went into in making it a

spectacular bust.

Don't get me wrong. The overall list is bullshit too. If you look at CIS' numbers, you see that most represented community, Somalia, also happens to be the one that has for years partnered closely with the FBI to alert them to concerns about radicalization. That basically means Trump's Muslim ban punishes that community for affirmatively working to prevent terrorism.

But CIS' efforts to pretend that Iran, Sudan, and Libya make sense here fall even further flat.