

The Syrian Refugee Crisis

The Syrian Civil War and the ISIS terrorist actions have resulted in millions (5 million or so) of refugees fleeing Syria for safety. This is indeed a humanitarian crisis. Most of the refugees are settling in countries adjacent to or near Syria (Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq), but hundreds of thousands (perhaps over a million) have emigrated to Europe, the Caucasus, or North Africa. Now, over 1500 have already been accepted into the United States, and President Obama has already agreed to accept another 10,000. Furthermore, Obama has indicated that his plans are for that number to rise significantly – perhaps to 100,000 or more.

The Syrian refugees include Christians, Muslims, men, women and children. I am sure that most are merely poor, unfortunate victims of the raging war and terror in Syria. I feel sorry for them, and I want to find ways to help them. But – I am very concerned about the safety of American citizens, and I believe that concern should override any immediate acceptance of thousands of refugees into the United States.

It had been widely speculated that ISIS had infiltrated the Syrian refugees, with plans to wreak havoc in the countries that accepted them. The recent terror attacks in Paris confirmed this speculation. At least one of the eight terrorists that committed the Paris attacks that killed over 120 people and injured over 300 more has been confirmed to be a Syrian refugee. And, there are other ISIS members among those arrested by the French that were Syrian refugees. ISIS sees the Syrian refugee crisis as an easy way to get terrorists into Europe and the United States. What better than to have the host countries welcome the refugees with open arms, facilitate their passage into the countries, and locate the refugees where the terrorists among them can kill Americans and destroy the Western way of life.

Our President and the leads of Dept of Homeland Security, CIA, FBI, DOJ, etc. assure us that they would be able to screen out any terrorists among the Syrian refugees. Really? Do you believe that? Do you think the Obama administration and our intelligence sources have the ability to distinguish between who is and is not an ISIS terrorist? Let me offer some comments that will probably change your mind about our ability to insure that no terrorists are included in the 10,000 or so refugees we have agreed to accept into the United States.

The United States conducts about 2 million background investigations each year of U.S. citizens seeking security clearances. To do this, they have birth records, arrest records, job histories, family histories, educational records, tax records, military service records, credit card histories, bank records, and personal references to assist in the background investigations. In spite of all of this information, there are still lots of poor security risks that pass through the screenings and are granted security clearances. Recent history has provided several high profile cases of U.S. citizens with top security clearances spying or stealing sensitive information and giving it to other countries, or even committing terrorist actions that have resulted in the loss of American lives. Remember Major Nidal Hasan and the Fort Hood massacre? Oh, I forgot, that was just "workplace violence." Or, how about Edward Snowden leaking highly classified information.

So... if there are many such cases where our government fails to screen out bad security risks among U.S. citizens with all of the information I listed above, why should anyone think that we would be able to screen out all terrorists among the Syrian refugees when they will have very little information to base the screenings on. They will likely have no birth records, no employment histories, no tax records, no finance records, no personal references, and probably very little else. And, don't you think it is likely that any terrorists among the refugees would have the most complete paperwork (albeit false) to indicate that they are not terrorists? Remember, ISIS is a well funded and devious organization. It certainly has the ability to provide counterfeit identifications and other paperwork. Yet, our President "assures us that our screening process will prevent any terrorists from entering our country."

Some of you may say that Obama really meant that our screening process would catch most of the terrorists. What is most? 99%? Would that be good enough? Even one terrorist could do a lot of damage in the United States. One suicide bomber could take out hundreds or even thousands of people. Are we willing to take that risk?

In an attempt to act in the most humanitarian way possible and still maintain caution, some Republicans have proposed legislation that would, in effect, profile the Syrian refugees. Restrict entry to children, and women. Or, restrict entry to non-Muslims. That makes more sense than including all comers, but even that is fraught with danger. ISIS has recruited many women and children. There have been multiple reported cases (including one in Paris) of women suicide bombers. Likewise for child suicide bombers.

So, what do we do? I think it is just too dangerous for Americans to allow large numbers of Syrian refugees into the United States. Already, over 35 states have indicated that they are not willing to accept the refugees, and the number is growing. If the Federal government ignores the desires of these states, it is unlikely that the states would be able to prevent refugees from moving into their borders and residing there. And Obama is signaling that he will indeed ignore the desires of the states. I guess that leaves us with just the hope that our screening will be perfect, or that if some terrorists do get through, we will be able to prevent any attack before it happens. I think both of these are somewhat far-fetched hopes. Almost certainly some Americans will die because of our acceptance of thousands of Syrian refugees into our country.

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