

Trump's Entry Ban against Muslims: Linked To Global Warfare and The Neo-Con Agenda?

By [Dr. Chandra Muzaffar](#)

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President Donald Trump's ban on nationals from 7 Muslim majority countries in West Asia and North Africa (WANA) entering the United States of America for a period of 90 days has brought to the fore the role and influence of some of the forces that shape US foreign policy in the region. With the exception of one country, the Trump list is similar to a purported list of 7 countries that the US planned to attack "in 5 years" that a Pentagon official had allegedly revealed to former US General Wesley Clark in 2001, a little more than 7 weeks after the 9-11 tragedy. The list had all the countries in Trump's list except Yemen. Instead of Yemen, there was Lebanon.

For many years, Clark and others have argued publicly that the targeted states were part of a neo-conservative agenda led by men like Dick Cheney, former US Vice-President, Donald Rumsfeld, former US Secretary of Defence, and Paul Wolfowitz, former US Deputy Secretary of Defence which sought to control and dominate WANA through the might of the US's military power. Apart from serving the hegemonic interests of the US, the agenda was totally committed to enhancing Israel's position in the region in the name of protecting its security. It was an agenda that was pursued through the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) which had as its articulators, individuals such as Robert Kagan, William Kristol, Peter Rodman, Richard Perle, and Elliot Abrams, among others.

If there was a common thread running through the 2001 Pentagon list, it was the reluctance of the states mentioned — Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Syria — or of forces within them to yield to US- Israel power. Indeed, a number of them were actively involved in the resistance to their hegemony. This was the primary reason why they became targets for attack by the US and its allies in the West and within the region in subsequent years stretching right up to the present.

Now almost all those states on the 2001 Pentagon list have become targets of Trump's entry ban. Lebanon was not on the list perhaps because the 2006 attempt by the Israeli armed forces to gain control over the state failed due to the effective resistance of the Hezbollah. Since the US is indirectly involved in the military campaign to defeat opponents of the Saudi backed regime in Yemen, that country has got into Trump's list.

Thwarting terrorism is the reason given by Trump for the blanket prohibition of nationals from the 7 states. He has offered no evidence of individuals from the states concerned who were inclined towards, or intended to, perform acts of terror in the US. In fact, a state whose nationals were allegedly responsible for a terror attack on US soil was not even on the banned list. 15 out of the 19 alleged 9-11 hijackers whose dastardly terror extinguished 3000 lives were Saudi nationals! And yet Trump has had a phone conversation with the

Saudi King in recent days in which they discussed among other matters ways of strengthening security cooperation and combatting terrorist outfits in the region.

It appears that Trump like some of his predecessors is manipulating the threat of terrorism in order to advance some other agenda. In his inaugural address he pledged to eradicate "radical Islamic terrorism" The term itself is offensive since terror has no theological justification. It is condemned in the Qur'an as it is condemned in other religious texts.

There are of course Muslims who commit acts of terror just as there are followers of other religions who are also guilty of killing innocent people. If Trump wants to dissuade some Muslims from resorting to mindless violence, he should address its underlying causes. The conquest of Muslim lands and the massacre of hundreds of thousands of civilians – which is the sordid record of the US elite and its allies in recent decades — is one of the principal reasons for the anger and humiliation that has spawned terrorism in various parts of the world. One hopes that Trump will not embark upon such hegemonic wars.

He should have the courage and the integrity to turn a new page. There is nothing he has done so far that suggests that he is capable of this. His entry ban apart, his endorsement of the expansion of illegal Jewish settlements in the West Bank; his stated intention to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; and his opposition to the Iran six power nuclear deal, all indicate that Trump is strongly wedded to the Israeli agenda. It is a nefarious agenda that will only escalate tensions in the region giving rise to even more horrendous conflict.

What such a conflict can lead to eventually is something that no one wants to contemplate.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar is the President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST).

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