

3/7/2017

nbcnews.com

POLITICS FEB 24 2017, 9:26 PM ET

# DHS Draft Report Casts Doubt on Extra Threat From 'Travel Ban' Nationals in U.S.

by PHIL HELSEL

A draft document by the Department of Homeland Security found that citizenship is "likely an unreliable indicator" of terrorist activity in the United States, a conclusion that appears to undercut the Trump administration's plan to temporarily restrict entry to the U.S. of nationals from seven predominantly Muslim nations.

The internal document, published by The Associated Press earlier Friday, said of the 82 people who died in or were convicted of federal terrorism-related offenses that were inspired by foreign groups since 2011, a little over half were native-born American citizens. Those identified as foreign-born offenders were from 26 nations.

Trump cited terrorism concerns to justify the executive order that temporarily suspended entry to the U.S. of nationals from seven predominantly Muslim nations. It has been blocked by courts, and the Trump administration plans to roll out a new order.

White House officials called the three-page document from the DHS intelligence and analysis arm an "incomplete document" and said it is based on "open sources" and is not the product of the best available information. Sources said it was not sent to the White House, and is not the threat assessment report that the president requested.

Trump's order suspended for 90 days entry to the U.S. of people from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, or Yemen.

The draft DHS document studied Justice Department press releases since the start of Syria's civil war in March of 2011 to conclude that slightly more than half of the 82 identified in federal terrorism-related cases were native-born U.S. citizens.

Those who were foreign-born came from 26 different countries, according to the draft document. The top seven origin countries among foreign-born offenders were Pakistan, Somalia, Bangladesh, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iraq and Uzbekistan.

Only two of those top countries are affected by Trump's order — three offenders were from Somalia and two were from Iraq. There was one each from Iran, Sudan and Yemen during that time, and none from Syria, according to the document. Libya was not mentioned.

The analysis of U.S. cases focused on offenses inspired by or in support of foreign terror groups. It did not count cases where people tried to travel overseas and join terror groups, according to the document.

## EXHIBIT 12

**Related: Trump 'Travel Ban' Highlights Divide in Michigan's Immigrant Communities**

The document also concluded that terrorist groups in three of the seven affected countries — Iraq, Yemen and Syria — pose a threat of attacks in the United States, while groups in the other four named countries were more regionally focused.

Homeland Security acting press secretary Gillian Christensen on Friday did not dispute the numbers, but repeated claims by the Trump administration that the countries affected by the order had been previously singled out over terrorism concerns.

"While DHS was asked to draft a comprehensive report on the seven countries, the document you're referencing was commentary from open source reporting versus an official, robust document with thorough interagency sourcing," Christensen said.

The "report does not include data from other intelligence community sources," she said. "It is clear on its face that it is an incomplete product that fails to find evidence of terrorism by simply refusing to look at all the available evidence."

Trump's executive order also suspended all refugees for 120 days, and indefinitely suspended entry to the U.S. of Syrian refugees. The order follows Trump's pledges of "extreme vetting."

Critics have called Trump's executive order a "Muslim ban," something Trump has denied.

**Related: Analysis: Here are Three Potential Fixes to the Travel Ban Order**

The executive order was blocked by a federal judge in Seattle on Feb. 3, and a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals refused to reinstate it. A senior White House source told NBC News a new order could come down "early-to-mid"-next week.

"The intelligence community is combining its resources to put together a comprehensive report using all available sources which will be driven by data and intelligence and not politics," White House spokesman Michael Short said Friday.

---