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What Changed?

Drastic Shift of Trump's Stance on Syrian Refugees

“What is the UN condemning @Israel and doing nothing about Syria? What a disgrace,” Donald J. Trump tweeted in in October 6, 2011. He contradicted his statement on March 24, 2016 by tweeting, “Europe and the U.S. must immediately stop taking in people from Syria. This will be the destruction of civilization as we know it! So sad!”. Since Donald Trump became the president, there have been many changes and plan to change policies concerning refugees specifically Syrian refugees. In his first executive order he banned Syrian refugees for 120 days and later he passed another executive order in which he prioritizes Syrian Christian refugees over Muslim refugees. The reasoning behind these orders given by Oval Office were nothing but false claims, also known as alternative facts. Thus, Syrian refugees are suffering from Trump's ban on seven Muslim countries, his claim that there is no vetting system, and his policy of giving priority to Christian Syrian refugees.

Right after Trump took control of the Oval Office he signed an executive order that banned people from coming to United States from seven Muslim countries: Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Sudan. The order also banned Syrian refugees for 120 days from entering United States. Trump is feeling victorious after passing this order, despite knowing the

fact that the Syrian crisis is the worst humanitarian crisis after World War II (CNN national security analyst). When Stephen Miller, White House senior adviser, was asked the reasoning behind this inhumane executive order he said, “We’ve had dozens and dozens of terrorism cases from these seven countries, case after case after case,” (qtd. in Qiu). It’s no surprise, The New America Foundation, reformatting and connecting politics to digital world, contradicts his claim. The foundation says that since Sept. 11, 2001 all jihadist terrorist attacks executed on American soil were carried out by U.S. citizens or permanent resident and none of those attackers have any link to Syrian refugees (“Who are the Terrorists”). Thus, the president didn’t have any logical reason to take such an extreme step, which affected thousands of people’s lives.

The United States has a strict vetting system for refugees but our President has a different story to tell. At Florida rally, after his inauguration Trump’s said, “We’ve allowed thousands and thousands of people into our country. And there was no way to vet those people. There was no documentation. There was no nothing,” (qtd. in Qiu). His statement has no truth to it since the U.S. have one of the most “regressive” vetting systems for refugees especially for Syrian refugees, said CNN’s reporter Ben Wedeman. The applicants must go through both biographical and biometric rounds such as DNA testing background check, medical clearance, and their names go through FBI database for security clearance. These steps take place after they have been approved by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The U.S. doesn’t hesitate to reject the applicant whom they have a doubt on. All this vetting process take at least one two years (“How do”). Moreover, refugees are not left alone after they arrive in US; their responsibility is given to voluntary Refugee Data Center (RDC) to provide reception and placement services They help them find them residence near transportation which is safe and

affordable. Perhaps extreme vetting is the reason The United States only took 15,000 Syrian refugees out of 5 million refugees since the beginning of Syria civil war; it only equals to 0.2% (Bergen).

Trump's favoritism for Syrian Christian is illogical. In an interview, President Trump said Syrian Christians are being treated "horribly" and it's impossible for them to come to United States but it's very easy for Muslim Syrian refugees to enter in U.S.. He also said, "Do you know if you were a Christian in Syria, it was impossible, at least very tough, to get into the United States? If you were a Muslim, you could come in, but if you were a Christian, it was almost impossible."(qtd. in Farley). Therefore, he signed the executive order to change refugee program and give priority to Christian refugees over Muslim refugees. In response to Trump's claim, United Nation refuge program officials said fewer Syrian Christian apply for refugee program (Qiu). Furthermore, no evidence has been shown of discrimination since 49% of Iran refugees were Christian yet only 5.2% of Iran population is Christian and the both countries have same refugee register office (Qiu).

All these executive orders signed by President Trump and the statements passed by Oval Offices are nothing but based on lies. The outcome of these lies, better word, "alternative facts" as Conny puts it, is disturbing. Syrian refugees couldn't come to U.S. to seek better life; a life where they won't have to fear of getting bomb dropped on them or if they will inhaling toxic gases with their next breath. Perhaps being pro and then being anti Syrian refugees was his strategy to gain votes, I can't say. Nonetheless, we should put humanity first before nationality, and then we can create peace, a peace which each and every candidate and president promises to create.

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