

Ban Those Who Can't Be Vetted¹

by Dr. Matt O'Brien

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A few months ago, in response to a crime wave driven largely by the irresponsible open borders policies pursued by the administration of former President Joe Biden, current President Donald J. Trump federalized members of the National Guard and deployed them to provide deterrent policing services on the streets of Washington, D.C.

America's National Guard is a military force similar to the "Home Guard" or "Territorial Guard" maintained by many other nations and serves a function roughly akin to that of the *Gendarmerie Nationale* in France.² National Guard soldiers train for a variety of missions ranging from homeland defense to the provision of fire, police and rescue/recovery services in times of national crisis. Unlike *Gendarmes*, however, the vast majority of American Guardsmen and Guardswomen are reservists who serve on a part-time basis in addition to maintaining normal civilian careers as mechanics, nurses, carpenters, lawyers, factory workers, architects, etc.

While U.S. law places significant limitations on employing members of the regular military forces to engage in standard law enforcement, both state and federal governments are permitted to call up the National Guard to assist with everything from searching for lost hikers to riot control.³

Not long after they were called into service to protect the District of Columbia, two members of a West Virginia-based National Guard unit were ambushed – in broad daylight – and shot by Rahmanullah Lakanwal, an Afghan national who was allowed into the United States under a Biden-era program known as "Operation Allies Welcome." In the wake of this attack, President Trump promptly announced his intention to severely limit immigration from 'Third World' countries.⁴

Quite predictably, this announcement has triggered mainstream media talking heads, and other members of the chattering classes.⁵ Critics have argued that such policies would be "discriminatory" – primarily because the developing world is full of what they describe as "brown and black" people. Cue Led Zeppelin's "Immigrant Song"⁶ and footage of large blonde men marching in big black boots, while deliberately ignoring the fact that all immigration policies are inherently discriminatory, but on the objective basis of national origin.⁷

But concerns about Third World migration have absolutely nothing to do with race or ethnicity. They are much more practical: It is virtually impossible to perform any kind of useful vetting on aliens from countries in places like Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Middle East.

Anti-borders advocates would have you believe otherwise. During a September 1, 2021 press conference, press secretary Jen Psaki told the American public, "I can absolutely assure you that no one is coming into the United States of America who has not been through a thorough screening and background check process."⁸ However, Ms. Psaki was deliberately deceiving her audience.

Vetting is simply a fancy word for "background check."⁹ But, the target of a background investigation must have a traceable history. In other words, he or she must have engaged in transactions that generate records. By looking at school registrations, real estate records, department of motor vehicle files, credit histories, etc., an investigator can substantiate an individual's identity and determine whether he or she is a person of good moral character.

However, that is only possible when a person being vetted comes from a society that keeps such records and is willing to share them with the United States. According to a Gallup World Poll survey conducted in 2018, more than 750 million people around the world would migrate if they could.¹⁰ And their preferred destination is the United States. Most of those people come from countries that either lack functioning record keeping systems or will not share information with the United States – which means there is no reliable way to determine whether those individuals constitute a threat to America's national security or public safety.

Nevertheless, over the last three decades, our political and societal elites have permitted aliens from violent, unstable regions to enter the United States, with minimal background checks. Time and time again, this has proven to be a disastrous choice:

- On May 1, 2010, Faisal Shahzad – a naturalized U.S. citizen from Pakistan – attempted to detonate a car bomb in New York’s Times Square.¹¹
- On December 25, 2009, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab – a Nigerian who traveled to the U.S. on a tourist visa – attempted to detonate a bomb sewn into his underwear on Northwest Airlines Flight 253. Miraculously, only Abdulmutallab was killed.¹²
- On April 15, 2013, Tamerlan and Dzhokar Tsarnaev – both Chechen asylum recipients - placed improvised explosive devices at the Boston Marathon finish line, killing three people and injuring hundreds.¹³
- On December 2, 2015, Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik – migrants from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, respectively – attacked a San Bernardino County Department of Public Health Christmas party, killing fourteen and injuring twenty-two others.¹⁴
- On May 19, 2016, Ratko and Divna Masljenjak – Bosnian war criminals – were ordered removed from the United States by an Immigration Judge, after being convicted of lying to immigration officials about their participation in crimes against humanity during the Balkan wars.¹⁵
- On October 31, 2017, Sayfullo Habivullaevic Saipov – an Uzbek who entered the U.S. on a diversity visa – drove a pickup truck into cyclists and runners in New York City, killing eight and injuring thirteen others.¹⁶
- On February 2, 2022 – Cuxum Alvarado – a Guatemalan who had been convicted of crimes against humanity in the 1980s – was arrested and removed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.¹⁷
- On October 16, 2024, Jugoslav Vidic – a Croatian war criminal who entered the U.S. under false pretenses and obtained a green card by fraud – was sentenced to three years in prison.¹⁸

The aforementioned have one thing in common: they hail from countries that either lack record keeping systems or will not share information with the United States. U.S. authorities had virtually no chance of detecting their involvement in terrorism and crimes against humanity. And, as a result, foreigners who presented a clear and present danger to U.S. citizens were permitted to walk America’s streets. Rahmanullah Lakanwal is only the latest, tragic reminder of just how important good vetting is.

And, with a simple Google search, one can find an alarmingly large number of frighteningly similar examples from Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden and a number of other countries across the West.

The term “Third World” was coined by French demographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952 to describe newly independent colonies vacillating between the Western and Soviet spheres of influence in the early days of the Cold War.¹⁹ Eventually, among liberals, the term became a shorthand for “victims of colonial oppression,” while among those less ideologically driven it became a label for nations mired in dysfunction and corruption.

The latter sense of the term is the more accurate one. According to economics professors Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, the authors of *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*, countries achieve prosperity when they have “inclusive systems” that share power, protect property rights and encourage innovation.²⁰ On the other hand, countries that fail have “extractive systems” that concentrate wealth and power in the hands of a small elite, thereby stifling growth.

In other words, corruption dominates in failing states. And nations that are busy fleeing their citizens to benefit the local religious, tribal, ethnic or political elite rarely have effective systems for tracking, deterring and punishing wrongdoing. On the rare occasions when they do have good record-keeping systems, those systems are dedicated to preserving the privileged position of the gangsters in charge, so that the corruption may continue, and the contents stored therein are not routinely shared with other governments or international organizations. As a result, it is virtually impossible to properly vet migrants from the developing world. And it is time that the nations of the West blatantly and unapologetically acknowledge that the only way we can protect our citizens and our way of life from grifters, terrorists and criminal cartels is to shut the door – at least for a while.

President Trump's alleged “ban” on “Third World” migration is well within the limits of 8 U.S.C. § 1182(f) which states, “Whenever the President finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may by proclamation, and for such period as he shall deem necessary, suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens as immigrants or nonimmigrants, or impose on the entry of aliens any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate.” It likely well within the boundaries of the authority accorded to other Western heads of state.

And it is high time that the nations of the West start sending a clear message to the endless tide of migrants seeking greener pastures: “We have grown tired of having our rules, our traditions and our generosity trampled upon. From this point forward, we are prioritizing the national security and public safety needs of our own citizens – not the migration desires of aliens with sketchy pasts. Our motto is no longer, ‘If you can’t beat them, join them’. It has become, ‘If you can’t vet them, ban them.’”

¹ Portions of this article were previously published at *American Thinker*:

https://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2025/12/ban_those_who_cant_be_vetted.html and *New American*: <https://thenewamerican.com/opinion/how-sanctuary-cities-enable-benefit-fraud/>.

² “About the Guard,” accessed January 16, 2026, <https://www.nationalguard.mil/About-the-Guard/>.

³ “18 U.S. Code § 1385 - Use of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Space Force as Posse Comitatus,” LII / Legal Information Institute, accessed January 16, 2026, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/1385>; “The Posse Comitatus Act and Using Military as a Police Force,” Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums, accessed December 26, 2024, <https://www.rbhayes.org/scholarlyworks/the-posse-comitatus-act-and-using-military-as-a-police-force/>.

⁴ “18 U.S. Code § 1385 - Use of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Space Force as Posse Comitatus,” LII / Legal Information Institute, accessed January 16, 2026, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/1385>; Jennifer K Elsea, *The Posse Comitatus Act and Related Matters: The Use of the Military to Execute Civilian Law*, n.d., 73.

⁵ -Doug Adams, “Trump Vows to Stop Immigration from Poorer Countries after Fatal National Guard Shooting,” PBS News, November 28, 2025, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/trump-vows-to-stop-immigration-from-poorer-countries-after-fatal-national-guard-shooting>.

⁶ Led Zeppelin, *Immigrant Song (Remaster)*, 2017, 02:27, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8OtzJtp-EM>.

⁷ “Mathews v. Diaz, 426 U.S. 67 (1976),” Justia Law, accessed January 16, 2026,

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/426/67/>, “... host of constitutional and statutory provisions rest on the premise that a legitimate distinction between citizens and aliens may justify attributes and benefits for one class not accorded to the other.”

⁸ “Ari Hoffman on Instagram: “THIS DIDN’T AGE WELL Joe Biden’s Press Sec Jen Psaki during the Disastrous Afghanistan Withdrawal on Refugees: “I Can Absolutely Assure You That No One Is Coming into the United States of America Who Has Not Been through a Thorough Screening and Background Check Process.”” Instagram, November 27, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/arihoffmanofficial/reel/DRjMhOoAQnu/>.

⁹ Matt O’Brien, “What ‘Vetting’ Actually Means,” *ImmigrationReform.Com*, September 8, 2016, <https://www.immigrationreform.com/2016/09/08/what-vetting-actually-means/>.

¹⁰ Gallup Inc, “More Than 750 Million Worldwide Would Migrate If They Could,” Gallup.Com, December 10, 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/245255/750-million-worldwide-migrate.aspx>.

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