

WHAT NATIONAL SECURITY LEADERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT OUR REFUGEE VETTING PROCESS

Matthew Olsen, former Director, National Counterterrorism Center

“I mean first of all I think the critical point here is that when it comes to the refugee program, the ones we've used in the past and certainly what we're applying with regard to Syrian refugees, there's really no program in the world as extensive as what the United States does in terms of looking at the background information, the intelligence, the biographic information.

It includes interviews of each potential refugee. It includes biometric -- gathering biometric information. The process itself takes 18 to 24 months all told. It -- and then finally a decision will be made at that time before anyone's let in.

And in terms of the populations that are being considered, remember that it is the most vulnerable populations in Syria.”—Committee on Homeland Security Hearing, November 18, 2015

Loretta Lynch, Attorney General of the United States

“We do have robust screening measures in place. They include not just databases, but also individual interviews, biometric data. We gather all relevant information about refugees from all countries because our first goal is the protection and safety of the American people as well as carrying out the compassionate nature also of the American people.”—House Judiciary Committee Hearing, November 17, 2015

“[W]e would use every measure, as we always do, to ensure those who were allowed into the country would not pose a threat to the American citizens”—House Judiciary Committee Hearing, November 17, 2015

“[W]e have a robust screening mechanism for refugees from all countries.

It relies upon efforts of not just the FBI, but the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, State Department. It uses interviews, it uses biometric data.

It is, as I indicated earlier, a challenging process. As is everything we do in law enforcement. But that does not mean that we're not committed to doing everything that we can to make sure that the process is as robust as possible and that we do everything that we can to protect the American people.”—House Judiciary Committee Hearing, November 17, 2015

Retired General Jack Keane, Former Chief of Staff United States Army

“[s]ome of the voices that are out there about this, are playing right into ISIS' hands.

When we talk about, let's only take Christians. I mean, that is a horrific statement. That is playing right into -- this is what ISIS wants. ISIS wants fragmentation between Muslims and non-Muslims. And we have -- that's an irresponsible statement to make. We are a country with Muslims in it.

And why wouldn't we welcome Muslims and others from around the world like we've always done who are being persecuted. We didn't care about their religion or their nationality. What we cared about is they were humans running from suffering and death. And there was a home for people like that in America.”—Committee on Homeland Security Hearing, November 18, 2015

“So yes, if we make -- if had a policy here now that would shutdown obviously Muslims who are running from the horror of what's taking place in Syria and shut them down because they're Muslims or because they may actually be a threat there, that plays right, right into his hands. That -- they will use that.

They're already -- I guarantee you that they have picked up on some of the statements that have been made in this town in the last few days. And those things are running all over their social media nets because it is exactly what they want, the polarization and fragmentation between Muslims and non-Muslims.”—Committee on Homeland Security Hearing, November 18, 2015

Jeh Johnson, Secretary of Homeland Security

“We've committed to 10,000, and I've committed that each one will receive a careful security vetting.”— Committee on Homeland Security Hearing, October 21, 2015

“[C]onsulting **all the right databases and systems** that we have available to us, and the refugee review process is probably one of the most if not **the most extensive thorough background checks** that someone seeking to enter this country goes through.”—USA Today, October 28, 2015

Nicholas Rasmussen, Director, National Counterterrorism Center

“[W]e have now worked successfully to make sure that every bit of available intelligence information that the United States government holds will be looked at with respect to a potential nexus to someone being screened as a potential refugee.”—Committee on Homeland Security Hearing, October 21, 2015

Matthew Emrich, Associate Director, Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

“I can assure the American people that we have a robust series of screening measures here that encompass the wide range of U.S. government resources that involve U.S. law enforcement agencies and intelligence community members that these processes and these screening measures are constantly reviewed, that we are continuously looking at ways to improve these, that they incorporate both biometric and biographic checks, they incorporate a -- an in-depth interview with a trained U.S. government officer, they incorporate an additional interview -- or inspection, rather -- when the person presents himself or herself at the U.S. port of entry.”—Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing, October 1, 2015

“USCIS has begun an additional layer of enhanced review of Syrian refugee applicants. This enhanced review is performed by headquarters-based staff from the USCIS Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate, or FDNS.”—Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing, October 1, 2015

Gary Schiffman, Former Chief of Staff, United States Customs and Border Protection Office—

"We have the Department of Homeland Security exactly so that we don't need to do knee-jerk legislative reactions to real world events," –Congressional Quarterly, November 18, 2015