

DHS Emails Reveal U.S. May Have Terrorist 'Hands Off' List

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The Obama administration appears to have a terrorist “hands off” list that permits individuals with extremist ties to enter the country, according to internal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) documents obtained by a United States Senator.

It's unimaginable that any government would do this, but it seems like the Obama administration is constantly breaking new ground. The disturbing details of this secret initiative were made public this week by Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley, who has obtained DHS electronic mail discussing what could be a terrorist “hands off” list. The exchange includes a 2012 email chain between U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) asking whether to admit an individual with ties to various terrorist groups. The individual had scheduled an upcoming flight into the U.S., according to an announcement issued by the senator.

The person was believed to be a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and a close associate and supporter Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, according to the mail exchange obtained by Grassley's office. The terrorist suspect had also been in secondary inspection “several dozen times of the past several years,” the agency emails reveal, but had not undergone a secondary inspection since 2010. This seems to imply that the suspect has been on the U.S. government's radar for some time.

It gets better. The DHS emails also reveal that this particular terrorism suspect has actually taken legal action against the U.S., presumably because authorities violated the hands off policy. The subject “has sued CBP twice in the past and that he's one of the several hands off passengers nationwide,” according to the DHS emails obtained by Senator Grassley's office. The documents go on to say that the terrorist's records were removed and that the DHS Secretary (at the time Janet Napolitano) was involved in the matter.

This is pure insanity and the senator has tried for months to get answers from DHS. In February he wrote a letter to DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson saying this: “I'm puzzled how someone could be a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land Foundation trial, be an associate of [redacted], say that the US is staging car bombings in Iraq and that [it] is ok for men to beat their wives, question who was behind the 9/11 attacks, and be afforded the luxury of a visitor visa and de-watchlisted. It doesn't appear that we'll be successful with denying him entry tomorrow but maybe we could re-evaluate the matter in the future since the decision to de-watchlist him was made 17 months ago.”

The agency's response, dated April 10, apparently frustrated the senator enough to make the whole thing public this week. DHS let CBP Commissioner Gil Kerlikowske get back to Grassley. His letter says the agency does not have the authority to ignore information that renders an individual alien inadmissible because CBP does not have the discretionary authority to admit an inadmissible alien. "Accordingly, CBP does not have any list or other mechanism which would render an individual free of the grounds of inadmissibility or from any other inspection requirements, including secondary inspections," Kerlikowske writes.

He goes on to pass the buck to another agency, the Department of Justice (DOJ). "The Terrorist Watchlist is maintained by the Terrorist Screening Center, which was created by the Attorney General and is administered by the Federal Bureau of Investigations," the CBP commissioner writes. "All questions related to the watchlist should therefore be referred to the Department of Justice for response." Kerlikowske also offers to provide the senator with a "more detailed briefing on the particular case cited in your letter, in the appropriate setting." That means nothing will be put in writing so as to avoid any sort of future incrimination in the event the scandal blows wide open.

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