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Republican Party Jumps on Board for Islamophobia

As primary results continue to come in state by state, it is becoming more apparent that the Republican Party in the United States is favoring Donald Trump and his Islamophobic views over more reasonable and realistic viewpoints. After the Paris attacks in November of 2015, Trump told MSNBC that he would consider closing US mosques with radical leaders if he became president (Shekhtman, 2015). This was just the beginning of his Islamophobia as we now know it in March of 2016. Donald Trump and other republican presidential candidates have turned the Islamic State and ISIS into an umbrella for Muslims and Islam in general. Farris Barakat, the brother of a man attacked in North Carolina in February, said in a phone interview that, “the enemy is not the individuals, the enemy is ignorance”. This statement is exactly what the American people need to be more focused on in the current political climate instead of jumping on bandwagons of attempting to ban a religion from the United States.

Seyed Hossein Mousavian, the head of Foreign Relations Committee of Iran’s National Security Council from 1997-2005 said in an article in December that, “little to no effort is given to really understand the root causes and motivations for such terrorism. With such a mentality, it is impossible to pursue a truly effective counterterrorism policy”. This mentality is exactly what the Republican Party in the United States is taking to. Instead of attempting to understand the religion and the faith, realizing that about 3.3 million Muslims of all ages live in the United States currently, the party is generalizing and stereotyping; causing the American people to hate and fear.

Why exactly is this fear happening though and where is it coming from? Trump isn’t the reason Americans are threatening Muslims and mosques in particular throughout the United States, but he isn’t helping the issue either. After each incident that happens involving a terrorist attack, hate crimes spike. An article by Corky Siemaszko from NBC found that after the Paris attacks, 38 anti-Muslim attacks happened shortly thereafter. 18 of those attacks happened directly after the December 2nd slaughter in San Bernardino as well. Muslims today are comparing the current climate of Islamophobia and hate as similar to the climate after 9/11. Trump said in a recent interview that he thinks “Islam hates us”, as though Islam as a religion can hate. The definition of Islam is, “the religion of the Muslims”. If he were to say that Muslims hate us, or that ISIS hates us; anything else would make more sense than “Islam hates us”. Politically incorrect statements like this are fueling the fire of the fear and hatred the American people are feeling.

If “Islam hates us” so much, why is it that survey research shows 38 of the 39 majority-Muslim countries and regions see closer relationships with the West as a benefit more than a harm? The United States should be attempting to band together with Muslims and with majority-Muslim countries to fight the real enemy which is the Islamic State group. Polls conducted in 11 nations and territories showed at least 60 percent or more of respondents had an unfavorable opinion of the Islamic State, which is worse than Trump’s unfavorable rate among the general electorate according to the Huffington Post’s pollster which is updated regularly.

However, Trump isn't the only GOP candidate that is jumping on board with anti-muslim statements. Ted Cruz, feeling the need to one up Trump with his statement about shutting down Muslims entering the United States, said that there should simply be a halt of immigration from "that part of the world". He also says that prosecutions of alleged offenses against Muslims have been too high. He criticized the hate-crime investigators and Attorney General Lynch by saying they have run amok and are prosecuting too many people thus creating fear of speaking out against Muslims.

Perhaps Cruz's viewpoints are somehow too radical since Trump is still winning a majority of the primary elections. He currently has 673 pledged delegates, more than half of the 1,237 needed to win the presidential nomination while Cruz only has 410.

If the United States, and the GOP in general, would do the smallest amount of research, they might realize that the enemy here is not Islam, it is not Muslims within the United States, it is ignorance, as Barakat pointed out perfectly.

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