

WHITE SUPREMACIST VIOLENCE: WHO CARES?

Scott Ostrem, a 47-year-old, white man, walked into a Walmart north of Denver on Nov. 1 and opened fire. Eyewitnesses described him as “nonchalantly” shooting shoppers with a handgun, killing three. Police captured Ostrem alive the next day. They said they had “no possible motive for the shooting other than to say there was nothing to suggest it was related to terrorism.”

This meets the FBI definition of a mass killing: Three or more people who died in a public place. But sandwiched between a Halloween day attack that killed eight in Manhattan and the slaughter of 26 people at a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, the Walmart killings have faded into the background. That’s a mistake. Ostrem’s rampage deserves far more attention because it represents the foremost terrorist threat in America today: White supremacist violence unleashed and encouraged by President Donald J. Trump.

Ostrem killed three Hispanic people, Pam Marques, Victor Vasquez, and Carlos Moreno, all parents. In the apartment complex where Ostrem lived, neighbors described him as “a bizarre, angry man who lived alone in an apartment with a stack of Bibles and virtually no furniture.” He was a “loner who would walk around carrying weapons” like a shotgun or bow and arrows. When it came to relations with neighbors, Ostrem “was very racist towards Hispanics.” Another said he was “verbally abusive towards Hispanics.”

The local CBS affiliate reported Ostrem “often expressed dislike for Hispanics to their faces.” A Hispanic employee at the building said, “If he saw a Hispanic person, he would tell them to get out of his way.” One neighbor said Ostrem would say, “This is America. You shouldn’t be here.” That sentiment could have come right out of Donald Trump’s mouth.

Compare this to the Manhattan attack. Two hours after it happened, before the name of the perpetrator was released, officials designated it an act of terrorism. That assessment was apparently based on nothing more than the suspect, Sayfullo Saipov, yelling “God is great” in Arabic after he mowed down cyclists and pedestrians with a truck. Gov. Andrew Cuomo called Saipov one of “these lone wolves who commit an act of terror,” linking him to ISIS. A day later, Saipov was hit with federal terrorism charges.

What officials said of Saipov — a lone wolf “consumed by hate and a twisted ideology” — applies as much to Scott Ostrem and the other white supremacists who have taken to murder since Trump was elected. The killers attack the same people Trump demonize— Muslims, Blacks, Hispanics, immigrants — and they resonate with Trump’s words and ideology.

In February, U.S. Navy vet Adam Purinton confronted two Indian men in a bar in Kansas, asking if they were in the country legally, and yelled “Get out of my country.” In May, Sean Urbanski, who liked “memes about Donald Trump, white supremacy, and the alt-right,” stabbed to death Richard Collins III, a black second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. The killing echoed a case in March

when Army vet James Jackson stabbed to death Timothy Caughman. Jackson murdered the 66-year-old Black man because “The white race is being eroded. ... No one cares about you. The Chinese don’t care about you, the Blacks don’t care about you.”

Also in May, Jeremy Christian stabbed to death Ricky John Best, father of four, and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, a recent college graduate, on a train in Portland, Oregon, after they defended two black women, one wearing a hijab, being threatened by Christian. Weeks earlier, Christian had attended a pro-Trump alt-right rally in Portland where he yelled “Die Muslims.” A recent FBI-DHS report determined white supremacists were the most dangerous domestic extremists.

Those storm clouds were brewing before Trump’s election. In October 2016 the FBI foiled a plot by a Kansas militia called “the Crusaders” to wipe out a Somali-American community in Garden City. They called the immigrants “cockroaches” and planned to perpetrate an Oklahoma City-style massacre, the 1995 bombing by right-wing militiamen that killed 168 people and stands as deadliest incident of domestic terrorism in modern U.S. history.

Sounding like Trump, the Kansas militiamen said the Somalis were “a threat to American society” and hoped a bloodbath would “wake up” a lot more people to “decide they want this country back.” With a president who uses the Bully Pulpit as a recruiting tool for right-wing terrorism, it’s only a matter of time before some of his followers try a slaughter on this scale again. And no one can see we didn’t see it coming.

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UN Left In The Dust- Again

The Trump administration has pulled out of the United Nations’ ambitious plans to create a more humane global strategy on migration. The UN Ambassador stated that the US was not willing to continue with an American commitment to the proposed UN global compact. The announcement came hours before the opening of conference on migration scheduled to begin in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. The aim is to publish a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration next year in time for adoption by the UN general assembly in September.

In 2016, the 193 members of the UN general assembly unanimously adopted a non-binding political declaration, the New York declaration for refugees and migrants, pledging to uphold the rights of refugees, help them resettle and ensure they had access to education and jobs. The global compact is regarded as a chance to shift world opinion on the need to address future migration, in the same way that the UN had managed to persuade the world it needed to address climate change. There are currently 60 million people who have been displaced worldwide.

The US mission to the UN said in a statement on Saturday that the declaration “contains numerous provisions that are inconsistent with US immigration and refugee policies and the Trump administration’s immigration principles”. In a statement issued on Saturday, the UN Ambassador said: “America is proud of our immigrant heritage and our longstanding moral leadership in providing support to migrant and refugee populations across the globe ... But our decisions on immigration policies must always be made by Americans and Americans alone. We will decide how best to control our borders and who will be allowed to enter our country. The global approach in the New York declaration is simply not compatible with US sovereignty.”

The UN had always insisted that the compact was never intended to be legally binding on any country, but instead was an attempt to create a shared understanding that migration flows are likely to increase, and need to be regularized by recognizing the reality of state interdependence, as much as national sovereignty.

-Patrick Wintour *theguardian.com*

DEMOCRATS AND THEIR MEDIA ALLIES SAY THEY’RE LEADING “THE RESISTANCE” TO DONALD TRUMP. IMAGINE IF THE REAL RESISTANCE OF WORLD WAR II HAD BEEN RUN BY THE DEMOCRATS...



YEMEN DISASTER: U.S. Made

Since March 2015, the U.S. has provided the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen with political and military support, including targeting intelligence, mid-air refueling, and other logistical support. U.S. personnel reportedly work alongside Saudi and other counterparts in the coalition’s joint command center. CENTCOM has publicly confirmed that the U.S. continues to provide mid-air refueling to the coalition, despite having no information on the objectives, flight plans, or targets of the refueled missions and no way to verify whether such missions comport with the laws of armed conflict or US national security objectives. U.S. weapons sold to Saudi Arabia have been misused repeatedly in airstrikes on civilians and civilians objects that are the leading cause of civilian casualties in the conflict and destroyed Yemen’s vital infrastructure. This destruction of infrastructure has exacerbated the world’s largest hunger crisis and created the conditions necessary for the largest cholera outbreak ever documented.

Yet despite the fact that the U.S. is actively aiding and abetting coalition abuses, U.S. military involvement in this disastrous conflict in Yemen has never been debated publicly. This war of attrition has been waged using U.S. weaponry, military support, and personnel without congressional authorization for far too long. As the Trump Administration has consistently ignored human rights and civilian harm in its national security decisions, and looks to take a more aggressive posture in the region, Congress must send a

clear signal that U.S. military involvement in Yemen’s civil war requires congressional authorization. Without it, U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen violates the Constitution and the War Powers Resolution of 1973. Congress has a constitutional and ethical duty to ensure any and all U.S. military operations comply with domestic and international law, and U.S. participation in the war in Yemen raises numerous legal and moral questions that must be resolved by Congress. Congress has an additional responsibility to do all in its power to convey to the administration and US allies in the region that more must be done to address the urgent humanitarian crisis facing millions of Yemenis.

The war has also created a security vacuum in Yemen that poses a significant security threat to the region and the United States. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is stronger than it has ever been. The U.S. State Department recently stated that “AQAP, in particular, has benefitted from this conflict by significantly expanding its presence in the southern and eastern governorates. It has successfully inserted itself amongst multiple factions on the ground, making the group more difficult to counter.” Iran has also taken advantage of Yemen’s instability, and benefits the longer the conflict drags on; by smuggling limited amounts of arms into Yemen, Tehran has further embroiled its Gulf rivals in an unwinnable war. Only by ending the war in Yemen can these threats from AQAP and Iran be mitigated, for they have been bolstered precisely because of the chaos wrought by the stalemated battle between the U.S.-supported Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi-Saleh alliance.

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