

Trump Sides With ISIS Supporters in Middle East Sectarian War

Dan Wright
[Shadowproof](#)

In a speech that contradicted numerous public statements, [President Donald Trump](#) praised the rulers of Saudi Arabia and other gulf state autocracies for fighting [Islamic](#) terrorism in his first foreign trip as president. Despite irrefutable evidence (that [he himself previously referenced](#)) that the [Kingdom of Saudi Arabia](#) is the primary source of support for [Sunni](#) jihadist terrorist groups such as [Al Qaeda](#) and ISIS, Trump celebrated the Saudi government's commitment to combating Islamic extremism.

Beyond support for terrorism, Trump had slammed Saudi Arabia in the past for wanting to ["enslave women and kill gays."](#) But, in another reversal, Trump characterized the country as a wonderful place to live, [saying](#), "I have always heard about the splendor of your country and the kindness of your people, but words do not do justice to the grandeur of this sacred place."

While some of the complete rhetorical flip-flops could arguably be attributed to diplomatic niceties, the actual substance of President Trump's speech addressing the Islamic world was both absurd and dangerous.

Trump not only praised one of [Al Qaeda and ISIS' chief backers](#) as a leader in the fight against Islamic extremism, he essentially blamed Iran and [Shiite Islam](#) for the instability in the [Middle East](#). He even praised the government of Bahrain whose Sunni minority government has been engaging in a [brutal crackdown](#) of the Shiite majority post-Arab Spring.

His condemnation of Iran as an authoritarian regime was particularly hollow, given the audience was made up of autocrats working to suppress domestic democratic movements and Iran had [successfully conducted an election](#) two days earlier. While it was by no means an open or substantially fair process, the Iranian people did get to offer a limited voice in deciding their future—an influence not granted in the slightest by the other governments represented in the room, especially the Saudis who rule under literal feudalism.

Putting aside the hypocrisy of the moral claims, President Trump blew a major opportunity to address one of the leading causes of Sunni jihadist extremism today: the export of [Wahhabist/Salafist ideology](#) by the Saudis to the rest of the world. That poison helped inspire both Al Qaeda and ISIS as well as the wealthy gulf state officials who fund them.

Rather than confront the roots of the terrorism that has savaged the U.S. and Europe, Trump praised its benefactors and took a side in a sectarian war that continues to rip apart the Middle East. The position is fundamentally counterproductive if your primary concern is American security.

The strategy is not good for America, but it is good for Saudi Arabia and [Israel](#). Trump's first foreign trip included a visit to Israel and the Vatican as well as Saudi Arabia. According to Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett, he spoke with Trump about his proposal for a ["right wing peace"](#) across the region, which relies on the Sunni gulf states allying with Israel against Shiite Iran and its allies, such as the government of Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

President Trump ran on getting the [United States](#) out of the Middle East and away from [stupid wars](#). But his actions and rhetoric so far as president indicate he is ready to double-down on dumb.

DAPL Company Hired War on Terror Contractors to Suppress Native Uprising

Lauren McCauley

[Common Dreams](#)

The years-long, Indigenous-led fight against the [Dakota Access Pipeline](#) (DAPL) briefly captured the nation's attention last fall as images of peaceful resisters being sprayed with water canons and surrounded by police in tanks and other military-grade equipment were spread widely, fueling global outrage and a fierce [protest movement](#) against the oil pipeline.

Now that the pipeline is operational and [already leaking](#), internal documents obtained by [The Intercept](#) and [reported](#) on Saturday reveal the deep collusion between local police forces, the pipeline company, and defense contractors as they executed "military-style counterterrorism measures" to suppress the water protectors.

TigerSwan, described as a "shadowy international mercenary and security firm" that "originated as a U.S. military and [State Department](#) contractor helping to execute the global war on terror," was hired by [Energy Transfer Partners](#) to spearhead "a multifaceted private security operation characterized by sweeping and invasive surveillance of protesters," *The Intercept* wrote.

Reportedly, one of TigerSwan's contractors leaked 100 internal documents to reporters Alleen Brown, Will Parrish, and Alice Sperti, who were able to assemble roughly 1,000 more via public records requests.

The trove paints a damning picture of the police response to the Indigenous-led effort to block construction of the pipeline on sacred, treaty land and is a shocking example of how anti-terrorist rhetoric and tactics could be applied to any uprising the government would like to suppress.

According to the reporting:

Internal TigerSwan communications describe the movement as “an ideologically driven insurgency with a strong religious component” and compare the anti-pipeline water protectors to jihadist fighters. One report, dated February 27, 2017, states that since the movement “generally followed the jihadist insurgency model while active, we can expect the individuals who fought for and supported it to follow a post-insurgency model after its collapse.” Drawing comparisons with post-[Soviet Afghanistan](#), the report warns, “While we can expect to see the continued spread of the anti-DAPL diaspora...aggressive [intelligence preparation of the battlefield](#) and active coordination between intelligence and security elements are now a proven method of defeating pipeline insurgencies.”

“As policing continues to be militarized and state legislatures around the country pass laws criminalizing protest,” Brown, Parrish, and Speri write, “the fact that a private security firm retained by a Fortune 500 oil and gas company coordinated its efforts with local, state, and federal law enforcement to undermine the protest movement has profoundly anti-democratic implications.”

Indeed, in the wake of the 2016 election, [Republican legislatures](#) in at least 19 states [introduced various](#) anti-protest laws, many with a deliberate nod to the uprising in North Dakota.

Not only that, but Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, who oversaw the police response to the DAPL resistance, has been

[advising](#) other law enforcement on how to deal with protests and demonstrations.

Indeed, the documents reportedly show that Energy Transfer Partners has “continued to retain TigerSwan,” despite the fact that the anti-DAPL camps have disbanded. The security firm continues to produce so-called [situation reports](#) that document “the threat of growing activism around other pipeline projects across the country.” These reports include “intelligence on upcoming protests,” information gleaned from social media, and “extensive evidence of aerial surveillance and radio eavesdropping, as well as infiltration of camps and activist circles.”

In some cases, persons “of interest” were even tracked when they crossed over state lines.

What’s more, the documents obtained via open records requests include “communications among agents from the [FBI](#), the [Department of Homeland Security](#), the [U.S. Justice Department](#), the Marshals Service, and the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), as well as state and local police,” that reveals interagency collusion and information sharing on the anti-DAPL protesters.

Read the extensive reporting and several published documents at [The Intercept](#).

[Wolf signs Real ID law, expects new licenses in 2019](#)

Michael Bryant

[Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

HARRISBURG – Gov. Wolf on Friday signed legislation that brings Pennsylvania into compliance with the 2005 Real ID law enacted following the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

That law requires driver's licenses and ID cards to have security enhancements and to be issued to people who prove they are legally in the United States. That means Pennsylvania drivers or ID card holders will eventually have to obtain the more secure certificates to board commercial airliners or enter certain federal facilities.

Wolf signed the Pennsylvania Real ID Compliance Act at a ceremony at Harrisburg International Airport. The law, which takes effect in 90 days, allows PennDot to create an optional driver's license or state ID that will match the Real ID requirements to access airports, military bases, federal courthouses and other facilities in 2018 and beyond.

The legislation, however, doesn't require residents to obtain a driver's license or ID that meets federal Real ID standards. People without Real ID will still be able to use a passport to board commercial airliners or enter certain federal facilities.

Wolf's office said Pennsylvania Real ID should be available in early 2019. In the meantime, existing state IDs or passports will work at airports and federal facilities.

PennDot does not have a cost estimate, but making the current driver's license compliant will require a mark, or symbol, on the license as well as upgrades to back-office operations and systems, said PennDot spokesman Rich Fitzpatrick. The law also requires drivers to present documentation, such as a birth certificate and Social Security card, the first time they get an ID-compliant license.

The federal Real ID Act stemmed from a recommendation by the

9/11 Commission to help curb the use of fake identification by terrorists by setting minimum standards all states should follow when issuing ID cards such as driver's licenses. Among the things the act required that licenses and IDs have are: full legal name; features that prevent tampering, counterfeiting, or duplication; and an RFID chip or machine readable technology that can be used to pull up biographical or biometric data.

Before Friday, Pennsylvania was the largest state that has not complied with the law, passed by Congress after the 2001 terror attacks.