



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 31, 2020

Despite Denials, Leaked Border Patrol Memo Proves Iranians Were Profiled

“Men, when they are angry with one another, will come into any measures for revenge, without considering that the same power which destroys an enemy, may destroy themselves; and he to whom I lend my sword to kill my foe, may with it kill me.”

— *Cato’s Letter Number 96 (September 29, 1722)*

The U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CPB) instructed its agents to detain and question Iranian Americans about their faith and military service in the days after President Trump ordered the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani.



Despite repeated public denials of such an order, NBC News has obtained a CPB memo instructing agents to do exactly what CPB claimed it was not doing: profiling Iranian-Americans trying to return to their homes in the United States.

NBC News reports:

The CBP memo, confirmed to be authentic by a source familiar with the matter, is headed “Updated Procedures” and tagged “Threat Alert High.” It notes that Iran’s supreme leader vowed “forceful revenge” after the U.S. strike that killed Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, commander of Iran’s Quds Force, on Jan. 3.

The memo directs officers to vet “All persons (males and females) born after 1961 and born before 2001 with links” to the Palestinian territories, Lebanon or Iran, including place of birth, as well as Iranian and Lebanese nationals “or any other nationality that has traveled to Iran or Lebanon.” It was issued by the Seattle field office, which controls the border from Washington to the Minnesota-Wisconsin line — more than 1,500 miles.

The memo said the office was looking for “extremist ideology,” “deceptive behaviors” and “membership in a specialized unit — QUDS forces.” It also warned that Shiite Muslims might hide their religious affiliation: “Anyone can state they are from a different faith to mask their intentions.”

The memo conceded, “We have not yet had anyone admit being in [the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps] or QUDS forces yet.”

When those Americans being detained and questioned began relating their experiences of being kept and questioned by CPB, the agency issued statements denying that there was any official mandate to stop and question anyone appearing Iranian who was trying to cross the border into the United States. Customs and Border Patrol went so far as to tweet its rejection of the allegations being made by media that such profiling was policy.



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“Social media posts that CBP is detaining Iranian-Americans and refusing their entry into the U.S. because of their country of origin are false. Reports that DHS/CBP has issued a related directive are also false,” the agency posted on Twitter.

As I reported at the time, more than 60 Iranians and Iranian-Americans of all ages were detained at length and questioned at the Peace Arch Border Crossing in Blaine, Washington.

Many more were reportedly refused entry to the United States due to a lack of capacity for CBP to detain them.

Numerous Iranian-Americans crossed the Peace Arch Border as they returned back to their homes in the United States from an Iranian pop concert that was taking place on Saturday in Vancouver, Canada.

Those detained reported that their passports were confiscated, and they were questioned about their political views and allegiances. CBP officials contacted at the Blaine Port of Entry provided no comment or reasons for the detentions.

Several lawmakers called on CPB to explain its treatment of so many people, all of whom were of Iranian extraction. Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) was among those calling for comments.

On Thursday, Jayapal issued a statement on the appearance of the memo:

It is becoming increasingly clear from multiple conversations with travelers and CBP staff that there was, indeed, a directive from the Seattle Field Office to target Iranian-Americans for secondary screening based on their country of origin and despite the fact that they were largely American citizens, legal permanent residents and legal visa holders.

This is absolutely unacceptable, and it reminds us of the dark times in our country’s history.

NBC News reports that the memo was given to Len Saunders, an immigration attorney in Blaine, Washington, who received it from an anonymous source.

As for the Customs and Border Patrol, they refuse to comment on leaked document.

While many Americans may consider such procedures proper in light of the increasingly hostile relationship between Iran and the United States, it must be remembered that today it’s a memo instructing agents to detain people appearing Iranian, but tomorrow it could be a memo instructing agents to detain people appearing to be Christian or to be “conservative” or to be “homeschoolers.”

The safest and surest course is to pursue the American principle of equality under the law of all men, a principle that is part of the foundation of our liberty and the Constitution that protects it.

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