**Two Op-Ed Pieces on the Syrian Refugee Crisis**

Below are two different arguments about what we should do about the Syrian refugee crisis. One is recent, whereas one was written back in 2015. One is by someone who has worked as a special envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, whereas the other was written by a candidate for president who is currently in line to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under Trump.

As you read, consider the strategies each writer uses, but also evaluate them. Look for strong points and weak points in both. Consider what you would say if you responded to either.

Ben Carson: The U.S. Must Not Accept Any Syrian Refugees

[Dr. Ben Carson](http://time.com/author/dr-ben-carson/) Nov. 17, 2015

Americans must stop viewing Islamic extremism through the lens of political correctness

The carnage in Paris last Friday reminded us all of the evil of Islamic extremism. President Barack Obama has promised to “bring these terrorists to justice.” Yet his administration appears altogether oblivious to the threat posed by an influx of refugees from war-torn Syria into the U.S. homeland. Furthermore, in the war against Islamic extremism, the President cannot even bring himself to confront the enemy by its name.

This Monday, I sent [letters](https://www.bencarson.com/-temporary-slug-895a0da4-a830-46fe-8e33-955a47db067b?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter) to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Speaker Paul Ryan urging Congress to terminate all public funding for ongoing federal programs that seek to resettle refugees from Syria into the U.S. I also call on the American people to stop viewing Islamic extremism through the lens of political correctness.

We now know that several teams of ISIS terrorist attacked six different locations in Paris, killing at least 132 people and wounding hundreds more. We have also learned that one of the terrorists responsible for this grotesque attack may have left Syria posing as a migrant and was able to gain safe entry to France, Belgium and perhaps other central European countries.

Given the tragedy in Paris last Friday, the U.S. simply cannot, should not and must not accept *any* Syrian refugees. Unfortunately, the Obama administration has [pledged](http://dailycaller.com/2015/09/21/state-department-lifts-refugee-cap-in-response-to-europe-crisis/) that the U.S. would accept an additional 45,000 new refugees, mostly from Syria, from 2016 to 2017. This must not happen. Instead of half talk and feel-good promises, the U.S. must defend itself with sound security measures.

Paris offers a bloody reminder that we must not be afraid to confront those who harbor the jihadist views that have spread violence and hatred around the world.

Although President Obama and presidential candidates from the Democratic Party prefer to describe radical Islam as just a form of extremism, the rest of us should remember that jihadists who have spilled blood on our soil before and must never be allowed to do so again.

If we thought Islamic extremism is a phenomenon reserved for foreign lands, terrorists have made sure to expose our naiveté. From London to Paris, Sydney to Madrid, Fort Hood to Chattanooga, radical Islamists and their lone wolf followers have inflicted their savagery across the civilized world. Paris now offers the latest gruesome reminder of radical Islam’s barbarism.

Given this troubling reality, and given the bloodbaths that have been perpetrated in the name of Islam in the modern era, I announced a few months ago that I personally would not support having a Muslim president in the White House if he or she had not renounced Islamic extremism, Sharia law or the tenets and practices of Islam that are in conflict with the Constitution.

Certainly, not every Muslim subscribes to jihadist ideology. Throughout my career, I have worked with superb Muslim Americans. Many more have served America honorably by joining the U.S. military, fighting for America overseas, working with federal and local law enforcement to combat radicalization in their own communities and publicly denouncing the violent or misogynist teachings of radical Islamists.

For their decency and courage, we should be grateful. Unfortunately, their own communities have often viciously vilified them as heretics and infidels.

The reality is that the threat of radical Islam and the corrosive influence of Sharia law here in the U.S. is not just a figment of our imagination. The U.S. must defend itself by preventing the infiltration of terrorists who pose as refugees to enter our land. To do anything less is foolish.

*Dr. Ben Carson is a Republican candidate for president.*

<http://time.com/4116014/paris-attacks-ben-carson/>

[The Opinion Pages](https://www.nytimes.com/pages/opinion/index.html) | Op-Ed Contributor

Angelina Jolie: Refugee Policy Should Be Based on Facts, Not Fear

By ANGELINA JOLIE FEB. 2, 2017

Photo



Credit Keith Negley

Refugees are men, women and children caught in the fury of war, or the cross hairs of persecution. Far from being terrorists, they are often the victims of terrorism themselves.

I’m proud of our country’s history of giving shelter to the most vulnerable people. Americans have shed blood to defend the idea that human rights transcend culture, geography, ethnicity and religion. The decision to suspend the resettlement of refugees to the United States and deny entry to citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries has been met with shock by our friends around the world precisely because of this record.

The global refugee crisis and the threat from terrorism make it entirely justifiable that we consider how best to secure our borders. Every government must balance the needs of its citizens with its international responsibilities. But our response must be measured and should be based on facts, not fear.

As the mother of six children, who were all born in foreign lands and are proud American citizens, I very much want our country to be safe for them, and all our nation’s children. But I also want to know that refugee children who qualify for asylum will always have a chance to plead their case to a compassionate America. And that we can manage our security without writing off citizens of entire countries — even babies — as unsafe to visit our country by virtue of geography or religion.

Refugees are in fact subject to the highest level of screening of any category of traveler to the United States. This includes months of interviews, and security checks carried out by the F.B.I., the National Counterterrorism Center, the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department.

Furthermore, only the most vulnerable people are put forward for resettlement in the first place: survivors of torture, and women and children at risk or who might not survive without urgent, specialized medical assistance. I have visited countless camps and cities where hundreds of thousands of refugees are barely surviving and every family has suffered. When the United Nations Refugee Agency identifies those among them who are most in need of protection, we can be sure that they deserve the safety, shelter and fresh start that countries like ours can offer.

Photo



*Angelina Jolie at a camp for Syrian refugees in Jordan, in September. Credit Jordan Pix/Getty Images*

And in fact only a minuscule fraction — less than 1 percent — of all refugees in the world are ever resettled in the United States or any other country. There are more than 65 million refugees and displaced people worldwide. Nine out of 10 refugees live in poor and middle-income countries, not in rich Western nations. There are 2.8 million Syrian refugees in Turkey alone. Only about 18,000 Syrians have been resettled in America since 2011.

This disparity points to another, more sobering reality. If we send a message that it is acceptable to close the door to refugees, or to discriminate among them on the basis of religion, we are playing with fire. We are lighting a fuse that will burn across continents, inviting the very instability we seek to protect ourselves against.

We are already living through the worst refugee crisis since World War II. There are countries in Africa and the Middle East bursting at the seams with refugees. For generations American diplomats have joined the United Nations in urging those countries to keep their borders open, and to uphold international standards on the treatment of refugees. Many do just that with exemplary generosity.

What will be our response if other countries use national security as an excuse to start turning people away, or deny rights on the basis of religion? What could this mean for the Rohingya from Myanmar, or for Somali refugees, or millions of other displaced people who happen to be Muslim? And what does this do to the absolute prohibition in international law against discrimination on the grounds of faith or religion?

The truth is that even if the numbers of refugees we take in are small, and we do the bare minimum, we do it to uphold the United Nations conventions and standards we fought so hard to build after World War II, for the sake of our own security.

If we Americans say that these obligations are no longer important, we risk a free-for-all in which even more refugees are denied a home, guaranteeing more instability, hatred and violence.

If we create a tier of second-class refugees, implying Muslims are less worthy of protection, we fuel extremism abroad, and at home we undermine the ideal of diversity cherished by Democrats and Republicans alike: “America is committed to the world because so much of the world is inside America,” in the words of Ronald Reagan. If we divide people beyond our borders, we divide ourselves.

The lesson of the years we have spent fighting terrorism since Sept. 11 is that every time we depart from our values we worsen the very problem we are trying to contain. We must never allow our values to become the collateral damage of a search for greater security. Shutting our door to refugees or discriminating among them is not our way, and does not make us safer. Acting out of fear is not our way. Targeting the weakest does not show strength.

We all want to keep our country safe. So we must look to the sources of the terrorist threat — to the conflicts that give space and oxygen to groups like the Islamic State, and the despair and lawlessness on which they feed. We have to make common cause with people of all faiths and backgrounds fighting the same threat and seeking the same security. This is where I would hope any president of our great nation would lead on behalf of all Americans.

*Angelina Jolie, a filmmaker, is the special envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. A version of this op-ed appears in print on February 3, 2017, on Page A27 of the New York edition with the headline: A Refugee Policy Based on Facts, Not Fear.*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/02/opinion/angelina-jolie-refugee-policy-should-be-based-on-facts-not-fear.html?_r=0>

If you’re curious, you can also read what Jolie wrote about this crisis in 2015, the same year (though months earlier) than Ben Carson wrote his piece. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/28/opinion/angelina-jolie-on-the-syrians-and-iraqis-who-cant-go-home.html>