

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 11, 2014

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
Harry S. Truman Building, 2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Kerry and Secretary Johnson:

We write today to encourage you to take immediate action to prevent U.S. and western country passport holders fighting alongside the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Jabat al-Nusra or other terrorist organizations from traveling to the U.S. to commit acts of terrorism against the homeland.

On September 3, 2014, Secretary Hagel stated that the U.S. government is aware of “over 100 U.S. citizens who have U.S. passports who are fighting in the Middle East with ISIS forces.” The following day the Pentagon clarified that approximately 100 American passport holders are operating inside of Syria and roughly one dozen of those individuals are fighting alongside ISIS. Reports also indicate that hundreds of additional westerners have joined the ranks of ISIS, Jabat al-Nusra, and other terrorist organizations in that region. According to the administration, “there is significant concern about the idea that some of these individuals may try to travel back to the west using their western passports and carry out acts of violence or engage in terrorism here.”

According to media reports, two American passport holders were recently killed in Syria while fighting in support of ISIS. The State Department also confirmed in May that an American citizen was involved in a suicide bombing in Syria. We agree that the prospect of U.S. citizens and other westerners being trained as terrorists in Syria and returning home to carry out terrorist acts is a real threat to the homeland and must be addressed using every available tool of the federal government.


Under the provisions of 22 CFR Section 51.60(c)(4), the Secretary of State may revoke a U.S. passport if “the Secretary determines that the applicant’s activities abroad are causing or are likely to cause serious damage to the national security or the foreign policy of the United States.” Additionally, through the FBI’s Terrorist Screening Center the FBI maintains the No Fly List by which known or suspected terrorists are prohibited from boarding a commercial aircraft that departs from or arrives in the U.S. We encourage you to use these authorities, as well as all available law enforcement and intelligence tools, as appropriate, to stop ISIS, Jabat al-Nusra fighters and other dangerous individuals from traveling to the United States to commit acts of terrorism.

Accordingly, please address the following questions:

1. How many individuals fighting alongside ISIS, or Jabat al-Nusra fighters or other terrorist organizations are projected to have passports from the U.S. or visa waiver countries?
2. What actions are being taken to engage visa waiver countries to track and account for individuals fighting alongside ISIS, Jabat al-Nusra or other terrorist organizations operating in this region who hold passports that provide access to the U.S.?
3. What specific information are you seeking from visa waiver countries to ensure that no individuals with ties to terrorism can enter the United States?
4. What visa waiver countries have satisfied all U.S. requests for information and which countries are refusing to provide you all requested information on their citizens suspected of having travelled to Syria to fight with ISIS, Jabat al-Nusra or other terrorist organizations?
5. What is the administration's plan for ensuring that these individuals who have traveled abroad with American or other western passports and have actively supported ISIS, Jabat al-Nusra or other terrorist organizations are being monitored, and when appropriate, are being prevented from entering the U.S. or being prosecuted for aiding these groups when they attempt to do so?
6. What is the administration's strategy for identifying, monitoring, and intercepting individuals living in the U.S. and influenced by ISIS's social media from traveling abroad to join ISIS and other groups and engage in acts of terror?


We thank you for your immediate consideration of this request, and we look forward to continuing working with you to keep Americans safe both at home and abroad.

Sincerely,



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JOHN THUNE  
United States Senator



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BOB CORKER  
United States Senator



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Mark

John Barrasso

Mark

Lee Meadows

Lawrence Alexander

Mike Johnson

Chuck Grassley

Pat Romney

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