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The White House released a list of 'under covered' terror attacks it would like you to look at

By **Philip Bump** February 6 at 9:44 PM

After President Trump made the baffling claim in a speech on Monday that the media was not reporting on terror attacks ("It's gotten to a point where it's not even being reported. And in many cases the very, very dishonest press doesn't want to report it. They have their reasons, and you understand that."), press secretary Sean Spicer hurried to do damage control.

It wasn't that the attacks weren't being reported *at all*, Spicer told reporters on Air Force One. It was that the attacks weren't being reported *enough*. "Protests will get blown out of the water, and yet an attack or a foiled attack doesn't necessarily get the same coverage," he said. He promised to release a list of those so-called under reported attacks shortly.

A few hours later, he did. The White House produced a list of 78 attacks that it felt met the criterion of receiving less attention than deserved, unlike, say, anti-Trump protests involving millions of people.

We decided to take a quick look at the list and see how many hadn't been reported in the American media. Below are the first 25 attacks on the list, with links to coverage.

- Melbourne, Sept. 2014. Deaths: 0
- Tizi-Ouzou, Sept. 2014. Deaths: 1
- Quebec, Oct. 2014. Deaths: 1
- Ottawa, Oct. 2014. Deaths: 1
- New York, Oct. 2014. Deaths: 0

- Riyadh, Nov. 2014. Deaths: 0
- Abu Dhabi, Dec. 2014. Deaths: 1
- Sydney, Dec. 2014. Deaths: 2
- Tours, Dec. 2014. Deaths: 0
- Paris, Jan. 2015. Deaths: 5
- Tripoli, Jan. 2015. Deaths: 10
- Riyadh, Jan. 2015. Deaths: 0
- Nice, Feb. 2015. Deaths: 0
- Copenhagen, Feb. 2015. Deaths: 1
- Tunis, March 2015. Deaths: 21
- Karachi, April 2015. Deaths: 0
- Paris, April 2015. Deaths: 1
- Zvornik, April 2015. Deaths: 1
- Garland, May 2015. Deaths: 0
- Boston, June 2015. Deaths: 0
- El Gora, June 2015. Deaths: 0
- Luxor, June 2015. Deaths: 1
- Sousse, June 2015. Deaths: 38
- Lyon, June 2015. Deaths: 1
- Cairo, July 2015. Deaths: 1
- Cairo, July 2015. Deaths: 1
- Paris, Aug. 2015. Deaths: 0

The White House released a list of 'under covered' <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/w...> There's a concept in interactions with the press called "working the refs." The idea is that it's worth paying attention to trying to shape the coverage you receive before you receive it by offering criticisms that hopefully push the media where you want. Trump's point about the media not reporting on terror attacks wasn't necessarily that he thought the media was burying stories — though it very well may have been. Spicer, at least, was smart enough to understand that this was an opportunity to get the media to run with a lengthy list of terror attacks that, he hoped, would reinforce Trump's broader message that terror attacks were a constant threat that demanded a strong response. Spicer, in other words, hoped to work the refs.

The problem with this effort is that it's both transparent and irrational. Should the media write dozens of stories about terror attacks in Egypt in which a couple of people were wounded? Notice that in the first 25 attacks listed above, only three were in America. In none of those three was anyone killed.

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And notice that the attack in Garland, Tex., is included in that list. That story, an attack on an event showing cartoons of Muhammad, received *tons* of media attention. So did the attack in Sousse, Tunisia: This was the attack on a beach resort that left nearly 40 people dead. You likely remember that story — because it received a lot of media attention.

Missing are attacks that don't involve a Muslim or Islamic State-sympathetic attacker. But the list *does* include stories that no person in his or her right mind could consider undercovered. The bombing in New York City. The attacks in Paris on cafes and the Bataclan theater. The shooting in San Bernardino, Calif. (misspelled on the White House list). The bombing at the airport in Brussels. The shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. These stories received wall-to-wall coverage, and deservedly so.

They also give the lie to the intent of Spicer offering the list. The point wasn't to complain that there was not enough coverage of the shooting in San Bernardino. It was to turn Trump's baffling remarks into an opportunity to make a broader point in service to Trump's policies.

The list was rushed — "attacker" is misspelled repeatedly and there is incorrect information, such as the statement that multiple people were involved in the recent attack at Ohio State University. This wasn't something that the White House was sitting on, waiting to raise as a legitimate critique of how the media approached an issue central to Trump's presidency. It was, instead, an attempt to make lemonade.

You may be the refs of whether or not it worked.

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/w...>

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