

TOM COTTON

- Tom Cotton is currently serving his first term in the U.S. Senate (2014-), representing Arkansas. He also served one term in the U.S. House of Representatives (2013-2015). From 2005 to 2009, Cotton served in the U.S. Army, with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.
- In December 2015, Cotton stated that while he **“strongly disagree[s]”** with then-candidate Trump’s **“across-the-board ban”** of Muslim immigration to the U.S., he **cautioned against “the small number of Muslims around the world who oppose Western civilization.”** Instead, Cotton advised, “We should be focusing on the Syrian refugee program, the visa waiver program from countries with radicalized Muslims in Europe who can come here without a visa, and programs like the fiancé visa.”
- In March 2016, Cotton unsuccessfully **introduced legislation that would prioritize refugee resettlement for “Syrian religious minorities.”**
- In February 2017, **Cotton and Senator David Perdue introduced the RAISE Act to end the Diversity Visa program and to reduce family-sponsored immigration and limit refugee admission**, among other reforms. In August 2017, President Trump held a press conference with Cotton and Perdue at the White House in support of the legislation.
- After the resignation of Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, Cotton played a central role in President Trump’s appointment of Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster. Early on, McMaster counseled the Administration against the use of the term “radical Islamic terrorism.”
- In an interview on CNN in November 2016, **Cotton asserted that “waterboarding isn’t torture.”** He later went on to say: “America does not torture. We never have and we never will.”
- In June 2015, **Cotton was one of 21 Senators to vote against an amendment** that would, according to reporting in The Atlantic, **“make it harder for future presidents to torture prisoners like the CIA did during the Bush Administration.”**
- During a February 2015 congressional hearing, **Cotton stated:** “In my opinion, **the only problem with Guantánamo Bay is there are too many empty beds and cells there right now.**” “As far as I’m concerned,” he continued, “every last one of them can rot in hell. But as long as they don’t do that, they can rot in Guantánamo Bay.” In an interview on Fox News about his remarks, Cotton said that the prisoners that remain in Guantánamo Bay “are not innocent goat herders.”
- In May 2013, then-Rep. Cotton sought to **introduce legislation** based on a principle of, in his own words, “corruption of blood.” According to reporting in The Intercept, the amendment was **“designed to punish the families of sanctions violators,”** including “parents, children, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, grandparents, great grandparents, grandkids, great grandkids.”
- In May 2015, Cotton wrote an op-ed in Fox News with then-Rep. Mike Pompeo, now the Director of the CIA, calling for congressional reauthorization of “vital counterterrorism tools” established in the USA PATRIOT Act (2001). Cotton and Pompeo claimed that the scope of such surveillance and metadata programs poses “a much lower risk to personal privacy than...a typical grocery-store rewards program.”

- In his speech at the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), Cotton said: **“We’re fighting one war and it’s a war against radical Islamic jihad. ... It’s a war against specific people, radical Islamic jihadists.”**
- In April 2016, Cotton **delivered the “Weekly Republican Address,”** stating that **“the right strategy against the threat of radical Islam is to confront this radical ideology and defeat it on the battlefield.”**
- Cotton was a vocal **opponent of negotiations under the Obama Administration with Iran over its nuclear programs.** Cotton described **the negotiations as comparable to when the “the West appeased Hitler.”** He has also said: “When your opponent is on his knees, you drive him to the ground and choke him out. But President Obama extended a hand and helped the ayatollahs up.”
- In May 2013, **Cotton spoke on a panel about “political warfare” alongside David Horowitz at the Freedom Center’s “Texas Weekend.”** Horowitz is cited as the “godfather of the anti-Islam movement” and a key funder of anti-Muslim organizations.
- While a U.S. Army lieutenant serving in Iraq in 2006, Cotton called **for the imprisonment of two New York Times journalists for breaking a major story about the U.S. government’s tracking of “terrorist financing.”**
- In April 2015, Cotton appeared on CNN to discuss state-level religious freedom bills that have been described as “discriminatory toward gay Americans.” Pivoting, Cotton said: “In Iran they hang you for the crime of being gay.”

IMPACT: During his tenure in the U.S. Congress, Cotton advocated the strengthening of surveillance and metadata collection programs, and the curtailing of immigration to the United States — ostensibly as a workaround of then-candidate Trump’s Muslim ban proposal. Cotton has also voiced controversial views about torture, the Guantánamo Bay prison facility, the Iranian nuclear deal negotiations, and “Islamic” violence.