

Trump's latest attack on Democrats echoes a conspiracy theory from the fringes of the internet

President Pizzagate.

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JUN 21, 2018, 2:34 PM



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During a cabinet meeting on Thursday, President Trump sought to blame Democrats for the humanitarian crisis he created with his family separation policy, going so far as to accuse Democrats of “creat[ing] a massive child smuggling industry.”

“The people are suffering because of the Democrats,” Trump said. “So, we’ve created, and they’ve created, and they’ve let it happen — a massive child smuggling industry. That’s exactly what it has become.”

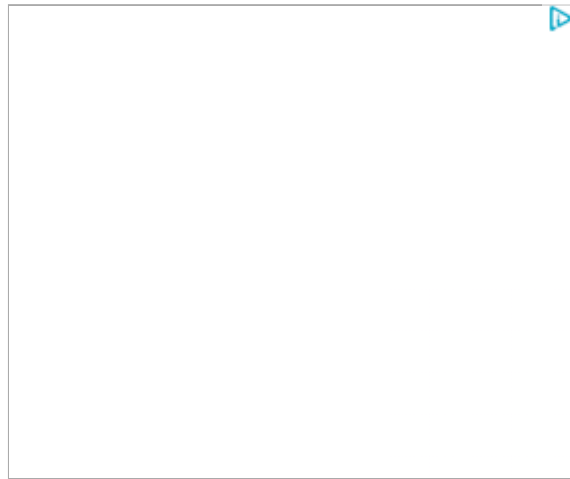
Trump suggests asylum-seekers are crisis



actors

Referring to unaccompanied children who cross the border, Trump said, "these alien minors were separated and sent all the way up here alone, but they really came up with coyotes. You know what a coyote is? Not good, these are not-good people."

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"They were sent up here with human traffickers," Trump said. "Because the Democrat-supported policies have allowed this to happen."

Trump did not bother to try to explain how the “zero tolerance” policy his administration implemented in April addresses the problem, since it creates a disincentive for parents to stay with their children as they make the dangerous trek through Mexico to the US border.

Trump's comments are darkly ironic, coming as they do the day after a number of major airlines announced they would no longer allow the federal government to transport children who had been separated from their parents because of Trump administration policy to detention centers in far-flung places.



Trump's claims about a sex trafficking ring come while some of his supporters push a conspiracy theory that the president is an international hero who is clandestinely working to dismantle a global sex trafficking ring.

As ThinkProgress has previously detailed about the so-called “QAnon” conspiracy:

The “QAnon” theory — also sometimes referred to broadly as “the Storm” — involves an anonymous 4chan user claiming to have high-level government information who leaves cryptic clues across the internet for followers to “decode.” The convoluted messages don't seem to have much meaning on their face, but followers claim they signal credible predictions.

For instance, “QAnon” claims that the major Democratic operatives and celebrities who currently have the most power over the country are pedophiles, and will soon be arrested for their role in facilitating sex trafficking rings.

Over the past several months, “the Storm” theories have gradually made their way out of the depths of 4chan and into more mainstream online platforms like YouTube, Reddit, and Twitter — including Roseanne Barr’s Twitter account.

Suffice it to say, there is no evidence that QAnon is any less bogus than the similar Pizzagate conspiracy theory WikiLeaks played a key role in pushing for Trump’s benefit during the presidential campaign.

There are indications that Trump has embraced QAnon, at least to a point. As Right Wing Watch details, a QAnon truther was given VIP access to Trump’s rally on Wednesday evening in Duluth, Minnesota.

Meanwhile, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen’s admission during a press conference on Monday that she couldn’t immediately account for girls who had been separated from their parents played a role in catalyzing public outcry — one that prompted Trump to try and walk back his family separation policy.



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During Thursday’s cabinet meeting, Trump admitted his administration has no immediate plan to reunite the more than 2,300 children who have been separated from their families as a result of his policy.