

The Blame Game

Written by Lady Logician
Wednesday, 30 December 2009 08:43 -

They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.

That quote by Founding Father Benjamin Franklin is about as prescient as any I have seen recently in light of the Islamists attacks in light of 9/11.

Today's Minneapolis Star Tribune Editorial board appears to fall into the "they that would give up essential liberty" crowd based on [their latest hyperventilation](#).

In post-9/11 America, federal officials assured us, the most modern screening technology would be used to prevent terrorists from boarding airplanes with the intent to murder. Body-scanning machines that allow airport security personnel to detect hidden weapons or explosives under clothing were thought to be an important part of the solution.

It's a crime that it took a Christmas Day wakeup call from alleged terrorist Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab -- following in the footsteps of failed shoe bomber Richard Reid -- to fully reveal how little progress has been made in implementing effective airport security screening.

Even more troubling is the extent to which privacy activists have been able to influence the political debate and restrict the use of whole-body imaging scanners in U.S. airports. To rally the opposition, the term "virtual strip search" has been used, conjuring images of Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screeners huddled around computers ogling the most shapely passengers.

Sigh....where to start. First (as many of the Strib commenters pointed out) Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab did not board the aircraft in the US so having the whole body imaging scans in **US AIRPORTS** would not have stopped this attempted attack! Second, [Schiphol Airport DOES HAVE](#) the whole body imaging scanners. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was not scanned by the whole body imaging scanners, nor was he scanned by explosives sniffing dogs (which Schiphol also has) NOR was he swabbed by any of the explosive residue testing stations that Shiphol has.

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So if Schiphol has all of this advanced technology that was not used in this instance, what assurances do we have that they will be used here? Absolutely NONE.

So the Star Tribune decides that it is the fault for this breach lies, not with the security personnel in Schiphol who did not screen this person and who allegedly let him pass through with no passport and no luggage and a 1 way ticket to the States (that was [allegedly paid for](#) with cash by a 3rd party), not with the DHS personnel who - after hearing from

[Abdulmatallab's own father](#)

that he was planning some sort of attack on US interests - couldn't be bothered to put his name on a no fly list,

[not the CIA personnel](#)

who didn't pass pertinent information on to other law enforcement groups...no they had to blame a freshman Congressman from Utah for the failure of security in Amsterdam and DC.

That ridiculous scenario was too much for our elected officials, and the House overwhelming passed a nonbinding measure in June to prevent the scanners from being used for primary screening. The brainpower behind the amendment, rookie Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, referred to screened images as "TSA porn" and came up with this wonderful but ill-informed sound bite: "Nobody needs to see my wife and kids naked to secure an airplane."

Former Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, whose expertise in airport security might run a tad deeper than that of the freshman congressman from Utah, has a different view. In the wake of the Abdulmutallab near-miss, Chertoff told the New York Times that body-scanning machines are valuable tools that should quickly be installed in more U.S. airports.

Of course the Star Tribune editorial staff has yet to meet a Republican or Conservative that was not the evilest of evil doers - that goes without saying. Because after all, we know that a freshman Congressman (in the minority) has more power than a President who [took 8 months to nominate](#) a permanent head to the agencies IN CHARGE of keeping terrorists off of US airplanes and off of US soil. Never mind the fact that the MAJORITY PARTY decided that passing health care reform was more important than approving said nominations that were made almost 4 months

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ago.....yeah blame it on the freshman.....

The commenters at the Star Tribune get what is apparently too opaque for the editorial board...the problem lies not with a lack of technology - but with the people working the hi-tech equipment. The people at the AMSTERDAM airport allowed an unscreened passenger through.

Then again this editorial was never about really getting to the root cause of what happened - it was about finding a convenient conservative political scapegoat...something the Red Star, and it's staff, [is well known for](#) .