

TSA airport screening procedures controversy / New procedures are justified

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Position: New procedures are justified

This position addresses the topic TSA airport screening procedures controversy.

For this position

“ These machines are safe, efficient, and protect passenger privacy. They have been independently evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institute for Standards and Technology, and the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, which have all affirmed their safety. And the weapons and other dangerous and prohibited items we've found during screening have illustrated their security value time and again.”

From Why we need TSA's security measures, by John Pistole (*USA Today*, November 24, 2010) (view)

“ Let's also leave aside any questions of constitutionality or fundamental fairness about terrorist profiling and simply consider whether it could be done effectively. The Israeli approach is an alluring mirage that would not withstand transplantation. Israel has two airports and 50 flights a day. It conducts intrusive background checks and questions passengers extensively. The process can take hours.”

From Don't touch my junk? Grow up, America., by Ruth Marcus (*The Washington Post*, November 24, 2010) (view)

“ Have Americans become such babies that a pat-down designed to prevent another 9/11 causes adults to melt down? Yes, I've been through body scans. Yes, I've been patted down, not just at airports, but also covering political events. Yes, I've had to contend with the rare overbearing TSA worker who let the power go to his head. Are these searches intrusive? Sure, but they beat crossing the country in a covered wagon.”

From TSA pat-downs prove it - Americans are whiners, by Debra Saunders (*San Francisco Chronicle*, November 23, 2010) (view)

“ “If we only search people who "look like terrorists," al-Qaeda will send people who don't fit the profile. It's no accident that most of the Sept. 11, 2001, hijackers were from Saudi Arabia; at the time, it was easier for Saudi nationals to get U.S. visas than it was for citizens of other Arab countries. If terrorists are clever enough to hide powerful explosives in ink cartridges, then eventually they'll find a suicide bomber who looks just like you, me or Granny.”

From TSA outcry is really a call for profiling, by Eugene Robinson (*The Washington Post*, November 23, 2010) (view)

Against this position

“ “TSA Administrator John Pistole acknowledged in recent testimony that these "blob" machines, as opposed to the "naked" machines, are the "next generation" of screening technology. His concern, he said, is that "there are currently a high rate of false positives on that technology, so we're working through that." But courts might hold that, even with false positives, "blob" imaging technology that leads to a secondary pat-down is less invasive and more effective than imposing a choice between "naked" machines and intrusive pat-downs as primary screening for all passengers.”

From Why the TSA pat-downs and body scans are unconstitutional, by Jeffrey Rosen (*The Washington Post*, November 28, 2010) (view)

“ “As a strategy, it's absurd, allowing al-Qaida to fashion new kinds of bombs for a few hundred dollars that will provoke spasms of security responses costing airlines and taxpayers billions of dollars. For the government, it seemingly presents a no-win situation. Respond, and stand accused of wasting money on intrusive measures. Do nothing, and bear the blame when the next terrorist attack succeeds. There's a better way. Instead of only looking for weapons and bombs, our security screening process should also be looking for the people who are likely to carry them.”

From Behavioral profiling best way to enhance air travel security, by Jonathan Gurwitz (*San Antonio Express-News*, November 27, 2010) (view)

“ “It seems Abdulmutallab, a name T.S.A. agents must now memorize, is to blame. Abdulmutallab is the failed Nigerian “underwear bomber” of last Christmas. He joins the failed shoe bomber and failed shampoo-and-bottled-water bombers in a remarkable success: adding another blanket layer of T.S.A checks, including dubious gropes, to the daily humiliations of travelers.”

From The Real Threat to America, by Roger Cohen (*The New York Times*, November 25, 2010) (view)

“ “What do the Israeli airport security people do that American airport security do not do? They profile. They question some individuals for more than half an hour, open up all their luggage and spread the contents on the counter-- and they let others go through with scarcely a word. And it works.”

From Airport "Security"?, by Thomas Sowell (*Human Events*, November 23, 2010) (view)

“ “That noted, nobody does it better than Israel: It pretty much wrote the book -- and it doesn't subject its passengers to X-ray machines and aggressive pat-downs. And Israel -- gasp! -- profiles. Those who fit a recognized pattern of would-be terrorists get special attention. That makes *total* sense.” ”

From Pat-downs vs. profiling, by New York Post editorial board (*New York Post*, November 23, 2010) (view)

“ “I suppose you can't be too careful with all the disabled freshman high school girl terrorist suspects wheeling around these days. Yeah, sure. Fact is, I'm all for airport security. Most TSA personnel we've encountered have been as sensitive as their jobs allow. We generally endure the security pat-downs that accompany her wheelchair use without much complaint. But at what point do the so-called experts stop harassing the disabled and elderly and start using good judgment when it comes to choosing whom to search?” ”

From Somehow, patting down disabled, elderly improves security, by John L. Smith (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*, November 21, 2010) (view)

“ “Instead of focusing on these factors, we need to develop a much broader profiling program that gives primacy to patterns of activities and behaviors. This profiling would not key primarily on race, ethnicity or nationality, but it would not totally ignore them either. Rather, it would rely primarily on intelligence and law enforcement and on consular, airline and other information related to an individual's recent and long-term behavior. Only after those factors were examined would others be considered” ”

From To find the needles, reduce the haystack, by Thomas E. McNamara (*Los Angeles Times*, November 21, 2010) (view)

“ “What the TSA is doing is mostly security theater, a pageant to reassure passengers that flying is safe. Reassurance is necessary if commerce is going to flourish and if we are going to get to grandma's house on Thursday to give thanks for the Pilgrims and for freedom. If grandma is coming to our house, she may be wanded while barefoot at the airport because democracy - or the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment; anyway, something - requires the amiable nonsense of pretending that no one has the foggiest idea what an actual potential terrorist might look like.” ”

From The T.S. of A takes control, by George F. Will (*The Washington Post*, November 21, 2010) (view)

“ “And what happens to these glorious images of dehumanized Americans once their bodies are scanned? How long before we see a montage of the digitally denuded on some Web site? Notwithstanding government promises to the contrary, they may be preserved. The U.S. Marshals Service conceded this year that some 35,000 images from a scanner at a Florida courthouse security checkpoint had been saved. The TSA insists that though storage is possible, the storing feature isn't activated when devices are installed at airports. Small comfort.” ”

From Enduring the bare necessities in airport screening, by Kathleen Parker (*The Washington Post*, November 21, 2010) (view)

“Knives and sharp objects were banned from carry-on luggage after 9/11, so Richard Reid boarded American Airlines Flight 63 with a bomb built into his shoe. Passengers ever since have had to take off their shoes, so the 2006 Heathrow terrorists came up with a plan to use liquid explosives. TSA responded by confining liquids to tiny containers sealed in baggies, so Abdulmutallab smuggled explosive powder in his underwear. Now TSA scans or feels even air travelers' nether regions, so terrorists based in Yemen hid two bombs inside printer cartridges and shipped them to addresses in Chicago. TSA promptly responded by announcing that "toner and ink cartridges over 16 ounces will be prohibited on passenger aircraft in both carry-on bags and checked bags." Just who has been staying a step ahead of whom?"

From Air travel: One step behind terrorists, by Jeff Jacoby (*The Boston Globe*, November 21, 2010) (view)

"A more likely explanation is that the Obama administration is engaging in a classic form of bureaucratic backside covering. Should another Islamic extremist board an aircraft while TSA agents are busy grabbing sippy cups from toddlers and confiscating fingernail clippers from Marines, the agency plausibly can claim there was nothing more it could have done. After all, with nude photography sessions and stories of nuns and 3-year-olds being groped, TSA has made it clear it has crossed every line of common decency - even laws governing sexual assault."

From TSA's security charade, by The Washington Times editorial board (*The Washington Times*, November 20, 2010) (view)

"And Israeli officials profile. They don't profile racially, but they profile. Israeli Arabs breeze through rather quickly, but thanks to the dozens of dubious-looking stamps in my passport -- almost half are from Lebanon and Iraq -- I get pulled off to the side for more questioning every time. And I'm a white, nominally Christian American. If they pull you aside, you had better tell them the truth. They'll ask you so many wildly unpredictable questions so quickly, you couldn't possibly invent a fake story and keep it all straight."

From Forget the 'porn machines', by Michael Totten (*New York Post*, November 19, 2010) (view)

"This has nothing to do with safety - 95 percent of these inspections, searches, shoe removals and pat-downs are ridiculously unnecessary. The only reason we continue to do this is that people are too cowed to even question the absurd taboo against profiling - when the profile of the airline attacker is narrow, concrete, uniquely definable and universally known. So instead of seeking out terrorists, we seek out tubes of gel in stroller pouches."

From Don't touch my junk, by Charles Krauthammer (*The Washington Post*, November 19, 2010) (view)

"I have never been sexually molested or raped, so I have no idea how my experience compares. But I walked away feeling invaded, sickened, and humiliated. During the long drive after I landed, those three minutes kept obsessively turning over in my mind. Late that night, in a strange hotel room, I suddenly woke with the panicked belief that rough hands were prodding my body. That time, it was only a dream."

From Invasion of privacy, by Tom Keane (*The Boston Globe*, November 19, 2010) (view)

“ “Despite what their proponents would have us believe, body scanners are not some magical tool to find all weapons and explosives that can be hidden on the human body. Yes, the scanners work against high-density objects such as guns and knives -- but so do traditional magnetometers. And the scanners fare poorly against low-density materials such as thin plastics, gels and liquids. Care to guess what Abdulmutallab's bomb was made of? The Government Accountability Office reported in March that it's not clear that a scanner would've detected that device.”

From Body scanners: The naked truth, by David Rittgers (*New York Post*, November 17, 2010) (view)

“ “In a lucky stroke, all the terrorists are swarthy, foreign-born, Muslim males. (Think: “Guys Madonna would date.”) This would give us a major leg up -- if only the country weren't insane. Is there any question that we'd be looking for Swedes if the 9/11 terrorists, the shoe bomber, the diaper bomber and the printer cartridge bomber had all been Swedish?”

From Napolitano: The Ball's In My Court Now, by Ann Coulter (*Human Events*, November 17, 2010) (view)

“ “Think about your 15-year-old daughter's breasts being squeezed by some stranger. Think about your pregnant wife being X-rayed, which damages the unborn. Many scientists insist scanners will also increase cancer risk in small children and adolescents. Think of those already sexually molested now facing a public, government-sponsored molestation anytime they take the shuttle to New York.”

From Freedom fades as we grope for answers, by Margery Eagan (*Boston Herald*, November 16, 2010) (view)

Mixed on this position

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