

TSA airport screening procedures controversy / Profiling should be used instead

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Position: Profiling should be used instead

This position addresses the topic TSA airport screening procedures controversy.

For this position

“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)

“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 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)

“ "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)

Against this position

“ "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)

“ "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)

Mixed on this position

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