



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on December 30, 2009

Sounding a False Alarm on Yemen?

The Times of London reported December 29 that in the wake of the botched airplane Christmas day bombing Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Qirbi has claimed there may be hundreds of terrorist plots against the West planned by al-Qaeda from Yemen. Specifically, al-Qirbi said: "Of course there are a number of al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen and some of their leaders. We realize this danger. They may actually plan attacks like the one we have just had in Detroit. There are maybe hundreds of them — 200, 300."



But al-Qirbi may simply be exaggerating the threat in order to cash in on the foreign aid gravy train from the U.S. and European Union nations, who have enriched corrupt dictatorships across the Middle East to forestall supposed al Qaeda threats. The very next line in the *Times* story involved a [major plea from al-Qirbi](#) for more Western foreign aid: "We have to work in a very joint fashion in partnership to combat terrorism.... If we do, the problem will be brought under control. There is support, but I must say it is inadequate. We need more training, we have to expand our counter-terrorism units and provide them with equipment and transportation like helicopters."

The United States has been providing anti-terrorist training funds to Yemen [since at least 2002](#), long before any terrorist attacks against the United States emerged from the nation. President Obama has also singled out Yemen as a location where he would like to send more aid, noting in [his December 1 address to the nation](#) where he announced he would escalate the Afghan war: "Where al Qaeda and its allies attempt to establish a foothold — whether in Somalia or Yemen or elsewhere — they must be confronted by growing pressure and strong partnerships." Several weeks later, Obama authorized [cruise missile strikes inside Yemen](#) against al Qaeda bases.

The Yemeni government plea for more aid comes less than a week after the Christmas day attempted bombing of a Detroit-bound Northwest Airlines flight by Nigerian native Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who claimed he received instructions from al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen. Abdulmutallab is a 23-year-old, London-educated child of privilege who tried to blow up the flight with pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN) explosives he had sewn into his underpants. Abdulmutallab was foiled as he tried to ignite the explosives with a liquid in a chemical reaction by Dutch video producer Jasper Schuringa, a passenger who pulled a melting syringe out of Abdulmutallab's hand and disabled the would-be terrorist. Schuringa [noted](#) that other than the fact that he tried to blow up the airplane, Abdulmutallab "seemed like a normal guy." And that's one profile of would be Islamic terrorists — they're not just uneducated buffoons. Most are college-educated and seem to fit in well to Western society.

At first blush, it may appear that our dollars are not providing the expected bang for the buck and perhaps even providing a counterproductive role among tribal societies that are jealous of their own national independence. Yemeni-based attacks against the United States were unheard of before the United States started meddling in Yemeni affairs and giving them "aid."



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“Counterproductive” seems to be the operative word in describing the federal government’s efforts to fight the so-called “war on terror.” Earlier this month, the Transportation Security Agency – an agency formed in response to federally centralize anti-terrorist security in the hands of the federal government in the wake of the September 11 attacks – [posted a 93-page manual detailing their airport screening techniques on the internet](#) for all the world’s terrorists to see. The document documented TSA policy of the kind of people who would be searched and which kind of handicapped devices are to be searched.

“This is the most serious security breach that TSA has been involved in since 9/11 and since TSA’s inception in 2003.” Clark Kent Ervin Former TSA Inspector General [told CNN](#). “It is really incredible.” It would be incredible if it weren’t government we were talking about. No one could have foreseen this kind of thing happening if America’s airports still had private airline security and hadn’t been taken over by the incompetent federal government.

Reaction (perhaps “overreaction” is the more accurate word) to Abdulmutallab’s underpants attack from the TSA seems to be more strip-searches of airline travelers, a ban on blankets and pillows as well as a ban on bathroom trips within an hour of landing. Some Americans have quipped that the U.S. Transportation Security Agency’s acronym TSA should stand for “Travel Stinks in America” or “Too Stupid for America.”

Yeah, both of those seem apropos.

Photo of Abu Bakr al-Qirbi: AP Images



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