

Airport Security: Scanners Are Not the Solution

By [Josh Fulton](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#)

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A mere [three days](#) after the attempted bombing of flight 253, Obama, well-rested from his Hawaiian vacation, strutted up to a microphone and told the world, “We’re in an emergency!!!” The emergency was that we weren’t afraid enough.

Despite the fact that air travel is the [safest method of travel per passenger mile](#), the only thing that would keep us truly safe was something that would strip us naked in front of airport security, shoot us full of radiation, and possibly store our biometric information. You know, a full-body scanner.

The astonishing thing was that hardly anyone in the mainstream media mentioned that a full-body scanner would not have been able to detect the chemical Abdulmutuallah brought onto the plane with him. Full-body scanners only detect things that are high density, like metal or wax, [not things that are low density](#), like chemicals or plastics. That is the entire idea behind the full-body scanner: its waves pass through lower density clothes to show the higher density body.

So, if the motivation of the people pushing for these things isn’t actually to protect us, what is it? Well, it’s to take power from us, and to give it to themselves, naturally. That isn’t, however, something that the American people typically like, so let’s take a closer look at these scanners and see just how angry the American people should be.

Aside from not being able to detect low density objects, full-body scanners also can’t detect objects inside a body. Only a few months ago Abdullah Asieri proved that this is a danger by concealing a bomb [inside himself](#) while trying to assassinate the Saudi Arabian head of counterintelligence.

Even with the TSA’s additional purchases, there will still also be hundreds, if not thousands, of airports with commercial airline flights inside the US that have no scanners. The United States alone has over [15,000 airports](#), and approximately [600 airports](#) certified to serve commercial aircraft with nine or more seats. Worldwide, there are hundreds of airports that help bring over [fifty million people into this country a year](#).

The US currently has [40 scanners in 19 airports](#). If the new scanners are installed in the same ratio, even if the TSA installs all [300 new scanners](#) that it plans to buy, and the [150 that it simply allows to lay dormant](#), they will still only cover roughly 225 airports, barely making a dent in the total number of airports that have flights inside the US. This of course doesn’t even address the fact that the TSA says they may actually deliver only [300 of the 450 scanners](#) in 2010.

Cost is another issue. Obama directed Homeland Security to purchase [\\$1 billion](#) worth of

advanced-technology equipment for screening at airports. Each scanner only costs \$[150,000](#), so Homeland Security clearly won't be using all that money to just buy scanners. We don't know exactly what they will be using it for, but we do know that it will be going into the pockets of the defense-industrial complex. We could be using that money on more important things, like bailing out banks, or one bank, ...one teenie weenie bank.

The scanners are also invasive. They take detailed nude pictures of everyone who walks through them: the old, the young, everyone. The images are so graphic that the British Department of Transport confirmed that images of people under eighteen may be considered "[child porn](#)."

TSA officials claimed that images of genitals would be blurred out, but in October of 2008, an Office of Transport official in Australia said that they would not blur out the genitals because it "[severely limits the detection capabilities](#)." Last week, scanners in use in the UK made images of people's genitals that were "[eerily visible](#)." Do we really think the TSA will be any different once the spotlight is off them?

Also, although a patch is put on the image of a person to distort its color, another patch can easily be put on the image to convert it into a clear [black and white picture](#).

It also seems likely that these machines, although they might not do it now, are capable of measuring and storing our biometric data. Israel just introduced [facial scanning](#) into an airport. British CCTV cameras are already capable of being [outfitted to recognize faces](#). With the importance of biometric data growing every day, do we really want the TSA to be one step away from being able to demand that we allow them to store virtually all of our biometric data before they let us on a plane?

As if that's not enough, the radiation from these scanners is dangerous. In only six seconds, they pump us full of as much radiation as [10,000 cell phone calls do](#). Your scan goes an extra second longer than usual? Woops. That's an extra 1666 cell phone conversations. In case you don't know, there is evidence linking [cell phone usage and cancer](#).

Also, the type of radiation the scanners emit is particularly harmful. Terahertz waves, the type of radiation emitted, have been described by Los Alamos researchers as "[ripping DNA apart](#)." Apparently, strands of DNA are loosely joined, so they can separate easily for replication. The resonant effects of the terahertz waves "unzip" the strands. If your DNA has been "unzipped," it can't replicate properly.

Even the TSA's [additional screening](#) for US-bound flights from 14 nations is harmful, because it unfairly focuses on Muslim nations, while not even including the Netherlands, the country from which Abdulmutuallah departed.

The powers that be certainly have exploited this "crisis" well. [France](#), [the Netherlands](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#) and [Canada](#) all plan to install full-body scanners in response to the attempted bombing. Other countries that [already have scanners](#) are planning to expand their usage. In Britain, the number of passengers agreeing to be scanned has risen from 72% to [92%](#) since the attempted attack. The Dutch police are even working on developing [portable body scanners](#) that can be used on the street on people "suspected of carrying concealed weapons."

This is especially astonishing considering that in June of 2009 the House [voted to bar](#)

[scanners](#) from airports by a margin of 310 - 118, and members of the European Parliament [voted to ban them](#) from airports in September 2008 by a margin of 361 - 16.

Perhaps the most upsetting part is that the focus on scanners diverts attention from where it should really be: the security failure that allowed this to happen. Let's just take a look at some things that should have garnered extra attention from the TSA and airport security:

- Abdulmutuallah bought a [one-way ticket with cash and had no carry-on luggage](#).
- He was on the US [terror watch list](#).
- He was banned from [entering Britain](#).
- According to [eye witnesses](#), he had no passport, and the only reason he was allowed on the plane was because an accomplice who was with him managed to convince an airline employee that Abdulmutuallah was a political refugee from Sudan.

If you think that any of these might be cause for suspicion, you're not alone. In fact, the TSA would agree with you, because as it turns out, even before the attempted bombing, TSA officials were actually [waiting to question Abdulmutuallah when he landed in Detroit](#). Abdulmutuallah had clearly had triggered something in the security system, and the TSA and airport security simply weren't fast enough to act upon it.

According to Rahm Emmanuel: "[you never want to let a crisis go to waste. \[...\]It lets you do things you think you couldn't do before.](#)"

The truth of the matter is that we do have a crisis, but it is not what the people in charge of the government and the media tell us it is. It is not Umar Farouk Abdulmutuallah or Islamic fundamentalism, and it won't be solved by turning our country into a police state. Our crisis is that our leaders try to pump us full of fear in order to make it easier for them to achieve what they want, even if that comes at the expense of the country. Once we realize that is the real crisis, then we finally will be one step closer to truly becoming safe.

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