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Behavior Identification Could Catch Bomber

by EU News Network

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Effective use of intelligence gathering and behavioral identification programs could have kept the alleged bomber off Flight 253, U.S. researchers say.

Mark G. Frank, a University at Buffalo behavioral scientist, says although Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab got through some security levels behavioral science techniques could have detected him once he got to the airport.

"There have been many scientific advances in technology coupled with understanding such people and their behavior to help identify them," Frank says in a statement. "Unfortunately, they are not being used widely enough."

Frank agrees with security experts who maintain security is best achieved in a layered approach that first employs intelligence and investigatory processes to dissuade or disrupt a would-be terrorist from traveling at all, but if a would-be terrorist passes through the first layer, the goal is to force him or her for intense secondary screening.

Frank serves as a consultant to the Department of Homeland Security for the SPOT and FAST programs.

"SPOT -- Screening of Passengers by Observation Technique -- is a behavioral observation technique employed by Transportation Security Administration, based upon a successful Israeli program derived from that country's direct experiences with terrorists and current behavioral science," Franks says. "FAST -- Future Attribute Screening Technology -- is a sensor-based program currently in development that reads body reactions indicative of hostile intention and uses these to develop stronger algorithmic predictions as to whom should be sent on to additional screening."

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