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## Should the US Adopt Israeli Airline Security Measures?

By [Heather Huntington](#) on January 14th, 2010 – [Edit](#)

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In light of the charming Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab failed underwear bomb attempt on Christmas, the discussions on what we can do to improve airport security rages anew. Full body scans? Or do they violate privacy and/or child pornography laws? Better trained TSA agents? How are we going to do that.

That Israel's El Al, the airline of the country that terrorists most hate, is the safest airline in the world —

obviously a major accomplishment. So how do they do it? Well, according to [this well-done piece](#) by Martin Himel of *The Wall Street Journal*, the answer is: ethnic profiling.

The theory behind the ethnic profiling makes sense. It's Israel. If you aren't Jewish, why exactly would you be going there? And if you're not only not Jewish, but part of a known potentially hostile group, then *really* why would you be going there? If you can answer their questions correctly, then obviously you have nothing to hide. But if you have something to hide, you are going to be grilled and quite likely caught.

The need for it, and acceptance of it in Israel also makes sense. This is a place that is highly militarized—everyone does military service, guns are absolutely everywhere. And given the way all of their neighbors feel about them, it's understandable.

But would that fly—and more to the point, is that appropriate—in the US? While there are many in the world who do not like us, we are hardly under the same threat as Israel. More importantly, civil liberties and equality are one of the major cornerstones of that whole Constitution thing we've got, and there is no getting around the fact that profiling violates that. Israel, on the other hand, isn't exactly known for not treating some (ahem, Arabs)—whether or not you can see their reasoning—like second-class citizens.

Then again, Israel allows gays in the military.

I don't know what the right call is. Perhaps there isn't one. But I would only hope there is something better than what we've got now.

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