Will Terrorists Be Allowed to Sidestep Security?

Written by Gadi Adelman
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A "fatwa" has been issued banning Muslims from being subjected to the use of full body scanners at airports. Where do we draw the line between religious freedoms versus safety?

Muslim-American groups are supporting a "fatwa" – a religious ruling – forbidding Muslims from going through body scanners at airports saying that the body scanners violate Islamic law. In a statement on February 9th, the Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA) asked that scanner software be altered to produce only an outline of the body and urged Muslim travelers to avail themselves of alternative pat-down searches. (The term "fiqh" refers to Islamic jurisprudence.)

In a press release on February 10th, The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) supported the statement. In the press release CAIR stated:

"It is a violation of clear Islamic teachings that men or women be seen naked by other men and women. Islam highly emphasizes 'haya' (modesty) and considers it part of faith. The Qur'an has commanded the believers, both men and women, to cover their private parts. Human beings are urged to be modest in their dress. See Holy Quran, 7:26-27; 24:30-31; 33:59. Exception to this rule can be made in case of extreme necessity, such as medical treatment, to investigate a crime or in a situation of imminent danger. There must be a compelling case for the necessity and the exemption to this rule must be proportional to the demonstrated need."

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Hmmm. Would the fact that 14,819 Islamic terrorist attacks have occurred since 9/11 not be a "situation of imminent danger" or a "compelling case" to have every Muslim subjected to body scanners? I don't like the idea of body scanners either. Actually, I don't know of even one individual who enjoys the thought of being seen naked by a total stranger (much less men during these past few cold winter months).

Personally, I would like to see the Israeli security method be implemented where no scanners are used. But given the fact that El-Al airlines spends over $97 million a year on security, with only 55 flights daily, I know that is just not feasible in a world that averages 81,000 flights per day.

In last week's article, "Why is Our Government Hiding the Truth About Our Safety?", I mentioned a report that the British MI5 had uncovered a plot by al Qaeda to surgically implant explosives inside suicide bombers. Jonathan Evans, head of MI5, warns "that the body-bombers pose a serious threat to security because they can circumvent current methods of detection." Surgeons from the UK's National Health Service agree that plastic implants are "virtually impossible to detect by the usual airport scanning machines." Given that fact, one could argue that body scanners just not be used at all. However, in what is an already flawed security system, the scanner would be another layer of protection that is quick and painless for the traveler and easy to use by security personnel. It is impossible to prevent every attack 100 percent of the time. For each new piece of technology that is introduced to keep us safe, our enemy works on another way to circumvent it. That is just reality and has been since the invention of the metal detector. Until we can improve on current technology, we should utilize every safety measure that we have in our arsenal.

Last Tuesday, I had the pleasure of meeting a young man while he and I were both guests on a radio talk show. Andrew Bieszad is young man who has been studying Islam since the age of 14 and is currently finishing his MA in Islamic studies. He and I spoke of the issue of body scanners and he had this to say:

"From the Muslim religious perspective, clothing is a highly sensitive issue, especially for women. We must remember that in Islam, obedience to these commandments is a matter of divine salvation or condemnation. The person who refuses to submit to what Islam commands could be found guilty of rebellion against Allah, and that would mean severe punishment in this world under Islamic Sharia, and eternal damnation in the afterlife. Having said this, the Koran is explicitly clear that Muslim men and especially women are to cover themselves with clothing in varying degrees when in public. The requirements are more stringent for women, but the same divine praise or chastisement awaits all Muslims who follow or fail to follow Allah's commands in the Koran.

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Therefore from an Islamic religious perspective, it's understandable why Muslims as a whole don't want to expose their bodies in any manner to even potentially be seen by others, since they could be seen as willfully participating in grave sin. It's also been documented that Muslims have used the respectable argument of religious exemption to repeatedly deceive our security safeguards in order to subvert our laws and society. This situation is further complicated because Islamic teachings permit and encourage Muslims to lie to non-Muslims (called taqiyya) if it involves furthering the Islamization of society as whole, which includes both terrorism and, more dangerously, the gradual institutionalization of Islamic law into our society."

The way Mr. Bieszad explains it, one can understand from a *"religious"* perspective why Muslims do not want to under go scanning. However, his statement of how Muslims use the religious argument repeatedly to deceive our safeguards puts forth the question of do we allow religious freedom to supersede our safety?

Regardless of one's religious faith, what is stopping any person who wants to commit a terrorist act on an airplane from claiming to be a Muslim? Pat downs are not 100 percent effective. As anyone with any law enforcement experience will tell you, when dealing with a situation where an individual may be hiding something in his or her undergarments, the only way to be 100 percent sure is to do a full strip search – and we already know as stated by CAIR and other Muslim leaders "it is a violation of clear Islamic teachings that men or women be seen naked by other men and women."

So where does this leave us? The United States has a strong history of religious freedom and I can already hear the ACLU and other advocacy groups screaming about religious rights.

Given the history of Islamic terror in the world, I have a problem of letting that same group use their religion as an excuse to avoid the very security procedures that were put into place because of them.

This is a fight about which we have not even heard the beginning, but knowing the history of the ACLU, CAIR, the American Islamic Congress, the Muslim Public Affairs Council and other organizations, it is bound to become a problem.

I too have a religious dilemma in this argument. It is against my religion to commit suicide. But if

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I board a plane knowing that someone may be on the same flight without having gone through all the same security measures as myself, that is exactly what I am liable to be doing.