

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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For Immediate Release

December 29, 2009

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE  
THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
THE DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF  
INVESTIGATION  
THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM  
CENTER  
THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY

SUBJECT: Inventory of Watchlisting Files and Procedures  
Review

On December 27, 2009, I directed that the White House lead an interagency review of the watchlisting system in the aftermath of the December 25, 2009, attempt to detonate an explosive device onboard Northwest flight 253. This review should include the following input from departments and agencies:

- An inventory of all intelligence or other information in U.S. Government files that existed prior to and up through December 25, 2009, relevant or potentially relevant to the alleged attempt to detonate an explosive device onboard Northwest flight 253, the individual allegedly responsible, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, and the date on which the intelligence or other information was available. In addition, a written account of how any such intelligence or other information was handled, shared, and acted upon within individual departments and agencies and what intelligence or other information was shared with others.
- A written account of the standards and processes for nominating, reviewing, and approving or denying individuals for placement on the Terrorist Watchlist, including a summary of how those standards and processes have developed, or have been revised, since 2001.

All aspects of this review shall be conducted in a manner that does not interfere with the ongoing criminal investigation and prosecution of any individuals involved in the attempt to detonate an explosive device onboard Northwest flight 253. Please provide a response to this directive, including initial findings and recommendations regarding ways to strengthen the watchlisting system, to the White House Staff Secretary by December 31, 2009. Follow-up direction will be provided, as appropriate, based on input received on December 31, 2009.

BARACK OBAMA

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