



Report on Audit of Department of State Actions Regarding the December 25, 2009, Attempted Terrorist Bombing of Northwest Airlines Flight 253

AUD/SI-11-11

Office of Audits

December 2010

This report has been designated as Classified. Please go to the [OIG FOIA page](#) for information on how to request a Mandatory Declassification Review (MDR).

The following is a summary of the sensitive but unclassified (SBU) report.

The subject report was issued by the Department of State's Deputy Inspector General to the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Consular Affairs, and to the Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The report presents the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) independent assessment of the manner in which information related to the December 25, 2009, terrorist bombing attempt of Northwest Airlines Flight 253 was collected and disseminated by the Department among key Federal agencies and to address other specific questions relating to this event.

OIG found the Department has taken a number of corrective actions that collectively represent significant progress in addressing the failures that contributed to the attempted Christmas Day bombing. However, additional measures are needed to improve management oversight procedures in the Visas Viper cable process, including ensuring that information contained in a Visas Viper cable submission is accurate and complete. (A Visas Viper cable is a communication from a Foreign Service post to appropriate Federal agencies regarding an individual known to be or suspected of being involved in terrorism.)

OIG found the Department has implemented more robust internal procedures and has reviewed Visas Viper cables issued in 2008 and 2009 to detect and revoke visas held by individuals considered to be threats to national security. In addition, the Department has taken steps to strengthen visa services through system enhancements, including a new online nonimmigrant visa application system, and has increased collaboration with its security partners to exchange information relating to potential terrorists. However, OIG determined additional measures are needed to further ensure that the failures that allowed Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab to enter the United States and carry out his terror plot are not repeated. OIG offered five recommendations to the Bureau of Consular Affairs to enhance management oversight of the Visas Viper process and to ascertain whether the subjects of previous Visas Viper cables have had their U.S. visas revoked or their names entered into the Department's Consular Lookout and Support System (CLASS).