

It is unfortunate that Christmas Day, 2009 will be remembered not as a peaceful time when Americans gathered with their families, but rather as the date that an Al-Qaeda operative nearly pulled off the murder of hundreds of Americans.

In retrospect, we were very fortunate that this plot to blow up an American airliner failed. Security measures at every step leading up to the incident were not properly followed. This episode should be a loud wake-up call to the Obama administration which has, so far, shown less inclination to bolster Americans' national security than it has to pursue an unprecedented agenda of social spending.

As you know, it has been over eight years since the terrible attacks of September 11, 2001 claimed 3,000 American lives. In the hours following those horrific acts, President Bush committed the full resources of the U.S. Government to bring the 9/11 plotters to justice and to defeat a new, shadowy enemy.

For certain, this battle against terrorism has not been easy. Our adversaries have hidden themselves in many different countries and taken advantage of our impatience, lying in wait until the opportune time to strike.

However, in the years following the 9/11 attacks, the Bush administration was successful in thwarting many other terror attempts. It was clear to our leaders then that America could never afford to let down its guard in order to keep our country safe. It was also clear that this war against terror would necessitate a reordering of U.S. intelligence, including better coordination of information gathering and sharing.

In the last year, the Obama administration has taken a different approach to the threat posed by Al-Qaeda. Not only does the administration no longer refer to this as a "war on terror," but we have also witnessed a major policy shift to cast these terrorists as mere criminals instead of enemy combatants.

We've also seen an administration dedicated from its first days in office to currying favor with international public opinion rather than keeping an emphasis on security efforts which have kept this nation safe.

The past 12 months have been disappointing as the new administration has sought to downplay the terror threat by closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and integrating foreign terrorist combatants into our criminal justice system.

Clearly, the December 25th episode was not the first such warning. The November 5, 2009 massacre of 13 U.S. soldiers and civilians at Fort Hood, Texas has also raised serious questions about our government's ability to identify potential terrorists and its willingness to stop them before they are able to carry out attacks.

Quite candidly, the Christmas Day terror attempt should have never occurred. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the 23-year-old Nigerian Islamic extremist who tried to blow up a Northwest Airlines jetliner, was on the U.S. terror watch list. Weeks before the incident, his own father had

warned the U.S. government about his son's extremist views. Furthermore, it has been revealed that our government also knew the young Nigerian had been to Yemen – a hotbed of terrorist activity.

Abdulmutallab paid for his airline ticket with cash and boarded after routine screening, taking only a backpack. The young terrorist had hidden a chemical explosive device under his clothing and was partially successful in detonating the make-shift bomb before he was stopped by an alert passenger. Had the explosive device functioned as intended, it could have brought down the plane, killing everyone aboard.

In the hours following the incident, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano stated that the “system worked”. Only when confronted with the facts later did she attempt to backtrack, admitting that the system failed miserably.

Americans have good reason to worry about the seriousness of their government's terror screening methods when such a blatant failure occurs. They also have reason to be concerned when “political correctness” governs airline passenger screening procedures.

Lastly, with the revelation that many of the Guantanamo detainees are from Yemen – a known location for Al-Qaeda terror training – Americans should also be furious over the administration's plans to close Guantanamo and possibly send some of these detainees back to Yemen for “rehabilitation.”

President Obama has admitted “human and systemic failures” in the December 25 terror incident and has ordered a review of U.S. security procedures. He should do more than that. He should make it a priority to fight and win the war on terror. He can start by keeping Guantanamo open and blocking the introduction of foreign terrorists into our criminal justice system.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721