

The Risk Professional: Obama admits re-run of pre 11 September failings

US President Obama's press conference late last night (US time) did not say two things it needed to say: first, a 100% success rate against terrorists is impossible and, secondly, that the reason the Christmas Day pants-bomber was not stopped sooner was because of the same underlying problems as were found by the 11 September Commission.

Obama is falling into the same trap as his predecessor, George Bush II. He is lambasting airlines and foreign governments, demanding they put in place expensive and - by most accounts unreliable - security measures.

But the fact is that the reason that a man got onto a flight to the USA is, as Obama did admit, that all necessary data to put him on a no-fly list was in the hands of various US agencies but they did not operate a comprehensive and joined-up collection and analysis regime.

That takes us right back to the reason for the overhaul of US intelligence and other securities, including the laughably named "Department of Homeland Security" where the whole point was to ensure that intelligence, once gathered never fell through the cracks or went to waste.

As more countries, the latest being Canada, say they will install full body ("strip search") scanners at airports, the general consensus is that they would not have identified the materials used to start the fire on board the aircraft concerned.

Again, as before, the US is forcing a global knee-jerk reaction to a problem that it neither fully understands nor is prepared for.

And it's pushing the costs and blame onto everyone else.