



## **New York Times Buries Terrorist Plot Story**

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This weekend, federal authorities foiled a stunning terrorist plot by Muslim extremists to kill thousands of our readers, strike the international transport grid, and depress the nation's economy during its slowest quarter since late 2002 -- but enough about that.

That was the message of Sunday's New York Times.

The FBI had prevented four men, including a former member of Guyana's parliament, from blowing up John F. Kennedy International Airport -- and possibly part of Queens. They hoped to ignite underground fuel pipes, setting off a chain reaction of explosions that would envelop the entire complex. The NY Post and New York Daily News made it front page news. The NY Daily News headlined its story, "They Aimed to Kill Thousands." The Post included a chilling sidebar, "Pipeline Security A Joke."

The (inexplicably) most prestigious newspaper in the world put its bland story on page 30. Instead, page one featured yet another story about Guantanamo Bay detainees.

Any junior editor at any county newspaper in the country would have been fired for putting the most reported story in the nation two-and-a-half dozen pages into the well. Aside from burying a major international story that took place in its metro area, the Newspaper of Record took pains to make the Muslim battle plan that could have atomized a portion of its immediate readership appear utterly irrelevant.

The NYT began by obscuring the terrorists' target. Although it faults the U.S. military for using the term "collateral damage," the Times wrote as though the plotters only planned to blow up inanimate objects, certainly not human beings. Its opening line read, "Four men, including a onetime airport cargo handler and a former member of the Parliament of Guyana, were charged yesterday with plotting to blow up fuel tanks, terminal buildings and the web of fuel lines running beneath Kennedy International Airport."

Secondly, it minimized the severity of the plot. JFK "was never in imminent danger because the plot was only in a preliminary phase and the conspirators had yet to lay out detailed plans or obtain financing or explosives." Besides, "safety shut-off valves would almost assuredly have prevented an exploding airport fuel tank from igniting all or even part of the network." Move along. Nothing to see here!

And, as they have for the last several plots (Ft. Dix, Miami, etc.), the Old Gray Lady portrayed the would-be mass killers as pathetic and sympathetic. Plot originator Russell Defreitas, 63, was "divorced and lost touch with his two children." Once homeless, he moved into an apartment where "the weather was rough on his health and the cold was tough on his arthritis." He now lives on "a run-down block full of graffiti." He liked jazz, "especially the saxophone." Friends described him as a "polite man" and "not that bright" -- not bright enough to pull off a serious attack.

Much deeper into the story the crack staff fesses up: "Defreitas envisioned 'the destruction of the whole of Kennedy'" and theorized that because of underground pipes, 'part of Queens would explode.'" He told his co-conspirators he wanted to inflict such massive loss of life that "even the twin towers can't touch it." Beyond crippling the U.S. economy (during a downturn), the move would have symbolic value, as well. Americans "love John F. Kennedy," he said. "If you hit that, this whole country will be in mourning. It's like you kill the man twice." Apparently murdering the president's brother once was not enough for Muslim extremists.

Later still, the Times notes that, while they weren't al-Qaeda operatives, the four sought help from "extremist Muslim group based in Trinidad and Tobago called Jamaat al-Muslimeen." They had "precise and extensive" surveillance of their target, which serves 1,000 flights a day. The quartet "was very familiar with the airport and how to access secure areas." The plotters were motivated by "fundamentalist Islamic beliefs of a violent nature." (Coincidentally, every terrorist who has killed Americans since the late Clinton administration has also shared "fundamentalist Islamic beliefs of a violent nature." In fact, "Mr. Kadir, who, along with being a former elected official [in Guyana], is an imam.") An unnamed law enforcement official told reporters they stopped the plot early for a reason: "if we let it go it could have gotten [serious]; they could have gotten the J.A.M. fully involved, and we wouldn't know where it could have gone."

Oh, and one of the plotters is still at large. Perhaps getting "J.A.M. fully involved" now. "The fourth suspect, Abdel Nur, 57, remained a fugitive."

# Assyrian International News Agency

Too busy to concentrate on news that doesn't fit, the Times featured another front page story in which the terrorist is portrayed as a victim, this one set in Gitmo. The story begins:

The facts of Omar Ahmed Khadr's case are grim. The shrapnel from the grenade he is accused of throwing ripped through the skull of Sgt. First Class Christopher J. Speer, who was 28 when he died.

To American military prosecutors, Mr. Khadr is a committed Al Qaeda operative, spy and killer who must be held accountable for killing Sergeant Speer in 2002 and for other bloody acts he committed in Afghanistan.

But there is one fact that may not fit easily into the government's portrait of Mr. Khadr: He was 15 at the time.

Not only a mere teen, Khadr is:

the youngest detainee at Guantanamo Bay, nearly blind in one eye from injuries sustained during the July 2002 firefight in which Sergeant Speer was mortally wounded and another American soldier was severely injured. Last week, Mr. Khadr said he wanted to fire all of his American lawyers, and some of them said they understood why he might distrust Americans after five years at Guantanamo.

His lawyer, Muneer I. Ahmad is -- surprise! -- an associate professor at the American University Washington College of Law. Saith Ahmad, "If Omar had had his free choice, what he would have chosen to do is ride horses, play soccer and read Harry Potter books."

Another innocent betrayed by Bush's War on Terror! Just like Hillary Clinton.

Only in the 17th and 18th paragraphs of the story do we learn Omar's father, Ahmed Said Khadr, was a "senior deputy to Osama bin Laden," and one of his brothers told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "We are an al-Qaeda family."

Moreover, the story grudgingly acknowledges international law does not forbid the United States from doing precisely what it is with Omar. Not only is this a non-story, it is an old non-story. FrontPage Magazine covered The Littlest Jihadist as early as 2002 and has run numerous stories about this extremist family, with its extensive ties to the 9/11 plotters. But to the Times, his alleged suffering trumps the suffering of its own readers.

In addition to this meager coverage of a legitimate threat, the NYT editorial page had not a single editorial on the threat to its readers' hometown, although Sunday's issue had three editorials targeting President Bush, Dick Cheney, and the "harsh" jurisprudence of Clarence Thomas.

The decisions to put a story portraying the plight of Guantanamo Bay's beleaguered terrorist population on page one and to ignore the JFK plot in its editorial coverage were transparently political moves. While Muslim extremists wage a hot war against the United States -- often centered in one of the bluest cities of the nation -- the Left sees its war on President Bush as infinitely more important. Why do anything that would put the spotlight on terrorism, vindicate the present administration, or -- worse yet -- perhaps elect a Republican in 2008? The NYT would not take that chance, and it had no difficulty altering its news coverage to fit that political template.

Ultimately, said Mark J. Mershon, the assistant director in charge of the FBI's New York office, the JFK plotters based their actions on "a pattern of hatred toward the United States and the West in general." One suspects the same could be said of the New York Times.

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