

Secret US Policy Blocks Agents From Looking at Social Media of Visa Applicants

We're always playing catch-up with terrorists. We have to take off our shoes at the airport (thank you [multi-plane plotters](#)), body scans (thank you [ABC News](#)):

Fearing a civil liberties backlash and "bad public relations" for the Obama administration, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson refused in early 2014 to end a secret U.S. policy that prohibited immigration officials from reviewing the social media messages of all foreign citizens applying for U.S. visas, a former senior department official said.

"During that time period immigration officials were not allowed to use or review social media as part of the screening process," John Cohen, a former acting under-secretary at DHS for intelligence and analysis. Cohen is now a national security consultant for ABC News.

One current and one former senior counter-terrorism official confirmed Cohen's account about the refusal of DHS to change its policy about the public social media posts of all foreign applicants.