

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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Obama cites intelligence failures

Officials had been warned about suspect.

President Barack Obama on Tuesday acknowledged a "systemic failure" in the nation's national security and anti-terror system. He said U.S. intelligence officials were warned weeks ago about the Nigerian man alleged to have tried to blow up a U.S.-bound flight on Christmas Day and that the man should never have been permitted to board the plane. Obama called the situation "totally unacceptable" and said he wanted a preliminary re-

Former air marshal says federal government has long known of security loophole at European airports.

By **TERI SFORZA**
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

For fired federal air marshal Robert MacLean, the near-tragedy on Christmas Day in the skies above Detroit conjures a bizarre sense of déjà vu, an unsettling surrealism and a numbing jolt of surprise: *It's a miracle this hasn't happened sooner.*

In July 2003, MacLean was a federal air marshal in good standing, part of the thin blue line sent to the skies after 9/11. He

face emergency threat briefing: *An al-Qaida suicide plan would exploit airport security loopholes abroad by allowing terrorists to fly from countries with less-stringent screening (such as, say, Nigeria) to airports in Europe (such as, say, Amsterdam), where they would escape further security screening. Thus armed with weapons or explosives, the terrorists would catch*

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