

**Washington Post, Letter to the editor, August 4, 2010**

The July 19-21 "Top Secret America" series correctly described the explosive growth of U.S. intelligence operations and the lack of oversight of the agencies.

Intelligence agencies and successive administrations have fiercely resisted congressional oversight. The agencies do not just resist oversight of their "sources and methods," the disclosure of which might well compromise national security, but they resist checks on essentially all of their operations.

In the attempted Christmas Day attack, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was allowed to board Northwest Flight 253 because the spelling of his name on the "no fly" list and his passport differed by one letter. The House Science and Technology Committee's investigation and oversight subcommittee inquired two years ago into problems with the terrorist database of the National Counterterrorism Center, including the failure to match similar spellings.

President Obama recently threatened to veto the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act because it requires intelligence agencies to allow the Government Accountability Office (GAO), an arm of Congress, access for audits and investigations. The GAO has the resources and expertise needed for effective oversight and knows how to keep secrets.

The president should welcome another set of eyes on the intelligence community.

Brad Miller, Washington

The writer, a Democrat from North Carolina, is chairman of the Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee of the House Science and Technology Committee.