

Yemen cargo bombs foiled

An international terror alert was sparked recently at East Midlands airport in Britain after several bomb making devices were discovered. The devices were en route from Yemen to several synagogues in Chicago, USA. Just before their discovery an MI6 officer responsible for Yemen late on Thursday night received a tip-off from a local source of a possible Al-Qaeda plot to smuggle bombs to America on board a cargo plane. They were said to have been placed in the holds of cargo planes that had already taken off from Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, a country that has become one of the key fronts in the battle against Islamic terrorists. Both flights were bound for Chicago. One was flying via Dubai, the other via the East Midlands, as it needed a fuel stop. Having passed the information on it became a race against time on three continents to intercept the bombs. At 3.30am officers from Leicestershire police were asked to check the hold of the UPS mail plane after it landed at East Midlands airport. They discovered a suspect package in a sealed cargo container. It was addressed to a synagogue in Chicago. The parcel contained an office-sized printer cartridge, which had a small circuit board and wires crudely attached and white powder inside it rather than the black toner powder it should have contained.

As soon as MI5 was informed it relayed the news to US President Barack Obama by John Brennan, assistant for homeland security and counter-terrorism who said a "potential threat" to the US had been identified. Mr Obama ordered his intelligence and law enforcement agencies to step up security. In Dubai, a second package sent via another parcel service, FedEx, was intercepted. This time the parcel, which also contained a printer cartridge, did contain explosives. The Royal Mail depot at the East Midlands airport was evacuated whilst packages were double checked. This time a Hewlett Packard printer was found containing a hidden device and appeared to be linked to a mobile phone. Crucially, tests for explosives came back positive. As a result the US President grounded all UPS and FedEx aircraft. At 8pm two fighter planes were scrambled to escort an Emirates passenger flight from Dubai, which had a package from Yemen in its hold and was on its way to New York's JFK airport. At 9.30pm Mr Obama broke the news to the world that a "credible terrorist threat" had been foiled.

Category: Yemen / Cargo bomb / Al-Qaeda

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. **Yemen cargo bombs foiled:** Briefly, what three things do you know about the recent Yemen cargo bombs that were en route to the US. Go round the room swapping details.

2. **Geography: Yemen:** Where is Yemen? What is its capital? What countries surround it? What sea surrounds it? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

3. **Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

4. **Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

5. **Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

6. **The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) **What's the latest on this story?**

7. **Let's think!** Think of five countries Al-Qaeda operates in. Then add five Al-Qaeda international terrorism incidents. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these.

Five countries Al-Qaeda operate in	Five Al-Qaeda terrorism incidents
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. **Let's discuss: Intelligence:** In pairs. What is it? Think of two positive and negative things you know about intelligence? Compare and discuss together with your partner. **The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

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9 . Let's think! In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with the '**The Yemen cargo bombs**'. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

10. Let's talk! BBC World Service: *In pairs/groups*. You are in the BBC World Service radio studio. One of you is the presenter; the other student(s) is/are one the people in exercise 12**. Try to get a balanced interview. *5 minutes*.

11. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Name the airport in Britain.
- 2) Name the county in Britain.
- 3) Where were the bombs en route to?
- 4) Name the parcel carriers.
- 5) Name the intelligence organisations.

Student B

- 1) Name the US airport and its city.
- 2) What happened at 9.30pm?
- 3) Who is John Brennan?
- 4) What was evacuated?
- 5) What happened at 8pm?

12.** The Yemen cargo bombs: In pairs/groups. Choose to be one of the following people. It is the period during the Yemen cargo bomb alert. Create a short story about it. Tell it to your partner/group. Try to make it interesting! Students try to interlink **or** interact student storylines!

1	MI6 officer	3	A terrorist
2	A journalist	4	The President of the USA

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

13. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **The Yemen cargo bombs**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

14. Presentation: In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a 2-minute presentation on: **The Yemen cargo bombs**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation. Class – After the presentations go through the good and weak points on each presentation. Learn from the results.

15. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) The bombs _____
- b) Yemen _____
- c) The President of the USA _____

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Is this a new strategy by terrorists?
- 3) What is known about the packages?
- 4) What do you know about PETN - the powerful plastic explosive Pentaerythritol tetranitrate?
- 5) Is air cargo screened?
- 6) What happens in the US regarding screened cargo?
- 7) What about screening in the UK?
- 8) How were the parcels supposed to get from Yemen to the US?
- 9) Why is there so much concern about Yemen?
- 10) Who are Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula?

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) How did the bombs get on board the planes?
- 3) Who sent the devices?
- 4) What were the intended targets?
- 5) Is there significance in the timing of the plot?
- 6) How was the plot foiled?
- 7) How did the British police miss a device?
- 8) What are the implications of the plot for security?
- 9) Who was in charge in Britain?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

Note: You can find the answers to these questions by clicking on the links on page 8

SPEAKING

Let's debate! The Yemen cargo bombs

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

The Yemen cargo bombs

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING: edited

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

An international (1)_____ alert was sparked recently at East Midlands airport in Britain after several bomb making devices were discovered. The devices were en route from (2)_____ to several (3)_____ in Chicago, USA. Just before their discovery an MI6 officer responsible for Yemen late on Thursday night received a (4)_____ from a local source of a possible Al-Qaeda plot to smuggle bombs to America on board a cargo plane. They were said to have been placed in the holds of (5)_____ planes that had already taken off from Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, a country that has become one of the key fronts in the battle against Islamic (6)_____. Both flights were bound for Chicago. One was flying via Dubai, the other via the East Midlands, as it needed a fuel stop. Having passed the information on it became a race against time on three continents to intercept the (7)_____. At 3.30am officers from Leicestershire police were asked to check the hold of the UPS mail plane after it landed at East Midlands airport. They discovered a suspect (8)_____ in a sealed cargo container. It was addressed to a synagogue in Chicago.

package

bombs

tip-off

terrorists

synagogues

cargo

Yemen

terror

The (1)_____ contained an office-sized printer cartridge, which had a small circuit board and wires crudely attached and white powder inside it rather than the black toner powder it should have contained. As soon as MI5 was informed it relayed the news to US President Barack Obama by John Brennan, assistant for homeland security and counter-terrorism who said a "potential (2)_____" to the US had been (3)_____. Mr Obama ordered his intelligence and law enforcement agencies to step up security. In Dubai, a second package sent via another parcel service, FedEx, was (4)_____. This time the parcel, which also contained a printer cartridge, did contain (5)_____. The Royal Mail depot at the East Midlands airport was (6)_____ whilst packages were double checked. This time a Hewlett Packard printer was found containing a hidden (7)_____ and appeared to be linked to a mobile phone. (8)_____, tests for explosives came back positive. As a result the US President grounded all UPS and FedEx aircraft.

evacuated

threat

crucially

identified

intercepted

device

explosives

parcel

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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An international terror alert was sparked recently at _____ in Britain after several bomb making devices were discovered. The devices were en route from Yemen to several synagogues in Chicago, USA. _____ discovery an MI6 officer responsible for Yemen late on Thursday night received a tip-off from a local source of a possible Al-Qaeda plot to smuggle bombs to America on board a cargo plane. They were said to have been placed in the holds of _____ had already taken off from Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, a country that has become one of the key fronts in the battle against _____. Both flights were bound for Chicago. One was flying via Dubai, the other via the East Midlands, as it needed a fuel stop. Having passed the information on it became a race against time on three continents to intercept the bombs. At 3.30am officers from Leicestershire police were asked to check the hold of the UPS mail plane after it landed at East Midlands airport. They discovered a suspect package in a _____. It was addressed to a synagogue in Chicago. The parcel contained an office-sized printer cartridge, which had a _____ and wires crudely attached and white powder inside it rather than the black toner powder it should have contained.

As soon as MI5 was informed it relayed the news to US President Barack Obama by John Brennan, assistant for _____ and counter-terrorism who said a "potential threat" to the US had been identified. Mr Obama ordered his intelligence and law enforcement agencies to step up security. In Dubai, a _____ via another parcel service, FedEx, was intercepted. This time the parcel, which also contained _____, did contain explosives. The Royal Mail depot at the East Midlands airport was evacuated whilst packages were double checked. This time a _____ was found containing a hidden device and appeared to be linked to a mobile phone. Crucially, tests for explosives came back positive. As a result the US President grounded all UPS and FedEx aircraft. At 8pm two fighter planes were scrambled to escort an Emirates passenger flight from Dubai, which had a package _____ hold and was on its way to New York's JFK airport. At 9.30pm Mr Obama broke the news to the world that a "_____ " had been foiled.

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

An international terror alert was sparked recently at East Midlands airport (1)___ Britain after several bomb making devices were discovered. The devices were en route from Yemen to several synagogues in Chicago, USA. (2)___ before (3)___ discovery an MI6 officer responsible (4)___ Yemen late on Thursday night received a tip-off from a local source of a possible Al-Qaeda plot to smuggle bombs to America on board a cargo plane. (5)___ were said to have been placed in the holds of cargo planes that had already taken off from Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, a country (6)___ has become one of the key fronts in the battle against Islamic terrorists. Both flights were bound for Chicago. One was flying via Dubai, the other via the East Midlands, as it needed a fuel stop. Having passed the information on it became a race against time on three continents to intercept the bombs. At 3.30am officers (7)___ Leicestershire police were asked to check the hold of the UPS mail plane after (8)___ landed at East Midlands airport. They discovered a suspect package in a sealed cargo container. It was addressed to a synagogue in Chicago.

it

in

for

from

they

just

that

their

The parcel contained an office-sized printer cartridge, which had a small circuit board and wires crudely attached and white powder inside it rather (1)___ the black toner powder it (2)___ have contained. As soon as MI5 was informed it relayed the news to US President Barack Obama by John Brennan, assistant for homeland security and counter-terrorism (3)___ said a "potential threat" to the US had been identified. Mr Obama ordered (4)___ intelligence and law enforcement agencies to step up security. In Dubai, a second package sent via another parcel service, FedEx, was intercepted. (5)___ time the parcel, (6)___ also contained a printer cartridge, did contain explosives. (7)___ Royal Mail depot at the East Midlands airport was evacuated whilst packages were double checked. This time a Hewlett Packard printer was found containing a hidden device and appeared to be linked to a mobile phone. Crucially, tests (8)___ explosives came back positive. As a result the US President grounded all UPS and FedEx aircraft.

his

for

the

who

should

than

which

this

SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	crudely	11	terrorism
2	international	12	crucially
3	responsible	13	credible
4	devices	14	Leicestershire
5	smuggle	15	Yemen
6	Islamic	16	potential
7	foiled	17	enforcement
8	information	18	scrambled
9	cartridge	19	synagogue
10	intelligence	20	intercept

LINKS

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/11658452>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/8099344/Yemen-bomb-plot-key-questions-raised.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-11660005>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/US/10/31/security.concern/index.html?hpt=T2>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/9141037.stm>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: Yemen cargo bombs foiled: An international **terror** alert was sparked recently at East Midlands airport in Britain after several bomb making devices were discovered. The devices were en route from **Yemen** to several **synagogues** in Chicago, USA. Just before their discovery an MI6 officer responsible for Yemen late on Thursday night received a **tip-off** from a local source of a possible Al-Qaeda plot to smuggle bombs to America on board a cargo plane. They were said to have been placed in the holds of **cargo** planes that had already taken off from Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, a country that has become one of the key fronts in the battle against Islamic **terrorists**. Both flights were bound for Chicago. One was flying via Dubai, the other via the East Midlands, as it needed a fuel stop. Having passed the information on it became a race against time on three continents to intercept the **bombs**. At 3.30am officers from Leicestershire police were asked to check the hold of the UPS mail plane after it landed at East Midlands airport. They discovered a suspect **package** in a sealed cargo container. It was addressed to a synagogue in Chicago.

The **parcel** contained an office-sized printer cartridge, which had a small circuit board and wires crudely attached and white powder inside it rather than the black toner powder it should have contained. As soon as MI5 was informed it relayed the news to US President Barack Obama by John Brennan, assistant for homeland security and counter-terrorism who said a "potential **threat**" to the US had been **identified**. Mr Obama ordered his intelligence and law enforcement agencies to step up security. In Dubai, a second package sent via another parcel service, FedEx, was **intercepted**. This time the parcel, which also contained a printer cartridge, did contain **explosives**. The Royal Mail depot at the East Midlands airport was **evacuated** whilst packages were double checked. This time a Hewlett Packard printer was found containing a hidden **device** and appeared to be linked to a mobile phone. **Crucially**, tests for explosives came back positive. As a result the US President grounded all UPS and FedEx aircraft. (V1)

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