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Pre-Election Bomb Plot a Political Boost for Obama

By [Jason Ditz](#)

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Though the administration has declined to raise the terror alert level, [the very public nature of the Yemen bomb plot](#) is seen as giving President Obama and incumbent Congressional Democrats a much-needed political shot in the arm, conveniently enough just days before the midterm elections.

The plot gave an opportunity for President Obama to look “presidential,” experts say, as he gave a high profile speech [vowing “any steps necessary” to see al-Qaeda’s Yemeni affiliate destroyed](#).

The fact that by all accounts no explosives appear to have actually gotten to the United States also likely plays to the administration’s advantage, and indeed the advantage of all incumbents, who can claim that the “system worked” in this regard even as they promise major new foreign policy ventures in retaliation.

Though [former Bush-era official Gordon Johndroe insisted that these attacks can “cut either way” politically](#) right before the election, the recent history in the US and abroad suggests that they have pretty much universally favored the incumbent, and while this particularly incident appears much larger, it does not appear to be any different in that regard.

Recent polls had [showed Democrats taking big hits in the upcoming Midterm election, and President Obama's campaigning doing very little to help](#). The consequences of a shift in the popular interest away from the economy and onto hawkish rhetoric about revenge attacks against al-Qaeda at the last minute could be significant, and might well mean that the massive losses the incumbents were facing will no longer apply.