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OPINION

EDITORIALS

The facts on high-speed rail

Re "Upside of rail travel? No lines," Column, Dec. 22

George Skelton's and Jeff Morales' fanciful musings about the security advantages of high-speed trains trivialize a substantial risk. Trains cannot be flown into buildings, but they are attractive targets for terrorists.

During rush hour on March 11, 2004, four commuter trains in Madrid were hit by 10 nearly simultaneous explosions in a coordinated attack that killed 191 and wounded more than 2,000. On Jan. 26, 2005, a car parked by a suicidal man on train tracks in Glendale derailed three trains, including two Metrolink commuter trains, killing 11.

The Alvia high-speed train from Madrid to Ferrol derailed due to driver recklessness on July 24, 2013, killing 79.

Securing aircraft requires securing only airports. Securing trains requires securing the entire right of way. High-speed trains are particularly vulnerable to attack.

JAMES E. MOORE II
Los Angeles

The writer is director of USC's transportation engineering program.

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Skelton writes, "But like many, I chortle at the route — Madera to Bakersfield for the initial leg." As a retired engineer, I take exception to Skelton's statement. This is the perfect place to start.

I have worked on large projects. You start where engineering problems will be fewest in order to work out the techniques, procedures and testing. The construction environment should be as uncomplicated as possible.

Even construction on the Interstate Highway System was begun in the 1950s on rural sections.

LEE MELLINGER
Valley Glen

LETTERS

It may be a nice idea to have a high-speed rail link between Los Angeles and San Francisco, but it is far more important to safeguard Los Angeles' water supply.

The Northwest and Northeast have abundant fresh water. The Southwest has very little, and that's not going to change any time soon.

Instead of valuable dollars and engineering brilliance being expended on a high-speed train between San Francisco and Los Angeles, surely it makes more sense to figure

out a way for a pipeline to be constructed to ensure that L.A.'s water needs are met for the next century.

Build the pipeline, then build the train line.

DAVID B. HILL
Pacific Palisades