

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION
FIRST MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF CIVIL AVIATION OF THE
CARIBBEAN REGION (CAR/DCA/1)

(Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, 8-11 October 2002)

Agenda Item 8: Air Transport
8.1: Security

Aviation Security in the United States since September 11th

(Presented by the United States)

SUMMARY

In continuation of efforts to improve transportation security in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States Congress passed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. On November 19, 2001, President Bush signed this Act into law. Among the provisions of the Act was the mandate to establish the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) within the Department of Transportation incorporating the responsibility for security of all modes of transportation. Since September 11th, the TSA has worked intensely to tighten security throughout the U.S. aviation system. These efforts, which include enhanced screening measures, hardening of cockpit doors, greatly increased deployment of Federal Air Marshals, and more intelligent use of technology have dramatically increased aviation security for all passengers.

1. INTRODUCTION

As a result of the events of September 11th, President Bush signed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, which made fundamental changes in the way air transportation security is defined, provided, and overseen within the U.S. To assist in this process, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), led by a new Under Secretary of Transportation for Security, was established to address security issues for all modes of transportation in the U.S. Now aircraft and passengers will not only be protected by a single organization, TSA's operations will ensure that all components of the U.S. aviation system are regulated from a security perspective.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Since September 11th, the TSA has worked intensely to tighten security throughout the aviation system. These efforts, which include enhanced screening measures, hardening of cockpit doors, greatly increased deployment of Federal Air Marshals, and more intelligent use of technology have dramatically increased aviation security for all passengers. The Aviation and Transportation Security Act requires that all passengers be screened by Federal employees by November 19, 2002, and that checked baggage be screened by explosives detection equipment by December 31, 2002. In order to meet these deadlines and all of the other mandates of the Act, the TSA is:

- Assessing airport facilities to determine equipment mix and location;
- Performing surveys to include cost estimates for installation and development of a preliminary schedule;
- Redesigning screening checkpoints and developing screening standards for checked baggage;
- Installing equipment;
- Ensuring that new construction provides adequate space and support for all equipment;
- Ensuring that aviation security systems at the airports are fully operational and trained screeners are deployed;
- Building an experienced, top-quality senior management team;
- Developing new hiring and training procedures for use on a scale never before attempted by the Federal government;
- Hiring thousands of screeners at numerous airports around the country (10,300, to date);
- Ensuring that new screeners master their new skills, perform to highest levels possible, and are deployed in a timely manner; and
- Significantly enhancing the Federal Air Marshal Program.

2.2 As you can imagine, this is an extraordinary challenge to meet at 429 airports throughout the country. TSA is working closely with the aviation industry and major contractors -- including Boeing, Lockheed Martin and NCS Pearson -- to meet this challenge.

2.3 In order to bring common sense into the aviation security arena, the TSA is taking aggressive steps to reduce the "hassle factor" at airports and eliminate "unnecessary rules." Just recently, the policy on passengers carrying beverages through security screening checkpoints was revised so that paper or foam polystyrene cups are allowed to pass with the passenger through the checkpoints.

2.4 A second common sense change made was the elimination of the questions asked at ticket counters and at curbside check-in as to whether the passengers had control of their bags at all times or had been asked by others to include items in their bags. These questions have not proven to enhance security. By eliminating them, the check-in procedure will be speedier and passengers can move to the secure areas of the airport faster.

2.5 As TSA considers other unnecessary rules that can be eliminated or modified while not diminishing the U.S. security posture, a website has been created that provides very clear guidance for the traveling public. This easily understandable, yet comprehensive guidance lists prohibited items, provides information on travel for people with disabilities, and gives guidance on traveling with children, as well as information on boarding aircraft, and general "dos and don'ts" for travelers. This is information that TSA encourages all travelers to read and it compliments the standardized signs posted at airports nationwide.

2.6 TSA also intends to move forward with a "registered traveler" card and system. The TSA believes that the needs of security can be balanced with common sense for those who agree to register for this program and submit to a detailed background check. Frequent fliers make up a large percentage of the air traveling public. By enrolling many of these frequent fliers as registered travelers, all air travelers can benefit. For those who register with the program and pass scrutiny, more will be known about them from a security standpoint than anonymous passengers who present themselves to screeners at the airport. Allowing registered travelers to pass more quickly into the secured areas will ease congestion at the checkpoints and reduce overall waiting times. And, by implementing a registered traveler program we may be able to better utilize our airport workforce. The same technologies and systems that will support a registered traveler program will be needed to support a program for airport employees.

2.7 TSA is also leading efforts to develop next generation technologies for use at airport checkpoints and to inspect checked bags. Methods to help control access to airport perimeters and ensure that only authorized people are allowed in secure areas are being developed. TSA is optimizing human performance by improving screener selection, training and evaluation methods. In addition, TSA is beginning to expand its research efforts in order to assess the terrorist threat to all transportation modes, particularly as it relates to cargo. These R&D efforts are expected to result in TSA's ability to test and phase in new generations of equipment over the next 2 to 7 years.

2.8 Another area of interest to many is the strengthening of cockpit doors to prevent forced entry into an aircraft's cockpit. In the United States, this project is the responsibility of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) although obviously, from a security standpoint, TSA has a great interest. The FAA is well on the way to approving designs for a retrofit of the cockpit doors for many airplanes and they expect to approve the designs for almost all of the remainder during the fall. Aircraft manufacturers are producing the required cockpit door kits. The key issue comes down to scheduling the aircraft to be out of service for the several days necessary to install the new equipment. Given today's market conditions, air carriers want to make sure they do not take aircraft out of service to the detriment of their business. The addition of bolts, locks, and bars to cockpit doors has already substantially increased cockpit security and the policy that once a plane leaves the gate, the doors must remain shut (save for essential access only), will be enforced.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The establishment of a new U.S. federal government agency on the scale of the TSA is a huge undertaking that has not been attempted since World War II. The TSA has an incredible challenge before it, especially since the tasks listed above refer to just the aviation component of the TSA. When TSA is fully functional it will have responsibility for the security of all modes of transportation.

3.2 Americans had a great reluctance to travel by air in the weeks after the tragedy of September 11th. Now, polls show that in less than a year, much of their confidence in air-travel security has been restored.

3.3 In late January when the TSA was first created, it had only 13 permanent employees. Now, 145 new federal airport-security directors have been hired. The TSA has done background checks on more than a million airport workers. An unprecedented number of federal air marshals are on flights.

3.4 The November 19th deadline for replacing private screeners with more than 30,000 federal passenger screeners will be met. The TSA expects to come close to meeting the Dec. 31 deadline for having more than 22,000 baggage screeners and necessary equipment in place.

3.5 The TSA is also making air travel more hassle free for the 5 million passengers, on average, who fly each day. Waiting times at security checkpoints are shrinking, as checkpoints become more efficient and unnecessary rules are eliminated or modified.

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