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Secretary Napolitano Announces Second Major Aviation Security Milestone this Month

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DHS now performs 100 percent watchlist matching for all flights by all U.S. air carriers

Washington, D.C.—Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today announced that 100 percent of passengers flying domestically and internationally on U.S. airlines are now being checked against government watch lists through the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Secure Flight program—the second major step in fulfilling a key 9/11 Commission recommendation achieved this month.

Today's announcement comes less than three weeks after TSA reached 100 percent watchlist checking for all passengers traveling within the United States and its territories through Secure Flight. Before TSA began implementing Secure Flight, airlines held responsibility for checking passengers against terrorist watchlists.

"Secure Flight fulfills a key recommendation of the of the *9/11 Commission Report*, enabling TSA to screen passengers directly against government watchlists using passenger name, date of birth, and gender before a boarding pass is issued," said Secretary Napolitano. "This achievement significantly enhances one of our many layers of security—coordinated with our partners in the airline industry and governments around the world—that we leverage to protect the traveling public against threats of terrorism."

Under Secure Flight, TSA prescreens passenger name, date of birth and gender against government watchlists for domestic and international flights. In addition to facilitating secure travel for all passengers, the program helps prevent the misidentification of passengers who have names similar to individuals on government watchlists.

U.S. airlines account for more than 90 percent of all travel to, from, and within the United States; with this achievement, Secure Flight will now cover all passengers aboard those flights.

"We are pleased to have been a part of this industry/government collaborative effort, working toward fulfilling this extraordinarily ambitious automation security program," said Air Transport Association President and CEO James C. May. "By streamlining processes through a single government entity, Secure Flight is a win-win for passengers—streamlining check-in processes while enhancing security."

TSA began implementing Secure Flight in late 2009 and expects all international carriers with direct flights to the United States to begin using Secure Flight by the end of 2010.

Under Secure Flight, 99 percent of passengers are cleared to print boarding passes at home by providing their date of birth, gender and name as it appears on the government ID they plan to use when traveling when booking airline tickets. Individuals found to match watchlist parameters will be subjected to secondary screening, a law enforcement interview or prohibition from boarding an aircraft, depending on the specific case.

For more information, visit www.tsa.gov/SecureFlight or www.dhs.gov.

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