

Subcommittee on Aviation

Hearing on

Airport Security

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this hearing is to examine the current status of efforts to improve airport security.

BACKGROUND

The President signed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act on November 19, 2001. This legislation removed responsibility for aviation security from the FAA and established the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), within the Department of Transportation, to handle all transportation security matters including aviation security. In the 10 months since the law was passed, a number of issues have arisen that will be the subject of the hearing.

Major Issues:

- Deadline for hiring a Federal screener workforce: The Aviation and Transportation Security Act requires that all passenger screening be

conducted by Federal employees by November 19, 2002. As of September 10, the TSA has deployed Federal screeners to 93 airports and has hired nearly 32,000 passenger screeners, but only about half that number are actually on the payroll. TSA believes that if given enough resources and operational flexibility, it will meet the deadline. If TSA fails to meet the November 19th deadline, TSA may have to limit the number of open checkpoints to those that it can staff. This would result in longer passenger queues. However, TSA believes it has the legal authority to continue to use private sector screening companies if necessary to prevent longer passenger queues.

- Deadline for screening all checked baggage with explosive detection systems: The Aviation and Transportation Security Act requires the TSA to deploy enough explosive detection systems by the end of this year to screen all checked baggage. TSA has said this will require about 1,100 bulk detection machines, such as the CTX or L3, and about 5,000 trace detection machines. There are now 215 bomb detection machines operating at airports. Some airports have complained that they will not be able to reconstruct their terminals by the end of the year to accommodate all the large bulk detection machines. TSA acknowledges that engineering problems will cause as many as 35 airports to miss the December 31st deadline. Although the law provides flexibility in such cases, some airports are seeking an extension of the deadline. TSA may grant individual waivers to airports that can't meet the deadline (although the law does not require waivers) and recommends that intensive hand searches and bomb-sniffing dogs be used until bomb detection machines are installed. So far, TSA has hired 440 of the 22,000 checked baggage screeners it says it will need. The Department of Transportation Inspector General estimates that TSA will need 27,000 baggage screeners to fulfill its mandate.
- Complaints about the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) hiring practices: The TSA seems to hire ex-law enforcement officers for key positions. While they have vast experience in security matters, they often have little experience with the complexities of managing an efficient airport and airline operation. Additionally, many experienced screeners who have passed the new stricter requirements have not been chosen to fill management level positions. Once turned down for the higher-level position, applicants have not been notified whether they will have screener jobs with the TSA. Also, those who have not passed the evaluation have had difficulty obtaining information from TSA on why they failed and how

- or if they can apply again.
- Other issues that may arise are those relating to airport and airline security and implementing the provisions of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, including the Trusted Traveler Program, arming pilots, cargo security, general aviation security and TSA budgetary issues.

WITNESSES

PANEL I

[Mr. Stephen J. McHale](#)

Deputy Under Secretary of Transportation for Security
Transportation Security Administration

[Mr. C. W. "Bill" Jennings](#)

Executive Director
Orlando International Airport

Ms. Rosemarie Grubbs
Kissimmee, Florida
accompanied by: Jim Grubbs

Mr. Mac Curtis
President/Government Solutions Division
NCS Pearson

Mr. John K. Davidson
Vice-President, Airport Security Programs
The Boeing Company

**Statement of Stephen J. McHale
Deputy Under Secretary for Management
and Policy
Before the
Subcommittee on Aviation
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
September 17, 2002**

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Congresswoman Brown. I am pleased to testify before the Subcommittee on Aviation here in Orlando, an important destination for travelers from all across America and the world.

I know that Acting Under Secretary Loy had hoped to be here today to discuss the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) progress in central Florida with the Subcommittee. He has dedicated much of his effort over the past weeks traveling to airports to meet with airport directors, air carriers and other leaders in the aviation community to build the important relationships that will help us work collaboratively. He was able to meet with the airport director in Miami just recently and would like to have the same opportunity here in central Florida.

Efforts to improve communication and collaboration are being made at all levels throughout TSA, not just by its top leaders. We are hearing good reports that as our Federal Security Directors (FSDs) take their positions at airports across the country, they are establishing productive relationships with airport stakeholders—airport directors, airline representatives, vendors, and other partners. They are meeting with them regularly to provide up-to-date information on the federalization process, answer questions, and discuss concerns.

Here at Orlando International Airport, TSA is making excellent progress. Our FSD, Charles Lutz, is in place and consulting frequently with airport director Bill Jennings. Federal screeners arrived on August 20, 2002, and a total of 763 screeners had been hired by the end of last week. Assessment work for deployment of explosive detection equipment is moving well along.

Overall, TSA has made great progress since its inception. As of this week we will have deployed federal screeners at 102 airports. This includes 11 airports that we transitioned from contract screeners to federal screeners in part or in full last week. This week we are engaged in deploying federal screeners at all or portions of 9 more airports.

In Florida, we are even further along. Federal screeners have been deployed at more than half the airports in Florida. In addition to Orlando International Airport, federal screeners are on the job at Daytona Beach, Melbourne, Sarasota, St.

Petersburg-Clearwater, Panama City, West Palm Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, Tallahassee, Tampa, and Pensacola airports. Federal screeners arrive at Southwest Florida International today and at the remaining Florida airports later this month and in October.

Across the country, by the first week in September we had hired 29, 952 screeners. We are confident that we will meet the November 19 deadline for providing for federal screeners at all commercial airports in the United States.[\[1\]](#)

These screeners have been carefully selected and must pass stringent qualifying tests. We train them well to carry out their important responsibilities. Though our standards are high, we strongly believe that everyone should have full and fair consideration for screener positions. This includes giving current screeners every opportunity for jobs, and in fact, many are being hired. For the east half of Orlando International Airport, 30 current screeners were hired. As we move forward, we are continually evaluating our hiring procedures and seeking ways to improve them.

I know that Members of this Subcommittee are very concerned that TSA must recruit women and minorities to its ranks. At Orlando International Airport more than 32 percent of our screeners are women and almost 42 percent are minorities. TSA job fairs and targeted media outreach efforts have been very successful. In fact, as of August 30, our job fairs in 56 markets had attracted nearly 90,000 candidates. In the design of job fairs

and other targeted outreach activities, TSA uses a database of 1,500 national, state and local organizations to build alliances in local communities to effectively tap into a diverse work pool. As part of our comprehensive program, TSA launched and is continuing to refine promotional and advertising efforts to recruit women.

TSA is making substantial progress in its efforts to screen all checked baggage for explosives by using explosive detection systems (EDS) as well. I have met twice with airport directors Bill Jennings of Orlando International Airport and John Clark of Jacksonville International Airport as we have considered how to move forward with EDS and federalization of airport security.

At Orlando International Airport our explosive detection system assessment is still underway, and the airport is partnering with TSA in three operational test and evaluation activities. The Advanced Technology Security Checkpoint project evaluates several newly developed technologies to increase security or throughput at airport checkpoints. Orlando's operational data collection project will measure throughput rate, transit time, and data on baggage system loads and look at operator processing times. A third project will evaluate multiple technologies in airport access control systems.

Jacksonville International Airport was the first airport selected for fully integrated in-line baggage inspection using a certified EDS. Designation of the Jacksonville airport as a pilot site provides TSA with a unique opportunity to design and implement a prototype system.

I know you are well aware of the concerns raised by some airport operators that pressing forward with the December 31 deadline will result in unacceptable delays for airline passengers and added costs for airports. TSA does not advocate a wholesale delay in the December 31 deadline. We must deploy explosive detection systems at all of our airports as soon as possible, and we will work with each airport to invest wisely in the solution that best meets the intent of the law. The December 31 deadline enables us to focus our efforts. And as we work to meet the deadline, TSA will continue to maintain the balance between customer service and security.

However, for a small number of airports it may be necessary to grant extensions for a modest amount of time, while temporarily putting in place other methods of screening checked baggage. Mr. Chairman, recognizing your previous efforts in this area, TSA would like to work with you and this Subcommittee on a solution.

TSA is making excellent progress in hiring the FSDs that will be deployed at our largest airports. We have 148 of the planned 158 FSDs on board. Those FSDs will in turn have 105 Deputy FSDs who will assist with the management of some of the smaller airports. We have made job offers to candidates for 45 of these positions. We expect to complete the process of hiring FSDs and their key support staff very soon.

In Florida, all 11 FSDs are now in place, as well as four Deputy FSDs. Two additional Deputy FSDs are in training, and we are

in the selection process for the final two Deputy FSD positions. I believe you have met some or all of the FSDs that are assigned to airports here in northeast Florida, Charles Lutz at Orlando International, Nicholas Scott at Daytona Beach, and Paul Hackenbury in Jacksonville.

As part of Acting Under Secretary Loy's plan to bring common sense into the aviation security arena, he has charged us with 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. We will now allow paper or foam polystyrene cups to pass with the passenger through the checkpoints.

A second common sense change that we have made is to eliminate the 16-year-old questions asked at ticket counters and at curbside check-in whether the passengers had control of the 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 we will speed up the check-in procedure so we can then more quickly move the passengers to the secure areas of the airport.

We have also published very clear guidance on our website for the traveling public to use. This easily understandable, yet comprehensive, guidance separately lists prohibited items that passengers may not bring through security checkpoints and onto airliners and also items that are permitted in aircraft cabins. It contains guidance on travel for people with disabilities and

guidelines on traveling with children, as well as information on boarding aircraft, and general “Dos and Don’ts” for travelers. This is excellent information that TSA encourages all travelers to read. We also have standardized signs at airports nationwide at the screening checkpoints, reminding passengers of the prohibited items.

In spite of our reminders to passengers, our airport screeners are still intercepting large numbers of prohibited items. Our field reports state that in August of this year alone we intercepted at least 107,385 knives, 199,903 other types of prohibited cutting devices, 4,177 box cutters, 3,676 incendiary devices, and 227 firearms through passenger security screening. From February 2002 through August we have intercepted a total of more than 2,800,000 prohibited items.

Mr. Chairman, these numbers speak volumes about the public’s confusion on what is prohibited from air travel under current circumstances. TSA will continue to publicize this information to better educate the flying public. We are partnering with aviation stakeholders to help communicate these messages.

Acting Under Secretary Loy continues to challenge all of us at TSA, and our stakeholders, to point out other unnecessary rules that we can eliminate or modify, while not diminishing our security posture.

TSA also intends to move forward with a “registered traveler” card and system. We believe that we can balance the needs of security 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. First of all, for those who register with the program and pass scrutiny, we will know more about them from a security standpoint than anonymous passengers who present themselves to our screeners at the airport. This enhances aviation security. Secondly, by allowing the registered travelers to pass more quickly into the secured areas, this will ease congestion at the checkpoints and reduce overall waiting times for the registered travelers and for the traveling public that does not participate in the registered traveler program. Third, we will be able to reduce the hassle factor for those registered travelers. Finally, by implementing a registered traveler program we may be able to better utilize our airport workforce.

Our ability to move forward with a registered traveler program at this time is hampered by the restrictions that the Appropriations Committees placed on our plans to move forward with a Transportation Worker Identification Card (TWIC). The Conference Report on the Supplemental Appropriations Act constrains TSA from proceeding with any further plans to implement a TWIC. This impacts on our plans to use a similar type of card for registered travelers.

In a related area, I know you have written to Secretary Mineta and Acting Under Secretary Loy concerning the credentialing and screening of airline and airport employees. The same technologies and systems that will support a registered traveler

program will be needed to support a program for these employees.

As you know, TSA was disappointed with the reduced funding provided in the recently approved FY 2002 emergency supplemental appropriations. Upon approval of the supplemental, however, we redirected spending so that progress towards meeting the passenger and baggage screening deadlines is not disrupted over the next few months.

However, our continued success in FY 2003 is based on receiving the \$4.8 billion in funds the President requested for TSA, plus an additional \$546 million in funds in the budget amendment forwarded to the Congress. TSA would be grateful for the support of this Subcommittee for our TSA budget request as the appropriations process moves ahead.

We would also appreciate support from the Subcommittee to discontinue caps on employment in FY 2003. Carrying over this cap into FY 2003 would reduce TSA's ability to effectively manage and meet our core statutory requirements of the law for passenger and baggage screening.

I would like to briefly address our research and development program. I know that this Subcommittee is interested in ensuring that we are developing the best possible technology to use in transportation security and investing in equipment that enhances security while effectively using the taxpayer's money. We are making progress in this area, although there clearly is no "magic bullet" on the near-term horizon. TSA is leading efforts

to develop next generation technologies for use at airport checkpoints and to inspect checked bags. We are developing methods to help us control access to airport perimeters and ensure that only authorized people are allowed in secure areas. We are continuing our efforts to optimize human performance by improving screener selection, training and evaluation methods. In addition we are beginning to expand our research efforts in order to assess the terrorist threat to all transportation modes, particularly as it relates to cargo. We expect these R&D efforts to result in our ability to test and phase in new generations of equipment over the next 2 to 7 years.

During Fiscal Year 2003 we plan to invest an additional \$130.4 million dollars in our R&D program. For the EDS Next Generation we are seeking \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2003. Fifty million dollars of that amount is contained in the President's initial budget submission for TSA. The other \$50 million is in the Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2003 that the President recently released to the Congress.

We have accomplished much in the short time of TSA's existence. There remains much to do. I want to assure you that everyone at TSA is fully dedicated to this important task.

I would be pleased to answer your questions.

[1] The Aviation and Transportation Security Act requires the establishment of a pilot program under which the screening of passengers and property at selected airports will be carried out by a qualified private screening company under contract with the TSA. TSA requested applications of airports interested in participating in the pilot program. The TSA selected the following five airports: San Francisco International Airport, Kansas City International Airport, Greater Rochester International Airport, Jackson Hole Airport, and Tupelo Airport. On July 21, 2002, we issued a Presolicitation Notice requesting interested companies to submit a capabilities letter. The Presolicitation Notice briefly outlined the program needs and the minimum requirements for companies to qualify to participate in the program. On August 13, 2002, we issued the Request For Proposal (RFP) to all of the companies that submitted capabilities letters. The RFP contains all of the requirements of the program and the requirements for submitting a full proposal to participate in the program. All proposals were due to the TSA by September 6, 2002. We anticipate awarding a contract or contracts for screening at all five airports by October 1, 2002.

Testimony to the House Aviation Subcommittee by
C. W. Jennings
Honorable John Mica, Chairman
September 17, 2002

I am Bill Jennings, Executive Director of the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority and I am honored to appear before the Aviation Subcommittee today.

I would first like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Orlando International Airport and to thank you for choosing to conduct this Congressional hearing at our Airport. As a matter of background, for 2001, this Airport was the 15th busiest in the U.S. as measured in total annual passengers and the 5th busiest (behind Atlanta) as measured by annual origin and destination (“O&D”) passengers. This latter ranking has a direct bearing on many of the issues I will address today since it is primarily the airport’s O&D passengers that influence the size of its passenger screening check points and passenger check-in facilities.

In preparing for my remarks on the topic of “Federalization of Aviation Security”, I have separated my comments into three areas:

1. TSA Role and Relationships with the Airport
2. Passenger Screening Checkpoints
3. 100% Checked Baggage Screening

First, I will open with a few remarks about the Airport’s relationship with the TSA and its contractors. Despite what at times had been a bumpy relationship, the cooperation and efforts of the TSA and its contractors have improved. However, a focus on security and customer service issues must continue. These issues are critical to the travelling public and the industry as a whole.

Second, let me briefly review the matter of federalizing passenger screening checkpoints. On July 29, the TSA and its employees took over operations of this terminal’s east screening check-point. On September 9, the TSA took over operation of the west check-point. In general, the transition has been relatively smooth but there have clearly been transition issues as the new TSA workforce moves into the respective

check point areas. My staff has worked closely with the TSA and their consultants to reconfigure and expand the existing passenger screening check-points to meet changing operational issues. Expansion of the east and west passenger screening check-points will serve to reduce many of these problems as will the hiring of adequate numbers of trained TSA staff. The reconfiguration and expansion projects are underway and are estimated to be completed in November 2002.

Next, I would like to address the issues surrounding the deployment of 100% baggage screening equipment.

Following the passage of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act in November 2001, this Airport began to evaluate a series of alternatives throughout our terminal regarding the placement of Explosive Detection Systems (“EDS”). Like most airports, our options to retrofit our terminal with dozens of SUV sized EDS units were limited and not without problems. At first, the use of Explosive Trace Detection (“ETD”) equipment was not understood to be an available option. The focus was on only using only EDS equipment. Also, in order to resolve alarms in checked baggage, it was the common understanding

at that time that the passenger would be present with the TSA to open baggage in order to resolve alarms. On this basis, we moved forward with concepts that favored placing EDS in close proximity to the ticketing area in a way that could most reasonably facilitate passenger and alarm resolution.

By the spring, TSA began to consider alterations to this premise in favor of a more quickly deployed alternative that could include a combination of EDS and ETD equipment. It became more evident that implementing an integrated EDS solution would likely become a second phase after first meeting the December 31, 2002 deadline with a more labor intensive EDS/ETD solution. This Airport then adapted its plan to focus on a phase 1 plan that could be implemented to meet a year-end deadline and quickly transition into a permanent integrated baggage screening solution. At this time, it still seemed to be probable that EDS equipment would be optimally placed near ticketing areas. In the case of this airport, that led us to an option to place EDS equipment in the office space behind airline ticket counters. This plan was first shared with Raytheon and then later Boeing and in large part was adopted as our phase 1 plan now under

final review by the TSA. Changes to that plan, specifically the placement of ETD equipment at or near airline ticket counters, have drawn a strong negative reaction from many airlines. At the center of their concerns are issues regarding use of ETD equipment and passenger flow and crowding in the airline ticketing lobby area. Only the proper modeling and simulation of this element of the plan will satisfy both airport and airline concerns over the proper placement and use of ETD units. This modeling is not yet complete but is expected to be completed soon.

At this juncture, there are several additional points I need to share with the Subcommittee. First, it should be understood that any airport's phase 1 solution for 100% baggage screening that heavily relies on ETD equipment will result in the hiring of TSA staff with a short tenure. In the case of the Orlando International Airport, there are proposed to be approximately 186 ETD units and approximately 800 ETD operators. If phase 2, an integrated baggage screening solution, is implemented within approximately one year of the current deadline, then most of those employees will give way to more automated EDS based baggage screening systems. Second, now that alarm resolution

no longer needs to occur with the passenger and bag present, this direction then opens up alternatives to airports to centralize baggage screening in areas not readily accessible to the public. For the Orlando International Airport and the TSA, a centralized 100% baggage screening solution will require less staffing and equipment.

We have learned recently that the TSA has approved such a plan for the Atlanta airport that will construct two centralized baggage screening systems. This clearly appears to be a good decision for Atlanta. It will require one additional year to complete beyond the current deadline and allow alarm resolution without the passenger being present. Recall that Orlando and Atlanta are numbers 4 and 5 on the list of the five busiest O&D airports in the country. I recommend that the TSA apply similar reasoning to Orlando and other Cat X airports and work quickly to proceed directly to a centralized solution that will result in labor, equipment and cost efficiencies to the TSA and achieve far greater convenience to the flying public. The ability to enhance security at a significant cost savings to the TSA and taxpayers should be examined closely and I urge Congress and the TSA to do so.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today and am available to answer any additional questions.