

JUN 26 1985

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MATT SCOCOZZA  
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BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION  
CONCERNING SECURITY MEASURES IN INTERNATIONAL AVIATION  
JUNE 27, 1985

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee to discuss the need for a continued strong focus on anti-hijacking measures throughout the world.

All of us deplore the tragic hijacking which occupies our attention today. This type of barbaric behavior must be ended. We can, I'm sure, agree on that. In a moment I will briefly outline the steps we are taking to improve our ability to deter air piracy in foreign air transportation. First, however, I want to assure you that the air transportation security system developed by the United States is fundamentally sound and protects the traveling public. Let me elaborate on that point for a moment.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, our nation experienced a surge of aircraft hijackings. In fact, air piracy was a worldwide problem. The United States instituted a massive "sky marshal" program designed to provide a meaningful deterrent. Subsequently, sophisticated air carrier and airport security programs were instituted including passenger screening requirements. Those requirements have proven tremendously effective. For the past 11 years, almost 6 billion persons and more than 7.4 billion pieces of carry-on baggage have been

screened. This has resulted in the detection of over 31,000 firearms, and almost 13,000 related arrests have been made. In the process, at least 112 hijackings or related crimes have been prevented.

Domestically, our security programs have been an unparalleled success. Many of our programs and requirements serve as models for the world community. Our ability, however, to oversee a total security program, as we do domestically, cannot be duplicated in the international environment, nor would this extent of U.S. involvement be accepted by many foreign nations. We can require air carriers serving the United States -- whether foreign or domestic -- to meet FAA security requirements. We have no authority over the foreign airports themselves. This is where the difficulties arise. There is a wide disparity in the attitudes and degrees of responsibility shown by different countries in their administration of airport security. There is also a different level of threat associated with different geographic regions of the world. Consequently, what represents good security in a low threat region may be inadequate where the threat is greater.

We are working closely with the Department of State in its anti-terrorist assistance program to provide training and technical assistance to other governments in their efforts to

improve aviation security. We have found most foreign governments cooperative and genuinely concerned for the safety of all passengers.

Unfortunately, that experience has not been universal. Security conditions at the Athens Airport, where the current hijacking had its genesis, have troubled us and other nations for some time. FAA and State Department officials met on a number of occasions with Greek officials regarding the need to improve security at Athens, particularly due to its location in a high threat region. We and others were generally unsuccessful in achieving those improvements at Athens; hence, there was a need for TWA to perform redundant screening at this facility.

As an outgrowth of a meeting between State and FAA officials with their Greek counterparts last February, it appeared that some of the security problems might be resolved. Unfortunately, the Greek government, while agreeing in principle, did not move quickly to implement improvements. We have been in contact with the Greek government since the hijacking and the Greek government has now made the commitment to take steps to improve airport security.

Current events make it clear that additional efforts must be made to assure the safety of our citizens when using foreign air transportation. In this regard, shortly after the Athens hijacking, the President directed the Department of Transportation to take action on several fronts. First, he has instructed that, in conjunction with the Department of State, we

assess the feasibility of expanding our air marshal capabilities. That study is completed and the Secretary has furnished a report to the President on its conclusions. The President directed further that we assess the current adequacy of security provided to our citizens at foreign airports. This information was also provided to the President yesterday along with recommendations on:

- ° the advisability of enhanced training for U.S. airline crews, with special emphasis on high-risk routes;
- ° providing security coordinators on-board threatened flights;
- ° accelerating and expanding research and development of explosive detection and hijack prevention systems; and
- ° enforced carry-on baggage security, calling for the physical inspection of bags.

I would note that we already have substantial information on international security based on our normal oversight in this area. That information is now being updated and supplemented through this current review.

The President also asked U.S. carriers serving Athens for a voluntary reconsideration as to whether they should continue such service. Additionally, as you may be aware, Secretary Dole is speaking this morning at the International Civil Aviation Organization meeting in Montreal and will urge this

organization -- which represents 150 nations and most major air carriers -- to take broad steps to improve international security.

Following our assessment of the adequacy of security at foreign airports, we will have the technical data necessary to recommend whether the Secretary should exercise her authority to suspend -- with the approval of the Secretary of State -- air service to any foreign airport.

This leads me to the importance of the legislative measure proposed by the Department of Transportation which is pending before you. This legislation has been introduced by request as S. 1343 by the chairmen and ranking members of the full committee and the aviation subcommittee. If enacted, the proposal would strengthen our existing authority under section 1115 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 which relates to the suspension of air service to unsafe foreign airports. It will make clear that any suspension necessary for safety purposes may be done promptly without the need to resort to potentially time-consuming consultation procedures. Further, the bill expands the coverage of section 1115 to expressly include U.S. air carriers and carriers of third countries in addition to foreign air carriers of the country in question.

Our legislation also complements the President's directive that we review the need for an expanded air marshal program by calling for a study by the Departments of Transportation and State to be followed by a report to the Congress. Further, the

bill authorizes the appropriation from the Trust Fund of such amounts as may be necessary to fund an expanded air marshal program. Finally, the bill provides DOT with the authority, subject to approval by the Attorney General and the Secretary of State, to grant the power of arrest and the authority to carry firearms, eliminating the need to have our air marshals deputized by the United States Marshals Service.

We believe the measures currently being taken and those we have proposed provide an appropriate response and make the necessary tools available to better deal with the threat of air piracy and terrorism in foreign air transportation. The expeditious passage of our legislative proposal will send a message that the United States is prepared to take decisive action to deal with threats to our citizens and other persons traveling anywhere in the world.

Before closing, I want to mention that the cooperation and support we have received, and continue to receive, from all facets of government has been tremendous. Not only have other Federal agencies offered to provide whatever assistance we may find useful, but there has been an outpouring of support and offers of assistance from the Congress as well. I assure you that we appreciate the support you have provided, and we look forward to working with you on this most pressing issue.

That completes my prepared statement. We would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have at this time.