

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW V. SCOCOZZA,
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, SUBCOMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES AND TRANSPORTATION, CONCERNING FOREIGN
AIRPORT ASSESSMENTS
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Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee today to discuss with you a variety of topics associated with international aviation security.

The Subcommittee has mentioned several topics of particular interest to it, which I will be pleased to address briefly. Before doing so, however, I want to underscore the importance which the Department of Transportation attaches to assuring the security of American aircraft whether operating domestically or in the international environment. We deplore the reprehensible acts of violence directed against civil aviation by terrorists such as that which occurred on September 4 in the hijacking of Pan American Flight 73, and we will continue to take appropriate measures both unilaterally and with our international aviation partners to combat such threats.

The Subcommittee has expressed particular interest in exploring the standards and methodology used by the Federal Aviation Administration in assessing security at international airports.

The comprehensive program we have instituted for conducting such assessments is guided by the provisions of Public Law 99-83, the International Security and Development Cooperation Act passed in August 1985. P.L. 99-83 directs the Secretary of Transportation to assess the effectiveness of security measures at foreign airports. The Act further provides for sanctions, including the suspension of air service, to be implemented for those airports that do not maintain and administer effective security measures according to our criteria.

Assessments are routinely conducted by the FAA at all foreign airports served by U.S. scheduled carriers and at all foreign airports that serve as the last point of departure to the U.S. There are currently 185 airports meeting these criteria, although the number of cities may change as U.S. and foreign carriers alter their schedules. The assessments of these foreign airports are scheduled according to the relative risk the FAA ascribes to a particular airport in consultation with U.S. and international intelligence sources.

FAA aviation security specialists designated to conduct foreign airport assessments provide advance notice of arrival to foreign aviation authorities through the appropriate U.S. embassy, and conduct either a Comprehensive or Supplemental assessment using, at a minimum, the standards and appropriate recommended practices of Annex 17 of the International Civil Aviation Organization. A comprehensive assessment covers all ICAO standards and appropriate recommended practices. A supplemental assessment is of lesser scope and focuses especially on security measures found needing improvement from prior assessments. Annex 17 covers a variety of areas such as ramp security, aircraft security, and passenger screening. The results of the assessment performed by FAA personnel are shared with the foreign aviation authorities as well as U.S. diplomatic representatives during an exit briefing. At this point, I would like to observe that our assessments are conducted, as much as possible, in a spirit of cooperation with the host government. Our interest is not solely in finding deficiencies but in identifying means by which security may be improved for the benefit of all international passengers. In all cases, the host governments have, upon our request relayed by the Department of State, arranged for the airport assessments by FAA personnel. Cooperation from the foreign governments has been very good. In fact, some countries have asked us to conduct assessments of airports which are not even on the FAA list of airports to be inspected.

In calendar year 1986, as of September 8, the FAA has conducted 228 assessments of foreign airports. This includes 158 Comprehensive assessments and 70 Supplemental assessments. By the end of 1986, all foreign airports meeting the criteria of the assessment program will have been assessed. These inspections have resulted in one instance in which the sanction provisions of P.L. 99-83 were instituted by the Secretary of Transportation for security measures determined to be ineffective. This occurred at Manila International Airport in the Philippines. In May, the Government of the Philippines was formally notified by the Secretary of Transportation of inadequate security measures in effect at Manila Airport. Since corrective actions were not fully implemented at the Airport within the succeeding ninety days, the State Department issued a travel advisory, and the American public was notified of the Secretary's determination of inadequate security measures at Manila as required by the statute. Subsequently, adequate corrective action was taken by the Philippine Government, with technical assistance provided by the airlines, State, and FAA; the FAA reassessed the security of the airport, and the Secretary of Transportation withdrew her determination on August 30. A comprehensive report on this situation was submitted to the Congress.

I mentioned a moment ago that we view our assessment role as a means of working in cooperation with other countries to find ways of improving aviation security internationally. One way we provide technical assistance to foreign governments is through the Civil Aviation Security courses offered through the Department of Transportation's Transportation Safety Institute (TSI).

Another important means through which we have been able to offer assistance to foreign governments has been the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) Program, enacted in 1983 by the Congress and administered by the Department of State. The purposes of the ATA Program are to strengthen the bilateral relationships between the U.S. and participating countries and to enhance the anti-terrorism skills of participating countries through training and related

assistance. The aviation security-related courses offered through the ATA Program are essentially the same as the Civil Aviation Security courses provided through TSI, modified to reflect international or ICAO security practices.

For FY-86, TSI contracted with the Department of State to provide 44 aviation security-related courses. The instructors for these TSI courses, which require expertise in such areas as crisis management, FAA and ICAO procedures, and explosives, are drawn from the FAA's civil aviation security inspectors. I should note that this program has been well received in the international community. Under the auspices of the ATA Program, FAA has also made available personnel, to accompany the installation of security screening equipment in foreign countries to assure the equipment is properly placed and tested, and to visit participating countries to assess the security training and equipment needs of the country. We view the ATA Program as a very positive force in helping foreign governments improve their aviation security posture, and welcome the continued opportunity to participate in this program. Since the beginning of 1985, the FAA has conducted or provided technical assistance in the training of 2,087 students from 94 countries through these two programs.

In closing, Madam Chairwoman, I would reiterate that we have instituted a comprehensive program of assessing the security of foreign airports, and have in place an effective framework for working with foreign governments to improve their security posture. We continually look at ways to improve upon our own security practices and requirements as well as to propose further enhancements in the international environment. You may be assured that we are remaining closely aware of the international security posture and will continue to take necessary action to combat the threat of terrorist acts or hijackings directed against U.S. civil aviation.

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