

STATEMENT OF MONTE BELGER, ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR
AVIATION STANDARDS, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, BEFORE
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TERRORISM, NARCOTICS, AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS, CONCERNING
AVIATION SECURITY

APRIL 7, 1989

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to appear before the Subcommittee today to describe briefly for you the FAA's efforts to combat the threat of terrorist activity against civil aviation. With me today is Mr. Raymond Salazar, FAA's Director of Civil Aviation Security.

I am attaching to my prepared statement statistical information concerning a variety of areas associated with the FAA's aviation security programs designed to give you a better perspective of our security program. We would, of course, be pleased to discuss those issues further with you.

We welcome the Subcommittee's hearing today as an example of the commitment of all segments of government to come to grips with the threat of terrorism. The recent tragedy of Pan Am Flight 103 highlights the seriousness of that threat, and reinforces that we must do all that is technologically and humanly possible to reduce that threat to the traveling public. We must demonstrate a firm and unwavering resolve to counter whatever new measures might be instituted by the criminals who would hold our air transportation system hostage and threaten the lives of our citizens.

To respond to the threat of terrorism, it is the FAA's job to work closely with intelligence agencies to seek to identify what the potential threats against civil aviation are, and then to apply the appropriate tools and techniques necessary to offset the tools and techniques used by those who would thwart the system. It is an ever changing process because, as technology and political objectives change, so does the threat.

In the early 1970's, for example, we revolutionized the civil aviation security system by instituting a sky marshal program and by implementing a highly effective passenger screening system designed to stem the wave of hijackings being experienced at that time. But as the level and nature of the threat to the traveling public has varied, so has our response. We have continued to make changes to that system, through heightened expectations of what the system must be able to detect and through improvements to equipment, techniques, and personnel; our recent requirement calling for improved systems for restricting and monitoring access to secured areas on airports is one example of such a change. And the system has worked remarkably well for over a decade and a half.

In 1985, following the TWA hijacking, Congress, with the strong leadership of this Subcommittee, called on the FAA to initiate a major program to make assessments of the security of foreign airports serving the United States. This new legislative thrust, contained in the International Security and Development Cooperation Act, significantly expanded the FAA's "global" presence in security matters and represented a measured response to a growing international threat against American aviation interests. Additional steps were taken as well at that time to increase funding for FAA security

research and development work and to bolster security inspector and Federal Air Marshal staffing within the FAA. Further, the United States worked within the International Civil Aviation Organization to strengthen international security requirements, and the FAA took actions to enhance security requirements for U.S. carriers operating abroad.

More recently, following the Pan Am tragedy over Scotland, FAA instituted a series of new security measures to tighten U.S. air carrier security requirements at airports in Western Europe and the Middle East:

- Airlines must now complete 100% x-ray or physical inspection of all checked baggage.
- Passengers may not have access to the contents of checked baggage following the security inspection.
- Airlines must perform a positive match of passenger and baggage to ensure that unaccompanied bags are not loaded onto the aircraft.
- Airlines must take additional measures to preclude unauthorized access to baggage from check-in to loading on board the aircraft.
- An increased number of passengers is to be randomly selected for enhanced screening. Checked baggage of the persons identified for enhanced screening must be physically inspected.
- Small packages and parcels that are shipped through passenger ticket counters must be x-rayed or physically examined prior to shipment.

These measures exact a cost on our air transportation system and are not lightly taken by the FAA. But we will not hesitate to tilt the balance toward improved security and away from convenience when that is necessary to

protect our citizens. Thus far, these measures appear to be working without undue hardship or inconvenience to air travelers.

We are also continuing our aggressive program of foreign airport assessments called for in the International Security and Development Cooperation Act. Since the inception of this program in 1986, we have conducted roughly 800 visits to 216 foreign airports in 107 countries. We have been well pleased at the cooperative approach shown generally by host governments, and believe this program has aided in attaining additional security improvements at many foreign airports. The current Act enables us to conduct assessments, provides general guidance concerning the nature of assessments to be conducted, and prescribes a workable and appropriate approach toward public notification of uncorrected problems at foreign airports, all in a manner which highlights the need for a cooperative rather than unilateral approach toward solving security problems.

Clearly, to accomplish fully our aviation security responsibilities, we must have adequate numbers of trained, security inspectors. With regard to our security staffing posture, this fiscal year we are increasing our civil aviation security workforce by an additional 56 personnel, and have requested 120 additional security personnel in our FY 1990 budget, which will bring the total security force to almost 700. These additional employees will facilitate our efforts to respond to the international threat and to continue to improve security here in the United States. The added staffing will enable us to improve the FAA presence in the most pressing areas of the world.

We are accelerating the delivery schedule of the thermal neutron analysis (TNA) units we have ordered for bomb detection. This remarkable system is the result of three years of FAA-directed research on an explosive detection system developed to detect all commercial and military explosives which might be concealed in checked baggage and air cargo.

Prototype TNA systems have already been tested at the Los Angeles and San Francisco Airports during June 1987-March 1988. One of the systems was electronic-based; the other was a radioactive element referred to as "CF" (Californium-based). Six CF-based TNA units will be delivered and in operation during the June 1989 to January 1990 time frame, six months ahead of schedule. We believe this unit shows great promise for operating effectively in screening passenger luggage. Our experience examining over 30,000 bags using thermal neutron analysis demonstrated that it could screen baggage with a high success rate (95%) and a low false alarm rate (4%). I should add that the high success rate was attained finding minimal quantities of explosives, and would be higher with larger amounts of explosive material. I would further note that the radioactive elements of the TNA system are well within prescribed safety levels and pose no threat to system operators or passengers. The first TNA system will be deployed at New York's Kennedy International Airport.

Research is also underway on an explosive vapor detection system for checking people for explosives. Last October at Boston Logan Airport, we tested a prototype walk-up explosive detection booth designed to detect the entire spectrum of explosives which may be carried by a saboteur. The false alarm rate was exceptionally low--less than 1%--but the time to test each

passenger was about 30 seconds. The manufacturer is working now on reducing that time frame to about 6 seconds per passenger. We hope to have the improved device available for testing next year.

We also are continuing work to develop improved weapons detection capabilities, including efforts for the detection of plastic weapons, and are conducting an evaluation of state-of-the-art detection equipment which is commercially available. Further, we continue to solicit new ideas from the scientific and academic community with a view toward identifying and developing additional tools that will enhance security.

All of these efforts are important to improving civil aviation security, and they will continue. Additionally, though, we must continue to work in the international arena to develop an international approach to end terrorism in the skies. As you are aware, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) already has in place a set of security standards and recommended practices, incorporated into Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention. One hundred fifty-nine countries have acceded to that convention. We believe the measures set out in Annex 17 are fundamentally sound, but, like our own security measures, they must periodically be reviewed and updated.

Just two months ago, Secretary Skinner attended a Council Session of ICAO called specifically to address the sabotage of Pan Am Flight 103. Nine other ministers responsible for civil aviation and 23 additional countries' permanent ICAO representatives participated as well. Secretary Skinner spoke with each of those ministers during the two-day ICAO meeting and with many of the other senior government officials present. They made it

clear to Secretary Skinner that they are willing to join us to do all that is necessary to make international civil aviation secure from terrorist acts.

As a result of that meeting, the 33-member ICAO Council unanimously adopted a resolution setting out a plan of action that, we are confident, will lead to strengthened security procedures throughout the world. As a matter of highest priority, ICAO will review existing international standards applicable to all operations to determine what changes are necessary in light of recent events. It will also consider developing a set of extraordinary measures to put in place when increased threat levels exist. Further, participants at the Council agreed to expedite research and development on detection of explosives and to explore the possibility of establishing an international regime for the marking of explosives.

Secretary Skinner has sparked other initiatives as well. He has met with the heads of all of the major U.S.-flag international carriers to discuss security issues, and listened to the proposals put forth by the Air Transport Association on the airlines' behalf. He has formed a special team in the Department to develop and evaluate a full range of concepts on how we and the rest of the international aviation community can make the skies safer and more secure, and he has made clear that, if we find that the Department's existing programs need to be augmented, he will not hesitate to reprogram funds to ensure that we can meet those needs. Further, he made the decision to amend Federal Aviation Regulation 129.25 to require foreign airlines to submit their security plans to the FAA for approval. We will use the standards and recommended practices contained in ICAO Annex 17 as the yardstick against which those plans will be measured. This will enable us to

better ensure that the security precautions followed by foreign airlines serving the United States are adequate to meet the threats ascribed to those operations.

Earlier this week, Secretary Skinner announced additional major security initiatives. They include:

- Requiring deployment of explosives detection systems such as the Thermal Neutron Analysis (TNA) device at the busiest airports in the U.S. and overseas where U.S. airlines operate. The U.S. will immediately initiate negotiations with foreign governments regarding installation of these systems at foreign airports.
- Assigning additional FAA security specialists to provide greater surveillance and assistance to U.S. carriers operating at the busiest airports in the U.S. and overseas.
- Improving the FAA security bulletin process through which important security information is disseminated to the aviation community, in a variety of ways, including:
 - making compliance by U.S. air carriers with such directives mandatory;
 - requiring acknowledged receipt within 24 hours;

- requiring carriers to submit to FAA within 72 hours specific information on how they plan to carry out preventative measures; and
 - ensuring that specific information in security bulletins is distributed to pilots-in-command of airline flights.
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- Elevating standards for x-ray and metal detection equipment to assure that U.S. air carriers are using state-of-the-art equipment.
 - Forming a National Aviation Security Advisory Committee to provide a forum for the exchange and coordination of security programs and research and development designed to further enhance aviation security.
 - Conducting a top to bottom review and evaluation by FAA of how well U.S. air carriers are complying with security requirements. This effort will look at each airline's resources and general philosophy toward security.
 - Discussing with foreign governments new procedures for more effective coordination of the international assessment and dissemination of security information and countermeasures.

On a related subject, Mr. Chairman, there has been substantial criticism over the \$75,000 cap placed on liability recoveries by the Warsaw Convention of 1929.

There is no question that the current \$75,000 international limit of liability for passenger deaths or injuries applicable in the United States is far too low. The Senate has before it the Montreal Protocols which propose revisions to the Warsaw Convention (which prescribes such liability limitation) so that, under a supplemental compensation plan, passengers would be entitled to unlimited recoveries for economic damages in international airline accidents.

Mr. Chairman, this Committee has jurisdiction over ratification of the Montreal Protocols. We urge that you move quickly toward ratification.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to emphasize the strength of our commitment to stop the threat of criminal actions directed against civil aviation. It is a difficult challenge, but one that we must meet. We thank this Subcommittee for its longstanding support of the FAA's aviation security efforts, and we look forward to continuing our work with you on these key issues which are so important to the traveling public.

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

CRIMINAL ACTS AGAINST CIVIL AVIATION
(1983-1988)

AIR CARRIER HIJACKINGS - WORLDWIDE

YEAR	U.S.	FOREIGN	TOTAL
1983	18	15	33
1984	5	21	26
1985	4	22	26
1986	4	9	13
1987	4	9	13
1988	2	13	15

EXPLOSIVES ABOARD AIRCRAFT - WORLDWIDE

YEAR	U.S.	FOREIGN	TOTAL
1983		2	2
1984		2	2
1985	1	3	4
1986	1	2	3
1987		1	1
1988	1	1	2

CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY SCREENING
(1973-1988)

- Over 10 billion persons screened.
- Over 11.6 billion pieces of carry-on items inspected.
- Over 42,800 firearms detected.
- Over 19,500 related arrests.
- 118 hijackings or related crimes may have been prevented by airline/airport security measures.

CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY SCREENING
(June-December 1988)

- Over 523 million persons screened.
- A total of 1,482 firearms detected.
 - 1,406 detected by X-ray.
 - 36 detected by use of metal detectors.
 - 40 detected by physical searches.
- Three explosive/incendiary devices detected by X-ray.
- 814 persons arrested at screening points for the unauthorized carriage of firearms or explosive/incendiary devices.

FOREIGN AIRPORT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

- Currently 250 airports meet the assessment requirements of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985.
- 335 assessments and U.S. carrier station inspection trips are scheduled this fiscal year.
- 773 foreign airport assessments have been conducted since 1985.
- Over 700 recommendations have been made to foreign governments to enhance/improve security in the following categories:

- Access	42%
- Local Airport Security Programs	27%
- Screening	17%
- Law Enforcement Support	5%
- Checked Baggage Control	5%
- Cargo	1%
- National Security Program	1%
- Miscellaneous	1%
- Assessments are measured, as a minimum, against the ICAO standards and appropriate recommended practices.
- To participate as a team member in a foreign airport assessment, FAA Security Specialists must successfully complete the FAA Security Inspections and Reports Course, or have a minimum of three years experience in domestic airport inspections. FAA Security Specialists also have a thorough knowledge of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices. Assessment team leaders ideally have participated in a minimum of four foreign airport assessments prior to serving as a team leader.

FISCAL YEAR 1990 BUDGET REQUEST

- The 120 additional FAA security personnel requested will increase the security workforce to 692. This is nearly three times the Fiscal Year 1985 level. Over 80% of FAA security staff is dedicated to international and domestic security inspections.
- Foreign Airport Assessments will continue and there will be expanded use of Federal Air Marshals on U.S. carriers operating in high risk areas. Over 500 Foreign Airport Assessments are scheduled for Fiscal Year 1990 (a 28% increase over Fiscal Year 1989).
- FAA has invested \$61 Million in security research since 1980. The \$9 Million requested for Fiscal Year 1990 will fund refinements to the Thermal Neutron Analysis technology and final test and evaluation of Vapor Detection Systems, as well as continuing investigations into new concepts and technology.