

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAMES B. BUSEY, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION AND THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CONCERNING THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON AVIATION SECURITY AND TERRORISM. JULY 26, 1990.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee today to discuss the status of our efforts to respond to the recommendations of the President's Commission on Aviation Security and Terrorism. With me today is Jeffrey Shane, DOT Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs.

At the outset I would like to reaffirm our appreciation of the work done by the Presidential Commission. The Commission took a hard look at virtually all facets of aviation security and developed a thoughtful and well-reasoned report for the President containing its findings and recommendations. The Commission's report represents a serious effort on its part to improve aviation security; for our part, we are treating the report with the seriousness it deserves and doing our best to evaluate fully all recommendations.

We have spent the last two months analyzing the report, meeting with other agencies involved in security and intelligence matters, and considering the feasibility of implementing each and every one of the Commission's recommendations. We are currently working

with White House and other department officials to offer our views on the recommendations contained in the report to the President. I am, however, pleased to report that at this early stage of our analysis, we already agreed to take actions consistent with approximately two-thirds of the Commission's report. In fact, we have already taken a variety of measures within the Department and FAA to improve security consistent with the Commission's recommendations. To my knowledge, this swift and supportive response by the Executive branch to a report by a Presidential Commission is unprecedented. So that there can be no doubt, we intend to breathe life into the vast majority of the Commission's recommendations.

In response to the Commission's recommendation that a position of assistant secretary for intelligence and security be established, Secretary Skinner recently established a new DOT Office of Intelligence and Security to oversee policy and strategic planning for security and intelligence initiatives within the Department. USCG Vice Admiral Clyde E. Robbins has been selected to head this office, and reports directly to the Secretary. Admiral Robbins will also serve as the Department's chief liaison with the intelligence community. The Secretary believes that the establishment of this new office fulfills the need identified in the Commission's report, although the establishment of this office does not preclude the future establishment of a different organization structure should circumstances warrant.

I have elevated the organizational status of the civil aviation security function within the FAA so that it is now headed by an Assistant Administrator for Civil Aviation Security who reports directly to me.

In order to bring about a more concentrated focus on security research and development initiatives and clearer accountability, we have established the position of Director for Security Research and Development within the FAA.

In May, we issued a proposed change to the Air Carrier Standard Security Program to improve the standards for metal detectors, and are currently evaluating comments on that proposal. Last month, we issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which calls for an enhancement in the performance standards required of x-ray equipment used in the preboard screening process, and we also amended the SSP to tighten up the reporting of threat information to the FAA by carriers and to ensure that threats were being appropriately dealt with by the carriers.

This month, we convened the Aviation Security Advisory Committee and requested views from the attendees on specific Commission recommendations including cargo and mail security procedures, bomb threat response procedures, airport design standards, and the most effective assignment of security functions among air carriers, airport operators, and federal security managers. We expect

formal recommendations from the Committee this September.

With regard to improving FAA technical assistance to foreign authorities, we have been working on an automated tracking system for foreign airport assessment results. That effort will be completed shortly, and will help us better focus our technical assistance efforts and provide for better coordination of efforts among other organizations with technical assistance responsibilities.

We have also met with the FBI to agree on a series of joint actions to enhance civil aviation security readiness:

- o FAA and FBI will host this October a seminar for the chief executive officers of the major international air carriers to discuss challenges to civil aviation security.
- o FAA and FBI will hold joint meetings in November for our field personnel assigned to major U.S. airports to discuss threat and vulnerability issues and how best to complement each other's responsibilities.
- o FAA and FBI are developing plans to send teams to major U.S. airports to conduct airport specific evaluations. Team's findings will be available for making changes in contingency plans and in improving crisis management guidelines.

Both Secretary Skinner and I have spent considerable time along with our senior staff putting in place needed short-term changes and in ensuring that the Commission's report has been objectively and fully reviewed. Our objective is to ensure that the President has the benefit of our best thinking on the report's recommendations so that the changes we make in response to the Commission's findings will, in fact, result in long-term benefits for the traveling public.

In the meantime, we would urge that the Committee hold any further legislative efforts in abeyance. The President's Commission recognized in its report that some of its recommendations were far-reaching and represented a dramatic shift in the government's traditional approach to civil aviation security. To that end, it realistically understood that six months to a year would probably be necessary to address the recommendations.

Many of the Commission's recommendations, of course, do not require legislation to implement. We would ask that, in cases in which DOT and FAA have existing authority to make changes on our own, legislation not be pursued in order to provide us needed flexibility needed to meet changing security threats. The oversight process will provide an adequate opportunity to assess both our performance and our implementation of these recommendations. For those recommendations which would require

legislation to implement, we would ask that legislation be stayed pending the completion of our ongoing efforts with other agencies and the White House for fuller policy development and coordination to develop a final Administration position.

As I said earlier, we view the Commission's report as a serious effort which demands a serious response on our part. And that is exactly what we have been doing. We are anxious to make those structural and procedural changes that will tangibly improve security--all of us share in that objective. We appreciate your continued interest in and support for a strong security system, and will be pleased to keep you apprised of our further efforts to implement key improvements in security.

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