

**STATEMENT OF  
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**BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,  
RESTRUCTURING AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
ON  
AIRLINE SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS**

**NOVEMBER 14, 2001**

My name is Duane Woerth, and I am the President of the Air Line Pilots Association, International. ALPA represents 67,000 airline pilots who fly for 47 U.S. and Canadian airlines. We sincerely thank you Chairman Durbin for inviting ALPA to present its views before this hearing.

Before proceeding into my formal remarks, I would like to express ALPA's most sincere sympathies to the families of the victims of American flight 587, that crashed on Monday in Belle Harbor, New York. ALPA stands ready to help in the aftermath of this tragedy in any way that we can be of assistance.

It is a difficult time to be an airline pilot – Monday's accident only adds to those difficulties. In addition to the stress that nearly every American is feeling over the attacks against this country and the ongoing war in Afghanistan, the past two months have resulted in a severe financial strain on our industry. That has affected not only our own pilot members, some of whom have been furloughed or lost their jobs, but every other airline employee, and the millions of people whose livelihoods are directly dependent upon a strong airline industry.

The airlines' third quarter was a financial disaster for U.S. major airlines – the nine largest carriers collectively reported \$2.43 billion in net losses in that period. One airline executive stated recently that “the industry in totality is burning through cash at an alarming rate, debt is rising, and revenue . . . remains far short of what's necessary to match high costs, many of which are fixed.” In short, unless the airlines are able to bring more passengers back to the airplanes at fares that meet or exceed costs, dire financial straits are inevitable, not only for the carriers but also for those many industries that rely on them as well. As you likely know, Canada 3000, one of our member airlines, last week declared its insolvency and has ceased operations due in large measure to the contraction of air travel.

It is clear that too many passengers are still afraid to fly, despite the aviation security advances made since September 11<sup>th</sup>. The traveling public needs to know what kind of improvements have been made, and are being made, in order to bolster their confidence to return to air travel – this hearing should help in that regard.

Let me say as emphatically as I can that ALPA and its safety-conscious, professional pilot members believe that it is safe to fly and prove it each and every day when they go to work. The traveling public should take note of that fact, but there is more that can be said to further reassure air travelers. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have created a very high level of security awareness by pilots, flight attendants, gate agents and all other airline employees. That awareness translates directly into a more secure operation, because it means that pilots and flight attendants are coordinating and communicating more than ever before to ensure that each flight is secure. We know of several instances where pilots have delayed flights in order to resolve a question or eliminate an area of concern.

Additionally, on September 11<sup>th</sup> the terrorists held a major advantage over their victims with the element of surprise. There will likely be no such advantage in any acts of air piracy in the foreseeable future. The level of security awareness among passengers, as it is among crews, is also very high, which further reduces the potential for another terrorist attack. It is hard to imagine a hijacking in today's environment that is not countered in the most aggressive possible fashion by everyone onboard. This means that the era of automatically assuming that a hijacker wants to live through an act of air piracy for the purposes of extortion has ended, and a more aggressive reaction will be used in all future hijackings.

### **DOT Security Recommendations**

There are concrete measures underway to make aviation more secure, too. I was honored to be named as a member of Transportation Secretary Mineta's Rapid Response Team on Aircraft Security, which was convened shortly after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. That group, and its counterpart on airport security, made a combined 33 recommendations on ways in which to improve our security system. Some of those recommendations are short-term measures and others will take longer.

One of the short-term actions that is nearly complete is "hardening" of cockpit doors. The airlines have worked very diligently over the past several weeks to strengthen the existing cockpit doors on our airliners. At least 11 operators of large aircraft report that their entire fleets have been fitted with gantry bars and other types of hardening devices. Operators of smaller jets and turboprop aircraft report that they are also making

significant progress toward beefing up the doors on their fleets. These enhancements make it more difficult for a terrorist to commandeer an aircraft today. But there is an ongoing effort to develop standards for retrofitting new, high technology cockpit doors to the existing fleet of aircraft that are capable of withstanding gun shots, sledgehammer blows and other types of forced-entry.

Another example of a near-term enhancement is the use of the Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System (CAPPS), which the FAA ordered to be used for all passengers as of September 28<sup>th</sup>. Many of the other recommendations I would define as “works in progress,” which will take longer to implement – I will discuss some of them in my further remarks.

### **One Level of Security**

I know that you are interested in learning of our perspective on the consistency with which airport security improvements are being implemented. I regretfully inform you that airline pilots are not yet seeing any evidence of our goal of One Level of Security. What we are seeing instead is a disturbing level of non-uniformity in security screening from airport to airport and even terminal to terminal within the same airport. Security practices to protect a B-747 freighter are still far less stringent than those for a passenger-carrying B-747, even though both aircraft could be used as terrorist-guided missiles.

Security screening practices are particularly inconsistent, and they are both exasperating and frustrating to passengers and airline pilots, who may be screened several different ways at several different airports in a single day. Screening companies, in well-intended but misguided zeal, have directed their screeners to confiscate small personal items, such as nail files and other little objects – we know of one screener who confiscated an electric razor! At some checkpoints, even after walking through a portal-type metal detector with no alarm sounding, individuals are asked to remove their shoes, their person is inspected with a hand-held metal detector, and then they are patted down.

The bottom line is that inconsistent, even illogical, screening practices are doing little for security and they are eroding the confidence that the traveling public has in the security system, which makes it all the more difficult for the industry to rebound. Fortunately, this problem is one that can be addressed, at least in part, quickly and effectively. The situation exists in substantial measure because the FAA, with few exceptions, allows the airlines to exceed the agency’s broadly written security regulations and related guidance as they see fit.

What is needed is a single, security-checkpoint screening standard for use by all screeners to help achieve One Level of Security. In fact, such a standard already exists, but it is not being used for that purpose. The airline organizations several years ago developed a standardized, screening-procedures document called the Checkpoint Operations Guide (COG), which is used by screeners to some extent, but is not a regulatory document. We have recently recommended to the FAA, and received a favorable first reaction to the concept of making the COG regulatory and training all screener personnel to strictly follow it. This simple action would begin to restore public confidence in the system and could be accomplished within a matter of a few days or weeks. It would also establish a uniform standard that could be used, and/or modified as necessary, by the screeners who are hired after the President signs the airline security bill now under consideration by Congress.

**There is another short-term measure that deserves immediate attention, namely, development of a new Common Strategy (CS). The current CS was developed by the FAA, FBI, ALPA and airlines in the 1970's as a result of the Cuban hijacking crisis. The CS has served the industry well for many years and brought numerous extortion-type hijackings to peaceful conclusions. However, the CS's methods were never intended for acts of air piracy by suicidal terrorists – from September 11th on, it is unlikely that any pilot is going to rely on those methods. In fact, in the absence of a new CS, pilots have been forced to develop their own hijacking strategies, none of which are common, known or approved by the FAA and FBI. We have strongly encouraged the FAA to assert leadership in this important arena and convene the meetings necessary to establish a new CS.**

**We urge the Senate to support our efforts in both this area and in that of adopting the COG as the security screening standard.**

### **Additional Security Measures**

Following is a list of some of the more important security issues and initiatives that we believe should be given urgent attention.

#### Universal Access System

ALPA has been promoting the need for positive, electronic verification of identity and electronic airport access control systems since 1987 – shortly after the downing of PSA flight 1771 by an armed, disgruntled, former airline employee. This mass murder, which bore similarities to the hijackings of September 11<sup>th</sup>, was attributable in large measure to

identity-verification inadequacies that have yet to be addressed 14 years later.

In the late 1980's, airports installed computerized access control systems that included airport employees and tenants' airport-based employees. Left out of the group of trusted individuals whose identity needs to be electronically verified were all transient airline employees and transient, armed law enforcement officers. Every employee who enters airport secured areas should be identified electronically so that there is confidence that only those personnel who have authorization are able to gain access. Without secure identity verification, a terrorist can purchase or steal a pilot uniform and, using fraudulent credentials, gain access to the aircraft and cockpit under false pretenses. This identification deficiency also enables terrorists to purchase or steal a law enforcement officer uniform and be processed through the security-screening checkpoint while armed. Undercover GAO inspectors revealed this security deficiency publicly in an April 2000 U.S. House of Representatives' hearing.

In the mid-1990's the FAA, with ALPA's urging and congressional funding, performed a test of what came to be known as the Universal Access System (UAS). Two million taxpayer dollars were spent on those tests involving two major airlines and four large airports. For all practical purposes, those funds were wasted. Although the FAA completed successful tests of the UAS and standards were finalized for the system in 1998, there has been no implementation by any airline of the system, per stated congressional intent. This failure comes as a result of an FAA policy to leave UAS implementation to the sole discretion of the carriers.

Although magnetic stripe technology was used as the basis for UAS tests, there are now several advanced, mature technologies that could be used to positively identify authorized personnel. The FAA is expected to complete its recent tests of a Memory Chip Card (MCC) system for identifying armed law enforcement officers in the near future. This technology is much more secure than magnetic stripe and has the additional capability of storing an extensive amount of data that can be used for both security and other types of uses.

The FAA has stated that these same readers could also be used by airlines for issuance of MCC cards to their employees. ALPA is recommending that the airlines use the MCC, or an equally-secure technology, as the basis for UAS and several other important functions, including the following:

1. *Positive verification of identity at the screening checkpoint to enable transient employees to be processed more quickly.* Passengers are enduring long lines at the

security screening checkpoint. These lines are made longer by the screening of pilots, flight attendants and other individuals in positions of trust, who are often screened several times a day. The lack of equipment for positively identifying these individuals means that they must go through the security-screening checkpoint, which wastes limited screening resources and further inconveniences the traveling public.

1. *Identity verification for jumpseat riders.* Use of the jumpseat by commuting pilots is an absolute necessity in today's airline environment. Unfortunately, that privilege has been severely curtailed since shortly after the terrorist attacks because there is no way to positively verify the jumpseat requester's identity and employment status.
1. *A platform for digital pilot licenses and medical information.* We envision that the same card, or type of card, could be used by the FAA for containing a pilot's license and medical information. ALPA is working with FAA Flight Standards on this concept. The MCC card has more than sufficient memory for this purpose and others that the airlines may develop.

One important aspect of UAS is the need to select a single technology for use by all transient airline employees, hence the name "universal." Use of multiple technologies for the same purposes will equate to unnecessary duplication of effort, equipment, and expense.

We urge the Senate to give its full support to the expedited installation of MCC card readers at all U.S. airports' security screening checkpoints, per the FAA's stated intentions, and the use of this or an equivalent technology for the creation of a high-tech, highly secure UAS.

Related to the subject of UAS is the positive identification, and smarter screening, of trustworthy passengers. One of the weaknesses of our current security checkpoint systems is that persons in positions of trust (e.g., pilots, airport directors, airline managers) and passengers who can be identified as being trustworthy (e.g, Senators), are given the same level of security scrutiny as those about whom little or nothing is known. Security screening will likely be a slow process for the foreseeable future, at least until such time as new higher-speed technologies are brought to bear. As such, it is imperative that we develop a means of identifying persons who can be trusted and process them more rapidly through screening checkpoints. Doing so will provide the added benefit of spending finite security resources on those unknown individuals who could pose a risk to flight security.

To that end, the airline and airport organizations are now calling for trustworthy passengers to be issued a “smart” card for identification at the screening checkpoint. Conceptually, such individuals would be processed more quickly than those without such a card at a special lane created for this purpose. ALPA supports this recommendation, provided that the passengers voluntarily submit to a thorough background check in order to receive this card; the background check should be updated at least annually in order to retain it.

### Protect Against Terrorist Attacks at the Airport

Seemingly lost in the necessary rush to protect aircraft against future acts of air piracy is the threat posed by terrorists to airport terminal occupants. Two deadly attacks were launched against the Rome and Vienna airports in the past and we must expect that Osama bin Laden’s forces could use such terrorism against U.S. airports as well. Our airports are vulnerable to an attack by terrorists who could shoot at, or use bombs or other weapons against, crowds in close proximity to ticket counters and check-in facilities. At some airports, lines of passengers waiting at these counters and security checkpoints even extend outside! For that reason, airports must institute much stronger vehicle control measures at airports.

Included in such measures should be: continuous monitoring of passenger loading and unloading areas on the landside of airport terminals by trained, armed, law enforcement personnel using binoculars, wireless communication devices, bomb detection equipment, K-9’s and so forth; a means of quickly routing suspect vehicles away from airport terminal areas; a constant presence of armed law enforcement officers in terminals and conducting random perimeter inspections; and other such measures.

Accordingly, ALPA recommends that the National Guard personnel assigned to secure the *inside* of airport terminals be reassigned to the *outside* for the duties listed above until such time as airports are capable of staffing these duties on their own. National Guard personnel are not trained to perform security screening and are of little assistance when posted at checkpoints, per their current use. These military personnel could perform an invaluable service, however, if used outside to (1) monitor the arrivals of vehicular traffic at airport terminals and (2) wield lethal force against terrorists who might attack passengers occupying these facilities. Armed guards with K-9’s outside airports are common sights in European airports – they need to be common sights here as well.

Perimeter security at many airports in the United States offers the potential terrorist an opportunity to easily access commercial aviation. Hundreds of miles of unguarded fencing, uncontrolled access points, and inadequate security fencing exist at numerous

major U.S. airports. One airport that has approached this problem in a very effective manner is Narita International Airport in Tokyo, Japan. That airport has built security watchtowers, implemented motion/sound sensors, developed interior/exterior perimeter barriers and “no-man’s land” at some junctions. Additionally, the fence is approximately 12 feet high with pressure points at the top that snap off at a weight of approximately 50 pounds, so as to defeat anyone from scaling the fencing. In addition, irregular foot and vehicle patrols with night-vision capabilities traverse the areas. This kind of dedicated approach to perimeter security is needed in the U.S. and the equipment is available from numerous vendors to implement it.

### New Explosive Detection System Research

The FAA is to be applauded for its cooperative efforts with the airlines and equipment manufacturers to create new security screening devices, such as the computed tomography (CT) explosive detection systems and trace equipment now used at U.S. airports. These devices are quite capable of finding bombs and contribute greatly to airline security.

The weakness of both technologies is that they are slow and the CT equipment is large and expensive. ALPA’s goal is to achieve 100% screening of both checked and carry-on items in order to thwart the carriage of bombs, weapons, hazardous materials, radioactive materials, and chemical/biological agents. This will be no easy task, but it is one that the research and development community needs to expedite and one for which the government should provide appropriate resources. Our discussions with FAA security R&D personnel convince us that they share our views and concerns about the need for expedited research on the next generation of faster, smaller and more effective bag screening equipment.

FAA and industry were developing “Secure Flow,” a blueprint for addressing all of the various threat “vectors” that pose a risk to the airport environs and aircraft, even before

September 11th. One fundamental characteristic of Secure Flow is the expedited movement of passengers and carry-on items through the security-screening checkpoint.

ALPA strongly supports ongoing research aimed at seamlessly and unobtrusively detecting bombs and weapons of all types that may be carried on one’s body. FAA has performed research with the scientific community on various types of technologies that are capable of detecting threat objects without physically touching the individual. The challenge for this particular effort will be to obtain an acceptable level of equipment reliability, effectiveness, size and cost.

### **Create a Photo Manifest of All Passengers and Their Checked Bags**



Similar to the problem of employee identity verification, the airlines are not currently capable of positively determining who has boarded their aircraft. This is demonstrated when aircraft leave the gate with an inaccurate manifest; we know of one airline that routinely allows flights to leave the gate with up to a two-person error. As another example, after one accident last year, an airline CEO made a public request for assistance in identifying the passengers on his own aircraft! The security ramifications are also substantial – unless we know that the person boarding the aircraft is the same one who bought the ticket, we cannot positively determine that the individual has been through the security checkpoint.

Currently available technology can be applied to this problem in order to create an inexpensive photo manifest of boarding passengers and their checked bags. The photo manifest will enable airlines to, among other things, (1) positively identify, via digital photograph, each person boarding the aircraft (2) reduce the potential of boarding someone who has not been through screening (3) create a strong deterrence against fraudulent ticketing (4) quickly identify a bag(s) that must be removed in the event that its owner does not board the flight, and (5) create an accurate passenger manifest that can be used in the event of an accident or other tragedy. ALPA has been influential in the development of such technology and we urge its deployment.

#### Perform Criminal Background Checks on Aviation Industry Job Applicants

All personnel seeking employment in the aviation industry who need access to airline aircraft or secure airport areas in the performance of their duties should, effective immediately, be required to undergo a complete criminal background check.

Technological development permits criminal background checks to be completed expeditiously through electronic fingerprinting. As a national security issue, the airline industry must create and maintain the highest personnel hiring standards in order to protect against “insider” threats.

#### Train All Aviation Employees on Security Awareness

The government, working in concert with industry should implement the recommendations of the FAA’s Aviation Security Advisory Committee’s Employee Utilization Working Group. The essence of those recommendations is that all airport, airline, and service employees can, and should, receive an appropriate level of training and ongoing information about how to make aviation more secure.

One noteworthy recommendation of that working group which has yet to be acted upon is

the creation of a security reporting “hotline” at all airports for tips, suspicious behavior, abandoned bags, and other information of use to the local authorities. This is one low technology, low-cost answer to the question of how to make security everyone’s business, as ALPA has recommended.

### Prepare for Chemical/Biological Attacks

We must also prepare for the possibility of a chemical/biological agent attack in our airports. Current technology exists that would permit airports to perform air quality sampling and monitoring in all areas of the terminals, baggage facilities, and passenger/visitors areas. Such monitors could immediately provide an alert to evacuate the area and notify appropriate emergency authorities.

### Use the U.S. Customs Service

ALPA recommends greater utilization of the U.S. Customs Service to enhance airport security. The Customs Service has many responsibilities that parallel the needs for security at airports, including contraband, fugitives and illegal activities of U.S. citizens. As a law enforcement agency, Customs has the authority and tools not readily available to the FAA. The Customs Service has thousands of agents currently assigned at U.S. international airports. Customs has the statutory authority to search persons and cargo and to stop contraband from coming into or leaving the United States. These resources could be more widely used to increase the security at many airports.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to appear today. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.