

Aviation Security, Five Years After the 9/11 Attacks

9/11+5

To take aviation security to the next level, the government needs to deploy a proactive, human-centered, and threat-driven security system which harnesses the expertise and experience of all parties—regulators, airlines, airports, and labor.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks revealed an underlying weakness in the government's approach to protecting aviation from criminal acts, namely, a reactive, regulatory-compliance-driven approach to security. In spite of this failing, which still exists, our view is that aviation security is markedly better than it was prior to 9/11, in no small measure because of improvements that the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA) has successfully promoted. To take aviation security to the next level, the government needs to deploy a proactive, human-centered, and threat-driven security system which harnesses the expertise and experience of all parties—regulators, airlines, airports, and labor. As part of this endeavor, there must be a shift away from unsophisticated screening for threat items toward a determination of the presence of hostile intent. Trusted airline employees should be positively identified and used as the "eyes and ears" of security, rather than being treated as potential threats to aviation. A new paradigm for cooperation, coordination and communication among all affected parties will enhance our ability to detect and counter all terrorist threats. ALPA has a history of building strategic alliances between stakeholders to achieve our common goals, and we enthusiastically rise to this challenge yet again.

The following two sections describe the most important accomplishments of the past five years and the most needed, specific improvements.

Most Significant Accomplishments Since 9/11

- *Common Strategy—Passenger and All-Cargo Domains*

ALPA played a significant role in the pre-9/11 development and implementation of the *Common Strategy*, a standardized crisis response plan, shared by the aviation industry and critical government agencies, for dealing with defined criminal and terrorist acts perpetrated on board U.S. and Canadian aircraft. Because the events of 9/11 clearly demonstrated that the plan needed revision, ALPA was asked by the FAA Administrator to lead a coalition of industry stakeholders to develop a new *Common Strategy*. Subsequently, ALPA and other critical industry stakeholders provided their expertise to the FAA, TSA, and Transport Canada in their efforts to reform this critical program. This undertaking was successful, not only with the creation of a new *Passenger Common Strategy*, which is more reflective of today's world climate, but also with the issuance of an *All-Cargo Common Strategy*, marking the first time that this standardized security plan has included crewmembers who fly all-cargo aircraft.

In Canada, ALPA worked closely with Transport Canada in the development of a program and guidelines that closely paralleled the *Common Strategy* in the U.S.

The revised *Common Strategy* is the foundation of many security enhancements that have been developed in the past five years.

- *Federal Air Marshal and Aircraft Protective Officer Programs*

On September 11, 2001, U.S. passenger airliners were thinly protected by a small cadre of 33 federal air marshals who were managed by the Federal

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Aviation Administration and flew primarily international routes. Today, a significantly bolstered Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) is managed by the Transportation Security Administration and protects U.S. carriers domestically and internationally. The FAMS is deeply embedded in the U.S. aviation domain, working closely with ALPA, government agencies, and critical industry stakeholders to accomplish its mission. Some of the many responsibilities it has undertaken include management of the Federal Flight Deck Officer and Crewmember Self-Defense Training programs.

After 9/11, ALPA was successful in convincing the Canadian Transport Minister that Canada needed an air marshal program. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) instituted the Canadian Air Carrier Protective Program (CACPP) that puts armed RCMP members, designated Aircraft Protective Officers (APOs), on selected flights into and out of Canada. These officers operate under training regimes and rules of engagement very similar to the FAMS. ALPA has developed a close working relationship with the RCMP and is working to improve communication and coordination procedures between the flight deck and APOs on board.

- *Federal Flight Deck Officer Program*

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, ALPA was instrumental in calling for the creation of the Federal Flight Deck Officer program. With the President's signing of the Homeland Security Act in November 2002, this vision became a reality. In April 2003, the first class of 44 pilots was deputized as federal law enforcement officers charged with the responsibility of defending the flight decks of passenger airliners. One year later, federal legislation made pilots who fly all-cargo aircraft eligible to participate in the program. Today, thousands of dedicated, volunteer pilots serve as Federal Flight Deck Officers, protecting the flight decks of both passenger and all-cargo airliners, with their numbers increasing weekly.

- *Reinforced Flight Deck Doors*

Today, nearly all passenger airliners in the U.S. and Canada, and foreign passenger aircraft entering North American airspace, are required by federal regulation to be equipped with hardened flight deck doors. Their installation and the implementation of accompanying regulations dictating their usage greatly enhanced the effort to secure the operation of passenger aircraft. ALPA played a critical role in assisting the Federal Aviation Administration's and Transport Canada's efforts to develop design criteria and standards for these barriers.

- *Cargo Security*

Enhancing cargo security presents a formidable task because of the complexities of the air cargo supply chain, the demands associated with the flow of commerce, and economic constraints. Responding to a federal mandate, the Transportation Security Administration took on this challenge by harnessing the expertise of critical industry stakeholders, including ALPA.

Based on a significant amount of work started in 2003, the Air Cargo Security Regulations final rule was published in the *Federal Register* on May 26, 2006. It calls for sweeping changes in security measures applied both in passenger and all-cargo domains. The final rule notwithstanding, efforts to improve cargo security continue as TSA, in partnership with industry, works on the development of the Air Cargo Risk-Based Targeting System (ACRBAT), an initiative intended to reach throughout the entire cargo supply chain to identify and properly handle cargo shipments considered to be of elevated risk.

ALPA continues to work diligently with Transport Canada to develop appropriate air cargo security legislation. ALPA sits on the Canadian Air Cargo

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Security Technical Committee that has been tasked to help draft legislation that is expected to greatly enhance the Known Shipper system in Canada.

- *Restricted Area Identity Card (RAIC)*

The Canadian Restricted Area Identity Card, or RAIC, was created in close cooperation with ALPA and is a major breakthrough in employee identity verification. Canada, with ALPA's assistance, is now the first country in the world to take the vital step toward implementing a system with robust background checks whereby all aviation workers will be positively identified using biometric technology. RAIC represents a fundamental shift in thinking, a shift that ALPA has long promoted and lobbied for, that focuses on ensuring that individuals with access to aircraft are trustworthy, have been properly vetted, and are verified. RAIC grants a level of trust that ensures that the cardholders are able to fulfill their duties in a fashion as free from hindrance as possible. As a result of ALPA's continued pressure, Transport Canada has advised airports that RAIC is to be fully implemented by December 31, 2006.

- *Government-Industry Partnership*

The aviation domain is complex, incorporating a variety of industry, government, and labor organizations often motivated by varying and sometimes conflicting interests. However, a common goal is shared by all in protecting the integrity of the aviation system. The value of joint security efforts is clearly evident when it is acknowledged that commercial aviation is a critical component of our nations' infrastructure and security.

Recognized successes in enhancing the layered approach to aviation security have been achieved through the coordinated efforts of industry stakeholders and government entities. Without this shared spirit of cooperation and governments' willingness to follow recommended practices when possible, the list of accomplishments would be significantly shortened. This partnership should be recognized as one of the many successes since 9/11 and must continue to be nurtured. ALPA appreciates its industry partners for this spirit of cooperation in our joint efforts to secure the skies and our livelihoods.

Most Needed Security Improvements

- *Individual Risk Assessment*

Because of terrorists' ingenuity, it is impossible to accurately predict the form that a future attack on an airliner or airport facility may take. Accordingly, government's heavy emphasis on the detection of dangerous objects and the lesser attention given to the detection of those with destructive intent leaves aviation vulnerable to future attacks carried out in an unexpected fashion. Suicidal hijackers, bombers, or other types of attackers usually exhibit behavioral patterns that can lead to their detection prior to arriving at an airport or boarding an airplane, even when their "tools" are not detected. The government must continue to use leading edge technologies and methodologies for screening and facility protection, with the primary purpose to detect harmful intent of individuals and a secondary emphasis on locating threat objects.

It is obvious that the vast majority of passengers and aviation employees pose no risk to airline security, yet today's screening does not recognize that fact. To remedy this problem, ALPA encourages the expansion of non-intrusive *individual risk assessment* programs across the U.S. and Canada, building upon those programs that are currently in use at a few locations in the U.S.

ALPA commends the Transportation Security Administration for the steps it has taken to improve the security of the air cargo supply chain and urges completion of ACRBT. ALPA is also encouraging Transport Canada to adopt similar measures to improve air cargo security in Canada.

- *Identity Verification and Access Controls*

A fundamental principle of effective aviation security is to verify the identity and employment status of those individuals who are granted access to airport secured areas and airliners. A U.S. Government Accountability Office-sponsored investigation in 2000 revealed that government representatives posing as law enforcement officers and using falsified credentials that were purchased from the Internet gained access to 19 federal office buildings and two major airports. In spite of this known deficiency, the U.S. government still has no method of ensuring that armed individuals boarding commercial aircraft are positively identified.

A related shortcoming is that the identity and employment status of airline crewmembers are not verified, which leads to both security gaps and a waste of limited security resources that must be spent screening pilots, whose trustworthiness has been proven beyond reasonable doubt. The TSA has developed the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) to remedy these problems, but the agency has not yet publicly stated that aviation security will be enhanced with that technology. The TSA should follow Canada's lead and expedite implementation of the RAIC-equivalent TWIC program into commercial aviation or, in the interim, mandate an alternative biometric-based identity management system.

- *Cargo Security*

The recent release of the Air Cargo Security Regulations final rule has led to significant improvements in the system that protects the air cargo supply chain. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done. The development of an efficient and effective ACRBT is critical to effective cargo security. Improvements in methodologies used to vet certain workers employed in the air cargo supply chain are still needed. The security of air cargo personnel, equipment, and operations at airports where no passenger operations are conducted also needs improvement. ALPA commends the Transportation Security Administration for the steps it has taken to improve the security of the air cargo supply chain and urges completion of ACRBT. ALPA is also encouraging Transport Canada to adopt similar measures to improve air cargo security in Canada.

- *Secondary Barriers*

The installation of reinforced flight deck doors on passenger aircraft and the implementation of enhanced security procedures for flight deck and cabin crew members have greatly enhanced the security of the flight deck. However, any time the reinforced flight deck door is opened while airborne, the flight deck is put at risk of intrusion and attack. In order to mitigate this risk, ALPA recommends the development and deployment of secondary barriers, as both retrofit devices and as standard equipment in future aircraft designs.

- *Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) Program Improvements*

The Federal Flight Deck Officer program has been a tremendous success in providing a reliable layer of security for aviation. This program comes at no cost to air carriers and provides excellent value to the government, since pilots volunteer their time to participate. Nevertheless, while it has undergone a number of positive changes since its inception, significant shortfalls remain.

For example, pilot volunteers are required to pay costs (which can be significant) associated with their training. Three years into the program, some air carriers still do not readily facilitate pilot scheduling for basic training, forcing applicants to use their personal leave so they might serve the traveling public, their carriers, and the nation. Protocols for the transportation and carriage of duty weapons are in need of refinement, and FFDOs do not receive the same protections as other law enforcement officers if they become the subject of an internal investigation.

Significant work remains to be done in securing the nation's airports and the people and aircraft they serve. Improved procedures and technology must be developed and implemented for multi-pronged, seamless processing of passengers at security checkpoints.

ALPA encourages the government to more closely scrutinize these issues and afford FFDs needed relief.

- *Airport Security Enhancements*

Since the events of 9/11, many positive changes have been made to the security of airport facilities. In May 2006, the Transportation Security Administration published a report entitled *Recommended Security Guidelines for Airport Planning, Design, and Construction* to provide a model for future airport facilities.

Significant work remains to be done in securing the nation's airports and the people and aircraft that they serve. Improved procedures and technology must be developed and implemented for multi-pronged, seamless processing of passengers at security checkpoints. Perimeter security of air operations areas and terminal buildings must improve. For airports serving only air freight operations, security regulations must be implemented that, at a minimum, equal the standards that are mandated for airports providing commercial passenger operations. People and operations entering through airport "back doors" also require closer scrutiny.

- *Risk-Based Funding Priorities*

Critical decisions regarding the allocation of funds and use of assets dedicated to the security of the aviation sector must be based on a threat-driven, risk-managed philosophy. Existing programs and new initiatives must be evaluated from this perspective. Since the events of 9/11, this guiding principle has been obscured at times, with the advent of programs that seem to add little or nothing of value to security efforts while having a negative impact on the efficiency of the aviation industry.

ALPA encourages the government's finalization and usage of the *Risk Management Analysis Process* (RMAP) that is being developed by the Aviation Security Impact Assessment (ASIA) Working Group. The process is intended to provide "strategic risk analysis of the entire aviation system to identify key threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences; and the effectiveness and efficiency of potential future countermeasure suites as measured by reduction in total risk and the impacts on the commercial aviation system."

Government and industry need this tool to help assess the costs and benefits of any proposed countermeasure, allowing them to allocate limited resources in the most effective way possible.

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