

AVIATION SECURITY: PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS IN PASSENGER BAG- GAGE SCREENING

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TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
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AVIATION SECURITY: PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS IN PASSENGER BAGGAGE SCREENING

Thursday, February 12, 2004

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:09 a.m. in room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. John L. Mica [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. MICA. Good morning.

I would like to call this hearing of the House Aviation Subcommittee to order.

Today, we have two panels of witnesses on the subject of "Aviation Security: The Progress and Problems in Passenger Baggage Screening." The order of business will be opening statements by members and then we will introduce our panelists and hopefully move the hearing along. We appreciate your joining us. I will start with my opening statement.

It has been more than two years since Congress passed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. That Act established the Transportation Security Administration and set some very tight deadlines in which to set up new passenger and bagging screening systems. Secretary Mineta, Secretary Ridge, Deputy Secretary Jackson, Admiral Loy and everyone at TSA, the Department of Transportation and Homeland Security who helped meet those deadlines should be commended for their work and hard efforts to meet the mandates imposed by Congress.

Unfortunately, in the rush to meet its congressionally mandated deadlines, I am afraid TSA created a monolithic bureaucracy that unfortunately has shown an inability to adapt and keep pace with the ever changing demands of our aviation industry. The airline industry fortunately is finally on the rebound and many fear now because of the structure and problems we have had with TSA that the Transportation Security Administration as currently structured and manned is not capable of handling the projected growth that we are now seeing in returned commercial passenger traffic.

In some areas and airports we have had reports that checkpoint lines are growing. Screener attrition rates and vacancies for those positions are climbing. At numerous airports, TSA screening positions remain unfilled. Training and background checks are, in some instances, missing and key airport hubs are left in limbo.

For example, TSA has only 2,250 of the 2,405 screeners authorized for Los Angeles International Airport on its payroll. Hundreds of TSA screeners are unable to report to duty due to military leave,

sick leave, maternity leave or injured on duty status. I visited Los Angeles Airport during our past recess and I was told that on any given day, LAX has had a screener shortage of 20 to 25 percent. You may recall LAX was one of those airports at which we had some threats during the holiday. So it is a concern when you have that number of screeners and professionals missing.

In addition to its 45,000 screeners, TSA has deployed a small army of management and support personnel. That doesn't mention the dozens of contractors and subcontractors that make up their new bureaucracy. The huge TSA bureaucracy has created layers of costly administrators that unfortunately may make it impossible in its current form to ever make TSA effective or manageable.

Airports and even the TSA-employed Federal Security directors are clamoring for more local control. After two years, it is clearly time for TSA to review its operations and prepare for the coming transition which is set out in law. In November of this year, I might remind committee members, under our TSA law, airports will have the ability to opt out. They will still be under TSA direction, still wear the TSA uniform and have TSA training and oversight, but airports can opt out in November. It is very vital that TSA have in place prior to November, we don't want to get to November and try to figure out what we are going to do in this transition. It is absolutely vital that TSA have protocols and procedures and arrangements to ensure a smooth transition.

Another thing that is a great concern to me and members of this committee is the lack of progress on next generation screening and explosive detection technology. That delay puts us further behind in addressing security threats and reducing our army of screening personnel. I was particularly disturbed to learn that some \$60 million of \$75 million appropriated in fiscal year 2003 on explosive detection equipment was diverted to pay TSA salaries.

It should be of concern to this committee that we are not one iota closer to routinely screening passengers and their carry-on baggage for explosives. I view that as one of our most serious risks and potential threats. Additionally, we continue to have problems completing the integrated checked baggage system. To date, we have only eight fully installed systems in the entire bank of 429 airports and not all 429 airports are going to receive integrated checked baggage system, the in-line checked baggage systems but we are far from even deploying those units to our 30 major hub airports, major passenger activity airports that carry some 70 percent of the traveling public.

To be fair, Congress has not provided sufficient funding. This committee in FAA reauthorization did try to be more specific in making certain that we meet our obligations but unfortunately we have not stepped up to the plate and that has caused TSA problems. However, in some instances, TSA has still yet to settle plans for developing those systems at our airports at this late date. I am very disappointed in the lack of leadership in this area. The limited investment analysis conducted so far, clearly shows that capital investment related to in-line EDS systems significantly reduces operating costs and pays for itself in just a few years. The results this subcommittee has seen in testing of the system both by TSA, by the Inspector General of Homeland Security and also by GAO indi-

cates we are getting the greatest protection of the flying public by having those systems and the best results in detection of dangerous items.

Unfortunately also, I have to report to the subcommittee this morning, and I will be reading about it in the paper tomorrow, GAO has also come up with a preliminary report on CAPPs II. I am told there are still problems with some seven of the eight measures, that the CAPPs Program is behind schedule. We were told by our witnesses at the table a year ago of a different timeline and it looks like CAPPs II which is so vital to detecting bad people and to stop harassing millions of innocent travelers is behind schedule and deficient to date. Of course this is a preliminary report but I am disturbed about the lack of progress in such an important area for aviation security.

The Federal Government spent well over \$12 billion on aviation security since TSA's inception, yet we continue to hear about failures of the screening system. Our Nation's aviation security must become smarter and we must make better use of our limited resources. Unfortunately, we have no other options.

With those comments, I am pleased to yield to the Ranking Member, Mr. DeFazio.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I share a number of the concerns you expressed. Of particular concern to me is the diversion of the funds for the next generation of passenger screening technology. We are using really spiffy, 1960s, early 1970s technology at most of our checkpoints. The screeners are doing the best they can but they are not being given the tools they need, particularly to detect what I see as new threats which go not to checked explosives, but explosives carried on a person or in carry-on baggage. I think it is an extraordinary disservice to the flying public that money was diverted and we aren't pushing ahead. I have had numerous presentations and demonstrations of off-the-shelf technology which seems far, far superior to the 1960s, 1970s x-ray stuff we are using today. Yet somehow between the TSA and FAA, we are not able to either test, certify or deploy that equipment.

The other issue the Chairman raises about personnel, I would note that our esteemed colleagues on the Appropriations Committee picked a number out of thin air and capped the TSA at the number of employees which was not warranted or justified by the needs of the agency or the need to fully protect the traveling public, driven only by budget imperatives of the Administration and the whims of the appropriators.

That is not wise but beyond that it seems there are still significant management problems at TSA in terms of recruiting, training and having ready positions for people to back fill when there is attrition. I would note the attrition is a tiny fraction of what it used to be when we had the private loophole ridden system out there. We are alarmed here at say 16 percent, but many airports were well over 100 percent in the bad old days. I expect we will be holding hearings later this year about both the potential up side and down side of going back to private screening companies and what processes might be followed to get to that point in time.

Also I am particularly concerned that the GAO report points out, as we had a GAO report two years ago, that we had a number of EDS machines in airports that were not at that time being fully utilized because the airlines could save money by not utilizing them and having enough personnel to utilize them. They weren't in-line systems, so they were a bit inconvenient but still today, we are underutilizing this technology because of either misallocation of personnel, resources or actual lack of personnel. I am hopeful that the witnesses can address that concern.

Bottom line, I think we have a work force that is much more professional, much more consistent than what we had previously but we have enduring management problems and allocation problems, perhaps some funding problems and I hope all the witnesses will be honest today. As one who worked with the Chairman and others to create this agency, I want to see it succeed because if doesn't succeed, people will die. That is not an acceptable alternative.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

Other opening statements? Mr. Porter?

Mr. PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this important hearing today which I think is vital to this country and to my constituents in the State of Nevada. I also want to especially thank you for inviting Randy Walker is Director of Aviation at McCarran International Airport which, by the way, is one of the busiest airports in the country and allowing him to testify with his firsthand experiences in Las Vegas with TSA. Randy holds perhaps the most vital job in southern Nevada. I will fight, as I have told him and many members of our delegation would agree, we will fight for whatever his recommendations are to this committee.

Mr. Chairman, every year more than 23 million people arrive in Las Vegas, Nevada by air. The entire economy of my district and the State I represent is driven by keeping our air links with the rest of the country open. After New York and Washington, no city was more affected than Las Vegas after 9/11. We cannot afford another 9/11 or even the perception that another is possible. Keeping the flying public safe and keeping the public confident of our ability to keep them safe is essential.

At McCarran International Airport we have an able Federal Security Director, Mr. Jim Blair, who has had many years of experience in security and in the Las Vegas community who commands more than 800 screeners. I am confident in their commitment, the screeners and Mr. Blair and their ability to keep us safe and I am committed to keeping our flying public safe as we are proud to work with the Nevada delegation, Jim and Randy, to fight the prior proposed cuts in screeners at McCarran and to get Federal funding for the in-line baggage screening.

The flying public is safe but my constituents are not safe if TSA cannot also accommodate the flying public in a manner that encourages people to travel. Recently, and I am sure Randy will testify to this later on this morning in more detail, a major trade show, the Consumer Electronics Show, one of our largest conventions, had to advise its members to leave early to avoid security delays. Lines stretched the length of the airport and literally hun-

dreds of people missed their flights, hundreds missed their flights. Many participants in this event said they would not fly to Las Vegas again. Other large events have had similar failures and imagine if only five percent of our visiting public chose not to come back to Las Vegas or were afraid to fly to Las Vegas, that could be close to a \$500 million hit on our economy, our bread and butter.

Every day for the TSA, the screening shift system should look better, tougher, more secure and safer than the day before. The customer must have a consistent experience. I know many members of this House and the other House and staff travel a lot. We experience the different airports. There is a serious inconsistency. As a flier myself, I have determined I don't know what to expect until I get to the security gate. I have no idea what to expect because every airport is different. I know as members we have heard from constituents that have had individual problems.

Even at McCarran, we have to hire people to watch the security people to make sure our customers can get through the gates. The TSA experience is really the chamber of commerce, the better business bureau, the welcome wagon to every community in the country not just in Las Vegas. That is why it is so important that the flying public has consistency and can feel safe.

My colleague, Ms. Berkley, who is here today and I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to look into these matters. I have joined with my colleague today in contacting Admiral Stone to resolve these issues. Again, I will fight for whatever combination of extra screeners we need, new technology, new procedures, better training and passenger education is needed. I hope the Federal TSA absorbs the lessons of this hearing today.

I appreciate all of you being here. Thank you.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

Now we will get a double hit from Nevada. Ms. Berkley?

Ms. BERKLEY. I would say Nevada is ably represented today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. DeFazio, for holding this hearing. The number of people attending this hearing on a day that Congress is not in session is testament to how important this issue is to the American flying public.

Few communities, as Mr. Porter stated, are more dependent on their local airport than Las Vegas. With nearly half of southern Nevada's 35 million annual visitors arriving through McCarran, the airport is the life line of the community and the cornerstone of our local economy. Hotels, businesses, jobs all rely on an efficient passenger friendly airport system.

Since the beginning of the new year, wait times at McCarran Airport security checkpoints have grown increasingly longer. Checkpoint lanes that had been consistently processing approximately 3.5 passengers per minute have slipped in recent weeks to an average of 2.8 passengers per minute. Visitors who come to Las Vegas to vacation or to attend conventions stay for about two or three days. If they are forced to wait in lines at the airport lasting two hours or more which for some is longer than their actual time in the air, they are going to think twice about returning to Las Vegas for our wholesome family entertainment.

To help illustrate this point, I would like to share with you the situation at McCarran Airport during the Consumer Electronics Show last month and my colleague, Mr. Porter, has already alluded to it. Approximately 130,000 people attended the Consumer Electronics Show and passed through McCarran. Many passengers reported waiting in lines for up to five hours. This was a flyer that was put out during the CES show and for those of you who can't read it, it says, "We hope you had a great 2004 International CES. If you are leaving by plane, please be aware that the Las Vegas Airport authorities are advising us that security lines are up to three or four hours long. Please plan ahead accordingly and have a safe trip. We apologize for the inconvenience."

On that Sunday approximately 110,000 people passed through McCarran, many passengers reported waiting in lines at least up to four hours. Convention organizers passed out this flier encouraging them to plan accordingly. After the event, I talked with the president of CES, Gary Shapiro. He told me that people who were stuck in these lines were frustrated. Obviously he didn't need to tell me that. Many said they were not going to attend next year's convention.

To an economy that relies heavily on tourism and the convention business, this would be a tremendous financial blow not only to our major industry but to the hundreds of thousands of southern Nevadans who depend on our tourism-based economy. We must find a solution to this problem. We spent millions of dollar securing our airplanes and the area from the checkpoint to the gate but we must also consider the security risk of having thousands of people standing in line waiting to pass through security. This provides yet another possible target for a terrorist attack.

One possible solution that should be examined is giving the Federal Security Directors at each airport flexibility so they can meet the unique needs of the airport. They are on the ground, seeing what is happening at the moment. They should have flexibility so they can address the situation as they see it.

I am very pleased that Randy Walker, Director of the Clark County Department of Aviation, is here to testify today. I have known Randy for many, many years. He is well respected in our community. His commitment to the Las Vegas community is extraordinary and well known. He has worked hard to meet the demands placed on the aviation community since September 11 by being both innovative and proactive. McCarran expects to have the initial phase of the in-line baggage screening facility up and running by the middle of this year. This system is the first of its kind in the country.

I also would like to acknowledge the efforts of Jim Blair, the Federal Security Director at McCarran, who has worked closely with Randy and the rest of the delegation to improve the situation at the airport. He should be given the flexibility to address McCarran's unique needs.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this very important hearing. I look forward to listening to the testimony of our witnesses today.

Mr. MICA. Thank you. Other members?
Mr. Beauprez?

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you are well aware, I represent the area immediately surrounding Denver International Airport. With the participation of this committee and the committee staff, and NTSA representatives, I held a meeting or summit we called it in Denver last July to address security wait times which had gotten quite excessive. As my colleagues Mr. Porter and Ms. Berkley both expressed frustration about Las Vegas, we had similar frustrations in Denver.

I think I actually have some good news to report. Certainly I recognize that around the country there are challenges. What came out of the Denver International Airport experience was surprise, surprise, the left hand wasn't talking to the right and very well, just not communicating and sharing passenger load information and some of the kind of basic numbers and anticipations of when most of the people are going to be coming through these screener checkpoints.

The long and short of that experience is that TSA, as we all know, was resizing—and more importantly, reshaping—their work force at about that same time, converting from essentially a 100 percent full-time work force that was consistently staffed throughout the day regardless of passenger loads because frankly they didn't have passenger load information to one that incorporates the use of a lot more part-timers, cross training of employees so that baggage screeners at times when need be could be called up and open additional screener lanes, some reconfiguration of how passengers were simply moved through the airport and very small steps were taken. Most importantly, the shaping of the work force changed so that when the airlines said we expect more passengers to be coming through the airport, TSA knew that, staffed up, opened more check lanes and surprise, people are being moved through the security check lines much faster.

How much faster? Well, DIA has adopted a standard of ten minutes as the expected or the acceptable wait time. In excess of 90 percent success, those wait times have been managed to be less than ten minutes.

Why do I say that? I wanted to thank the committee staff and you, Mr. Chairman, for making that opportunity available to TSA personnel for likewise participating and the airlines as well. We had United, Frontier, our largest carriers, out there as well as other airlines represented, the management of the airport, and good cooperative effort in getting it done. The real point is it can happen. I am hoping perhaps our witnesses today can give us some assessment as to whether or not that experience which, frankly, wasn't rocket science but simply getting the right people together to talk, share information and work together for the desired result, whether or not that is happening in other places around the country.

I have experienced frustration at other airports too, including the one nearest this building at Reagan and the unpredictable nature of getting through those security lines frustrates us all.

Lastly, I would thank both TSA as well as this committee for our experience in getting one of the Letters of Intent, of putting that to use and we do have one of the six eventual modules open for our in-line baggage screening in Denver. It is my understanding it is

working very well. I look forward to having in the near future another look see at how that progress is occurring out there.

Long story very short, I think we have learned much at DIA about not only the right sizing and body count but the right shape of a work force, we are still struggling a bit in finding an adequate number of part-time employees, but the exchange of information and having everybody realize airlines, airport management, TSA personnel realize that we are in it together, that when good people have a common purpose, they can actually accomplish the mission.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

For the Washington report, Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate this hearing. I was sure there would be one after the time we have been out, given the reported concerns.

I do want to say to our witnesses that I think I can say without fear of contradiction that we all recognize how complicated your job is as you have had to start from nothing and build an entire agency. I hope you will understand our questions and concerns in that context of appreciation.

I apologize that there are three hearing going on, all of them important. I did want to be here to make an opening statement. Of course Dulles airport has been a site of repeated cancellations. I am pleased that we are canceling flights rather than raising alerts. That says to me that there is so kind of targeted security going on and we need more of that.

There is concern though about why these flights are being canceled. I think it makes far better sense for TSA to say something about why rather than, for example, let the press speculate that there may be all kinds of bioterrorism, something people are not particularly prepared to hear. That may not be the case but nobody knows what the case is and I am sure you are being prudent in canceling the flights, although I say that understanding what that must mean to whether people are going to take flights at all from Europe and certainly from Paris and London to Dulles if they can't depend upon the frequency of the flights.

Nevertheless, I have no criticism whatsoever of that because I am sure you are doing what the security information indicates you should be doing. If there is some kind of threat of bioterrorism in airplanes, then you need to say there is and what you are doing to counter it if that is the threat that is coming forward. If it is not the threat, then you need also to say that. People expect that there is some kind of explosives effect but the press is out here saying what it thinks. We want to hear what TSA thinks.

I am concerned about different levels of screening at different airports. I think there may be perfectly good reasons for that but people who travel from one airport to another and see certain kinds of things are required in some airports and not in others, they wonder whether or not some airports are safer than others. They may have to do the machines. I want to know if that is what it has to do with or does it have to do with something else. There needs to be some explanation.

Finally, you are surely aware that in December, the President signed the FAA reauthorization. The Chairman and I have spoken

about this matter and though I am not here, he has said to me that this is something we need to follow up on. In mandatory language, Section 823 required, "The Secretary of Homeland Security shall develop and implement a security plan to permit general aviation aircraft to land and take off at Ronald Reagan Airport," two and a half years after 9/11. It is disgraceful that given the fact that general aviation says we will do whatever Homeland Security says, that at this stage you surely know what to do, that you know no matter how stringent are the requirements, they can and will be met. The notion of not opening general aviation at the airport of the Nation's capital sends a terrible, terrible message about our ability to keep ourselves safe.

We had a secure briefing on this. It could not have been more unconvincing. Essentially, it was all about star wars, worse case scenarios. If you want to apply that to general aviation, you had better start applying it to all aviation. In any case, you have no alternative now because this committee, the House and the Senate have spoken and I hope since I have to go to another hearing that the Chairman or others will follow up on where you are on developing that plan.

I thank you very much for coming. I apologize for not being able to hear testimony that I think is absolutely critical. Once again, I thank the Chairman for holding this hearing.

Mr. MICA. I thank the gentlelady and I share her concerns about the lack of opening Ronald Reagan and will announce to you that I hope we will do a field hearing at Ronald Reagan in the near future and will also do a closed hearing. The commitments that were made have not been followed through and we need to make some further progress.

Thank you. It was worth coming for this morning.

Mr. Menendez from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for calling the hearing. I want to associate myself with many of the remarks you made in your opening statement.

I want to just give another element of experience in this regard. Newark International Airport, one of the top 15 in the Nation, top in the region, which I represent is an example of failures of the TSA. In May of last year, I sent a letter to Admiral Loy outlining several issues that needed to be addressed at Newark Liberty International Airport and almost a year later, little has been done to address my concerns.

Clearly inadequate staffing is part of our problem. Recent press reports cite that TSA is short about 100 full-time screeners to fully staff the bomb detection machines and other security posts. Despite the 2003 deadline, TSA has acknowledged that it is not yet electronically screening 100 percent of luggage for explosives. It is my understanding that at Newark Airport the TSA frequently is able to only staff 14 of the 23 bomb detection machines. So I would love to hear what is the reason for this grossly inadequate staffing. It is clearly unacceptable. It is clearly unacceptable when one of the flights that took place on September 11 came out of Newark International Airport.

Secondly, we gave authorization to the TSA for the ability to hire part-time screeners at Newark. I don't get the sense that has been

used to its utmost flexibility we have given TSA, in order to try to meet the challenge.

A second issue that we raised that still remains unaddressed is that passengers at Newark routinely experience peak period screening wait times that far exceed the TSA desired standard of ten minutes. I know this is a fact as someone who has traveled through the airport every week, sometimes multiple times. During peak travel periods, line waits at Newark check points extend well beyond 30 minutes and at times can be up to one hour. Now we are coming into March, the beginning of a peak travel season, and I would really like to see how we are going to deal with that.

Existing security checkpoint configurations contribute to the longer passenger screening line waits and TSA has not upgraded all of the many screening points in the three passenger terminals to meet the current TSA standard configuration. The new standard configuration includes an enlarged holding area that has been observed to increase screening capacity by as much as 20 percent. Why have we not done that?

Finally, in May, I along with several of my colleagues in the New Jersey delegation warned that unless aggressive action is taken now, that was in May of last year, the delays and inconvenience experienced and the risk will get worse as the attrition occurs, as many of the CTEX and ETD machines continue to remain idle and it appears that our worse fears as stated last May have become true.

This is unacceptable. One of the top 15 airports in the Nation, top in the region, incredible density with a history of September 11, it is simply not acceptable.

I look forward to the testimony, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Thank you. I want to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from New Jersey.

I think there are no further opening statements at this time, so let me introduce our witnesses. Our first panel is Mr. Tom Blank, Assistant Administrator for Transportation Security Policy, TSA, accompanied by Dr. Randy Null, Chief Technology Officer, TSA and to give us some of the background and information relating to the GAO report released on February 12 and this particular topic of progress and problems in passenger baggage screening, Cathleen Berrick, Director, Homeland Security and Justice Division, U.S. General Accounting Office.

Welcome to our panelists. Let me say before I recognize you, I guess Mr. Blank is going to testify and you are back-up. You are very fortunate today that Congress is in recess because you have only heard a sampling of what I hear every day when I go to the floor. Unfortunately, members of Congress, almost 95 percent of them, fly into Washington, our Nation's Capital or the surrounding areas every week, so they see firsthand what is going on. I have been deluged.

This hearing is going to be followed, gentlemen, and you can tell the Acting Administrator, with a meeting of a sampling of two dozen airports. I only have two picked out today to testify. We have Las Vegas and you heard a little of that story but we are going to have about two dozen airports in for a roundtable in Washington for a Congressional session in the next few weeks. We are going to

have to do that soon because we have so many problems at so many airports that you are only getting a sampling both of members today and from two airports. I would just prepare you in advance for that.

Mr. Blank, you are welcome and recognized.

TESTIMONY OF TOM BLANK, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR TRANSPORTATION SECURITY POLICY, TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION; RANDY NULL, CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION; AND CATHLEEN A. BERRICK, DIRECTOR, HOMELAND SECURITY AND JUSTICE DIVISION, U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Mr. BLANK. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Congressman DeFazio, and members of the subcommittee.

Today, my colleague, Mr. Null and I would like to focus on TSA's extensive efforts to develop new aviation security technologies and the progress we are making in improving and measuring screening performance.

TSA has established an aggressive research and development program to develop and deploy new security technologies. The President's 2005 budget request, \$99 million in funds dedicated to TSA's applied R&D and next generation explosives detection systems programs. Technology can help make TSA's screening operations more efficient, less costly and most importantly, more effective. I would like to invite the members of the subcommittee to visit TSA's state-of-the-art research laboratory in Atlantic City, New Jersey. A number of screening and other security technologies are under development, including an explosives detection portal for passengers to determine if explosives are being carried on an individual's person, document scanners to detect trace amounts of explosives materials on items such as boarding passes and scanners for better screening of casts and prosthetic devices. We are also developing explosives detection systems for carry-on baggage and improving technology for screening liquids.

TSA is hard at work to develop the next generation EDS for checked baggage screening to increase throughput, improve detection capabilities and lower false positive alarm rates. At the same time, we are working with vendors to develop systems that will detect explosives in smaller amounts and occupy a smaller footprint in airports.

To date, in Jacksonville, Florida, the airport's state-of-the-art, in-line EDS system is piloting an on-screen alarm resolution protocol that could be deployed at more airports this fall. We are also piloting a baggage tracking system in Jacksonville using the latest in radio frequency identification technology.

To date, six letters of intent have been issued for in-line checked baggage screening systems and we anticipate issuing additional LOIs as funds allow. To boost airport terminal security, TSA has awarded \$7.9 million to airports to support a wide array of surveillance, sensor and other technologies. In addition, our Airport Access Control Pilot Program will test state-of-the-art technologies in partnership with airport operators who have volunteered to be par-

ticipants. We expect to initiate and complete ten airport access control projects by the end of the year.

In addition, TSA has made significant progress in carrying out its screening improvement plan. Today, 98 percent of all checkpoint security lanes are equipped with x-ray machines with a 2400 image threat, image protection or TIP Library. TIP for baggage screening is under development as well. This new system continuously exposes screeners to the most current threats including improvised explosive devices. TIP is an excellent tool for evaluating individual screener skills so that we can focus directly on areas needing improvement. Deployment of the TIP system will help us collect and analyze significant amounts of performance data that have not been previously available to us.

Network connectivity has been established in 71 airports and TSA is moving forward to deliver connectivity to all airport locations to bridge the gap. Until this is achieved, TSA has launched a secure TIP data collection and reporting website. Federal Security Directors will have access to performance reports based on February TIP data including reports at the individual screener level. To maintain and improve screening performance TSA also places a strong emphasis on recurrent screener training and supervisory training.

Over 550 inert modular bomb sets and weapons training kits have been deployed to airports. We have established an excellence in screener performance video training series and production is underway on a series of web and computer-based screener training products. Our on-line learning center is now available to screeners and we have sent more than 2,000 screening supervisors to introductory leadership training. That is about two-thirds of the full supervisor work force.

While using every means to enhance screener skills and equipment, TSA continually tests and challenges screeners. Special operations teams use intelligence reports and training on advanced screening technology to create challenging protocols to test checkpoints and checked baggage. These teams provide immediate feedback on the results of their tests and other data affecting airport security. Tests are reenacted in post-test interviews to share results and guidance with additional screeners and FSDs. TSA covert testing has increased nationwide and over 50 airports have been tested in just the last three months. Since September 2002, the overall pass rate for checkpoint testing has steadily improved. This is a three to one increase in this kind of testing over FAA.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and with that, I will suspend for any questions you may have.

Mr. MICA. Thank you and we will now hear from Cathleen Berrick with GAO. Welcome and you are recognized.

Ms. BERRICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congressman DeFazio and members of the committee for inviting me to participate in today's hearing to discuss airport passenger and baggage screening.

My testimony today is based on our preliminary observations from our ongoing reviews of TSA's passenger and baggage screening programs and research and development efforts. In particular, my testimony highlights TSA's efforts to hire and deploy passenger and baggage screeners, train the screener work force, measure

screeener performance in detecting threat objects and leveraging and deploying screening equipment and technologies.

TSA has successfully reduced its trainer work force below the congressionally imposed cap of 45,000 full-time equivalent screeners. However, staffing shortages have hindered TSA's ability to full staff screening checkpoints without using additional measures such as overtime. Difficulties in hiring part-time screeners and a sometimes lengthy hiring process have also contributed to staffing shortages. TSA has initiated several efforts to try to correct screener imbalances including hiring a consultant to study screener staffing levels and establishing a national screening force to fill in when necessary.

Regarding screener training, TSA has made considerable progress in strengthening its basic recurrent and remedial training programs. For example, beginning in April 2004, TSA will cross train all newly hired screeners to perform both passenger and baggage screening functions. Despite this progress, staffing shortages have hindered the ability of all screeners to attend developed training. At five of the large 15, Category X airports we visited, Federal Security Directors state that due to staffing shortages, their screeners were unable to attend all required training because they were needed to man screening checkpoints.

TSA has also undertaken several initiatives to measure the performance of its passenger screeners in detecting threat objects, including increasing the number of covert tests it conducts at screening checkpoints and enhancing and deploying additional threat image projection systems. However, we found that TSA continues to face challenges in conducting 100 percent screening of checked baggage using explosive detection systems or explosive trace detection equipment. Although TSA made progress in deploying this equipment some airports are not able to use all equipment due to insufficient staff or not having enough equipment or the equipment being out of service for maintenance or repairs.

Based on our preliminary analysis, we found that a number of airports have recently reported they are not conducting 100 percent screening of checked baggage using explosive detection systems or explosive trace detection equipment primarily due to shortages of trained staff.

Finally, TSA continues to invest in research and development of technologies to improve passenger and baggage screening. The majority of these technologies are scheduled to be deployed during the next two to five years. As CSA moves forward with its R&D program, it will be important for the to balance funding for R&D with competing priorities and maintain their schedule while planning for a merger with the Department's Science and Technology Directorate.

We will continue to review TSA's efforts to stabilize the screener work force and enhance screening operations and technologies during the remainder of our review.

This concludes my opening statement. I would be happy to respond to any questions at the appropriate time.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

We will start with questions but before we get to questions, I don't want to forget to do this. A couple of members will probably

leave and catch planes like Mr. Beauprez who is leaving. I want to take a minute for members and staff that are here to recognize the service of David Schaffer. This is probably his last Aviation Subcommittee hearing. He has announced his retirement. He has had some 26 years I think of total Federal service. He has been on the committee for many years. He has been gracious enough and he never told me until after we finished the FAA reauthorization, maybe that forced him into retirement, but incredible public service. He has been Staff Director and Chief Counsel of the Aviation Subcommittee even back to the Civil Aeronautics Board. He has done an incredible job. I wish the rest of the members were here to express our appreciation, but thank you, David, for all you have done, for your good work and putting up with me and our committee. David Schaffer.

[Applause.]

Mr. MICA. That was the nice part about the hearing, but we do appreciate David.

Now, unfortunately, let me turn to questions. I am disappointed that Steven McHale, the Deputy Administrator, couldn't be with us today. I think he broke a limb or something and I had nothing to do with it, and he sent Mr. Blank and Mr. Null, both qualified to respond. We do have some very serious problems with the operation of the TSA.

As I said before, if Congress were in session, we would probably have another two hours of opening statements, so I guess we have been fortunate in some regard. We have a number of very, very serious problems with the operation of the screening system, some which were pointed out by GAO.

I will give you one example. I left Orlando this weekend, and we heard from the Representatives from Las Vegas of their experience, and I saw long lines. This is one of our busiest, if not the busiest week in Orlando. We have the Daytona 500, we have the spring break and I saw the lines and fortunately I got there early. I called the Federal Security Director and he said they currently have 124 vacancies in Orlando. I said, what is the problem and he said, well, I have asked one interim step in Washington fill these vacancies. What is the problem with filling the vacancies as far as training, background checks and getting these people on-line?

Mr. BLANK. We have to make a transition to local control to solve this problem in the long term. We stood up an agency and we needed to centralize or hiring, training and background check functions because the infrastructure to conduct this activity at an airport by airport basis was not in place. That is why we used the national contractor, that is why we used a centralized control to get this 45,000 person work force in the field.

Now we are faced with a new management challenge and it is not to build or deploy that work force but to sustain it. In order to sustain it, we have to change our management approach and we are committed to doing that. The headquarters focus is now becoming a focus on supporting the field rather than ordering around or managing the field. We need and are committed to getting to a place where a Federal Security Director is able to recruit, hire and train that local work force because they know the local the best, they know how to recruit and put that together.

Mr. MICA. I agree on that. When do you think that will be in place?

Mr. BLANK. We are committed to getting there as quickly as we possibly can. We are already beginning to involve the FSDs in the current process of interviewing and selection. I know the Acting Administrator is committed to doing it and as quickly as we can get there, I would suspect that would take a matter of months until we can have this outside the headquarters.

Mr. MICA. Let me ask another question. You heard my testimony that I was concerned about diverting money from the R&D program, and I will get into some questions with Mr. Null about that, to using that money for personnel. I am told within the last 24 hours there is a carryover of somewhere between \$120 million and some \$400 million from the last fiscal year to this fiscal year. Are you aware of that?

Mr. BLANK. I am aware there is some carry over, I am not aware of the specifics.

Mr. MICA. I want to know before the close of business tomorrow what the carryover is and if it is \$120 million or \$400 million, we took money out of research and development and I absolutely would be astounded about having that money when I have airports that don't have commitments to finish installation or even start installation of much better EDS equipment which actually once it is installed, an in-line system will reduce the cost dramatically of personnel. Isn't that correct?

Mr. BLANK. That is correct.

Mr. MICA. I want by the close of business, and nobody is to go home at TSA tomorrow until I get it, an accounting of those dollars. I am just stunned to hear that.

Mr. Null, I have heard now for two years that we are going to develop new technologies, both for passenger screening and better EDS equipment. I believe we have in this current budget that was just approved \$155 million for development of next generation technology. How many contracts do we have ready to go to sign with the private sector? I know TSA can't develop anything in-house, you have to do it with someone who has the expertise. How many contracts do we have ready to go today with the private sector to develop new technology?

Mr. NULL. I would have to get the exact number but we are in the 20 to 25 contracts with 2004 funds this year and there were approximately 10 next generation EDS last year.

Mr. MICA. I am told also that the Safe Skies Alliance, which tests some of the passenger screening equipment, has been prepared to deploy and test some next generation or combination of technology passenger screening equipment. Where are we with that effort?

Mr. NULL. We certainly appreciate the Safe Skies efforts because they are our key partner in terms of piloting new technologies.

Mr. MICA. Yes, and we are funding a large part of their operation.

Mr. NULL. Absolutely. We continue to use them.

Mr. MICA. Where are we with the next generation passenger screening?

Mr. NULL. The components of the consolidated checkpoints are all in our labs under evaluation, we have the latest trace portal in

last week that has corrected a lot of the issues. That will go into pilot in the airports within the next two months. We will get the latest document scanners in the next two to three months, we have a manual one. The automated one will be in the three to four month range. We have new shoe screeners that are in-house, we have new bottle screening for liquid detection capability. All of those will be going into the pilot phases in the airports in the next three to four months.

Mr. MICA. We still do not have a set of your plans either for your intent to contract, I don't care who the contractors are, nor do we have anything on your schedule on developing passenger screening equipment, next generation.

Mr. NULL. Yes, sir. Those road maps are in process right now and will be completed in the next two weeks. That is the commitment I have given to your staff that we will have those in your hands in two weeks.

Mr. MICA. One of the things that also concerns me, and we had a closed session yesterday on this but Ms. Norton spoke about it, is the lack of coordination between our alert and what goes on at the airports and then how it affects flights. I heard just this morning of additional flights canceled. What I heard yesterday behind closed doors did not impress me as far as our having a watch list together which we still do not have, an integrated watch list and I know that is beyond some of your capability but it is still under Homeland Security now, about development of the CAPPS system which we are going to get a very negative report on which is also important to identifying bad people instead of harassing millions of innocent travelers. I am very concerned about the progress we have made in getting an integrated watch list, coordinating with these alerts and then having in place a system that identifies bad guys. Do you want to respond, Mr. Blank?

Mr. BLANK. Yes. With regard to watchlists, the Terrorist Screening Center is charged with doing that integration. That is currently housed at the Department of Justice I believe but they are working across multiple agencies, the Department of State, the intelligence community.

Mr. MICA. Do you have any idea when that will be in place?

Mr. BLANK. I don't. We could provide that to the committee but it is the Terrorist Screening Center.

With regard to the flights of interest, it is important to note that it is not the Department of Homeland Security or TSA that is canceling those flights. These matters are being handled government to government. We are in close partnership with our counterparts, the Transportation Security Agency in other nations and these determinations are made really out of the context of that partnership.

If I may comment briefly on CAP II, we acknowledge and agree with much of what is in the report from GAO. I would say, however, that what we are encouraged about is the fact that we are taking our time to get this right. This has to be a transparent program, we have to build confidence in it, we have to have both the American public, the Congress and privacy organizations fully understand what it is about. So taking our time in the long term we think will be beneficial.

Mr. MICA. This subcommittee has been very supportive of coming up with a passenger profiling system but we want one that doesn't discriminate, one that protects privacy, and so forth. We are going to be three years into the process and there is nothing except a bad report that is coming out tomorrow on the progress of that. Furthermore, the whole system doesn't work until we are able to identify bad people, so we don't have a watchlist, we don't have a passenger identification system in place and we don't have coordination between our alerts. Again, it appears to me there is a breakdown. There is no system to begin, we just don't have this together and it is pretty disturbing at this stage.

I will probably get another shot, I don't want to monopolize all the time. Let me turn right now to Mr. DeFazio for questions and then we will do another round.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In discussing CAPPs, which is not the subject of this hearing but will be the subject of a subsequent hearing, I was a little surprised Mr. Blank when you said that it is going to be a transparent program. As I understand, it isn't going to be transparent to those who are chosen for additional screening or denial of service. In fact, the only parameters made available to them will be the parameters they provided to the airline and whatever the database found won't be provided to them but you are going to set up some sort of process where you supposedly have an ombudsperson. It is going to be worse than dealing with the credit card companies when they screw up your credit card records as far as I can tell. You will have less information available. At least they have to give you the information and then you can try and correct it, which they are very reluctant to do. In this case, I am being told you won't even be given the information that was supposedly found about you and they are you service. How does that translate to transparent?

Mr. BLANK. Transparent means a couple of things. First of all, we will have a redress system that will allow anyone who feels they have been singled out wrongfully to have that situation reviewed and have them cleared if there is not a reason to be concerned about them.

Mr. DEFAZIO. But they won't be able to look at the data that actually denied them the service. They will be able to complain to someone who will say I will go look at it.

Mr. BLANK. We very likely will not have the data because we are not creating a database that we are going to maintain. It will be a one time risk score. We will have the information technology well overseen by experts as well as privacy experts will oversee to see that we are in accordance with all Privacy Act requirements.

Mr. DEFAZIO. We will get into CAPPs at another hearing but I think the flip side of dealing with CAPPs is there is a very small percentage of people that constitute a very large number of passengers on an annual basis. They are the highest revenue passengers for the airlines, they are critical to the future of the industry, they are people generally conducting business who don't just fly occasionally. We have been asking for three years to set up some sort of a trusted traveler program so that you can move those people out of the potential suspect list through a voluntary background check which they pay for themselves which would be man-

dated and conducted by the Government or under contract by the Government, given biometric or other non-counterfeitable cards, we could have had that in place now while you are still struggling with CAPPS. I am disturbed that we aren't making any progress on that. Are we making any progress on that?

Mr. BLANK. We are making progress.

Mr. DEFAZIO. What is the progress? Tell me what is the progress?

Mr. BLANK. We are committed to undertaking a pilot program this year. We have a proposal for one that is being reviewed at the Departmental level.

Mr. DEFAZIO. What is the pilot program?

Mr. BLANK. Our approach to this has been to say that we have a wide area of responsibility in credentials. CAPPS II is one of those, the transportation worker identification credential is one of those. Those are both inherently governmental and with regard to registered traveler, we don't feel the Government is in the position to be offering retail type of credentials the way airlines do with frequent flyer programs. So our pilot program envisions working with people that have expertise in retail credentials, which are the airlines, to be able to see how this works at a checkpoint in a set number of paired cities.

Mr. DEFAZIO. As I understand, the airlines are extremely reluctant and I totally disagree with the approach. I would put the approach at the individual level. It would be like my concealed weapons permit. For a concealed weapon permit, I pay for and undergo an FBI background check which is certified by my local sheriff and then I am issued the permit. I am thinking of something much more along those lines. The airlines, after being burned on participating and providing passenger data for CAPPS II are not going to want to participate in this program, and it seems like a particularly bizarre and baroque way to get there.

If you put out a call for any and all frequent fliers who want to apply who would pay for their own background check tomorrow, which could be conducted by the FBI, the Government or under contract to the Government to be issued a Government-backed ID like mine which is State-backed in terms of a concealed weapons permit, you would have probably a million volunteers tomorrow. No bureaucracy, no nothing and you go out and conduct the background checks and you set up the system. I think the approach here is particularly arcane but let us get to a couple other issues.

I would like to ask a question about the issue of what I see in terms of the checking of baggage. Apparently because of either lack of personnel or lack of equipment, we aren't meeting the 100 percent of the time mandate and apparently there are some discrepancies in the reporting between those confidentially reported airports and those that GAO found that are not meeting the requirements. Is that correct?

Ms. BERRICK. Yes, Congressman DeFazio. First of all, we looked at TSA's information management system that they use to collect data at the airports and some of the data they collect is related to electronic screening of checked baggage. We found there were a number of airports that weren't conducting 100 percent of electronic screening, using explosive detection systems or explosive

trace detection. The primary reason was a lack of staff. Other reasons included lack of staff that had the appropriate training, some airports are still reporting they don't have enough EDS or ETD equipment and some of the equipment was inoperable because it was undergoing maintenance or repairs. So there were still some airports that were not reporting.

In terms of the discrepancies with the monthly report that TSA provides to Congress, we spoke to TSA about that and their response was that their report to Congress focused on the deployment of the equipment rather than the utilization. So that is why they said they weren't picking up some additional airports that we found.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I will be discussing that with the Chairman and I hope we could ask that in the future the reporting be on whether or not it is being conducted, not whether or not we have acquired the theoretical capability of doing it. I think that would be a more useful measure on a month to month basis on how the airport is actually performing.

If they aren't doing the electronic screening, is one of the ways in which an airport can let flights go and clear them the positive bag match?

Ms. BERRICK. Yes, that is one.

Mr. DEFAZIO. May I ask, in an era of frequent daily suicide bomb attacks, what good does it do us, in fact perhaps the terrorists would be pleased to know that their bag was on board and hadn't been misloaded on another plane or lost in the airport to explode in the baggage handling area. What do we get out of positive baggage match in the era of suicide bombers?

Ms. BERRICK. That is definitely the vulnerability with positive bag match.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Could I ask Mr. Blank and Mr. Null, do you think it is time for Congress to repeal the authority to let flights go because we are now assured that the baggage of all the passengers is on board?

Mr. BLANK. I would like to respond in this fashion. I would like to say that we do not agree with the GAO finding with regard to how many airports are not using 100 percent. The primary source of the GAO data is our performance management system which is raw data and it is not instructive unless it is analyzed. You may have an instance in real time where a machine is not being used because it is down for maintenance. That may be reported in there.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I am somewhat supportive here, but would you agree that the standard should be not whether the theoretical capability exists, but rather on a monthly basis the standard was met? Is that a fair measure?

Mr. BLANK. That is certainly a fair measure.

Mr. DEFAZIO. No matter what the cause, whether the machine is down, whether the people are sick, the electricity was off, whatever. Would you agree that ought to be the reporting standard?

Mr. BLANK. I would agree that ought to be the reporting standard but if a machine is down for one day out of a month for maintenance purposes or because the screeners were sick that day and couldn't be deployed, then it ought to be on that monthly report.

Mr. DEFAZIO. It could say for 29 days we met, for one day we didn't, here are the reasons, right? That doesn't seem to be too much of a burden to me.

Mr. BLANK. No, but that data is the data that GAO reviewed to make its finding so that data is available.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I think we need to parse through that and get more meaningful reports but beyond that since we can't go into the specifics of the reports in public session anyway, what about the idea is it time for Congress to rescind the authority for the TSA to allow positive bag match to be considered as screening baggage for explosive purposes to prevent destruction of an aircraft in mid-air?

Mr. BLANK. No, I would not say it is time to do that.

Mr. DEFAZIO. So you haven't been watching the news, you haven't noticed the suicide bombings that are going on?

Mr. BLANK. The purpose of what we are doing is trying to deter attacks and we are trying to disrupt what a terrorist might choose to do.

Mr. DEFAZIO. And I would be deterred if I were a terrorist and I packed a bomb if I knew they were going to be assured that the bomb was on the plane I was on and I am a suicide bomber? It seems to me I would be encouraged.

Mr. BLANK. What we don't want you to know is precisely what methods we are using to deter you. If we have a situation where a machine say was broken and we used PPBM as an alternative.

Mr. DEFAZIO. But what does positive bag match have to do? Perhaps if a machine is broken, you are going to have to manually search the luggage. What does positive bag match in an era of suicide bombers get you? I know you want to create randomness, you want to create uncertainty. I agree with that. If one of the random and uncertain factors is the fact that you are going to be associated with your luggage and your bomb, in an era of suicide bombers it makes no sense. We are going to have to have the other backups there. I know we don't want to delay planes and that is the imperative here. No, my imperative is not to blow up planes, so if we are going to have to have more people and when the machines break down, we are going to have to manually search the baggage or have more machines out there so there is a backup machine, we are going to have to have more dogs out there, but positive baggage match gets you nothing. I can't believe you won't admit that. It is not a part of an arsenal.

Mr. BLANK. It is a risk mitigation method and we can debate as to how effective it is but it is risk mitigation.

Mr. DEFAZIO. For non-suicidal terrorists. It works for non-suicidal terrorists. That is good.

Ms. BERRICK. I just wanted to add to an earlier comment by Mr. Blank. In terms of the PMIS data, we do agree that there are questions about the reliability of that data. For purposes of this testimony, we actually based our analysis on reports that TSA's Aviation Operations Division conducted based on the PMIS data which they believe is much more reliable but we will continue to look at the reliability of the system.

In terms of days that the equipment wasn't being used, we included in our testimony data that the airports that weren't in 100

percent compliance, it ranged from one day being out of compliance to 371 consecutive days.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I know my time is up and the Chairman has been very generous, but may I yield to the Ranking Member of the Full Committee.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I understand the thrust of the gentleman's inquiry and I think it is entirely appropriate, that the passenger who actually is on board and to assure that the luggage is on board, but there is a benefit to assuring that a bag does not board without a passenger.

Mr. DEFAZIO. That is correct.

Mr. OBERSTAR. So I don't think the gentleman wants to leave the impression that positive passenger bag match is without value. It has a very specific value to assure that no bag boards without a passenger but the gentleman's point is quite relevant.

Mr. DEFAZIO. And that being used as a substitute for EDS.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Against a suicidal bomber, that is quite appropriate and we may have to search all those bags by hand.

Mr. MICA. Will the gentlemen both yield? If you have 100 percent electronic detection systems in place, you can put on all the bags in the world and it wouldn't matter, whether the passenger is on or not.

Mr. OBERSTAR. But it is a lot better if the passenger is not on board.

Mr. MICA. My concern is now is a passenger getting on board like a Richard Reed except strapping explosive to himself or herself with duct tape and a non-metallic fuse like Richard Reed did in his shoes, go through any metal detector domestic or most abroad and self emulate himself, the plane and all the passengers.

Mr. OBERSTAR. I quite agree but by the same token I feel much better about keeping the bag off the plane if the passenger isn't on.

Mr. MICA. If we have 100 percent detection and you have seen some results of that.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Even if we have 100 percent.

Mr. MICA. I don't see where it matters but I have been more than generous. How did I get sucked into that debate?

[Laughter]

Mr. OBERSTAR. It was of your own volition, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. I try to self discipline myself.

Mr. Porter, you have been waiting patiently.

Mr. PORTER. Thank you.

I appreciate the responsibility of TSA in balancing the risk, making sure that passengers are safe and I also appreciate where you have come in a short time, but if we set aside technology for a moment, we are probably never going to have enough money and there will always be a complaint we are not spending enough money on technology, so let us take a moment and talk about people, your staff and what I mentioned earlier about consistency.

That senior citizen or that handicapped person or the business traveler or the tourist, they just want to know from day to day what they should expect, whether the terrorist level is orange, green, blue or pink, or whatever color. They just want to know there is going to be some consistency.

There are two acronyms that people hate the most, that is IRS, HMO and I hate to say it but TSA is moving up to the top. I would suggest that you find some what that if you are in Des Moines, Iowa or Sioux City, Iowa or Las Vegas, Nevada that the traveler can know there is going to be consistency no matter what the terrorist level is or the attitude or mood of the current airport is. What plans do you have in place right now to add some consistency? Technology separate and aside, you need more technology. If you look at what the IRS has done, one of the most hated acronyms, as taxpayers we will still fill out the same form and Congress prior to my being here was trying to make it easier for people to file a tax return, you can go on-line, go to the computer, fill in the forms or even more simple, certainly not the security degree but if you take a McDonald's, there is a consistency all over the world when you go to buy a hamburger. They have new regulations all the time, health concerns and scares, but there is a free flow to that customer every time they go to fill out an IRS form or to McDonald's. What plans do you have in place for consistency?

Mr. BLANK. First of all, all the screeners that are out there receive identical training, they are all screening and conducting their operations to a nationally approved set of SOPs. One of the things we think will improve consistency is the fact that we have completed or just about completed putting what we call a TIPS Program out there, a threat image projection program so that we will begin to have consistent training and consistent experience across our system.

The other thing we have done is get an on-line learning center up and operating so that we can continue to train more. There are some 350 programs available to screeners and FSDs to improve and get more toward consistency. I think most importantly we have now up and operating a website so that the performance information from the TIPS system is available to the FSD. That means that an FSD at an airport can now say, let us check how the checkpoint operations are going at 4:00 p.m. when there is a peak or at 8:00 a.m.. If he begins to see that there is a problems, there are long lines there, there are reports of security breaches, whatever the problem is, he can analyze that almost down to the individual screener and identify where there is a performance problem which would indicate a consistency problem, recommend training or whatever the anecdote to the problem might be.

So I would say what we are doing is getting better information real time about what is going on at checkpoints into the hands of FSDs whose responsibility it is to administer that consistency.

Mr. PORTER. That all sounds good and I appreciate that, but what are you doing for the passenger so he knows he is taking off his shoes at every airport or not or you can't take a rolled newspaper through because it looks like a weapon? What are you doing on the doorstep for the flying passenger to understand what they should expect at every airport?

Mr. BLANK. We have a website that tells them what to expect when they come to the airport. You would find it would recommend that they approach the checkpoint and take off their top coat because that is going to be a problem, you are going to be required

to do that. We would recommend that shoes come off. Passengers don't always do that, we don't require them to do it.

Mr. PORTER. How about some signs? There's a list so everyone knows?

Mr. BLANK. We do have signage in airports and perhaps we need to go back and assess whether or not we have adequate signage but that is something that we do. Another thing we would like to be able to do but we are not always able to do is have a greeter, have somebody who is on the public side of the checkpoint as you approach say, please take your shoes off, take your coat off, here is a bin.

Mr. PORTER. Excuse me. That is what we are doing at McCarran right now and Randy is going to talk about it later. That is something we are doing.

Another question, we mentioned again the Las Vegas challenge with the 130,000 people who showed up for CES which we want everyone to come back. We want 200,000 people. At one time there was close to 2,000 people waiting to get into security. We have learned around the world that folks waiting to get to security areas are now targets for terrorists.

We received letters and comments from the CES and I am sure you have heard from other trade associations around the country because it is not just Nevada, but what plan do you have in place to meet with those trade organizations and special events groups that can help you help them which can help the flow of traffic? Are you working with trade industries now that are impacted?

Mr. BLANK. We are open to doing as much interaction with the private sector as we can. We routinely interact to a significant degree with the transportation associations, aviation, airport and that sort of thing but we are open to any advice or input any association might want to give us.

Mr. PORTER. Let me give you some advice and then we can move off this question. I would suggest that you create something as an outreach to these organizations because you are well aware of what has happened at these different communities and with tourism, one, two and three in every State in the country depending upon air travel, I would suggest you put together a program and outreach that could be a partner with you to make your jobs easier.

Mr. BLANK. We will do that, sir.

Mr. MICA. Thank the gentleman.

Ms. Berkley?

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Both the Chairman and the Ranking Members took a more global view of the challenges we have with the TSA and the needs that we have for the flying public. I would like to take a more parochial view, given the fact that our Las Vegas Airport Director is here. Let me focus on McCarran Airport for a minute, if I may.

Las Vegas' McCarran Airport has increased its checkpoint capacity by 13.6 percent, while its passenger growth has increased only 3.6 percent. Starting in January of this year, the lines in front of the enlarged checkpoints ballooned compared to last year. Can you give us a reasonable explanation of why that has occurred?

Mr. BLANK. I would say it is because of a number of factors. We have a number of challenges at Las Vegas and I must say that they

are challenges our partners are working well with us on. Director Walker, the carrier community, and so forth. We do not have at this time as many people as we should have, staffing, and we are moving to remedy that. We are moving to get the in-line system in place that will relieve some of the congestion in lobbies. We applaud Director Walker and McCarran because they are paying out of their own pocket to expand checkpoints so that we can have more lanes open. That is clearly a problem there in our view and I know there is construction underway on the second level to fill in what is an open space that should allow us to enhance processing as we get some configurations changed around.

I was at McCarran on Monday. I did have the opportunity to review some of the throughput numbers. While we all have our challenges, it is not acceptable to us, the screeners there are processing about 250 people a hour on average. That is a very high throughput rate as we look across the system. I know there is some debate about throughput but from what I saw over this past weekend, I know there were long lines, but the throughput is very high.

We have a number of challenges from a number of perspectives, not only the high nature of the traffic there, it is a high origin and destination airport. There is growth there, we recognize that and the lines are not acceptable to us.

Ms. BERKLEY. I am not sure that growth is the issue here although we are almost back to 9/11 numbers. We had significant growth from the fall to Christmas without lessening the number of people that went through the checkpoints. It was in January and I am wondering if there isn't some other compelling reason that has slowed us down.

Mr. BLANK. Congresswoman, there may be. I am unaware of it but we would be pleased to doublecheck and report back to you.

Ms. BERKLEY. All right. Let me ask you something. You said, and I think we all agree, that we have a personnel problem, not enough personnel. How soon will you be remediating the personnel shortage, do you think?

Mr. BLANK. We are working with FSD Blair to get together a pool of applicants. The Assessment Center is very close to being able to be opened and that should begin the candidate flow, the interview and hiring process very shortly.

Ms. BERKLEY. Months? Weeks? Days?

Mr. BLANK. I am not certain whether it is months, weeks or days but again, I would like to take that and get back to you.

Ms. BERKLEY. I would appreciate that. You of all people I don't have to tell that each airport has its own unique needs. Federal Security Directors are on the ground and they know what is going on, Washington often doesn't. Don't you think we should give them a little bit of flexibility to balance the risks on both sides of the checkpoints and accommodate accordingly?

Mr. BLANK. Yes.

Ms. BERKLEY. How will we go about doing that because now I think we are inflexible? Here are the rules and we have to follow them.

Mr. BLANK. Most of our programs whether they be security directives or security programs do contemplate alternative means of compliance which is to say that if Director Blair wanted some flexi-

bility, he ought to propose to us and ask us to review it and approve it. If there is some additional flexibility he thinks he needs that would fix the problem on the ground, it doesn't reduce security below what we think it needs to be, we would be very open to looking at that.

Ms. BERKLEY. Without going into any privileged information, what do you think the effects of implementing the TIPS Program is at McCarran? Do you think that may be increasing the lines?

Mr. BLANK. No. I think actually that will help because it is going to help Jim Blair identify where his weak performers are, whether that is a crew, whether that is an individual screener and it should help him a great deal to make efficiencies and improvements in individual performance.

Ms. BERKLEY. I am going to be interested to hear Mr. Walker's assessment of the program.

Let me ask one more question that may lead to other questions. During the peak periods at McCarran, and my colleague has spoken of this, thousands of passengers are crammed into tight lines in front of the checkpoints. I have been on those lines and I have observed others on the lines. Aren't we creating a very large potential new target for terrorists? We are spending so much money protecting people in the air and we have literally thousands of people standing in line at the airport?

Mr. BLANK. That is of concern to us and we recognize that can present its own security situation. It would be unfair to generalize but much of that congestion, I believe, is at Terminal D at McCarran and we would hope some of that would be relieved by the construction project that is going to fill in the open area so that you wouldn't have quite the congestion at Terminal D that we now have which I believe is one of the worst parts of the problem.

Ms. BERKLEY. D is bad but I can tell you I have been on the C gate lines and it took longer to get through the line than it took me to fly to Burbank, substantially longer, almost twice as long. I can tell you that line stretched out to almost the parking lot as well.

Thank you very much.

Mr. MICA. Tell Mr. Stone I don't want any members of Congress being escorted through any fast lanes either.

Mr. BLANK. Will do, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Pearce?

Mr. PEARCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Blank, how many passengers are screened daily approximately in the United States?

Mr. BLANK. About 1.8 million.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chairman, when you get the response to the \$400 million carryover figure, I would like to have a copy of that.

Yesterday, I think our office referred to you Gavin Stiner with Corporate Clipper who had a software program we had inquired about for different purposes where they can track specific individuals biometrically with photo ID in the air. It seemed like it had application for the frequent flier program or whatever.

Mr. BLANK. Members of my staff met with the gentleman yesterday. I haven't had a readout from that meeting because I was here giving a briefing.

Mr. PEARCE. There was also some comment yesterday in the hearing that software didn't exist to check enough people in a timely enough fashion. The last time I was in my district, I bumped into somebody who had a program they were showing me that would check one million photo IDs per minute. So the fact that we have a passenger manifest that we cannot check in a timely fashion, sometimes I wonder just how adequately we are looking in the field for those solutions that could really speed up things quite a bit.

As I look at the question of the diverted money, were any bonuses paid during the year the monies were diverted?

Mr. BLANK. TSA has paid one round of bonuses in two years that it has been up and operating.

Mr. PEARCE. So we are taking money away from the detection equipment and we are paying bonuses. Were those bonuses up and down the line or just to management?

Mr. BLANK. Up and down the line.

Mr. PEARCE. Do you know the total amount for the bonuses that were paid during the year they were paid?

Mr. BLANK. I do not. We will get that.

Mr. PEARCE. I would appreciate that information, if you would.

I see here you have about \$1.5 billion for long term installation of explosive detection equipment that Congress has appropriated. What percentage of that money has been used?

Mr. NULL. Of the \$1.5 billion, about \$1.1 billion of it has been committed or obligated and used. The other \$400 million is allocated for the LOIs that are in existence and the ones that will be following on as well as the continued expansion efforts because the traffic is increasing, so we are having to make capacity adjustments associated with that.

Mr. PEARCE. How much additional money through the Airport Improvement Program have you accessed besides the \$1.5 billion?

Mr. NULL. It was about \$380 million.

Mr. PEARCE. Has any of the money in that \$1.5 billion or the \$380 million been diverted into salaries?

Mr. NULL. No, sir.

Mr. PEARCE. Into anything else?

Mr. NULL. No, sir.

Mr. PEARCE. Who made the final decision on diverting funds away from the explosive detection equipment? Who made that decision?

Mr. NULL. I am not sure I know who.

Mr. BLANK. I am sure that would have been Admiral Loy in conjunction with Senior DHS officials and very likely there would have been full Administration coordination on that.

Mr. PEARCE. What is the percentage of management to screeners?

Mr. BLANK. I don't know the percentage but there is approximately 2,000 or so headquarters staff, 45,000 screeners and approximately 1,500 FSD staff.

Mr. PEARCE. That would be all my questions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

Former chairman of this subcommittee, Mr. Duncan, the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I had to be at another committee mark up and hearing so I was not here for the testimony. I will be very brief. In fact, what I really want to do, as I know you did, is I want to say this is my 16th year on this subcommittee and during all of that time, I have had the privilege of working with and receiving the benefit of the work done by David Schaffer. He has decided to leave, I know, and go on hopefully to bigger and better things but I want to commend him for his dedication to this committee and particularly for the work he has done on this subcommittee.

We worked very closely together during the six years that I chaired this subcommittee and I guess I received credit for many good things that he did was able to do. I also occasionally received the blame for some things that he had done too but that is part of it I suppose.

He is much too young to retire and I think he should be ashamed of that and for leaving us but I do want to say I think this country is a better place today and particularly the aviation system of this Nation is better because of David Schaffer. I did want to commend him.

I will say very briefly that the TSA has an extremely difficult job. I am told by staff that 50 to 60 percent of the revenue for the airlines comes from 10 percent of the passengers. I do think surely there should be some way we could come up with this trusted traveler program so that we can speed up the efficiency and convenience for the passenger traffic in our airports. I hope you will continue to work on that.

There is one little thing that I have gotten curious about. We have been given almost unbelievable statistics about the TSA confiscating during one month 161,463 knives, 265,468 sharp objects, 1,780 box cutters. Those are almost hard to believe. I was told by one person that you auction off some of these things and I was told by somebody that probably is a little more in the know that all these items are just dumped or destroyed in some way. That is about 2 million knives a year. I am wondering what happens to all that stuff?

Mr. MICA. Could I interject? I had read that TSA spends several million dollars having someone dispose of them. Is that correct?

Mr. BLANK. That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Surprised, Mr. Duncan?

Mr. DUNCAN. It looks like that could almost be a source of revenue if it is handled right instead of costing the TSA money. I think you should look into some possible ways to change that. I have people in Tennessee who can make a lot of money off that. They would probably pay you instead of you having to pay somebody. That is almost ridiculous.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. That is the difference between Washington and Tennessee, Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Oberstar and then Mr. Baker.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize to the witnesses for ducking in and out and trying to conduct other committee business as well as my own district business.

This is a very important overview of TSA and an appropriate time to take stock and assess what TSA is doing. We have conducted years of work on aviation security going back to when I chaired the Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee in the 1980s and held the first hearings, the Committee on Aviation Security Matters and subsequently serving on the Pan Am 103 Commission with my then colleague, John Paul Hammerschmidt from Arkansas. We crafted what became the Aviation Security Act of 1990, pressed vigorously for the incoming Clinton Administration to do a top to bottom review at the five year point and finally got their attention just on the eve of TWA 800 to appoint a blue ribbon commission to completely overhaul the law and see what we needed to do. Then came September 11 and we accomplished in the Transportation Security Act almost all of what we tried and couldn't accomplish in the 1990 Aviation Security Act, incorporating in the TSA Act the recommendations that our commission set forth.

The result is I think vastly better security than we have ever had in the United States or any place else in the world except perhaps for Israel, which conducts aviation in a state of war. The information that I have seen from TSA is that they have confiscated some 10 million prohibited items. If we had been doing that kind of thorough search prior to September 11, it might never have happened, TSA has also confiscated 1,500 firearms and, as I think Mr. Duncan referenced, 54,000 box cutters, and made a thousand arrests: it is a remarkable accomplishment. We have a highly trained, far more dedicated and zealous work force among the screeners. Everywhere I travel in the country, I make a point to stop and talk to the screener work force with the TSA head of security. But, I think the work of that force is being undercut by the Appropriations Committee putting a cap on staffing without any reference to the real world, without any hearings or any understanding, without any consideration of the impact this arbitrary cap is going to have on the security at our airports, including the ability of screeners to manage the explosive detection systems. There are disturbing reports of equipment that is not being properly used because TSA does not have enough people to handle it because of the arbitrary cap.

We have had the discussion already about screening checked baggage but we also need to discuss the matter of screening cargo that goes on board passenger aircraft, that is a serious matter that still needs to be addressed. The gentleman from Nevada just returned and has been through Las Vegas airport. Your folks are just overworked, overwhelmed. It was clear when I was out to speak at a conference in Las Vegas, I came in at night and left the next morning: peak period is just overwhelming. They simply don't have enough people to handle that workload. They were working courteously, efficiently, effectively drawing people from various points to come in and help with the overload and then you have all those selectees who were standing in line. The selectee line was almost as long as the non-selectee line. My hat is off to them. They were sweating working that line doing the best job they could.

This arbitrary limitation on numbers of people is just not appropriate. It is a tribute to the TSA work force that you have been able to accomplish the job you have under those limitations.

The other thing I have learned and I talked with Admiral Loy about this; that is, the role of Federal Security Directors having the resources and authority they need to get the job done at the airports. Admiral Loy has assured me that there will be an ongoing conference of the Federal Security Directors to get their input. They are the people on the front line, in the trenches working with the screener work force, know the needs and ought to be consulted first. Mr. Blank, can you tell me what steps have been taken to support the very pivotal role of the FSDs?

Mr. BLANK. We have great regard for the FSDs and we agree with you wholeheartedly, Congressman, that they are our people on the front lines. They need to be supported and we need to be listening to them and supporting them. What have we done to make that a reality? We do have an advisory council of FSDs which meets regularly here in Washington. They meet privately without management and then management receives their input. We take that as an obligation and work on what they tell us in terms of additional intelligence they need, additional management flexibility that they need.

In addition, over the past couple months, we have taken to starting off our day as senior leaders with what we call an OPS Intel briefing. We go over every single incident that happened across the system the day before, so we know about disrupted passengers and we are focused on a prohibited item that got through, why was a terminal evacuated, and that puts us in very close consultation on a daily basis with what an FSD is out there managing on a daily basis. We have started to enhance the interaction and to really put our focus on that field as opposed to on other matters.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Does that include enlarging or enhancing the FSD's authority to manage personnel within the FSD's region of responsibility because often they have more than one airport under their jurisdiction and are not in a position to determine whether they can move people from one facility to another or shorten or adjust those hours. Is that also being included?

Mr. BLANK. Yes. They now have the capability to be able to do that and to say we want to get to where they have more control over hiring, where they are doing the training themselves and overseeing and are responsible and accountable for that. That is the management approach we are shifting to now that we are stood up and are trying to sustain a work force and sustain an agency rather than build one.

Mr. OBERSTAR. So that you are avoiding the appearance of an overload of personnel at an airport that may have four daily flights and an underserved airport that has three or four times as many flights?

Mr. BLANK. Yes.

Mr. OBERSTAR. The recently passed legislation had Mr. DeFazio's language which we generally supported in the committee to authorize increased funding to accelerate development of new screening technologies and yet GAO says TSA reprogrammed money earmarked for research and development. Why was that done?

Mr. BLANK. We have had ongoing resource constraints as we have stood up and tried to get ourselves to a place where there is a baseline budget that is annualized and as we have done that, we have had very difficult internal debates about what to prioritize. Those matters that were absolutely mandatory that were statutory in nature such as screening by Federal employees, such as moving toward the baggage checked by electronic means, we determined those had to be the priority.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Is that the reason for reprogramming the \$61 million GAO reported from research and development to other activities?

Mr. NULL. That is correct.

Mr. OBERSTAR. What are you going to do to replenish the R&D fund?

Mr. NULL. The 2004 budget had no reprogramming at all, so I have \$155 million this year for my R&D budget.

Mr. OBERSTAR. But you then you have already lost a year of research initiatives because of the reprogramming I suppose because you didn't have enough money in the area to which you reprogrammed the funds?

Mr. NULL. We slowed down, yes, sir.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Although there was a good deal of debate about this and difference of viewpoint, there was provision in the reauthorization bill to fund a letter of intent for in-line installations but of the \$500 million that was authorized, only \$250 million only was provided in the 2005 budget. Why is that?

Mr. BLANK. Our position is that the LOI is a very useful tool. We have used it eight times. We are in the final stages of discussion about numbers seven and eight with the Congress and as we go through and prioritize our resources, look at what it is expected of us, the determination and our current position is that for the balance of 2004 and 2005, it will be very difficult for us to see our way clear to go beyond these eight LOIs that we have used.

Mr. OBERSTAR. But the airports organization tells us that we can expect as many as 60 airports seeking LOIs and at the \$250 million level you are not going to have enough money to respond to those needs. Do you differ with the airports on how much equipment is needed?

Mr. NULL. In terms of the general cost and estimates on both cost and equipment needed, we do not disagree with that. In terms of the percentage of airports or the number of airports that actually should go in-line, we think we still need to do some adjustment on understanding the return on that investment and whether the efficiencies are there for that large a number. We know that the top 30 or 40 we have done some assessment that says there is potentially good return there. Beyond that still needs work to be done.

Mr. OBERSTAR. The budget also reduces the Federal participation from 90 percent to 75 percent. Why was that done?

Mr. BLANK. I think it is a fundamental policy difference over what the fair split between the public and private sector or the airports and the Federal Government ought to be.

Mr. OBERSTAR. That is why we have these hearings. I see the Chairman is getting restless but I think it would be useful to pursue further why that is happening.

Mr. MICA. We can come back. I just want to give Mr. Baker a chance. He has been waiting patiently.

Mr. OBERSTAR. May I patiently compliment David Schaffer?

Mr. MICA. Yes, go ahead.

Mr. OBERSTAR. On his long years of service. He is a voice of continuity, a constructive, thoughtful mind in the field of aviation law. Along with David Heymsfeld, there isn't a piece of aviation legislation in the last 20 years that doesn't have David Schaffer's fingerprints on it and his wise, seasoned legislative craftsmanship in his very understated but steady and thoughtful way. After 26 years in Federal Government, 6 years with the Civil Aeronautics Board, he is a gem for this committee, a treasure for our staff and emblematic of the quality of staff we have been proud to honor on our committee. I ask unanimous consent to include in the record a more fulsome account of Mr. Schaffer's service.

Mr. MICA. Without objection.

I don't know if you were here earlier but he did get a standing ovation. We will add that for the record and with your comments and the fact that Mr. Oberstar, the Ranking Member of the full committee, stood in your honor.

Mr. Baker, waiting patiently.

Mr. BAKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I really just wanted to make an observation and comment, not really expecting a response today. On several different occasions, I observed instances where there appears to be by the structure of the rule or regulation within the agency an inability of the screener on duty post to be able to make appropriate adaptation to the circumstances at hand.

There was a young mother traveling with two children. The children went through the magnetometer first without any thought by anyone of the consequences. The mother alerted because of something she was carrying in the diaper bag and she was isolated into the screening area while the children were left alone on the other side of the wall. The children became a bit concerned about what was happening, she did not travel in the company of another family member and it was up to frankly other travelers to give some temporary comfort to the children while the screening was concluded.

Secondly, there was a senior person traveling by necessity with a cane, went through the magnetometer, it was fairly evident this fellow was not going to break and run to the plane and fling himself through the passenger door. He was seated, had difficulty physically complying with the screener's requirements to be physically examined. The difficulty in this instance was it was a small airport, there was only one person doing the handwanding. It took considerable time and folks were a bit frustrated that level of attention was given to someone who obviously was going to have difficulty even making it to the plane.

In a third instance, I was waiting behind a gentleman having been identified as a potential felon and he was being screened. In the course of the screening, the screener, the person who happened to be a constituent and myself engaged in casual conversation. At the conclusion of the conversation, I remained lawfully behind the designated line and was approached by the screened passenger and we shook hands. He then was told he would have to be rescreened

because I could have passed an explosive device to him undetected by the screener. It could have been easier for him to grab his hand, check me out or some intermediate step beyond a full fledged security screen again but he had to sit down, take off his shoes and go through the whole thing.

All I am requesting is that some authority be granted at the site to a person or persons who could view individual circumstances, make judgments as to the necessity of complying with the apparent well intended regulation that would facilitate much more rapid movement of passengers through the security constraints.

In all these cases I was told by personnel they had no authority to relieve any of the people from the obligations, they were required to do these things or else they would be written up and have negative comments in their employment file which I certainly understand their position. I don't expect to see something happen overnight but merely to get on record with the agency that in the field flexibility given to a few, well trained individuals would be a great aid in facilitating travel.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BLANK. What I will say is that at this point in our development, we are seeing 1.8 million a day and with a work force of 45,000, trying to get some consistency across that many human interactions is a difficult task which is why we at least for now require pretty strict adherence to our SOP book is probably laying out there at all those checkpoints.

Having said that, where we could see ourselves going is putting the kind of flexibility you are talking about in the hands of perhaps a screener supervisor who would also be there and with the proper training and the proper judgment and experience, we might be able to get to a place where we have that kind of flexibility.

We recognize that some of these instances can be frustrating to people. We also recognize there is a need to continually deal with special circumstances which might be a mother traveling with children and we do have a group at TSA that meets to adjust SOPs or advise screeners of a special circumstance, whether that be a physical limitation or other circumstances, if that happens enough, produces enough confusion or a customer dissatisfaction that we need to address it.

Mr. BAKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. We will start a quick second round.

Just to set the record straight, there were some comments made about how great the current system is. Mr. Null, you are the technical person. Do we have any passenger screening equipment or equipment that a passenger walks through with their bags that will detect plastic weapons, all plastic weapons?

Mr. NULL. We have imaging systems that will allow us to do that. The problem with the imaging systems we have available to us today are the privacy problems we are trying to work our way through.

Mr. MICA. If I have concealed a plastic weapon that won't set off a metal detector, can I not walk through any of the metal detectors?

Mr. NULL. Metal detectors will not detect plastic, that is correct.

Mr. MICA. In fact, we don't know for certain that on September 11 they walked through with those items, they can still do that today.

The second point is box cutters were not a prohibited item by the Federal Aviation Administration on September 11. I will just state that for the record neither with your or FAA. While I am not free to reveal the detection rate of TSA who have actually been testing the system, TSA has tested it, GAO has tested it and the IG has tested it. I can tell you the results are much better than where we were before, what I saw right afterwards.

The other point is our friend "boxcutter boy" proved what I can't talk about from the results of our testing the system, but box cutters can and have gotten on aircraft today. To follow Mr. Oberstar, the cost of this in-line system, if we have another 60 airports, we are probably looking at in excess of a \$10 billion requirement for equipment. Would you say that is a ballpark figure, Mr. Null?

Mr. NULL. I think most of the estimates we have done or have seen in other sources are for the top 60-64, we are looking at about anywhere from \$3-\$5 billion worth of installation. That does not include equipment which would be probably another \$1.5-\$2 billion.

Mr. MICA. It took Great Britain seven years and \$4.5 billion to do 38 installations out of 41 airports. I think if we use that as a rule of thumb, we will probably see it will be closer to \$10 billion rather than \$7-\$8 billion and probably take just as long based on I don't see Congress coming up with that kind of money.

We have five airports that I was able to get as test programs where we have private screeners with Federal supervision. There is a bearing point study now reviewing progress of both those airports and others. When do we expect that report to be completed, Mr. Blank?

Mr. BLANK. The end of March.

Mr. MICA. That is on schedule?

Mr. BLANK. Yes, sir.

Mr. MICA. One of the problems we had with the CAPPS system I am also told is the problem of airlines not being willing to give data to the agency or afraid to because of suits, and so forth. Do we need to deal with that legislatively and are you going to have a recommendation?

Mr. BLANK. I think what we have under consideration is compelling the airlines to give us that data, all airlines. That way we avoid some of the problems individual airlines have had where there has been marketplace backlash because they provided data. We are looking at ordering it to do testing and we are looking at a rulemaking that would compel it be provided to us on a long term basis.

Mr. MICA. We also gave you in TSA's legislative authority the ability to put a rule in place without long delay. If you can't put the rule in place and the counsel advises authority, we need to know about that.

We still have no biometric standard that has been agreed upon for passenger identification, crew identification, trusted traveler identification, law enforcement officer, Federal officer identification, is that correct?

Mr. NULL. That is correct.

Mr. MICA. We still have more than several hundred people who can carry weapons on board an aircraft and no standard ID or biometric measure, is that correct?

Mr. BLANK. I can't testify to the precise number but what I can say is that out of the universe of people who travel armed, over 90 percent of them are Federal law enforcement officers that have Federal credentials. We are taking steps to train our screener work force to be familiar.

Mr. MICA. I am told that some State and local people can just appear with various identification and letters and also board aircraft. Is that correct?

Mr. BLANK. They would have to go through the established procedure of getting the document and coming to the checkpoint with the document.

Mr. MICA. Finally, two things. One, we have heard about the great job TSA is doing in employing people but I am running 20 to 25 percent vacancies at some airports. Congress has authorized the positions and funded the positions but TSA is unable to fill them. Systemwide, what is your guesstimate as vacant positions today and can you give us some exact figures in a historical context during say the last year?

Mr. BLANK. I don't have that information at hand.

Mr. MICA. Would you submit that to the committee?

Mr. BLANK. Yes.

Mr. MICA. Again, as of yesterday, Orlando had 124 vacancies going into our busiest season and vacancies at Las Vegas and other airports. That is not acceptable.

Finally, San Francisco Airport was here yesterday and they are about 80-85 percent in-line, check screened baggage and I have seen the results on that and anyone who flies out of there and goes through that system and checks their baggage, the detection is awesome. Fifteen to 20 percent of that airport is not done. I am told they have been passed over for the balance of their funding or haven't received it.

Can't we sort of finish the job and if I find out we have \$100-\$400 million left over from last year not going into these projects, we are going to have a wet hen as chairman. What is the story?

Mr. NULL. First of all, we have not had authority to go beyond ten LOIs, so we have not been able to do an LOI with them. We currently are working to try to cover that through another vehicle in our funding but that is still under assessment.

Mr. MICA. Mr. DeFazio?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Larsen asked to speak. I would like a second round after him.

Mr. MICA. Go ahead.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will start off by echoing the Chairman's last comment about not enough screeners in place with the advent of the anticipated heavy travel season. The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport certainly anticipates a travel season that will require you all to supply more screeners so that we can fully accommodate the travelers.

Obviously in the last couple of weeks, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, TSA has been in the news and it has been unfortunate news. The unfortunate news is there have been allegations

of bribes given to managers to help screeners with promotions taking place at the airport, TSA folks and I understand an internal affairs team was sent out there and now has returned.

I think the most important question I can ask given the fact that your IA team has to go through results and you have to go through your process and so on, what kind of timeline can we expect to hear back? Unfortunately, this happened at Seattle, it is unfortunate it happened anywhere because there are enough challenges TSA faces to make the system work but then to have these allegations out there and have 200 plus people sign a letter to me and other members of the delegation saying you have to stop this from happening. What is your timeline on getting the report done and how do you expect to report back to the committee in addition to your supervisors?

Mr. BLANK. Congressman, we could better advise you early next week as to why that IA team has been out there as you stated. They have returned and are working to compile their findings and assessments. It is my understanding that the senior leadership of TSA is to be briefed on what they found at least in a preliminary way early next week. At that point, we will have a better idea of what it is we are dealing with and what the time frames we are dealing with might look like.

Mr. LARSEN. After the briefing to the senior leadership team, we will be out next week presumably in our districts. Do you anticipate them being able to contact me and other members of our delegation next week to talk that over, are you going to release this information? How is that going to work?

Mr. BLANK. It will be depend on what is found. We have to be careful in a legal proceeding which this very likely will be as to what legal processes are required to be put in place and I can't guarantee that we will have anything public to be able to say because we don't know what we are going to find, we don't know what requirements are going to be put on us as a result of the findings. We can certainly communicate with you and tell you where we are. It may be to say that given legal considerations, privacy considerations there is not a lot we can say but at least we can be responsive in that fashion.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you. That is a fair answer and I appreciate that. We are obviously considering the 200-plus folks as well that signed the letter and they wanted to see some action as well. That is a fair answer and I appreciate that very much.

With that, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

Mr. Porter, you had another question?

Mr. PORTER. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We spent a lot of time today talking about passengers and I think that is certainly a priority as with our safety. I know at another time we will talk about airlines but there is one I would like to bring up today and that is the start-up airlines. Some of the major carriers are having challenges every day staying in business but also there are some start-ups that are trying to get into the transportation business, single hubs, single routes, they share some unique experiences but many of the disruptions that happen to the smaller carriers literally can put them out of business as we talk

about a percentage of a few travelers not being able to catch their planes, revenues. Do you have a program in place where you are working with some of the smaller, start-up airlines because they certainly don't have security staff and the personnel that the larger airlines have?

Mr. BLANK. We would certainly be willing to do that. Obviously they are a regulated party. They would be subject and have to implement what we call the Aircraft Operators Standard Security Program, so we would provide that to them. We would assign them a principal security inspector and be more than pleased to sit down with them and share with them what the expectations are and walk them through what it would take to be in compliance.

Mr. PORTER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Mr. DeFazio?

Mr. DEFAZIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the panel for its patience. I had to run to ask questions in Homeland Security.

One thing I see running through the concerns and reports and it will certainly come up later when we talk about the potential for private conversion at the airports is the lack of flexibility that FSDs have. I guess I would ask GAO to briefly address that as a potential root cause for some of the problems we are having with personnel. We have gone into the hiring problems in Washington, D.C. and then ask either Mr. Blank or Mr. Null to address it.

Ms. BERRICK. We have gotten back input from Federal Security Inspectors that they do feel they don't have enough input into both the hiring process and other processes within TSA. They feel if they had more authority to act on their own and individually at their airports that security would be better served. In fact, we are going to be doing some additional work for Mr. Oberstar to look into this further.

Regarding training, Federal Security Directors have complained that they don't have much input to the training process, specifically they don't review applications or interview applicants. They felt if they had more input to that process, their airport would be better served. I know TSA Headquarters has started a program where they are starting to get more input from the Federal Security Directors and we will continue to look at that.

Another area is training, Federal Security Directors stated that in addition to doing standard training that TSA provides, they wanted to do some additional training on their own but weren't permitted to do that because they had to follow the TSA standard training procedures. Those are some of the things we have heard.

We are getting ready to do a survey of all 158 Federal Security Directors to collect additional information but it has been a concern we have heard so far.

Mr. BLANK. We support enhanced flexibility and control by FSDs. We are taking steps to allow them to have certified trainers on their own staffs so that the training can be conducted in the airport instead of by a contractor. We see ourselves beginning to move away from that somewhat. We want them to have a hiring control, we think that is the ultimate answer to these lowered screener

numbers and get away from the large assessment centers and assembling of candidate pools and that sort of thing.

That is where we think we have to be able to go in order to sustain our operation.

Mr. DEFAZIO. How long do you think it will take you to get there, the agency?

Mr. BLANK. We are beginning as we speak to authorize the FSDs to begin to do the things we are talking about. I will be happy to try to get a more firm timeline but as we speak, this is where we are going and what we are doing.

Mr. DEFAZIO. On the body scan, just a question. I met with a vendor and they recognized privacy problems and said, it is easily remedied. We don't have to show the person's actual body, all we have to do is show where on the body the object is and we could use stick figures, we could use cartoon figures, we could use ideal figures so people would feel really good about themselves, whatever. What is the privacy hangup if we don't have to expose the actual body to see there is a suicide belt under their clothes?

Mr. NULL. We will be evaluating a number of those. One concern that we have is that some of the ways in which you obfuscate or eliminate parts of the body potentially can eliminate threats. A part of our assessment is to make sure that we don't lose detection capability as the result of those privacy algorithms. We certainly have options, we think there are some that will get us where we need to be but we have some evaluation and detection work that needs to be followed to validate those algorithms.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The object would still be displayed, just not the real life sensitive areas, with what they showed me but I am glad to see you are addressing that and hopefully you will move quickly.

Finally, a question I always ask and I asked Secretary Ridge and he wasn't certain of the answer, so I will ask you. Are we now screening all of the vendors most of whom we don't know who they are, many of whom may or may not be citizens or legal or illegal members of the work force in this country who file in and out of our airport concourses through security on a daily basis? Are they now being screened?

Mr. BLANK. No, they are not and let me elaborate. We have a number of regulatory approaches to security. One is an airport security program. In the airport security program, an individual airport is given authority to do the badging and to provide the access to the sterile area. Many airports across the system for ease of operations are in a position of allowing sterile area access with an airport-issued badge that would require a background check. That is authorized under an airport security program.

TSA has a security directive in place issued in late December of 2002 that says those individuals must be screened.

Mr. DEFAZIO. That is just airport employees, not McDonald's?

Mr. BLANK. It includes the McDonald's employees.

Mr. DEFAZIO. But the airport doesn't conduct the screening as they tell me of the McDonald's employees, they depend upon McDonald's to screen McDonald's employees. Since McDonald's and other people are regularly employing illegal aliens, I wonder how much screening they are really doing.

Mr. BLANK. Let me tell you the position of the agency. The position of the agency is that those vendor employees should be screened every time they go from the public area into the sterile area to go to work, just the way an airline captain should be.

Mr. DEFAZIO. So are they?

Mr. BLANK. They are not at this time.

Mr. DEFAZIO. So how do we get from should to will?

Mr. BLANK. Because we have to assess the impact of what we are going to do. We had a hearing here this morning where we discussed wait times and shortages of staff and so forth and we are going to start on Friday to do an economic analysis of the impact if we put many more people through the physical checkpoint screening. If we find it is not going to be disruptive, we are going to enforce our regulations and require them to go through.

We want to make sure that we are doing something that is not going to be disruptive or doesn't make sense or hurts the economies of those vendors that might be inside the sterile area. We are trying to find the right balance acknowledging that we have something we want to fix. We do support screening of those vendor employees.

Mr. DEFAZIO. If I can, I will tell you what doesn't make sense. That an airline pilot has to go through security every day and they have tight schedules. Many of them miss out on rest time and they could use a little more sleep but no, we are going to make them go through security. Flight attendants, they are going to go through security. But you have the virtual unknown of vendors in the airport who don't have to go through because it might be disruptive. I don't think if one of those people was involved in an incident either carrying something through, since I have observed airport employees going through a security area where they just flashed an ID and were wearing heavy winter coats which could have concealed anything, AK-47, whatever, that the American people are going to think that this was a very good system because they have been standing in line but these other people who we don't know who they are for the convenience of the vendors or whatever are going through.

In any case, we will look forward to that evaluation and report. If the evaluation is that it would be disruptive, then we need to hear what it would take to make it non-disruptive in terms of additional resources no matter what the Administration thinks about how much money we should spend on security.

Mr. MICA. I thank the gentleman.

I thank the witnesses. As I said this is an off day. We are going to reconvene with the airports about two dozen of them. I think that is for March 24, so prepare yourselves for that. The 24th is only a sampling of those having problems. We will hear from a few in the next panel. If the TSA reps could stay you really need to hear the rest of the story with the sampling of witnesses, I would appreciate it.

Mr. BLANK. I have a prior commitment, Mr. Chairman, but we can certainly have the staff stay.

Mr. MICA. I will let you go only if you promise to take the testimony of each of those and read it.

Mr. BLANK. I promise to do so, sir.

Mr. MICA. I probably should have had the second panel first so you could hear the rest of the story but we will proceed. I will excuse this panel. Mr. Stone and Mr. McHale and others I expect to be at the 24th meeting. We will hold it in the morning, late at night, whatever fits their schedule but we are going to hold it.

We have additional questions too. We have only scratched the surface. We will be submitting them to TSA. We don't need that many people from TSA to leave all at once. It looks bad, folks.

Let us call the second panel. The second panel is Mr. David Plavin, President, Airports Council International; Mr. Todd Hauptli, Senior Executive Vice President, American Association of Airport Executives; Ms. Angela Gittens, Director, Miami-Dade Aviation Department; Mr. Randy H. Walker, Director, McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas; and Mr. Tom Jensen, President and Chief Executive Officer, National Safe Skies Alliance.

We appreciate your patience. Again, you are fortunate that there weren't more members of Congress in town today because of us not having any votes because you probably wouldn't get on until 3:00 or 4:00 p.m.

Again, welcome and let us start with Mr. David Plavin, President, Airports Council International and work our way down. If you have lengthy statements or additional information you would like to be made a part of the record, please submit it. Even though you have been patient, I would like to try to have you adhere to our five minute rule. We will get your message to TSA and other members.

Mr. Plavin?

TESTIMONY OF DAVID Z. PLAVIN, PRESIDENT, AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL, NORTH AMERICA; TODD HAUPTLI, SENIOR EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF AIRPORT EXECUTIVES; ANGELA GITTENS, AVIATION DIRECTOR, MIAMI-DADE AVIATION DEPARTMENT; RANDY WALKER, DIRECTOR, MCCARRAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, LAS VEGAS, NV; AND TOM JENSEN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NATIONAL SAFE SKIES ALLIANCE

Mr. PLAVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do indeed have a statement that I would like to submit for the record.

Mr. MICA. Without objection, the entire statement will be made a part of the record.

Mr. PLAVIN. My task is made easier by the panel that preceded us because many of you have asked some of the questions on exactly the subjects I want to emphasize. I have four basic areas I thought it would be worth identifying as themes that may be relevant for your consideration today.

The first is the EDS installation issue. Our testimony has a list of airports and an estimate as to what it would cost to do proper EDS installation at that number of airports. I think it is illustrative of the fact that we are talking about numbers well within the range that you identified earlier today.

I think the LOI issue which Todd Hauptli will talk about a bit later is clearly an issue of vital importance to us. We hope sincerely that we look seriously at equipping airports with EDS. One of the

reasons EDS is so critical is because it is not only a better technology but it is also much more cost effective. We have seen some examples. In Lexington, Kentucky for example, we identified the fact that a \$3.5 million investment up front is actually saving comparable numbers on an ongoing basis in the staffing requirements. So at the very least, the EDS installation is critical to make more effective and efficient use of the resources we have.

It is also critical that we get them out of the lobbies where they exist today. I think Ms. Berkley, you made the point earlier that we think there are safety and security considerations just having that kind of crowding in the lobby. That is another reason we think that is critical.

The second major issue is the issue of maintenance. We haven't really talked much about that but I think it is pretty clear that as warranties expire, as equipment we do have installed gets very heavy use and as they are being used in ways they probably weren't designed to be used, they are breaking down and are not available at a fairly high rate.

We think it is very important that some attention be identified to fund and to implement maintenance programs so that they can be available, and that is a high priority for the operators of the system.

We talked a bit about new technology, we talked a bit about the need to invest in new technology, the new to implement new technology as a way of saving money but also to improve the quality of our screening. I would urge that we also look seriously at the fact that other parts of the world have been doing this for a number of years and doing it in a way that gives them confidence in the quality of their security. I think the fact we are willing to learn and be guided by some of their experiences is not a very helpful sign.

The fourth area is one that has also been identified earlier and that is the issue of flexibility. Flexibility on staffing, flexibility on procedures, flexibility on ways of doing business. This is not to say we ought to do anything of this in a way that compromises security. The TSA has done a good job in identifying screening procedures, screening practices, but I think there is an opportunity to take advantage of the fact that we have different facilities, we have different layouts, we have different requirements, we have different passenger loads, different flight patterns. All of those things will require a level of flexibility that the Federal work force clearly does not permit in its current configuration. We really need to look or seriously at ways of making people available when the peaks occur, whether they are daily peaks in the morning or evenings, whether they are weekly peaks, whether there are seasonal peaks.

I would submit to you that one of the reasons we haven't had more problems right now is because we are still 13.5 percent below where we were at our peak of passenger activity in the year 2000. We have had some sort of cushion, we are also at the off season. As the spring and summer months appear, we will have considerable growth over what we have today. If we can't figure out a way to provide the flexibility to allow the people who are making hiring decisions, making the deployment decisions to get people there

when they need them, the lines that we are experiencing now will be short by comparison to what we are going to experience.

Finally, I thank this committee for having taken it upon itself to include in Vision 100 a sizable number of provisions. We would hope obviously that they can be funded in a way that allows them to be realized. I think the important point is most of the people on the committee have identified the serious issues that need to be addressed. We would hope with the other speakers today we can add some level of precision to that understanding. Thank you.

Mr. MICA. Thank you for your testimony.

We will now hear from Mr. Todd Hauptli, Senior Executive Vice President of the American Association of Airport Executives.

Mr. HAUPTLI. Thank you.

I want to focus on three points on the baggage side. Point one, shockingly, we need more money. As has been discussed today, \$1.5 billion has been made available so far. It is a \$5 billion problem as we see it, we are \$3.5 billion short. We appreciate what this committee has done to make funding available through the LOI mechanism but we have a long way to go. As both the Chairman and Ranking Member indicated, as we get more in-line equipment in place, we will have lots of efficiency benefits to the entire system.

Second point, on letters of intent, the representatives from TSA have talked about how there are eight LOIs in place. Our testimony indicates that there is a need for probably 60. I don't sit before you today with perfect vision, it might be 60, it might be 65, it might be 70, it might be 45 but what it is not is 8 and it is not 10.

The Office of Management and Budget has dictated to the Homeland Security Department and TSA that they will not issue anymore LOIs or grudgingly may issue one or two more LOIs. OMB and the Administration need to be educated on the fact that putting more systems in place that are in-line in nature will save money for the Federal Government, not cost money to the Federal Government over the long haul.

Third point, local matching share, in Vision 100, you in our judgment wisely moved forward on providing a greater Federal share for these security projects. Collectively the aviation industry would have preferred 100 percent Federal share but got 90 percent on these projects and that was very important to us. No army of TSA lawyers, and they do have an army, can change "shall" to "may" without your acquiescence.

For my dramatic reading of the day, Section 605 of Vision 100, Federal Share, "In general, the Government's share of the cost of a project under this section shall," not "may" but "shall be 90 percent per project at a medium-large hub airport and 95 percent for a project at any other airport." It also goes on to talk about "shall revise letters of intent issued before the date of enactment." This is the retroactive provision for those airports that already had LOIs in place.

The law is not a matter of convenience. The issue is not that TSA or the Department is going to just ignore that. They have put forward a proposal in their fiscal year 2005 budget to change that and revert back to the 75 percent. We don't agree with them, but that

is okay. The Administration, the Executive Branch, proposes and Congress disposes. I am sure you will give that every consideration but until such time as you change the law, they are required to fund those at 90 percent. Today, airports are being told that in-line for LOIs, they will get 75 percent from TSA, not 90 percent. There are airports today that have LOIs in place that are seeking reimbursement that are being told by TSA that they can expect 75 percent, not 90 percent. That is totally unacceptable.

Last point, you stole our thunder a little bit. We were going to collectively do a kiss to David Schaffer. Randy Walker had even imported Wayne Newton and show girls from Las Vegas for a little number that we had lined up. We will save that for another time but on behalf of the entire aviation industry, and I want to say for the past 15 years me personally, we want to thank David Schaffer for his excellent work. He has forgotten more about aviation than I will ever learn.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Thank you, Mr. Hauptli.

Let me call on Mr. Porter, if he would be so kind as to introduce our next witness.

Mr. PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The next guest is a friend of mine probably for over 20 years, Randall Walker, we call him Randy. He is head of one of the busiest airports in the United States of America and numerous other airports around the Clark County area.

In 2002, there was almost 500,000 aircraft operations, takeoffs and landings that took place at McCarran and as I mentioned earlier, close to 50 percent of all of our visitors to Las Vegas travel via McCarran Airport. Over 10,000 people are employed at McCarran, including airline employees, concession personnel, contractors and nearly 1,000 Clark County employees under Mr. Walker's leadership. The airport generates close to \$260 million a year and has a yearly impact on our local economy of almost \$25 billion.

I think we are going to find today Mr. Walker has not only areas of concern but also some suggestions of how to make it better for those TSA folks here today. I believe Mr. Walker has provided some photographs of McCarran Airport shortly after the Consumer Electronic Show that was mentioned. I think it graphically shows the challenges we have had in the Las Vegas area.

I welcome Mr. Walker.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Porter for that introduction. I appreciate it.

The lines are back. That is the problem that we have. We had these long lines at the end of 2001 and 2002. We didn't sit around and wait for somebody to do something about it, we did a lot on our own to make sure that the lines went away. We expanded our checkpoint lanes from 12 to 25, adding the last three this last year. We are now constructing new floor space to add more lanes at our own expense. We have added our new speed check common use check-in kiosk to help take the band off the ticket counter so those not checking bags don't have to go to the ticket counter. We have added cameras to the checkpoint. We have developed automatic doors that are tied to the security checkpoints. If an alarm goes, we can seal off the terminal and with our cameras, we can deter-

mine how far penetration went. We don't have to dump the entire terminal so we have a lesser impact on those passengers already screened.

We have already done the things that were suggested by two of your colleagues, the one from the Denver area that talked about getting everybody together to talk about what the peaks are going to do. We did that a long time ago. We actually have ten minute intervals to show what the seat capacity and demand is going to be on a daily basis. We share that with the TSA and the airlines provide their information.

We have already done the lane configuration your colleague from New Jersey talked about. We couldn't wait for the TSA, we did that with our own money. We looked at what they were doing in Baltimore and it kind of scared us because we thought they were taking more space than they needed, so we developed our own. We constructed our checkpoint lane and then had them come out and take a look at them and they decided they would work so they stayed in place.

We did all that in 2002 and the lines became tolerable. I won't say they were great but they were tolerable. Then all of a sudden in January, the lines just ballooned again. We added three checkpoints in 2003. That was an expansion of 13.6 percent lane capacity. Our passengers only went up 3.6 percent, so the lanes should have gotten shorter but got much, much longer. We tried to figure out why that was. We were very perplexed.

We went out and started examining what was happening and we came to several conclusions. First, I want to tell you what we did is rather than complain, we wanted to do everything we could to make the lines as efficient as possible, so we sent all of our senior staff, including myself, out to the checkpoint to manage the front of the lanes, what we call front-end loading. We actually are there handing the passengers a bin, directing them to what to do so they are more prepared when they get to the checkpoint.

What we found is people are not prepared when they get to the checkpoint. They are still taking their shoes off, they are still taking their beepers, they are still getting the change out of their pocket. If you add ten seconds of delay to 65,000 passengers in a peak day, that is 150,000 seconds and you do the math, that is a lot of hours of additional wait for everybody.

So we were talking to the customers, seeing what was happening and one of the things we have concluded is in spite of all the public attention to this, people are still not prepared when they come to the checkpoint. One of the big reasons we find is that they are confused as to what the rules should be or what the rules are because every airport is different. Do I have to take off my shoes, do I have to put my shoes in the bin, do I have to put them directly on the belt, can I put my coat in the same bin as I put my shoes, et cetera.

What happens is they wait until right before they go in the magnetometer until somebody tells them what to do or they play it safe and put everything in a separate bin. My shoes go in a bin, my coat goes in a bin, my change goes in a bin and now I have five bins for one passenger and that increases the processing time for each passenger. That is because they are so confused, they don't know what to do.

I will give you an example of two conversations I had in the last week. One was with an investment banker who does a lot of investment banking work for us. I had dinner with him last week and he was telling me an experience and his colleague had in an airport. They were walking through a magnetometer, he knows his shoes don't ring because he is an experienced traveler, somebody the airlines like, a frequent business traveler that books his travel on short notice. The TSA employee said, you need to take off your shoes. He said no, I don't, they don't ring. He said, yes, you need to take your shoes off and he said, no, I don't, they don't ring. Finally, the guy let him come through, he didn't ring and he invited him into the lane where you get the extra special attention for not following his suggestion.

His colleague that was behind him made a comment, that is ridiculous. He also got invited into the special lane and he told me, I will never not take my shoes off again even though he knows they don't ring. So that is just adding more processing time that is absolutely unnecessary.

My marketing manager, who flies all over the country and all over the world on an annual basis, gave me the same story in another airport. I had a similar experience personally in Providence, Rhode Island where I knew my shoes didn't ring but yet it was easier to take them off than argue with the TSA employee that I shouldn't take them off. So customers are confused and so they do the prudent thing for themselves that adds more processing time for everybody behind them. Then you multiply that by 65,000 passengers and you have a real problem.

The second part I haven't mentioned is the throughput reduction we had in our lanes. We on a regular basis send our staff out to measure a number of hours period of time the throughput of each of our checkpoints. What we found from 2003 to 2004 is the throughput capacity of our checkpoints has dropped, same number of lanes, expanded number of lanes by 13 percent, all of the lanes are managed by the TSA in the peak times and yet the throughput dropped. Why is that? What happened?

Our analysis is as follows, what we can find out because TSA hasn't been very helpful in describing what their process changes have been. One of the things that happened is they turned on TIPS at all the airports. They have described to you what TIPS is. Of course if you are an employee who now knows there is a software program that is going to measure your effectiveness, you are going to be much more efficient at your job which means you are going to take more time which slows down the lanes. That probably is not a bad idea in and of itself.

If you step back a couple of years, one of the things that happened at our airport is we used to have free flow of the bag belt, and the operator would just stop the bag when they saw something that was questionable so they could take a better look at it. TSA decided to stop that, now each image must stop for five seconds. That adds a lot of extra processing time.

When we complained about that, they explained our staff is new, we don't have measurements to determine whether they are effective, we need to do this. It sounded reasonable so we kind of left it alone. Now that TIPS is in, now they have a mechanism to deter-

mine the effectiveness of the screener, they still make you stop the bag, every bag. So if you have a bin with a coat that is clearly identifiable to a screener that there is no problem, they still have to stop that for five seconds to look at it. That is the rule and they will be in trouble if they don't do it.

What the TSA needs to do as they implement these new procedures is go back to the old procedures and see which ones can be eliminated because they now have a system that can actually monitor the effectiveness of the screener and get rid of the old rule they had that is creating some of the delay.

Some of the members have touched on the trusted traveler program and CAPPS. CAPPS was fully implemented at the beginning of the year. As Mr. Oberstar mentioned at our airport, sometimes the CAPPS line can be as long as the regular line and those all have to have special attention, be handwanded and their bag searched. We could certainly get CAPPS-II where we have fewer people who are being subjected. So those are some simple things they could do.

The other thing they should do is give the FSD the flexibility at every airport to manage the system in real time. If you look at these pictures we have provided you, Mr. Chairman, unfortunately, I can tell you at each point how long the line is. The W.H. Smith store, if the line is there, that is about 40 minutes. This particular line goes beyond that. This was probably a hour and a half to two hours. This was not after CES, this was just last Sunday.

Mr. MICA. I don't want to cut you off but if you could conclude?

Mr. WALKER. Yes, Mr. Chairman. In conclusion if you could give the TSA, if the TSA could give the FSD the authority to manage in real time to make sure the rules are implemented to protect people on both sides of the checkpoints so we don't have this security problem in front of the checkpoint. As we now know, the terrorists have figured out they can walk people up in front of a checkpoint like we have seen recently in the news, I think that would be more secure for everybody. The GAO and the IG should come out and criticize the FSD for taking that authority and balancing the risk.

Mr. MICA. Angela Gittens is Director of the Miami Dade-Aviation Department.

Ms. GITTENS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee.

First, I would like to ask permission to submit to you additional information.

Mr. MICA. Without objection, so ordered.

Ms. GITTENS. Secondly, I know I speak for all the airport directors here when I emphasize that airport proprietors have a maximum stake in the safety and security of air transportation. We know it is the cornerstone of our business since commercial aviation cannot exist as a form of mass transportation without that safety and security. Obviously the dramatic decline in air travel after September 11 was tragic proof of that fact. So this will not be a debate on the vital interest we share to constantly ratchet up the level of safety and security in our air transportation system.

Although I will be talking about the frustrations specifically of Miami-Dade County in dealing with the Transportation Security Administration, I would like to acknowledge up front that we have

a great deal of respect for the tremendous challenge that TSA confronts and the prime risk that TSA has made in short tenure and the fact that we have worked very collaboratively and cooperatively with the MIA Federal Security Director and his staff as team members in an integrated mission and will continue to do so. We commend them for the job that they do.

My purpose here today is to highlight the barriers we see as keeping the TSA from being responsive to the security needs of Miami International Airport. We are very concerned the Federal Government is retreating from the commitment it made to the communities of this Nation in the wake of the vicious attacks on September 11.

The most pressing issue for my community I would like to discuss is the explosive detection system installation at MIA. Congress, as you know imposed a December 31, 2002 deadline for permanent installation of EDS equipment in line with the baggage sortation systems. To accomplish this on an interim basis, the TSA installed equipment in the passenger lobbies and baggage make up areas of MIA. It was clear to all that our mostly 1960s vintage terminal facilities could not long tolerate such an arrangement but we understood that we just had to make do in the short run.

At MIA, we are in the midst of a \$4.8 billion capital improvement program. That includes construction of two new terminals, north and south. The construction program has entered its peak phase with expenditures of over \$1 million a day. We are having to cancel and defer projects that this community wants including the intermodal commuter facility that we have talked about, Mr. Chairman, that is part of Miami-Dade County's overall transportation system because now the airport must fund the permanent installation of EDS equipment in-line since the TSA has reneged on its commitment to pay for this. For Miami-Dade County this constitutes over a \$200 million unfunded Federal mandate we can ill afford but we can no longer defer because we have an ongoing construction project. The longer we wait, the bigger the ultimate bill since as we know in construction, time is money.

We have been working with the TSA on a Memorandum of Agreement and Letters of Intent. In a conference call the day after Thanksgiving, I think Randy was on that same call, then TSA Administrator Admiral Loy proposed to us the MOA LOI process. Airports have expressed themselves willing to finance the substantial EDS installation costs by allowing the TSA to leverage its resources by spreading out the payment over several years. In this way, the TSA could achieve its mandate at more airports in a shorter period of time. We agreed to do it this way.

Over a year has passed since that conversation and a second congressional deadline has come and gone and yet MIA still does not have approval of an EDS in-line design and a funding commitment from the TSA. Considering we were not placed in the first group of airports, even though we are the Nation's third busiest international gateway, have the highest number of foreign visitors of any airport in the Nation, have long been considered an airport with very special security needs due to our particular market characteristics is no less now, we are very confused as to what possible criteria the TSA can be using.

We now hear that the Office of Management and Budget has prohibited TSA from entering into any further LOI agreements so even though Congress has passed appropriations for the TSA to install EDS equipment, although we can contemplate that Congress will pass appropriations in the future, we know the threat and the need remain, the LOI Program is effectively suspended. With the suspension of a program that was conceived as a convenience to the TSA and a way for the TSA to hasten achievement of its mandate, the TSA now walks away from its mandate. You will forgive me if I say we feel that the Miami-Dade County community has been dumped on.

Along with other members of our community, I have personally traveled to Washington on numerous occasions over the last two years to make sure that TSA knew how important the EDS request was to Miami-Dade County. I have met with every TSA Administrator and many senior executives, I have always been assured that our message was received but received no commitment. On other occasions, our audience expressed surprise that we had not already gotten our LOI or our MOA given the importance of our airport and we were assured due attention would be given our request.

After all the TSA leadership changes, meetings and conversations, I am sorry to report to you that MIA is on closer to receiving funding for EDS installation than we were when the TSA was created in November 2001 with the signing of the Aviation Transportation Security Act.

You have heard here about the importance of McCarran to the State of Nevada. The importance of MIA to the State of Florida and to Miami-Dade County is no less. Ninety-five percent of the visitors to Miami-Dade County arrive by air. Without its aviation assets, the community is subject to losing \$18.6 billion in economic impact and more than 237,000 jobs.

Some recommendations. With respect to the permanent in-line installation, Congress must act to clarify TSA's ability to obligate funds for airports at which TSA has determined that an on-line solution is the only effective means of accomplishing the intent of ATSA. There appears to be a debate within the Executive Branch to the fiscal, statutory or policy basis for the LOI/MOA Program. Congress should address this and provide a viable means to reimburse airports for this unfunded mandate.

If a dedicated source of funding is needed for an LOI program, Congress should provide it. If the answer is additional funding, then we urge Congress to include an earmark for terminal modifications for in-line EDS in the supplemental spending bill.

Also, I want to urge you, as Todd said, to maintain the 90 percent Federal share. It is an appalling betrayal of our community that the Federal Government commits to taking on a responsibility, then asks for a 10 percent local match for the Federal Government's responsibility, then asks for a 25 percent match or in our case, a 100 percent match as though baggage screening has become a local responsibility.

Lastly, I think we need to take a cold, hard look at what it is going to take to protect our Nation's air transportation system without undoing the air transportation system's main job, to serve as the economic engines of the economies of our communities. It is

not too early to look back at ATSA with the TSA, the Department of Homeland Security, the local communities and the industry and start making such adjustments as may be necessary to secure not just a place or a plane, but the process of air travel.

Thank you very much.

Mr. MICA. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Let me recognize, finally and patiently, Tom Jensen, President, National Safe Skies Alliance

Mr. JENSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have submitted written testimony along with a list of our members.

Mr. MICA. Without objection, the entire testimony will be made a part of the record.

Mr. JENSEN. Thank you.

I would like to take the opportunity now to comment on some of the issues that have been raised and that you have raised, Mr. Chairman, in the testimony here today. One of these issues concerns the need for in-line screening of checked baggage. We have been working with Lexington, mentioned earlier by Mr. Plavin. We participated in helping to design that facility and also have performed testing in that facility to make sure the kind of system set up there can be a model system that can be used in other medium-sized airports across the country. We feel we have moved forward some in that particular area.

I also want to comment on the concern about McCarran. We have undertaken a project in Atlanta in checkpoint optimization for which we have set up certain rearrangements to two of the checkpoint queues there to make measurements to see if we move people better through that kind of configuration than the configuration presently being used. That effort is ongoing but as a result of the effort we have in Atlanta, Seattle has asked us to come and conduct a similar thing there. We do have a crew that has been working in Seattle for three weeks now taking the necessary measurements needed to make some determinations as to how that checkpoint can be speeded up.

We also have been involved with trying to improve the means by which resolution of alarms can be made in checked baggage using on-line protocols rather than having to search bags. So we have done testing at Boston, San Francisco, Jacksonville and Orange County. We are in the process of providing the data necessary to change those protocols, and hopefully the TSA will be able to make it possible to move baggage through with on-line corrections or on-line resolution of alarms rather than having to do it manually.

The question was raised earlier about the viability of using full body screening. As you know, Mr. Chairman, Safe Skies tested for some three months whole body screening at Orlando Airport and even with the nearly hysterical news coverage of that effort, we found that 78 percent of those people that came through voluntarily were happy to be screened by that kind of device. So it is not as big an issue as perhaps has been reported. We think continued screening and improving the equipment will make it possible to solve that problem.

I would also like to comment on Dr. Randy Null who gave a laundry list of things that are underway right now in answer to

your question with regard to what is being deployed into the field. I would like to say we are getting prepared right now—we had meetings even yesterday at TSA—to begin testing those specific devices that were mentioned.

I would like to turn to one other issue included in my written testimony regarding the ATSC, a group of several devices put together and tested in that fashion. We did those tests at Stanford Research Institute, an organization in California that can do live explosive testing. We tested that equipment there, and a report has been completed and submitted on that. We think there are some things to learn from the work we did there.

Mr. MICA. Thank you. I want to thank each of the panelists for their testimony.

Ms. GITTENS. I don't recall and maybe I missed it, what kind of penalty do you face if you don't get this matter solved?

Ms. GITTENS. Because the construction is ongoing, between the two terminals we are talking about \$150,000 a day in delay claims by the contractors.

Mr. MICA. Just for the record, did you say \$150,000 a day?

Ms. GITTENS. Correct.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Jensen, you heard what Mr. Null testified today and I heard your comments. Please advise the subcommittee on a continuous basis of the progress with these commitments to next generation testing. Could you do that?

Mr. JENSEN. We will be delighted to do that.

Mr. MICA. No further questions.

Ms. Berkley?

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I also want to echo the Chairman's thanks to all of you. This has been a very enlightening panel and I appreciate the input. It was superb.

If I could ask Mr. Walker a few questions, if I may. Your testimony mentions the front-end loading project to assist passengers prepare for the checkpoints. Can you tell me who is paying for this service and how much the service costs?

Mr. WALKER. We are paying for it with airport funds and now that we have the system down with testing with our senior management, we are entering into a contract with a private company on an annualized basis, about \$600,000 a year.

Ms. BERKLEY. Just for the record, you are paying for it and it is \$600,000 a year?

Mr. WALKER. Correct.

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you. I understand that you as the director of the airport are not responsible for the TSA. I know I receive phone calls regarding the long lines and the various problems, then I call you and we talk about them, but can you tell us what other procedures you have deployed at the airport to help reduce delays at the TSA-manned checkpoints?

Mr. WALKER. Some of the things I mentioned were we reconfigured the checkpoints and used a configuration that was a little different than the TSA to squeeze more lanes in, we were able to go from 12 to 25 lanes. We had established before the front-end loading, processes where we have helped the passengers get organized before they got there but it wasn't quite as efficient as what we

have now. We have worked with the TSA to get all of the equipment they need, any cameras, anything they need, we have put in at our expense to make sure that checkpoint is as efficient as possible.

Ms. BERKLEY. Is the TSA staffing level a problem at our airport?

Mr. WALKER. Yes, they are. The last I checked, they are about 150 staff down. They are trying to hire some part-timers but that has become a little more problematic than they had anticipated in terms of the length of time and the turnover is extremely high with the part-timers. That progress hasn't been as good as I think they had hoped. They have authorized overtime at airport. All of our TSA employees are working 50 hour weeks to be able to staff the checkpoints at a peak time, so that has helped.

It is not that they haven't addressed the issue but yes, it is a problem and you can't work people 50 hours a week forever.

Ms. BERKLEY. So you are saying we are 150 people down?

Mr. WALKER. The last I checked it was about 150 down.

Ms. BERKLEY. And we are going to be adding new lanes?

Mr. WALKER. We are going to be adding six new lanes in October.

Ms. BERKLEY. Then how many more down will we be with six additional lanes?

Mr. WALKER. We should get 100 or so more to manage those lanes if they were to properly staff them during peak times.

Ms. BERKLEY. Obviously I know these photos, I know this airport very, very well. Looking at the photos, can you describe the experience that passengers go through from the moment they arrive at the airport until they actually board the airplane?

Mr. WALKER. Assuming ticketing is not a problem, when they come up the escalator, this particular line to the D gates, they will probably encounter this line shortly after they come up the escalator and will have a two to two and a half hour wait based on this line to get through the checkpoint and it snakes through. Disneyland couldn't do any better in providing a serpentine line to keep people up to get to a ride like the rides in Disneyland. Every time you turn a corner, you think you are almost there and you have another distance to go. It is a long line. They stand there, get very frustrated but what are they going to do, they have to catch their plane.

Ms. BERKLEY. Again, I want to thank all of you for your input. Mr. Walker, I enjoy working with you very much. You do an excellent job and I appreciate all that you do on behalf of the community and the airport.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you.

Mr. PORTER [ASSUMING CHAIR]. Mr. Walker, I think this is Nevada's lucky day because if we look at the committee, two members of the Nevada delegation and my senior member to my left, certainly now is your chance.

On a more serious note, the comments that have been expressed today by members of the panel and members of the elected body are although at times specific to our communities, we represent what is happening across the country.

Mr. Walker, I actually have two questions before we conclude. You mentioned many of the challenges that McCarran has had and

is probably reflective of other airports, but as your Congressman, what should we be putting in the budget right now to help you with your needs at McCarran Airport?

Mr. WALKER. I think the most important thing for us is for the TSA to have the ability to buy the equipment that is necessary both from the baggage screening side—we are fortunate we have a LOI, so we are putting in with Federal help our baggage screening system and are under construction as we speak. Unfortunately for Ms. Gittens, she doesn't have the same thing in Miami and that is problematic for her and for a lot of other airport directors. So solving the problem in one airport like Las Vegas does not necessarily make the whole system efficient. Our customers have to come from some other airport, including Miami, so it is important that is efficient on both sides so that they are not discouraged to take a plane to our community because they don't want to go through their own airport. It is important that we have the equipment and can solve this problem at both ends from our perspective.

Also, the number of employees is a problem. This 45,000 cap or whatever the number is that Congress put on, not this committee but the Congress put on the TSA is a little problematic if you want them to do everything you have directed them to do. Either you need to be more realistic in what your instructions are to them and what their duties are or you need to give them more manpower, one or the two, because there are other things they are directed to do that they haven't even started yet. I don't know how they are going to do that with 45,000 people when they can't even manage what they are supposed to do with the cap today.

Problematic in that is they need to get their hiring process solved because I wouldn't give them more authority to hire more people when they can't hire the number they have been authorized to have. I think it is incumbent upon them to show they can actually manage what you have given them. Once they can do that, I think if you don't add more people to the system as the traffic grows back to pre-9/11 and beyond, there is no way we are going to be able to accommodate that growth in a reasonable fashion. We will discourage people from flying and the system won't grow if we don't get this fixed.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Walker, assuming for a moment that nothing changes, what will happen to our community?

Mr. WALKER. In my opinion, as the reputation of coming to our airport or any other airport similarly situated, that you are going to have to spend that type of time in line, people will not come, people will find an alternative way to spend their leisure time. Maybe they will drive, maybe they will stay home or whatever they want to do besides stand in line for two or three hours on their way home. I think from an economic standpoint both from individual communities and the airlines as well, which are not exactly at the top of their financial strength at the moment, if we want to make sure they are successful, we have to be able to encourage people to fly. What we are doing now I think is discouraging people to fly based on the fact that the experience is inconsistent and many times miserable.

Mr. PORTER. Thank you, Mr. Walker.

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Porter.

I think it is important to note that two-thirds of Nevada's congressional delegation is sitting here today.

There is one other question that I wanted to ask you because I posed the question to Mr. Blank and I said I would be interested in your answer as well. Could you explain to us what the effect of the implementation of the TPS Program is at McCarran Airport?

Mr. WALKER. Reduction in our throughput. It is very logical. Employees now know that there is a software tracking their effectiveness and they are going to be judged on the results of that tracking. So far, they are much more cautious about how they examine which has slowed the whole process down. That is not to say that TPS is not a good thing, but we need to examine, as I said, the other rules in effect before we had TPS that were justified. Maybe those need to be reconsidered so at the same time we are slowing down the process one, we can speed up the process on another. That is what I don't see the TSA doing, examining the old rules they instituted in 2002 before they had some of the new software and justified because they didn't have any way to track the employee, so they need to balance that. They need to be looking at the entire system and making the changes simultaneously, not after the fact.

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you very much. Thank all of you very much for being here.

Mr. PORTER. I would like to note that for the record, there were some items presented earlier the attendees would like make sure are added to the record, the photographs from McCarran, also the letter from the Consumer Electronics Association Mr. Gary Shapiro would like to add for the record, and also important to note, representing part of Las Vegas, these challenges are not every day. It is a great place to visit and be a part of our community.

Also, the record will be kept open for two weeks for additional comments.

I thank you all very much for your presentation and being with us today. Thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 1:20 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Testimony
Before the Subcommittee on Aviation,
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure, House of Representatives

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AVIATION SECURITY

Challenges Exist in Stabilizing and Enhancing Passenger and Baggage Screening Operations

Statement of Cathleen A. Berrick, Director,
Homeland Security and Justice



February 12, 2004



Highlights of GAO-04-440T, a testimony before the Subcommittee on Aviation, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives

AVIATION SECURITY

Challenges Exist in Stabilizing and Enhancing Passenger and Baggage Screening Operations

Why GAO Did This Study

Securing commercial aviation is a daunting task—with hundreds of airports and thousands of flights daily carrying millions of passengers and pieces of baggage. In an effort to strengthen the security of commercial aviation, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was created and charged with making numerous enhancements to aviation security, including federalizing passenger and baggage screening and screening checked baggage using explosive detection systems. To assess the progress of passenger and baggage screening operations, GAO was asked to describe TSA's efforts to (1) hire and deploy passenger and baggage screeners, (2) train the screening workforce, (3) measure screener performance in detecting threat objects, and (4) leverage and deploy screening equipment and technologies.

What GAO Recommends

In prior reports, GAO has made numerous recommendations designed to strengthen airport passenger and baggage screening. GAO also has several ongoing reviews related to the issues addressed in this testimony, and will issue separate reports related to these areas at later dates, with additional recommendations as appropriate.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-440T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Cathleen A. Berrick, (202) 512-8777, Berrickc@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

TSA met its mandate to establish a federal screener workforce by November 2002, but continues to face challenges in hiring and deploying passenger and baggage screeners. Staffing shortages at some airports and TSA's hiring process have hindered TSA's ability to fully staff screening checkpoints without using additional measures, such as overtime. In addition, while TSA has taken steps to enhance its screener training programs, staffing shortages and lack of high-speed connectivity at airport training facilities have made it difficult for screeners at some airports to fully utilize these programs.

TSA has also undertaken several initiatives to measure the performance of passenger screeners in detecting threat objects. These efforts include increasing covert testing at screening checkpoints and conducting annual recertifications of screeners. While TSA is making progress in measuring the performance of passenger screeners, it has collected limited performance data related to its baggage screening operations. However, TSA has begun collecting additional performance data related to its baggage screening operations, and plans to increase these efforts in the future.

TSA also continues to face challenges in deploying and leveraging screening equipment and technologies. TSA deployed Explosive Detection Systems and Explosive Trace Detection equipment to all airports to screen checked baggage. However, TSA has been unable to fully utilize this equipment to screen 100 percent of checked baggage due to screener shortages, and equipment out of service for maintenance and/or repairs. When this equipment is not available, TSA continues to screen checked baggage using alternative means. TSA also has ongoing initiatives designed to increase the efficiency of screening checked baggage, including implementing in-line baggage screening systems and streamlining screening processes.

TSA is also conducting research and development (R&D) activities to strengthen passenger and baggage screening. These efforts are designed to improve detection capability, performance, and efficiency for current technologies, and to develop next generation screening equipment. TSA faces a number of challenges with its R&D program, including balancing funding with competing priorities, and working with other components of the Department of Homeland Security to develop a strategy for merging their R&D programs.

Passenger Screening Checkpoint at U.S. Airport



Source: FAA.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting me to participate in today's hearing to discuss progress and challenges in airport passenger and baggage screening. Securing commercial aviation is a daunting task—with hundreds of airports, thousands of aircraft, and thousands of flights daily carrying millions of passengers and pieces of baggage. In an effort to strengthen the security of commercial aviation, the President signed into law the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) on November 19, 2001.¹ ATSA created the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and mandated actions designed to strengthen aviation security, including the federalization of passenger and baggage screening at over 440 commercial airports in the United States by November 19, 2002, and the screening of all checked baggage using explosive detection systems.² Notwithstanding these efforts, recent reviews and covert testing conducted by us, the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Inspector General, and TSA's Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review revealed continuing weaknesses and vulnerabilities in the screening system.

My testimony today focuses on the progress TSA is making in developing and deploying tools to enhance and measure screener performance and the challenges that remain. In particular, my testimony highlights four key areas, including TSA's efforts to (1) hire and deploy passenger and baggage screeners, (2) train the screening workforce, (3) measure screener performance in detecting threat objects, and (4) leverage and deploy screening equipment and technologies. My testimony is based on our prior work and preliminary observations from our ongoing reviews of TSA's passenger and baggage screening programs, and research and development efforts.

¹Pub. L. No. 107-71, 115 Stat. 597 (2001).

²According to TSA, Explosive Detection Systems (EDS) and Explosive Trace Detection (ETD) are the only technologies available to TSA for meeting ATSA's requirement to screen 100 percent of checked baggage using explosive detection systems. EDS operate in an automated mode and use probing radiation to examine objects inside baggage and identify the characteristic signatures of threat explosives. ETD works by detecting vapors and residues of explosives. Human operators collect samples by rubbing bags with swabs, which are chemically analyzed to identify any traces of explosive materials.

In summary:

While TSA met its mandate to establish a federal screener workforce by November 2002, it continues to face challenges in hiring and deploying its screener workforce. To accomplish its security mission, TSA needs a sufficient number of passenger and baggage screeners trained and certified in the latest TSA screening procedures and technology. However, staffing shortages and TSA's hiring process have hindered the ability of some Federal Security Directors (FSD)³ to provide sufficient resources to staff screening checkpoints and oversee screening operations at their airports.

TSA has taken steps to enhance its training programs for passenger and baggage screeners. In addition to strengthening its basic and recurrent training programs, TSA is also enhancing and standardizing remedial training for screeners who fail covert tests conducted by TSA's Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review. TSA has also established leadership and technical training programs for screening supervisors. Although TSA continues to make progress in this area, staffing shortages and lack of high-speed connectivity⁴ at many airport training facilities have made it difficult for screeners to fully utilize these programs and complete required training.

While TSA has undertaken several initiatives to measure the performance of passenger screeners in detecting threat objects, it has collected limited data related to the performance of baggage screeners. In response to its July 2003 Passenger Screener Performance Improvement Study, TSA developed a short-term action plan that identified key actions TSA planned to take to strengthen the performance of passenger screeners. These actions built on several initiatives that TSA already had underway, including enhancing training for screeners and supervisors, increasing covert testing, completing installation of the Threat Image Projection

³Federal Security Directors are responsible for overseeing security at each of the nation's commercial airports.

⁴High-speed connectivity refers to broadband access to TSA's field operations training sites and checkpoints.

System (TIP),⁴ and conducting annual recertification of screeners. TSA has focused on assessing the performance of passenger screeners, but has collected limited data related to the performance of baggage screeners. However, TSA has begun collecting additional performance data related to its baggage screening operations, and plans to increase these efforts in the future.

Although TSA has made progress in its checked baggage screening operations, it continues to face operational and funding challenges in its efforts to screen all checked baggage using Explosive Detection Systems (EDS) or Explosive Trace Detection (ETD) systems. TSA deployed this equipment to all airports to screen checked baggage, but has been unable to fully utilize this equipment due to screener and equipment shortages and equipment being out of service for maintenance and/or repairs. When EDS and ETD equipment cannot be used, TSA continues to use alternative screening means identified in ATSA,⁵ including K-9 teams, manual searches, and positive passenger bag match.⁷ TSA has ongoing initiatives to increase the efficiency of screening all checked baggage using EDS and ETD, including the development and construction of in-line baggage screening systems—which streamlines screening processes⁸ and airport operations at larger airports. In addition, although TSA is funding research and development (R&D) on several technologies designed to improve the effectiveness of screening checked baggage and passengers for explosives, progress has been delayed due to competing priorities in a tight budget environment.

⁴TIP is designed to test screeners' detection capabilities by projecting threat images, including guns and explosives, into bags as they are screened. Screeners are responsible for positively identifying the threat image and calling for the bag to be searched. Once prompted, TIP identifies to the screener whether the threat is real and then records the screener's performance in a database that could be analyzed for performance trends.

⁵Pub. L. No. 107-71, § 110, 115 Stat. 597, 617, requires the use of alternative means for screening any piece of checked baggage not screened by an explosive detection system. Authorized alternative means include a bag match program, manual search, K-9 explosive detection units, and other means or technology approved by the Under Secretary.

⁷Positive passenger bag match is an alternative means of screening checked baggage, conducted by the airline, which requires that the passenger be on the same aircraft as the checked baggage.

⁸In-line baggage screening systems integrate EDS equipment into airport baggage handling systems to improve the pace of checked baggage screening (i.e., throughput).

Background

The security of the U.S. commercial aviation system has been a long-standing concern. Over the years, numerous initiatives have been implemented to strengthen aviation security. However, as we and others have documented in numerous reports and studies, weaknesses continue to exist. It was due in part to these weaknesses that terrorists were able to hijack four commercial aircraft on September 11, 2001, with tragic results. Concerns continue to exist regarding the security of the aviation system, as evidenced by the recent cancellations of several, mostly transatlantic flights to and from the United States in response to intelligence information regarding specific threats to those flights.

In response to the attacks of September 11th, ATSA mandated specific actions designed to strengthen aviation security, and established ambitious deadlines for completing many of these initiatives. Consequently, TSA initially focused on attempting to meet these deadlines, particularly creating a federalized screener workforce at commercial airports nationwide by November 19, 2002. TSA also focused on screening 100 percent of checked baggage using explosive detection systems by the original deadline of December 31, 2002.⁹ These efforts resulted in the deployment of more than 55,000 federal screeners at over 440 commercial airports nationwide by November 19, 2002, as well as the deployment of thousands of EDS and ETD systems.

Virtually all aviation security responsibilities now reside with TSA. Two of the most important of these responsibilities are passenger and checked baggage screening. Passenger screening involves the use of metal detectors, X-ray machines, ETDs, and manual searches to examine passengers and their carry-on baggage to identify threat objects. Checked baggage screening involves the use of EDS, ETDs, K-9 teams, positive passenger bag match, and manual searches to screen checked baggage. Performing these screening functions can be cognitively demanding and difficult for screening personnel.

The results I am presenting today are based on our preliminary observations of TSA's passenger and baggage screening programs and related research and development efforts, based on our ongoing reviews of

⁹Pursuant to the Homeland Security Act, Pub. L. No. 107-296, § 425, 116 Stat. 2135, 2185-86 (2002), the deadline for screening all checked baggage using explosive detection systems was extended until December 31, 2003, at airports the Under Secretary of Transportation for Security determined could not meet the December 31, 2002, deadline due to TSA's inability to deploy sufficient explosive detection systems to those airports.

these areas for this committee. As part of our ongoing reviews of TSA's passenger and baggage screening operations, we interviewed TSA officials and visited 15 category X airports; 11 category I airports; and 7 category II, III, and IV airports.¹⁰ During these visits, we observed screening operations and interviewed FSDs, their staffs, and, at some airports, airport authority and airline officials. We plan to visit additional airports and conduct additional analysis during the remainder of our review, including conducting a survey of all 158 FSDs regarding their screening operations. Additionally, we will continue to assess TSA's and DHS's research and development programs and the views of a panel of security and technology experts that we convened with the assistance of the National Academy of Sciences. We will report on the results of these reviews later this year.

Although Progress Has Been Made, Concerns Remain Regarding Hiring and Deploying the Screener Workforce

Although TSA successfully met its mandate to establish a federal screener workforce by November 2002, it continues to face challenges in hiring and deploying passenger and baggage screeners. To accomplish its security mission, TSA needs a sufficient number of passenger and baggage screeners trained and certified in TSA security procedures and technologies. TSA has acknowledged that its initial staffing efforts created imbalances in the screener workforce and is taking steps to address these imbalances. However, staffing shortages at some airports and TSA's hiring process have hindered the ability of some FSDs to fully staff screening checkpoints without using additional measures, such as overtime and the use of a National Screening Force.¹¹

Staffing Shortages Affect Screening Operations

TSA accomplished a significant goal by hiring and deploying more than 55,000 passenger and baggage screeners by November 19, 2002. However, TSA continues to struggle to maintain an adequate number of screeners at airport checkpoints, and has not yet achieved a stable screener workforce. Recognizing these difficulties, TSA has taken several steps to address staffing imbalances—including enhancing its workforce planning efforts, and deploying a National Screening Force to airports with pressing screening needs.

¹⁰There are five categories of airports—X, I, II, III, and IV. Category X airports have the largest number of enplanements and category IV airports have the smallest number.

¹¹TSA's National Screening Force provides screening support to all commercial airports in times of emergency, seasonal demands, or under other special circumstances that require a greater number of screeners than currently available to FSDs.

Screeners Imbalances

After meeting its deadline of deploying over 55,000 screeners by November 19, 2002, TSA recognized that its initial efforts created imbalances in the screener workforce, as some airports had too many screeners while others had too few. To address these imbalances, as well as congressional concerns regarding screener-staffing levels, TSA began attempting to right-size its screener workforce. Specifically, TSA established a goal to reduce its screener workforce by 3,000 screeners by June 1, 2003, and an additional 3,000 screeners by September 30, 2003. These reductions were achieved through attrition, voluntary transfers from full to part-time, and involuntary transfers to part-time or terminations based on screeners' scores on competency-based examinations.¹³

Currently, a congressionally imposed staffing cap¹⁴ prohibits TSA from exceeding a screener staffing level of 45,000 full-time equivalents (FTE).¹⁴ Figure 1 shows that based on annualized FTE data, TSA is currently below the 45,000 cap.¹⁵

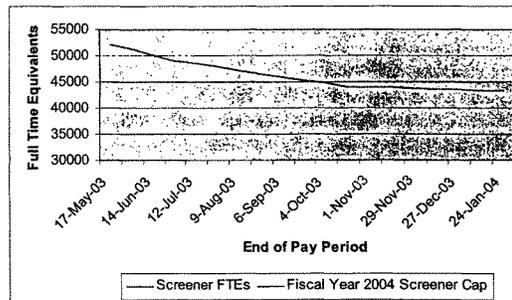
¹³TSA instructed FSDs to use competency-based testing at airports that were over their authorized screener staffing levels as the identification method for involuntary conversions to part-time and reductions-in-force. Based on an airport's staffing plan, the FSD was required to identify the number of screeners and screening supervisors to be converted to part-time or be reduced-in-force. Screeners were ranked based on testing scores. The competency-based tests consisted of two computer-based tests, including image recognition and knowledge of standard operating procedures.

¹⁴The fiscal year 2004 Department of Homeland and Security Appropriations Act, Pub. L. No. 108-90, 117 Stat. 1137, 1141-42 (2003).

¹⁵One full-time-equivalent is equal to one work year or 2,080 non-overtime hours.

¹⁶According to TSA, an annualized number represents an estimate of the usage of FTEs over the fiscal year assuming that the usage in a given pay period remains constant over all future pay periods.

Figure 1: TSA Full-Time Equivalent Screeners, May 2003 through January 2004



Source: TSA annualized data.

According to TSA officials, TSA has experienced an average annual attrition rate of 14 percent for screeners. However, attrition among the nation's more than 440 commercial airports is sometimes considerably higher. For example, at 8 category X airports visited during our review, FSDs reported that average annual attrition ranged from 15 to 36 percent.

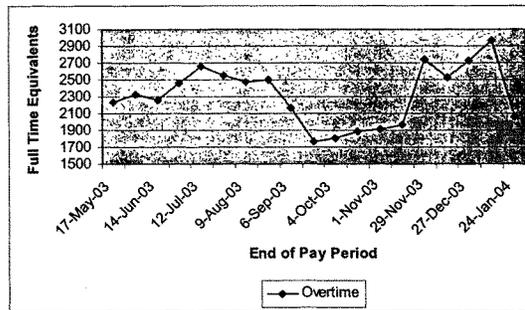
TSA has also experienced difficulties in hiring new staff, particularly part-time staff. FSDs at 11 of the 15 category X airports we visited reported that they were below their authorized staffing levels due to attrition and difficulties in hiring new staff. In addition, 3 of these FSDs noted that they were never successful in hiring up to the authorized staffing levels. FSDs said that some of the factors contributing to their inability to hire and retain screeners were the location of their airport, the lack of accessible and affordable parking and/or public transportation, and the high cost of living.

In addition, FSDs at several of the airports we visited stated that they experienced difficulty in attracting needed part-time screeners, which they believed to be due to low pay and benefits, as well as undesirable hours. Additionally, FSDs stated that very few full-time screeners were interested in converting to part-time status, and TSA officials stated that attrition rates for part-time screeners were considerably higher than those for full-

time screeners. TSA began actively recruiting part-time screeners during the summer of 2003, and continues to recruit part-time screeners at more than 80 airports.

Due to screener shortages, FSDs at 6 of the category X airports we visited stated that they frequently had to require mandatory overtime, particularly during the holiday season, to accomplish passenger and baggage screening functions. FSDs' use of overtime was particularly high during peak summer and holiday travel seasons. Figure 2 shows that between May 2003 and January 2004, TSA used the equivalent of an annualized average of 2,315 full-time-equivalent screeners in overtime hours per pay period (every 2 weeks).

Figure 2: TSA Screener Overtime in Full-Time Equivalents, May 2003 through January 2004



Source: TSA annualized data.

Workforce Planning Efforts

In an effort to right-size and stabilize its screener workforce, TSA hired a consultant in September 2003 to conduct a study of screener staffing levels at the nation's commercial airports. Specifically, the consultant was tasked with:

- evaluating TSA's current staffing methodology and systems to establish a baseline for model development;

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- developing a method for collecting and analyzing data to realistically portray specific airport conditions rather than using a generalized large/small airport protocol;
 - developing a comprehensive modeling approach with appropriate details to account for the considerable variability that occurs among airports;¹⁶
 - integrating modeling parameters into TSA's screener scheduling system;
 - implementing a staffing analysis model to be used as a management tool to determine daily and weekly staffing levels and deploy the model to commercial airports nationwide; and
 - delivering user-friendly simulation software that will determine optimum screener staffing levels for each of the more than 440 commercial airports with federal screeners.

TSA expects the consultant's study to be completed in April 2004. In the interim, TSA officials stated that they will continue to review the staffing allocation provided through their internal modeling efforts, which, among other things, assesses air carrier and airport growth patterns, and makes adjustments as appropriate. We will continue to review TSA's efforts to determine appropriate staffing levels for passenger and baggage screeners during the remainder of our review.

National Screening Force

To compensate for screener shortages and to enable operational flexibility to respond to changes in risk and threat, in October 2003, TSA established a National Screening Force to provide screening support to all airports in times of emergency, seasonal demands, or under other special circumstances that require a greater number of screeners than regularly available to FSDs. This force replaced the Mobile Screening Force—a regionally-based force—that was created in early 2002 primarily to support the initial deployment of federal screeners to commercial airports. The National Screening Force currently consists of over 700 full-time passenger and baggage screeners, of which about 10 percent are screening supervisors. Members of the National Screening Force volunteer to participate on the force for a 1-year period. TSA officials stated that while these screeners have a home airport to which they are assigned, they travel to airports in need of screening staff approximately 70 percent of the year.

¹⁶ TSA officials stated that it required the contractor to validate the staffing model using statistical samples of all staff and equipment operations at all category X airports and as many category I, II, III, and IV airports as necessary.

TSA officials stated that they determine where to deploy members of the National Screening Force based on four priorities. The highest priority is given to those airports that need additional screeners in order to be able to screen 100 percent of checked baggage using EDS and ETD. The second priority is given to small airports that have never met their authorized screener staffing levels and have no permanent screeners. TSA officials stated that several small airports have screening checkpoints that are entirely staffed by the National Screening Force. They also stated that some National Screening Force staff are deployed to airports, particularly small airports, where they are only needed on a part-time basis. The third priority is given to airports that are so understaffed that significant screening delays would occur without additional staff. Finally, the fourth priority is given to those airports with peak seasonal needs, such as Palm Springs, airports that have a shortage of female passenger screeners;¹⁷ and airports offering new commercial service. Additionally, when DHS recently increased the threat condition from yellow (elevated) to orange (high),¹⁸ TSA reportedly redeployed about 50 percent of the National Screening Force to airports determined to be at a higher risk based on intelligence data.

TSA is also currently drafting standard operating procedures for the National Screening Force. We will continue to examine TSA's use of the National Screening Force during the remainder of our review.

TSA's Hiring Process Not Fully Responsive to FSD Needs

TSA's hiring process is designed to ensure that its hiring practices are standardized and consistent throughout all airports. However, this process has hindered the ability of some FSDs to adequately staff passenger and baggage screening checkpoints. Several FSDs we interviewed expressed concern that TSA's hiring process was not responsive to their needs, and wanted to have more input in the hiring process. These FSDs faced screener shortages that hindered their screening capability.

¹⁷TSA's standard operating procedures require that a screener of the same gender as the passenger conduct secondary searches (i.e., hand wand and pat downs) of the passenger.

¹⁸DHS's Homeland Security Advisory System consists of 5 threat conditions, ranging from low (green) to severe (red).

To ensure consistency in its hiring process, TSA headquarters manages hiring centrally through its Aviation Operations and Human Resources offices. In general, the process includes the following steps.

- FSDs identify their need for additional passenger or baggage screeners, within their authorized allocation of screeners, and request headquarters to initiate the hiring process.
- Aviation Operations reviews and prioritizes each request in consultation with FSDs.
- Human Resources develops a hiring plan that identifies a schedule of hiring events – from vacancy postings to the establishment of centers at which the applicants' skills are assessed.¹⁹
- A recruiting contractor receives and assesses all screener applications to ensure the applicants meet the basic requirements for employment, including U.S. citizenship and specific education and work experience. All applicants that meet the minimum qualifications are invited to schedule themselves for the assessment process.²⁰
- Upon successfully completing the assessment process, the recruiting contractor sends the list of qualified applicants to TSA's hiring/personnel contractor responsible for making job offers.
- The hiring contractor schedules the candidates for orientation and training once they have accepted the offers.

Many of the FSDs we interviewed expressed concern with the lack of a continuous hiring process to backfill screeners lost through attrition, and their lack of authority to conduct hiring on an as needed basis. The FSDs also complained of the time lag between their request for additional staff

¹⁹An assessment center is a temporary testing site that TSA's hiring contractor assembles to conduct assessments of screener applicants. The centers are generally constructed at locations such as hotels and TSA training facilities that are in close proximity to the airport(s) where FSDs have requested additional staff.

²⁰The assessment process consists of three phases. Phase I includes three computer-based tests (1) the English Proficiency Test; (2) the Screener Object Recognition Tests, which assesses an applicant's ability to identify an X-ray images through visual observation and identification and mental rotation; and (3) the Aviation Security Screener Employment Test, which evaluates interpersonal skills such as customer service and dependability and work values. Applicants who pass Phase I of the assessment process are scheduled to attend Phase II, which includes (1) a structured interview; (2) physical ability tests, such as luggage lift and baggage search; (3) a medical examination such as vision, color vision, hearing, physical coordination, and motor skills; and (4) a drug test. Applicants who pass Phase II proceed to Phase III, which entails a background investigation including credit and criminal checks. TSA officials reported that approximately 8 percent of applicants pass both the Phase I and II assessments, and about 90 percent of applicants pass Phase III. Officials further reported that nearly 80 percent of offers made are accepted.

and having trained and certified screeners on board. FSDs at 4 of the category X airports we visited stated that the time lag between their request for additional staffing and the opening of an assessment center took several months. For example, one FSD stated that in response to continued attrition at his airport, he notified TSA in advance that additional screeners would be needed before the peak summer travel season. However, an assessment center was not opened until mid-June and the initial training did not begin until July. The FSD reportedly had to rely on the Mobile Screening Force and overtime to accommodate the demand during the peak summer season. This same FSD also stated that the lengthy hiring process limited his ability to address screener performance issues, such as absenteeism or tardiness, and contributed to screener complacency because screeners were aware that they were unlikely to be terminated due to staffing shortages. In another example, an FSD at one large airport found it difficult to fill the more than 100 part-time approved screener positions because the nearest assessment center was too far away for local applicants to be processed.

Several FSDs we interviewed also stated that not all of the applicants who were offered positions showed up for initial basic screener training. For example, in November 2003, at one large category X airport, the FSD reported that 80 individuals who accepted screener positions were scheduled to report for basic screener training, but following orientation, only 15 individuals (less than 20 percent) reported for training. TSA headquarters reported that an average of 13 percent of screeners who are hired fail to attend basic screener training.²¹

FSDs also expressed concern regarding the lack of input they had during the hiring process. Specifically, they stated that they do not have a role in reviewing applications, interviewing applicants, or making hiring decisions. In response to these concerns, TSA officials reported that they plan to redesign and streamline their hiring process, particularly the assessment center process (Phase II), to allow for more involvement by FSDs and their staff. Specifically, officials reported that they are beginning to (1) ensure that the recruiting contractor includes the FSD in recruitment planning, including obtaining input regarding where and how the contractor recruits; (2) allow FSDs to participate with the contractor in the structured interview of the candidates during Phase II of the hiring

²¹TSA attempts to contact hired screeners who do not show up for basic screener training, and reschedule training when possible.

process; and (3) ensure that FSDs swear in the candidates and provides organizational briefings on their first day of orientation. Officials also reported that they plan to establish an advisory council of FSDs to help guide the piloting and implementation of this new process. The goal of these efforts is to make the hiring process more responsive to the wide range of airports' needs while ensuring efficiency and quality. We will continue to review these initiatives as part of our ongoing review of TSA's process for hiring and deploying passenger and baggage screeners.

TSA Has Enhanced Its Screener Training Programs, but Access to Programs Is Sometimes Limited

TSA has taken steps to enhance its training programs for passenger and baggage screeners. However, staffing shortages and lack of high-speed connectivity²² at airport training facilities have made it difficult for screeners to fully utilize these programs. Specifically, TSA recently revamped its screener training program to include three main components: (1) dual training for both passenger and baggage screeners (replaces basic screener training); (2) recurrent (skills refresher) screener training; and (3) technical screener training/certification for EDS.²³ In addition to strengthening its basic and recurrent training programs, TSA is also enhancing and standardizing remedial training for screeners who fail a covert test conducted by TSA's Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review. Despite these efforts, however, FSDs at 5 of the 15 category X airports we visited stated that ensuring screeners received required training continued to be a challenge.

Dual Passenger and Baggage Screener Training

As required by ATSA, TSA established a basic screener training program comprised of a minimum of 40 hours of classroom instruction and 60 hours of on-the-job training for passenger and baggage screeners. The initial basic screener training courses were updated at the end of 2003, respectively, to incorporate changes to standard operating procedures. In addition to these updates, TSA officials stated that they recently developed a new basic screener training program, "dual function screener training," to address technical aspects of both passenger and baggage screening. This training will utilize modular courses to provide skills refresher (recurrent) training or to cross-train screeners, such as refreshing baggage screening skills for a screener who has worked predominately as a

²²High-speed connectivity refers to broadband access to TSA's field operations training sites and checkpoints.

²³TSA plans to develop other certifications as new technologies are utilized and integrated into the screening process.

passenger screener. TSA officials reported that beginning in April 2004, all newly hired screeners will receive dual function screener training in order to provide FSDs with the flexibility to staff them as either passenger or baggage screeners.

Recurrent Training

Comprehensive and frequent training is key to passenger and baggage screeners' ability to detect threat objects. TSA requires passenger and baggage screeners to participate in 3 hours of recurrent training per week, averaged over each quarter. One hour is required to be devoted to x-ray image interpretation, and the other 2 hours on screening techniques or reviews of standard operating procedures.

We reported in September 2003 that TSA had not fully developed or deployed a recurrent training program for passenger screeners.²⁴ Since then, TSA has developed 12 recurrent training modules for passenger and baggage screeners. Two of these modules have been deployed to airports nationwide,²⁵ while 9 additional modules are expected to be deployed by March 2004. The final module, a Web-based x-ray image interpretation tool, is scheduled for implementation in April 2004.

As we reported in September 2003, many of the passenger screeners and supervisors we interviewed expressed the need for recurrent training.²⁶ Screeners were particularly interested in receiving additional training related to recognizing x-ray images of threat objects, and also identified an interest in more realistic training for the detection of improvised explosive devices. FSDs and training coordinators also emphasized that screeners needed to receive more hands-on training using threat simulators and emulators. TSA headquarters also identified these training needs as part of a study of passenger screener performance, and developed and deployed training tools to help address these needs.²⁷ For example, TSA officials

²⁴U.S. General Accounting Office, *Airport Passenger Screening: Preliminary Observations on Progress Made and Challenges Remaining*, GAO-03-1173 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 24, 2003).

²⁵The 2 completed modules are videos that provide training on procedures for conducting handheld metal detector, pat down, and manual bag searches.

²⁶As we did not select statistical samples of passenger screeners and supervisors to interview, the views of those we interviewed should not be considered representative of the views of all screeners and supervisors at the airports we visited.

²⁷While the study was focused on passenger screening, TSA officials stated that many of the performance issues identified also pertained to baggage screening.

reported that they provided every airport with at least one Modular Bomb Set kit and one weapons training kit. These Modular Bomb Sets and weapons training kits are intended to fill an identified gap in training by allowing screeners to touch and feel the threat objects that they are looking for. TSA also instituted a training program called "Threat In the Spotlight" that provides screeners with the latest in threat information regarding terrorist attempts to get threat objects past screening checkpoints.

TSA is also in the process of developing specialized certification training for technologies used by passenger and baggage screeners. TSA has developed only one course, for EDS use, but plans to develop other certifications and courses as new technologies are utilized and integrated into the screening process. Additionally, in October 2003, TSA fielded an Online Learning Center—a Web-based tool with 366 self-guided training courses available to all screening staff. The courses provided on the Online Learning Center Web site capture common developmental needs identified by TSA. The Online Learning Center also enables screeners to view the list of required and optional training courses and materials, review their training records, and track their training progress.

Remedial Training

Consistent with ATSA, TSA requires remedial training for any passenger or baggage screener who fails an operational test, and prohibits screeners from performing the screening function related to the tests they failed until they successfully complete the training.²⁸ FSDs must certify that screeners identified as requiring remedial training complete the training before they can perform the screening function identified as a performance weakness.

TSA is in the process of enhancing and standardizing remedial training requirements required after failure of covert operational tests. Program enhancements will provide specific guidance regarding materials to be reviewed during remedial training and standardize the practice of demonstrating proper techniques and procedures in the area of deficiency noted during the failed test.

²⁸Screening supervisors and managers may also require screeners to participate in corrective action training based on their observations of performance deficiencies, such as failure to follow a standard operating procedure.

Supervisory Training

TSA's Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review identified a lack of supervisory training as a cause for screener testing failures. In addition, both FSDs and TSA headquarters officials have recognized the need to enhance the skills of screening supervisors through supervisory training. As we reported in September 2003, TSA had begun working with the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Graduate School to tailor USDA's off-the-shelf supervisory course to meet the specific needs of TSA's screening supervisors. According to TSA, 500 screening supervisors participated in the course during the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2003.²⁹ Since then, TSA reportedly has sent an additional 1,500 of its approximately 3,600 screening supervisors to the enhanced USDA Graduate School supervisory course, and expects all screening supervisors to have received this training by April 2004. TSA officials also stated that they intend to schedule recently promoted supervisors to attend the USDA Graduate School supervisory course after March 2004 if they had not yet attended, and plan to extend the course offering to include screening managers, once screening supervisors are trained.

In addition to the USDA Graduate School supervisory course, TSA officials reported that the agency plans to have a Web-based technical training course—required for all screening leads, supervisors, and managers—by the end of February 2004. This course will cover technical issues such as resolving alarms at screening checkpoints. Additionally, TSA's Online Learning Center includes over 60 supervisory courses designed to develop leadership and coaching skills. TSA officials noted that they focused their efforts on training supervisors that were initially hired into supervisory roles, rather than internally promoted supervisors.

Challenges Exist in Providing Screeners Access to Available Training

While TSA has begun developing and fielding recurrent training modules to airports, staffing shortages and a lack of high-speed connectivity at airports have made it difficult for all screeners to access these courses. Specifically, due to staffing shortages, FSDs at 5 of the 15 category X airports we visited stated that it was difficult, if not impossible, to comply with the requirement that screeners receive 3 hours of recurrent training each week, averaged over a 3-month period. FSDs stated that due to staffing shortages, they were unable to let screeners take this training because it would impact the FSDs' ability to provide adequate screener

²⁹The USDA course covers topics related to supervising staff within the federal government.

coverage. Consequently, screeners received an average of only 3 hours of recurrent training per month. In an attempt to ensure screeners receive required training, several FSDs provided training through overtime, or established training relief teams with the sole purpose of staffing screening checkpoints while screeners participated in training.

The lack of high-speed connectivity at airport training facilities has also limited access to TSA's training tools. TSA's Online Learning Center was established to provide passenger and baggage screeners with high-speed access to over 350 training courses. However, TSA did not begin deploying high-speed connectivity to its training sites and checkpoints until May 2003. Currently, TSA has reportedly provided high-speed connectivity to 71 airport locations, including training sites where 927 training computers are fully connected.³⁰ TSA expects to install high-speed connectivity at up to 81 additional airports by the end of fiscal year 2004. Until high-speed connectivity is fully achieved, TSA plans to continue to distribute new training products using multiple delivery channels, including written training materials and CD-ROMs.

TSA Continues to Strengthen its Efforts to Measure Screener Performance in Detecting Threat Objects

TSA has undertaken several initiatives to measure the performance of passenger screeners in detecting threat objects. However, TSA has collected limited data related to the performance of baggage screeners. In July 2003, TSA completed a study of the performance of its passenger screening system, which identified numerous performance deficiencies. These deficiencies were determined to be caused by a lack of skills and knowledge, low motivation, ineffective work environment, and wrong or missing incentives. In response to this study, TSA developed a short-term action plan that identified key actions TSA plans to take to strengthen the performance of passenger screeners. These actions build on several initiatives that TSA already had underway, including enhancing training for screeners and supervisors, increasing covert testing conducted by TSA's Office of Internal Affairs, completing installation of the TIP, and conducting annual recertifications of screeners. While TSA is making progress in each of these areas, it has collected limited data on the performance of its baggage screening operations. Officials stated that they have collected limited performance data related to baggage screeners due

³⁰TSA defines fully connected as a training computer with the new network image installed and connected to the TSA broadband network.

to their focus on passenger screener performance, but plan to collect additional performance data in the future.

Performance Improvement Study and Short-Term Action Plan

In July 2003, TSA completed a Passenger Screener Performance Improvement Study designed to identify root causes for gaps between the current performance of passenger screeners and TSA's desired performance—defined as 100 percent interception of prohibited items coming through screening checkpoints. The study identified many of the performance deficiencies that FSDs reported to us during our site visits to more than 30 airports, including inadequate staffing and poor supervision of screeners. While the study was focused on passenger screening, TSA officials stated that many of the performance issues cited also pertained to baggage screeners. TSA officials stated that they plan to assess the performance of baggage screeners after recommendations from the performance improvement study relative to passenger screening have been implemented.

In October 2003, to address passenger screener performance deficiencies identified in the Screener Performance Improvement Study, TSA developed a "Short-Term Screening Performance Improvement Plan." This plan included nine action items that TSA plans to pursue to provide tangible improvements in screener performance and security, and identified 6 week, 3 month, 6 month, and, in some cases, milestones of 1 year or more. These action items include increasing covert testing at screening checkpoints, completing installation of TIP at all airports, enhancing screener training, and strengthening supervisor's skills through leadership and technical training. TSA is also establishing a longer-term plan that addresses identified deficiencies, such as the need to establish adequate training facilities at airports and to reconfigure checkpoints to eliminate screener distractions. Table 1 provides a summary of TSA's short-term action items for strengthening passenger screener performance.

Table 1: Summary of TSA's Short-Term Action Items for Strengthening Passenger Screener Performance

Category	Action Item	Description	Benefit
People			
	1 Increase FSD support and accountability	Hold FSDs accountable for screening performance and delivery of security	Management accountability is driven down to the local airport FSD performance is linked to screener performance, creating incentives for maintaining and improving security
	2 Enhance training	Provide ongoing training for screeners and supervisors to maintain their skills and provide new skills and techniques based on evolving threats and lessons learned	Maintains and improves knowledge base of screeners Ensures proper oversight by supervisors Ensures that screeners are capable of addressing evolving threats
	3 Increase Internal Affairs covert testing	Increase the frequency of TSA covert testing	Improved identification of systemic vulnerabilities in airport security systems Immediate implementation of limited remedial actions
	4 Continue to pursue human performance improvements	Better understand reasons and causes for human errors and interactions with technology in order to identify opportunities for performance improvements with a goal of identifying optimum work conditions	Reduces human-based errors Increases workforce morale and working conditions, leading to improved performance
Technology			
	5 Continue to identify screening technology improvements	Continue to research alternative technologies and seek short-term technological solutions, especially for potential vectors.	Identifies threats more accurately and quickly Decreases number of false positives from equipment
	6 Finish installing TIP	The TIP system is a series of 2,400 images of threat objects that can be automatically fed into X-Ray machines during actual screening	Maintains alertness of screeners Identifies individual screener performance issues
	7 Expedite high-speed connectivity to checkpoints and training computers	Connect all TSA offices, checkpoints and screening equipment (X-rays, EDS machines) to the internet in order to automate and improve processes that are currently done manually or not at all	Provides immediate feedback on and response to screener performance issues Improves communication with managers in the field
Process			
	8 Refresh aviation operations policy, procedures and practice	Conduct a thorough and expedited review of all policies and procedures developed during the rollout of TSA with a focus on increasing screening performance and capabilities	Maintains "freshness" of standard operating procedures based on most recent intelligence about security threats Removes or updates outdated or unnecessary screening techniques based on lessons learned
	9 Improve workforce management	Determine the optimal workforce staffing levels based on latest passenger flows and other factors	Maximizes utilization of existing resources

Source: TSA

Covert Testing

TSA's Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review conducts unannounced covert tests of passenger and baggage screeners to assess their ability to detect threat objects and adherence to TSA-approved procedures. These tests, in which TSA undercover agents attempt to pass threat objects through screening checkpoints, are designed to identify systematic problems affecting the performance of screeners related to their adherence to standard operating procedures and handling of equipment. TSA's testing to date has identified weaknesses in the ability of passenger and baggage screeners to detect threat objects.

In November 2003, we reported that the Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review had conducted 733 covert tests at 92 airports of passenger screeners at screening checkpoints.³¹ Since then, TSA has conducted an additional 362 passenger screening checkpoint tests through January 17, 2004, for a total of 1,095 tests, and estimates that it will double the number of tests conducted during fiscal year 2004. However, even with the doubling of these tests, only a small percentage of the screener workforce is subject to a covert test.

TSA initially focused most of its resources on testing passenger rather than baggage screeners. While TSA began conducting covert tests of passenger screeners in September 2002, it did not begin conducting covert tests of checked baggage screeners until January 2003—after Congress's initial deadline for 100 percent screening of checked baggage using explosive detection systems had passed. Between January 2003 and September 2003, TSA conducted checked baggage tests as part of the Computer-Assisted Passenger Prescreening selectee testing protocol.³² In November 2003, TSA developed a protocol specifically designed to test checked baggage. From January 2003 through January 17, 2004, TSA conducted 192 checked baggage tests at 128 airports, and plans to increase the number of checked baggage tests it conducts this fiscal year. We plan to review the Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review's covert testing in more detail during the remainder of our reviews.

³¹U.S. General Accounting Office, *Aviation Security: Efforts to Measure Effectiveness and Address Challenges*, GAO-04-232T (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 5, 2003).

³²The Computer Assisted Passenger Screening System is a stand-alone application residing in an air carrier's reservation system that analyzes certain behavioral patterns to score and calculate each passenger's risk level for determining the appropriate level of screening.

Threat Image Projection System

Another key source of information on screener performance in detecting threat objects is the TIP system, which places images of threat objects on the X-ray screen during actual operations and records whether screeners identify the threat objects. TIP was shut down immediately following the September 11th terrorist attacks due to concerns that it would result in screening delays and panic, as screeners might think that they were actually viewing threat objects. Recognizing that TIP is a key tool in maintaining and enhancing screener performance, TSA began reactivating and expanding TIP in October 2003. Additionally, TSA has increased the number of TIP-ready X-ray machines at passenger screening checkpoints from about 1,300 in October 2003 to over 1,770 as of January 20, 2004. In January 2004, TSA also reported that it had installed a new library of 2,400 threat images on all existing TIP ready X-ray machines—a significant increase from the 200 images the Federal Aviation Administration had in place. TSA has ordered an additional 30 TIP-ready X-ray machines and expects TIP to be 100 percent operational by April 2004.

With an operational TIP program, FSDs have the capability to query and analyze passenger screening performance data in a number of ways, including by individual screeners, checkpoints, terminals, and airports. However, until high-speed connectivity is available at screening checkpoints, collecting this information for reporting and analysis purposes will continue to be cumbersome.³⁰ For example, at airports where high-speed connectivity is not available, TIP data have to be downloaded onto a disk and mailed to a remote location where they are uploaded for analysis.

Although TIP is available to measure the performance of and train passenger screeners, it is not currently available for baggage screeners. TSA officials stated that they are currently working to resolve technical challenges associated with using TIP for checked baggage screening on EDS machines and have started EDS TIP image development.

Annual Recertification Program

ATSA requires that TSA collect performance information on all passenger and baggage screeners by conducting an annual proficiency evaluation to ensure each screener continues to meet all qualifications and standards related to the functions that he or she performs. To meet this requirement, TSA established an annual recertification program. Currently, there are

³⁰TSA began deploying high-speed connectivity to screening checkpoints in May 2003

two parts to recertification: a knowledge and skills assessment program and a final rating on a screener's annual assessment. The knowledge and skills assessment is comprised of three modules: (1) knowledge of standard operating procedures, (2) image recognition, and (3) a practical demonstration of skills. To be certified, a passenger screener must pass all applicable modules of the knowledge and skills assessment program and have a rating of "met" or "exceeded" standards on a screener's annual assessment. However, baggage-only screeners are not required to complete the image recognition test.³⁴ If a screener does not meet the recertification requirements, he/she is not certified and may not continue employment as a screener.³⁵ According to TSA officials, approximately 200 screeners have been terminated to date for failure to pass the recertification program.

TSA began implementing its recertification program in October 2003, and expects to complete testing at all airports in March 2004.³⁶ As of January 30, 2004, TSA reportedly had completed modules one and two of its annual screener recertification program at 100 percent of federalized airports, and had completed module three at 50 percent of these airports. TSA does not have a recertification track specifically for cross-trained screeners. However, TSA officials stated that they plan to establish a dual functioning screener recertification track for the 2004-2005 recertification cycle. Currently, all screeners who are cross-trained and actively performing both passenger and baggage screening functions are considered passenger screeners for the purpose of recertification. However, the current recertification program ensures that cross-trained screeners pass the image interpretation test for x-ray threat image interpretation, as well as the ETD system and manual bag search, which are also performed in checked baggage screening. We will continue to examine TSA's progress in administering its annual recertification program during the remainder of our reviews.

³⁴Checked baggage screeners will not recertify on EDS as part of the current recertification program. EDS is a separate certification program under development. The need for other skills or equipment-certifications is under consideration for future certification programs.

³⁵Screeners that fail any module will receive study time, remediation, and one retest opportunity.

³⁶At the time the recertification testing began, TSA considered about 28,000 screeners as having already completed the first two components of the knowledge and skills assessment because they successfully passed competency tests TSA administered at many airports as part of a screener workforce reduction effort.

Performance Management Information System

TSA's Performance Management Information System (PMIS) is designed to collect, analyze, and report passenger and baggage screening performance data. While PMIS does not contain information on screener performance in detecting threat objects, it collects information on operational performance, such as wait times at selected airports, workload data, and the performance and utilization of passenger and baggage screening equipment. TSA headquarters uses PMIS data to support external reporting on performance and internal decision-making processes.

TSA recently surveyed FSDs or members of their staff who use PMIS by inputting or analyzing data, to solicit their feedback on the usefulness of the system.³⁷ PMIS users who responded to the survey identified several areas for improvement, including additional capabilities, such as the ability to customize reports, and enhanced technical features, such as split screen report viewing and data entry. TSA reported that, to the extent possible, they plan to use feedback from the survey to make enhancements to the system.

TSA provides FSDs and other PMIS users with monthly PMIS system updates that include new functionalities and improvements to the system. These enhancements have allowed TSA to collect additional information with which to better analyze its operations. For example, when TSA began collecting employee census data in June 2003, it only collected information on the number of screeners. TSA is now able to collect more detailed information on screeners including the number of part-time screeners, hours worked per week, and screener gender. TSA also developed pilot programs in order to determine the usefulness of PMIS data before making systemwide changes. For example, TSA began to collect additional data regarding checked baggage screening operations during the spring of 2003 at 36 airports. Among other things, the 36 airports collect data on the number of checked bags screened, number of prohibited items confiscated, and number of law enforcement officer interventions. TSA is evaluating whether to expand collection of baggage screening data to additional airports. TSA plans to continuously enhance the system as it learns what data are needed to best manage the agency.

³⁷The PMIS user survey was conducted in July 2003 and had a response rate of 21.9%. Given this low response rate, the results of the survey may not be representative of the views and opinions of PMIS users. TSA plans to administer a second survey in March 2004.

To help ensure the quality of the data, TSA has also developed PMIS user guides and procedures. TSA officials reported that headquarters' staff and contactors provide consultation to and review the input from FSDs to ensure that the data provided are complete and consistent. The PMIS also contains checks for data entries that are out of normal bounds. However, because the PMIS system relies on self-reporting by FSDs, there may be inconsistencies in the way in which the data are reported, reducing the overall usefulness of the system in aiding management decisions. We will continue to review TSAs plans to enhance the system and its reliability during the remainder of our review.

Performance Indexes for Screeners and Screening Systems

In September and November 2003, we reported that in addition to making improvements to PMIS, TSA was developing performance indexes for both individual passenger and baggage screeners and the screening system as a whole. The screening performance index will measure the effectiveness of the screening system through nationwide TIP results and covert testing data; efficiency through a calculation of dollars spent per passenger screened or dollars spent per bag screened; and customer satisfaction through a national poll, customer surveys, and customer complaints at both airports and TSA's national call center. TSA is currently developing baseline data for fiscal year 2004 and plans to report the indexes to the DHS in fiscal year 2005 in support of its Government Performance and Results Act performance measures.³⁸

³⁸The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, Pub. L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285, shifts the focus of government operations from process to results by establishing a foundation for examining agency mission, performance goals and objectives, and results. Under the act, agencies are to prepare 5-year strategic plans that set the general direction for their efforts, and annual performance plans that establish connections between the long-term strategic goals outlined in the strategic plans and the day-to-day activities of managers and staff. Finally, the act requires that each agency report annually on the extent to which it is meeting its annual performance goals and the actions needed to achieve or modify those goals that have not been met.

TSA Faces Challenges in Its Efforts to Deploy and Leverage Screening Equipment and Technologies

TSA has made progress in its checked baggage screening operations, but continues to face operational and funding challenges in screening all checked baggage using explosive detection systems, as mandated by ATSA. Although TSA has deployed EDS and ETD equipment to all airports, TSA has not been able to fully utilize this equipment to screen 100 percent of checked baggage for explosives by December 31, 2003, due to screener and equipment shortages and equipment being out of service for maintenance and/or repairs. When TSA cannot screen 100 percent of checked baggage using EDS and ETD, TSA continues to use alternative means outlined in ATSA, including K-9 teams, manual bag search, and positive passenger bag match. TSA has ongoing initiatives to increase the efficiency of screening checked baggage using EDS, including the development and construction of in-line baggage screening systems at larger airports—which, streamlines the screening processes. TSA is also conducting research and development activities to strengthen passenger and baggage screening. These efforts are designed to improve detection capability, performance, and efficiency for current technologies, and to develop the next generation of EDS equipment.

TSA Is Not Fully Utilizing Equipment for Meeting the 100 Percent Checked Baggage Screening Requirement

While TSA has made progress in its checked baggage screening processes, it continues to face challenges in attaining 100 percent screening using explosive detection systems²⁰ 100 percent of the time. Since its creation in November 2001, TSA has deployed over 1,100 EDS machines and 6,000 ETD machines to over 440 airports nationwide. However, TSA has not been able to fully utilize this equipment to screen 100 percent of checked baggage due to screener and equipment shortages, and equipment being out of service for maintenance and/or repairs.

In its effort to meet ATSA's original requirement to screen 100 percent of checked baggage using explosive detection systems by December 31, 2002, TSA deployed hundreds of EDS and thousands of ETD machines to over 440 airports. As it became apparent that TSA would be unable to attain the December 31, 2002, deadline, the Congress authorized an extension of that

²⁰According to TSA, Explosive Detection Systems (EDS) and Explosive Trace Detection (ETD) are the only technologies available to TSA for meeting ATSA's requirement to screen 100 percent of checked baggage using explosive detection systems. EDS operate in an automated mode and use probing radiation to examine objects inside baggage and identify the characteristic signatures of threat explosives. ETD works by detecting vapors and residues of explosives. Human operators collect samples by rubbing bags with swabs, which are chemically analyzed to identify any traces of explosive materials.

deadline for noncompliant airports until December 31, 2003. In its effort to meet these deadlines, in June 2002, TSA and its contractors began to deploy EDS and ETD equipment to the nation's commercial airports. This effort involved designing and implementing facility modifications for EDS and ETD equipment, installing equipment, and developing and administering equipment training for baggage screeners. As EDS and ETD were being deployed to airports, TSA implemented interim solutions to screen 100 percent of checked baggage, until more permanent solutions could be designed and constructed. For example, many large airports were equipped with stand-alone EDS machines that were not integrated with baggage conveyor systems. These minivan-sized machines were sometimes deployed in airport lobbies, which led to crowding as passengers filled lobbies waiting to have their checked baggage screened. In addition, stand-alone EDS machines are both labor and time intensive to operate since each bag must be physically carried to an EDS machine for screening and then moved back to the baggage conveyor system prior to being loaded onto an aircraft.

Realizing the inefficiencies of these interim solutions, TSA and some airport authorities are developing more permanent solutions, such as in-line systems. TSA also continues to look for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the baggage screening process, especially ways that reduce reliance on screener personnel.

TSA has made progress during 2003 in its efforts to deploy equipment to screen 100 percent of checked baggage using explosive detection systems. However, some airports are currently unable to use this equipment to screen all checked baggage for explosives, or reported that they do not have enough EDS or ETD to conduct baggage screening. These airports are unable to achieve the requirement to screen 100 percent of checked baggage, 100 percent of the time, using EDS and ETD due to insufficient screener staff to operate screening equipment, insufficient staff and equipment to meet surges in passenger volume, and equipment being out of service for maintenance and/or repairs. As a way to monitor baggage-screening operations, FSDs are expected to report, using TSA's PMIS, when they are unable to screen all checked baggage using EDS and ETD and the reasons that prevented them from doing so.⁴⁶ We reviewed TSA's Aviation Operations division's report on the status of checked baggage screening (based on PMIS data), dated January 5, 2004, to determine

⁴⁶ FSDs are expected to list all reasons that prevented them from screening 100 percent of checked baggage using EDS and ETD. Also, FSDs are to report when they do attain 100 percent screening of checked baggage using EDS and ETD.

whether airports were conducting 100 percent screening using EDS and ETD, and to identify reasons for not achieving this deadline. Our preliminary review of that data showed that the most frequently cited reasons for not being able to meet the requirement—**noted by about two-thirds of the FSDs that reported they were not conducting 100 percent screening using EDS or ETD⁴¹**—were staff shortages, absenteeism, and a lack of training. Almost half of these FSDs also identified that they did not have sufficient EDS and ETD equipment to screen all checked baggage, and/or that some of their EDS and ETD equipment was inoperable.

Of the airports reporting that they were not screening 100 percent of checked baggage using EDS or ETD, the number of consecutive days that they were not conducting this screening ranged from 1 to 371 days. In addition, almost one-third of these FSDs reported that they did not conduct 100 percent screening using EDS or ETD less than 10 consecutive days, while half of the FSDs reported not conducting 100 percent screening using EDS or ETD for more than 200 consecutive days. This reporting status can change daily as the events that caused airports to not conduct 100 percent screening using explosive detection systems may be corrected. FSDs are also expected to report whenever there is need to use alternative screening means because fewer than 100 percent of checked bags are being screened using EDS and ETD.

Furthermore, in our visits to several category X and I airports, FSDs identified EDS and ETD machines that were unable to be used due to an insufficient number of screeners to operate the equipment or because the equipment was not in the locations where it was needed. FSDs at some of these airports expressed concerns about not being able to resolve operational issues that were causing them to be noncompliant with the requirement for 100 percent screening using explosive detection systems.

To comply with a requirement from the Homeland Security Act that TSA report on its status in achieving the checked baggage-screening deadline,⁴²

⁴¹The number of airports unable to attain 100 percent screening of checked baggage using EDS and ETD is Sensitive Security Information and, therefore, is not included in this testimony.

⁴²The baggage-screening requirements of 49 U.S.C. § 44901(d)(1), on which TSA must report, include: (A) that explosive detection systems are deployed as soon as possible to ensure that all airports described in § 44903(c) have sufficient explosive detection systems to screen all checked baggage no later than December 31, 2002 (as discussed earlier, the Homeland Security Act extended this deadline to December 31, 2003, for airports that the Under Secretary of Transportation for Security determines could not meet the original deadline), and that as soon as these systems are in place at an airport, all checked baggage at the airport is screened by those systems; (B) that all systems deployed under

TSA provides classified reports monthly to selected committees of the Congress identifying its progress in deploying EDS and ETD equipment to screen 100 percent of checked baggage. As of December 31, 2003, TSA reported that it fell short of this goal at several large airports, primarily because these airports did not have the EDS and ETD equipment needed and/or experienced staffing shortages to operate the equipment. We compared TSA's January 5, 2004, Aviation Operations Reports to the December 2003 monthly report provided to the selected congressional committees, and identified additional airports that were not using EDS and ETD to screen checked baggage 100 percent of the time. TSA officials stated that the discrepancies were caused because the primary focus of their report to the selected congressional committees was on initial deployment of the equipment, rather than fluctuations in staffing and maintenance issues that affect TSA's ability to utilize the equipment. We will continue to monitor TSA's compliance with the requirement to screen 100 percent of checked baggage using explosive detection systems during the remainder of our review.

TSA Faces Funding and Operational Challenges in Achieving Efficiencies in Checked Baggage Screening

TSA has two major initiatives underway to achieve efficiencies in its baggage screening operations—integrating EDS machines into the airports' baggage handling systems and resolving EDS alarms using computer images, referred to as on-screen resolution. Reconfiguring airports for in-line checked baggage screening could be extensive and costly, especially when new construction or extensive conveyor belt systems are required. TSA estimates that the systemwide costs to complete installations of in-line baggage screening systems may be as high as \$3 to \$5 billion, not including the costs of EDS and ETD equipment. In addition, TSA's efforts to develop protocols for on-screen resolution, which may permit more efficient screening operations without increasing security risks, have taken longer than anticipated.

Many large airports are planning to install in-line baggage screening systems—installing EDS machines as an integrated part of the airport baggage handling systems—to improve throughput of baggage and reduce crowding in airport lobbies. These in-line systems have been funded in

subparagraph (A) are fully utilized; and (C) if explosive detection equipment at an airport is unavailable, all checked baggage is screened by an alternative means.

part through letters of intent (LOI) signed by TSA.⁴² To date, TSA has signed 6 LOIs covering 7 airports promising multiyear financial support totaling about \$772 million for in-line integration of EDS equipment. For example, LOIs are to provide \$87 million in airport modifications at Boston Logan International Airport, and over \$104 million at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. In addition, TSA is negotiating LOIs with 4 additional airports. The 7 airports with signed LOIs and the 4 airports negotiating LOIs with TSA are shown in table 2.

⁴²A letter of intent represents a nonbinding commitment from an agency to provide multiyear funding to an entity beyond the current authorization period. Thus, that letter allows an airport to proceed with a project without waiting for future federal funds because the airport and investors know that allowable costs are likely to be reimbursed.

Table 2: Airports Receiving or Negotiating Letters of Intent

Letter of intent issued		Letter of Intent in negotiation	
Airport	Amount	Airport	Amount
BOS – Boston	\$87,000,000	ATL – Atlanta	\$175,700,000
DEN – Denver	\$71,250,000	IAH – Houston	\$101,520,000
DFW – Dallas/Fort Worth	\$104,437,359	MCO – Orlando	\$80,000,000
LAS – Las Vegas	\$93,750,000	PHX – Phoenix	\$65,565,000
LAX/ONT – Los Angeles International and Ontario	\$256,467,000		
SEA – Seattle	\$159,000,000		

Source: Transportation Security Administration

Note: Amounts reflected are TSA's contribution, which is 75% of funding needed for an in-line EDS screening solution.

TSA also reported that 23 additional airports, shown in table 3, have requested LOIs.⁴⁴

⁴⁴In addition, in-line systems have been funded through the Federal Aviation Administration's AIP funds. The Airport Improvement Program trust fund is used to fund capital improvements to airports, including some security enhancements, such as terminal modifications to accommodate explosive detection equipment. Thirteen airports are using AIP funds to make infrastructure upgrades to support EDS equipment that TSA will supply.

Table 3: Additional Airports Requesting Letters of Intent

Airports	
SNA – Orange County, California	TPA – Tampa
CLE – Cleveland	MCI – Kansas City, Missouri
PVD – Providence	MIA – Miami
PHL – Philadelphia	FLL – Fort Lauderdale
SJC – San Jose	MDW – Chicago-Midway
RSW – Ft. Meyers	SFO – San Francisco
SAN – San Diego	SLC – Salt Lake City
MSP – Minneapolis/St. Paul	PDX – Portland, Oregon
STL – St. Louis	MKE – Milwaukee
ANC – Anchorage	PBI – West Palm Beach
RIC – Richmond	BDL – Bradley, Connecticut
GPT – Gulfport-Biloxi	

Source: TSA.

TSA officials stated that they are assessing requested LOIs based on a security evaluation, as well as a determination of return on investment. Officials stated that top priority would be given to airports that need in-line systems to comply with the requirement for 100 percent screening of checked baggage using explosive detection systems. However, officials stated that they would also assess other airports that are currently conducting 100 percent baggage screening using EDS and ETD. Officials gave the following reasons why these airports may be good candidates for in-line checked baggage screening systems.

- airports that will fall out of compliance at peak passenger load times due to seasonal fluctuations and/or carrier moves, additions, or changes;
- airports with highly disruptive operational implementations and high staffing levels; and
- airports with a heavy reliance on ETDs that would benefit by improved operational efficiencies and cost reductions.

In December 2003, the Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act shifted the funding formula for LOIs from a 75 percent TSA (25 percent local contribution) to a 90 percent TSA (10 percent local

contribution).⁴⁵ This increase in TSA's required contribution for both future and previously issued LOIs could diminish TSA's capacity to accommodate additional LOIs.

In addition, TSA has not yet approved protocols for on-screen resolution of EDS alarms. TSA's promulgation of these protocols is an important element in enabling efficiencies in in-line baggage screening systems and affects the design of the systems being constructed or planned.⁴⁶ Under these protocols, EDS operators would be able to view images of alarmed bags and either clear the bags or divert them for further screening. Using on-screen resolution, baggage screeners could be able to view images of the baggage from a remote location electronically connected to the EDS machines, raising the throughput rate of bags screened. Currently, TSA is testing protocols for on-screen resolution at 4 airports. Officials from TSA's Office of Security Technologies initially reported that they anticipated the protocols being completed by December 2003. However, to date, the protocols have not been approved for nationwide use. Advance knowledge of on-screen resolution protocols could assist airports in developing in-line systems by providing valuable information that could be used to design the systems for optimal efficiency. We are examining TSA's baggage screening program, including both development of in-line systems and its issuance of letters of intent, in an ongoing review.

TSA is Funding R&D on Screening Technologies, but Deployment Is Years Away, and TSA Faces Several Challenges

TSA is funding R&D on several technologies designed to improve the screening of checked baggage and passengers at the nation's airports. However, while the majority of these technologies are scheduled for pilot testing within the next 12 to 18 months, they are not scheduled to be deployed in quantity for 2 to 5 years. Furthermore, progress on this research was delayed in fiscal year 2003 when TSA used more than half of its R&D funds for other programs that TSA viewed as higher priorities. As TSA moves forward with its R&D program, it faces a number of challenges, including maintaining its schedule while planning for a merger with the DHS's Science and Technology Directorate. TSA must also balance funding for competing priorities in a tight budget environment, not

⁴⁵Pub. L. No. 108-176, § 605, 2490 Stat. 2566-68 (2003).

⁴⁶On-screen resolution could also be used with stand-alone EDS machines to potentially increase screening efficiencies.

Checked Baggage Screening Technologies

only between R&D and other requirements, but also between aviation and other modes of transportation.

To improve the detection capability and operational efficiency of its current checked baggage-screening program, TSA has both near-term (2 to 5 years) and long-term (more than 5 years) approaches designed to develop, test, acquire, and deploy checked baggage screening equipment. In fiscal year 2003, TSA obligated about \$12 million for near-term activities, significantly more than the \$75,000 it obligated for long-term activities. For fiscal year 2004, TSA has budgeted \$45 million for the development of next generation explosive detection systems, which encompass technologies for screening checked baggage, carry-on baggage, and individuals. The President's fiscal year 2005 budget requests a total of \$155 million for TSA's R&D program, of which \$45 million is planned for the development of next generation explosive detection systems.⁴⁷

The near-term activities for developing next-generation checked baggage screening equipment are largely reflected in the Phoenix program, which is funded jointly by government and industry. In September 2003, TSA obligated about \$9.4 million of the \$12 million obligated for near-term activities to enter into five cooperative agreements with private sector firms under the Phoenix program.⁴⁸ While the five agreements are designed to enhance existing systems and develop new screening technologies, TSA was not able to provide us with scheduled deployment dates. The five agreements are described below:

- Two cooperative agreements, totaling \$4.7 million, provide enhancements to existing systems. These upgrades are intended to reduce false alarm rates, advance screener user-interface tools, and improve service diagnostics, thereby increasing reliability, maintainability, and availability.
- One cooperative agreement, for \$1.2 million, is intended to enhance detection capabilities and reduce false alarm rates by combining two new and emerging detection technologies, X-ray diffraction, and quadrupole resonance, with currently deployed EDS technology, and computed

⁴⁷The President's fiscal year 2005 budget is requesting a total of \$155.2 million for TSA's R&D program.

⁴⁸The remaining about \$2.7 million was obligated for continuous improvement to currently deployed equipment and for contractor support activities for the Phoenix program.

tomography.⁴⁰

- Two cooperative agreements, totaling \$3.5 million, are aimed at developing new screening technologies that perform substantially better than current technologies. One technology is intended to triple the pace of checked baggage screening (throughput), reduce false alarms by 75 percent, and enhance detection through superior spatial resolution. The other technology is intended to take up less space at less than half the unit cost of current systems.

In addition to these checked baggage-screening technologies, TSA is testing radio frequency identification (RFID) baggage tags at several airports, including those in Jacksonville, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Las Vegas.⁴¹ The RFID tags, which identify baggage much more accurately than the bar code tags that are currently used, are intended to allow TSA to track luggage, such as bags that must be searched by hand because they triggered alarms. The tags are also intended to allow TSA to redirect bags that require further screening because of receipt of updated intelligence information or interactions with the passenger who checked the bag. TSA expects these tags to also benefit industry by reducing the incidence of lost, mishandled, or misdirected luggage. TSA expects the pilot systems at the previously mentioned airports to be fully operational by May 2004.

TSA's long-term approach for improving checked baggage screening systems, called the Manhattan II program, is in the planning stages. This program will consist of several initiatives and technologies that are designed to achieve "revolutionary" improvements in detection capability and operational efficiency in 5 to 10 years using new screening technologies. TSA intends to award this project's first contracts in fiscal year 2004.

⁴⁰X-ray diffraction technology is based on the detection of scatter patterns as X-rays interact with crystal lattice structures of materials. Quadrupole resonance uses radio frequency pulses to probe bags by eliciting unique responses from explosives based on their chemical characteristics. Computed tomography uses an X-ray source that rotates around a bag, obtaining a large number of cross-sectional images that are integrated by a computer, which displays the densities of objects in the bag. The machine automatically triggers an alarm when objects with high densities, characteristic of explosives, are detected.

⁴¹RFID is a technology that uses radio waves to automatically identify individual items, such as checked luggage, for tracking purposes.

Passenger Screening Technologies

To better detect explosives and weapons that an individual may try to carry into an aircraft cabin, TSA obligated about \$1.2 million in fiscal year 2003 for research, development, testing, and evaluation of checkpoint screening technologies. As mentioned previously, for fiscal year 2004, TSA has budgeted \$45 million for the development of next-generation explosive detection systems, which encompass technologies for screening checked baggage, carry-on baggage, and individuals. For example:

- TSA has conducted tests of two explosive trace detection portals at airports in Orlando and Knoxville. These portals analyze the air for explosives as passengers pass through them. TSA anticipates that these portals will be ready for limited deployment in 2004.
- TSA is funding the development of a document scanner capable of detecting traces of explosives on a document handled by a passenger, such as a boarding pass. TSA anticipates that the scanner will be ready for limited deployment in 2004.
- TSA is evaluating body-scanning technologies—such as backscatter X-ray, millimeter wave energy analysis, and terahertz wave technology⁶¹—that can detect a variety of weapons and explosives on passengers. However, TSA acknowledges that it needs to resolve issues related to passenger privacy before deploying any of these technologies.

Future Challenges

As TSA moves forward with passenger and baggage screening R&D, it faces a number of organizational, funding, and coordination challenges. One challenge will be to sustain its R&D efforts during a period of organizational uncertainty and a possible merger. Under the Homeland Security Act, TSA is mandated to operate as a distinct entity until November 25, 2004, but after that date its organizational future is not specified in statute. According to a DHS official, the Secretary of Homeland Security intends to transfer TSA's R&D program from DHS's Border and Transportation Security Directorate to DHS's Science and Technology Directorate, which is responsible for homeland security R&D. One of the key areas that we will be reporting on later this year is the

⁶¹Backscatter X-ray detects reflected X-ray energy, providing an image that highlights organic materials such as explosives on a passenger. Millimeter wave energy analysis provides a 360-degree image of the human body in order to detect weapons and explosives. Terahertz imaging penetrates many common materials and reveals not only the shape but also the composition of hidden objects, including explosives.

extent to which TSA and DHS have developed strategies for the merger of their R&D programs.

Balancing funding for competing priorities may also pose challenges for TSA. In a tight budget environment, TSA may be under pressure to use R&D funds for other purposes, as it did during fiscal year 2003, when it reprogrammed about \$61 million, or more than half of its \$110 million R&D appropriations to programs outside of R&D. As a result, TSA had to delay several key R&D projects, including developing a device to detect weapons, liquid explosives, and flammables in containers found in carry-on baggage or passengers' effects, and further development and testing of a walk-through chemical trace detection portal for detecting explosives on passengers. Competition for resources may also increase the difficulty that TSA already faces in allocating funds to address security threats in modes of transportation other than aviation. While aviation has historically faced, and continues to face, significant security threats, and improving aviation security is an important goal, TSA is also responsible for security in the other transportation modes, and these modes have significant vulnerabilities that remain to be addressed.⁶²

Concluding Observations

Having achieved many of ATSA's deadlines designed to strengthen passenger and baggage screening, TSA has begun to focus on longer-term planning to assist in stabilizing its screener workforce and screening operations. Carefully considering how it strategically hires, deploys, and manages its screener workforce will help TSA meet its mission and stabilize its passenger and baggage screening operations. We are encouraged that TSA is undertaking efforts to develop the tools needed to train its screener workforce and measure their performance. However, as TSA works toward improving the performance of individual screeners and screening operations, it will also be important that the agency deploy and leverage screening equipment and technologies and sustain its research and development efforts.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you or other members of the Subcommittee may have at this time.

⁶²U.S. General Accounting Office, Transportation Security: *Federal Action Needed to Help Address Security Challenges*, GAO-03-843 (Washington, D.C.: June 30, 2003).

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Washington, D.C. 20548

**Testimony of Angela Gittens, Aviation Director, Miami-Dade
Aviation Department
Before the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Aviation
*Aviation Security: Progress And Problems In Passenger And Baggage
Screening*
February 12, 2004
10:00 a.m., 2167 Rayburn House Office Building**

Good morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee. I thank you for your invitation to discuss the progress and problems in passenger and baggage screening at Miami International Airport.

First, I would like to ask permission to submit to you additional information for the sealed record containing some security sensitive information that I will not address in this public forum.

Secondly, I know I speak for all of the airport directors here when I emphasize that airport proprietors have a maximum stake in the safety and security of air transportation. We know it is the cornerstone of our business since commercial aviation cannot exist as a form of mass transportation without that safety and security. The dramatic adverse effect of the steep decline in air travel after September 11th was tragic proof of that fact. So this will not be a debate on the vital interests we share to constantly ratchet up the level of safety and security in our national air transportation system.

Although I will be talking about some of our frustrations in dealing with the Transportation Security Administration, I would like to acknowledge up front that we have a great deal of respect for the tremendous challenge it confronts and the progress the TSA has made in its short tenure. We have worked very collaboratively and cooperatively with the MIA Federal Security Director and his staff as teammembers in an integrated mission and will continue to do so. We commend them for the job they do.

My purpose today is to highlight the barriers that are keeping the TSA as an institution from being

responsive to the security needs of Miami International Airport. We are concerned that the federal government is retreating from the commitments it made to the communities of this nation in the wake of the vicious attacks of September 11th 2001.

The most pressing issue for my community I would like to discuss concerns the Explosive Detection System – or EDS – installation at MIA. Congress imposed a December 31st, 2002 deadline for permanent installation of EDS equipment *in-line* with the baggage sortation systems. To accomplish this on an interim basis at MIA, the TSA installed EDS

equipment in the passenger lobbies and baggage make-up areas. It was clear to all that our mostly 60's vintage terminal facilities could not long tolerate such an arrangement but one makes do in the short term.

At MIA, we are in the midst of a \$4.8 billion Capital Improvement Program – CIP – that includes the construction of two new terminals, North and South, along with improvements to the existing Central Terminal. Our construction program has entered its peak phase with expenditures of over \$1 million per day - \$40 million per month.

Faced with reduced passenger traffic since September 11th and the need to maintain our Cost per Enplaned passenger at a level that remains competitive and minimizes the risk of a further loss of traffic, we are now forced to eliminate key elements of our construction program, such as runway safety projects, and defer other projects with strong community support, including the intermodal commuter facility that is a part of Miami-Dade County's overall transportation plan.

These project cancellations and deferrals are primarily driven because the airport now must fund the permanent installation of EDS equipment in-line

since, we are advised, the TSA has reneged on its commitment. For Miami-Dade County this constitutes a \$236 million unfunded federal mandate that we can ill afford, but can no longer defer given our ongoing construction. The longer we wait the bigger the ultimate bill since, as we know, in construction, time is money.

We have been working with TSA on two mutually agreeable Memorandums of Agreement and Letters of Intent –MOA/LOIs –to define the funding amounts and schedules for performance of work for the EDS in-line installation in our existing Central Terminal and the North and South Terminal Development

Programs. In fact, it was during a conference call the day after Thanksgiving, 2002, when then-TSA Administrator Admiral Loy proposed to us the MOA/LOI process. Airports had expressed themselves willing to finance the substantial EDS installation cost by allowing the TSA to leverage its resources by spreading out payments over several years. In this way, the TSA could achieve its mandate at more airports in a shorter period of time.

We agreed with Admiral Loy that a Letter-Of-Intent program, modeled after FAA's successful AIP-LOI program, subject to annual Congressional

appropriations, would be an effective way to accomplish the work and reimburse airports.

Over a year has passed since our conversation with Admiral Loy and a second congressional deadline for permanent installation of EDS has come and gone, yet MIA still does not have formal approval of EDS in-line designs and a funding commitment from TSA. We understand TSA has prioritized their LOIs into phases with eight airports programmed for LOIs in Phase I. We understand that TSA has signed LOIs with six of the Phase I airports and will be signing two additional LOIs in the very near future.

Due to no fault of our own, MIA was not placed in this first group of airports even though we are the nation's third busiest international gateway and have the highest number of foreign visitors of any airport in the nation. We have been a Category X airport since such categorization began nearly twenty years ago.

We now hear that the Office of Management and Budget has prohibited TSA from entering into any further LOI agreements for EDS installation due to the lack of a dedicated funding stream, such as what the airway trust fund is to the AIP. So, even though Congress has passed appropriations for the TSA to

install EDS equipment, although we can contemplate that Congress will pass appropriations in the future; although the threat and the need remain, the LOI program is effectively suspended. And with the suspension of a program that was a convenience to the TSA and a way for the TSA to hasten achievement of its mandate, the TSA now walks away from its mandate.

You will forgive me if I say we feel that the Miami-Dade County community has been dumped on. Along with other members of the community, I have personally traveled to Washington on numerous occasions over the last two years to make sure that

TSA knew how important the LOI/MOA request is to MIA. I have met with every TSA Administrator and many senior executives. I was always assured that our message was received, but received no commitment; on other occasions our audience would express surprise that we had not already gotten our LOI/MOA, given the importance of our airport, and assured due attention would be given to our request.

After all the TSA leadership changes and meetings and conversations, I am sorry to report to you that MIA is no closer to receiving funding for EDS installation than we were when TSA was created in

November, 2001 with the signing of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act.

We – the airports, airlines, federal and local agencies – are all responsible for the safety, security and facilitation of operating air service at the nation’s airports. The Florida Members here know how important MIA is to the economic viability of South Florida and, indeed, the entire State. In addition to extensive security initiatives of our own, we have responded to the many security directives and mandates instituted by federal agencies, but it is these critical unfunded mandates such as EDS, that will strangle MIA and adversely impact the associated

\$9.5 billion in economic impact and more than 75,000 direct and indirect jobs that MIA brings to the State of Florida.

Some recommendations.

With respect to the permanent EDS in-line installation, Congress must act now to clarify TSA's ability to obligate funds for airports at which TSA has determined that an in-line solution is the only effective means of accomplishing the intent of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. There appears to be a debate within the Executive Branch as to the fiscal or statutory or policy basis for the LOI/MOA program. Congress should address this

and provide a viable means to reimburse airports for this unfunded mandate. If a dedicated source of funding IS needed for a an LOI program, then Congress should provide it. If the answer is just additional funding, then we urge Congress to include an earmark for terminal modifications for in-line EDS in the supplemental spending bill.

Also, I want to urge you to maintain the 90% federal share for all airports. The Administration has proposed in its 2005 Budget Request that at large and medium airports EDS projects should be funded at 75%. We strongly oppose this proposal. It is an appalling betrayal of our community that the federal government commits to taking on a responsibility,

then asks for a 10% local match for the federal government's responsibility, then asks for a 25% match, if not a 100% match – as though baggage screening has become a local responsibility.

Lastly, I think we need a cold hard look at what it's going to take to protect our nation's air transportation system without undoing the air transportation system's main job: to serve as the economic engines of community economies. With two years into the mission, it's not too early to look back at ATSA, with the TSA, the Department of Homeland Security, the local communities and the industry, and start making such adjustments as may be necessary to secure, not

just a place or a plane, but the process of air travel.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this hearing and for your leadership in this critical issue.

I would be pleased to answer your questions at the appropriate time.

Statement by Tom Jensen, President/CEO of the National Safe Skies Alliance
Before the Subcommittee on Aviation
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
February 12, 2004

I would like to thank Chairman Mica and this distinguished committee for the opportunity to provide testimony to you today regarding the progress and problems in aviation passenger and baggage screening. Our organization, the National Safe Skies Alliance, owes its inception to this committee and to its former chairman, the Honorable John J. Duncan, Jr., and its continued support to this esteemed body and to you, Mr. Chairman. For this, we are very grateful.

National Safe Skies Alliance (Safe Skies) is a membership-based, not-for-profit corporation that was founded six years ago (see Appendix A for a membership list). In essence, Safe Skies serves two missions for aviation transportation: the first is as a conduit to bring stakeholders and solution-providers together to solve security challenges; the second is to serve as an independent testing organization that evaluates technologies and security systems.

The Alliance is funded in part through a cooperative agreement in response to the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR 21). The AIR 21 Bill called for the funding of an independent testing organization to evaluate current and emerging airport devices, systems, and procedures and provided a minimum of \$5 million annually for such purposes. Since the passage of AIR 21, Safe Skies has answered that need by providing operational testing of security devices at its permanent test bed located at McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS) in Knoxville, Tennessee, and at 30 other airports nationwide. The information garnered from these operational evaluations has been used by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to make improvements in airport security infrastructure and practices. Additionally, we have from time to time provided information to the Inspector General and to the Government Accounting Office.

Our organization provides information, through operational and developmental testing, that assists the TSA in making decisions on the deployment of security devices. We would like to bring three examples to your attention that illustrate this function.

First, Screener-Assisted X-ray was a technology designed to provide image enhancement support to the security screener in the detection of explosives. We tested devices from four different manufacturers to determine the operational viability prior to procurement and deployment; however, our testing demonstrated that none of the devices were mature enough to meet detection or passenger through-put standards. As a result, the technology was not purchased and deployed, which saved taxpayers an estimated \$30 million (see Appendix B for TSA document references).

The second example is that of product improvement for the L3 eXaminer 6000 Explosive Detection System (EDS) for checked baggage (see Appendix B for the TSA document

reference). Because of our testing, the manufacturer was able to generate more than 100 improvements to make the device operationally acceptable, which in turn allowed the U.S. to have more than one source for EDS and to achieve the 100% baggage screening mandate by December 31, 2002.

Finally, Congress appropriated funds for 1600 enhanced metal detectors to replace older units that existed in all U.S. airports. Safe Skies evaluated the operational effectiveness for these enhanced metal detectors from different manufacturers. Because of our testing results, the TSA was able to make purchasing decisions based on equipment effectiveness for all of our nation's airports (see Appendix B for TSA document references).

Safe Skies test engineers have employed their extensive experience in Biometrics, Explosive Trace and Vapor Detection, Explosive Detection Systems, Passenger Screening, Human Factors, and Perimeter Protection Technologies. Testing has been conducted in over 30 airports on a wide variety of projects and technologies, some of which include Checkpoint Optimization at Atlanta Hartsfield and Seattle Tacoma International Airports, a Checked Baggage Security Wrapping Project at Miami International Airport, and a Biometric Fingerprint Access Project at Jackson Municipal Airport (see Appendix B for TSA document references). Our support of aviation transportation security has also included participating in the first risk assessments for airports after September 11th, and recently, providing the necessary evaluations of resolution protocols for screeners of checked baggage at Boston Logan, San Francisco, Jacksonville, and Orange County John Wayne Airports. This has led to training modifications for screeners and on-screen alarm resolution, which will potentially allow for more efficient and effective alarm resolution for checked baggage.

Congress is to be commended for the foresight that it has shown and its willingness to address the problem of aviation security in a direct manner. The TSA is also to be commended for its efforts and ability to achieve improvements in aviation security in a short period of time. Changes have been implemented that have resulted in heightened professionalism among the security screeners nationwide. With these improvements comes an increased standardization in technology and screening procedures, which has encouraged uniformity and higher performance in threat detection. One hundred percent screening of checked baggage has now been implemented at all U. S. airports, and the industries that supply screening devices are fully engaged and committed to improving the quality of their products for the enhancement of both security and the stream of aviation commerce.

One such example of this vendor commitment is the work that has been conducted on the Advanced Technology Security Checkpoint (ATSC). The ATSC is a suite of equipment that has been configured to optimize conventional threat and explosive detection. Technologies that make up the ATSC include a prescreening divestiture device, quadrupole resonance, explosive trace detection, walk-through trace portal, scanner for explosives and hazardous liquids, metal detector, dual-view x-ray, and body scanning with backscatter x-rays. To determine the effectiveness of this system, Safe Skies conducted two separate tests. The first was a TSA-endorsed operational test and evaluation that was conducted for three months at Orlando International Airport. This test was focused on operational impact issues such as processing time, screener performance, system configuration, and passenger acceptance.

After the operational tests in Orlando were completed, a need was identified to perform system effectiveness testing. This system effectiveness testing, funded by ATSC Consortium Members, was conducted using conventional threat objects such as guns and knives, non-conventional threat objects such as weapons made from plastic and ceramic, and live explosives of various compounds shaped into numerous configurations. All threat objects were placed into luggage or on test subjects. The combined system of the individual ATSC security devices, each of which was provided, installed, and paid for by ATSC Consortium Members, was tested at the Stanford Research Institute International site in Tracy, CA. Consortium Members, who ordinarily are rivals, saw specific problems in screening and put aside competition for patriotism. These manufacturers recognized that none offered a complete solution, but together, they offered a more comprehensive approach to aviation security screening. The results of the ATSC tests are available by request from the Consortium Members (see Appendix C).

Although much progress has been made in aviation security, much more work needs to occur to ensure the safety of the traveling public. As our adversaries become increasingly sophisticated, so too must our technologies and personnel continue to improve so that we can meet new threats. There must be a continual and advancing training program for all screeners, and at the same time, a continual and advancing test program to monitor the progress of implemented changes to devices and systems. Security must be balanced and layered to combat threat migration at airports of all sizes, so the same level of security effectiveness exists at our smallest regional airport as what is in place at our largest international airport. Technology development and vetting has often been hampered by funding; our nation must rise to meet these challenges and commit to continued support of better aviation security.

We face an enemy that is imminent and dangerous. But by committing ourselves to security improvement, we can close many of the potential portals to disaster. The National Safe Skies Alliance plays an integral role in quality assurance for emerging technologies and systems, which includes support for the short and longer term Phoenix and Manhattan II Developmental Projects. Safe Skies will continue to be dedicated to improving aviation security for the U. S. and for the world. In closing, I would like to thank you for offering me the honor of appearing before you today. I welcome any questions that the committee has for me.

Appendix A: National Safe Skies Alliance MembersGovernment, Education,Airports and Associations

AVSECO, Hong Kong
 Air Line Pilots Association
 Airports Council International - NA
 Amputee Coalition of America
 BAA/Heathrow, UK
 Blue Grass Airport
 East Tennessee Economic Council
 Eastern Kentucky Univ., Justice & Safety Center
 El Paso International Airport
 Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
 Greater Orlando Aviation Authority
 Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport
 Idaho National Engineering & Environmental Lab.
 Jackson Municipal Airport Authority
 Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport)
 Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority
 Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro. Airports Commission
 Oak Ridge National Laboratory
 Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
 SITA
 Tennessee Air National Guard
 Transport Canada
 University of Tennessee

Corporate

ADT Security Services
 American Airlines
 American Safehouse, Inc.
 Boeing Company
 BWXT Y-12, LLC
 CEIA - USA
 Cernium, Inc.
 Delta Air Lines
 DRS Data & Imaging Systems, Inc.
 Engineering & Computer Simulations, Inc.

Corporate, cont.

FMC Corporation
 Gate Safe, Inc.
 GE Ion Track
 Georal International of New York
 Global Systems Technologies, Inc.
 Harris, Gov't. Communications Div.
 Honeywell Technology Center
 iMove Inc.
 Ingersoll-Rand Security & Safety
 InVision Technologies, Inc.
 Johnson Controls, Inc.
 Knox-Air, Inc.
 L-3 Communications
 Laser Data Command
 Lockheed Martin
 Lockwood Greene
 Logan Fabricom, Inc.
 Metorex Security Products, Inc.
 Michael Stapleton Associates Ltd.
 Mistral Security, Inc.
 National Recovery Technologies
 New Chromex Incorporated
 Northrop Grumman
 Nuclear Safeguards & Security
 QinetiQ Ltd., UK
 Rapiscan Security Products, Inc.
 Raytheon
 Samsung CCTV
 Scintrex Trace Corp.
 Siemens Dematic
 Smart Approach, Ltd., UK
 Smiths Aerospace - Electronic Systems
 Smiths Detection
 Smiths Heimann
 SRI International
 TransSolutions
 Ultra Electronics Airport Systems, Inc.
 XTec, Inc.

Appendix B: Safe Skies Test Reports Submitted to the TSA

To obtain copies of our test reports, contact our Contracting Officer's Technical Representative:

Kurt Montavon
Office of Security Technologies
TSA Headquarters, West Tower
TSA-16, 739S
601 S. 12th Street
Arlington, VA 22202-4220
571-227-1161
kurt.montavon@dhs.gov

1. ADT X-Exit Arch Test Report
2. Biometrics Technical Guide and Usage Survey
3. Checkpoint Optimization Report For Phase I Data Collection at the Hartsfield Atlanta International Airport
4. Data Collection Report for Spatial Dynamics Applications BCT 2000 Bottle Contents Tester
5. Data Summary Report for the CTX 2500 Operational Utility Evaluation Conducted at the Raleigh Durham International Airport
6. Evaluation of CTX 2500/5500 Training and Performance of Personnel With and Without X-Ray Experience
7. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the HandKey CR Hand Geometry Identification Device
8. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the IDS Systems Inc. Tailgate Detection System (TDS)
9. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the IrisAccess® 2200T Access Control Device
10. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Laser Guard Ltd. Laser Guard System for Unattended Aircraft Protection
11. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Law Enforcement Officer Verification Card System
12. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Newton Research Labs Inc. Tailgate-Detection, Alarm, and Recording (T-DAR) System
13. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Perimeter Products, Inc. Tactical Microwave Portable Sensor (21100) Intrusion Detection System for Unattended Aircraft Protection

14. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Portal™ Facial Recognition Access Control Device
15. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the SAGEM MorphoAccess™ Access Control Device
16. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Southwest Microwave, Inc. Mil Pac 310B Rapid Deployment Intrusion Detection System for Unattended Aircraft Protection
17. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Transaction Control Technologies' Versamax™ Selector Door
18. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Ultra-Scan Fingerpunch™ Access Control Device
19. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Veriprint 2100 Fingerprint Identification Device
20. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the V-Flex™ Biometric Access Control Device
21. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Wireless Assetnet™ Fleet Security and Management System
22. Evaluation of the Secure Wrap Process at the Miami International Airport
23. Field Data Collection Report for the Checked Baggage Baseline Study at the Bluegrass Airport
24. Final Report for Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Georal 2001-2DS
25. Final Report for Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Secure Access Portal
26. Implementing Technology to Address Checkpoint Breaching in the Airport Environment
27. Implementing Technology to Address Tailgating and Piggybacking at Airports
28. L3 ARGUS VCT30 Operational Data Collection, Portland International Jetport
29. Operational Evaluation Report of the Ion Track Instruments (ITI) EntryScan 3® Walk-Through Explosives Detection and Identification System
30. Performance Evaluation Report for EG&G Astrophysics' Screener Assist X-Ray Technology
31. Performance Evaluation Report for Exit Lane Baseline Testing at the McGhee Tyson Airport in Knoxville, TN.
32. Performance Evaluation Report for Heimann Screener Assist X-Ray Technology
33. Performance Evaluation Report for Rapiscan Screener Assist X-Ray Technology

34. Performance Evaluation Report for Spatial Dynamics Applications M600 Bottle Contents Tester
35. Performance Evaluation Report for Vivid Screener Assist X-Ray Technology
36. Phase II Operational Data Collection Report for the General Dielectric, Inc. BCT 2000 Bottle Contents Tester at the Louisville International Airport
37. Report for Operational Evaluation of the Rapiscan 520 Dual View X-Ray System at Orlando, Florida
38. Report for Operational Testing and Evaluation of the Automated Video Tracking System
39. Report for Operational Testing and Evaluation of the CEIA Enhanced Metal Detector at the TSL-Knoxville Laboratory
40. Report for Operational Testing and Evaluation of the Garrett Enhanced Metal Detector at the TSL-Knoxville Laboratory
41. Report for Operational Testing and Evaluation of the Metorex Enhanced Metal Detector at the TSL-Knoxville Laboratory
42. Report for Operational Testing and Evaluation of the Rapiscan Secure 1000 Full Body Scanner System
43. Report on Operational Alarm Rates for Seven Metal Detectors at the McGhee Tyson Airport in Knoxville, TN
44. Report on Pilot Demonstration of Revised EDS On-Screen Alarm Resolution Protocols-Phase I
45. Report on the Demonstration of L3 Communications' Examiner 3DX 6000
46. Site Survey Report – Blue Grass Airport
47. Site Survey Report – McGhee Tyson Airport
48. Statistical Analysis of the Test: Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Metorex Metor 200 HD
49. Multi-Zone Metal Detector
50. Task Report for McGhee-Tyson Ramp Data Collection Knoxville, Tennessee
51. Test Report for Barringer Instruments' IONSCAN 400 Document Scanner

- 52. Test Report for Evaluating the Effectiveness of the FastLane® Door Detective
- 53. Test Report for the Operational Evaluation of the i-Portal 100 Advanced Weapons Detection System
- 54. Test Report for the Operational Evaluation of the Liquiscan Bottle Scanner at Orlando International Airport, Orlando, FL
- 55. Test Report for the Operational Evaluation of the QSCAN QR 160 Explosives Detection System

Appendix C: ATSC Consortium Members

To learn more about the results of the ATSC demonstration, contact the following person:

John Huey
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ATSC Consortium Members

GE Ion Track Instruments

OSI/Rapiscan Inc. Security Products

Quantum Magnetics

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

STATEMENT OF

STEPHEN J. McHALE
DEPUTY ADMINISTRATORON
PASSENGER AND BAGGAGE SECURITY SCREENINGBEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 12, 2004

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Congressman DeFazio, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am pleased to have this opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to report on TSA's progress in passenger and baggage security screening programs. Last October, Deputy Secretary James M. Loy testified before this Subcommittee on aviation security, providing many details on TSA's plans and programs for improving passenger and baggage screening. Today I would like to focus on new screening technologies in passenger and baggage screening, provide an overview of TSA's research and development (R&D) program, and highlight the progress TSA has made in carrying out its plans for screening improvement since last October.

Passenger and baggage screening is an essential component of TSA's many-layered rings of aviation security. Each day, TSA intercepts more than 15,000 prohibited items at airports around the country. Since February 2002, TSA has intercepted more than 1650 firearms, more than 3 million knives, and over 57,000 incendiaries. While the majority of cases are not intentional violations, too frequently individuals are deliberately attempting to circumvent security or test the security system. We have intercepted a knife concealed inside a soda can, a sword hidden inside a cane, and a knife hidden within a prosthetic leg, just to name a few examples. During December 2003, checkpoint screeners reported intercepting 37 firearms. Daily TSA intelligence reports shared among airport security officials detail a startling array of concealed prohibited items discovered by screeners and reports on the ever-changing methods that terrorists may employ in their attempt to foil security measures. No single component of our rings of security is infallible; however, as just illustrated, our system of reinforcing rings of security has substantially improved the security of the traveling public. TSA strives to stay well ahead of those who attempt to game the system, using every tool within our means.

Technology plays a critical role in TSA's passenger and baggage screening programs. The President's Fiscal Year 2005 budget includes a request for \$49 million for TSA Applied R&D and \$50 million for Next Generation Explosives Detection Systems (EDS). Working closely with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate, we have established an ambitious program to develop and deploy new security technologies and use technology to enhance human performance. Technology can help us make our screening operations more effective, more efficient, less time consuming, and less costly.

TSA operates a state-of-the-art research laboratory, the Transportation Security Laboratory (TSL), in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Several screening and other security technologies are under development at the TSL, including an explosives detection portal for passengers to determine if explosives are being carried on an individual's person, document scanners to detect trace amounts of explosive materials on items such as boarding passes, and scanners for better screening of casts and prosthetic devices. We are also developing EDS for carry-on baggage and improving explosives detection technology for screening liquids.

We are continuing work on the Next Generation of EDS for checked baggage screening to increase throughput capacity, improve detection capabilities, and lower false positive alarm rates. Simultaneously, we are collaborating with new vendors to develop technologies that will enable us to detect explosives in smaller amounts than are currently established in our certification standard and that will occupy a smaller footprint at airports. In Jacksonville, Florida, the airport's state-of-the-art in-line EDS system is piloting an on-screen alarm resolution protocol. We hope to be able to deploy the protocol to more airports this fall based on the results obtained at Jacksonville and the two other pilot locations. Within the Next Generation program, we are also looking at new applications of X-ray, electro-magnetic, and nuclear technologies to better probe sealed containers for materials that pose a threat to aviation security.

We are planning FY '05 R&D efforts to combine expanded technological capabilities in conjunction with sensor fusion development. Unfortunately, the restricted space at airports and other transportation facilities will not support continuing additions to the footprints of our screening areas. Therefore, we must design systems that will address multiple threats within very confined spaces. The challenge of moving new technology from the laboratory to the real world is significant.

TSA's R&D program focuses on far more than passenger security technologies, with major efforts underway in commerce, conveyance, and infrastructure security as well. Last month, TSA issued a market survey requesting submissions and participation of vendors of commercial off-the-shelf explosives detection technology to support cargo inspection. A number of vendors have been tentatively selected for laboratory evaluation of their products against the current EDS certification criteria. We will soon issue a request for proposals (RFP) for potential inventors of explosives detection technology for the screening of break bulk cargo to be transported on passenger aircraft. This RFP will

lead to the award of R&D grants to assist in the development of promising technologies. At TSL, we are conducting a cargo characterization study to determine the feasibility of using currently deployed explosives detection technology (EDS and ETD) to screen cargo while new systems are under development. The President's FY '05 budget requests a total of \$55 million for TSA air cargo security R&D.

We are continuing our efforts to design systems to mitigate the impact of an explosion on an aircraft through use of blast resistant cabin and cargo liners, as well as overhead bin mitigation technological solutions. We are working with FAA and aircraft manufacturers to determine which solutions might be candidates for retrofitting and which are appropriate for incorporation into initial aircraft designs.

DHS, in partnership with other federal agencies, is taking an aggressive approach to counter the threat of Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) to civilian commercial aircraft. The strategy includes proliferation control, tactical measures and recovery, and technical countermeasures. In January, the DHS S&T Directorate announced the selection of teams to develop plans and test prototypes to help determine whether a viable technology exists that could be deployed to address the potential threat of MANPADS. In cooperation with the DHS S&T Directorate, TSA is conducting R&D efforts related to MANPADS and stand off weapons. We are assessing the specific capabilities of different missiles and developing computer models that will allow us to determine if it is likely that an aircraft would be hit, and if it would be more susceptible during takeoff or landing. TSA is working with the Department of Defense and other partners to collect signature data from wide and narrow body aircraft to help better determine hit probability and location. With the data gathered during the susceptibility assessments, TSA will be able to model survivability scenarios and determine which R&D efforts could be undertaken to help improve the survivability of today's commercial fleet. In addition, as part of the overall MANPADS strategy, TSA is performing airport vulnerability assessments to identify and map the areas around an airport from which a MANPADS attack could be initiated.

TSA's R&D program also focuses on developing standards for biometric systems through ongoing pilot programs and laboratory efforts. Research in biometrics technologies continues to be applicable and useful in supporting several TSA initiatives such as the Transportation Workers Identification Credential program, the Registered Traveler program, infrastructure access control programs, and employee screening.

To boost airport terminal security, TSA recently issued 9 grants to airports totaling \$7.9 million to support a wide array of surveillance, sensor, and other terminal security technologies. As examples, in Jacksonville, funds will be used for full terminal video surveillance, and in Boston, funds will support a new network airport analysis tool for managing resources, equipment, and traffic flow at different threat levels.

TSA's Airport Access Control Pilot Programs will test and evaluate state-of-the-art access control technologies, including biometrics, in partnership with airport operators who have volunteered to be participants. Currently TSA is conducting site surveys to

match technology design plans with volunteer airports. TSA expects to initiate and complete 10 pilot projects by the end of the calendar year.

As reported to this Subcommittee in October, TSA recognizes that we must continually work to maintain and sharpen screener capabilities. Pulling talent from throughout TSA disciplines—security technology, information technology, training, Office of Internal Affairs and Program Review (OIAPR), human resources, and Aviation Operations—TSA created an integrated task force committed to improving screening performance over six months and to laying the ground work for continued, long-term screening performance improvement. This task force devised and implemented a Short-Term Screening Improvement Plan, a series of integrated interventions that include enhanced training and technology deployment, policy and process reengineering, increased support to the field, and increased covert testing. In the last three months we have already made significant progress in carrying out our screening improvement plan.

All passenger screeners must meet annual recertification standards, passing a Standard Operating Procedures Job Knowledge Test, an Image Certification Test, and a Practical Skills Demonstration, and achieve a fully successful performance rating. Recertification for 2003-2004 began on October 1, 2003, and will run through March 2004. As of February 1, 2004, all federal and contract security screeners had completed the first two steps to recertification, with over 55 percent of the federal screeners having completed all steps and been recertified. This percentage changes daily as screeners complete the required steps and we receive confirmation from airports, and we expect to screeners to complete the recertification process on schedule.

The development of advanced screening technologies is only one aspect of our screening improvement plan. Technology is not only critical to TSA's threat detection capability, but it is being harnessed to help TSA's efforts to improve human performance. Deployment of an enhanced version of the Threat Image Projection (TIP) system is a major component of the screener improvement plan. TIP superimposes threat images on X-ray screens during actual operations and records whether or not screeners identify the threat object. Through a tremendous example of private-public partnership, a significantly enhanced 2400 Threat Image Projection (TIP) library was uploaded to every TIP Ready X-Ray (TRX) in the country during the height of the holiday travel season without interrupting service. This new TIP image library replaces the much smaller 200-image library developed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with images that will continuously provide screeners exposure to the most current threats, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Since late October, an additional 150 TRXs have been delivered to airports around the country, bringing the total number of deployed TRX units to over 1770. Now 98 percent of all checkpoint security lanes are equipped with TRXs with the 2400 image TIP library. Delivery of approximately 30 remaining units will be completed this month. Through the combination of increased deployment of TRX machines and deployment of the expanded TIP image library, we will be able to collect and analyze significant amounts of performance data that has not been previously available.

TIP is an excellent tool for evaluating the skills of each individual screener so that we can focus directly on areas needing skill improvement. By regularly exposing screeners to a variety of threat object images, TIP provides continuous on-the-job training and immediate feedback and remediation. TIP allows supervisors to closely monitor screener performance and improvement.

In the past, collecting TIP data for analysis and reporting was a cumbersome task. Network connectivity to checkpoints will be the ultimate answer to efficient collection, analysis, and reporting of TIP data, but to bridge the gap until full connectivity is achieved, TSA has launched a secure TIP Data Collection and Reporting Web Site. TIP performance reports, including reports at the individual screener level, will be available to Federal Security Directors (FSDs) and other TSA managers for TIP data collected in February 2004.

Network connectivity has been installed in 71 airports to date, and TSA is moving forward on delivering connectivity to many more airports. This effort will provide the capability for continuous training, including real-time training on current threats; greater capacity for monitoring TIP performance; connectivity with checked baggage areas; and a foundation for planned implementations of additional administrative, surveillance, CAPPs II, and other security enhancements.

To maintain high levels of screener proficiency, TSA's screener improvement plan places a strong emphasis on recurrent screener training and supervisory training. Over 550 inert Modular Bomb Set (MBS II) and weapons training kits have been deployed to every airport in the country as an integral part of TSA's recurrent training for screeners, enabling them to see and touch the components of IEDs and weapons. TSA is also developing protocols to help FSDs conduct their own airport level screening testing. To blend nationally and locally developed training, TSA has established the "Excellence in Screener Performance" video training series. The first two videos, "Hand Held Metal Detector/Pat Down Search" and "X-ray Operator" have been delivered to the field. Training videos on physical bag search and screening persons with disabilities are now in production. The third part of our recurrent training program is a series of web-based and computer-based screener training. Eight training products are in production, with the first due to the field this month.

From the standpoint of training delivery, our most significant accomplishment is the launching of our learning management system, the TSA Online Learning Center (OLC). Now available to screeners through the TSA intranet or a secure site on the World Wide Web, the OLC makes available over 350 general training and development courses in addition to TSA specific training.

Finally, recognizing the need to provide our front line supervisors with the tools they need to effectively manage the screener workforce, we have sent over 2000 supervisors to introductory leadership training at the Graduate School, USDA. We will continue to offer 10 sessions each week until all screening supervisors have received this training.

We are currently adding a customized module to this training that includes airport-specific examples of leadership issues they might encounter.

TSA also has begun training some of its senior screeners to better recognize patterns of unusual or suspicious behavior. This additional skill set will further enhance aviation security.

We have increased support to the field by deploying Mobile Training Assist Teams (MTAT) to help FSDs identify and resolve short-term issues that may be affecting screening performance. MTATs have visited 10 airports, providing FSDs with airport-specific performance improvement recommendations. Professional Assist Teams have been deployed to help FSDs turn around any longer-term performance deficiencies. To encourage top screener performance, an "On-the-Spot" awards program has been established in the field. Finally, to help FSDs meet recruiting and hiring goals in some locations, recruiting incentive benefits have been developed. Some of these are currently being field tested at Dulles International Airport and may be deployed to other airports as needed. We have also increased accountability for screening performance. FSD performance standards have been revised to include accountability for screening performance at their airport(s), and new passenger screener performance and passenger screening effectiveness indices have been implemented.

We are in the final stages of revising both passenger and checked baggage Standard Operating Procedures. These revisions, based on data from more than a year of operation and input from the field, should significantly enhance screening processes.

While using all available means to enhance screener skills and equipment, TSA continually tests and challenges screeners to make sure they are on their toes. OIAPR's special operations teams contribute to TSA's Screener Improvement Program through increased and repeat testing at airports and by providing immediate feedback to FSDs, screener supervisors, screeners and TSA leadership on the results of the tests and other data affecting airport security.

TSA's covert testing program increasingly introduces more difficult test objects and exposes screeners to real-life terrorist threats. Special operations teams use intelligence reports and training on advanced screening technology to create challenging protocols to test checkpoints and checked baggage. These teams also conduct tests of access to the aircraft, Air Operations Area (includes perimeter and general aviation), and Security Identification Display Area (SIDA); and whether individuals without appropriate identification in the SIDA are challenged by other employees. In addition, the special operations teams conduct Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System (CAPPS) tests to determine whether air carriers properly designate individuals as selectees and whether checkpoint and baggage screeners follow required screening procedures for selectee passengers and their baggage.

OIAPR is conducting repeat testing at airports so TSA officials have another indicator to assess whether screeners' skills have improved and to gather data on TSA's screener

performance initiatives. As part of post-test reviews with the screeners, OIAPR collects data on TIP installation and use, screener participation with the OLC videos, Mobile Training Assist Team visits, experience with MBS II and weapons training kits, and other performance improvement initiatives. OIAPR is also continuing to test new airports to build a baseline of airport test results to assess changes in performance in the future.

TSA covert testing has increased nationwide, and over 50 airports have been tested in the last three months. From September 9, 2002, to January 17, 2004, OIAPR conducted 1,095 checkpoint tests at 159 airports. Since September 2002, the overall pass rate for checkpoint testing has steadily improved, with an overall pass rate increase of 13 percent since that time. In addition, OIAPR has conducted 463 CAPPs tests, 192 checked baggage tests and 3,976 access tests during this time period.

Although the Aviation and Transportation Security Act mandated the federalization of airport security screening, it held open the possibility that airports could return to contract screening, provided the high standards required by law and instituted by TSA. TSA is currently operating a pilot program at five airports using private screeners that, by law, must meet TSA eligibility, training, and performance requirements and receive pay and other benefits not less than those of TSA screeners. Beginning on November 19, 2004, any airport operator may apply to have screening performed by a contract screening company under contract with TSA. TSA is assessing if and how it would expand contract screening, and to help us make these decisions we have awarded a contract to perform a thorough assessment of the pilot program. TSA is conducting covert testing at the five private screening pilot airports as well and plans semiannually testing to generate data for comparing performance between these airports and airports manned by TSA screeners. OIAPR is coordinating with TSA's evaluation contractor concerning information needed for the evaluation.

In addition to testing system performance, OIAPR investigates security breaches to determine how prohibited items may have entered sterile areas through checkpoints. OIAPR replicates the incidents to test equipment, policies, and personnel. Investigation results are analyzed and reviewed and form the basis for recommendations on improvements in airport security operations and screener performance and training, and for the development of testing protocols.

TSA has undertaken several human factors studies to identify appropriate adjustments in training, operational implementation of screening procedures, and physical layout of screening areas to improve screener efficiency and effectiveness. These efforts will help TSA better understand the causes for human errors and interactions with technology to help identify opportunities for performance improvements. This summer we expect to complete (1) an assessment of the screener work environment to help design ergonomically correct working conditions and determine whether improving the environment improves performance, and (2) a test and evaluation of a "best image first" (BIF) concept to see if this modification to technology can increase X-ray screener threat detection performance for IEDs. We are also evaluating changes in the physical environment for checkpoint supervisors that might enhance oversight and communication

and conducting controlled studies to determine the impact of time-on-task, fatigue, shift cycle, and equipment familiarity on detection performance and alarm resolution.

TSA recently carried out a screener workforce rightsizing effort. A complete review of the current screener staffing model was conducted to assess and identify the proper mix of full time and part time screeners to match the passenger flows at the nation's airports. Airport FSDs are given the flexibility to schedule the screening workforce to meet the peak travel periods. While this development will ultimately result in more efficient management of screener staffing to meet passenger throughput, matching staffing resources to the ever-changing needs at each airport remains an ongoing challenge. While the overall size of the workforce is declining, TSA is creating some additional capacity and greater efficiencies in the scheduling of screeners. FSDs at each airport now have access to scheduling tools that provide real-time information enabling them to forecast periods of peak demand for screening. TSA uses more split shifts and part-time screeners to maximize the operational flexibility available to FSDs when scheduling screeners to satisfy varying levels of demand. Balancing workload and screener scheduling is increasing TSA's options for meeting the demands at traditionally hard-to-fill airports. TSA continues to recruit and train screeners to fill vacancies and address normal attrition.

Today screeners are much better trained and prepared to meet the demands of screening both passengers and checked baggage. Over the holidays, the screener workforce responded well to the increased travel volume and heightened security procedures, capably carrying out their responsibilities with pride and professionalism. Over 1.7 million passengers and 2 million bags are processed through airport checkpoints on a daily basis. We are aggressively working with stakeholders to identify opportunities to increase efficiency.

In an effort to streamline and increase passenger throughput, TSA has instituted a pilot program to test the feasibility of remote baggage check-in. In Orlando, Florida, BAGS, Inc. is authorized to accept baggage at four offsite locations. BAGS, Inc. personnel are trained by air carriers to accept baggage and perform the responsibilities of ground security coordinator. The baggage undergoes EDS screening at Orlando International Airport. After a one-year trial, TSA will evaluate the success of the Orlando pilot to determine its applicability nationwide.

TSA has met the December 31, 2003, deadline for electronic screening of checked baggage at all but a handful of our Nation's airports. A classified report on the few airports where the deadline has not been met is provided to Congress each month. The report provides the status of our efforts to achieve compliance and a projected completion date. If Members of the Subcommittee would like additional details, further information could be provided in a setting appropriate for the discussion of classified information. TSA will continue to use congressionally-approved alternative methods for checked baggage screening, even after all airports have been provided the equipment capacity to screen all checked baggage. Although contingencies are built into each system to minimize the instances when non-electronic screening procedures would be required, we anticipate that there will always be situations when temporary circumstances require the

use of approved alternative measures to ensure the continued movement of passengers and baggage.

To date, six Letters of Intent (LOI) have been issued for in-line checked baggage screening systems at seven airports. Presently, TSA anticipates issuing additional LOIs and will make information regarding any future LOIs public, following the required Congressional notifications. TSA will continue to use a process to ensure that airports with the greatest security needs for an in-line system are given priority consideration for available Federal assistance.

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the enormous contribution to being made by hundreds of pilots now trained as volunteer Federal Flight Deck Officers (FFDOs), another vital link in our rings of aviation security.

On February 25, 2004, TSA's FFDO program will have been in place for one year. TSA developed and implemented this program in close cooperation with organizations representing airline pilots, such as the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and the Coalition of Airline Pilots Associations (CAPA). Pilots provided valuable insights to TSA during the formation of the FFDO program and many of their suggestions are reflected today in the initial qualifications, training, and standard operating procedures for FFDOs. In recent testimony before a Congressional subcommittee, ALPA characterized TSA's initial training curriculum as extremely effective and designed to prepare FFDOs for the challenges they will face when field deployed.

Last month, TSA began doubling the number of FFDO classes at our new site for training in Artesia, New Mexico, where there is capacity for further expansion if necessary. With the resources at hand, we plan to provide initial training and qualification for thousands of FFDOs by the end of this fiscal year. TSA has streamlined the process for pilots to become FFDOs. The selection process consists of an on-line application, an hour-long computerized assessment, an interview, and a background check. FFDO assessments are administered at over 200 locations throughout the United States, and more are being added. Classes are available continuously except during certain holidays.

TSA conducts an efficient screening process that is consistent with the process for other law enforcement personnel. Most FFDO volunteers are eligible to schedule training within 60 days of submitting an application.

Pilots also must attend re-qualification sessions twice a year to ensure that they maintain a high level of proficiency and familiarity with program requirements. Ten private and state and local government sites are available for self-scheduling of re-qualification training. Sites were selected in geographically diverse locations that would be convenient to pilots. As the numbers of FFDOs grows, TSA will expand the number of recurrent training sites to meet their needs.

With the enactment of Vision 100, the FFDO program has been expanded to include cargo pilots and other flight deck crewmembers. TSA is examining modifications to the

current FFDO curriculum and operating procedures to reflect the different environment in which cargo pilots operate. TSA initiated the on-line application process for cargo and other flight deck crewmembers on February 3 and expects to conduct its first cargo FFDO prototype program this April.

TSA is working to develop the components of crewmember basic and enhanced self-defense training programs based on the requirements of Vision 100. TSA will consult with the Federal Air Marshal Service, air carriers, flight attendants, training and terrorism experts, and individuals with expertise in counter-terrorism and self-defense training in the development of the program. The delivery of training to volunteer crewmembers will be carried out in partnership with air carriers.

Working with the DHS S&T Directorate, TSA is beginning a comprehensive review of the civil aviation security system now that two years have passed since the enactment of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act and over twelve years have passed since the Aviation Security Improvement Act of 1990. We are incorporating this review as part of our constant evaluation of the security measures we have put into place, and will be able to use the results of this report, along with our other evaluative efforts to consider other approaches to aviation security that may be available.

As a final note, I would like to comment on the extraordinary level of information sharing and cooperation that has been achieved during recent threats. When the alert level was raised to Orange over the holidays, TSA and DHS sister agency, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, maximized anti-terrorist efforts in the air environment by coordinating air security operations. Combined agency resources were utilized to screen passengers, cargo, aircraft, and airport personnel with access to aircraft. The Department of Transportation and the FAA were integral partners as we addressed the recent threat conditions. Furthermore, not only did TSA and DHS work closely with intelligence and law enforcement agencies to assess the threat, but we received invaluable cooperation and assistance from the State Department in addressing issues with our international partners. This is perhaps the most vivid evidence of the transformation that has taken place in aviation security since 9/11.

Thank you again for this opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

8/24/2004; 4:05 PM

Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation
Hearing on Aviation Security
“Aviation Security: Progress and Problems in Passenger and Baggage Screening”
February 12, 2004

Congressman Frank A. LoBiondo

Questions for Tom Blank
Assistant Administrator for Transportation Security Policy, TSA

Question: What is the President's FY05 budget request for salaries and operating expenses for the TSA's Transportation Security Lab? Are those items funded out of the approximately \$154 million requested for Aviation Security Research and Development?

Answer: The FY 2005 budget request of \$154 million includes \$16 million for Transportation Security Lab (TSL) employee salaries and benefits and TSL operation costs. The remaining amount is directly attributable to applied research, air cargo security, or Next Generation EDS.

Question: When does the TSA intend to begin operational testing of trace portals and next generation baggage screening technology at airports? What airports would receive the prototypes?

Answer: TSA is planning to conduct operational testing and evaluation of explosives trace detection portals in the fourth quarter of FY 2004. The airport sites have not been selected yet, however, we are considering conducting the testing at both a small and medium size airport to measure performance, throughput, and operational impact. With regard to next generation baggage screening technology, TSA is working with a number of vendors to identify the needs for checkpoint explosives detection systems, and will likely have a prototype ready for operational testing and evaluation early FY 2005. We also expect to see preliminary results from our Phoenix program for checked baggage by the end of this calendar year.

Question: It is my understanding the TSA intended use a small portion of its FY03 Research and Development funding to construct a new facility at the Transportation Security Lab to house cargo security research activities, but the project never happened due to the transfer of funding to screener hiring. Does the TSA still intend to build this facility at the Transportation Security Lab?

Answer: At this time TSA is not planning to construct a new facility at the Transportation Security Lab to house cargo security research activities. Through established partnerships, TSA has access to several facilities that can accommodate its R&D efforts related to cargo, two of which are the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, and the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation
Hearing on Aviation Security
“Aviation Security: Progress and Problems in Passenger and Baggage Screening”
February 12, 2004

Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher
Questions for Tom Blank
Assistant Administrator for Transportation Security Policy, TSA

- 1. Question:** Mr. Blank, as I’m sure you know, San Francisco International Airport (SFO) used its own money to install in-line explosives detection system (EDS) machines even before the establishment of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). This reduced TSA staffing requirements to 150 employees. Now the Airport needs a \$20 million Letter of Intent (LOI) to complete their system but has been waiting for approval since May. This cost is eight times less than the average existing LOI and would actually save TSA money by further reducing staffing requirements and freeing 13 smaller EDS machines for other airports. Why has TSA not provided SFO with the remaining \$20 million to complete their in-line EDS system?

 - **Answer:** TSA has designated funding in support of the ongoing efforts at San Francisco International Airport (SFO) for projects associated with completion of an in-line screening solution. While this funding will not be allocated through a Letter of Intent (LOI), TSA will be entering into an “Other Transaction Agreement (OTA)” with SFO allowing TSA to provide funding directly to the airport for work to be accomplished. TSA expects the funding to be allocated to SFO in May 2004.

- 2. Question:** Haven’t you caused a competitive disadvantage for carriers not located in the updated terminals at SFO?

Answer: TSA’s top priority is security. Consequently, TSA focuses its available funds on EDS installation work at those airports that require additional funding in order to comply with the 100% electronic screening mandate for checked baggage.

- 3. Question:** As there are more airports seeking LOIs than available funding, what kind of projects will receive priority?

Answer: TSA will continue to apply prioritization factors when determining which airports will be covered by funding allocated. Revised prioritization factors are currently under development and review.

Recognizing the Service of David Schaffer

**HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR
OF MINNESOTA**

February 12, 2004

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate one of our long-time staff members on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on his retirement. David Schaffer is retiring as the Majority Staff Director and Senior Counsel of the House Aviation Subcommittee at the end of this month.

David joined the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation in 1984 as Assistant Minority Counsel for the Subcommittee on Aviation, became the Minority Counsel of the Aviation Subcommittee in 1992 and then Majority Counsel in January 1995.

Over the course of his 26 years in the federal government, including 6 years with the Civil Aeronautics Board, his efforts have directly contributed to many of this Committee's significant legislative efforts to enhance the overall safety, efficiency, competitiveness and security of our nation's aviation system.

During my tenure as Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee from 1989 through 1994, David was a fixture at our hearings, sitting at the elbow of my Republican colleagues John Paul Hammerschmidt and William Clinger. As we

crafted some of the most important aviation law of our time, including the Aviation Security Improvement Act of 1990 and the Aviation Noise and Capacity of 1990, David was always at the negotiating table, working with my staff and me toward the common goal of effective legislation.

As the Majority Counsel for the Aviation Subcommittee, David was instrumental in crafting the Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR 21), Federal Aviation Authorization Act of 1996, the Aviation Medical Assistance Act, Pilot Records Improvement Act, Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act, and the Aviation and Transportation Security Act.

His bipartisan, non-confrontational approach to crafting legislation, his painstaking attention to detail, and his mastery of the subject matter has been most impressive and has been greatly appreciated by my staff, and by me.

I know that his work has required great personal sacrifice and I commend him for his unwavering commitment to excellence. I wish him nothing but the best as he moves on to the next phase of his exemplary career.

Joint Statement Of
David Z. Plavin, President, Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA)
And
Todd Hauptli, Sr. Executive Vice President, American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE)
On Behalf of ACI-NA and AAEE
House Aviation Subcommittee Hearing on Passenger and Baggage Screening Problems
February 12, 2004

On behalf of the men and women who operate and manage America's airports, we appreciate the opportunity to offer our observations on the current state of passenger and baggage screening and to outline some of the challenges that remain at airports across the country. Since the creation of the Transportation Security Administration and the assumption of baggage and passenger screening responsibilities by the agency more than two years ago, airports have made every effort to serve as an active partner with TSA in meeting its mandates and its mission. We look forward to continuing our work with the TSA and with this subcommittee to ensure that every effort is made to meet the need for the highest level of security while ensuring high levels of customer service. These twin goals are crucial to protecting our nation's aviation system, which remains so critical to our economy, our standard of living, and our way of life.

The Partnership Role of Airport Operators

Before discussing the views of airport operators and managers on the subjects of passenger and baggage screening and the collective priorities we should have toward the future, it is important to note that the direct role of airports in passenger and baggage screening is limited by law. As the members of this subcommittee are well aware, the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (P.L. 107-71) established the TSA and gave the agency direct regulatory and operational responsibilities over passenger and baggage screening at the nation's airports. These functions include the hiring, training, and assignment of passenger and baggage screeners as well as the regulatory function of testing, enforcing, and evaluating the success of the program. Prior to that time, operational responsibilities fell largely to the airlines that operated the screening functions, and enforcement fell to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Under the current regulatory regime, airports recognize that they have a tremendous stake in serving as an active partner with the TSA to meet the requirements of the law and to ensure that every effort is undertaken to achieve the highest levels of security, customer service and system efficiency. Our airport members have sought aggressively to work with TSA to tackle problems relating to passenger and baggage screening, and many, as you will hear in other testimony today, have strong views about how improvements can be made, particularly with regard to two areas. First, there is a need to install explosive detection equipment "in-line" at airports across the country as quickly as possible. Second, there is a need to provide additional local flexibility in meeting staffing requirements at passenger screening checkpoints.

It is also important to note that airports along with our partners in local law enforcement have always exercised direct responsibilities in areas of airport security beyond baggage and passenger screening, such as perimeter security, access control, and airport parking. Airports and our local government partners have performed these functions exceptionally well since the inception of the recognized need for security of our customers and facilities, and we believe strongly that these responsibilities should remain at the local level. Keeping traditionally local responsibilities in local hands has the added advantage of allowing the TSA to leverage airport and local resources and enables the agency to better focus on its core missions of baggage and passenger screening and providing intelligence to local law enforcement.

Airports are public institutions and, therefore, have the necessary and appropriate incentives to perform security responsibilities at the highest levels. The primary mission of an airport is to establish and maintain a safe and secure environment for travelers and the general public and to serve the community and the national aviation system by encouraging competitive air service. Airports have always been responsible for the safety and security of their facilities and the people who use them, and this will continue to be so.

Establishing a more balanced federal-local partnership should be a collective goal of all of us. The best path forward to more effective, efficient and secure airport passenger and baggage screening is one where federal resources and standards pave the way guided by local experience and management.

Deadlines Have Driven Short-Term Goals; Long-Term Approach Needed

Since the creation of the TSA in November of 2001, the majority of agency efforts with regard to passenger and baggage screening have centered on the need to meet the strict mandates and deadlines established in the law to create a fully federal workforce for airport screening duties and to screen all checked baggage placed aboard commercial flights. Over the past few years, these action-forcing mandates by the Congress have created the imperative to get things done quickly. In the context of this accelerated timetable, TSA deserves praise for the quality of its screeners and their ability to conduct screening with a professional and customer friendly demeanor. This is no small accomplishment.

This approach, while understandable in the wake of the outrages of 9-11, has created unintentional consequences, however. On the passenger screening side, the TSA has struggled at a number of airports to adequately staff passenger screening checkpoints, while others are overstaffed, especially during slack periods of demand. Baggage screening remains an even bigger challenge. As all of us who travel often through airports know, a large number of explosive detection machines currently sit in already overcrowded terminal areas where they were quickly installed in order to meet the 12/31/02 deadline. This “temporary” arrangement uses resources inefficiently, increasing the number of TSA personnel required to screen baggage. In addition, it inconveniences customers and potentially creates added risk for them as they attempt to check baggage and board flights.

Unfortunately, these problems arising from TSA staffing challenges and overcrowded terminals will only get worse as traffic continues to return to the aviation system. An artificial “cushion” was created by the drop in passenger demand over the last three years. October 2003 enplanements, for example, were down 13.6 percent from October 2000 levels.

Passenger traffic is returning quickly, however, and airlines continue to add back seats in existing and new markets. Unless we take steps now to address these shortcomings and make the infrastructure and technology investments necessary to improve system security and efficiency, we will not optimize our federal and local investments, and we risk reliving the dismal passenger experiences of the summer of 2000. It is time to shift from the reactive mode we have taken toward security in recent years to a proactive approach that achieves better security in a smarter, quicker, more efficient manner.

EDS Installation – Potential for Significant Security Upgrades and Personnel Savings

Nowhere can better improvements be made in aviation security and system efficiency than in the area of explosive detection system (EDS) installation at airports. While the costs of moving EDS equipment out of crowded terminal lobbies and placing it “in-line” as part of an airport’s integrated baggage system are significant with a price tag estimated between \$4 billion and \$5 billion nationally, investing now in this effort will improve security and service and produce significant personnel savings.

The case of the Lexington Blue-Grass Airport in Lexington, Kentucky, offers a perfect example. In Lexington, a \$3.5 million investment to make the terminal modifications necessary to establish an in-line baggage system instead of the terminal lobby explosive trace detection (ETD) protocol that was offered as an alternative has resulted in annual personnel savings of more than \$3 million. The TSA has been able to use four screeners for the in-line system per shift rather than the 30 that would have been necessary for primary checked bag screening using the ETD configuration. In addition, the in-line EDS option in Lexington allows for reduced congestion in terminal areas, a result that improves security and enhances passenger convenience. Large airports stand ready to achieve even bigger gains. Modeling in San Francisco, for example, shows savings of tens of millions of dollars annually for an in-line EDS solution.

While virtually everyone agrees that integrating EDS equipment in-line makes sense and is a wise long-term investment, gaining the estimated \$4 billion to \$5 billion needed at airports across the country to

reinforce flooring, make electrical upgrades, and construct new facilities has been difficult given federal budget constraints and the ways in which the existing money has been invested. To this point, Congress has appropriated \$1.488 billion for EDS-related terminal modifications, although significant portions of those funds were used by TSA on the short-term challenges associated with getting EDS machines in airports to meet the 12/31/02 deadline, leaving a resource gap of at least \$3.5 billion.

Efforts to gain additional funding were helped by the establishment as part of VISION-100 legislation of an Aviation Security Capital Fund that authorizes up to \$500 million a year for four years to fund EDS installation and other airport security-related improvements. We greatly appreciate the efforts of you, Mr. Chairman, and the subcommittee to make this issue a priority and ensure that key provisions were included in the final version of the legislation. We will continue to work to make sure that resources materialize to follow this authorization.

VISION-100 also reaffirms the use of a Letter of Intent (LOI) process by TSA, with individual airports specifying long-term funding arrangements for these types of projects. In simple terms, the LOI process allows interested airports to provide immediate funding for key projects with a promise that the federal government will reimburse the airport for those expenses over several years. At Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, for example, the airport used its strong rating in the financial market to leverage the LOI and to issue bonds to install these systems. This approach takes advantage of professional airport management capabilities and maximizes the use of limited federal resources to ensure that key construction projects get underway as soon as possible.

To this point, TSA has issued LOIs to eight airports (see chart below), committing just over a billion dollars to those projects. Although airports contend that the cost of these projects should be met entirely by the federal government, given its direct responsibility for baggage screening established in law, in light of the national security imperative for doing so, and because of the economic efficiencies of this strategy, airports are required by law to provide a local match of 10 percent in the case of large and medium hubs

and 5 percent for smaller airports. We were surprised to see that the President's budget request for fiscal year 2005 ignores current law and proposes a local match of 25 percent for larger airports and a 10 percent match for smaller airports.

While the issuance of eight LOIs is certainly a good start, this represents the proverbial "tip of the iceberg." More resources are needed to address the dozens of other airports that do not currently have LOIs with the TSA. To give the subcommittee an idea of the scope of current needs, we have included the latest data we have from a number of airports that have identified EDS installation as a major challenge facing their facility.

<u>LOI Airports</u>	
Airport	LOI Total Cost
Atlanta	\$125 million
Boston Logan	\$116 million
Dallas/Fort Worth	\$139 million
Denver International	\$95 million
Las Vegas McCarran	\$125 million
Los Angeles/Ontario	\$342 million
Phoenix	\$122 million
Seattle/Tacoma	\$212 million
Total LOI Airports:	\$1.276 Billion

Airports Currently Without Funding in Place for EDS Installation (With Project Cost Estimate)

Albuquerque	\$48 million
Anchorage	\$30 million
Biloxi	\$5 million
Bismarck	\$20 million
Bradley	\$35 million
BWI	\$65 million
Charlotte	\$40 million
Chicago Midway/O'Hare	\$90 million
Cincinnati	\$20 million
Cleveland	\$45 million
Colorado Springs	\$15 million
Detroit	\$100 million
Elgin AFB	\$2 million
El Paso	\$15 million
Ft. Lauderdale	\$85 million
Grand Rapids	\$20 million
Guam	\$14 million
Harrisburg	\$15 million
Honolulu/Kahului	\$78 million
Houston	\$115 million
Jackson	\$9 million

John Wayne	\$12 million
Kansas City	\$34 million
Memphis	\$42 million
Miami	\$200 million
Milwaukee	\$35 million
Minneapolis/St. Paul	\$30 million
Nashville	\$40 million
Newark	\$99 million
New Orleans	\$14 million
New York LaGuardia	\$98 million
New York JFK	\$250 million
Oakland	\$30 million
Omaha	\$18 million
Orlando	\$65 million
Palm Beach	\$30 million
Panama City	\$10 million
Philadelphia	\$65 million
Portland	\$45 million
Port Columbus	\$22 million
Providence	\$38 million
Raleigh-Durham	\$40 million
Richmond	\$30 million
Rochester	\$10 million
St. Louis	\$90 million
St. Thomas	\$10 million
Salt Lake City	\$20 million
San Antonio	\$40 million
San Diego	\$20 million
San Francisco	\$22 million
San Jose	\$172 million
San Juan	\$130 million
SW Florida	\$28 million
Tampa	\$124 million
Tucson	\$10 million
Washington Dulles	\$121 million
Washington Reagan National	\$52 million
Total:	\$2.962 billion

The need for just these airports tops \$4 billion, and we believe that there are dozens of additional airports not listed here that have yet to develop comprehensive cost estimates or that have not yet responded to our requests for information.

Despite the overwhelming need of dozens of airports from coast to coast, TSA has stated that it intends to sign only a handful of additional LOIs, leaving a significant number of airports across the country without a long-term EDS solution. The TSA's task has not been made any easier by opposition from the Office of

Management and Budget (OMB) to the issuance of additional LOIs to airports for these projects. It is our sincere hope that OMB will quickly move past what we believe is a short-sighted view of this problem and focus on the long-term benefits that can be achieved by immediately investing to make the terminal modifications necessary to accommodate EDS equipment. The longer these investments are stretched out, the more resources are wasted unnecessarily.

Mr. Chairman, the installation of EDS equipment in airports is a perfect example where the federal government cannot afford to be penny-wise and pound foolish. While it is true that the procurement and installation of EDS systems will require significant upfront expenses, those capital costs are relatively modest when compared to the extraordinary expenses necessary to pay for literally thousands of extra screeners year after year after year using today's model.

We urge TSA to continue its work with airport operators and managers to ensure that proposed solutions and changes are really the best course at an individual facility. Airport professionals understand the configuration and layout of their facilities better than anyone and are uniquely suited to highlight where pitfalls lie and where opportunities exist. In addition, TSA must continue to work with airport operators to optimize the use of limited space in airport facilities and to pay airports for the agency's use of space in accordance with the law.

Airports are pleased that the TSA is seeking significant resources in the fiscal year 2005 budget for ongoing maintenance of EDS machines. As the machines age and as their use continues to grow and their warranties expire, it is critical that funding is provided to keep the existing machines in operation and to restore machines that fail.

New Technology Holds Additional Promise

In addition to investing in necessary infrastructure improvements and maintenance, the federal government needs to look toward the promise of new technology and invest in making those promises a

reality. Like you, Mr. Chairman, we remain convinced that there are a number of additional applications for new technology to enhance perimeter security and access control, improve baggage and passenger screening, and numerous others. The key is for the federal government to encourage innovation in these areas and to make it a priority to investigate and approve new technology as quickly as possible. “On-screen” resolution using EDS equipment, for example, offers great promise in enhancing the efficiency of integrated in-line baggage systems, and the utilization of technology to achieve that goal should be encouraged.

We must also look beyond our borders to learn from the experiences of the rest of the world. In many instances, the goals that we have been discussing over the course of the past several years both in terms of operations and technology are already a reality in many places. We would be wise to study those successes and incorporate best practices where appropriate.

Passenger Screening: Local Flexibility And Performance Standards Are Key

As anyone who has traveled recently can easily tell, the passenger screening experience seems to vary greatly from airport to airport. At some facilities, there is a virtual army of TSA employees standing at the ready. At other airports, staffing issues have created extensive wait times for passengers. In many senses, it is a tale of two systems.

While anecdotal evidence might suggest that average wait times system-wide are currently manageable, passengers do not experience the aviation system in terms of averages, but instead largely during “peak” and “off-peak” times. The diversity and dynamism of the aviation industry does not lend itself to evaluating screening operations by anecdotal experiences or averages taken during single points during the day. Our success, rather, depends on being quickly responsive to changing market conditions and customer needs, whenever passengers fly. Having the right numbers of employees at the right spot at the right time is a critical component to our industry’s success, and we are not meeting that goal in many instances.

The strict rigidity of TSA in its hiring and staffing practices seem to be the source of many current problems. A number of our members tell us that the many issues could be resolved through more flexible staffing schedules or through the use of additional part-time workers. Yet, individual FSDs don't always have the flexibility they need locally to tackle problems that are inherently local in nature.

Mr. Chairman, as is the case in so many areas relating to security, one size does not fit all. The challenges in Orlando with regard to hiring and placing screeners are not the same as they are in Eugene or Anchorage or Minneapolis/St. Paul. Each of these has unique local labor markets, unique flight banks, unique seasonal traffic patterns, unique airport configurations, and so on down the list. Flexibility at the local level to hire and manage workforces is the only way of ensuring that these unique situations are adequately addressed.

This rigidity and the almost inevitable problems that result has led a number of airports to consider exploring the "opt-out" option established by law effective later this year that allows airports to request non-federal screeners. Although there are dozens of issues associated with "opt out" that are the subject for another day, the fact is that some airports are desperate to find an approach that provides additional local flexibility.

Beyond additional local flexibility, we believe that it is critical that the agency establish measures and performance standards for passenger processing. While the 10-minute goal established initially by DOT Secretary Mineta may not be exactly the right standard, it is clear that a reasonable goal must be established and that the TSA and the full array of passenger and cargo processing personnel employed by the federal government must be held accountable for meeting such goals. We have goals holding the airlines accountable for meeting their schedules; it is only appropriate and right that we do the same with the federal workforce. Only by setting a standard can TSA and airport managers know that the workforce size and deployment model for their airport is the appropriate one.

While security is obviously a priority imperative, maintaining the efficient, effective functioning of the aviation system is also critical. We cannot realistically expect the traveling public forever to wait patiently on a system that they view as unnecessarily and increasingly intrusive and inefficient. The more hassle involved, the less inclined people will be to board aircraft, especially as time passes. We have already seen convincing evidence that passengers who have an option have already forsaken air travel: short distance trips have seen the greatest decline in patronage. Too often, the effect has been to remove a spoke community from its connecting hub. Those truths have had, and will continue to have, a profound affect on the airline industry and its financial well-being.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, for the past several years, our approach to passenger and baggage screening and airport security has been deadline driven. While this strategy was necessary to establish an imperative for quick action, it is now time to move forward to ensure that limited federal resources are wisely utilized to enhance security, system efficiency, and passenger convenience. The items we have outlined in our testimony today – continued cooperation and collaboration between TSA and airports, immediate investment in EDS installation and new technology, additional local flexibility to meet staffing requirements, and the establishment of performance measures for passenger processing – are several of the key items that are central to that effort. We appreciate the subcommittee's continued interest in these topics and we look forward to our work with you and with the TSA to accomplish our mutual goals.

**Statement of Randall Walker, Director
Department of Aviation, Clark County, Nevada
Before the House Aviation Subcommittee
February 12, 2004**

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and your Subcommittee for this opportunity to discuss with you the passenger screening issues at Las Vegas McCarran International Airport. Because Las Vegas is not a hub for one of the large network carriers, it may surprise some of you to learn that Las Vegas McCarran is the second busiest domestic Origin and Destination airport in the nation. We process more passengers through our checkpoints than any other airport with the exception of LAX.

As has been reported in the media, the long lines are back at our airport (see pictures). This is problematic not only from a passenger satisfaction level but from a passenger security level as well.

Everyone agrees that since the events of 9/11 the passenger experience at an airport has changed forever. Increasing the level of security for baggage and passenger screening for air travel was essential, not only to protect the safety and security of our citizens and visitors, but to restore confidence in our air travel system.

In October 2001, McCarran was the first major airport to see its traffic rebound. That month our traffic was 82% of the previous October. A

system that had previously handled that level of passengers and more at a high degree of customer satisfaction nearly collapsed under the new procedures developed in response to 9/11. Working with our airline partners and the FAA (pre TSA creation), we developed strategies, which complied with the new security rules but enhanced the processing experience to tolerable levels. These strategies involved significant resources from the airport and our airline partners.

With a 3.6% increase in passengers in 2003, Las Vegas McCarran's passenger levels are essentially back to the pre 9/11 levels (over 98%), the first major US airport to rebound to that level. Because we are principally an O&D airport, almost all of our departing passengers must past through a security checkpoint. Once again we find ourselves with the unenviable task of working with our partners to develop strategies to balance the system to provide a safe and effective process for the traveling public. As before, we hope what we learn and accomplish can be used by other airports to avoid the pain we are experiencing.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee some have jokingly defined the acronym TSA as "Thousands Standing Around", referring to the federal employees. At McCarran I can assure you this is not true. Unfortunately, though, it can describe our passengers crammed in front of

the security checkpoint at a peak time. While the TSA's current Congressionally-mandated passenger protection mission begins when travelers reach the security checkpoint equipment, we suggest that the process can be improved if it is managed as a whole to prevent inadvertently shifting the would-be target from the airplane to the airport terminals themselves.

Our airport staff has been analyzing reasons as to why the long lines have returned. One issue we have learned is that in spite of all the public attention, even seasoned travelers are often not prepared upon arrival at the magnetometer and x-ray screening positions. This past week we staffed, in the peak times, one or two airport employees and/or airline contract employees at each processing lane. We encouraged and directed each passenger to get prepared before arriving to the screening point. We refer to the staff performing this task as "Front End Loaders" This process was extremely helpful and kept our lines to tolerable levels for our post super bowl travelers.

What did we learn from this front end loading process? We learned that the passengers are not getting prepared for the screening process as they should because they are confused as to the rules. Do I have to take my shoes off? Can I put my shoes in the same bin as my coat? Do I need my

boarding pass? Do I need my ID? Since the rules change from airport to airport, many passengers wait until they are told what to do before making the final preparations to enter the screening process. Without the front end loaders, this load falls to the TSA employees behind the check point. In addition, without knowing the rules, passengers tend to use more bins than are required. More bins mean more items screened per passenger equating to more wait time for everyone.

Although front end loading has helped speed up the processing time, it does not account for all the increase in the wait times for our passengers. Something in the process itself has increased the processing time since late last year. I am sure that each procedure and any change in that procedure mandated by TSA is good for security when analyzed individually. But the cumulative effect of all these procedures being applied at our airport is creating a new security problem: thousands of passengers crammed into a small space. It seems no one is examining the entire passenger processing experience with a goal of balancing the security of the entire passenger screening process. The federal process is doing a good job of providing a secure system from the check point to the plane and from the plane to the next airport, but at the same time it is creating a new potential security problem on the front end of this process.

Since September 11, 2001, Las Vegas has more than doubled the number of security checkpoint lanes from 12 to 25, with the last three added in 2003. We currently are constructing new floor space to expand that number by six to 31 lanes. We have added our new Speed Check common use electronic check-in kiosks to help reduce the demand on the ticket counter. We have added cameras to the check point areas. We have developed automatic doors to seal areas of the terminal in the event of a breach to minimize the impact to already screened passengers. All this was accomplished without any federal mandate or financial assistance.

When our checkpoint lines ballooned in January we were perplexed as to the reason. The number of check point lanes in 2003 grew by 10% more than our passengers. When we analyzed the checkpoint through put, we found that the rate was approximately 20% less than the last time we did such an analysis in 2003. This reduction in the through put rate has resulted in very long lines in our peak times, an issue which has been the subject of discussion by the media and on the frequent-flier internet discussion boards.

The return of the long lines is a cause of frustration for the Las Vegas air traveler. If the situation does not improve, many of our visitors may be discouraged from returning to our community. This would be bad for the economic well being of our community and for the airlines as well. But

perhaps of equal concern is the unintended security consequence of these long lines: creating an attractive target in front of the checkpoint lanes for someone looking for an opportunity to inflict catastrophic injury on a large number of people. If I could make one recommendation it would be for TSA to give Federal Security Directors (FSD's) at the individual airports, sufficient authority and flexibility to make decisions based upon the "on the ground" situation as it exists from time to time as necessary to lower the risks throughout the entire security screening process.

Thank-you for inviting me to testify before you today. I look forward to responding to any questions you may have.

AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
OF THE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
HEARING ON
AVIATION SECURITY: PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS IN PASSENGER AND
BAGGAGE SCREENING

FEBRUARY 12, 2004

The Air Transport Association of America, Inc. (ATA) appreciates this opportunity to submit its views on progress and problems in passenger and baggage screening. We commend the Subcommittee on its continuing oversight of how this important aspect of modern commercial air transportation security is implemented. As the Subcommittee knows, Section 101 of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) directed the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to assume responsibility for civil aviation security. Section 110 of ATSA specifically directs the TSA to provide for the screening of "all passengers and property, including United States mail, cargo, carry-on and checked baggage, and other articles, that will be carried aboard a passenger aircraft." With certain exceptions, such screening is to be conducted by Federal employees. Notwithstanding ATSA's clear mandate regarding TSA's responsibility, airlines have been required to screen cargo, service personnel, catered food and supplies, and both passengers and their bags on private charter flights, without reimbursement of costs from TSA.

The policy that all passenger and baggage screening is a government function rests on Congress' wise determination that protecting civil aviation is a matter of national security and therefore a Constitutional responsibility of the Federal government. This is because the nation as a whole benefits from a secure civil aviation system. Air travel is crucial not only to the commerce of the United States, it also permits Americans to maintain family and personal ties, a broad societal benefit that extends well beyond those using the system. In short, aviation has become an irreplaceable tie that binds together the fabric of American society and our nation's "just-in-time economy." For these reasons, it is crucial that passenger and baggage screening be implemented in a way that is effective, efficient and respectful of American values and expectations.¹

Our comments address two principal topics: screener staffing, and deployment of explosive detection systems.

Screener Staffing

The TSA's screener staffing levels have been the subject of much debate and discussion. Faced with the daunting task of creating checkpoint and baggage screening systems virtually overnight, it is not surprising that reaching appropriate staffing levels has been

¹ Also for these reasons, as ATA has stated on many occasions, aviation security should be fully funded out of general tax revenues, and the aviation security infrastructure fees imposed on passengers and airlines should be abolished. In our view, the discretionary fee imposed on airlines directly, in particular, is inconsistent with ATSA.

an evolutionary process for TSA.² This has been further hampered by Congress due to a lack of funding and a headcount cap that was only recently rescinded.

A positive evolutionary step for TSA has been the decision to begin hiring part-time employees. From the industry's perspective, the flexibility to match screening capacity with demand is crucial to an effective and efficient system. Part-time positions allow TSA managers to have in place enough employees to meet operating and rest needs during peak travel times, thereby ensuring that screeners remain vigilant and perform their functions effectively. Screener effectiveness should not be compromised by pressures created by long lines and passenger frustration. Part-time positions maximize TSA's limited resources by avoiding overstaffing during off-peak times of the day.

An associated and important facet of this issue is providing the airport Federal Security Directors (FSDs) with adequate authority to make staffing-related decisions to meet the needs of their individual airports. Each airport is unique in terms of physical layout and the ebb and flow of passengers entering its security system. To maximize effectiveness and efficiency, the FSDs should have the authority and resources to adjust staffing levels throughout the day and manage full and part-time positions accordingly. Further, TSA's current centralized hiring process impedes efficient staffing. TSA should place greater reliance on FSD input regarding hiring and staffing procedures. Finally, FSDs should be required to consult with airline officials in making staffing determinations. Such

² GAO reported that TSA's screener workforce totaled 55,600 on March 31, 2003. That number dropped to 52,600 on June 1, 2003 and 49,600 full-time equivalents (FTEs) on September 30, 2003. TSA predicts it will be at 45,000 FTEs by the end of FY 2004. See GAO-03-1173 at 15.

consultations will allow informed decision-making which will result in security screening that fulfills TSA's responsibilities while avoiding long security lines.

In order to judge efficiency, an appropriate measuring stick must be used. For passenger and checked baggage screening, we recommend that TSA implement performance metrics to ensure that passenger wait times are kept to an absolute minimum at checkpoints and baggage screening locations. Establishing a maximum period of time passengers should be required to stand in line to go through security screening is an appropriate performance metric. As a checkpoint approaches the maximum wait time, additional resources must be available and added to ensure both efficient and effective passenger and baggage screening. A maximum wait standard offers several other benefits. Among other things, it allows screening problems to be identified, it encourages uniformity across the system – something passengers expect to see, and aids FSDs (in consultation with airlines) in making staffing adjustments.

Finally, Congress must provide funding, and TSA must be prepared, to expand hiring to meet passenger growth. There has been some recent modest growth system wide, and some analysts forecast a five percent increase in passenger traffic this year. Indeed, we are already hearing reports that security checkpoints and checked baggage screening locations are understaffed at as many as 90 of the nation's commercial service airports. As the nation's economy continues to recover and the air carriers act to meet the challenges of increasing demand, TSA must have the funding and authority to hire additional screeners where and when demand exists. As noted above, TSA must have the

flexibility to efficiently hire both part-time and full-time employees, because the demand will vary from airport to airport and over the course of the operational day within a single airport.

Deployment of Explosive Detection Systems

Section 110 of ATSA requires all checked baggage to be screened for explosives by the end of 2002. For a variety of reasons, the expectation that this requirement could be met using bulk Explosive Detection Systems (EDS) proved to be unrealistic, and today TSA continues to work to overcome the many challenges to achieving 100% EDS screening.

If TSA is to achieve 100% EDS screening of checked baggage, then the program must be fully funded in accordance with the cost sharing formulas in Section 605 of the recently enacted FAA reauthorization bill, Vision 100. Section 605 authorizes the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to issue grants to airports for projects to put into place EDS and related systems, including baggage conveyor systems. Under Section 605, the federal share for EDS-related projects is 90% for medium and large hub airports, and 95% for smaller airports.

ATA supports this program and encourages the Subcommittee to take all steps necessary to see that it is fully funded. In particular, the proposed DHS budget for FY 2005 fails to match the federal government's share under Vision 100, instead it proposes a federal funding level of 75% for large and medium-sized airports. ATA strongly opposes shifting these costs, and the Subcommittee must guard against this and future efforts to

diminish the federal share for EDS equipment deployment and installation. As stated earlier, protecting our civil aviation system is national security and a Constitutional responsibility of the Federal government. Funding of these security initiatives should reflect this.

Of particular concern to ATA member airlines is funding to modify baggage conveyor systems to accommodate in-line EDS screening. Baggage conveyor systems are critical to efficient and timely baggage screening. Modifying these extremely complex systems to accommodate in-line EDS screening is complicated and expensive, and Federal funding for modifications, as Vision 100 recognizes, is necessary to achieve Congress' objective for 100% baggage screening. Unfortunately, the proposed FY 2005 budget falls short of the funding needed for the deployment of required in-line EDS systems.

In addition, the Subcommittee must also guard against efforts to permit Federal funds intended for aviation infrastructure and safety improvements to be diverted to other uses. Specifically, Federal Airport Improvement Program and Passenger Facility Charges should not be used to fund TSA security requirements. The Subcommittee must protect against underfunding safety and infrastructure to pay for security. AIP and PFC eligibility should remain circumscribed to projects that will enhance airport safety and efficiency.

Respectfully submitted,

AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510
February 9, 2004

The Honorable David M. Stone
Acting Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Admiral Stone:

The members of the Nevada congressional delegation write to you today to express our strong concern about the significant delays in the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) screening of passengers at McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas. McCarran International Airport, one of the country's busiest, is second only to Los Angeles International in the number of passengers passing through security checkpoints. In fact, McCarran was one of only three large airports in the United States to show a positive increase in scheduled passenger seats from December 2000 to December 2003. With nearly half of southern Nevada's 35 million annual visitors arriving through McCarran, the airport is of vital importance in sustaining the community and its largely visitor-dependent local economy. Disruptions to passenger throughput at McCarran, therefore, have the potential to cause significant harm to the Las Vegas area's well being.

Decreases in checkpoint throughput rates over the last several weeks illustrate the declining efficiency of passenger screening at McCarran. The airport's checkpoint lanes, on average, had been consistently processing 3.0-3.5 passengers per minute during peak times. This number has slipped recently, however, to an average of only 2.8 passengers per minute, leading to a significant increase in wait times for departing passengers.

As this is certainly a cause of frustration for Las Vegas travelers that threatens to discourage many of them from returning to our community and may ultimately create an unwelcome reputation for McCarran as an airport to be avoided, perhaps of equal concern is the potential threat posed by the backup of passengers queuing to pass through the checkpoints. Such a situation – with thousands of individuals often congregated in the terminal area – could be viewed as an attractive environment by someone looking for an opportunity to inflict catastrophic injury on a large number of people.

While screener staffing levels have of late been the subject of intense debate, this letter steps away from manpower issues for the time being in order to urge your Administration's examination of two other matters in which TSA policy adjustments could contribute to remedying McCarran's passenger processing problems: continuing flexibility in the authority of the local Federal Security Directors (FSDs) and a re-examination of the effectiveness of various screening rules and procedures.

Transportation Security Regulations allow that local FSDs may be delegated authority to adjust implementation of security mandates in order to best tailor practices to the distinctive attributes and needs of the facilities within their jurisdictions, in consultation with senior TSA officials. This policy is a sensible one, as no two airports are alike and what works best at one site may not be practical at others. McCarran's Airport Director reports that in his briefings with

Las Vegas' FSD, James Blair, Mr. Blair has said he believes he has benefited considerably from the autonomy he has been given to make decisions appropriate to McCarran's unique characteristics. We applaud your support for this initiative and encourage you to continue pursuing ways in which this decision-making flexibility for local FSDs can be expanded for the benefit of airports such as McCarran.

We also encourage your Administration to continue to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the screening rules and procedures that TSA has adopted over the last two years, implementing lessons learned as the agency has matured. For instance, greater staff experience and advancements in technologies may have rendered some of the current rules and procedures redundant or obsolete. To the extent that such potentially outdated practices may be taking up valuable screening time and extending security checkpoint waits, we urge you to take steps to identify and eliminate them.

In short, Mr. Acting Administrator, while TSA resources remain an issue of concern to all the nation's airports, we believe there are non-resource-intensive solutions – such as those outlined above – that are worthy of exploration and may help alleviate passenger screening delays of the sort that have become acute at McCarran International Airport. We thank you for looking into this matter and for your Administration's continued commitment to facilitating the secure, efficient air transportation upon which southern Nevada and the country depend.

Sincerely,



HARRY REID
United States Senator



JOHN ENSIGN
United States Senator



JIM GIBBONS
Member of Congress



SHELLEY BERKLEY
Member of Congress



JON C. PORTER
Member of Congress



Consumer Electronics Association 2500 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22201-3834 USA (703) 907-7600 main (703) 907-7601 fax www.CE.org

February 11, 2004

The Honorable John Mica
 Chairman, House Subcommittee on Aviation
 2445 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Subcommittee Hearing on Progress of Passenger and Baggage Screening Efforts

Dear Chairman Mica:

I am writing to express concern about current security screening procedures for air passengers traveling to U.S. events and destinations. My concern stems from the feedback of attendees returning from the 2004 International CES. The International CES is the largest technology tradeshow in the world, which is managed and produced by the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA). While passenger and baggage screening should be thorough to ensure passenger safety, CEA believes that overall security screening processes should not delay passenger travel to the point that they become a disincentive for Americans to travel throughout the country.

With some 130,000 attendees traveling to and returning from Las Vegas, NV from January 8-11, we received hundreds of complaints from attendees with regard to the delays caused by security screening procedures at McCarran International Airport. Most attendees experienced three to five hour delays in getting through security on January 11th with many missing their scheduled flights. As a result, a number of attendees have written CEA stating that they would not attend CES again due to the security delays at McCarran Airport.

Such comments are of grave concern as our trade show, like many others, helps fuel our industry, fills hotel rooms, attracts international visitors and boosts the economy. While the high volume of attendees and exhibitors traveling to and from Las Vegas present many logistical and transportation challenges, such challenges should not act as a deterrent for people looking to attend CES in the future.

We thank the Subcommittee for the opportunity to provide input on our experiences at the 2004 International CES and urge the subcommittee to resolve the problems of security check-in delays so that airline passengers are able to travel in a safe and timely fashion.

Sincerely

Gary Shapiro
 President and CEO



Attention CES Attendees!

We hope you had a great 2004 International CES.

If you are leaving by plane, please be aware that the Las Vegas airport authorities are advising us that security lines are up to 3 to 4 hours long.

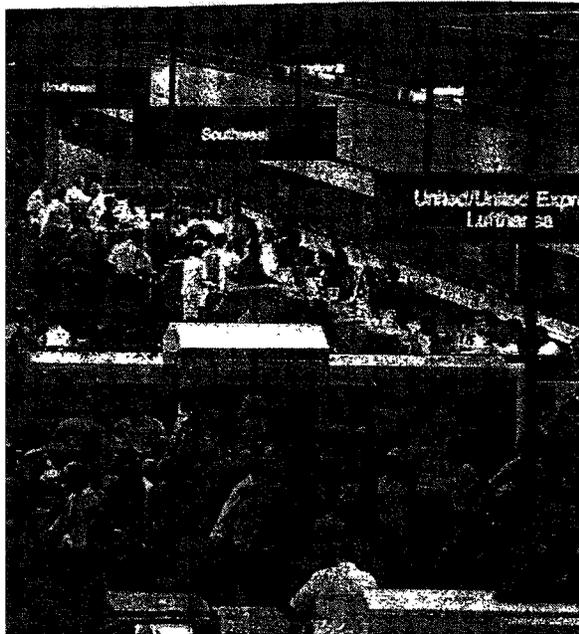
Please plan ahead accordingly and have a safe trip. We apologize for the inconvenience.



MONDAY

LAS VEGAS
REVIEW-JOURNAL

JANUARY 12, 2004



JOHN GURZINSKI/REVIEW-JOURNAL

Travelers endure airport gridlock

Lines at McCarran longest since just after Sept. 11, 2001, attack

By FRANK CURREN

REVIEW-JOURNAL

McCarran International Airport's security gates will be expanded by next fall, but that was no consolation to Patrick Legault on Sunday.

The 40-year-old Canadian businessman, like thousands of other McCarran passengers, spent most of the afternoon trapped in a traveler's nightmare.

He and a colleague spent almost two hours checking in for their return flight to Montreal.

After that, the delays only got worse. Fliers passing through McCarran's C and D security gates met with three-hour waits.

"It's insane," Legault said in disbelief as he surveyed the massive line, which some estimated was at least a half-mile long.

Ridiculous. Absurd. Unbelievable. Those were among the other words exasperated Las Vegas tourists uttered while suffering through some of the largest passenger gridlock the airport has had.

The lines were the longest

► SEE FLIERS PAGE 2A

MONDAY

LAS VEGAS

REVIEW-JOURNAL

JANUARY 12, 2004

► **FLIERS:** *You can't shove an egg through the neck of a wine bottle,' official says*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

seen at McCarran since the week after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, when the airport first imposed tighter security measures, airport spokeswoman Hilarie Grey said. No security scares or threats caused Sunday's congestion, Grey said.

Airport officials eyed another culprit: the International Consumer Electronics Show.

The show ran Thursday through Sunday and brought an estimated 115,000 people to Las Vegas.

"Maybe it was just one of those cosmic coincidences that everybody from CES decided to leave today," Grey said. "There's nothing unusual in the security or in the new procedures that would be causing the long lines. This is just a crazy high-volume crowd and definitely the biggest we've seen in a long time."

How bad was it? Well, an airport worker stood holding a sign that read, "The line starts here." That worker was standing outside in the parking lot.

Richard Blatt, 61, was none too pleased to meet up with the sign holder. He and Legault went to the airport at 10:15 a.m., figuring that would leave them plenty of time for their flight, which was scheduled to depart at 12:25 p.m. But the crowd congestion ruined that plan, and Blatt was rebooked for a 2:40 departing flight. At 2 p.m., he stood behind thousands of others.

"We missed our flight, we'll probably miss our next one, too," Blatt said. "I've been to Denver, where there were big snowstorms and people sleeping in the airport who couldn't get out, and they handled it better than these guys. It's chaos. ... I consider myself a world traveler. I've never seen this."

It was easy to find passengers who felt Blatt's pain. Many wondered why airport officials and congestion organizers hadn't warned them of the potential problems.

Ellis Aguilar, a 29-year-old Texan who was in town for a wedding, said it would have been nice to have gotten a heads-up on the headaches.

"But maybe this is the best they could do," Aguilar said. "Will I make it home tonight? Will I be at work tomorrow?"

Nico Melendez, a spokesman for the Transportation Security Administration, said his department had all of the security gates fully staffed. All on-call security workers were summoned to duty.

"You can't shove an egg through the neck of a wine bottle," Melendez said. "You can't give up security to just shove people through the checkpoint. It just doesn't happen."

Figures on the number of passengers at McCarran International Airport on Sunday were unavailable, but a high volume day could mean 110,000 fliers or more, Grey said.

Though airport officials and the TSA try to predict passenger counts, many airlines overbook flights, Melendez said.

As passengers commiserated, many tried to maintain a sense of humor.

As he looked at the masses, Dr. Eric Gould, a New-York based pediatrician, said "I don't think there's a cure. I think this is terminal."

"What I expect to happen next is they'll roll out some slot machines and let 'em gamble. ... And, man, if this was political, the Republicans

would blame Clinton and the Democrats would blame Bush," he said.

Grey said such long lines will be alleviated by this fall when the airport plans to add seven additional security gate lanes.

That meant little to Montreal-bound passenger

Irwin Belitsky, who just wanted a cup of coffee. But Belitsky said he would come back to Las Vegas and trusted the inconvenience was just an anomaly.

"They'll never let it happen again," Belitsky said. "They were just caught off-guard."









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eXaminer 3DX® 6000

A RELIABLE EXPLOSIVE DETECTION SYSTEM FOR ENHANCED SECURITY VALUE

“The performance at this airport during that week [Thanksgiving] speaks volumes for the reliability and performance of the L-3 system.” (Chris Gordon, Logan International Airport director of capital programs and modernization, The Boston Globe, Dec. 5, 2003).

Examiner 3DX® 6000 – The Most Advanced TSA-Certified Explosive Detection System (EDS)

- ✓ The eXaminer system uses superior EDS technology, providing complete 3-D analysis of checked baggage. Competing systems are limited and comparable to traditional 2 dimensional X-ray images, which provide less images of the bag.
- ✓ The eXaminer 3DX® 6000 is certified by the TSA for both the original threat level requirement of 100 percent threat mass, as well as the more stringent reduced requirement of 75 percent threat mass.
- ✓ The eXaminer demonstrates the lowest false alarm rate in the industry in the 45 airports where systems are deployed. The eXaminer’s unique technology allows false alarms to be resolved while the bag continues to move on the belt, providing a more efficient processing solution.
 - L-3 Communications’ Security & Detection Systems (SDS) is funding three R&D programs to further improve performance.
 - In locations where alarm resolution protocol is permissible, use of eXaminer results in fewer hand searches than competing systems, providing significant savings to TSA in screening manpower.

Enhanced Security Value

- ✓ L-3 defines Security Value as maximizing overall airport security while maintaining the highest standards of performance for the lowest total cost of ownership. The total cost of ownership of the eXaminer system includes all facets of its use, including initial purchase, operation, reliability, maintainability and availability. Enhancing Security Value is a primary focus for L-3 in its support of airports and the U.S. government.
- ✓ The time to clear alarms puts pressure on the operators to make decisions (much like air traffic controllers). Understanding the operating risk and cost impact associated with alarm resolution is a key element in improving the process. The eXaminer’s high quality 3-D Computed Tomography tools reduce these risks through its demonstrated ability to produce better on-screen images allowing the operator to evaluate and clear alarms quickly and effectively.
- ✓ SDS has also successfully deployed multiplexing capabilities in an integrated airport setting. This allows for several eXaminers to be networked to multiple workstations. This capability offers manpower efficiencies during operations, allowing fewer people to monitor the workstations during lower demand periods.
 - A single eXaminer EDS can maintain the effective throughput of two of its competitor’s machines, significantly reducing hardware, infrastructure and manpower costs, thus improving Security Value.
 - The eXaminer weighs less and has a smaller footprint than competitive systems, resulting in lower total cost of ownership for airports due to fewer design and infrastructure impacts.

Efficient and Easily Configured

- ✓ The eXaminer is the only certified system that can resolve alarms or false positive readings in a single continuous pass. This is especially critical with in-line installations to insure the flow of baggage is not disrupted. Furthermore, the eXaminer is adaptable to varied and unique screening conditions. Unlike any other competing system, the eXaminer can be easily configured as a single stand-alone unit or fully integrated into a baggage handling system, and can be easily converted from one use to the other.

Unparalleled Reliability

- ✓ The eXaminer 3DX® 6000 has demonstrated unparalleled availability of 99 percent for all integrated systems in the field for the period from November 2003 through January 2004. Craig P. Coy, Massport Chief Executive Officer, has called the eXaminer system in place at Logan International Airport "a model for the nation."

Future Developments

- ✓ SDS development efforts are focused on technologies that will enhance security as well as improve the overall operational performance of the eXaminer system. The application of these technologies is targeted to reduce the overall cost of ownership of security systems while enhancing their capabilities.
- ✓ SDS is developing additional technologies to support automated resolution of alarms for EDS technology. These development efforts include diffraction x-ray and quadrapole resonance. Both promise to provide enhanced operational performance while reducing the number of alarms requiring manual resolution.
- ✓ Other development efforts at SDS are focused on checkpoint enhancements, which include a potential certified airline carry-on baggage inspection system utilizing electron beam technology as well as a passenger portal applying passive millimeter wave technology.

Examiner 3DX® 6000 – Deployment History

- ✓ SDS developed eXaminer specifically as an explosive detection system (EDS) for screening checked baggage. The machine was certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in November 1998.
- ✓ As a result of 9-11, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) developed a plan to enhance aviation security. A key element of the plan mandated the screening of all checked baggage on commercial flights. The initial phase required the procurement, production and deployment of 950 CT-based EDS systems from two contractors.
- ✓ SDS successfully completed its mandated production and deployment of 425 systems to approximately 45 airports in a period of eight months. The other FAA-certified EDS manufacturer delivered 325 systems in 2002 with the remaining 200 delivered in early 2003.
- ✓ Meeting the TSA mandate required a significant deployment and integration effort in a very short timeframe. Start-up issues were encountered by SDS and its competitor that have been addressed over the past year in collaboration with TSA, airlines, airports and other systems manufacturers and integrators.

Company Background

- ✓ L-3 Communications Corporation is one of the largest global manufacturers of aerospace, defense and homeland security-related products. The publicly traded company (NYSE: LLL) has over \$5B in annual revenues with 50+ divisions throughout the United States. L-3's Security & Detection Systems (SDS) division offers a full range of security solutions ranging from aviation systems for checked and oversized baggage, cargo and air freight, port and border applications and facility protection. The division has an installed base of over 18,000 units. SDS is headquartered in Woburn, Massachusetts, with a production facility in St. Petersburg, Florida, and employs over 700 people worldwide.