

# AVIATION **security** *international*

The Journal of Airport & Airline Security

ISSN 1352-0148

VOL.2 ISSUE 4 DECEMBER 1997



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**Check-in; Departure Hall;  
Screening Point; Passport Control;  
Boarding Gate; Aircraft.**

The order may change depending upon which airport one is departing from. In some places one can add extra stops at customs, terminal transfer bus stops, DEA and the departure tax kiosk. Queuing is part of airport life. Some passengers, as if they haven't queued enough, like to practice standing in line in Duty Free shops, cafeterias and, especially in the satellites at Charles de Gaulle Airport, waiting to

The reality is that checkpoint screeners are expected to process both more and heavier bags than they should resulting in lengthier queues and their having to deal with passengers who, by the time their bags have been x-rayed, are already aggravated.

The fear of competition may prevent some carriers unilaterally implementing stricter controls of hand-baggage, even though they stand to benefit both financially and in respect of safety. Their passengers may, after all, find themselves queuing

might necessitate another control point. This would ensure that all passengers on all airlines carry only the authorised quantity and weight of hand-baggage. If they have excess they would be sent back to the check-in counters. One or two experiences would be enough to teach the frequently flying businessman, who is often one of the worst offenders, that excess hand-baggage and the associated strains it puts on screeners and their fellow passengers will no longer be tolerated. Control at this point has the added benefit of not having a negative impact on the airport's retailers who would be aghast at my earlier proposal.

There will always be exceptions. Extremely sensitive documents that cannot be out of the passengers sight, exceptionally fragile gifts made of glass or china, and changing bags for infants. In respect of the latter however, many do exaggerate their needs - neither of my kids have ever needed 72 Pampers, 100 baby wipes, six different sleep suits and a month's supply of milk formula on one long-haul flight!

## Queuing to Fly

by Philip Baum

use the public toilets. No wonder that the problem of unruly passengers is a growing concern to the industry.

There are tremendous efforts being made to ensure that airports become more user-friendly, yet the aviation industry does have the potential to speed up the processing of passengers at hand-baggage screening points without having to alter the airport layout. For it is here where the queues are often the longest and where passengers seemingly display the least degree of patience, despite the fact that this is the one check that can spell the difference between life and death for them.

One regulation that passengers ignore the world over is the limitation of their hand-baggage to one item, not to mention the weight of that item. The airlines seem reluctant to tackle the problem, despite the obvious flight safety issues that excess baggage in the cabin raises. The results are overhead bins stuffed beyond capacity to the extent that the last passengers to board, who are often those who do actually obey instructions and board by seat row numbers, are penalised and often find little, if any space, left for their hand-baggage.

### **"queues result in over-stressed screeners and potentially unruly passengers"**

behind a passenger flying with a rival and who has been permitted to take on excess with the screening process having hardly speeded up at all. This, unfortunately, destroys my long-held belief that overhead bins should be structured so that only items of the permitted size can be stored within and that there be only one such compartment assigned to each seat.

So maybe the ball should be placed in the hands of those controlling entrance to the departure hall. In most places this will be members of the security team or airport authority personnel, although it is acknowledged that in places where access is controlled by immigration this

Providing exceptions are declared at the check-in, and the agent provides the passenger with some form of authorisation docket (possibly for a fee), system abuse can be limited.

In the same way that many people still prefer to drive their cars rather than utilise public transportation due to the latter's lack of reliability, so to the aviation industry must respond to the needs of the frequent flyers who take excess hand-baggage as they cannot tolerate the time it takes baggage handlers to off-load a flight. I share their frustration. There is nothing worse than arriving on time, or even early, and then having to wait an



## Personal Comment

by Homer A. Boynton

hour or more for one's baggage whilst a taxi driver is standing outside the reclaim hall happily charging waiting time.

That said, it is high time the industry acted. A suit-carrier, laptop and briefcase, often supplemented by duty free purchases and a set of wheels, exceeds reasonable

### **“who needs to carry clothes for all weather conditions between Greenland and the South Pacific?”**

allowances. As does the (sorry ladies!) vanity case, handbag, beach bag and hat box. Who needs to carry a change of clothes for all weather conditions found between Greenland and the South Pacific islands?

As an aviation security consultant my focus is on the security implications. If excess hand-baggage results in lengthy queues and lengthy queues result in overstressed screeners and potentially unruly passengers, then this is one area where the security and safety Venn Diagram overlaps.

Well, I'm off for a flight now. And, yes, I have way too much in the way of hand-baggage. But then will anybody stop me? No, probably not. And, like so many others, I can rightly be branded as being selfish. A hypocrite too, I hear you say. Yes, I also stand guilty on that charge. But if the industry acted.... ●

#### **The most recent edition of The American Heritage Dictionary Of The English Language defines the word commitment as follows:**

“The act of committing; a giving in charge or entrusting; a pledge to do something; and engagement by contract involving financial obligation; the state of being bound emotionally or intellectually to some course of action.” I would suggest that this definition is readily acceptable to all who have a basic knowledge of the English Language - even when spoken by an American.

Whenever there is an aviation disaster, by sabotage or other reasons, political and other responsible officials speak of the need for an increased dedication of resources, augmented research, priorities and commitment in order to prevent a similar disaster. For example, in the 1989 Report of the President's Commission On Aviation Security and Terrorism (Commission appointed by President Bush after Pan Am 103) there is much discussion about “priorities” and “national will” to meet the problem of terrorism directed against the aviation industry. This report was a commitment to follow recommendations in the report to prevent another PanAm 103 disaster. Subsequent to the TWA 800 disaster in July of 1996 President Clinton appointed another commission chaired by Vice President Albert Gore.

This was designated The White House Commission On Aviation Safety and Security and its report was submitted to President Clinton on February 12, 1997.

In its report the commission (more popularly called the “Gore Commission”) stated that aviation security “should be a national priority” and, speaking to the commitment of the US Government “our activities, programs and results should define aviation safety and security for the rest of the world.”

What are the results of these lofty commitments made in 1989 and 1997. Many of the recommendations of the “Bush Commission” have yet to be

implemented. For example, one of these recommendations was to conduct criminal background investigations for all security screeners and airport and airline employees. This recommendation was not implemented because of intense pressure from the airline industry. This recommendation has been re-stated in the “Gore Commission” report. Hopefully it will now be implemented. So much for the commitments of the “Bush Commission”.

Among many other recommendations, the “Gore Commission” recommended “\$160 million in federal funds for capital costs involved in improving security” for the immediate purchase of explosive detection systems, and other security enhancements for US Airports. The US Congress agreed and this money has been appropriated and funds are currently being expended for aviation security equipment and other upgrades. The Commission went on to state that “As a part of this ongoing commitment, the federal government should devote significant resources, of approximately \$100 million annually, to meet capital requirements identified by airport consortia and the FAA” in order to improve aviation security and carry out the recommendations of the commission. The additional £100 million has not been appropriated by the US Congress nor has it been requested by the White House for the 1998 fiscal year. Future annual appropriations are also in doubt. So much for that commitment!!!

It would appear that the common English interpretation of commitment does not necessarily apply to aviation security. The success of any security endeavour is directly linked to the commitment of those responsible for aviation security and this includes not only the screeners, airlines and airports but those political leaders who have the responsibility of funding the resources necessary for assuring the true meaning of the word commitment. Unfortunately, in many instances, the commitment is a reflection of the incident or crisis of the moment ●