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# POLITICAL CORRECTNESS VS. EFFECTIVE SECURITY

Over the last few weeks, the newspapers have been full of articles outlining a litany of complaints and court cases relating to pat down body searches, watch lists, invasive screening technologies and racially influenced behavioural analysis. the disasters.

Organisations, like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), who normally engage in fighting for worthy causes, such as the abolition of the death penalty, seem intent on challenging each new security initiative that in any way impinges upon our privacy. Most of these initiatives are designed to safeguard the very civil liberties that such groups claim to be protecting.

In a utopian society, there would be no need for security measures at all. There would be no crime, no terrorism, no deranged behaviour of any kind. However, our world is a far cry from that ideal.

Whatever measures we take to combat society's ills, we will never be free of the challenges posed. Disturbed individuals, such as the hijacker who carried out an axe attack on the cockpit of a Kato Airline flight in Norway in September (see page 8), will always be potential hazards for the aviation industry. And, as soon as one international conflict is solved, there is always the likelihood that another will rear its ugly head. Today it may be Chechnya, Palestine or Iraq that commandeer the headlines, whilst tomorrow the brewing territorial claims over the Spratley Islands could be at the top of the international agenda...

We may yearn for the days in which air travel was a hassle-free privilege, a luxury and a pleasure, yet we have to recognise that, nowadays, there is a price to be

paid for such enjoyment, and it may not be a financial one.

This does not mean that screeners have carte blanche to do whatever they wish. There is certainly no need for passenger humiliation and any genuine excesses must certainly be challenged, through the courts if necessary. However, granted the world we live in, I, and, it would seem, most of the travelling public are prepared to accept that subjecting oneself to further scrutiny is a regrettable, yet unavoidable, fact of life. Our primary objective is, after all, the preservation of life.

**"...portals with explosive detection capability are costly, but they respond to the current threat, and that's exactly what security is supposed to do ..."**

Let's consider the moans and groans of those passengers who complain about physical body searches, or groping as many of them call it. My only complaint about the procedure is that many countries, like the USA, are only implementing it after an attack. It is another example of reactive, as opposed to proactive security. Whilst the evidence suggests that the Russian bombings were the result of two suicidal females carrying bombs onto planes on their person, it's not as if we didn't know about that likelihood beforehand.

There are alternatives to pat downs (aside from strip searches), but are the public prepared to pay the price? Whilst metal detectors don't detect explosives, there are now portals with explosive detection capability. They are costly, but they do respond to the current threat. And that's exactly what security is supposed to do.

Naturally a combination of metal detection and explosive detection capability is the ideal and, hopefully, will become reality in the near future. Such deployment may have identified the Domodedovo bombers before they had boarded.

Millimetre wave technology and passenger X-ray solutions, such as Rapiscan's Secure 1000 currently on trial at London Heathrow (which I had the pleasure of being screened by en route to AVSEC World in Vancouver), reveal what we may be concealing beneath our clothing, regardless of the material from which it is

formed. Wooden stakes, such as those used by the Qantas hijacker last year, may have been identified had such products been deployed.

But until the day arrives when we deploy advanced passenger screening technology at all our checkpoints, pat down searches are the only alternative, profiling aside, if we actually want to detect non-metallic threat items.

Talking of profiling, whingeing has become suing...in Boston at least. The bizarre accusation is that the implementation of behavioural analysis techniques, in particular Behavior Pattern Recognition (BPR), is a fancy way of making racial profiling legit! The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts has filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the programme developed

by Rafi Ron's New Age Aviation and adopted by the Massachusetts Port Authority and the Massachusetts state police at Boston Logan Airport.

A certain King Downing, the National Coordinator of the ACLU's Campaign Against Racial Profiling, believes that his being stopped at Boston in October, and asked to show identification was racially motivated. The ACLU's own press release indicates that Downing did not willingly provide such ID, yet then goes on to moan about the police intimating that non-compliance would lead to arrest. He did show ID and was released.

Without getting lost in the detail of one case, surely it must be recognised that airports are security sensitive locations. Access to the public concourses may not require one to pass through screening, yet the security authority must be able to freely challenge people's reasons for

being at an airport. If one has nothing to hide, one has nothing to fear.

Should the TSA opt to implement its SPOT (Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques) programme countrywide, we should be embracing the move and recognise that, whilst the programme will need fine tuning, it is official recognition of the need to focus on people and their motivations.

Our behaviour is assessed in all walks of life. In social settings, we may decide that we either get positive or negative vibes from an individual and subsequently pursue a deeper relationship with that individual or reject them. In the security world, picking up on negative vibes could spell the difference between life and death.

True, some people will be influenced in their decision-making by racial factors, but don't condemn the product. Rather

train the staff and supervise them to ensure the requisite level of professionalism is maintained. We can be all politically correct and deny that ethnicity or religion make a difference, or we can be more honest and recognise that such issues may, and sometimes should, influence our decisions.

It is understandable that people don't want to be vetted, don't want to be subjected to body searches or have their body contours displayed on monitors for screeners to ogle at (have you seen just how unsexy the images are?!), but until there is an all-encompassing effective alternative, maybe we should just get on with life.

Programmes like BPR and SPOT may be part of the solution, but the civil liberty groupies don't like them either. They've got to realise that either we respond to the current threat and develop an effective security regime or be politically correct... not both! ■



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