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Unruly Passengers: a growing threat

X-Ray Training: improving the chances of detection

Islamic Fundamentalism: the will of Allah?

Aviation Terrorism: the hidden victims

National Aviation Security Programmes:

the smaller airport

● Publishers Comment ●

As a matter of general policy I tend to leave the talking, or at least the writing, to our editorial staff and contributors. On this occasion however I feel that I should welcome Mr Philip Baum to the editorial chair of ASI and, at the same time, introduce him to you.

Philip has extensive experience in the field of aviation security and will continue to operate his own London-based training and auditing consultancy, Green Light Limited, alongside his activities on our behalf.

It is also of course the right time to record my thanks to the outgoing editor, Mr Trevor Nash, for his careful stewardship of the journal over the past year. I am pleased to say that Trevor will now devote his time to our civil aviation training journal, CAT, which he has edited for the past four years, as we increase its frequency and add a Chinese language sister title.

Our company's focus in aviation, on both security and training, gives a good deal of insight into the general problems of ensuring overall safety in the operation of the world's airports and airlines. Despite the hopes of a few years ago that the New World Order would produce a safer environment for us as individuals and corporately, it certainly has not done so - although the threats have changed.

At the same time the world has seen the greatest technological revolution since the Industrial Revolution of the early 1800's or the invention of printing three hundred years earlier.

As a front runner in the technology game - and as a prime target for the disaffected - the commercial aviation industry has more varied and numerous challenges to cope with now than ever in the short history of flight.

If we can cope with these changes and the challenges that they throw at our personnel, whilst also handling the tremendous projected increase in the numbers of passengers using our airports and airlines, we have a happy future. The alternative is not an option.

was acting extremely nervously. Typical case studies! Many comments are no doubt valid. We too can tell our stories that, considering our insight into the industry, might at least add a degree of realism to each situation. And what an opportunity for the Editor of the aviation security industry's journal to select the most juicy tales. The press, after all, are known to head for the sensational stories.

But then again, maybe not...

An industry magazine, especially when it concerns a sensitive subject, cannot play into the hands of the enemy. In this case, those whose wish it is to target aviation. So there will be no dramatic exposes of security glitches or unsupported scare-mongering in these pages. Such irresponsible reporting will be left to others. There seem to be enough television journalists who feel that they are serving the public interest by notifying the international terrorists of the world how to by-pass security in the world's most secure airports.

This journal will discuss topical issues, dealing with information that is in the public domain. General government policy or industry guidelines may be challenged but seeing as no security system is perfect and no technology is the solution to all our problems, similarly no single airline or airport will find itself being targeted by ASI. My goal is to improve the levels of security afforded globally. My primary interest is in training. Accordingly I make no apology for the fact that we shall be emphasizing the positive in the hope that successes in one area can be achieved elsewhere. Good security, it is said, depends to a significant extent upon good communication. I aim to make the journal one medium of such communication. A source of information that can be utilised in security briefings and in training packages; an opportunity for suppliers to inform the industry of new developments; a forum for debate...

I started with new labour and continue with New Labour.

The British election has certainly had its ripple effect on the aviation security industry with the resurgence of IRA terrorist attacks against England's transportation network in the run up to polling day. Albeit the genuine bombs were targeting roads and railways, the coded threats that were received by airports had to be taken seriously too causing delays and disruption to finely-tuned airline timetables. The British populace awaits to see what New Labour will do

New Labour

by Philip Baum

For anybody that has been following the recent general election in the United Kingdom, the phrase "new labour" may have political connotations, yet for me "new labour" means an addition, albeit one that I'm excited about, to my workload. For this edition of Aviation Security International is my first as Editor.

I, like many of you, will have had to sit and listen to friends and family as they sit at the dinner table eager to

enlighten us on their recent experience of poor aviation security on their international travels. It doesn't seem to matter where in the world they have visited, they all consider themselves as experts on the subject. The off-hand manner in which officials handle unattended luggage, the perceived lack of concentration by x-ray operators, the baggage that wasn't off-loaded and the passenger whom they were seated next to that

editorial

with regard to the peace process in Northern Ireland. And, whilst we wait, we have to adjust to the fact that today's terrorists can create chaos by making a simple telephone call from a public pay-phone. For all the significant sums being spent on the research and development of sophisticated technology to counter the terrorist threat, the authorities appear impotent to deal with threats received that could, based on previous experience, be genuine.

Whilst this is not exactly a new form of terrorism, it does take us, to use an old British Conservative adage, "back to basics". For despite all the quite justifi-

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able security procedures we implement to limit the potential of an aircraft being either seized or the subject of an act of sabotage, the basic aim of most terrorist groups is to cause sufficient disruption, or fear of disruption, to the lives of the average citizen. Enfranchised citizens are, after all, those who have the power to change governments. The degree of disruption caused will determine the publicity the terrorists cause achieves and will influence its ranking on a nation's political agenda.

There can be no doubt that when an organisation, such as the IRA, has the power to cause the postponement of one of Britain's premier sporting events



Philip Baum
Editor, Aviation Security International

by the mere threat of terrorism, other sectors of the security industry need to review their contingency plans.

Possibly the most worrying aspect of the evacuation of 70,000 people from Aintree race course before the start of the Grand National on April 5th of this year was the fact that there was no bomb. Similar decisions were made at London's airports subsequently. On April 21st Gatwick was brought to a near standstill for much of the day and mass flight cancellations and stranded passengers were the result. Stansted, Luton and terminals at Heathrow also suffered the effects of the hoax callers. Many of you will have had to take the decision to re-search an aircraft due to a bomb threat, or to search a passenger more thoroughly due to their behaviour, or perhaps to have evacuated a check-in

zone due to the discovery of a suspect bag. And, in all probability these were false alarms. Such incidents can lead to complacency and make the decision-maker feel 'guilty' that they made the wrong decision. Yet the decisions were correct, as each of those scenarios could have been a test and we don't take chances.

Which reminds me of an incident I recently experienced - I know I promised not to, but please grant me this one....!

When waiting in a lengthy queue, snaking my around tensor barriers in the direction of an x-ray machine, at Airport X (I'm keeping to that part of the bargain!) recently, I noticed a bag left in the middle of the crowd. Being somewhat concerned, and having established that it did not belong to anybody in the vicinity, I made my way to the security agent loading the bags onto the x-ray machine. I drew the unattended bag to his attention. He responded by telling me that it probably belonged to a passenger in the queue who would soon realise that they had left it behind. I told him he was probably right but that I felt he should at least try to identify who that passenger was. He told me that he would be the judge of whether action was necessary. Unsatisfied and supported by a chorus of other passengers, I then spoke to his supervisor who found the owner of the bag waiting for his bag the other side of the x-ray machine, believing he had placed it on the conveyor belt! The supervisor thanked me. Yet, the original agent then said that he'd been right all along in that it probably belonged to a passenger. Unfortunately for him, security sense had been replaced by complacency. Some, and my judgement is reserved, might argue that this would be a prime example of why aviation security agents should not be allowed to perform the same job functions for more than a few years. After which? Well, I guess they would just have to find new labour...

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Aviation Security International
will ensure that ASI becomes a forum for debate in the Aviation Security Industry.

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