

AVIATIONsecurity

international

The Journal of Airport & Airline Security

OCTOBER 2003 : Volume 9 Issue 5



A Spanish Assault:

the training and capabilities of the UEI

Queue Management:
preventing passenger logjams

Air&Port Security Expo:
show preview

Federal Security Directors:
who are they?

By Veins, Gait and Odour:
innovative biometric solutions

Baghdad International Airport:
rescued from the ashes



IF YOU ARE GOING TO DO IT, DO IT...

BY PHILIP BAUM

As we marked the second anniversary of the attacks on New York and Washington, it became apparent that this time of the year, for the foreseeable future, is likely to be one for progress checking. The media certainly went to town on coverage of the memorial services, reviewing the impact on the lives of victims' families and assessing the effectiveness of the war on terror. So, seeing as the atrocities all started with acts of aerial piracy, it would seem that journalists, and the general public, are certainly entitled to ask us how much better aviation security is now than it was on the morning of 11 September 2001.

The world over, standards have generally improved and nowhere more so than in the United States. Perhaps most important of all is the fact that we were given a reminder of the worst possible kind that, on that fateful day, aviation is all too easy to attack. Consequently, airports and airlines, in the west in particular, appreciate the risk to which they are exposed.

However, members of the flying public are also experts in the art of aviation security. How many times has a non-industry friend or acquaintance been keen to recount their experience of failed airport security checks? It's all too easy to sigh and feign vague interest in their analysis of our procedures. Or, perhaps, to simply tell them that they are only seeing a small part of the security system and that if they could see the bigger picture they would realise how safe they really are! Then again, maybe we shouldn't be so quick to criticise. After all, we feel that we are entitled to criticise medical treatment without being doctors or nurses, to criticise educational strategies without

being teachers and to criticise government fiscal policy without being economists...

We must remember that what the members of the flying public see is actually strategic information for the terrorist groups. Poor or pointless security checks can even become trigger factors to potentially disruptive passengers as they are infuriating and create little public faith in our security procedures.

Seeing as it's the silly season, the time when key industry players start conference and exhibition-hopping, perhaps we can focus on that aspect of our working lives. It has almost become *de rigueur* for X-ray machines and archway metal detectors to be placed at the entrance to each event, ostensibly to secure it from an act of terrorism. In reality, the systems are deployed as part of a specific manufacturer's marketing campaign, so that their system can be demonstrated in action. All well and good. But, when those same systems are visibly only being manned during exhibition hours, or only placed at the entrance to the trade show but not at the entrance to the conference room, or are regularly bypassed by exhibitors and trade show organisers, or the alarms those same people trigger are ignored, it becomes a farce. There are lots of knowing nods, the occasional shake of a head and lots of mutterings, but we generally accept it as part of exhibition and conference life, in much the same way that the flying public accepts our screening methods. Isn't it time to start setting an example?

When Norman Y. Mineta set out to rid the US air transport industry of stupid rules, the intent was spot on but we seem to have created more than we have abolished. The classic examples of this are the industry's new approach to metal cutlery,

the carrying of knives and scissors and excessive reliance on metal detectors.

I find it nigh on impossible to justify the metal cutlery ban. The plastic knives are sharper than the original blunt metal ones, glasses are still carried, duty free bottles still permitted and, for those carriers that have decided metal knives are a "no no" but metal forks are OK, just try bending down the outer prongs...

I was discussing the issue with one crew member on a flight recently (as he was opening a bottle of wine with a rather pointed bottle opener) and he told me that it was actually quite a common occurrence for passengers to cut themselves trying to get the cutlery out of their sealed packs. Such accidents were nearly always a result of them impaling their fingers on the fork, be it plastic or metal.

Wherever I go, I hear story after story of how airport security didn't pick up nail scissors or missed penknives. Why are we setting ourselves up to be discredited? All because of the box cutters used on 11 September, which were probably secreted on board the aircraft in question by insiders rather than carried through a passenger screening point. The world knows that, where there is a will, a passenger can get a small bladed item onto an aircraft with ease. The world is also aware of the wide range of other items a suicidal hijacker could use as an assault tool. And, if the world knows, why don't we stop making fools of ourselves.

I write this article on a long haul flight from an Asian airport where I have just witnessed one of the world's best displays of oriental magnetometer waving. If it had been a dance routine, it would have been quite beautiful to watch. Passenger after passen-

ger stood on a block, were wanded in a perfunctory manner and, alarm or not, were cleared to board. What depressed me most was listening to the passengers ridicule the procedure. There was laughter and then, just as I have witnessed at our own trade shows, those knowing nods. Part of me wanted to explain that much of what we do is deterrent, but, then again, why defend a system that is asking to be criticised?

How we behave determines how much respect we are afforded. For the frequent fliers amongst you, just consider the behaviour of your colleagues that irritates you. It might be behaviour that turns somebody else into a disruptive passenger. I become very frustrated when I see cabin crew disregard commands from the cockpit that they be seated for landing. The sight of crew members either standing around chatting until the last minute and then rushing for their seats or tidying the galley after a long haul flight only 30 seconds before landing, indicates their lack of respect for the safety procedures designed to safeguard them. All this after telling me to make sure my seat belt was fastened 20 minutes earlier...

Yet, to give cabin crew their due, when it comes to security, they are crying out for more to be done. In a 10 September joint statement by the major American cabin crew unions, they said, "Flight attendants still have not received any meaningful anti-terrorist security training to help protect their lives or the lives of their passengers in case of another deadly attack onboard an aircraft." The statement went on to say, "The airlines have been successful in using loopholes to avoid providing anything more than minimal training that mocks the law, or using their leverage on Capitol Hill to gut the legislation. Airline lobbyists have tried every trick in the book, from opposing mandatory standards to requesting that flight attendants pay for security training out of their own pockets. Now Continental's lobbyists are at it again. At the last minute and without any discussion, Continental snuck a change into the FAA Reauthorization Bill Conference Report that made the once mandatory flight attendant security training guidelines voluntary, removing any requirement for the Transportation Security Administration to develop guidelines at all."

We live in dangerous times. Lockerbie may be consigned to the history books with Libya's payout, but another Al Qa'eda-style attack is still very much a possibility. It would seem that the original plan was to use 10 aircraft as missiles of mass destruction that 11 September, yet their desire to ensure the plan succeeded resulted in their carrying out a more modestly sized atrocity. Part 2 could still follow and the venue might not be the United States. Al Qa'eda has already demonstrated its global reach, so authorities the world over must take precautions. High profile events, such as the forthcoming APEC meeting in Bangkok or the Athens Olympics, rightly engender increased security cover, yet Al Qa'eda has often struck where it is least expected.

The key to our success, however, lies in our ability to adopt a sensible rules policy. Let's quash the dinner table tittle-tattle with a display of professionalism. If we are going to implement a procedure, let's do it properly, be it at a screening checkpoint, a secondary check at the gate, in the cabin, at the check-in, or even at our trade shows! ■

AIRPORT SOLUTIONS BY BOON EDAM



Amsterdam Airport Schiphol became the world's first airport to replace manual passport control with Automated Border Passage. Boon Edam was part of the team; advising, co-developing, producing and installing this unique system.

The system is developed in answer to the following problem definition; organise fast and comfortable border passage with a minimum involvement of airport staff but without making any concessions to clearance procedures.

The solution was found by combining two types of physical access barriers from the Boon Edam range. Additional database-controlled electronics, biometrics technology (iris scan) and smart card technology completes the system at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol which is part of the loyalty program called 'Privium' offered and owned by Schiphol.

Whatever the problem is airports have to deal with, Boon Edam provides custom made airport solutions.

More information about Automated Border Passage or our other airport solutions? Please contact us.



BOON EDAM
The first name in entrance technology

Boon Edam Group Holding B.V., P.O. Box 40 1135 ZG Edam, the Netherlands
Ambachtstraat 4 1135 GG Edam, the Netherlands
Telephone +31 (0)299 38 08 08 Fax +31 (0)299 37 28 59
E-mail sales@boonedam.nl Website www.boonedam.com

AVIATIONsecurity
international