

TESTIMONY

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*“How Best to Improve Our Nation’s Airport Passenger Security System Through
Common Sense Solutions”*

Chairman Petri, Ranking Member Costello, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of IATA’s members on the future of aviation passenger screening.

IATA’s 240 member airlines crisscross the globe every day, safely carrying passengers and cargo to their destinations. Aviation is responsible for 56.6 million jobs globally and 3.5% of global GDP. Here in the US, it contributes \$669 billion dollars to the GDP which is equivalent to 4.9% of the US economy. In 2011, airlines carried more than 2.8 billion passengers. You’ve heard all of this before. But these numbers are expected to grow globally over the coming years, with nearly 6 billion passengers, 82 million jobs, and \$6.9 trillion in economic activity by 2030. With this projected growth will come the need for improved infrastructure, operations, and, perhaps most importantly, next generation passenger screening.

The aviation industry today is dramatically different than it was when the object-focused security checkpoint was introduced to airports some 40 years ago. The need to evolve passenger security screening to a more sustainable, efficient, and effective process has been a topic of conversation across the aviation industry for many years. For regulators, the conversations are driven by the need to adapt security in the face of continuously changing threats. For airlines and airports this is also driven by the need to ensure compliance with regulations, while balancing the very real issue of efficiency. For passengers, the conversations are driven by long security lines, the complexity of rules and often invasive processes.

Inconsistencies and reactive, often duplicative regulations have led to less efficient security processing, which in turn has led to sky rocketing security costs for governments and industry as well as passenger frustration and global confusion. Today’s security checkpoint has served us well, but a new paradigm is needed for a dynamic industry confronted by growing passenger numbers and new threats.

Here in the U.S., we see encouraging signs that the one-size-fits-all approach to passenger screening is being re-evaluated and our finite security resources are being better directed. Under Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano and Transportation Security Administrator Pistole we have seen an important move to a risk-based approach to screening. An example is TSA's voluntary PreCheck program, which allows pre-screened passengers, to participate in an expedited screening experience at the airport. In addition, new procedures for individuals 12 and under, 75 and older, and airline crewmembers highlight this laudable approach.

In parallel, and as an outcome of the Global Aviation Security Summit prompted by the attempted bombing of Northwest Airlines Flight 253, the airline industry committed itself to developing a new screening checkpoint. –At this point, I would like to pause and acknowledge both Secretary Napolitano and Secretary General of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Raymond Benjamin, for their vision and support of launching this initiative.

IATA is working with public and private partners around the world to modernize and improve the passenger screening experience through the Checkpoint of the Future program. Our vision for 2020 is simply an uninterrupted journey from curb to aircraft door, where passengers proceed through the security checkpoint with minimal need to divest, where security resources are allocated based on risk, and where airport amenities can be maximized.

The goals of the Checkpoint of the Future are:

Strengthened security – through focusing resources based on risk, increasing unpredictability, making better use of existing technologies, and introducing new technologies with advanced capabilities as they become available.

Increased operational efficiency – by increasing throughput, optimizing asset utilization, reducing cost per passenger, and maximizing space and staff resources.

Improved passenger experience – reducing lines and waiting times and using technology for less intrusive and time consuming security screening.

Allow me now to highlight the scope and the roadmap of the Checkpoint of the Future project. Over the last three years the program has evolved into an industry-led and IATA supported initiative. That means that airports, security equipment manufacturers, Interpol, universities, governments, and airlines are working together to make a new checkpoint a reality. We can put numbers behind the collaboration. Our Advisory Group, which provides oversight, has 16 key senior executives from every corner of aviation. They guide 110+ experts who are working to assemble the technology, policy, and procedures needed for a checkpoint of the future. All have volunteered I would add.

To date this team has developed a concept definition and blueprints to take us through checkpoint evolutions from today to 2014, 2017, and 2020. In addition, the

stakeholders have developed an Operational Test and Evaluation Program (OT&E) that will evaluate the key Checkpoint of the Future components in light of our overall goals.

I am happy to report that we have concluded component trials this year with our airport partners at Geneva, Heathrow, and Amsterdam. For 2013, we are planning a dozen new trials that will support rollout of the first checkpoint in 2014. We certainly hope that we can bring several of these trials to airports in the US.

So what will the checkpoint look like in the future?

With a view toward the near term, the Checkpoint of the Future in 2014 focuses on integrating new procedures to facilitate risk based screening and decision making, optimizing resource and asset utilization, and integrating available technology and repurposing existing equipment. The emphasis is therefore to introduce new and innovative procedures that maximize the opportunities presented by the existing checkpoint configuration.

The 2017 Checkpoint of the Future, or the medium term vision, is focused on updating technologies and processes to increase the security value of the checkpoint, while maintaining a strong focus on customer service to enable greater passenger satisfaction. It includes some major advances in risk assessment, dynamically delivering a result to the checkpoint to enable greater automation, and a better passenger experience. It envisages increased use of biometrics and remote image processing, coupled with advances in screening technologies and targeted algorithms to achieve less divesting and faster throughput.

From 2020 and beyond it is envisaged that the passenger will be able to walk through the security checkpoint without interruption unless the advanced technology identifies a potential threat. A passenger will have a level of security screening based on information from states of departure and arrival through bilateral risk assessments in real-time. In terms of the passenger experience, there will no longer be the burden of divesting by default, and there are expected to be little to no lines as a result of the enhanced speed at which screening can occur.

Just as one-size-fits all is not a desirable situation for screening today, neither will it be for the next generation of screening. The Checkpoint of the Future project offers many options and suggestions that can help move screening towards being more efficient, effective, and passenger-friendly. We are confident that the important collaboration between the airline industry, airports, manufacturers, ICAO, and global regulators will continue to improve security and efficiency in passenger screening.

Allow me to spend a few moments on one other important aspect of risk based security and that is changing our mindset to focus on outcome-based requirements supported by global standards. Governments must define outcomes—such as no bombs on planes. But often airlines or airports are best placed—under supervision—to find the most efficient operational solution to achieve them. And our chances of raising the bar on

security globally are much better by focusing efforts on delivering results rather than on replicating processes that may work better in one jurisdiction or airport than another. The UK is in the forefront of developing such an approach. I hope that it will be the basis for setting a global standard which others could benefit from.

Chairman Petri and Ranking Member Costello, thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today about the future of aviation security. IATA applauds your commitment to improving aviation security and making the experience more enjoyable for passengers. The future of flight is bright, and your collaboration is vital to our continued success as an industry.