

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Statement of

GALE D. ROSSIDES  
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR

Before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 31, 2009

Good morning Chairman Price, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to provide an update on the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) efforts to improve aviation security.

I would like to begin by thanking the members of the Subcommittee for their support of TSA's ongoing initiatives to improve transportation security and especially for the leadership of this Committee which provided us with our fiscal year (FY) 2009 annual appropriation on October 1, 2009. Your efforts made a difference in accelerating planned enhancements and positions us well for a successful Presidential transition. I especially want to thank the Subcommittee for the resources you provided TSA in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5, (ARRA), which will enhance TSA's explosives detection capabilities in airports throughout the country and will significantly accelerate the deployment of more effective and efficient detection technologies.

**Building On Our Joint Success**

As someone who has experienced first-hand the growth and maturation of TSA from its creation following the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (9/11) to the current high-performing global organization protecting Americans and our transportation systems, I also want to express my sincere gratitude to the Members of this Subcommittee. Your efforts over these seven short years have enabled TSA to successfully fulfill our mission. TSA has grown from a small cadre of employees to a dedicated workforce of over 50,000 protecting every domestic commercial airport, strengthening our nation's surface transportation modes, and working with our international partners around the world. We

began with the challenge of hiring, training, and placing the first Federal screeners, now known as Transportation Security Officers (TSO), in airports and tasked them with stopping the obvious prohibited items, such as guns, knives, and razor blades. Now, TSA employs a highly-trained, professional, multi-skilled TSO workforce performing physical and behavioral screening to counter constantly changing threats and operating state-of-the-art screening equipment. In 2002, TSA was known primarily for screening passengers at fixed airport security checkpoints. Today, TSA conducts security operations and inspections throughout the airport environment and in multiple modes of transportation utilizing our screening, inspection, and law enforcement resources.

### **Ongoing Threat**

Continuing TSA's success is as important today as it has ever been. Our Nation's threat level for all commercial aviation operating in or destined for the United States remains at "High," or "Orange." Terrorists continue to pose a significant threat to the United States and focus on prominent infrastructure targets with the goal of producing mass casualties and significant economic aftershocks. The threats facing us are real and evolving. We must remain vigilant and never lose focus on our mission.

### **Ensuring an Effective Transition**

The reason I am appearing before you today to discuss aviation security is due to a deliberate strategy by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to ensure TSA, as well as other DHS components, were poised to maintain our high level of security during the critical Presidential transition period. Continuity is essential for an agency that conducts security operations 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. Designating the Deputy Administrator at TSA as a career position helps ensure that continuity. I am honored to serve in this position and humbled to testify before you today as the agency's Acting Administrator. Other transition efforts included TSA personnel participating in joint exercises with our DHS and other Federal colleagues to ensure we could have effectively responded to a terrorist attack during this period. We have assembled a talented team of dedicated public servants to carry on our mission and enable President Obama, Secretary Napolitano, and the new administration to assume the important responsibility of protecting our Nation's transportation security systems.

I have already had the pleasure of working with Secretary Napolitano as she immediately focused on TSA and our operations by requesting a review of security programs and strategies for the aviation, surface, and maritime modes of transportation. We are working closely with the Secretary and her office. The Secretary strongly supports TSA's mission and has already shown significant interest in TSA's important role in an overall homeland security strategy.

### **Implementing ARRA Funding**

ARRA's additional \$1 billion for the purchase and installation of explosives detection systems and equipment will greatly enhance our ability to accelerate the deployment of

these technologies and our detection capabilities. This funding will be allocated to the Electronic Baggage Screening Program, which includes airport baggage handling system and facility modifications, and the Passenger Screening Program (PSP) to improve explosives detection capabilities in passenger screening. The plan to expend the ARRA funding is consistent with our risk-based approach to security.

As a result of the ARRA funding, TSA notified airports in eleven states, including several small and medium sized airports, that their optimal baggage screening solution projects are being considered for funding. TSA is currently in the process of project validations and agreement negotiations with these airports.

For the PSP, TSA plans to use ARRA funding for the purchase of Advanced Technology X-rays (AT X-ray), Whole Body Imagers (WBI), Universal Conveyor systems, Bottled Liquid Scanners (BLS), and Next Gen Explosives Trace Detectors. With the purchases made possible through ARRA, there will be a tremendous advancement of our prior projected schedules toward full system operating capacity of these technologies, greatly enhancing checkpoint security for the traveling public.

In addition, TSA is providing subject matter expertise and assistance to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the award of the \$150 million appropriated in ARRA for public transportation and railroad security assistance grants.

### **Preliminary FY2010 Budget**

Although the complete FY2010 Budget has not been determined, I would like to address several items that were previously announced by the President on February 26, 2009.

Visible Intermodal Protection and Response (VIPR) teams. The FY2010 Budget includes \$50 million for 15 additional VIPR teams to increase our random and surge force protection capability by deploying at transit hubs unannounced. VIPR teams are capable of protecting any mode of transportation through risk-based targeted or unpredictable deployment of integrated TSA assets in coordination with state and local officials. VIPR teams may consist of any combination of TSOs, Transportation Security Inspectors (TSI), Federal Air Marshals (FAM), Behavior Detection Officers (BDO), Explosives Security Specialists, Bomb Appraisal Officers (BAO), as well as local, state, and Federal security and law enforcement partners. This increase is a strong signal of President Obama's and Secretary Napolitano's commitment to enhance surface transportation security.

Bomb Appraisal Officers. The FY2010 Budget adds 109 BAO positions by the end of FY2010 to strengthen security at domestic airports. BAOs are highly skilled individuals who have undergone specialized training in the identification and disposal of explosive ordinance. BAOs provide continual interaction and formal training to TSOs to increase their ability to recognize potential improvised explosive devices (IED) and IED components. BAOs also assist in clearing suspicious articles presented at checkpoints, often avoiding the need to call bomb squads, which results in lengthy airport delays.

Infrastructure for Identity Vetting. The FY2010 Budget provides an additional \$64 million to modernize the information technology infrastructure used to vet the identity of travelers and covered transportation workers. The funding will allow TSA to strengthen and enhance the existing infrastructure used to conduct vetting operations on populations involving several of our most important security programs, such as the Secure Flight program, background checks for airport workers, the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC), Hazardous Materials Commercial Driver's License Endorsement, and alien flight students. The infrastructure funding will also allow TSA to vet new populations as directed by Congress in the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, P.L. 110-53, (9/11 Act).

Passenger Security Fee. To better align the costs of aviation security with the beneficiaries, the President announced we will pursue an increase to the Aviation Passenger Security Fee beginning in 2012. Since its establishment in 2001 as part of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, P.L. 107-71 (ATSA), the Passenger Security Fee has been limited to \$2.50 per passenger enplanement with a maximum fee of \$5.00 per one-way trip. Congress anticipated that the aviation industry would pay for airline security costs through a combination of the Passenger Security Fee and an air carrier fee. However, the cost of providing security has increased substantially since 2001, leaving Federal taxpayers, rather than passengers and air carriers, to shoulder most of the expense of civil aviation security. For example, in FY2008, Passenger Security Fee collections covered only about 31 percent of the discretionary costs for civil aviation security. Appropriated funds covered 60 percent of the discretionary costs and air carriers covered the remaining 9 percent of the discretionary costs. The adjustment in 2012 will fulfill the original intent of ATSA by more closely allocating the cost of aviation security services to the individuals who directly benefit from this unique government service and simultaneously reducing the burden on the general taxpayer. The Administration and TSA will work closely with Congress to obtain the necessary authorization to begin the fee adjustments in FY2012.

## **Our Security Strategy**

Our transportation security strategy begins with intelligence. We are an intelligence-driven operation applying a risk-based approach to security. Our daily operational decisions are influenced by the latest intelligence, whether it is adjusting the FAM coverage on flights, the location of VIPR operations, or informing the public and appropriately sharing classified information with our industry partners.

An effective security system must constantly adapt to ever-changing threats and the security environment. TSA is in the process of upgrading security effectiveness at checkpoints, which encompasses people, process, and technology. This is the most significant change in passenger screening since 9/11, and even since the checkpoint was first established in the 1970's. TSA has taken a fresh look at our checkpoint operations to see how we can improve security. We identified possible changes to the checkpoint that we are piloting after reviewing inputs from the intelligence and law enforcement communities, our employees, passengers, and evaluations of readily deployable

technology. A full pilot checkpoint is now being tested in Terminal B at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI).

Air travelers are noticing a new look at the checkpoint, but the most significant aspect is that the new checkpoint supports a team approach that is calmer and more conducive to smart security. The goal is to improve security through better training, process, and technology, providing passengers with a calmer checkpoint process. A six week pilot program using kiosks to obtain passenger feedback at BWI yielded very positive results. Passengers gave TSA high marks on all eight questions asked, ranging from passenger satisfaction with security procedures to thoroughness of screening, length of time of the screening process and quality of information available before traveling. The responses range from 79 percent to 84 percent positive.

People. The effectiveness of our security screening relies on our people—they are TSA’s biggest investment and most valuable asset. We work hard to take care of our employees and we are making significant progress. Our workforce attrition rates continue to decrease. The latest FY2009 voluntary attrition rate of full-time TSOs is 7.5 percent—an improvement of more than 40 percent since FY2006. The number of workplace injuries has fallen over 75 percent from FY2004 to FY2008 and continues to fall.

Every TSO working at a checkpoint is undergoing an extensive 16-hour retraining called ENGAGE!, which brings together the latest thinking from intelligence, explosives detection, and inhuman factors that can affect security. This training is designed to develop a cadre of more analytical, rather than “checklist-oriented”, security professionals. Additionally, all supervisory personnel are required to complete a second 16-hour training course called COACH! to help reinforce the ENGAGE! training and provide guidance to TSOs. We have revised our checkpoint Standard Operating Procedures to enable officers to use their judgment in achieving sensible security results. This will give us the approach we need to make security smarter and harder to beat.

As part of TSA’s improved security measures, we are deploying our workforce where we can achieve the best security result, most efficiently, and with minimal hassle for travelers. These improvements and this Subcommittee’s support have enabled TSA to add critical new security layers based on risk.

The Travel Document Checker (TDC) program is now operating at all Federalized airports and enhances security by disrupting and detecting individuals who attempt to board an aircraft with fraudulent documents.

We have deployed hundreds of BDOs at the nation’s busiest airports as part of the Screening Passengers by Observation Technique (SPOT) program. The SPOT program uses non-intrusive behavior observation and analysis techniques to identify potentially high-risk passengers based solely on their exhibited behavior. BDOs are trained to detect individuals exhibiting behaviors that indicate they may be a threat. The program is a derivative of other successful behavioral analysis programs that have been employed by law enforcement and security personnel both in the U.S. and around the world. Some of

our law enforcement partners at the local and Federal level have asked TSA to provide training on this successful program.

TSA believes a highly motivated workforce enhances our nation's security. We implemented a pay for performance system to recognize and reward individual and organizational performance, and created a career progression program for TSOs with new job classifications and opportunities to acquire new security skills. Our flexible personnel system authorities enable TSA to offer creative pay incentives, such as full-time health benefits for part-time TSOs. And most importantly, we listen to our employees. Through the National Advisory Council (NAC) – a formal group of TSOs nationwide elected by their peers and meet in person with TSA's senior leadership on a quarterly basis – and the Model Workplace program, TSA strives for continuous improvement by addressing employee concerns. At TSA, these programs reflect a genuine commitment by senior leadership. I have participated in every quarterly meeting of the NAC and many of their monthly conference calls.

Process. As mentioned earlier, TSA is continuing to implement innovations in the checkpoint process as well. The current checkpoint during a peak travel period can be noisy and congested, which has the potential to conceal the actions of someone with hostile intent. The checkpoint pilot strives to provide a more convenient layout for passengers with more information explaining the screening process together with a better security environment.

Another simple yet effective program that improves the checkpoint process is the Diamond Self-Select program. Our self-select screening lanes are designated by signage (modeled after the familiar ski icons) that directs passengers to the appropriate lane based on their travel needs and knowledge. Green is the queue line for travelers who need extra time or special assistance, such as families traveling with children, people with disabilities or those who need prescription liquid medications or other liquids for medical conditions. The blue lane is for casual travelers who are somewhat familiar with the security procedures. The black diamond lane is for expert travelers who know the TSA security requirements and arrive at the checkpoint ready to go through efficiently.

These dedicated lanes give passengers some measure of control over their own experience and also provide a better, less stressful environment for us to do our job. The result has been more effective and robust security. In cities with self-select lanes, we are seeing considerably lower alarm rates in the green lane because there is more time to prepare and remove prohibited items.

We have also provided airlines with more flexibility to allow passengers to check in remotely on line or at a kiosk who had previously been unable to do so because they have a name similar to someone on a watch list. Airlines are now able to create a system to verify and securely store a passenger's date of birth to clear up watch list misidentifications. By voluntarily providing this limited biographical data to an airline and verifying that information once at the ticket counter, travelers who were previously

inconvenienced on every trip now have an opportunity for a more convenient travel experience.

Technology. Through the support of this Subcommittee, we will be able to expedite the upgrading of technology at passenger checkpoints and for checked baggage screening. AT X-Ray and WBI technologies greatly enhance our ability to detect small IED components made of common items, which remain the greatest threat. AT X-Ray provides a greatly enhanced image with the ability to target novel threat items, resulting in fewer bag checks and faster throughput, as well as the ability to upgrade the system with enhanced algorithms. WBI technologies enable TSA to detect prohibited items such as weapons, explosives, and other metallic and non-metallic objects concealed under layers of clothing without physical contact. Bottled Liquid Scanners are an integral technology TSA will continue to deploy through 2009. These are used to ensure sealed containers do not contain threat liquids. Additionally, TSA will purchase and install reduced-size explosive detection systems (EDS) to increase security effectiveness and improve operational efficiencies through improved throughput.

Deploying new technology is important, and certainly a step this Subcommittee has encouraged, but we are also taking critical steps to reassess both the technology and the search methods used by our TSOs. TSA has commissioned three National Laboratories to work with us to keep these screening technologies advancing ahead of terrorist tradecraft, which seeks to exploit ingenious devices and ingredients.

### **Implementation of the 9/11 Act**

I want to thank the Subcommittee for its ongoing support in providing \$20 million to TSA in FY2009 to implement new regulations and activities authorized by the 9/11 Act. TSA plans to use \$3.6 million to upgrade the Automatic Detection and Processing Terminal (ADAPT) system that determines threats in the airspace and reduces the time and energy spent tracking an unknown anomaly that presents no threat. As explained in the TSA Spend Plan recently provided to the Subcommittee, the remainder of the FY09 funding for 9/11 Act implementation will be used for surface security measures, including the hiring of an additional 50 TSIs for Surface, completing vulnerability and threat assessments for surface modes, developing the Inter-Modal Security Training and Exercise Program, and developing a transportation security Information Sharing and Analysis Center.

Air Cargo. The 9/11 Act included two air cargo security requirements that mandate the screening of 50 percent of cargo transported on passenger aircraft by February 2009 and 100 percent by August 2010. I am happy to report that while much remains to be done to fulfill this requirement, we are confident that the industry is currently screening at least 50 percent of air cargo transported on passenger aircraft on flights originating in the United States. The data analysis completed thus far shows that the 50 percent requirement is being met by the air carriers. We predict that the 100 percent screening requirement will be met by August 2010 for domestic cargo through our Certified Cargo Screening Program (CCSP). Under this program, the responsibility for screening is distributed throughout the supply chain to improve security while minimizing the

potential negative impact on the integrity and movement of commerce. The requirement in the 9/11 Act to also screen 100 percent of inbound air cargo from international departure points continues to present significant challenges. Although it is unlikely that we can meet the ambitious timetable set by Congress, we are working with our international partners to address the many challenges and expect to continue to see significant improvements in the level of security for inbound air cargo on passenger aircraft as we move forward.

A key component of achieving these milestones is the requirement, developed in coordination with air carriers and other stakeholders, that 100 percent of cargo transported on narrow-body (single-aisle) aircraft be screened. This requirement went into effect in October 2008. The passenger security impact of this screening is significant: although these aircraft carry only 25 percent of domestic air cargo on passenger aircraft, they account for the majority—approximately 95 percent—of domestic passenger flights. More importantly, these flights carry more than 80 percent of all passengers on flights originating in the United States. Thus, even at the statutory deadline for screening 50 percent of air cargo aboard passenger aircraft, we are effectively protecting the vast majority of the flying public.

### **Secure Flight**

Beginning with the FY2005 DHS Appropriations Act, P.L. 108-334, Congress provided TSA with very specific guidance to address concerns with the implementation of the Secure Flight program and gave the Government Accountability Office (GAO) a proactive role in reporting on our progress. It is important to acknowledge that your oversight and our partnership with GAO towards meeting the ten conditions mandated by Congress made Secure Flight a better program and that it is now poised to effectively fulfill the mandate of assuming the prescreening process of comparing passenger information against the watchlists. Specifically, Secure Flight provides a consistent watch list matching process across all aircraft operators; allows for earlier law enforcement notification and coordination, if necessary; and decreases the chance of compromised watch list data thanks to its limited distribution. The Secure Flight program will also provide an integrated redress process that clears individuals who have been previously misidentified, have applied for redress, and have been placed on the Cleared List. Given the completion of the rulemaking process and operational testing and the progress in the oversight effort, I am pleased to report that the Secure Flight program began operational cutovers from certain aircraft operators on selected flights beginning on January 27, 2009. To date, four operators have successfully begun cutover and one has begun testing. I also do want to mention that TSA truly appreciates the cooperation and assistance these volunteer air carriers provided to the program during its initial rollout. We also appreciate GAO's efforts that enabled TSA to proceed with the initial operating capability of the program. TSA believes that the Secure Flight program will be able to assume responsibility for watch list matching of passengers for all domestic commercial flights by the end of the first quarter of calendar year 2010, and all international commercial flights by the end of calendar year 2010.



## **Global Outreach**

As TSA continues to adapt to changing threats, we recognize the need to expand our zone of security and interdict threats before they arrive on our shores. By building trust through collaboration and partnership, TSA promotes the implementation of effective global transportation security processes worldwide while ensuring compliance with international and TSA standards. Focusing on closing gaps and providing enhanced capability, TSA seeks to manage risks and work with our international partners to harmonize security measures. The increasing influence we have in multinational organizations allows us to work with like-minded partners to raise the baseline for security. The global transportation community is only as strong as its weakest link; by prioritizing harmonization and capacity building efforts, TSA believes it can make a positive impact.

One example of our global efforts is our Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service (OLE/FAMS) robust liaison relations with foreign air security partners. OLE/FAMS conducts training for foreign air marshals in relation to international terrorism. As shown in August 2006 in response to the discovery in the United Kingdom of a plot to use liquid explosives to take down passenger aircraft bound for the United States, TSA, to include the FAMS, worked with our international partners to respond overnight to conduct missions at unprecedented tempo and complexity in an effort to combat the threat and help preserve the confidence of passengers and air crews in the security of commercial aviation. Another example is the Aviation Security Sustainable International Standards Team (ASSIST). This program works to effectively build sustainable institutions through information sharing and best practices. Key focus areas include training needs, equipment, current aviation programs, and aviation security legislation. St. Lucia is the first nation to partner with TSA in this new program and we look forward to continuing this effort in other locations.

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity to discuss TSA's efforts in aviation security. I look forward to our continued work together and would be pleased to respond to your questions.