UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Statement of

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Before the

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION

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Good morning Chairman Costello, Ranking Member Petri, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to discuss our continuing efforts to improve our aviation security environment.

First, I would like to recognize the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's critical role in the passage of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) in November of 2001. This Subcommittee responded swiftly to the events of 9/11 and diligently conducted oversight in the following months on TSA's successful efforts to accomplish each of the landmark mandates of ATSA.

TSA has come far since meeting the ATSA deadlines for deployment of Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) and installation of Explosives Detection Systems at airports from coast to coast. The Subcommittee has maintained a watchful eye on our progress in subsequent years, seeing many of the new strategies we have discussed together— behavior detection techniques, Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) teams, travel document checking—mature from just concepts to important, visible components of our layered security approach. I appreciate the sustained, deep interest of this Subcommittee in aviation security and the amount of personal time and attention that Members and staff have invested in being well informed on all aspects of TSA's aviation work. While we have differences of opinion on occasion, I value the thoughtful, direct communications that have become routine in the Subcommittee's oversight of TSA's aviation security responsibilities.

Reducing risk to our aviation systems is as important now as it has ever been. Since August 10, 2006, the nation's threat level for all commercial aviation operating in or destined for the United States has been "High," or "Orange." The Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence released on February 5, 2008, confirmed that terrorists continue to pose a significant threat to the United States. Terrorists are likely to continue to focus on prominent infrastructure targets with the goal

of producing mass casualties and significant economic aftershocks. Our enemies are adaptive and innovative in overcoming security obstacles. This threat is real and evolving. We know they are working to defeat us, and we must remain vigilant even as the busy summer travel season is in full swing.

For example, we are working closely with our fellow Department of Homeland Security (DHS) component, the Secret Service, to support its critical efforts to protect those attending the political conventions in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Denver, Colorado, later this summer.

At the same time, as summer air travelers face an array of new challenges, TSA remains committed to making the security component of their air travel experience a better one. We are improving the checkpoint environment and using innovation and technology to make things safer and easier for travelers. We are reducing passenger wait times, with 83 percent of passengers waiting 10 minutes or less nationwide so far in fiscal year 2008. The busy Miami, Atlanta, and Denver airports have all been able to reduce peak wait times. Our focus is not on screening more quickly; it is on more effective scheduling of staff and lane openings to meet passenger demand. All the while, we are improving security in the process.

Checkpoint Evolution—People, Process, and Technology

An effective security system must constantly adapt to the ever changing security environment. TSA is in the process of upgrading the security effectiveness at checkpoints, which encompasses people, process, and technology. We call this Checkpoint Evolution. 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 took what we know from the intelligence and law enforcement communities, we listened to our employees, we learned from passengers, we evaluated readily deployable technology, and we came up with changes that we are piloting.

A full pilot checkpoint is now being tested, thanks to the tremendous leadership and support from the airport and the airlines involved. It is in place in Terminal B at Baltimore's BWI airport.

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 main point of the Checkpoint Evolution is not to provide the public with the tangible improvements you can see and hear like soothing lights and soft music. Rather, the goal is to improve security by better training, process, and technology. Passengers should notice a calmer checkpoint process. A variety of measures, including self-select lanes that speed the process, wireless communications that facilitate discrete communication between Security Officers, and new passenger engagement training protocols, all contribute to the reduction of some of the noise and commotion thereby enhancing our security measures.

People

Checkpoint Evolution starts with our people—they are TSA's biggest investment.

This year, every TSO working at a checkpoint will undergo an extensive sixteen-hour retraining, bringing together the latest thinking from intelligence, from explosives detection, and in human factors that can affect security. TSOs will be more analytical security professionals and less "checklist-oriented." 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. The Travel Document Checker (TDC) program is now at over 340 Federalized airports. The TDC program enhances security by disrupting and detecting individuals who attempt to board an aircraft with fraudulent documents. We allow our officers to interact with passengers in a way that lowers the general stress level and assists our Behavior Detection Officers (BDO). Since July 2007, TDC referrals have resulted in more than 350 arrests for suspect or fraudulent travel documents, outstanding warrants, and illegal alien status.

Starting in May 2008, we provided travelers with greater clarity on the types of identification accepted at checkpoints. Standardizing the list of accepted documents helps travelers understand what types of identification to bring to the airport and better aligns TSA with other DHS efforts.

We have deployed hundreds of BDOs at the 40 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.

An incident this spring in Orlando, Florida, displayed the effectiveness and importance of this program. On April 1, 2008, a Jamaica-bound passenger aroused the suspicion of BDOs, who, working in conjunction with the Orlando Police Department, the Orange County Bomb Squad, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, uncovered everything needed to make a bomb in the passenger's checked bag. Their swift action demonstrated that BDOs, trained to detect deceptive and suspicious behavior, are contributing to airline security by detecting and discovering dangerous people and dangerous items.

We have launched nationwide deployment of VIPR teams, comprised of TSOs, BDOs, Transportation Security Inspectors (TSI), and Federal Air Marshals (FAMs), in

cooperation with Federal, state and local law enforcement as well as various transportation entities. VIPR teams enhance the security of persons and critical infrastructure and prevent, prepare for, protect against, and respond to acts of terrorism in all modes of transportation at any location. Since the beginning of Fiscal Year 2007, VIPR teams have conducted a total of 494 operations in the aviation mode.

Process

Checkpoint Evolution means innovations in checkpoint process as well. The current checkpoint during a peak travel period can be noisy and congested.   This has the potential to conceal the actions of someone with hostile intent. The Checkpoint Evolution pilot gives security officers wireless communication that enables them to perform their duties in a low-key demeanor and communicate more effectively with others on their team. Further, the 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 for families traveling with children or people who need special assistance. 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. To date, 29 airports have moved forward and are seeing benefits in just a few months of operation.

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.

To help streamline the security process and better protect laptops, TSA has encouraged manufacturers to design bags that will produce a clear and unobstructed image of the laptop when undergoing X-Ray screening. Bags of this design would enable TSA to allow laptops to remain in bags for screening. More than 40 manufacturers have

submitted prototypes for testing, and TSA has now opened three airports for manufacturers to perform live testing of their prototypes.

Technology

Checkpoint Evolution also encompasses upgrading the technology at passenger checkpoints.

Last week, we announced expanded deployment of Advanced Technology (AT) X-Ray and Passenger Imaging that will bring the total of major U.S. airports with enhanced technology to 21 in 2008. AT X-Ray and Passenger Imaging technologies greatly enhance our ability to detect small improvised explosives device components made of common items, which remains the greatest threat. TSA also plans to purchase and deploy approximately 300 additional AT X-Rays and 80 Passenger Imagers, bringing the total to 900 AT and 120 Passenger Imaging units nationwide in 2009.

Advantages of AT X-Ray include 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.

Passenger Imaging 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. We are currently testing Passenger Imaging technology at Phoenix (PHX), New York (JFK), Los Angeles (LAX), Baltimore (BWI), Denver (DEN), Washington (DCA), Dallas (DFW), Detroit (DET), Miami (MIA), and Albuquerque (ABQ). Passenger Imaging technology will debut at Tampa (TPA), Las Vegas (LAS), Indianapolis (IND), and Atlanta (ATL) later this summer.

Bottled Liquid Scanners are an integral technology TSA will continue to deploy through 2009. These are used at the security checkpoint and by TSOs to ensure sealed containers do not contain threat liquids. TSA plans to deploy up to 900 bottled liquid scanners to the nation's busiest airports by the end of 2009.

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—Lawrence Livermore in California and Sandia and Los Alamos in New Mexico—to work with us to keep these screening technologies advancing ahead of terrorist tradecraft which seeks to exploit ingenious devices and ingredients.

<u>Working with Partners Toward the Future of Aviation Security</u>

Transportation Security Officers and the full community at TSA are focused not only on what we already know, but also on being alert for clues of something new, different, and dangerous. That is our challenge, to execute against known threats but also to have the wisdom and imagination to put measures in place now that will prepare us for the future.

We rely on strong partnerships with the aviation community to achieve these security measures.

TSOs and other Federal employees perform central security functions, but our airport and air carrier partners are closely, actively integrated in our security measures and strategies. We are so well coordinated that when we must adapt or quickly respond to a threat, we can move together.

Airport law enforcement agencies play a critical role in security at airports throughout the country. They are the primary law enforcement authority to respond to incidents at our security checkpoints and anywhere else at or within the perimeter of the airport. This partnership, at many airports, is anchored in the Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Reimbursement/Cooperative Agreement Program which provides partial reimbursement for increases in post-9/11 law enforcement requirements at our checkpoints.

However, the cooperative spirit goes well beyond activities at the checkpoint. Airport law enforcement agencies are active partners in intelligence-driven operations at our airports such as the VIPR teams. TSA also works closely with groups such as the Airport Law Enforcement Agencies Network (ALEAN) to discuss mutual problems common to the field of airport law enforcement and security to derive best practices to enhance aviation security. We also have a long-standing relationship with our State and local law enforcement partners through the National Explosives Detection Canine Training Program, which started in 1972. Together we have developed and refined explosives detection canine best practices for our airports. Whether it is responding to a security incident, protecting a Foreign Diplomat, arresting a criminal, or responding to an "Amber Alert" for an abducted child, airport law enforcement agencies are cooperative partners in securing our nation's airports.

Working closely with Congress and airport operators, TSA initiated seven pilots at airports of different sizes and configurations this past May 2008 to test a range of methodologies for security screening of employees at airports. At three airports, TSA is conducting screening of all employees using a combination of handheld metal detectors, walk-thru metal detectors, and patdowns. Liquid explosives detectors are being used where available. At two airports, TSA also is evaluating existing biometric identification and access systems. At four airports, TSA is conducting random screening using hand wanding, liquid explosives detectors as conditions permit, application of behavior detection training for law enforcement officers, and security awareness training for employees. The pilots will run through the end of this month and are in operation at Boston Logan International Airport; Denver International Airport; Jacksonville International Airport; Kansas City International Airport; Eugene Airport in Eugene, Oregon; Craven County Regional Airport in New Bern, North Carolina; and Southwest Oregon Regional Airport in North Bend, Oregon. Pilot results will be carefully evaluated for ways to strengthen current employee screening methods, effects on passenger and employee wait times, impact on other screening related duties and airport and airline operations, costs and staffing, and other important factors.

Meeting the requirements of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (9/11 Act) air cargo provisions—requiring the screening of 50 percent of cargo on passenger aircraft by February 2009 and all such cargo by August 2010—presents significant challenges. We are on track to meet the air cargo screening requirement due in February 2009.   To meet these challenges, TSA is emphasizing effective security management of the entire air cargo supply chain by building upon our established programs: air cargo security regulations, standard security programs, security directives, information sharing, and increased use of TSA-certified explosives detection canine teams and Transportation Security Inspectors (TSIs) for Cargo. However, key to the success of our screening regime will be collaboration with stakeholders—U.S.-based shippers, freight forwarders, and passenger air carriers—through a program that will allow them to receive TSA certification to screen cargo early in the supply chain and to implement a secure chain of custody up to the point at which cargo is accepted by the aircraft operator. Certified screeners will use TSA-approved screening methods and will implement stringent facility and personnel security standards.

TSA's strategy involves every component of the air cargo shipping system from the entity originating the freight to the freight consolidators/forwarders, airports, air carriers who transport the cargo, and the people involved in the process that have access to cargo at every point in the supply chain. TSA is committed to meeting the 9/11 Act's requirements. Even before we meet the 50-percent goal, the vast majority of flights, carrying more than three-quarters of all passengers, will have their cargo screened at the 100-percent level. Over 90 percent of flights carry approximately 80 percent of passengers but transport less than 30 percent of air cargo. Our emphasis on these flights represents a significant step forward in ensuring the security of air travelers.

In 2001, Congress authorized the creation of trusted traveler programs with a vision of extending security benefits to known individuals, thereby allowing TSA officers to focus on those passengers perceived to be a greater threat to aviation security. Based on lessons gleaned from nearly four years of Registered Traveler (RT) experience and three distinct pilot phases, TSA has concluded the latest of these pilots – the Registered Traveler Interoperability Pilot. We have decided to lift the current cap on the number of airport locations that can sponsor RT operations and eliminate the $28 fee for the Security Threat Assessment (STA) TSA conducts. We believe that this will allow the RT program to respond and adapt more nimbly to market demand, including by allowing more airports to participate in the program. We continue to encourage private-sector investment and innovation to improve the passenger experience without sacrificing security.

International Harmonization of Security Measures

One of TSA's most important responsibilities is connecting with our security partners around the world so we can extend the security buffer. In 2007, TSA created the Office of Global Strategies to help achieve this critical goal. This new office will work to strengthen relationships with international transportation security partners through increased communications, information sharing, and best practices. Examples of

international cooperation that the Office of Global Strategies aims to increase and strengthen include: common strategies on screening liquids, aerosols, and gels; implementing advanced technologies; and intelligence sharing.

We are faced with the challenge of aviation security as a complex and global issue, where each State has its own laws, capabilities, technology, competing interests and threats. The goal of our Global Strategies Office is to develop and harmonize these diverse methods—and at the same time, to help determine global threat and vulnerability.

This summer, flights to the Olympics in Beijing will have significant air marshal coverage due to the extraordinary cooperation between the Chinese air marshals and our own Federal Air Marshal Service.

In June 2008, TSA brought together operators of foreign repair stations in Singapore to discuss the status of security of foreign repair stations and commonly employed security measures. This first effort was so successful that TSA is expanding its efforts to use outreach and partnership to enhance security at foreign repair stations while the regulatory requirements are undergoing legal clearance.

Conclusion

Thank you again for this opportunity to highlight TSA's progress in enhancing the layers of aviation security while improving the experience for air travelers.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.