

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

Event: Edward T. Cox

Type of event: Interview

Date: October 16, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Bill Johnstone

Team Number: 7

Location: Dulles International Airport Manager's Office Conference Room

Participants - Non-Commission: Edward T. Cox, Airport Operations Officer/Airport Security Coordinator, Washington Dulles International Airport; Naomi C. Klaus, Associate General Counsel, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA); Dana A. Pitts, Airport Operations Manager, MWAA; Mark A. Dombroff, attorney, Dombroff & Gilmore, P.C.

Participants - Commission: Bill Johnstone; John Raidt; Lisa Sullivan

Background

(Unc) Mr. Cox has spent his entire career at Dulles, starting with service as an FAA police officer at the airport from 1978-1987. He served as a Federal Air Marshal during a portion of that time period. Cox became a MWAA police officer when control of the airport police force was transferred in 1987, and he remained in that position until 1990. From 1990-1992, Cox was an AOA Security Inspector at Dulles, and from 1992-1996 he was an Airport Operations Officer at the airport. He started in his current position as Airport Security Coordinator on October 1, 1996. In that role, his main duty from 1996 through 2001 was to enforce the airport access control provisions outlined under Federal Aviation Regulations Part 107. Though, with the advent of TSA there is now a different federal organizational scheme, his job remains essentially the same at present.

Intelligence Reporting, Relationship with CASFO and Enforcement

(CS) Cox reported that his main source of intelligence information pre-9/11 was from the Federal Security Manager (FSM) who would distribute relevant Information Circulars and Security Directives to him. Cox indicated he had a "good working relationship with the FSM, and with the Civil Aviation Security Field Office (CASFO) manager from 1996 to 1999. However, when a new CASFO arrived in 1999 (Mark Randol), Cox stated that the relationship "went downhill." He felt that Randol's testing was "causing havoc" with the air carriers, and that Randol was "notorious" for imposing fines. He cited a particularly troubling incident in which a Signature Air employee had suffered a serious accident, and the airport was fined for not properly clearing him into a secure area. Cox felt that Randol's testing methods were not the FAA "norm."

(CS) Ms. Klaus reported that the airport's relationship with Randol was "adversarial" and that he "sought" to produce fines, especially for access control. She indicated that his testing was not

fed back into the system, and therefore was ineffective in improving security: it was "more punitive than constructive." They felt a more cooperative spirit would have improved security, rather than a game of "gotcha."

Airport Vulnerabilities and Threats

~~(S)~~

[Redacted]

9/11 Closed by Statute

In Cox's view, the hijacking threat was "low." In fact, prior to 9/11, he had only been involved in one hijacking incident at Dulles in his entire 20+ years at the airport. The terrorist threat was not mentioned much by the FSM,

[Redacted]

9/11 Closed by Statute

~~(S)~~ Cox was aware that the FBI did annual threat assessments at the airport. He asked for a copy of the assessment but the information was denied to him. The FAA also did a comprehensive assessment at Dulles, but this too was never shared with Cox and he never has found out why (he had and has a Secret security clearance). Pitts indicated that the airport did participate and share in the results of a "blast analysis" done at Dulles on the potential impact of explosions at the airport.

~~(S)~~ In implementing a recommendation of the Gore Commission, an airport security "consortium" was created at Dulles circa 1997, and had regular meetings, first biweekly and later monthly. Participation was open to all within the airport community who wished to participate, and included air carriers, the airport, some of the airport tenants, and originally the FAA. However, after the FAA publicized a document on a threat assessment of Dulles, the CASFO was "disinvited."

Performance Testing

(Unc) Dulles had its own safety and security inspectors (usually a staff of 4) whose job was to insure compliance with FAA regulations, especially access and Secure Identification Display Area (SIDA) challenges.

~~(S)~~ Cox reported that he "never" received Red Team testing results, nor notices of violations under regular FAA testing. He specifically felt he needed to know of the Red Team's presence so that security "breaches" caused by their testing - which could lead to closure of the airport - could be avoided. He cited one incident in which a CASFO agent tested ramp security, without any notice to Cox's office, by "walking out" onto the tarmac and then claiming he wasn't challenged, though Cox (and Klaus) believed he had in fact been challenged promptly.

(Unc) Cox was not aware of testing results for screening and left all FAR 108 issues to the air carriers, only a notice of violations/fines. In fact, the FSM would not allow Cox to see the Air Carrier security programs, and only after 9/11 did the carriers start to share this information with him.

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Vulnerability and Consequence Assessments

Cox was asked if he assessed the quality of the checkpoint screening at the airport. He indicated that checkpoint screening was a "part 108" responsibility of the air carriers and therefore not something he needed to worry about. He indicated that the FSM wouldn't allow him to look at the Air Carrier Standard Security Program, or get involved in checkpoint issues. MWAA/Dulles sponsored no studies or reports on the vulnerabilities of their facilities or on the consequences of terrorist actions at the airport.

Contingency Plans

(SSI) Pitts indicated that under the airport's FAA-approved Emergency Operations Manual (now called the Airport Emergency Plan) there was an incident command procedure pursuant to Part 139 of the Code of Federal Regulations, including for hijackings. In fact, the FBI had conducted a hijacking exercise at Dulles (involving a "traditional" hijacking with hostages), with Dulles providing some operational support. The airport was required to do training exercises every three year, and "table top" contingency exercises every year.

The Day of 9/11

(Unc) Cox was in the Airport Operations office (in Terminal B) from about 7 AM. Around 9 AM, he got word of the first crash from a staff member who had seen the report on CNN. The new FSM for Dulles was in Brussels on training that day, and Bruce Parks (attached to the local CASFO) was acting FSM on that day. Parks came to the Operations office after the Pentagon crash, but his role was subsequently taken over by Phil Eastberg at the direction of the CASFO (Randol).

(Unc) Pitts reported that all traffic out of Dulles was stopped around 9:30 AM at the direction of the control tower. Cox recalled that the terminals were evacuated around 10 AM, which the FAA coordinated with airport operations. Cox further reported that the FBI "showed up" around 6:30 PM to obtain the airport's videotapes. Cox gave them access but couldn't pull the tapes and turn them over to the Bureau until it produced replacement tape (flown in from California). Cox did not recall a 6 PM meeting noted in the CASFO report, though he thought that might just be a definitional question of what constituted a "meeting."

(Unc) Cox did not recall any discussion of screening of passengers or aircraft for the flights grounded on 9/11, but later that evening he got word of an FAA or FBI request to screen the aircraft and Dulles police assisted in that process.

Suspicious Incidents

(Unc) Cox was not aware of reports from [redacted] (involving Middle Eastern-appearing individuals at Dulles on 9/10), or [redacted] (involving the presence of box cutters at the airport prior to 9/11). He did point out that box cutters were frequently in use in secure areas by maintenance personnel.

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(Unc) Cox did receive reports from an ADT (the company which managed videotaping for the airport) employee [redacted] who, after 9/11, viewed an airport videotape with the FBI showing the hijackers lost in the B Terminal on 9/10. Reportedly, the videotape shows the hijackers paying special attention to emergency exits. (Dombroff indicated that all of the hijackers, as well as the other passengers, were videotaped going through the screening checkpoint on 9/11.)

(Unc) Cox was aware of a summer 2001 incident in which police were called to the C and D terminals to investigate a Middle Easterner-appearing individual who was filming gates and United aircraft. He recalled that one of the gates may have been D-1, which generally is used for West Coast bound flights.

(Unc) Cox indicated that the airport had no systematic suspicious incident reporting system, but police records of such reports would have been kept. The problem is that such reports are not easily searchable.

Background Checks

(S/SI) [redacted] 9/11 Closed by Statute

The airport was responsible for credentialing all employees. However, the air carriers were responsible for conducting the background check on its employees, and the airport was responsible for conducting the check on its people.

(S/SI) The background checks for SIDA badge applicants did turn up many problems, and Cox was responsible for determining whether badges were granted.

[redacted] 9/11 Closed by Statute

Klaus reported that starting in December 2000, the airport was required (by law) to finger-print all new employees, and it turned this information over to the FAA who would give it to the FBI who would then give it back to the FAA who would then give the information to the Security Director for a credentialing determination.

(S/SI) Cox reported that the airport now receives No-Fly and Selectee lists from TSA, but didn't get this information up through 9/11.

[redacted] As a general aside, Klaus indicated that the airport would much prefer (for liability and other reasons) to receive mandates by regulation rather than the non-legal SD's.

Recommendations

(Unc) Cox supports making everyone and everything which comes to the airport be screened by TSA.

[redacted] He believes that the entire terminal needs to be made "sterile" and that screening should be moved to the front of the building, even if this means structural changes at the airport.

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(Unc) Cox would have TSA made responsible for clearing all SIDA personnel. Since the federal government has all of the relevant information, the airport shouldn't have the responsibility for making these decisions.

(Unc) Cox cited the need to improve cargo security, but said it still has to be figured out how to accomplish it. He said that, "the known shipper program is the biggest joke. It is pathetic."

(Unc) Cox advocates for making the entire terminal area a sterile zone, thereby pushing the checkpoints to the front of the airport entrance.

(Unc) With respect to screening, Cox thinks TSA has only accomplished two things: made the screeners be English-speaking, and kept knives off of planes. Cox and Klaus both indicated they would rather have federally-contracted screeners (as opposed to federal employees) because the system would be "more responsive." Cox also has not seen much improvement in the training of screeners; "they just changed the uniforms."

(Unc) Subsequent to the interview, Ms. Klaus called to add a recommendation that a system should be established for "flagging" police reports on suspicious incidents involving airports.