

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD)

Type of event: Briefing and Site Tour

Date: September 29, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Bill Johnstone

Team Number: 7

Location: Dulles International Airport Manager's Office

Participants - Non-Commission: Edward S. Faggen, Vice President and General Counsel for Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA); Dana A. Pitts, Airport Operations Manager, MWAA; Frank E. Dunn, Deputy Chief of Police, MWAA; Mark A. Dombroff, attorney, Dombroff & Gilmore, P.C.; Michael W. Kerns, attorney, Dombroff & Gilmore

Participants - Commission: Bill Johnstone; John Raidt

#### Dulles Security Features

~~(SSI)~~ Dunn reported that on 9/11, Dulles had certain "unique" security features, including the

9/11 Closed by Statute

Dulles also had, and has, a video recording capability, which was developed and paid for (out of its Operations and Maintenance funding) by the airport authority of its own volition. Typically, these tapes were kept for 30 days.

#### Threat Reports and Aviation Security Levels

~~(SSI)~~ Dunn recalled that in the lead-up to 9/11, he received regular reports from the Federal Security Manager, and Dulles had not received word of any specific threats to the airport. The Security Directives and Information Circulars went to the airport security coordinator (Edward Cox) but Dunn was aware of no specific threats. On 9/11, Dulles was at AVSEC Level 3, and had been so for some time.

~~(CS)~~ Pitts reported that the pattern had been that the airport would operate at an elevated threat level for some time, and then that elevated "plateau" would become the new norm. He was generally satisfied with the airport's security performance with respect to access control, and this was borne out by the fact that they did "pretty well" in FAA access control tests. There had been a 9/10/01 report on an attempted access breach (unrelated to the 9/11 hijackings).

~~(CS)~~ Pitts indicated that the airport authority had not had any special difficulties in accomplishing the requisite employee background checks, and as of 9/11, to the best of his knowledge Dulles was in full compliance with all Security Directives and other FAA security mandates, and the elements of the aviation security system were "working as well as intended."

~~SSI~~

~~(SSI)~~ Dunn thought that, based on the intelligence available, he thought the security situation was okay on 9/11. He indicated that access to better intelligence, including the information about the pilot training of terrorists, would have "raised an alarm."

### **Pre-9/11 Surveillance by Hijackers**

~~(SSI)~~ Faggen reported that after 9/11, a review of their videotapes revealed that the hijackers had apparently been videotaped on the evening of 9/10/01 in Terminal B. The hijacked flight left from Terminal D, but Faggen pointed out that the Mobile Lounges for B and D departures were located adjacent to each other. The FBI has a copy of the videotape, as does MWA, and the Commission has requested a copy.

### **The Day of September 11, 2001**

~~(CS)~~ After reviewing his notes, Dunn recalled that once the plane hit the Pentagon, the terminal was cleared and closed (after 9:30 AM). They had learned of the Dulles connection around that time from a TV reporter, and began canine sweeps of all of the terminals around the same time. The FBI contacted Dunn at 12:40 PM, and the FAA confirmed the hijacking of AAL #77 at 1:05 PM. The FBI arrived around 12:40. The log shows that the FAA told Dulles about the downing of Flight 77 at around 1:05 pm. Washington Tower had been tracking flight 77 for MWA.

~~(CS)~~ Faggen was at an airport directors' conference in Montreal on 9/11, and he heard of the hijackings by mid-morning via news accounts. It was his impression that the Air Traffic Control System knew what was going on before the media accounts appeared.

~~(CS)~~ Dunn indicated that no national guidance was received on how to process passengers on planes grounded on 9/11. The goal within the system was to get passengers out of the terminals as quickly as possible. (As an aside, Dunn indicated that he had pulled the screener logs in the aftermath of the groundings.) He recalled that United, American and other carriers had requested a security sweep of their grounded aircraft, and that knives were found on some of these, including a box cutter on a flight from Raleigh. However, the FBI took the lead in reviewing de-boarding passengers. Pitts said that on 9/11 he worked with operations to clear people out of the terminals. They have a log that shows Pitts' activities.

(U) Pitts reported that Dulles had re-opened at 3 PM on September 13, with limited flights resumed at 6 PM on that day. They said the decision to reopen was being made by the White House and top national leadership.

### **9/11 Consequences**

(U) Faggen indicated that 9/11 had had a major economic hit on MWA. In particular, he indicated that DOT had been uncommunicative as to the timing of the re-opening of National Airport (also governed by MWA), and they are still having problems with TSA with respect to the return of General Aviation to National. "There have been many changes in security since 9/11, and an upheaval in the industry." The passenger count is down by 12% at National and 8% at Dulles, though much of this is more attributable to economic factors. In general, National continues to be more impacted by 9/11 effects than Dulles.

~~SSI~~

**Current Aviation Security System**

(~~SSI~~) [REDACTED] 9/11 Closed by Statute [REDACTED]  
 9/11. He believes more attention must be directed at cargo security (though he and Faggen both indicated that the costs of subsidizing passenger air carriers to forego carrying cargo would outweigh the benefits).

(~~CS~~) Faggen believes the new security regime is better than the old one, though he and Pitts both expressed concerns about its capability to handle the situation once the passenger load returns to pre-9/11 levels. Pitts indicated that, with hindsight, the focus on bag-passenger match was "foolish" in light of the events of 9/11.

(~~SSI~~) [REDACTED] 9/11 Closed by Statute [REDACTED]  
 airports. Faggen stated that a clever terrorist can find a way to defeat the system. He believes the key questions for policy-makers include how far do we go with respect to security measures, how will we allocate resources to address security concerns, and who will pay for such measures.

(~~CS~~) Faggen and Dunn both reported that TSA is not currently reimbursing the airports for a law enforcement presence at the checkpoints or for law enforcement background checks. With respect to a suggestion that TSA personnel at airports be given law enforcement authority, they indicated that they had not had a positive experience in dealing with federalized law enforcement and thought another (federal) police force at the airports would not be a good idea.

(~~CS~~) Faggen and Dunn stated that having a Federal Security Director (FSD) "who thinks he runs the place" is a real problem. A previous FSD had sought to order the airport police force around, but the new FSD is better. Faggen, Pitts and Dunn all called for a more clearly defined role for TSA and all stakeholders in the system—we should know where the authorities and roles begin in ends to avoid confusion.

(~~CS~~) Pitts expressed the opinion that TSA personnel lack strong backgrounds in aviation, and that TSA should direct its focus on passenger screening, as per the law. He also indicated he thought it would be difficult for Dulles and other airports to meet the 12/31/03 deadline with respect to in-line screening because physical modifications will be necessary.

**Recommendations**

(~~CS~~) [REDACTED] 9/11 Closed by Statute [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED] He said they are getting better intelligence now, and that they have members serving on the Joint Terrorism Task Force. If anything, they may be getting too much unfiltered intelligence, coming in from many sources and therefore he believes there is still a need for a centralized intelligence-gathering point. The intelligence community also needs to look at the classification issue with respect to the aviation security system's needs to disseminate threat information to non-government personnel (i.e. industry).

(U)Dunn was asked about the idea of developing a suspicious activities database. He said that there's just too much innocent activity going on that might look suspicious to make such a database useful.

**Site Tour**

(~~CS~~) At the conclusion of the briefing, Commission staff were taken on a tour of the Main Terminal, with Dulles personnel pointing where they surmised the hijackers parked (western part of hourly lot), entered (through westernmost entrance) and traversed (through western checkpoint, to mobile lounge bound for Terminal D) the terminal. One of the hijackers went to the American ticket counter (again on the western side of the terminal) seeking to change his ticket. The relative locations of the departure points for mobile lounges bound for Terminals B and D (see above) were pointed out, and were in fact side-by-side.