

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

(R)

Event: Interview of Stephen Luongo, General Security Manager at Logan on 9-11

Type: Interview (conference call)

Date: February 11, 2004

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Lisa Sullivan

Team: 7

Participants (non-Commission): Steve Luongo and Christine Beyer, TSA General Counsel

Participants (Commission): John Raidt, Lisa Sullivan, and Bill Johnstone

Location: Conference call held from GSA conference room.

**Background**

[U] FAA hired Luongo in 1985 as a FAM after the TWA hijacking. In 1989, he became the lead agent for security at Logan. He applied for and got the Federal Security Manager (FSM) position at Logan in 1991, and served in that position through September 2001. After 9-11, he was called up to active duty as a Lt Col in the AF Reserve. He was activated through August of 2002 in the reserves. When he came back, many changes had occurred at Logan and within the system. TSA gave him a job as Assistant Federal Security Director for Regulatory in Sarasota, FL.

**Aviation Security Program at Logan prior to 9-11**

[U] Luongo knew the Logan Aviation Director, Tom Kinton, well. He had a good relationship with both him and the Massport Security Director, Joe Lawless. Leading up to September 11<sup>th</sup>, the FAA was conducting Special Emphasis Assessments (SEAs) at the airports to address priority security issues.

[U] Logan airport was focused on assessment and remedial action with respect to access control. Guards were assigned to doors that stayed open. This happened prior to 9-11.

[U] The SEA program also gave them good baseline data to look to in order to constantly update the plan for Logan. The federal regulation for the airport security program (FAR - 107) was in re-write for a long time. Logan officials were waiting on the FAA to complete the re-write, but finally decided to move forward with updating security at Logan on their own initiative. This began at least a year before 9-11.

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Luongo pointed out that Electronic Finger Printing at Logan was in place before mandated by the FAA; that was up and running before 9-11.

[U] The construction pace at the airport was "feverish" at that time. Everything was in flux - the perimeter of the airport and the gates were changing - it became a full time job for someone at to keep up with it. "MASSPORT went above and beyond in a lot of places" when it came to security.

[U] Luongo approved all amendments to the security plan for Logan. The pace of the amendments was constant mostly because of the ongoing construction. He urged them to beef it up. Joe did not have control over everybody at the airport. They should have invested a little more inside the ID badge office.

[U] Luongo did not feel as though the amendments he got from security were attempting to "water down" the standards at the airport.

[U] Counter Technology, Inc. (CTI) had a role in assessing the airport. Kinton relied on them to do a lot of different assessments. He was aware they were there but he had no role in negotiating their contracts or reviewing their product.

[U] As FSM, he reported to Washington. Pete Falcone was his immediate boss at the FAA. He thinks he was a branch manager. He did not report to the CASFO. He had no staff and no resources. He said he was "reliant on the CASFOs and regional folks for the equipment and office space."

### **Relationship with the Logan CASFO, Mary Carol Turano**

[U] For the most part, FSM and CASFO relations were good. There was a little tension at first because Turano was new and Luongo had been there a while; and because he had also applied for her job. It was ironed out. They worked well together. There was constant communication between them because they were co-located in the same office. The co-location was good for information flow. In comparison, he was in less constant communication with Tom Kinton and Joe Lawless.

[U] Somewhere along the line the CASFO got bigger and more supervisors were put into place. The roles and division of management were clearly defined between the CASFO and the FSM to avoid friction.

[U] Luongo said that he assumed all the duties set forth in the Act that created the FSM post. He was supposed to know about anything security-related in the airport it. "My philosophy was to solve things at the lowest possible level." Duties of the FSM were stated in the Act; and he also referred to his FSM handbook, which was also in re-write. It laid out his duties. He didn't limit himself to the official job description.

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[U] His duty with respect to the airlines was to raise issues with the air carrier's station managers at Logan. The CASFO didn't always have person at the LAMCO meetings. After SEAs were done, he went out and briefed the airport and the air carriers. He liaised with Logan and the federal government.

[U] Checkpoint Inspections were handled by the CASFO which had the manpower for testing. He had inspection credentials but the CASFO was full of agents that did all of that. He was prohibited from doing it.

### **Planning**

[U] Luongo noted that Pete Falcone asked for a plan for the year in the early 1990s but it wasn't a regular requirement. Annual tabletop exercises were conducted to train for emergencies, such as a car bomb in front of the terminal (before 9-11). In these exercises he went through all the existing Av Sec measures that were prescribed in the aviation security program and then some. Luongo felt that these exercises were especially important given the high turnover rate for airline station managers.

[U] He said the scenarios were boring and outdated. He needed to beef them up. MASSPORT tried to include other initiatives. He recalled that in the ten years he was an FSM, hijacking scenarios were practiced. One example of such a scenario utilized the new fire station as the crisis center very effectively. "The FBI brought all their laptops in for the exercise. The training exercise really improved performance for the FBI dealing with the Air Egypt incident." He did not, however, remember the details of the hijacking scenario enacted at that time. He said that none of the scenarios used in table top exercises or other training involved the hijacking of a plane to be used as a weapon.

### **Suspicious Activity at Logan prior to 9-11**

[U] Luongo was asked how suspicious activities at the airport were reported. Luongo didn't recall. He said that on occasions when he was made aware of a suspicious incident at the airport, he would call the FAA's civil aviation security intelligence watch. There was no procedure in place to report suspicious activities. Nothing sticks out in his mind of reports of surveillance or suspicious activity. The News Media would film at the airport sometimes. That was it.

### **Threats – receiving information**

[U] ICs (information circulars) were the primary means of receiving intelligence information. As soon as he received any information from the FAA on threats, he passed it on to Joe Lawless or Tom Kinton. He stated the "Ressam info" was specifically addressed in March 2001. Luongo told staff an attack "can happen here" – in reference to the Ressam information targeting LAX.

[U] Luongo said he a STU-3 telephone. He probably received 5 calls on it in 10 years.

**Consortia – the Boston model; the LEO**

[U] “Logan was one of the first airports in the country to establish a Consortium that addressed screening and law enforcement that people volunteered to join.” The group determined how to handle presidential visits (U.S. Secret Service, etc) and helped clue the airlines in on new technology. He said that, after a few years, the Consortia lost momentum (i.e. “tapered out”).

[U] There was also a quarterly law enforcement meeting with officials from the airport. These meetings were productive for information-sharing purposes. The consortia meetings were replaced by LAMCO (Logan Airport Management Committee) meetings. At a LAMCO meeting prior to 9-11, an FBI agent talked about Bin Laden. He delivered a report to Logan officials on groups that were active in the area; not just raising money. Logan relied on such information as this from the FBI. No information, however, was provided on specific threats to the airport. He thought the FBI liaison to the airport was

[REDACTED]

[U] Luongo mentioned the Joint Vulnerability Assessment conducted by the FAA and FBI on Logan that concluded there were no specific threats to the airport.

[U] He remembers the Pat McDonnell presentation on threats assessed by FAA Civil Aviation Intelligence. Luongo was at the presentation. He doesn't recall the specifics but remembers it taking place.

[U] Specific intelligence was required for the airport to take specific actions. From the information provided in McDonnell's presentation, the airport could only continue to make sure it met the standards outlined by the FAA. Deciding whether or not the standards set forth appropriately responded to the threat level as defined by intelligence was the job of Headquarters.

[U] SDs (Security Directives) handed down to the airports were based on the intelligence received by the FAA. It was Luongo's job to implement security measures as directed.

**Breaches of security at Logan prior to 9-11**

[U] Luongo was aware of the pre-9/11 Fox News expose on security breaches at the checkpoint; the guy who climbed onto the fuel farm; and the Boston cab driver associated with the Cole bombing that frequented Logan airport.

[U] Luongo said they took the Fox News incident very seriously. The airport wanted to conduct its own tests to make sure it didn't happen again by improving checkpoint screening. A Consortia meeting was held on the topic. The airlines were informed. Willy Gripper went to that meeting held to discuss the Fox News story.

SENSITIVE INFORMATION  
SAFETY

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[U] It was Luongo's expectation that any time an event happened that involved law enforcement and aviation security Lawless would tell him about it. He was supposed to be informed of all things security related.

[U] Luongo didn't believe he received enough threat information from intelligence and law enforcement sources. Before 9-11, he told the FBI he trusted that law enforcement was protecting them if there was a "bad guy" trying to infiltrate Logan.

[U] Since 9-11, he has learned that intelligence will never be 100 percent. Security measures need to be taken pro-actively that much better address deficiencies of intelligence gathering.

[U] Luongo does not recall a story about five Middle Easterners trying to get a tour of the Control Tower on 9/8/01. [REDACTED] was the tower manager at the time.

**Logan's Customer Service Program**

[U] Luongo noted that the Logan Customer Service Program which in part tried to enforce timely processing through security (with the threat of taking a carrier's gate away for poor throughput for passengers) "was all customer service related stuff." He was not consulted on the program and agreed that the act of timing people through the checkpoint could diminish effectiveness of security procedures if that occurred. He did not hear concerns that air carriers were leaning on security screeners to hurry people through security to keep the schedule, or receive complaints from screening companies.

[U] Luongo noted that Bob Johnson Station Manager at American was a "fine guy." He was instrumental getting the EDS machines implemented at Logan. The United guy was also a great guy. He doesn't recall them griping about long security lines or poor service.

**Check-point screening**

[U] The Checkpoint, equipment, and screeners had to meet standards set out by FARs 107 or 108. Enforcing this aspect of security was primarily a CASFO function. Mary Carol Turano, the former CASFO, would know better about the checkpoint performance at Logan pre-9-11. Contract screening wasn't the best system because of the high turnover rate, for one thing. TSA is a lot better. FAA had a program of testing - misses at one checkpoint or another happened - there were three or four companies at Logan handling screening pre 9-11.

**Joint Testing Initiative**

[U] Prior to the FOX News Show revealing security problems at Massport, the SEA program was finding a lot of violations. They were working to address these problems.

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[U] After the Fox News expose, there was a lot of heat on MASSPORT. There was pressure on Logan to do some kind of testing with the state police.

[U] Lawless wanted a group associated with the Mass. State Police (MSP) to conduct testing of the checkpoints at the airport. FAA wanted to know if the air carriers were going to be involved, and if they were going to share the results with the carriers. Logan's answer to both questions was no. Luongo said that there were two main questions from the FAA perspective. One, did the airport have the legal authority to test the system. Two, why conduct the tests if you weren't going to share the results? The idea eventually got derailed.

[U] As a member of the integrated product team with the FAA officials, Joe Lawless went to a meeting with Lee Longmire where he raised the issue of the airport conducting its own testing with the help of Troop F of the MSP. Eventually The FAA wrote up a draft agreement on a joint initiative that had enforcement language based on the outcomes of the testing. Logan did not want to deal with enforcement issues should their tests reveal poor results. He thought that the idea for the "cooperative agreement" was to test both checkpoint and access controls, but he's not certain.

**Strengths**

[U] Luongo believes that the leadership at Logan, with Kinton and Lawless, was strong. They were committed to security. MASSPORT put their money where their mouth was. They had cops on site such as K-9 and bomb units, Dive Teams, Swat Teams etc, as well as hostage negotiators. They had a good LEO presence overall. Joe stayed on top of problems. As a member of the Integrated Product Team, Joe Lawless was able to get them the newest technology very quickly.

**Weaknesses**

[U]   
 9/11 Closed by Statute  
That probably added to the reason why Logan scored badly on the FAA assessments.

[U] The older design of the airport made controlling access tough and breaches occurred as a result. Also, the ongoing construction presented challenges for this reason.

**9-11**

[U] He was in the car in traffic when he got the call from  (he doesn't remember the time) that AAL 11 was hijacked.  was in the region at the time; not the field office. He probably first learned of the hijacking from the ATC presence. A net was opened up there - a primary net possibly. He could hear the conversation in the background. He called Lawless and informed him.

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[U] Luongo had two cell phones with him at the time. He called the CASFO unit and spoke to [redacted] (he thinks). [redacted] told him that a United plane was also hijacked. The first aircraft had not impacted the WTC yet. He heard about the first plane hitting the trade center on the radio while he was still in his car. He got to the office where he grabbed the stu-3 phone. He went to Logan's emergency operations center before the second plane hit. He tried to get on the net with the Command Center. [redacted] (it was his first day on the job at Logan) listened to the net and took notes. He was a cargo security guy or hazmat official at the time. He still works for TSA/FAA. (Beyer will try to locate his notes for us).

[U] He doesn't know if the calls were recorded. CASFO did written statements after the fact. All of his contact with the FAA on 9-11 was through the net.

[U] Luongo said they did not look at other manifests to see who was on the other planes. There was no discussion of that. FBI was in the ops center on the 11<sup>th</sup>. He can't really remember what else happened on that day.

[U] The Command Center was set up in the fire station. The CASFO people were in there. He was in MASSPORT's command center that day at a different location.

[U] He believes that the Bin Laden family left through Boston while the national air space was still closed. He doesn't know a lot about it.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

[U] "Logan was as good as or better than any other airport in the country on 9-11," Luongo said. "No laws were broken before the hijackers were in the planes."

[U] He thinks CCTV would have been a good idea to have before 9-11. He remembers in '95-96 talking about how many TVs they would need to install. At the time, MASSPORT didn't see a need for the expense. It was mainly a budget issue. There was not a regulatory requirement for cameras. Since 9-11, they approved \$11 million for a new camera system right before he left the FAA.

[U] TSA is better than the old system because people are more focused on intelligence and working as a team. Airlines need to be honest brokers and "step up to the plate" on some of the security issues. Physical security measures such as cockpit and FAMs and 100-percent baggage screening is important. Money comes into it with risk assessment.

[U] General Aviation - we need to continue to look at it - it still presents a threat. "Terrorism didn't start on Sept 11. We can't assume the next one will be the same type of attack."

9/11 Closed by Statute

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[U] It's a tough job for the screeners – “looking for a needle in a haystack but they don't even know what haystack to look in.”