

**Notes for a speech
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AVIATION SECURITY FOR TOMORROW

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Introduction

It is a great pleasure to be in Washington today and to explore with you the topic of aviation security for tomorrow. The fact is, there are many potential “tomorrows” for aviation security—what might be called “future contingencies”. Our job is to consider not only where we hope to be, but what we need to do to get there. There are no guarantees. But our choices today matter tomorrow, and good choices make it much more likely that we will achieve the result of a secure system of global aviation which we are all working hard to realize.

Let me proceed in this fashion:

First, by affirming what we all believe: that international cooperation is essential for combating terrorism. But I’d like to take a few moments to illustrate this with some specific Canadian context.

Second, I'd like to stress the need for us to be proactive and not reactive, and discuss both the strengths and limitations of technology in our security work.

Finally, I'd like to reflect briefly on one of the biggest challenges for security agencies within our liberal democracies: fighting terrorism without undermining human rights and the very values we are seeking to defend.

1. The Need for Cooperation

Globalization is usually thought of as something that facilitates trade around the world, but it is also something that facilitates terrorism.

Ease of transportation and communications means that old borders between countries are rapidly diminishing in importance for criminals and especially for terrorists who have shown tremendous ability to coordinate their actions around the world.

This shrinking global context is especially relevant in air transportation security, because aircraft and airports are such important targets for terrorists. This has been true for a long time. Hijackings have long been a prominent threat to air travel. For example, there were 385 hijacking incidents between 1967 and 1976. And with the horrific bombings of an Air India flight in 1985 and a Pan Am flight over Lockerbie Scotland in 1988, sabotage became the primary security focus.

But the September 11th attacks brought these together: according to reports, the original plan was to have ten planes simultaneously used as weapons.

They succeeded in creating havoc with only four planes. I can't begin to imagine the devastation had the terrorists original plans come to fruition.

This shows how vulnerable air travel is to committed terrorists—even those operating with low tech equipment such as box cutters.

Airlines have high symbolic value because they represent the peak of technological achievement and modern prosperity. And with about 25,000 commercial flights each day in North America carrying millions of passengers there are countless opportunities for terrorists to prod and test security. If they fail, they can regroup and try again. And again. All it takes is one successful attempt. But air security personnel do not have the luxury of trial-and-error. We have to succeed every time, at every stage. A single failure can cost the lives of hundreds of innocent victims,

and reward the terrorists with sensational, wall to wall, full colour media coverage, which again reinforces fear among the public. So how do we defend along such a wide front? I strongly believe that the only way to stay ahead is close collaboration and cooperation—sometimes even integration—between countries and within countries. Cooperation is easy to preach and hard to do. It requires trust, and trust requires experience and personal connection with other people and other organizations. But our success in combating global terrorism demands such linkages, and, on balance, I think this is increasingly recognized by policy makers around the world.

The Canadian Context

Canada's historical and geographic relationship with the United States makes us a prime staging ground—perhaps even a prime target—for terrorist activity. Even before 9/11 it was clear that Canada could not be complacent.

Because terrorists see our nation as a potential target, or as a launching pad for attacks against the United States, Canada must undertake its security obligations with the utmost resolve and commitment. And I am pleased to say that the government of Canada is doing so.

Government of Canada's National Security Policy

Integration and cooperation are keys to our national strategy.

This past April, the Canadian Government released a comprehensive National Security Policy and committed 690 million Canadian dollars in new spending towards addressing current and future threats. This includes many initiatives which speak to the need for cooperation and integration such as the Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBETS) which bring together law enforcement agencies from Canada and the US at border points across North America.

CATSA

Perhaps it is appropriate that I tell you about my own organization, which is part of the Government of Canada's integrated response to the challenges of 9/11. Created in 2002, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority is mandated to ensure the security of critical points in the air transport system. In doing so, CATSA works closely with both Canadian and international security agencies.

How does this work in practice? I like to compare air transportation security to the layers of an onion. As you can see by the illustration, each layer must work closely together to protect the core and most important part of the onion, the aircraft and passengers. This means close cooperation and coordination with all agencies involved.

2. Anticipating New Challenges: Technology and People

When we try to envision what aviation security will look like in the future, it is perhaps unavoidable that we often think in terms of technological innovation. After all, we are as a society addicted to technology.

And we are programmed to believe in technological progress--that if we can as much as think of a gadget, then it can't be too far away from store shelves.

Certainly there are many promising technologies on the horizon that would be wonderfully helpful for security and police work.

And even today we have remarkable abilities that were unthinkable not so long ago.

Here are some examples:

Canada is planning to introduce digital chips in passports to thwart forgeries.

Biometrics such as iris and fingerprint scanning technologies make it possible to ensure that only properly cleared workers can access sensitive areas of an airport, or even to fast track pre-cleared “trusted passengers” through airport screening or customs.

Using GPS satellites to create invisible boundaries within airports which only employees with properly coded I.D. could enter without triggering an alarm.

“Anti-hijack autopilot systems to prevent terrorists crashing a plane.”

Facial recognition software which can link to international databases to identify terrorists or other criminals in a crowded terminal.

These are all possible technological solutions which would help to make airports and aircraft more secure. Some are being tested. Some are still work in progress.

However, I caution that we must not rely too heavily on technological solutions. We must remember that our technology can be adopted by both sides.

It can help the good guys share information and communicate rapidly, but also allows the bad guys to direct and finance global terrorist networks, hiding behind advanced encryption tools.

Is there, for example, an imminent technological solution to the frightening possibility of bio terrorism? Airport security screening is effective for preventing restricted objects from being taken aboard an aircraft.

We even have detection equipment for identifying trace residue from explosives. But what about an aerosol can filled with anthrax or some other deadly toxin like the sarin found recently in Iraq?

If Project BioShield passes the U.S. Congress, perhaps some research could examine whether specialists such as biochemists would ever have a role to play in screening at airports or other security checkpoints? The threat is not unthinkable. Do we have a solution?

Personally, I wish that someone would invent a machine that we could use at airports to identify people with criminal intentions. “Beep once if it’s ok, beep twice for a terrorist.” But I’m not holding my breath.

Because law enforcement, in the end, is about people more than technology. And until we can make windows into people’s hearts, we will have to sweat it out the old fashioned way.

We must remember that terrorists are well aware of the technologies available to law enforcement agencies and of their routines and practices. We must not allow ourselves to be locked into yesterday’s paradigm, defending against yesterday’s attacks.

Do you remember the Maginot Line? It was built in the aftermath of the First World War to protect France by defending the traditional German invasion route along the eastern frontier. It was a modern, technologically unsurpassed and militarily impregnable

defensive system. But it was built to fight the previous war, and was not relevant to the war which overwhelmed France in 1940 because the second war was about airplanes more than ground troops.

We must be skilled chess players, seeing the board one move, two moves, many moves into the future, and using all of our resources—human and technological—to stay ahead of terrorists and their resolve to do harm.

3. Maintaining Security in a Liberal Democracy

In the wake of 9/11, democratic governments around the world began to pay more attention to the threat of terrorism and their ability to respond. The United States passed the Patriot Act. The Canadian Parliament passed Bill C-36 (An Act to Combat Terrorism) which created new measures to prosecute terrorist groups and provided new investigative tools to law enforcement and national security agencies. In doing so, both our governments

were attempting to strike an appropriate balance between respecting their deeply held values of fairness and respect for human rights while helping to ensure that their citizens and the global community are better protected.

Obviously I agree that we needed to take security more seriously, and I believe that we have begun making many necessary improvements in the last two years.

Certainly the need for vigilance remains high. However, while our security policies must adapt to changing threats and changing environments, we must remember that our basic principles should not.

What sort of questions should we be asking in the specific areas of air transportation security? Let me focus on two.

First, at what point does the “lesser evil” itself become a greater evil? Or, put another way, when is the cure worse than the disease?

Passenger air travel around the world is predicated upon the assumption that the threat of hijacking or bombing an aircraft is serious enough to justify requiring millions of passengers annually to submit their baggage and their bodies for inspection, and to justify confiscation of prohibited items or denial of boarding privileges.

Against an absolute measure of human rights, this is certainly a violation of privacy, but clearly society accepts the trade off, even after 9/11 when increased security has meant increased inconvenience with requirements to remove shoes or belts, and the prohibition of a much wider range of articles.

We must be careful, however, not to take public support for granted. Because if we pretend that the time and comfort of passengers at pre-boarding checkpoints does not matter, then we will create frustration and anger, and undermine the system.

In the interests of enhanced security, citizens have agreed to impositions on their liberty; government agencies must not take this for granted or abuse it.

Let me raise another angle—the relationship between security and safety. Last year at a major airport, one individual managed to slip past a security check point. This resulted in a complete shut down and evacuation of a major terminal. Fully loaded planes were grounded, causing agitation for thousands of passengers. Planes which had already departed were forced to return, and compete with arriving aircraft for runways, terminal space, and grounds crew attention. The congestion was a crisis for air traffic control, for security, maintenance and customer relations.

As an editorial in *Aviation Security International* asked in

December 2003:

“In the final analysis, what is the bigger problem? Is it the individual who made it past a security checkpoint, or an accident on the ground or in the air? At what point does a countermeasure to a security threat become a threat to safety?”

And I would add, how long will it be before terrorists decide to stage security challenges for the very purpose of precipitating panic, frustration, and anger among the public, undermining confidence in the safety of air travel, and hoping that a crash will occur not by a bomb but through an old fashioned accident?

Finally, let me also make a few observations about security and privacy. As I mentioned, any airport screening is in some degree an intrusion on a passenger's privacy, no matter how strong the consensus that this is a "lesser evil" to prevent the potential of a far greater evil represented by a mid-air act of violence. But if we accept the "lesser evil" formulation, then we owe it to citizens to infringe individual rights only to the extent that such infringement is actually necessary to improve security. Gratuitous infringement, or, worse, using the terrorist threat as a convenient cloak to justify measures which restrict freedom but do not promote public safety, brings the provision of security into disrepute and obviously conflicts with the basic tenets of a democratic society.

Being aware of the implications of our security practices on civil liberties such as privacy means finding ways to reduce the impact when we can do so without compromising our ability to protect air travellers.

We need to get in the habit of asking whether our security needs can be met in ways which respect privacy. And, wherever we can, we need to choose the less intrusive means.

Conclusion

Fortunately for me, as a public servant, I am not responsible for having to decide high level policy questions about how best to balance security versus liberty. Rather, these decisions must be taken through the democratic process. And that is a job for our elected representatives and for the judiciary, in full view of media and public scrutiny. But as we think about aviation security for tomorrow, I do think it is important for all of us to keep these questions in mind. We need to develop lines of cooperation both at home and abroad. We need to foster technological innovation to improve our ability to combat terrorism, while at the same time developing the human resources which will give us the ability to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances. But we must also make sure that we do not allow the strengths of our liberal democratic

societies—openness, toleration for dissenting viewpoints, a high view of human rights—to be forgotten or ignored.

For it is possible that we can win the war on terrorism at the cost of our own principles and identity. Possible; but not likely if we ensure that security measures are only as limited in scope and duration as necessary to do the job.

Thank you.