



Airport Security Today... and Tomorrow

Speaking Notes for James Cherry

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Introduction

Thank you for inviting me to take part in this session.

Anyone traveling by air these days will have experienced the impact of tightened security screening at airports since 9/11. The vast majority of airline passengers recognize and accept the need for these increased security measures.

For the most part, they are willing to put up with a certain degree of added inconvenience if it provides added peace of mind while traveling and contributes to eliminating security threats.

But they do not accept, and understandably so, long line-ups, bottlenecks and delays that are sometimes associated with these heightened security screenings, especially during peak travel times.

To quote Montie Brewer, president and CEO of Air Canada, from the December issue of *EnRoute Magazine*, "Your transit through an airport can often make the difference between a pleasant travel experience and an unpleasant ordeal."

Fortunately, today we have a tremendous opportunity to offer our passengers the best of both worlds: A secure travel experience, but also an enjoyable one.

The CAC's vision is "Working Together, Moving Forward." That is the vision for Canada's airports, but it also can be a vision for working with our partners in aviation security.

The title of this conference is "Leading Change." But we must lead change together.

By working in partnership, employing the latest technologies available, we can create a positive travelling experience for the passenger that is safe, secure and efficient for all concerned.

With the five-year review of CATSA, Canada is set to re-examine how aviation security is defined and managed in this country. This is an opportunity to set a new example for the world in how to offer an efficient, safe and secure air passenger travel experience.

But to do so, we must work together.

Air System Security and Canada's Competitiveness

Failure to achieve an acceptable balance could ultimately threaten our competitiveness by prompting frustrated travelers to seek alternate means of transport, especially for short-haul routes such as Montreal-Toronto or Calgary-Edmonton.

Our biggest advantage over land travel is speed and convenience, and the only way to maintain that is to ensure easy access and fluidity of movement at our airports.

One way to promote this is to encourage steps toward deeper integration with our North American partners in the Security and Prosperity Partnership. Later this week, the three national leaders of Canada, the United States and Mexico meet in Cancun to discuss this accord, which was intended to achieve, among other things, harmonized screening practices for passengers and cargo.

We should be promoting progress on this potentially very important accord or be prepared to face serious economic consequences for trade and tourism.

This is a responsibility we all share. Should we fail, long delays in passenger processing, for example, can have a serious impact on tourism as a whole.

Recent reports warn that new security measures along the Canada-U.S. border could have a devastating effect on tourism – a \$2 billion impact, according to the Canadian Tourism Commission.

The U.S. government's Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative will require all travelers entering or re-entering the U.S. to carry secure documentation. This will increase the costs and inconvenience of crossing the border.

So while we all agree on the need for secure borders, the timely and efficient flow of goods and travelers also clearly is critical to our economy.

Meanwhile, traffic growth continues. The latest Transport Canada forecasts see Canadian passenger traffic growing at about 4% a year over the next three years.

Growth is coming in domestic air travel, but in even greater numbers for travel overseas, while it actually is declining to the U.S.

There is no room for complacency. We must act together now to build the aviation security infrastructure of tomorrow if we expect it to be in place in time to handle this growth.

Trusted Traveler Programs

Fortunately, technology already is beginning to play a major role in dramatically improving the passenger experience with security compared to the immediate aftermath of September 11.

One of the most promising developments, for example, is the introduction of "trusted traveler" schemes at our airports. These voluntary systems are designed to enable airlines to screen out the known passenger from one that may pose a threat.

And passengers who choose to participate in a trusted traveler program are rewarded with a speedier check-in and baggage screening process.

CANPASS and NEXUS

At our borders, we also need to leverage existing and emerging technologies like biometrics to detect and isolate the potentially dangerous passenger from the bulk of travelers.

Several security systems based on biometrics already exist at Canadian airports and are showing excellent results.

CANPASS AIR, for example, is streamlining customs and immigration clearance for low-risk, pre-screened travelers.

Another biometrics system currently being tested in Vancouver is called NEXUS AIR, which also simplifies and expedites air border crossing for pre-approved, low-risk travelers.

The NEXUS pilot program is a huge success and should be extended to other Canadian airports in the future.

Other advanced technologies are being developed at major airports to identify travellers and satisfy new security rules. When taken together, these technologies all serve our goal of providing seamless fluidity at every step of the airport travelling experience.

The message is clear: Canada simply must invest in the technology that is already available to ensure both a secure and pleasant travel experience.

The Future is Upon Us

By 2010, the eyes of the world will be on Canada with the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Tourists will be coming in increasing numbers – not just to British Columbia, but to other regions of our nation as well.

While we have less than four years to prepare, 2010 is an opportunity for Canada to demonstrate that we can have the best of both worlds.

We need a safe, secure air travel environment, yes. But we can also offer one that provides a positive travel experience. This is our challenge to the other stakeholders in this discussion.

We have proven we can work together. A good example of this is the Aviation Security Executive Working Group. Chaired by Transport Canada with the participation of the CAC, ATAC and CATSA, the group proved that the stakeholders in aviation security can work together to alleviate “irritants” in the system.

Consensus was reached on 29 security-related issues that were negatively affecting the passenger travel experience. Already, several recommendations have been implemented and progress has been made on several others.

We need to make sure that the recommendations are enacted and we welcome Transport Canada's commitment on this. The work of this group should continue, and it is a great model for how we can work together again in the future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, now is a good time to ask ourselves the hard questions about aviation security. The five-year review of CATSA is a legislative review, yes. But it also is an opportunity to consider how we want to handle aviation security in the years to come.

Should we continue the way things are? How can we improve them?

Fortunately the stakeholders in Canadian aviation security already are working together to improve security and the passenger experience. This conference is evidence of that.

Intelligent technology tools also are available that promise to reduce security threats while effectively improving the air travel experience for passengers. It is in all of our interests to make sure we avail ourselves of these tools.

But perhaps most importantly, we have the challenge to maintain an attitude that is open to collaboration and change. At Canada's airports, we are open to that challenge.

Thank you.