

AIRPORT SECURITY

Background

1. The paper received by Conference two years ago in Liverpool attempted a detailed description of the international, European and UK national, legal and administrative framework within which Airport security operates. The paper can be seen on the Liaison Group's website¹
2. Last year² we sought to update members on a number of the issues and to describe some of the current developments in this field and that is the aim of this paper. The past year, 2006/07, has certainly been a frantic one in terms of airport security.

The Continuing Threat

3. According to ICAO figures, in 2006 there were 16 acts of unlawful interference in which two persons were killed and 27 were injured. Among them were four unlawful seizures or attempted seizures, three facility attacks, three acts of sabotage or attempted sabotage, one in-flight attack and five other acts of unlawful interference. So good security at Airports continues to be vital.

In Europe

New EU Regulation on Airport Security

4. The European Commission's first annual report on the implementation of Regulation (EC) 2320/2002, published in September 2005, said that although the Regulation had substantially strengthened and harmonised security at EU Airports it was necessary now to :
 - make it easier to modify the more technical aspects of the legislation to adapt to technological progress and make adjustments based on inspection findings and the lessons learned from combating terrorism.
 - clarify and simplify the common requirements to make the rules more coherent and easier to apply and to prevent the shortcomings found in some airports, which often required urgent remedial action, from being reproduced.
 - extend the existing rules to freight and in-flight security and allow for a common response to measures requested by third countries, where necessary.
5. The Commission thus proposed legislation which would replace the 2002 Regulation. The new Regulation³ has been working its way through the EU's legislative processes. Most recently, on 25th April 2007, the Regulation received its second reading in the European Parliament where it was approved but with amendments which will need now to be considered by the other EU agencies. It had been hoped to bring the regulation into effect by the end of 2006 but clearly it will not now come into force until later this year at the earliest.

¹ <http://www.ukaccs.info/05almfiles/05security.doc>

² <http://www.ukaccs.info/06almfiles/06security.doc>

³ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0429en01.pdf

New rules on passenger hand baggage

6. On 5th October 2007 the EU announced a new EU wide Regulation restricting the liquids that passengers can carry past airport screening points and then onto aircraft. This new Regulation⁴, which came into force on 6th November 2006, was a response to the alleged plot disrupted in August 2006– see paras 10-17 below.

Financing Airport Security

7. There has for some time been concern across Europe that Regulation (EC) 2320/2002 lacks any clear policy as to the financing of the additional security. As previously reported this prompted the Commission to employ the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) to carry out a study to gain a clear picture of the various security systems across and within EU Member States, and to investigate the funding of civil aviation security.
8. The IAA's Report⁵, expected in 2003, did not emerge until the end of 2004 and it was not until August 2006 that the Commission finally responded via a *Report to the EC Council (COM 2006/431)*⁶. This said that security costs in transport can be significant and that currently they are largely borne by users. The report gives some insight into the different financing mechanisms which exist in the Member States and warns that the heterogeneity of approach may distort competition. It concludes that more transparency of security taxes and charges would benefit the users of transport services and that, in general, public funding of anti-terrorist measures in transport does not constitute state aid "as it is connected with the exercise of powers that are typically those of a public authority".
9. As expected, it seems unlikely that the EU will seek directly to legislate on the issue although draft Directive on Airport Charges proposes that the security charges made by airports should be used exclusively to meet their security costs, including the cost of financing necessary security facilities and installations, and expenditure on security staff and operations. There is a paper on the proposed Airport Charges Directive elsewhere on the Agenda.

In the UK

The August 2006 aviation security alert - Increased Airport Security

10. Airport security was dramatically transformed when on 10th August 2006 the Department of Transport issued the statement reproduced at Annex A. This followed an overnight counter-terrorism operation to disrupt an alleged plot to bring down a number of aircraft through mid-flight explosions using liquid explosives, causing a considerable loss of life. The Government believed this to be a major threat to the UK and its international partners
11. Security at airports in the United Kingdom, across Europe and in the United States was immediately tightened and there were lengthy delays and cancelled flights stretching over many days. There was considerable disruption at most airports.
12. Within days the restrictions began to be relaxed and there has followed a succession of Security Directions – see Annex B - but the security regime at airports has by no means returned to that which obtained before 10 August 2006. The latest rules and advice for outgoing passengers can be seen on the

⁴ See [EU Poster](#)

⁵ http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/air/safety/studies_en.htm

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/security/financing/doc/com_2006_0431_en.pdf

Department's website⁷ - see also the EU Regulation and poster referred to at paragraph 6 above.

13. On 1st May 2007 the security regime at UK airports was tightened still further by a requirement that liquids should be subjected to random litmus style tests. It is understood that this new measure was trialled using BA crew entering the Compass Centre at Heathrow Airport, the conclusion from which was that passengers should experience no disruption whatsoever. Two further pilots were carried out at Gatwick and Manchester airports. But in a (leaked) letter to airports the DfT said the new measure was likely to "cause inconvenience to customers, airport staff and crew travelling through UK airports and will potentially impact on the speed of security processing".
14. In an effort to speed up the security process most airports have increased the number of security staff – at Heathrow alone more than 300 extra people have had to be recruited - and to provide more passenger search facilities in order to cope with the extra security requirements. But there are still periods of delay.
15. Passengers continue to be confused about how the security measures affect them. In relation to liquids alone many thousands of items are confiscated from hand baggage every day. The confusion is compounded because the rules at airports abroad seem to be different and incoming passengers are thus subject to different requirements.
16. The cost to airports, airlines and ordinary passengers must be enormous. There is more about the financing of airport security later in the paper.
17. What follows needs to be seen in light of the much tenser atmosphere which flows from the dramatically changed security regime which emerged on 10th August 2006.

Working Together – Clarification of Responsibilities

18. At Annex C is an extract from the paper on Airport Security prepared for the last annual meeting in Manchester in June 2006. It concerns the Government's November 2005 announcement that it proposed to use the Civil Aviation Bill then before Parliament to amend the Aviation Security Act 1982 to clarify the responsibilities of airport managers and police in relation to the protection and policing of airports which have been designated by the Secretary of State under section 25 of the 1982 Act. (The airports currently designated for policing purposes are Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, Prestwick, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen).
19. The Bill finally received the Royal Assent on 8th November 2006 and the changes to the 1982 Act have taken effect.

Review of Airport Policing

20. In its November 2005 announcement the Government also said it had decided to commission an independent, wide-ranging review of policing at airports. The review aimed to identify a sustainable approach to airport policing which takes account of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in protecting an airport and in particular addresses the need for funding arrangements that are objective and transparent. The review was asked to compare the present method of policing airports with that of other modes of transport to establish any differences or similarities in policing approaches, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities that may apply. The review also considered whether the

⁷ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/airtravel/airportsecurity>

principle of designation could be made to work. If not, the review was asked to propose alternative options.

21. The report of the Review Team was submitted to the Department for Transport in July 2006. For security reasons it is not to be published but some aspects of what it says are contained in a statement by the Secretary of State on 21st July 2006 – see Annex D. It will be noted that a further statement is promised "in due course".

Airport Security - Funding

22. Inequities in the funding of airport policing have long been an issue and indeed the Government included the issue in the Review of policing referred to in paragraphs 20 and 21 above.
23. It will be seen from Annex D that the Review recommended that the system of "designation" should be discontinued and that policing costs should generally be met by the industry on the basis that policing forms part of an agreed airport "community" response, that costs are clear and transparent, and that policing at airports is brought within the mainstream policing agenda. The Government's response is awaited.
24. Meanwhile, prompted perhaps by the increased requirement for security at airports following the aviation security alert of August 2006, there seems to be unrest among police authorities over airport funding issues. According to press reports at a meeting called by the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) in mid-January 2007, representatives from the police forces and authorities which provide security at the airports agreed unanimously that operators should pay the full cost. Highlighting that there are now 16 airports in the UK with more than 2 mppa, the chairman of the meeting said: "We are still operating under a funding arrangement worked out back in the early 1970s. We are now living in a completely different world with far greater threat levels, and we need to come up with a national strategy for policing our airports and recovering in full the costs involved. It is unfair to expect taxpayers to have to bear the costs for policing what are commercial enterprises, often earning huge profits."
25. In a separate report it was noted that the policing of Heathrow costs the Metropolitan Police £48 million a year. Operator BAA pays £38 million towards the service. The Metropolitan Police also provide policing at London City Airport and at its January 2007 meeting the airport's consultative committee heard that the MPA:
 - had written to the Secretary of State seeking the designation of the airport under section 25 of the Aviation Security Act 1982 so that the Airport would pay the policing bill instead of taxpayers as at present; and
 - had meanwhile asked for a voluntary contribution towards policing costs. This had been rejected by the Airport not least because the amount involved would have been four times the amount payable per passenger at Heathrow.
26. Airports, too, are concerned about the increased cost of security. According to news reports last December Liverpool airport was seriously considering a charge for passengers to cover its security costs. The scheme would require people to pay up to £2 to pass through a turnstile before boarding. Managers said the extra revenue would help meet the £3m cost of increased insurance and security.

Foreign Nationals – Criminal Records Checks

27. Members will already have seen the attached correspondence between the Manchester Airport Consultative Committee and the Department about the difficulty the Airport company is experiencing in obtaining correct and complete criminal history checks from abroad for foreign nationals. This is perhaps an issue for discussion at the meeting.

Iris Recognition Immigration System (IRIS) – Progress

28. This new system, introduced at Heathrow as a pilot project during 2005, now also operates at:

- Heathrow Terminal 1
- Heathrow Terminal 2
- Heathrow Terminal 3
- Heathrow Terminal 4
- Gatwick North Terminal
- Manchester Terminal 1
- Manchester Terminal 2
- Birmingham Terminal 1

29. The scheme is expected to start in Gatwick South Terminal in the middle of this year.

30. The scheme allows enrolled passengers holding non-EU passports to enter the UK through a special automated immigration control barrier incorporating an iris recognition camera. The barriers, located in the Immigration Arrivals Hall, form part of Immigration and Passport Control.

31. Enrolment for the scheme is currently free and voluntary. Enrolment takes place in the airport departure lounge where Immigration Officers assess eligibility and enrol qualifying persons. Those who qualify to participate in the scheme have both their eyes photographed in order to capture their iris patterns. This data is stored securely alongside their personal details. The enrolment process takes about five to ten minutes.

32. There is more information about the scheme at www.iris.gov.uk

MiSense Trial at Heathrow

33. This trial was conducted at Terminal 2 at Heathrow in December 2006 and January 2007. There is more information in the BAA's Press Release at Annex E and also on the projects website at <http://www.misense.org/home.html>

Stuart Innes
May 2007

Annex A

Airline Security - Statement by Department of Transport – 10th August 2006

Following this morning's police action, security at all UK airports has been increased and additional security measures have been put in place for all flights.

With immediate effect, the following arrangements apply to all passengers starting their journey at a UK airport and to those transferring between flights at a UK airport.

All cabin baggage must be processed as hold baggage and carried in the hold of passenger aircraft departing UK airports.

Passengers may take through the airport security search point, in a single (ideally transparent) plastic carrier bag, **only** the following items. Nothing may be carried in pockets:

- pocket size wallets and pocket size purses plus contents (for example money, credit cards, identity cards etc (not handbags));
- travel documents essential for the journey (for example passports and travel tickets);
- prescription medicines and medical items sufficient and essential for the flight (eg diabetic kit), except in liquid form unless verified as authentic.
- spectacles and sunglasses, without cases.
- contact lens holders, without bottles of solution.
- for those travelling with an infant: baby food, milk (the contents of each bottle must be tasted by the accompanying passenger) and sanitary items sufficient and essential for the flight (nappies, wipes, creams and nappy disposal bags).
- female sanitary items sufficient and essential for the flight, if unboxed (eg tampons, pads, towels and wipes).
- tissues (unboxed) and/or handkerchiefs
- keys (but no electrical key fobs)

All passengers must be hand searched, and their footwear and all the items they are carrying must be x-ray screened.

Pushchairs and walking aids must be x-ray screened, and only airport-provided wheelchairs may pass through the screening point.

In addition to the above, all passengers boarding flights to the USA and all the items they are carrying, including those acquired after the central screening point, must be subjected to secondary search at the boarding gate. Any liquids discovered must be removed from the passenger.

There are no changes to current hold baggage security measures.

Regrettably, significant delays at airports are inevitable. Passengers are being asked to allow themselves plenty of extra time and to ensure that other than the few permitted items listed above, all their belongings are placed in their hold baggage and checked in.

These additional security measures will make travel more difficult for passengers, particularly at such a busy time of the year. But they are necessary and will continue to keep flights from UK airports properly secure. We hope that these measures,

which are being kept under review by the Government, will need to be in place for a limited period only. In light of the threat to aviation and the need to respond to it, we are asking the travelling public to be patient and understanding and to cooperate fully with airport security staff and the police.

If passengers have any questions on their travel arrangements or security in place at airports they should contact their airline or carrier.

Annex B

DFT Security Restrictions at UK Airports 10 August – 27th October 2006

Security Direction issued to industry: 10 August 2006

Date of effect: With immediate effect

Brief description:

- Passengers not permitted to take liquid items through the airport security search point, except for items such as prescription medicines and medical items sufficient and essential for the flight.
- All cabin baggage processed as hold baggage and carried in the hold of passenger aircraft departing UK airports.
- Passengers permitted to take through the airport security search point a limited amount of essential items (e.g. money, credit cards, identity cards passports and travel tickets etc), placed in a single transparent plastic bag.

Security Direction issued to industry: 12 August 2006

Date of effect: With immediate effect

Brief description:

- Clarification of items to be taken into the cabin (e.g. deletion of the word 'female' in respect to sanitary items).

Security Direction issued to industry: 14 August 2006

Date of effect: With immediate effect

Brief description:

- Passengers permitted to carry one item of cabin baggage through the airport security search point, the dimensions of which not to exceed: a maximum length of 45 cm, width of 35 cm and depth of 16 cm (including wheels, handles, side pockets, etc.).

Security Direction issued to industry: 21 September 2006

Date of effect: 22 September 2006

Brief description:

- Passengers still permitted just one item of hand baggage, though the size of the bag increased to 56cm x 45cm x 25cm, consistent with the International Air Transport Association's long-standing recommendation.
- Large musical instruments allowed as a second item of hand luggage.

Security Direction issued to industry: 27 October 2006

Date of effect: 6 November 2006

Brief description:

- Passengers permitted to carry small quantities of liquids in separate containers each with a capacity not greater than 100ml. These containers must all be contained within a single closed transparent, re-sealable plastic

bag, which itself must not exceed 1 litre in capacity. The bag must be presented for examination at the airport security point.

- Essential medicines and baby food may be permitted in larger quantities above the 100ml limit, subject to authentication.

Security Direction issued to industry: 10 April 2007

Date of effect: 1 May 2007

Brief description:

- A new protocol for the random testing of liquids carried through search control points by passengers and staff using 'litmus style' test strips. All passengers and staff have an equal chance of being selected and a robust alarm resolution process has been developed for airports to comply with.
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Annex C

Extract from 2006 paper on Airport Security

Working Together – Clarification of Responsibilities

11. From the paper considered last year members will recall that in 2002 Sir John Wheeler published his Review of Airport Security. His findings and recommendations were accepted by the Government and work has been going on to implement them.
12. Among the recommendations was greater joint working between all security stakeholders including both the regulatory authorities and the industry. Working together he felt they could produce the most accurate assessments of the threats to airports from crime and terrorism; identify any gaps and overlaps in the existing security regimes; and plan for management of the risks involved.
13. Following trials at Heathrow, Birmingham, East Midlands, Newcastle and Glasgow the MATRA (*Multi Agency Threat and Risk Assessment*) concept was rolled out across the country in 2003. Very simply the aim is to arrive at a security plan which is jointly-owned and which can be routinely revisited to take into account future developments. These could be a change in the type, volume or profile of services operating at that airport, or responding to new or differing crime trends or threat intelligence.
14. Against this background the Government in November 2005 announced it had decided to amend the Civil Aviation Bill to clarify the responsibilities of airport managers and police in relation to the protection and policing of airports that have been designated by the Secretary of State under section 25 of the Aviation Security Act 1982.
15. There are currently nine airports designated for policing purposes - Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, Prestwick, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. The primary responsibility for policing activity at these airports lies with the Chief Constable and the airport manager must make such payments in respect of policing the airport as the manager and the relevant authority may agree. If they cannot agree, the Secretary of State may be required to determine the amount to be paid to the police by the airport manager (section 26(3)).
16. The Secretary of State said it had become clear that at these airports the relationship between the responsibilities of:

- airport managers, aircraft operators and others carrying out security activities directed by the Secretary of State under Part 2 of the Act (sections 10 to 24); and
 - the Chief Constable whose officers police a designated airport under Part 3 (sections 25 to 31)
 - is uncertain and also that the scope of the Secretary of State's power under section 26(3) of the Act is unclear.
17. Given the importance of this issue to the UK's aviation security programme the Government had decided to use the Civil Aviation Bill to seek to amend the Act, to clarify the relationship between the activities of the airport manager and other directed parties at an airport, and policing activities in order to prevent disputes and to provide a more independent method for settling any disputes that may arise in future. The aim of the amendment is to acknowledge that designated airports require both directed parties and police to perform activities, but that in making policing decisions the Chief Constable should be aware of the role of the directed parties and deploy his resources so that they complement those of the directed parties.
18. There is more detail about this proposed provision in the paper on the Civil Aviation Bill elsewhere on the Agenda.

Annex D
Review of Policing at Airports
Statement by Secretary of State – 21 July 2006

The Secretary of State for Transport (Douglas Alexander): In his statement on 21 November, the then Secretary of State for Transport announced the Government's intention to commission an independent, wide-ranging review of policing at airports. He subsequently appointed Stephen Boys Smith, a former senior civil servant, to lead the review.

The review was tasked with identifying a sustainable approach to the policing of airports which takes account of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and, in particular, addresses the need for funding arrangements that are objective and transparent.

The review was about airport policing not airport security, which had already been considered by Sir John Wheeler's review in 2002. Wheeler recognised that the "designation" of airports for policing purposes was an issue and saw the implementation of a Multi-Agency Threat and Risk Assessment (MATRA) process as fundamental in modernising that process. MATRA is in place at over 40 UK airports and the present review has considered whether the process of designation should now be replaced, given the changes implemented following the Wheeler review.

The review report has now been submitted to both my Department and the Home Office. We welcome its broad thrust and will be working closely with key stakeholders to consider the recommendations in detail.

The review has identified areas where we can build on the good work already being done by all stakeholders at our airports. It makes recommendations in a number of areas:

- It endorses the principle of joint accountability for airport security and the concept of airports as "communities" where stakeholders must work together in full partnership to protect against a range of threats.
- It recommends continued and enhanced liaison between key stakeholders, including Government Departments, the Police Service and airport operators at both national and local level to maintain a consistent understanding of and response to threats and risks.
- It endorses the current Multi-Agency Threat and Risk Assessment (MATRA) approach already in place at UK airports and recommends that it is strengthened further.
- It recommends the system of "designation" is discontinued and that policing costs should generally be met by the industry on the basis that policing forms part of an agreed airport "community" response, that costs are clear and transparent, and that policing at airports is brought within the mainstream policing agenda.

Although this review has not focused on aviation security measures it is concerned with a key element in the wider protection of our airports against a range of threats including from terrorism and serious and organised crime. Given these considerations, it is naturally not a report for public circulation. I intend to make a further statement in due course.

AnnexE

MiSense Trial at Heathrow – Text of BAA Press Release

New Biometric trials to make travel simpler and safer ***06 December 2006***

A new trial, called 'miSense', was launched at Heathrow Airport's Terminal 3 today. MiSense uses the latest biometric technologies to simplify a passenger's journey through the airport while further strengthening levels of security.

The project was officially opened by the Minister for Immigration, Liam Byrne MP, and Heathrow CEO, Tony Douglas.

Having enrolled in miSense himself, Liam Byrne MP said: "Biometric ID systems are fundamental to securing our borders in a more mobile age. They are crucial to our plans for counting everyone in and out of the country. This proof of concept shows just how well the technology can work."

The Trial, which will run until the end of January 2007, in conjunction with the airport authorities and immigration services of the U.K, Dubai and Hong Kong, the airlines Emirates and Cathay Pacific, and leading companies engaged in the Immigration and Border Security Industry.

Passengers travelling on selected Cathay Pacific and Emirates flights are being invited to participate in the first part of the miSense trial at check-in by scanning their passport and right index fingerprint into a specially designed miSense self-service kiosk. This information then becomes a passenger's secure 'virtual key' which will allow them swift access to security control and aircraft boarding using their fingerprint.

The second part of the trial, miSenseplus, also uses biometric information, to trial an international registered traveller programme and fast path on departures and arrival immigration in the UK.

Anyone flying out of T3 can enrol in miSenseplus as long as they are a European Economic Area National, hold a passport valid for at least six months, be aged 18 or over and satisfy UK Government background checks. Passengers will have 13 biometrics captures (10 fingerprints, 2 irises and 1 facial image).

Participating in the trial is easy, free of charge and only takes a few minutes to enrol. Once enrolled, participants will receive a miSenseplus membership card which will allow them to enjoy fast track immigration clearance when arriving and departing.

The third part of the trial, miSenseallclear, involves the testing of interactive Advance Passenger Information (iAPI) for the UK authorities. iAPI is the capability of automatically providing border control agencies with intelligence prior to passengers boarding a plane. As each passenger checks-in, this system enables real-time interaction between airline and government systems. iAPI is already well established in countries such as Australia, Bahrain, Kuwait and New Zealand, where it is used to issue the "authority to carry" at the point of check-in. This trial will provide insight into how iAPI could be implemented in the UK.

miSense is part of IATA's Simplifying Passenger Travel Programme, and involves a number of key airport, airline, government and technology partners, including Accenture, BAA, Cathay Pacific, Emirates, the Home Office, IER, Raytheon Systems Limited, Sagem Défense Sécurité and SITA.

Extensive research into passenger acceptability and technical performance will be conducted during the trial and used to inform the future design and operation of both airport and border control facilities and services

**MANCHESTER AIRPORT
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**Michael F Flynn
Secretary**

To All Members of the Consultative Committee

Date 27 April 2007

Our Reference
IDJ

Your Reference

Telephone
01244 602750

Ask for
Ian Jones

Dear Member

Criminal History Checks for Foreign Nationals

You will recall at last Friday's meeting of the Manchester Airport Consultative Committee; Members were concerned to hear that a response to the Committee's letter of 28 November had not been received from the DfT. The Committee asked if I could circulate a model letter to enable Members to write to MP's represented on the Government's Transport Select Committee.

I am pleased to say that I have, at last, received a response from Gillian Merron which is attached together with my original letter for your perusal. The Chairman has agreed that there is no longer a requirement for the model letter.

I am also copying this correspondence to the Secretary of the Liaison Group of UK Airport Consultative Committees for wider circulation.

Yours sincerely



Secretariat to the Consultative Committee

Ian Jones, Manchester Airport Consultative Committee, County Hall, Chester, CH1 1SF (Tel: (01244) 602750; Fax 01244 602270) or email to ian.d.jones@cheshire.gov.uk

cc UK Airport Consultative Committees

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**Michael F Flynn
Secretary**

Gillian Merron
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
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Date 28 November 2006

Our Reference IDJ	Your Reference	Telephone 01244 602750	As for Ian Jones
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Dear Gillian

Criminal History Checks for Foreign Nationals

At a recent meeting of the Manchester Airport Consultative Committee, Members were concerned to hear about the difficulty the Airport Company was experiencing in obtaining correct and complete criminal history checks from abroad for foreign nationals. It was noted that these checks usually came back all clear when this was not always the case, whereas UK applicants were fully screened.

Members were concerned at this disparity between UK and foreign national job applicants and asked me to write and express their concern and what, if anything was the Government going to do to address this issue.

Yours sincerely

Secretariat to the Consultative Committee

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Ian Jones
Manchester Airport Consultative Committee
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25 APR 2007

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your letter of 28 November, reporting concern expressed by members of the Manchester Airport Consultative Committee about difficulties the airport was experiencing in relation to criminal history checks on foreign nationals. I apologise for the delay in responding.

It is important to view any specific security measure - in this case Criminal Record Checks (CRCs) - in the context of the overall security regime at an airport, of which it forms only a part. Security at UK airports takes two main form: physical protective security, and personnel security. Each supports and reinforces the other. The most obvious is of course the physical protective security regime, which is focused in particular on placing a *cordon sanitaire* placed around the the airport's Restricted Zone, and around the aircraft *within it*, in order to prevent the bringing in of prohibited items. Thus everything taken into the Restricted Zone – hold and cabin bags, cargo, catering supplies, retails goods for airside shops, vehicles and aircraft – is required to be screened and/or searched. The same is true of every person entering the Restricted Zone, whether passenger or staff, including control authority staff such as customs and immigration officers. Even if the duties of those working at the airport require them to move in and out of the Restricted Zone many times in a day, they are screened and/or searched each and every time.

An individual's airport pass will moreover allow entry to those parts of the Restricted Zone to which they properly need access in order to discharge their own particular duties.

The personnel security measures at UK airports then reinforce and support those physical protections, adding their own assurance. This "layered" approach is fundamental to the overall security regime: it recognises that no procedure is infallible, and avoids the need to place full reliance on any single measure. Personnel security itself has various components. First, anyone with unescorted access to the Restricted Zone must have had their identity and employment/education references for the past five years verified. Next, the person, regardless of nationality, must also have undergone and passed a Criminal Record Check so that it can be established that he or she has no unspent conviction for an offence on the Department's disqualifying list. Such offences are those that involve violence, dishonesty or abuse of trust. Finally, any person discharging aviation security responsibilities within the Restricted Zone must have undergone a further, higher level of vetting known as a "Counter-Terrorist Check".

The absence within the CRC arrangements of a requirement for a check of overseas criminal records reflects what is practically possible. Attempting such a check would not only require the cooperation of a large number of foreign countries, and inevitable delays, but would also require comparisons to be made between offences and rehabilitation periods in UK law and those of other legal systems around the world. The nature of the different legal systems would make any such system extremely difficult, if not impossible, to operate. These difficulties would be compounded where, as is sometimes the case, a country does not have a recognisable system of maintaining criminal records.

I am sure you would agree that it would be a mistake to allow this practical difficulty over checks on foreign criminal records to prevent such checks being enforced in respect of UK criminal records, with the added assurance this brings. More generally though, I would underline again the importance of seeing the CRC arrangements in the wider context of the full range of security at UK airports. No single measure – whether CRCs or some other – can provide in itself the complete answer, but with each layer underpinning and reinforcing the next, an appropriate level of overall security and confidence can be achieved. The UK National Aviation Security programme is amongst the most demanding in the world, exceeding in some respects the standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the European Union. It is kept under standing review by this Department, and measures are adjusted, quickly, whenever that is necessary.

I hope that the above is helpful.

*Yours sincerely,
Gillian*

GILLIAN MERRON