Mitigating Aviation Threats, Risks and Vulnerabilities

Submitted by: Australia
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Resolution of Suspicious Activity

APEC STAR II Chile, March 2004, the Working Group on Air Transportation Security discussed Threats to Civil Aviation and Security Measures.

It was agreed that:

An effective approach to air transportation security calls for training of personal, in order for them to be able to monitor suspicious activities and report incidents.

Nature of the Threat

• Trans-national terrorism is the primary security threat
• Some APEC countries interests are a target of terrorist activity
• Places of mass gathering are a potential target
• Terrorist groups have demonstrated intent and capability
• There is constant heightened level of threat
• Nature and level of threat means we Must Expect the Unexpected
• There is likely to be no prior warning of attack
• Criminal activity highlights vulnerabilities

The Threat to Aviation Security

• The aviation sector is a target for terrorists because it concentrates people:
  – in large numbers;
  – at high density;
  – in accessible places; and
  – at regular, predictable times
• Forms of attack against the aviation sector have included:
  – Aircraft hijack or theft;
  – Improvised explosive devices;
  – Assaults by commando-style teams;
  – The use of "stand-off" weapons (eg mortars and missiles) to attack aircraft or infrastructure

The Threat to Regional Aviation

• Primary threat is from unlawful activity
  – Deranged or emotionally disturbed persons
  – Air rage
  – Drunkenness
  – Hoax activity
• Regional and general aviation may be attractive to terrorists if it is seen to be a "softer" target
  – Flight schools
  – Hiring or theft of light aircraft or crop dusters
• Identification and Resolution of Suspicious Activity is essential

Criminality and Aviation Security

• Terrorism is a crime – not all crime is terrorism
• Professional organised criminals utilise vulnerabilities in aviation security regimes
• Their actions highlight vulnerabilities that may facilitate a terrorism
• Criminals want to preserve the transport system for their own ends
• Terrorists want to destroy the transport system for their own ends

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Vulnerabilities

- Vulnerabilities potentially amplify terrorist capabilities and therefore increases the chance of a risk eventuating.
- Vulnerabilities must be prioritised to focus and ensure proportional targeting of risk mitigation strategies there by best utilising resources.
- Vulnerabilities should be prioritised through an intelligence-led assessment of likelihood and an understanding of the local security context.

Vulnerabilities in the Aviation Sector

- Aviation operations gather people together in large groups and at regular, predictable times.
- Aviation operations have inherent vulnerabilities.
- Terrorists have demonstrated the intent and capability to exploit vulnerabilities in aviation systems.
- Failing to identify risk and vulnerabilities in aviation operations changes the risk context.
- Good security is both:
  - Effective physical measures
  - Creation of an environment and culture hostile to terrorist activity.

Points to Consider

- Terrorists plan and prepare to exploit security vulnerabilities.
- They are expert in concealing knowledge of their plans.
- They give no warning of an attack.
- They have a demonstrated capacity and intent to attack transport infrastructure.
- They focus on mass casualties and traumatic effects.
- Almost anything is possible – expect the unexpected.
- Their planning is thorough – pre-attack trial runs have been discovered after the fact.
- Intelligence agencies and police uncover some plans but will never be able to uncover all.

What To Do About It

- Security responses must be based on risk management that is informed by threat information and security vulnerabilities.
- There is a need to address the security challenges in a nationally consistent manner to ensure that:
  - The nature of the terrorist threat is recognised.
  - Effective counter measures are developed which are relevant and proportional to the known threat.
  - We develop an awareness and an ability to harness the capacity of the public, staff and officials to counter terrorism.
  - All resources are harnessed to create a security environment that is 'hostile' to terrorists and facilitates the identification and resolution of suspicious behaviour.

Terrorists conduct pre-operational surveillance

Review & Conclusion

- APEC Chile 2004 - It was agreed that: An effective approach to air transportation security calls for training of personal, in order for them to be able to monitor suspicious activities and report incidents.
- What have we done about this agreement?
- Have we included the Business-Government partnership?