



# COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

David Price (D-NC), Chairman, Subcommittee on Homeland Security

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY (Approx. 2:10 PM)  
Thursday, March 4, 2010

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**OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DAVID PRICE**  
***FY 2011 Budget for Transportation Security Administration: Are We Making Smart***  
***Investments for Real Transportation Security***  
***March 4, 2010 / 2:00 pm***

This afternoon we welcome Acting Assistant Secretary Gale Rossides to her second budget hearing on transportation security issues before this Subcommittee. Ms. Rossides, at this point, you have been the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Acting Assistant Secretary for much longer than any of us anticipated. While we all look forward to having some certainty about the long-term leadership at your agency, you have stepped up to the demands of your role, and we appreciate your strong and diligent leadership, which I am confident, has made air travel in our country more secure. Thank you for serving your country with distinction in what is sometimes a thankless job.

Created in the wake of the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the initial focus of the TSA was securing the aviation sector in this country. But soon thereafter, attacks in London, Madrid and Mumbai pointed to other transportation vulnerabilities – especially in transit systems. Based upon the threat environment, this Subcommittee has worked diligently over the years to fill security gaps in all our transportation networks.

Since 2003, we have appropriated over \$8 billion to give TSA screeners better tools to detect weapons and explosives in luggage and on people. We have appropriated over \$400 million for TSA to vet passengers for links to terrorism in order to prevent certain individuals from boarding an aircraft. Plus, Congress has set an August 2010 deadline for screening all cargo on passenger aircraft, appropriating \$468 million to date to accomplish this task.

To address threats outside the aviation environment, Congress has provided \$1.8 billion in grants to help local transit agencies and Amtrak secure rail and transit networks. We worked with the new Administration last year to place additional emphasis on surface transportation security with new special response teams (or VIPRs) and funding to better coordinate security efforts in non-aviation modes, such as pipelines, highways, motor carriers, mass transit, rail, and shipping.

This Subcommittee has also encouraged research and development of technologies to thwart threats that have yet to materialize. Well before the Christmas Day bomb plot, TSA had been working to field a solution to the non-metallic explosives threat by testing and evaluating Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT), which this Subcommittee supported. On December 25<sup>th</sup>, when Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to detonate an explosive device on board a Northwest Airlines flight from Amsterdam to Detroit, our fears about this threat were realized. As a result, TSA ramped up its procurement and deployment plan for the new screening capacity. For that, you should be commended.

However, the failure of Dutch screeners to detect the explosive on Christmas Day was just one piece of the breakdown in our intelligence and aviation security systems that permitted Mr. Abdulmutallab to get as far as he did. After ordering a top-down review of all aviation security procedures, including our terrorist watch-list system, President Obama initiated a number of reforms, including:

- Enhanced screening for passengers flying into the United States from, or flying through, nations on our list of state sponsors of terrorism and other countries of interest;
- The deployment of additional law enforcement at airports, air marshals on flights, and explosives detection canine teams to keep our air traffic safe;
- Ramped-up deployment of passenger screening technologies that can better detect hidden explosives;
- And, importantly, improvements to the terrorist watch list system, including placing more individuals on the “no fly” list.

We will want to discuss your efforts since the announcement of these reforms, and of course, how your 2011 budget builds on these measures to create lasting security solutions for the American people.

The high threat environment we face makes plain the need to close critical gaps in the aviation sector. The 2011 request, which totals \$7.87 billion overall, includes an additional \$946 million above the 2010 level for increased measures to secure the nation's airports and flights on the heels of Christmas Day's botched attack. We will need to closely scrutinize your request today, bearing in mind that the enemy is constantly watching and evolving, and that no single tool is a foolproof solution to the threat.

We will also be watching TSA to ensure the agency *itself* is evolving to thwart potential attackers. One thing we rely on to give us perspective on the agency's strategic vision is your annual expenditure plan for checkpoint systems, checked baggage, and air cargo. This plan is our guidebook, indicating how funds will be allocated within various programs. It is routinely updated to address changes in the threat environment or to revise estimates for technology development. Without knowing what you plan to procure in 2010 for airport checkpoints, we cannot make complete sense of your 2011 budget request for such items as advanced imaging

technologies and portable explosives trace machines. We need to know what you are requesting for 2011 is the best use of resources and not just an impulsive response to the latest incident.

Today I look forward to learning more about this cohesive strategy. As part of this discussion, I expect you to be able to answer not only why a 9 percent increase in aviation security is a smart investment in 2011, but also whether we are devoting the correct amount of resources to domestic versus international activities. After all, aviation security does not start at our borders. We need to work across the globe to make sure that threats are identified at their originating point, not when a terrorist boards an aircraft headed for the United States. So we'll also want to hear about how TSA and the Department are cooperating with foreign authorities to secure air travel worldwide as well as discuss the optimal mix of manpower and screening technology for the 2011 fiscal year.

I want to thank you, again, for your service to our country. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure our transportation security professionals are equipped with the resources they need to keep the American people safe. Please take five minutes to summarize your written statement. However, before we begin, let me recognize our distinguished Ranking Member Mr. Rogers for any comments he may wish to make.

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