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From: Stephen Melis [<mailto:stephen.melis@nec.com.au>]

Sent: Thursday, 4 September 2003 9:39 AM

To: Carter, John Gordon (REPS)

Cc: admin@airsafety.com.au

Subject: Aviation

Hi John,

I know that security is an important issue these days but I am concerned that we can over do security too. As with most things in life, security being one of them, the law of diminishing return needs to be carefully considered.

In the case of RPT aircraft security is important and relative to the size and number of passengers on the aircraft, i.e. making an RPT service of 6 seats pay for expenses meant for a Jet service of 100+ seats is silly. In the case of airport security, of course large international and domestic airports should be secure, but small country and regional airports need only be secure when large RPT are arriving or departing. Where small RPT are arriving at large Jet airports then perhaps they should be quarantined whilst on the airport until the security screening is performed, I strongly suspect that this is not undertaken today. It might even be better to restrict passengers to no cabin baggage, and all luggage must be checked in. Or perhaps the use of facial recognition biometric tools to verify a person matches either their passport or drivers licence from the time of check in to boarding, i.e. when checking in the passenger must present some valid photo ID of which the check in desk person can validate, then a photo of the person is taken for the purposes of ensuring that the same person enters the security area and then boards the aircraft. There are electronic tools available today to be able to perform these functions.

In the case of private or GA aircraft and airports then there should be no restrictions and there is no need for extra, or in some cases any, security other than perhaps for airways clearances when transiting security sensitive areas. Referring to 9/11 (Sept 11), yes a jet can cause problems but GA is not a problem, e.g. Cessna hitting the Telstra tower is likely to knock down a few antennas and perhaps scare a few people, but other than that the Cessna is most likely to fall in a crumpled heap on the street below, however airways clearance is required to get there anyway. With Airways clearances then Flight Service or the Centre frequency need to be diligent and keep track of aircraft and should the aircraft divert from track or become suspect then the appropriate alerts should be raised and perhaps a chopper or two dispatched if there is no communications to the suspect aircraft.

Finally perhaps pilots need a more through security check and Air services should keep and cross check that pilots whose name is on the flight plan are really licensed pilots, I suspect they currently do not do this.

Anyway please consider that over doing security is not a good thing and security should be applied where the most risk is concerned, around Jet airport hubs.

Regards,

Stephen Melis