

MEMO 4020019

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## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Interview of Mary Carol Turano, Manager of the Civil Aviation Security Field Office (CASFO) in Boston, responsible for Boston Logan Airport and Portland Jetport.

Type: Interview (conference call)

Date: March 11, 2004

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: John Raidt

Team: 7

Participants (non-Commission): Mary Carol Turano and Christine Beyer, TSA General Counsel

Participants (Commission): John Raidt, Lisa Sullivan, and Bill Johnstone

Location: Conference call held from GSA conference room.

### Background

[U] Turano started with the FAA in 1988-1989 as a management analyst in FAA headquarters. In that capacity she organized special projects for the Associate Administrator of Civil Aviation Security (including O.K. Steele and Irish Flynn). She noted that among her projects was setting up at Northwestern University bringing together experts and stakeholders to discuss how to improve checkpoint screener performance. In 1993 Turano became manager of FAA's K-9 Explosives Detection Unit at FAA Headquarters. She stated that she was the first full-time manager of the unit and noted that it was a voluntary, rather than a regulatory, program. Turano indicated that prior to the TWA 800 disaster in 1996 the K-9 program had a budget of about \$600,000. After the incident the program's budget was boosted to \$8.9 million. She remained with the K-9 unit until September 1998. In 1998, Turano became the FAA CASFO manager in Boston. She held this position on September 11, 2001. Ten days after 9-11 Turano was reassigned as a special assistant to the Security Division manager at FAA's New England Regional Office (Rich Stevens who replaced Willy Gripper around 9/11). Among the projects she worked on in the aftermath of 9-11 was the federalization of screening at BWI (2002) and writing the screener training manual for TSA (2002). In November of 2002, Turano became Deputy Director of Screener Performance and Training at TSA. In January 2004, Turano took the position she currently occupies-- Director of TSA's Instruction System Design Division (which is under Workforce, Performance and Training).

## **Portland Jetport**

[U] As CASFO manager Turano had regulatory compliance and enforcement jurisdiction over 21-22 airports, including the Portland, Maine Jetport. Turano was quite certain that on 9-11 Portland did not have explosive detection equipment such as CTX machines, nor did they have explosive trace detection at the checkpoints.

[U] Turano was shown pictures of hijackers (Atta and al Omari) going through the security checkpoint at the Portland Jetport on the morning of 9-11. The sequence of pictures showed that no "random and continuous" hand searching or trace detection screening of carry-on bags was taking place at the checkpoint. Turano indicated that the absence of such "random and continuous" screening constituted a violation of FAA security rules/requirements. She agreed with other experts interviewed by the commission that the requirement for "random and continuous" secondary screening of carry-on items, and the requirement for air carrier Ground Security Coordinators to monitor checkpoint operations were among the regulations that air carriers complied with least. She further stated that Ground Security Coordinators had many responsibilities and didn't focus on the requirement to monitor checkpoint operations.

[U] Turano said that screening companies were required to keep staffing records and there should be paperwork to indicate how many screeners were staffing the checkpoint at Portland on 9-11. This paperwork should indicate whether the proper number of individuals were staffing the facility.

[U] Turano said that Portland Jetport didn't stand out as a problem airport. Her view was that people there wanted to do the right thing. She stated that the CASFO's ability to monitor compliance was constrained by staffing limits.

[U] She stated that the hijackers' tickets would indicate whether they were prescreening selectees at the Portland Jetport. She said that the bags of selectees would be marked by a tag or some other identifier.

## **Intelligence**

[U] Turano said that, as a rule, she didn't see threat information. The Federal Security Manager by regulation/law was the individual who received it and would decide whether it should be shared with the CASFO or others. Turano did remember that Pat McDonnell visited her region in 2001 to provide a briefing for civil aviation security stakeholders, regulators and enforcers about the threat to civil aviation security and the presence/activity of terrorists. She also remembered seeing a CD-ROM presentation produced by FAA's Office of Civil Aviation Security Intelligence (ACI) discussing the threat to civil aviation security. She was aware that terrorists were most likely present in surrounding areas and attacks were always possible, but she had no indication of anything specific. She was unaware that the summer of 2001 was a time of escalated threat. She believes that she should have been made aware of the higher threat environment. Her

attitude about ACI was that they needed to tell stakeholders more than what they could see on CNN.

### **Logan and LAMCO**

[U] Turano stated that sometimes she attended the Logan Airport Management Council (LAMCO) meetings at which security was supposed to be discussed once per month. On the occasions she didn't attend the meeting, she would assign someone from the CASFO to participate. She stated, however, that the primary FAA representative at these meetings was the FAA Federal Security Manager (Steve Luongo).

### **Logan Security**

[SS] Turano said that screener performance was a tough problem all over the country, not just at Logan. She said that checkpoints were striving to meet a goal of  effectiveness as measured by FAA checkpoint testing. This goal was directed by FAA headquarters. The special emphasis assessments (SEA's) also set performance goals.

[U] Turano said that Argenbright Security was not good at all. The company had management problems and high turnover. For instance they never understood the proper procedure for hand wand screening. They didn't retrain or remediate screeners who failed. They would simply fire them. This practice of firing rather than training, along with low pay, contributed to the high turnover rate, which meant that many screeners had little experience. Turano said that the Ground Security Coordinator and the Checkpoint Screening Supervisor were pulled in many directions and didn't have adequate time to do all they were supposed to do. She stated that Huntleigh and Globe security companies had the same problems.

### **Air Carriers at Logan**

[U] Turano said that both American and United Airlines had good station managers at Logan who tried to do the right thing on security. She noted that the system created its own problems by regulating it out (the security function) to the air carriers, only to have the air carriers contract it out. She does not believe the test results show that screening checkpoints showed more serious problems at Logan than other airports. Logan had the same problems as other airports. Its biggest problem, however, was access control.

### **FAA Testing**

[U] Turano acknowledged that FAA testing had certain problems because screeners were good at recognizing FAA testers. She tried to encourage FAA's agents to use disguises and vary the times they conducted testing to make the tests more authentic but it was tough. She indicated that FAA had the authority to compel the airlines to share the records they kept of the self-audits they conducted on their own checkpoints.

[U] Turano said that she did receive a summary of Red Team testing results. She didn't know when or where the Red Teams would be testing, but their tests were definitely focused on explosives detection.

[U] Turano remembers that the FAA did propose a joint testing initiative with Logan prior to 9/11 but the program was targeted on access control issues, not checkpoint screening. The FAA wanted to add language to the joint testing agreement assuring that punitive measures would be taken for violations discovered by the testing. As a result, the airport decided not to move forward with the program.

### **Massport**

[U] Turano stated her belief that Massport tried to do its best in security. She did not recall being involved in the development or implementation of Massport's Customer Service Initiative in 2001, and noted that the FSM would be the individual responsible for working with the airport on the security implications of any such programs.

### **FSM and the CASFO**

[U] Turano stated that it took a while for the FAA Federal Security Manager (FSM) at Logan, Steve Luongo, to trust her. He was guarded at first but their relationship improved. Turano shared the CASFO's testing results with Luongo, and eventually he came to trust her. They worked together on a joint training initiative with the air carrier station managers to try to improve screener performance.

### **Boston CASFO**

[U] Turano said that the CASFO at Boston did have morale problems and internal discord which she found when she arrived. There were lots of personality conflicts and dissension. Some of the agents felt like the FSM did not take security seriously. There was also a dislike for Willy Gripper (the Security Division Manager in the Regional Office who had jurisdiction over the CASFO) and his management. Some felt like he didn't listen to their issues and concerns. Some of the senior agents "hated each other's guts." Also there was an issue involving sexual harassment by a supervisor. Turano also said that she encountered outright insubordination such as one agent who refused to attend training in Oklahoma City.

[U] Turano believes that the majority of agents were dedicated to doing their job properly, even those who weren't happy. She also believes that during her tenure morale started to improve.

[U] One of the most significant management problems was that there were disparate opinions about when and how to cite air carriers and airports for violations. She tried to get everyone on the same page.

[U] She recalled that in 2000 Willy Gripper had decided that all the airport assessment testing should be done in the first quarter of the year. He never explained to her or the CASFO agents why he issued this requirement or how it would benefit security. Turano said that her agents were unable to tell her how long an assessment would take. In turn, she told Gripper that while she would give 100% in trying to comply with his order, without knowing the time required by the agents to do the job, she couldn't guarantee they could accomplish it within the designated timeframe. She stated that the CASFO agents were angry at Gripper's demanding and seemingly capricious requirement, particularly because it was the quarter leading up to the holidays. Turano asked Gripper to come to the CASFO to explain the purpose of the order, but he refused saying that was Turano's job. In the end, the CASFO was able to complete the job on time but at a great price. She remembered a meeting that Gripper attended when she publicly thanked the CASFO employees for their accomplishment but he did not seem to appreciate or join in the gesture. She said these things hurt morale.

[U] Turano also stated that there was almost 80% turnover (15 of her 19 employees left) in her office. When she arrived there was no real case management system, and during her tenure the CASFO opened 781 cases (violations). She acknowledged that the CASFO did have problems closing out cases, but many of these problems were systemic and some she inherited when she took over, such as the absence of a case management system. She said that the Boston CASFO was never singled out as problem by headquarters because of any problems with its open caseload.

[U] Turano was asked whether the absence of case closure hurt security. She indicated that even if the case were closed and a fine imposed, the amount of the levy was considered "chump change" by the air carriers. The backlog of cases certainly didn't help security, but there was no indication that it had any adverse impact.

### **9-11 – The Day**

[U] Turano remembers that it was a beautiful day in Boston. She had gone to the GSA building in Boston for a meeting with her two supervisors to review the current fiscal year and look at their needs for the upcoming year. The meeting was due to start at either 8:00 am or 8:30 am. At some point before the meeting started her cell phone rang. It was Jasmine from her office who said that Dick Batts (Air Security Manager at the Regional Office) called to say that a plane from Logan had been hijacked. Turano told Jasmine to assemble all the agents in the conference room at the CASFO. Turano immediately called into the FAA tactical net to hear what was going on. While on that call she received the report that an aircraft had struck the WTC. Her two supervisors were well trained and had participated in writing the emergency response manual used by the CASFO. At some point Jasmine called Turano again to say that Dick Batts wanted Turano to come back to the office.

[U] Turano said that she believes the regional office (Dick Batts) was probably notified of the hijacking by Air Traffic Control. Turano made her way back to the CASFO and immediately went to work. She said that the environment was wild and hectic. Her

agents swung into action obtaining records from the airlines and conducting interviews with checkpoint personnel. Two of the agents served as liaisons to the FBI getting things such as manifests etc. The Principal Security Inspectors (such as Janet Riffe) were calling for information as well. She does not recall many details, but what information she did get usually came from the tactical net which FAA Air Traffic Control was on. In addition there were a lot of sidebar telephone calls among the CASFO, the regional office and FAA Headquarters. She believes that the tactical net was recorded by FAA Headquarters but she can't be sure. She stayed plugged into the net for 2-3 days. FAA headquarters had requested a lot of records and data which was shipped off as soon as possible.

[U] Given that this information was sent to headquarters, she does not believe her office produced a summary of the 9/11 events. However, she does not recall the CASFO investigation uncovering anything out of the ordinary in its information-gathering.

[U] Turano doesn't remember hearing any information about weapons and tactics on 9-11. She didn't even see the footage of the WTC crash until three days later when she went to a nearby hotel to get some rest.

[U] Turano is not aware of any shredding of documents at the CASFO or anywhere else in the aftermath of the attacks.

## **TSA**

[U] Turano said that TSA has brought much needed changes to the hiring, testing and training of screeners. She also indicated that a report was produced by TSA indicating that screener performance has increased since federalization. She believes federalization improves accountability, training, documentation and recertification. Turano said that under the old FAA system there was no screener recertification process.

## **Recommendations**

[U] Turano recommends that the federal government do its best in getting threat information and other anti-terrorism information to local law enforcement authorities where it's needed in the field.

[U] She also recommends that the federal government make the necessary research and development funding commitment to improve detection technologies.

[U] Finally, she recommends that TSA and other agencies assure that employees receive the moral support and counseling they need in the aftermath of such disasters. No one at FAA ever came to talk with the CASFO personnel after 9-11. They were left alone with guilt feelings and despair. We should better manage the human consequences of terrorist incidents including to federal employees.