# Airport Security and the Limits of Mobility : the Case of the United States

Autor(en): **Ortlepp, Anke**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Traverse : Zeitschrift für Geschichte = Revue d'histoire**

Band (Jahr): **16 (2009)**

Heft 1

PDF erstellt am: **15.08.2024**

Persistenter Link: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-99800

# Airport Security and the Limits of Mobility

## The Case of the United States

**Anke Ortlepp**

Today's air travelers associate airport security with the events of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath. Security requirements have changed frequently since then and were often implemented in reaction to the activities of people like Richard Reid, the so called "shoe-bomber", who brought plastic explosives onboard American Airlines flight 63 from Paris to Miami in an alleged attempt to blow up the aircraft.[1] American airports reacted by requiring passengers to take off their shoes while going through security; airlines banned liquids and gels from carry-on luggage. These and others requirements added measures of inconvenience to the pre-flight experience of many travelers. Tightening security rules made it necessary to add extra time before departure, it limited the number and choice of carry-on items that could be brought into the cabin, and it solidified the divide between travelers and non-travelers who go to airports for drop-off, pick-up, plane spotting or any other kind of activity. These days, both are strictly kept apart in areas that lie beyond the security checkpoints.

As current an issue as it may be, the concern over airport security is several decades old. American airport and aviation authorities first addressed the question of who should be granted access to airports and airplanes in the late 1960s and early 1970s when skyjackings became a frequent phenomenon and by the summer of 1972 an almost weekly occurrence. As a consequence an intensive program of pre-flight screening that included the use of metal detectors was introduced in 1973 upon which the number of hijacking incidents was greatly reduced. Previously, air travelers had enjoyed free access to airport facilities. Bags were often weighted but not searched, passengers brought weapons, flammable substances and other odd items into the cabin, and family members often waved travelers good-bye at the gate just before they disappeared into the plane.

Looking at the US example, this paper investigates airport security and the ways in which it has impacted the mobility of travelers. It will do so on two different levels: First, it will look at the development of airport security programs and their impact on travel behavior and the accessibility of the United States. It will argue that while security programs do make a difference as far as the security

situation – real or perceived – is concerned, they negatively affect patterns of mobility and contribute to the de-individualization of the travel experience. It will then go on to reflect on the changing spatial configurations of airports in the postwar period. Over the course of the past five decades, airport planners increasingly had to take security interests into consideration in their designs and their allotment of space to the different airport functions. Therefore, the ways in which travelers have been led from the curb to the cabin and vice versa have changed thoroughly. This paper argues that this has happened mainly in an attempt to control and curtail the air travelers' mobility inside airports which have become highly confined and monitored spaces. At the same time the control of mobility has been accompanied by efforts to stimulate consumer desire. Upon entering the sterile concourses that lie beyond the security checkpoints, travelers for years have found themselves amid shops and restaurants which aim at anticipating the needs that long waits at the gate may trigger.

## Screenings and Searches: The Development of Airport Security Programs

While the protection of airfields and airports had been part of the effort to secure the home front during World War II, airport security only became an issue in commercial aviation in the postwar period. Until then passengers moved around freely inside airports which in most places were relatively small structures.[2] They also had more or less uncontrolled access to airport facilities like hangars and tarmacs. Passengers who wanted to board a plane checked-in, had themselves and their bags weighed after which they could proceed to their aircraft. Travelers and non-travelers mixed freely in the airports' departure and arrival lounges as well as the observation desks as many airports became destinations for local tourism soon after their construction.[3]

The historical record of violent acts against airlines or acts of air piracy is very slim for the period ending with World War II. The first major incident that received national attention did not occur until July 1947 when three Romanian nationals attempted to gain control of an airplane killing an aircrew member before they were arrested. Between that year and 1958, 23 additional hijackings occurred, mostly committed by eastern Europeans seeking political asylum in the United States.[4] The first major act of sabotage that targeted an American airline took place on November 1, 1955 when a United Airlines flight exploded on its way from Denver to Seattle leaving 39 passengers and four crew members dead. The bomb had been planted by a certain John Graham who hoped to collect on insurance policies of his mother who was on the flight. In January 1960, a suicide bomber

killed all aboard a National Airlines plane.[5] These incidents led to demands for an increase in airport security, particularly the use of baggage-inspection devices. By that time the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) had been founded. Established by an act of Congress, the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, the FAA served as the follow-up agency to a number of predecessors.[6] Like its immediate precursor, the Civil Aeronautics Administration, the FAA was created to take on aviation hazards. Besides acts of sabotage, these consisted mainly in airplane crashes and midair collision caused by an enormous expansion of commercial and military air transportation in the postwar period which most airports and air traffic control systems were unable to handle.[7] To alleviate these problems the FAA was responsible for "the promotion and development of air safety, including air safety regulations, and for the regulation of all airspace for both civilian and military use", with the later provision essentially preparing the ground for the establishment of a new air control system.[8] Soon it also took on the issue of aviation and airport security.[9]

It was mainly the rapidly increasing number of hijackings that led to the FAA's involvement with aviation security in the 1960s. With only a few incidents in the early part of the decade, the situation seemed to be getting out of hand in its closing years with 22 hijackings in 1968 alone. Most of those hijackings, a total of 19, involved Cuban exiles anxious about the political impasse between the United States and the Castro government. In 1969, the number of US passengers whose planes were diverted to Cuba rose to 1359.[10] In 1970 the total number of planes that were hijacked to Cuba and elsewhere reached 43.[11] Contemporaries voiced concerns over what they perceived as a growing threat. Air travel which not too long ago had been considered glamorous and fun had become a nightmare. Even if the actual chance of experiencing an act of air piracy remained rather slim for the individual passenger given the total numbers of air travelers, the public demanded to know: "What can be done to prevent hijacks?"[12] The FAA, airlines, airports, political commentators, and passengers' rights advocates became involved in the discussion about appropriate security measures.

The first measure of a tripartite anti-hijacking plan to go into effect in the fall of 1970 was the "sky marshal program". This federal program had originally been created in 1958 but was so understaffed that it was abandoned after a few years due to its apparent ineffectiveness.[13] Now, however, the Nixon administration reactivated it as a deterrent that promised to bring quick results. In his accompanying remarks President Richard Nixon struck a hopeful note when he said: "Most countries, including the United States, found effective means of dealing with piracy on the high seas a century and a half ago. We can – and we will – deal effectively with piracy in the skies today."[14] Air marshals, armed guards in civilian clothes, were to serve on international flights leaving from one of the

country's 22 international airports. Captains and crew members would be notified of their presence, which would remain unbeknownst to their passengers.[15] The other parts of the plan called for the installation of improved metal-detector devices at all major airports – existing models reacted to corset stays but often failed to detect weapons if they were used at all – and the increase of airport security forces.[16]

The FAA built on these measures by expanding preflight inspection programs in the spring of 1971. Inspections applied screening procedures which for the first time involved behavior profiles. While the exact details of the passenger profiling remained secret the *New York Times* explained to its readers how it worked: "When a suspicious individual is sighted, he is taken aside for questioning and his baggage may be searched." The paper quoted government officials when pointing out that profiling was not "predicated on such characteristics as race, dress or physical appearance". Its main purpose was to function as a psychological deterrent which, as the article went on to point out, seemed to work as one airline reported the sudden disappearance of a number of ticketed passengers upon facing personal interviews. The paper also reported that the combination of security measures brought about a significant decrease in hijackings. Whereas 43 planes were abducted in the first eight months of 1970, the number fell to twelve in the period from September 1970 to April 1971.[17]

Yet, with hijackings on the rise again in 1972, aviation officials deemed security requirements insufficient. Too many passengers still boarded flights without going through security. Secor D. Browne, the chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board,[18] complained that the existing "system was handicapped by the issue of 'who's in charge'"?[19] Airports, airlines and the federal government each had taken on responsibilities but their efforts lacked coordination. Browne called on all parties involved to recognize that "major airports have to be viewed as the nation's frontier and should be protected as such".[20] The airlines – which had been prone to a certain laxness in enforcing security standards as they feared that thorough passenger screenings would lead to delays – were the first to react to this call to action. Alerted by marketing surveys which indicated that hijackings had a measurably negative effect on their business, airlines such as American Airlines and TWA announced in late August of 1972 that they would start searching and screening their passengers' hand luggage.[21] They had no interest in seeing a postwar trend reversed that had led to the increased mobility of a rising number of Americans who now routinely chose the airplane as their preferred means of transportation for long distance travel.[22] Delays could be dealt with by streamlining security procedures but airlines did not want to lose customers. In their effort they were encouraged by the FAA and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) whose findings confirmed that one third of all hijackers hid their explosives and

weapons in carry-on bags. Moreover these findings showed that those planning violent acts also tried to place packages containing such items with unsuspecting passengers willing to carry them.[23]

The shooting of an Eastern Airlines gate agent at Houston International Airport in October 1972 led to a White House emergency order which required that starting in January 1973 all passengers had to be searched, all carry-on bags screened and local law enforcement personnel stationed at the boarding gates of all departing flights.[24] The order which was to be carried out under the direction of the FAA met with mixed reactions from airlines, airports, professional organizations and Congress. While most approved of searches and screenings, Senator Howard W. Cannon, a Democrat from Nevada and chairman of the Aviation subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee, voiced concerns similar to those of the Association of Airport Operators when he assailed the latter provision remarking: "This [the supply of law enforcement officers] ought to be the responsibility of the Federal Government. The United States doesn't require local governments to enforce Federal laws regarding bank robbery, kidnapping, or the smuggling of drugs into the country."[25] It would take another three decades for a federal airport police force to be established. In the meantime, the executive orders' provisions set the framework for what would become standard procedure at each of the country's commercial airports.[26] Additional regulations calling for the screening of checked bags and the matching of luggage identification tags with passenger names were introduced much later.

The traveling publics' reactions to increased levels of airport security were positive at first. Passengers and newspaper commentators applauded the efforts which led to a significant decrease in hijackings and other acts of sabotage. A few, however, grew weary after only a few years. Writing in early 1975 to syndicated columnist Ann Landers, a woman using the pseudonym "Irked Lady" remarked: "I am a frequent traveler who is becoming increasingly irritated by the hand luggage inspection in airports. I missed two planes because I had to stand in line while strangers poked around in my purse, examined my shopping bag and even unwrapped gift packages. Not only is it annoying but I'm sure if a smart lawyer looked into it he (or she) would discover it violates some constitutional law that has to do with invasion of privacy."[27] Airport searches did not violate rights of privacy as guaranteed in the Bill of Rights' Fourth Amendment.[28] But the woman's remarks are interesting because they express concern about a number of issues. She laments an infringement of personal space and her ability to move about freely. It is not only her mobility inside the terminal that is restricted – no one who tested positive in a screening made it past the security checkpoint – but also her ability to reach destinations as she had planned. Security measures, she argued,

prevented her from getting to where she wanted to go; airports had changed from dynamic places into places of stagnation and long lines where travelers were no longer treated as individuals but as a de-individualized mass of potential criminals. Ann Landers ignored most of these issues when she wrote quite matter-of-factly in her reply: "Dear Irk: Sorry about the inconvenience, but here are the facts: Since the airport security checks began [...] not one successful hijacking has been pulled off in the United States [...]. I'd say the security checks have proven to be well worth the inconvenience. So cool it, Toots, and give yourself an additional 30 minutes to get to the airport so you don't miss another plane."[29]

Relatively unaffected by the worldwide surge in hijackings that plagued countries like Germany in the late 1970s, the United States still joined international efforts to combat air piracy. It supported a United Nations call on countries harboring hijackers to prosecute them and attempts to enforce stricter airport security abroad.[30] At foreign airports that did not subscribe to U. S. security standards, American airlines, like their German competitor Lufthansa, began to perform their own security screenings.[31] Domestically, airports did face new security challenges: acts of sabotage like bombings that were carried out inside terminal buildings. On April 23, 1977, for instance, a custodian was killed at National Airport in Washington, DC, when a bomb exploded in an employees' locker room.[32] Many airports added bomb squads, some including dogs, to their security teams and eliminated storage facilities from terminal interiors.[33]

Increasingly, airports also seized the idea to create "sterile" areas which reconfigured the spaces accessible to ticketed travelers and airport visitors. As one commentator explained: "Most major American airports also have adopted the now familiar 'sterile concourse' system, in which security checkpoints at a handful of locations and terminal areas beyond these checkpoints are made off limits to everybody who has not been screened for weapons."[34] This, of course, further decreased the mobility of air travelers and their company. Whereas before it had been possible for everyone – ticketed passengers or not – to pass through security and proceed to the gate, now access to the gate areas was restricted. Travelers had to see friends and family off before entering the security lines. Equally, those who came to the airports to pick someone up were now confined to the arrival area.

Discussions about airport security in the 1980s brought back many of the issues that had defined the early 1970s. Reading newspaper coverage, FAA and General Accounting Office (GOA) reports, and other related publications it is perplexing to see how little the debate changed and how each cycle of security disturbances was followed by a rush of measures by either the federal government or local airports and the airlines that served them with little attention to the structural problems of the system. After some years with fewer incidents, hijackings in

the mid-1980s were on the rise again. Now, acts of air piracy mostly affected American airlines serving Middle Eastern and European countries. On June 14, 1985, for instance, TWA flight 847 which originated in Cairo, Egypt, was hijacked on its way from Athens, Greece, to Rome, Italy. Killing one passenger and taking the plane on an odyssey between Algiers and Beirut, the hijackers, members of an islamist group, released their last hostages two weeks later after their demands had been met.[35] In reaction to this and other incidents federal authorities expanded the existing catalog of security checks. They mandated that airlines match all passengers and bags and abolished curbside check-in for international flights.[36] With increasing frequency the FAA called on airports, airlines and their security contractors to improve the quality of their screenings.[37] Airports also reacted. In 1986, as the first airport in the country Newark International Airport began using a "watch list", against which the names of all departing passengers had to be checked.[38] Airlines now recommended that travelers arrive at the airport at least 90 minutes prior to departure time.[39] Starting in 1989 they also required that travelers answer questions regarding the contents of their bags.[40] Many passengers expressed their willingness to go through expanded security procedures as long as they served a real purpose. Americans did, however, travel less especially internationally. TWA and Pan Am which served the most overseas routes were the hardest hit by this decrease in international travel.[41] Pan Am, which would go out of business in 1991, never quite recovered from the shockwaves that the bombing of its flight 103 from London to New York sent through the traveling public. The plane went down over Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988 killing all of its 270 passengers.[42] Still, only a few months later the FAA announced that thanks to a tightened security system, air travel was getting safer again.[43]

By the mid-1990s the airport security system that the FAA was enforcing consisted of six components: Screening of passengers and carry-on luggage for weapons and explosives; screening of checked baggage and cargo for explosives; controlling access to secure air operations areas; clearing and badging of personnel with access to airport areas and aircraft; inspections and oversight by the FAA; and a small contingent of air marshals. Analysts of the causes of 9/11 have pointed out that the single features of this system were well designed.[44] At the same time, they suggest, that it suffered from performance and structural flaws. Not all airports were equally strict about implementing all of the required security measures. Many small regional airports displayed a certain laxness in checks and screenings. So did big international airports like Boston's Logan International Airport and Washington Dulles International Airport where some of those involved in the 9/11 atrocities boarded their planes. Tests that the General Accounting Office ran in 2000 showed that access to tarmacs and aircraft was relatively easy for

unauthorized personnel. They also documented that screeners of passengers and carry-on luggage missed more than 25 percent of the items that had been declared potentially dangerous.[45] Structural problems continued to persist as well, most importantly the lack of coordination between airlines, airports and the FAA that had plagued security efforts all along. Ineffective management, underfunding, and a lack of oversight by the FAA are the other factors that contributed to the system's problems.[46]

The struggles over resources and responsibilities for airport and aviation security came to an end with the events of 9/11. In an immediate reaction to the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon (Department of Defense) in Washington, D. C., the FAA in an unprecedented move shut down all air traffic nationwide. Domestic traffic was suspended for three days; for four days, international flights were barred from entering the country. As expected these measures brought the movement of people and goods to a complete stop.[47] Within two months Congress reacted by passing new transportation security legislation: the Aviation and Transportation Act of 2001 which went into effect on November 19, 2001. The law federalized the security of the civil aviation system with the establishment of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) as a new federal agency. The TSA "assumed all the security functions of the FAA, the airlines, and the airports".[48] Since its establishment the TSA has hired and trained its own work force, ending the practice of delegating the responsibility for security checks to airline sub-contractors. The TSA now screens all passengers, their carry-on luggage and checked baggage. It operates the air marshal program which was restructured after it had been almost abandoned in the 1980s. The TSA is also in charge of federal law enforcement at US airports.[49]

Apparently, as Paul Seidenstat points out, "the tighter security regime has reduced the level of fear among travelers. In a survey taken by the online booking site, *Travelocity,* 78% of the respondents were 'somewhat' or 'not at all' concerned. Eighty percent agree that airport security has improved and that most security measures are 'reasonable'."[50] At the same time, tighter security has led to even earlier pre-departure airport arrival times. Travelers are now requested to check-in 2½ to 3 hours prior to departure. The new security regime has also further cemented the divide between travelers and non-travelers. Sterile concourse systems are now strictly enforced at all American airport making it impossible for the two groups to mingle beyond the security checkpoints.

Security measures, however, have not only affected departing passengers but also those who arrived in the United States from abroad. In May 1986 Newark International Airport was the first airport in the country to put a computerized immigration watch list into regular service. "The list", the *New York Times* reported,

"is called the National Automated Immigration Lookout System, or NAILS. It replaces the cumbersome volumes of names that immigration agents elsewhere still leaf through to check each arriving passenger."[51] After 9/11 the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) which maintained the list and handled immigration procedures at US airports became part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).[52] Requirements for international passengers who entered the United States have varied according to the country where they were or are from, of course. They also have become uniformly strict with the introduction of the US-VISIT Program which requires all travelers to be photographed and fingerprinted.[53] Scholars and civil rights advocates are still in the process of studying and debating how the new immigration requirements affect patterns of mobility.

## Air Curtains and Sterile Corridors: The Spaces of Air Travel

Postwar passengers moved about freely in modern new terminal buildings like the TWA and Pan Am Terminals at John F. Kennedy International Airport. The TWA Terminal was designed by Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen and built between 1958 and 1961 at what was then still called Idlewild Airfield. After its completion, the building was celebrated as an architectural masterpiece that gave built expression to a new postwar spirit of mobility. Its cool, free-flowing concrete structure was a big step away from Beaux Arts architecture which had dominated airport design during the 1930s and 1940s. At the same time it provided a stylish, space age alternative to the internationalist language of form which had inspired the International Arrivals Building or the American Airlines Terminal. The TWA Terminal ideally translated the idea of flying into architecture for its main concourse seemed to imitate the body shape of a landing eagle, the American national symbol. It welcomed the busy traveler at the curb side to take him or her under its wings and helped him or her make the transition from ground transportation to airplane.[54]

As a "liminal space" or – to use Mark Gottdiener's term – "transition space" the terminal also served as a platform where the traveler's everyday movements and state of mind connected to his or her air travel experience which in the 1950s and 1960s still had the flavor of exceptionality and exclusivity.[55] The architects of the Pan Am Terminal at JFK Airport, which began serving passengers in 1963, envisioned a flowing transition from everyday life to air travel. Travelers did not enter the building through doors but instead had to pass through an "air curtain". The idea was to remove "congestion caused by funneling passengers through several doors and confusion as to which doors are 'in' and which are 'out'".[56]

Security concerns went without much discussion as the United States had only recently experienced its first acts of sabotage.

Both terminals provided the stage for the different kinds of activities that were associated with departure and arrival: the main level housed ticketing and check-in counters from where departing passengers could proceed to the main lobby. Arriving passengers could pick up their luggage in the baggage claim area. The second floor or Gallery Level provided a more leisurely atmosphere. Here the traveler could wine and dine or chose between different lounge areas. The TWA terminal offered three lounges: the International Lounge, the Ambassadors Club or the VIP Lounge. They provided room for conversation, drinks, or waiting while their names suggested the exclusive character of these activities. To get to their planes, travelers needed to pass through a concrete tunnel which connected them to their departure gates. Travelers and non-travelers could mingle in the restaurant, lounge and gate areas which were freely accessible to the public. This spatial arrangement was altered with the introduction of security equipment in the first half of the 1970s. Makeshift arrangements interfered with the buildings architecture and held up the flow of passengers from the check-in counters to the gates. Many other terminals lend themselves much better to the integration of new security equipment that the FAA required than the TWA terminal.

The trend to conceive of airport terminals as multifunctional spaces has continued since the 1950s. It has expressed itself in the construction of new airports such as the Denver-Fort Worth Airport which opened its doors in 1995 or the renovation if not reinvention of the United Airlines concourses at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago which the German American architect Helmut Jahn designed.[57] Travel is only one of the many activities that people who come to airports these days engage in. Airports function as gateways to national and international destinations but they are also shopping malls, places to eat, convention centers, hotels, and – if we are to believe Steven Spielberg's movie *The Terminal* – places where people live.[58] Increasing numbers of people seem to go to airports without even planning to travel anywhere. Instead they spent their time much like they would in a shopping mall or amusement park. The airport in Austin, Texas, even offers airport weddings.[59]

Those who do travel often find it difficult to navigate terminals and to keep their bearings from the security checkpoints to the departure gate. Extensions and additions to existing structures have left many buildings less than clearly laid-out. Restaurants, coffee shops, and stores add to the sense of disorientation as does the uniformity of design that characterizes many terminal interiors. Trapped in sterile corridors, that channel flows of passengers often in one direction only, passengers can no longer see and visually connect to their aircraft once they have navigated their way through security. Whereas the design of the Pan Am Terminal

had evolved around the idea that the plane had to be brought to the passenger, not the passenger to the plane, today's travelers often see the plane that is about to take them someplace at the very last minute upon arrival at the gate. Airports give built expression to transition and movement from one place to another and from one experience to another. They cannot or no longer, however, be considered as places where people feel a sense of belonging as Marc Augé has argued. Instead we have to understand them as the quintessential non-places of our time "in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense; spaces in which solitude is experienced as an overburdening or emptying of individuality, in which only the movement of the fleeting images enables the observer to hypothesize the existence of a past and glimpse the possibility of a future".[60]

## Conclusion

The security of US airports and the safety of air travelers have been issues of national importance for most of the postwar period. Often in reaction to acts of sabotage, experts, government agencies and the public debated on how to discourage attacks on airports and airplanes and how to protect crews and passengers best – just like they did after 9/11. The attacks of 9/11, of course, had a new quality: office buildings were targeted and an unprecedented number of people died. But the debate that followed and that still continues focused on the adequacy of existing security measures, the role of airports, airlines and the federal government in providing security as well as the degree to which passengers could be searched and information about them collected. All along, airport security programs impacted the mobility of air travelers. Passengers had to adjust to security measures that grew from spontaneous searches to thorough screenings of them and their luggage. The implementation of these programs has affected air travelers' schedules, the contents of their bags, and their freedom of movement in airport terminals. Over the past decades, these buildings have become some of the most highly confined spaces in which a passenger's every move is monitored. At the same time airports have become mini-malls, those quintessentially postmodern places of consumption, where air travelers are led from the security checkpoints to their departing gates along a carefully crafted course of restaurants and shops. Security programs, most experts agree, have made a difference as far as the security situation – real or perceived – is concerned. Hijackings and violent incidents happen less frequently in the post-9/11 period, than they did in the 1960s and 1970s. It remains to be seen, however, how increased security and limited mobility will shape the experience of air travelers in the future.

*Notes*

1 *The Miami Herald,* 24. December 2001, 1A.
2 See Janet R. Daly Bednarek, *America's Airports: Airfield Development, 1918–1947*, College Station 2001.
3 Alastair Gordon, *Naked Airport: A Cultural History of the World's Most Revolutionary Structure,* New York 2004.
4 See http://www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Government_Role/security/POL18.htm.
5 *New York Times,* 2. November 1955, 1; *The Washington Post and Times Herald,* 4. November 1955, 3; *New York Times,* 18. 1. 1960, 18.
6 With the creation of the Department of Transportation (DOT) in 1966 the FAA became one of several organizations within DOT. It was also renamed to become the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
7 See Roger E. Bilstein, *Flight in America: From the Wrights Brothers to the Astronauts,* 3rd. ed., Baltimore 2001; Tom D. Crouch, *Wings: A History of Aviation from Kites to the Space Age,* New York 2003.
8 John W. Gelder, "Air Law: The Federal Aviation Act of 1958", *Michigan Law Review* 57/8 (1959), 1214–1227, 1215; Stuart I. Rochester, *Takeoff at Mid-Century: Federal Civil Aviation Policy in the Eisenhower Years, 1953–1961*. Department of Transportation/Federal Aviation Administration, 1976.
9 See http://www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Government_Role/FAA_History/POL8.htm.
10 Kathleen M. Sweet, *Terrorism and Airport Security,* Lewiston 2002, 62.
11 *New York Times,* 13. September 1970, E1.
12 *New York Times* (cf. note 11).
13 Sweet (cf. note 10), 70–72.
14 *New York Times* (cf. note 11).
15 *New York Times* (cf. note 11).
16 Sweet (cf. note 10), 70–72.
17 *New York Times,* 9. April 1971, 62.
18 The Civil Aeronautics Board, part of the Department of Commerce, regulated the economic affairs of the airlines including their fares and routes until 1984.
19 *New York Times,* 11. April 1972.
20 *New York Times* (cf. note 19).
21 *New York Times,* 30. August 1972, 1.
22 Robert Horonjeff and Francis X. McKelvey, *Planning and Design of Airports,* 4th edition, New York 1994, 4.
23 *New York Times* (cf. note 21), 1.
24 *The Washington Post, Times Herald,* 30. October 1972, A1; *New York Times,* 6. December 1972, 93.
25 *New York Times,* 6. December 1972, 93.
26 Additional regulations required airports to install appropriate fencing and bright lighting devices for ramp and other sensitive areas and to provide their employees with identifications cards.
27 *The Washington Post,* 13. February 1975, B8. For a similar call to relax security measures see Clayton Fritchey's commentary "Skyjacking and Airport Security" in the *Washington Post*'s op-ed page on 5. September 1975, A 27.
28 See "Airport Security Searches and the Fourth Amendment", *Columbia Law Review* 71/6 (1971), 1039–1058; "The Constitutionality of Airport Searches", *Michigan Law Review* 72/1 (1973), 128–157.
29 *The Washington Post* (cf. note 27).
30 *Los Angeles Times,* 4. November 1977, B1.
31 *New York Times,* 1. November 1977, 34; *New York Times,* 4. November 1977, 3.

32 *The Washington Post,* 24. April 1977, 1. For other bombing incidents see for instance "Bomb Components Found at LaGuardia", *The Washington Post,* 4. January 1976, 26; "Soldier's Remark Bombs", *The Washington Post,* 7. January 1976, D8.
33 *New York Times,* 21. November 1977, 11.
34 *New York Times,* 4. January 1976, E 1.
35 *The Washington Post,* 15. June 1985, A10.
36 *The Washington Post,* 26. June 1985, A18.
37 Union representatives, like William F. Genoese, the director of the Airline Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, as well as security experts reminded the public, however, that the poor performance of security personnel which studies brought to light had to be seen in connection with their unattractive working conditions. Employees of security contractors were mostly paid minimum wage salaries, were poorly trained and often had to work long hours. *New York Times,* 28. Juli 1985, E20; *The Washington Post,* 14. January 1986, A1.
38 *New York Times,* 2. May 1986, A1.
39 *New York Times,* 6. July 1986, 1.
40 *New York Times,* 10. April 1989, A1.
41 *New York Times* (cf. note 39), 1.
42 The Lockerbie disaster, its causes and consequences are discussed in Robert Gandt, *Skygods: The Fall of Pan Am,* McLean 1999.
43 *New York Times,* 5. February 1989, E2.
44 Paul Seidenstat, "Terrorism, Airport Security, and the Private Sector", *Review of Policy Research* 21 (2004) 3: 275–291, 276.
45 United States General Accounting Office, *Aviation Security: Terrorist Acts Illustrate Severe Weaknesses in Aviation Security,* Testimony before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Senate and House Committees on Appropriations. Washington, D. C., 20. September 2001, 5–6.
46 Seidenstat (cf. note 44), 277–281.
47 They also had lasting consequences. As Elizabeth F. Bailey points out: "Even after flights began again, the negative externalities persisted. Traffic was down 35–40% for the month of September (vs. the previous year) and was still down 20–25% for the month of October. This drop in traffic is much steeper than any that had occurred before. For example, the drop in air traffic during the Gulf War in spring 1991 was 10–11%." Cf. "Aviation Policy: Past and Present", *Southern Economic Journal* 69/1 (2002), 12–20, 18.
48 Seidenstat (cf. note 44), 284.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 287.
51 *New York Times,* 2. May 1986, B4.
52 For the history and the development of the Department of Homeland Security refer to its website at http://www.dhs.gov/index.shtm.
53 For further information refer to the program's website at http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvlsec/programs/content_multi_image_0006.shtm
54 Mark Gottdiener, *Life in the Air: Surviving the New Culture of Air Travel,* Lanham 2001, 11.
55 Ezra Stoller, *The TWA Terminal,* New York 1999; Antonia Román, *Eero Saarinen: An Architecture of Multiplicity,* New York 2003, 42–67.
56 "Worlds Largest Air Curtain Eliminates Congestion and Confusion at Terminal Entrance", Press release, Box 162, Folder 2, Pan Am Records, PAWAR.
57 Helmut Jahn, *Airports,* Basel 1991.
58 *The Terminal,* Dir. Steven Spielberg, Perf. Tom Hanks, Catherine Zeta-Jones. Umvd/Dreamworks, 2004.
59 See http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/news/abia_y2k.htm.
60 Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity,* London 1995, 87.

## Abstract

This article traces the development of airport security programs and the debate about them in the United States. Established in reaction to an increase of airplane hijackings in the postwar period, these programs grew from spontaneous searches to the screenings of passengers and their luggage that were implemented after September 11, 2001. Whereas previously airports, airlines and the federal government shared responsibilities, the security of the civil aviation system is now handled by just one federal agency, the Transportation Security Administration. This article suggests that while heightened airport security has made a difference, security measures have also adversely affected the mobility of travelers both inside airport terminals and beyond them. In the past decades, airports have become highly confined spaces where a person's every move is monitored and restricted. At the same time, programs that control the entrance into and departure from the US have been implemented. Rather than apply a before and after perspective, this article integrates 9/11 and its security policies into a continuity of structural developments.