

# **Opening Statement of Ranking Member Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)**

## **Subcommittee on Transportation Security**

### **“Building Secure Partnerships in Travel, Commerce, and Trade with the Asia-Pacific Region”**

Tuesday May 8, 2012

I would like to first join the Administration in recognizing all of the men and women in our intelligence and counterterrorism agencies for their role in yesterday's events that led to the disruption and capture of a suicide bomber from Yemen who intended to detonate an explosive aboard a US bound flight. It must be noted that the events that unfolded yesterday and compounded by the events surrounding the failed attack aboard Flight 253 on December 25<sup>th</sup> 2009, display that we must address vulnerabilities at foreign airports with direct flights to the U.S.

The security at these Last Point of Departure airports is as critical to our aviation security as the security of our domestic airports. I look forward to hearing from Mr. Halinski today and continue the discussion on our efforts to strengthen international screening processes that yield sustainable detection capabilities for inbound flights.

Recently the Subcommittee traveled on a CODEL to the Asia Pacific Region. We must continue to take critical steps to strengthen international cooperation on transportation security with the Asia-Pacific Region. One of the most interesting aspects of the trip was the opportunity to learn more about Japan's bullet train, also known as high-speed rail.

It is imperative to note that we are currently in a unique position with regards to ground transportation security policy. Unlike with aviation, we have the opportunity to build a brand new mass transit system and develop superior security standards at the design level, as opposed to retrofitting an existing system in response to an attack.

I look forward to continuing this dialogue with the Department, and learning more about best practices gleaned from other countries on mass transit security and with that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit for the record a statement by the U.S.-Japan High Speed Rail association, which articulates significant findings concerning this matter. However, our discussion on international cooperation does not end here. In October of 2010, international cooperation and public – private interaction successfully intercepted explosive devices shipped on passenger and all-cargo aircraft from Yemen.

Today, I look forward to hearing from the Department and Express Association of America about the most recent developments in private-public partnerships across all cargo and supply chain security. This hearing offers an opportunity to continue a critical security dialogue on securing our skies while allowing for the flow of passengers and goods between the United States and the Asia-Pacific Region.

Domestically, we try to assure that commerce is not impeded by security requirements. However, our concerns about these important issues are magnified when the supply chain involves the international aviation arena.

Secretary Napolitano and Administrator Pistole have put forward the important issue of raising and harmonizing security standards before the governments of the world. In the last two years, this Administration has worked diligently to take significant steps to harmonize security standards and establish a stronger working relationship with the Asia-Pacific Region. Agreements have been signed and accords have been reached.

Today, we must ask how the United States can leverage these developments to secure aviation from terrorist attack and ensure that terrorists do not sabotage our cargo supply chain. I welcome our witnesses today and look forward to your perspective and insight on the feasibility of increasing security at international airports and throughout the global supply chain. This Administration has taken significant steps to establish stronger relationships with countries across the Asia-Pacific Region.

Now, more than ever, we must collaborate with our partners abroad in government, at airports, with air carriers, and throughout industry to reach solutions to the complex issues associated with aviation and global supply chain security.