



PRESS RELEASE
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Insider Threats Are a Reality, but Preventable

[As warning calls continue regarding threats to aviation](#), particularly lone-wolf and insider threats, the American Alliance of Airport Police Officers (AAPO) urges Congress to require total employee screening at our nation's major airports.

Former CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell echoed AAPO's airport security concerns this week at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's aviation summit in Washington, D.C. He stated that groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS focus on "symbols of the modern world and symbols of American and Western power. Well, guess what, right in the center of that target set are airports and airlines." The former deputy director also said that lone-wolf terrorists inside the United States are "the biggest threat we face today" and that "threats, primarily from homegrown terrorists or foreign fighters returning to the United States, will continue to increase. Insider threats are among the most significant — 'the people who actually work for us.'"

Airports continue to be highly symbolic targets, and as we have seen with incidents abroad and at home, airports and airplanes are a priority objective for those looking to cause harm. Whether it is the 2015 Russian Metrojet bombing incident, which is suspected to have been carried out by an airport employee, or the numerous gun and drug smuggling schemes at our country's airports involving airport employees, these incidents highlight the dangers of the insider threat and the ongoing internal security vulnerabilities at our airports.

The most effective way to keep the public safe is by conducting total screening of every employee, including TSA, and their backpacks, purses, bags, etc. Given that passengers are already subject to these screening procedures, it is reasonable to expect the same security standards for airport employees and TSA. Three airports — Miami International, Orlando International and Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International, the world's busiest airport — conduct full screening of employees and their property. So, not only is employee screening at airports feasible, it is essential.

"Insider threats like airport drug and weapon trafficking rings, or far worse, will continue to pose a danger to the traveling public unless major airports are required to screen employees. Without total employee screening, we are playing a dangerous, deadly game of cat and mouse," said Marshall McClain, President of the Los Angeles Airport Peace Officers Association and co-founder of AAPO.

"Oftentimes, changes are only made when disaster happens. I hope airports and congressional leaders will wake up to the reality of the insider threat and require employee screening," said Paul Nunziato, President of the Port Authority Police Benevolent Association and co-founder of AAPO.

The American Alliance of Airport Police Officers (AAPO) is composed of rank-and-file airport police officers (including many dual police/aircraft rescue firefighters) who stand as the first line of defense against terrorist attacks, hijackings and other criminal activity at our nation's airports. We seek to promote security and safety for the traveling public, visitors and airport employees by highlighting best practices and identifying areas for improvement and proposed solutions for our nation's airport security deployment. AAPO focuses on regulatory issues that promote our efforts to provide the most advanced and cutting-edge service innovations and security processes in our nation and the world. Our organization represents thousands of sworn law enforcement officers across the United States beholden only to this mission. We are unencumbered by neither political nor managerial constraints that would prevent us from promoting sound public safety policy.

The founding members of the American Alliance of Airport Police Officers are composed of numerous rank-and-file airport police officers from John F. Kennedy International Airport; LaGuardia Airport; Los Angeles International Airport; Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport; LA/Ontario International Airport; Newark Liberty International Airport; Van Nuys Airport; Stewart International Airport; and Teterboro Airport.