

MFR 04020010

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: American Airlines Captain Don Dillman

Type: Briefing

Date: November 18, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Team: 7 and 8

Prepared by: Lisa Sullivan and John Raidt¹

Location: AA Operations Center, DFW Airport, Texas

Participants (non-Commission): Capt. Don Dillman, Managing Director, Flight Operations Technical for American Airlines; Mr. Chris Christensen (outside counsel to American Airlines); Desmond Barry (outside counsel to American Airlines); Doug Cotton (General Counsel's office, American Airlines).

Participants (Commission): Sam Brinkley, Lisa Sullivan, Bill Johnstone, Miles Kara, and John Raidt.

Background

[U] Capt. Dillman is the Managing Director, Flight Operations Technical for American Airlines.

Briefing

[U] Captain Dillman, who is the chief pilot for American Airlines (AA), briefed Commission staff using a power point presentation prepared for the Commission. (A copy of the slides is on file with the Commission). He then conducted staff on a tour of a Boeing 767-300. The B767-200 was the aircraft used for AA 11 and UA 175, but that model was not available on the day of the briefing. Dillman indicated that the two models are very similar.

Air Crew Security Training and Response to Hijacking

[SSI] Capt. Dillman's presentation indicated that the foundation of American Airlines' response to hijackings is based on FAA's "Common Strategy," which focused on a "cooperative and passive" response by flight crew to hijackers, and included certain countermeasures such as notifying ground authorities of a problem, trying to land as quickly as possible, etc. The response to security emergencies expected of flight crew is

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incorporated into the Flight Crew Operating Manuals; AA's policies and procedures Manual; Basic indoctrination and recurrent training; and procedures required by the FAA. Pre 9/11 American Airlines had five training video tapes: 1) Lufthansa Capt. Hijack 2) When danger calls – targeting bomb threats; 3) Bomb least risk locations; 4) Common Strategy tape; 5) Basic indoctrination with an introduction to security (Capt Kodwa).

[U] Dillman said that American Airlines developed certain training materials to deal with the difficulty of teaching the Common Strategy, particularly in regard to recurrent training for flight crew who had seen the videos before. He said that American produced a videotape a few years before 9/11 designed to offset the boredom and lack of interest in the video produced by the FAA. He stated that the video took a lighthearted approach but it included disclaimers. He said that the lessons contained in the video were accurate and that it used humor in order to get the points across. He indicated that the FAA approved the video. He believes that the humorous video was taken out of circulation in 1995-1996.

[U] Dillman stated that there were discussions/efforts in early 2001 to update the Common Strategy because communications systems and methods had advanced. The strategy/training materials needed to keep up with such changes. He said that there was a concern about the "joint agreement" with the FBI on common strategy. They (not sure whether he meant FAA, FBI, or the air carriers) weren't anxious to revise the tape or the agreement. He felt that the presentation of training materials was routine – they were shown in a classroom with an instructor.

[U] Professional Ground Crew instructors taught ground school, including the security piece. Management staff updated their lesson plans. Development of the curricula was taken straight from FAA's common strategy and the threat book. He stated that it wasn't law enforcement or an ex FBI agent teaching or developing the curriculum of training, nor was it very high-level stuff. It was an end-use product. The training would reflect incidents that had happened the past year. Flight crews were required to watch the Common Strategy video once a year.

[SSI] He stated that the Common Strategy did not instruct Flight Attendants what to do if the pilot were incapacitated or incommunicado. He doesn't remember any discussions of how flight crew would respond to a 9/11 type of scenario. He saw the likelihood of such a threat as slim. He didn't perceive that the Common Strategy might be inappropriate or "fail" in certain instances.

[U] Dillman reported that the post 9/11 lesson plans for security were signed off on by the corporate security director, Pat Schroeder. Capt. Dillman said that the training materials and security information provided to flight crew is updated continuously now.

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~~SSI~~**Threat Assessment**

[U] Capt. Dillman indicated that the threat as American Airlines understood it and as was relayed to the carrier by FAA was a "regional threat"— meaning overseas not domestic. He indicated that recurrent training for crewmembers stressed that there hadn't been a domestic hijacking in nine years. He said that the perception was not that threats weren't applicable to the US, but that the civil strife was overseas, and that's where the threat was. He stated that he was not aware of flight training by terrorists taking place in the country. Hijackings were understood to be terrorists that wanted to come out of the thing alive. There was a mindset "this is not where the threat is." They just didn't have the data to support such a premise. On the safety side of commercial aviation there was lots of data to set an action plan and agenda for remediation and response.

~~[SSI]~~ Capt. Dillman was asked about the FAA Security presentation by Pat McDonnell in 2001, which discussed the increased threat to aviation, including the possibility of domestic hijacking and the potential for suicide hijacking. Captain Dillman said that this information did not reach him. As a Captain, he would like to have as much information and analysis as possible, but he's not sure what he would have done with the information had he received it. He said that a Captain had to balance many requirements and a lot of information in regard to his duties.

Vulnerability

[U] In regard to checkpoints, Capt. Dillman said that they were not perceived as impenetrable, only that they would stop the most obvious weapons.

Novelty of the 9-11 plot

[U] Capt. Dillman's presentation included a slide titled, "9/11—A New Threat Emerges." This focused on the unprecedented nature of the attacks including the use of a suicidal team of multiple hijackers; terrorists with the ability to fly aircraft; airliners used as weapons of mass destruction; and sophisticated, coordinated, multiple attacks.

New Common Strategy

~~[SSI]~~ The Dillman presentation indicated that the FAA/TSA has redesigned the security system with a new fundamental philosophy [REDACTED]. Among the elements of the new approach are the following that were noted in the presentation: Secure cockpit door (interim use of a Katie Bar); new common strategy materials; inclusion of Sensitive Security Information in American Airlines' Policy Manual; the use of a secure website with security information included in it; modified security procedures dealing with cockpit access; ID checks at the gate; security inspection of aircraft; and a pre-flight security brief on the aircraft.

~~[SSI]~~ Post 9/11, the pilots' secure website has TSA's Security Directive and Information Circulars updated daily, and the site includes response protocols and security information

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that pilots should brief their flight crew on prior to departure. Previously the term Sensitive Security Information was not used in any book shown to crews. There was no way to distribute SSI information to pilots and crews. Only through recurrent training did SSI information get disseminated.

[~~SSI~~] Capt. Dillman said that he believes the new common strategy is sufficient. It prepares crew, provides an added sense of awareness and empowers them. However, he said it's not a "cook book of what to do in every single situation"

Possible Future Security Enhancements under TSA consideration

[U] In regard to various security enhancements under consideration by TSA, Captain Dillman provided the following observations. In regard to video cameras that televise the cabin and cockpit to authorities on the ground, he does not think video surveillance is necessary. He believes the secure cockpit door is highly effective.

He thinks that video surveillance could breed complacency—an attitude that "well we have a camera so we must be safe." He stated that at one time American Airlines had cameras in the cockpit as a customer service initiative that would allow passengers to see what the pilot was seeing out the cockpit window. Pilots have resisted such surveillance and it is a huge labor/privacy issue.

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Cockpit Keys

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Air Circulation

[U] Capt. Dillman stated that a typical commercial jetliner has two large Air Conditioning packs, and that some of the air in the cabin is not recycled into the cockpit.

Air Rage

[U] Capt. Dillman said that prior to 9/11 air rage was synonymous with passenger misconduct. American was taking a very serious approach toward air rage, including prosecution. It was perceived as a legal issue.

Air Crew uniforms

[U] Capt. Dillman said that it used to be fairly easy to buy an aircrew uniform. Now, you have to show an ID and be vetted. The vendor logs the employee ID number, and vendors are approved. He believes it is a national requirement but he's not sure.

Suspicious Incident Reporting

[U] Captain Dillman stated that pre-9/11, if the room of a flight crewmember was broken into that would not be something that the crewmember would report to the dispatcher. American Airlines operated a Corporate Event Reporting System (CERS) that was the collection point for data, including suspicious activity.

[U] Today, the Flight Manual Part 1 requires pilots to file "FLIGHT NET REPORTS" on incidents such as the following: ATC irregularity, exercise of emergency authority, deviation from procedures, engine failure, mechanism failure, fuel dump, ill or injured passenger or crewmember, overweight landing, passenger misconduct or smoking, incident involving hazmat, food poisoning, electromagnetic interference, flight through volcanic ash, in-flight diversion, aborted takeoffs, runway incursions, near midair collision, alcohol abuse by passengers. These reports must be filed within 36 hours of the incident.

Communications with 757/767 jetliners

[U] The following are the means of communication on a B757/767: internal intercom system; Airphone system; ACARS messaging; radio contact (including VHF voice to ATC; VHF voice to Dispatch; HF radio for over the water); and SATCOM (satellite phone). The briefer wasn't sure whether both types of aircraft were outfitted with SATCOM units.

Jumpseat use

[U] Capt. Dillman said that the computer would have noted anyone approved for jumpseat occupancy. It would also be noted on the manifest with a 1W, 2W or an X. It would also be appended to the crew list under "dead heading." He said that to be

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approved for a jumpseat you would have to show your FAA certificate. However, wearing your uniform was not required.

Navigation

[U] Captain Dillman doesn't believe that a Global Positioning System (GPS) would have worked in the cockpit. He said you would have needed antennae outside. He said that if the hijackers knew the latitude and longitude of their target (which they could have gotten from the GPS), they could have entered the coordinates into the Flight Management Computer so that the plane would fly them to that destination.

American Airlines Flight 11

[U] Captain Dillman was asked about the three indicators of problems on Flight 11: lack of radio contact; transponder turned off; and the dramatic course change. Captain Dillman said that the NORDO (no radio contact) situation is not terribly rare but the system usually reacts pretty quickly to it. When it happens an ACARS message will be sent to the aircraft instructing it to contact Air Traffic Control. FAA Air Traffic Control might also contact the carrier's corporate office to ask that a message be sent.

[U] A second indicator of a problem—the loss of a transponder beacon—is more rare but not unheard of. It could be caused by a host of things including an electrical failure.

[U] The third indicator of a problem with AA 11 was a dramatic course change to the south. However, Captain Dillman said he is not sure that all three factors together would necessarily indicate to him a hijacking. If there were rapid decompression or an engine failure you might see plane get off its course to get out of the way of other traffic. In fact, controllers thought that AA 11 was trying to get to LGA or JFK for emergency landing

[U] He said that you don't just jump to the conclusion that a hijack is in progress or, especially, that a hijacker would have the ability to fly the airplane.

American Airlines Flight 77

[U] The lack of communications and the transponder being disabled drove one to think that it was a catastrophic failure, possibly that the plane was in the ground because the FAA Air Traffic Control facility in Indianapolis wasn't even getting a primary radar contact with the plane. Traditionally, these factors weren't associated with hijackings. They were more reflective of a technical failure. The transponder would not be turned off in a traditional hijacking.

Communication to Pilots

[U] It was mentioned to Captain Dillman that pilots were asking ATC for more information but they weren't being given any data. He said that certainly, any information that could have been passed on to cockpits would have been good.

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[U] Captain Dillman stated that he thinks that American Airlines had better communications capability than the FAA, because the carrier was capable of contacting aircraft worldwide in real-time. FAA's communications come from many different Air Traffic Control centers that have different information. American Airlines on the other hand, had the ability through its dispatchers to communicate with every plane.

Day of 9/11

[U] On 9/11 he was in the American headquarters building. He heard that there were news reports of an incident so he went over to the "war room" at the operations center, and the day unfolded for him there.

[U] Capt. Dillman said that once the ground stops were ordered on 9/11 ACARS messages went to flights not yet airborne telling them to stay put. Nothing was sent to notify the pilots already airborne of the problem.

[U] Capt. Dillman stated that if a positive threat is received in regard to an airplane after the flight has already taken off, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He stated that prior to 9/11 American Airlines' protocols did not establish a procedure to notify all aircraft of a security threat. [REDACTED]

Recommendations

[SS1] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This is a big issue for pilots and they're not happy about it.

[U] He doesn't have any recommendation for addressing the MANPAD issue and he doesn't know how valid the threat is.

[U] He believes that cargo safety could be enhanced by hardened containers but wasn't sure. [REDACTED]

[U] Capt. Dillman mentioned that there is a current labor dispute about upgrading flight attendants to security personnel from marketing personnel. He said that he opposes it because it will be tough to accomplish. He is also against arming pilots. He said that during an emotional encounter, the gun could go off accidentally or negligently.

¹ The Commission staffer originally assigned to write the MFR for this briefing, team leader Sam Brinkley, did not do so. Because the decision was made by Commission staff not to record this briefing, the MFR was rendered solely from participant notes several months after the event. The MFR has been written as faithfully as possible according to the notes; however, any key information derived from the MFR for use in reporting should be confirmed first.

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