

Kevin Murphy

President

Airport Law Enforcement Agencies Network

Testimony

Before the Committee on Homeland Security

Subcommittee on Transportation Security

US House of Representatives

May 29, 2014

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Richmond and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to give input and perspective on the lessons learned from the LAX shooting as it pertains to airport law enforcement. I appreciate the commitment and concern from this committee to ensure the aviation system continues to be a safe and secure environment for our traveling public.

The Airport Law Enforcement Agencies Network or ALEAN is a non-profit organization formed in 1989 to represent those law enforcement agencies whose mission is to protect and patrol the nation's airports. ALEAN was formed for the purpose to facilitate the exchange of information concerning terrorism and emerging criminal trends associated with airport operations. The original charter participating agencies were located in the largest Cat X airports, but ALEAN has since expanded to over one hundred U.S. airport agencies as regular members and numerous foreign Associate Membership agencies in Canada. Many governmental law enforcement agencies such as the FBI, FAMS, INTERPOL, U.S. Secret Service and federal regulatory agencies from around the world also hold Adjunct Membership. ALEAN holds official conferences in the Spring and Fall of each year to discuss business, provide training and conducts monthly membership teleconference calls.

After the LAX shooting and senseless murder of Transportation Security Officer Gerardo Hernandez, Administrator Pistole immediately reacted by setting in motion a comprehensive review of the incident and forming a group of aviation experts to look at all aspects of the current security programs as it related to the incident. Administrator Pistole should be commended on this measured and thorough approach to ensure all entities with ties to the aviation system had an opportunity to review, discuss and provide input into any advances or changes to the security measures which are in place.

ALEAN was involved early on in these discussions and meetings, as one of the prevailing issues focuses on whether a law enforcement officer should be stationed at or near the checkpoints. ALEAN has and continues to be opposed to the mandatory stationing of law enforcement officers at checkpoints, because it severely limits the ability of the police chiefs and commanders at airport to manage their officers. Law enforcement officers are a finite and valuable resource which need to be deployed to all areas of the airport, some with much higher risk than checkpoints. Given the fact that all airports are unique, forcing a standardized approach to response times for any incident, may indeed cause law enforcement officers to be pulled away from other areas within the airport which are just as critical.

Just as Administrator Pistole has used a risk based approach to arrange security measures, airport police chiefs and commanders use the same approach for their individual airports to position their officers in the best location to handle all calls for service and provide security and safety to all of the airport travelers and staff, not focusing on a single group. Airport law enforcement officers are responsible to detect, deter and respond to criminal and other public safety or security related incidents from the roadway to the runway of the nation's airports. Depending on the ebbs and flows of individual airports, the higher risk may be with large number of vehicles on the curb dropping off passengers, to the long lines at ticket counters or

the many bags and unattended items in the baggage pick up areas. The airport law enforcement officer needs to have the ability to move throughout these areas to provide deterrence and response capabilities to all. Assigning an officer to a fixed post tethers them to one location and creates an inefficient use of much needed manpower.

Law enforcement officers are a key element in deterring, detecting and responding to a critical incident such as an active shooter, but they are not the only aspect of creating a safe and secure environment. There is no one tactic or strategy that can be developed to prevent these incidents in the future or to provide a better security stance. The best approach is a multi-layered approach. Communication from the airport tenants to the airport emergency communication centers (ECC) is a vital layer which must be clear and direct. Again, Administrator Pistole has led this charge to ensure there are direct lines of communication to the airport ECC and even further to encourage all TSA employees to program their individual cell phones with the direct line to the ECC. This approach has been mirrored over to all airport tenants and employees. Another layer for the ECC is additional or enhanced video data systems. The video data systems provide immediate eyes on the situation, especially if the systems are linked to incoming call or alarm locations. Cameras allow the ECC to better direct the responding officers to the exact location of the incident facilitating a quick resolution to the incident. Again, Administrator Pistole and the TSA are to be commended for partnering with many U.S. airports on funding to expand existing video data systems.

Los Angeles World Airports conducted an all-encompassing after action report of the incident and shared the report with all, so others could benefit from what they experienced. This type of coordination and information sharing are the key elements of ALEAN. Over the years ALEAN has played a significant role in ensuring a successful 1994 World Cup Soccer Tournament in the United States, developed a model partnership with the federal government with the National Explosives Detection Canine Program, managed the airport community's post 9-11 law enforcement response, initiated a national aviation law enforcement benchmarking project, put in place a vital real time electronic intelligence sharing network for airport criminal investigators and an administrative information sharing network, helped local agencies develop and share model best practices programs, and assisted with the development and integration of public policy related to aviation law enforcement. ALEAN partners with the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) and Airports Council International (ACI) to address issues vital to our industry. ALEAN's partnerships include working with local Joint Terrorism Task Forces, the Federal Air Marshall Program, and the TSA Federal Intelligence Officer Program to ensure the safety on the travelling public.

Coordination between law enforcement agencies is needed to resolve these dynamic incidents and all must be trained to respond as one. Active shooter response training is yet another layer which airports must participate in. A lone gunman who is intent on senselessly destroying the lives of others may be nearly impossible to deter or detect until the first shot is fired. Airport Police agencies must continue to train to quickly respond and resolve these incidents. The training should include mutual aid agencies, federal law enforcement officers, and as important, the fire and EMS agencies which respond to the airport. We have continued to

improve deterrence and response to active shooter incidents through experience and training. Airport police and responding EMS must train to quickly recover, remove and treat those injured persons quickly, even if the incident continues in other areas of the airport complex.

Dynamic incidents, such as active shooters, will continue to occur in our nation and abroad. Only a flexible layered security stance which involves all entities within the airport complex will allow for a swift resolution and recovery from these incidents. Airport police chiefs and managers must be able to move their officers freely to where the risk is. ALEAN members continue to be inventive and proactive in creating different and unique security layers to deter those who want to do harm in our airports and to respond quickly and effectively when those incidents do occur. ALEAN provides coordination by sharing best practices among its members such as: airports which have created random dynamic force and long gun patrols; active shooter response bags which include first aid items and other tools to resolve an incident; random vehicle inspection posts; enhanced security ID checks to ensure all those in the security area are authorized to be in the security area. These are but a few of the innovative security layers being created by airport police across the nation – all require the ability for airport police chiefs and commanders to flexibly deploy their finite assets where the risk is for that airport.

Thank you for your continued focus on improving the safety and security for our nations traveling public.