

**CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING ON THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT (ONRA)  
AND THE COMPUTER ASSISTED PASSENGER PRE-SCREENING (CAPPS II) PROGRAM  
MARCH 7, 2003  
PRESENTED BY MR. BEN H. BELL III**

**INTRODUCTION**

Good morning Mr. Chairman, members, and staff. Thank you for this opportunity to brief you on the Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System (CAPPS II) which the TSA Office of National Risk Assessment is in the process of implementing. My name is Ben H Bell III, Director for the Office of National Risk Assessment (ONRA) of the Transportation Security Administration.

The purpose of this briefing is to provide the accurate facts regarding this system. During the past 10 days, there have been a number of inaccurate press reports. This briefing will help set the record straight.

One of TSA's first responses to Congress' mandate was to establish the Office of National Risk Assessment (ONRA). ONRA's mission is to develop and maintain risk assessment systems to detect known terrorists and other legislatively assigned programs. This office will apply risk assessment processes and systems to all forms of transportation.

I will provide a factual description of the congressionally mandated CAPPS II system. This system is designed specifically to save American lives and protect American critical aviation infrastructure and assets. It is designed to significantly enhance the convenience of airline passengers and strengthen public trust and confidence. In addition, CAPPS II will be operated and managed by the Office of National Risk Assessment thus relieving the US Air line industry of a significant cost burden.

The CAPPS II system now being implemented is the successor to the CAPPS system currently in use. In the wake of the September 11, 2001 Congress determined that the existing CAPPS I system was not effective as a counter-terrorist measure. Congress mandated that any successor system be capable of screening all passengers to assess the terrorist threat to commercial aviation.

I will outline the steps TSA has taken to realize Congress' vision of effective passenger screening— without compromising on the important privacy principles upon which Congress has insisted.

CAPPS II has many technical and process components. The system will be managed by ONRA. A trusted partner relationship with industry will be required for success. The system will assess the terrorist risk of all passengers on commercial aircraft entering or transiting US territory. CAPPS II will contain the strongest privacy protections of any system in the Federal Government. Finally, the system is designed to help TSA optimize its resources to reduce overall security costs while enhancing passenger convenience and airline efficiency.

## AVIATION INDUSTRY

On September 11, 2001 the United States suffered the most serious terrorist event in our history. This tragic event galvanized national attention on the safety and security of air travel. As we are aware, these events have had a significant impact on the health of the airline industry and the economy as a whole. Today, over 2 million passengers a day travel on airlines within the United States. There are over 75 commercial airlines servicing 635 airports in our country. Travel and tourism account over 8% of GDP. The loss of 3,000 lives on September 11 and the continuing terrorist threat underscores the requirement to protect this and other transportation infrastructures from attack.

## CAPPS I

CAPPS I is operated by the airlines using information provided by the Federal Government. The system was designed for threats prior to September 11, 2001. The new threat environment requires an enhanced layered security approach. CAPPS II is one portion of a new layered security approach.

## NEW REQUIREMENTS

Congress recognized the problems inherent in CAPPS I and it mandated a number of changes, all with an eye towards more effective screening. These mandates included:

- Creating a solution that will be operated by the government
- Improving the ability to identify threats to aviation security
- Conducting an assessment of every ticketed passenger
- Conducting an assessment of for every airline and airport

These new CAPPS II requirements are just one component of a multi-layered security system. Examples of other layers include on-site passenger and baggage screening, federal air marshals, and hardened cockpit doors.

## CAPPS II OVERVIEW

The ONRA team has designed CAPPS II to deal with current and evolving foreign terrorist threats to the airline passengers and critical infrastructure. The business requirements for CAPPS II are being developed in consultation with industry and government subject matter experts and stakeholders. CAPPS II is designed to enhance airline security while strengthening privacy protection, leveraging proven technologies, and utilizing best practices.

Important aspects of the system include:

The use of data currently in the reservation and ticketing process.

The leveraging of industry identity authentication services.

No storage of any passenger information with the exception of identified terrorists.

The ability to set rules and policies on how the data is transported, used, and delivered.

The ability to audit and document compliance of the same rules and policies.

The capability for real-time policy compliance auditing for Congress

## PASSENGER PRE SCREENING

Passenger Pre-Screening is a critical layer of the multi-tiered security system. CAPPS II will be a tool that integrates other security layers. For example, the CAPPS II system can help us optimize the placement and scheduling of TSA screeners.

The information used in the CAPPS II system is a small subset of the normal information provided by a passenger at time of reservation or ticketing. The system does not use financial or credit information. The system does not use ethnic, religious or racial data. The system does not profile, conduct surveillance, or data mine. Finally the system does not store or create a database of personal identifying information with the exception of those identified as being known terrorist.

The system will expedite the boarding of passengers that pose no risk of terrorism. The system will conduct the analysis and identify foreign terrorist in less than 5 seconds. Once the analysis is completed, a red, yellow, or green classification will be provided in the system. This classification will determine the level of screening the passenger receives when passing through security.

This system is designed to reduce the number of people that receive the enhanced screening that we have all experienced in today's process. For example, a "green" assessment allows the passenger to proceed directly to the gate through normal security. A "yellow" assessment may receive the enhanced security that we have all recently experienced or witnessed. Further, a passenger with a "yellow" assessment who clears the enhanced screening is immediately permitted to board. "Red" assessments are referred to law enforcement.

The CAPPS II design also included enhanced processes and procedures for TSA employees. For example, CAPPS II will include a comprehensive redress process for those passengers who have questions concerning their experience. TSA will appoint an Ombudsman to handle any inquiries. These capabilities will result in improved resource scheduling and other operational efficiencies.

The system is designed to meet current or emerging needs. For example, a change in the national threat levels may result in changes in risk assessment criteria or rules.

## TRUSTED PARTNERSHIP

An underlying objective of ONRA the CAPPS II program is to establish trusted partnerships between the government, industry, and the public. This basis of this trust will be the continuous verification of compliance of all policies governing the system operation and data use. The data and services required to make this system a success are owned by government and commercial industries that must work together in a trusted environment. Finally, public trust will be assured through the system audit capabilities and congressional oversight.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

ONRA has assembled a team of information privacy, policy, and industry domain experts to support the development and deployment of this program. As you know, this is critical to the success of the ONRA and TSA mission. To that end we are will are planning to conduct the following activities:

Dissemination of public information about what to expect and how to get questions answered concerning the CAPPS II program  
CAPPS II briefings for officials and opinion leaders  
Meetings with the privacy and public interest community experts  
Congressional reports on the performance of the pre-screening process enabled through CAPPS II  
The appointment of an Ombudsman

## CLOSING REMARKS

As we have discussed, CAPPS II is critical to the protection of United States citizens, our airline industry, and our economy. CAPPS II will enhance airline security and strengthen privacy protection. In closing I would like to restate critical aspects of the system:

CAPPS II only uses data that is acquired in the normal reservation and ticketing process.

It leverages proven industry identity authentication services.

The system does not store any passenger information with the exception of identified terrorists.

CAPPS II rules and policies are continuously audited for compliance

I would like to thank the chairman and members for the chance to discuss ONRA and the CAPPS II program. We appreciate the opportunity to present the facts of the CAPPS II program. I will now be happy to answer your questions.