

Behavioural Detection as a Security Measure

Note: This Briefing Leaflet supersedes 16SECBL02 – Behavioural Detection as a Security Measure.

INTRODUCTION

One of aviation security's main challenges is to adapt to new threats and develop new methods to mitigate them. There is a wide consensus on the need for risk-based security measures. In this context, new methods ideally focus on disclosing dangerous people instead of dangerous objects regardless of who carries them. One promising technique is Behavioural Detection, a method which works in addition to existing aviation security measures. It uses trained analysts in the airport environment to identify individuals who may represent a threat. It focuses exclusively on a person's intent and is independent of any new product emerging as a threat to aviation security.

BACKGROUND

Over the last decades, States have developed an array of security procedures to prevent acts of unlawful interference against civil aviation. Likewise, new technologies have emerged: new generation metal detectors, explosive trace detection equipment, and the development of even more precise explosive detection systems. However, these systems remain very costly and time-consuming when applied to all passengers. Some of the most efficient methods are applied to only a selection of persons, usually selected at random. Alongside such selection, it is also possible to apply a system based on analysing behaviour to categorize passengers. This allows baseline measures to be applied to some passengers, and additional measures to others.

THE TECHNIQUE

Behavioural Detection concentrates exclusively on the observation of specific suspicious behaviour which may indicate a possible threat. The technique is based on the premise that individuals attempting to evade security measures typically display signs of suspicious behaviour compared to the behaviour of the legitimate travelling population. The technique can disrupt and deter activities that are either pre-cursors to attack (e.g. hostile reconnaissance or dry runs), or actual attacks on aircraft or airport.

Behavioural Detection can take various forms and be applied at various levels. It can include overt and covert techniques, as well as engaging passengers in short conversations to resolve concerns. The technique can be performed by dedicated Behavioural Detection officers, or by selected airport or airline personnel who are properly trained to interact with passengers in such a manner.

Behavioural Detection techniques have been implemented successfully worldwide, for example by police forces and customs and immigration officers. In a number of States, they are also fully integrated into the airport security chain.

ADVANTAGES/BENEFITS

Some advantages of the techniques include:

- Identification of bad people and bad intent
- Proactiveness rather than reactivity
- Emphasis on risk-based philosophy
- Enhancement of the unpredictability aspect into the security measures
- "Out of the box" thinking and observations
- Efficiency and performance improvement of the security checkpoint
- Ability to observe and intercept also landside threats
- Introduction of more direct involvement by security staff, proven to enhance motivation

IMPORTANT ASPECTS

As with all new security measures, there are many important aspects to consider with the implementation of Behavioural Detection techniques. In particular:

- Terrorists and other individuals representing a threat can come from a variety of backgrounds. They can be of any nationality, age, sex, race, religion, and social background, and can even be fully integrated into the communities they live in. Behavioural Detection should therefore never involve any sort of discrimination and only target behaviour.
- Behavioural Detection requires psychological skills, attention to detail, good social interaction, and the appropriate personality and mindset. Personnel involved in Behavioural Detection should therefore be selected using stringent selection procedures. Their training should be regulated by the appropriate Authority, and there should be a common baseline and standards for the training contents. The competency and motivation of the personnel should be assessed regularly. Re-current/refresher training should also be considered. As part of the security personnel, consideration should also be given to the level of security clearance that the personnel should hold.
- Behavioural Detection is a risk-based philosophy where security measures are directed to where they are most needed. Therefore, implementation of Behavioural Detection ideally aims at a more efficient allocation of existing security resources, contrary to requiring more of them.

CONCLUSION

Behavioural Detection is an innovative and proactive approach to aviation security which has a lot of potential. Provided that the above considerations, and known advantages and disadvantages are taken into account, IFALPA welcomes the implementation of this new technique as part of the airport security chain.