

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Bonnie Watson Coleman

Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security Hearing

Securing Air Cargo: Industry Perspectives

July 25, 2017

Today's topic, air cargo security, is not one that usually receives a lot of headlines and attention, yet it is critical to our economy. In fact, according to the International Air Transport Association, air cargo accounts for approximately 35% of the value of all products traded worldwide.

An attack on our cargo industry could have devastating effects on commerce, and since many cargo shipments are placed in the "belly" of passenger planes, such an attack could also result in significant loss of life.

Unfortunately, the lack of headlines surrounding air cargo has not kept it hidden from our adversaries. In 2010, terrorists attempted to hide bombs inside printer cartridges shipped out of Yemen. Only a last-minute intelligence tip from a foreign partner prevented the explosives from flying on aircraft bound for the U.S. While no similar attempts against cargo have been reported since 2010, terrorists continue to seek new ways to attack our transportation systems.

Given the threat, TSA must consistently partner with industry stakeholders to enhance air cargo security. Next week will mark the tenth anniversary of one of the most significant homeland security laws ever enacted—"The Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007".

Our leader on this panel, Ranking Member Thompson, was the author of this measure that, among other things, required 100% screening of cargo on domestic and international inbound passenger flights within three years. Complying with this mandate was a massive undertaking for TSA and industry, and we should all be proud that, together, they were able to achieve compliance for domestic passenger flights in 2010, and international inbound passenger flights in 2012.

The ten-year anniversary of the passage of the *Implementing 9/11 Commission Act* is a great time to reflect on how far we have come and be grateful that no attacks against our air cargo system have been carried out.

However, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must constantly improve our security to keep up with the evolving threat. We must continue to prioritize the security of our transportation systems and invest in security measures that really make a difference, like those that help secure our cargo, rather than wasting billions on a border wall that will not improve security.

Additionally, we cannot allow the attention we rightfully pay to passenger security to come at the expense of focusing on air cargo security. And just as the threat landscape constantly evolves, so too does the nature of commerce.

The emergence of "e-commerce" sites like Amazon and eBay has caused a seismic shift in not only how Americans buy goods but also their expectations about how quickly they will receive them. This, of course, has huge implications for the air cargo sector.

I will be interested to hear from our witnesses how these changes are affecting air cargo security, as well as what changes industry, TSA, and Congress should consider to improve security.