

Airport security measures could hurt business

Travel agency head says new measures 'inconsistent'

By JOAN DELANEY
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The head of Canada's travel agency industry has expressed concerns that new security measures for Canadians travelling to the United States are "inconsistent" and could hurt business.

David McCaig's comments come as eight airports across the country are preparing to introduce controversial full-body scanners after the failed bombing attempt on an Amsterdam-Detroit flight on Christmas Day.

New aviation security measures, which include the loss of carry-on baggage rights for travellers to the United States, have resulted in delays at North American airports.

McCaig, president of the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies (ACTA) and a board member of the Canadian Corporate Travel Association, says the new security measures "are inconsistent and we question how effective they really are."

"We just feel that some half-measures, or measures that don't really address all the issues, may generally hurt the business. I don't just mean travel business—it could certainly hurt the economy as well."

He cites an instance in which ACTA employees who were patted down at a Las Vegas airport everywhere but in the crotch area where the so-called "underwear bomber" hid an explosive, says body scanners are an invasion of privacy, and questions why business travellers can't take their briefcases on the plane.

"I mean, why is it that a businessman can't do a carry-on into the United States after it's gone through



A Security officer views images from a body scanner. As part of new aviation security measures, Canada plans introduce full-body scanners at eight airports across the country. ANDREW YATES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

the screening? Most business class travellers do a carry-on bag so that they can do their work while they're on the plane—that's part of the reason they're paying for business class."

As for those with "fast cards" who have been pre-screened for fast-tracking through security, McCaig says it's "not clear what the rules are—that's part of the problem."

"We do consider security to be the prime and most important thing, but we need to have it consistent. It needs to be thought out a little bit more."

In addition to full-body body scanners, Canada is planning to develop a passenger behaviour observation program focusing on identifying irregular or suspicious behaviour.

Arne Kislenko, a professor of international relations at the University of Toronto and a former senior security officer at Toronto's Lester B. Pearson Airport, says behaviour screening is an important part of security.

"I guarantee you it's not going to be any sort of panacea, it won't cure everything, but it does, in fact, catch a few bad people regardless of whether it's a science or not. I myself over 12 years in a senior post doing this kind of work every day, we caught people on a fairly regular basis," he says.

However, he warns that the terrorists are very advanced and will find ways to get around any security system.

"The threat changes constantly. These are highly sophisticated people

for the most part, and they'll always find a new way to mess you up. So we can never have perfect security."

Some agencies in Canada, such as the RCMP and Canada Border Services Agency, already use similar programs. A number of other countries have behaviour screening in place at airports, including Israel where security experts begin observing travellers as soon as they arrive in the parking lot.

Civil liberties groups have voiced concerns about behaviour screening, saying it could lead to racial profiling. But according to a Transport Canada news release, this additional layer of security focuses on identifying those who are acting suspiciously "and not racial or ethnic profiles."

ACTA's McCaig says behaviour screening "has been extremely successful" and the government should make it a priority.

Kislenko, however, stresses that while more security is necessary at airports, security measures shouldn't go too far.

"We should never want such draconian security that you couldn't get out of the house if you wanted to. But we do need to be realistic, we need to improve security constantly."

"It's a never-ending battle and the only major question that we all face is how do we reconcile these measures against our own civil liberties and the timing issue of getting many millions of people through airports and on to their destinations."

Inuit sue EU in bid to kill seal ban

OTTAWA (Reuters)—The Inuit have filed a lawsuit against the European Union in a bid to overturn an EU ban on imports of seal products, major Inuit organizations said on Wednesday.

The EU ban was imposed in July after decades of protests from animal activists, who said the annual seal hunt was cruel and inhumane. The ban will go into effect in time for the 2010 hunting season.

The Inuit, who call Canada's vast Arctic region home and whose economy relies in part on the seal hunt, say the hunt is humane and complain. They complain the impending EU ban has sharply cut the prices for seal pelts.

"It is bitterly ironic that the EU, which seems entirely at home with promoting massive levels of agribusiness and the raising and slaughtering of animals in highly industrialized conditions, seeks to preach some kind of selective elevated morality to Inuit," said senior Inuit official Mary Simon.

There was no immediate reaction from the Ottawa office of the European Union's executive commission.

While the Inuit hunt seals in the Far North, Canada's main seal hunt takes place in March and April on the ice floes off the Atlantic Coast and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The seals are usually shot, or bludgeoned over the head with a spiked club called a hakapik.

Seal products include fur used in clothing and oil used in vitamin supplements.

The Atlantic seal herd is estimated to number more than 5 million. In 2009, the quota for harp seals—the main species hunted—was 280,000.

In November, Canada took action at the World Trade Organization to overturn the EU ban.

This week, Fisheries Minister Gail Shea was in China to promote seal products.

Outpouring of support from Canada for Haiti earthquake victims

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"Our government is deeply concerned about the impact of the earthquake and we want to ensure that the immediate basic needs of the Haitian people are met quickly and effectively," said Minister of International Cooperation Bev Oda, who on Wednesday announced the initial \$5-million funding.

"Haiti is a priority for this government, and Canada is committed to supporting the Haitian people in these devastating times," said Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon at a press conference early Wednesday morning.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper released a statement extending sympathies from Canada. "Canada stands ready to provide any necessary assistance to the people of Haiti during this time of need," he said.

"This natural disaster has hit a country with an extremely fragile infrastructure, where many buildings are already unstable, and where living conditions are often very difficult. I fear for its people," said Governor General Michaëlle Jean, a Haitian-Canadian born in Port-au-Prince, in a statement.

The small nation of 8.79 mil-

lion people has suffered tremendous natural disasters, political upheaval, and violence in recent years.

'Like me, Haitian communities across Canada are heartbroken and overwhelmed by the magnitude of this catastrophe. The images and news reports are unbearable to watch. So much distress, suffering and loss'

— Governor General Michaëlle Jean

When the earthquake struck, the country, which is the poorest in the Western Hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world, was still in the process of rebuilding following several devastating hurricanes in 2008.

"Like me, Haitian communi-

ties across Canada are heartbroken and overwhelmed by the magnitude of this catastrophe. The images and news reports are unbearable to watch. So much distress, suffering and loss," Ms. Jean said in a statement released Wednesday.

"I salute the friendship and solidarity being demonstrated all across Canada and throughout the international community," she added.

Canada's financial aid will help provide emergency shelter, medical and sanitation services, water, food, and other relief items and protection.

The quake struck at 4:53 p.m. EST Tuesday and was followed by an aftershock just before 11 p.m. EST. It was the largest earthquake in 200 years to strike the country and Haitian citizens are struggling to find survivors in the rubble amidst severe damage to infrastructure including power and communications. Many international diplomats stationed in Haiti have been reported dead.

Canada is home to some 120,000 Canadian-Haitians, with Montreal having the country's largest Canadian-Haitian community.

Canada's development program in Haiti is CIDA's largest in the Americas and second largest in the world (after Afghanistan). Haiti and Canada are both members of the United Nations, Organization of American States, and La Francophonie.

Four Canadian humanitarian organizations have coordinated efforts under the banner of the Humanitarian Coalition to bring disaster relief to Haiti. The New Democratic Party is calling on the federal government to match Canadians' contributions to the coalition.

Foreign Affairs is advising against non-essential travel to Haiti and asks Canadians to donate money to experienced humanitarian organizations—rather than clothing or food—as the best way to help.

A travel report for Haiti and more information on how Canadians can help can be found at http://www.international.gc.ca/humanitarian-humanitaire/earthquake_seisme_haiti.aspx.



Girl Guide uniforms in 1969. GIRL GUIDES OF CANADA



A Girl Guide and a Brownie model their uniforms. GIRL GUIDES OF CANADA

Girl Guides celebrate 100 years of girl power

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Today, with about 10 million individual members globally, Girl Guides is one of the largest girl-focused organizations in the world and is aimed at engaging girls and young women in world issues and making a positive difference through self-empowerment.

While girlguiding has always stood for "fun, friendship and adventure," in more recent years it has broadened from outdoors skills to include activities like fashion design and community projects.

Because of the way the movement developed, the 100th anniversary will be celebrated over three years, from 2010 to 2012, says Deborah Del Duca, chief executive officer at Girl Guides of Canada (GGC).

"Guiding commenced in Canada in 1910 but the movement in the majority of the 145 member countries substantially started in the window of 1909 through to 1911, so that's why the centenary goes on for three years."

In Canada, festivities begin on Saturday at the Casa Loma, an historic castle in Toronto. About 4,000 guests are expected to attend.

One of the biggest centenary celebrations to date took place at London's Wembley Arena on October

17. Some of U.K.'s top music acts, including The Saturdays, Alexandra Burke, The Noisettes, and Pixie Lott entertained tens of thousands of Guides, Brownies, and Rainbows at The Centenary Big Gig.

In Australia, Federal Minister Tanya Plibersek declared 2010 the Year of the Girl Guide and the Australian Royal Mint has plans to produce a Girl Guide dollar coin. Canada Post will be issuing a stamp to mark the occasion in Canada.

Among the several signature events GGC has planned for the centenary year are a national rally on May 15 and a national camp occurring from July 8-17 at Guelph Lake in Ontario. About 3,000 girls and women will attend, including guests from 13 countries that have girlguiding.

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) is committed to the UN Millennium Development Goals, and in 2010 girl guides around the world will take up the challenge to eradicate hunger and poverty.

"Starting now, we are encouraging our girls in their local communities to be food collecting," says Del Duca. All donations will be contributed to food banks across the country.

Girl Guides Canada "enables girls

to be confident, resourceful, and courageous, and to make a difference in the world," says their mission statement.

Del Duca says this can be achieved through community activities and through the programming GGC offers the girls, such as an anti-bullying program which helps them be more courageous and a girl empowerment program to give them confidence.

"Their experiences around being resourceful, their contributions, their activities around camping, and learning a variety of skills through their regular meetings—those often dovetail into making a difference in the world, because they're also committing to community events which can be anything from tree-planting in the local community to visiting seniors facilities to doing major clean-ups in their communities."

The global centenary celebrations encourage girls and young women to reach out to each other and share stories. A guide named Dianne wrote on the WAGGGS website:

"I think this is wonderful and the projects are super-duper important!!!! I'm very happy about what the international girl scouts are doing. I'm a 5th grader and I am happy about what the girl scouts are doing."



Governor General Michaëlle Jean, a Haitian-Canadian born in Port-au-Prince, pauses while speaking about the crisis in Haiti following Tuesday's earthquake. BLAIR GABLE / REUTERS