

# Aviation Operational Threat Response Plan

*Supporting Plan to the  
National Strategy for Aviation Security*

March 26, 2007

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## Foreword

By issuing National Security Presidential Directive-47/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-16 (NSPD-47/HSPD-16) of June 20, 2006 (“Aviation Security Policy”), President George W. Bush established U.S. policy, guidelines, and implementation actions to continue the enhancement of U.S. homeland security and national security by protecting the United States and U.S. interests from threats in the Air Domain<sup>1</sup>. NSPD-47/HSPD-16 directed the development of the National Strategy for Aviation Security (National Strategy), which established the overarching framework for a comprehensive and integrated national approach to security the Aviation Transportation System, building on current successful initiatives and directing additional security enhancements where necessary, and the following seven supporting plans:

- **The Aviation Transportation System Security Plan** directs a risk-based approach to developing and implementing measures to reduce vulnerabilities within the Aviation Transportation System.
- **The Aviation Operational Threat Response Plan** prescribes comprehensive and coordinated protocols to assure an effective and efficient United States Government response to air threats against the Nation and its interests.
- **The Aviation Transportation System Recovery Plan** defines a suite of strategies to mitigate the operational and economic effects of an attack in the Air Domain, as well as measures that will enable the Aviation Transportation System and other affected critical government and private sector aviation-related elements to recover from such an attack as rapidly as possible.
- **The Air Domain Surveillance and Intelligence Integration Plan** coordinates requirements, priorities, and implementation of national air surveillance resources and the means to share this information with appropriate stakeholders.
- **The International Aviation Threat Reduction Plan** details U.S. international activities to counter illicit acquisition and use by terrorists, other criminals, and other hostile individuals or groups of stand-off weapons systems that pose the most significant threats to lawful civilian and military use of the Air Domain.
- **The Domestic Outreach Plan** ensures stakeholder participation in the implementation of the supporting plans and related aviation security policies and provides guidelines for outreach in the event of a threat to, or an attack on, the United States or another disruptive incident to the Aviation Transportation System.
- **The International Outreach Plan** provides a comprehensive framework to solicit international support for an improved global aviation security network.

While these plans address different aspects of aviation security, they are mutually dependent and complement each other. When combined with critical performance

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<sup>1</sup> “Air Domain” is defined as the global airspace, including domestic, international, and foreign airspace, as well as all manned and unmanned aircraft operating, and people and cargo present in that airspace, and all aviation-related infrastructure.

measures, collectively they create the integrated foundation essential for an effective strategy and should be regularly assessed to ensure progress in the Nation's aviation security program. These plans do not alter existing constitutional and statutory authorities or responsibilities of the department and agency heads to carry out operational activities and to provide or receive information. Together, the National Strategy and its supporting plans enhance the security of the United States and its interests, including all lawful and legitimate public and private activities in the Air Domain.

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## **Executive Summary**

The Aviation Operational Threat Response Plan (Plan) directs the coordination, as appropriate, of the United States Government operational response to terrorist, criminal, and hostile state threats to, or attacks against, the United States and its interests in the Air Domain. This Plan is part of an active, layered, aviation security and defense in-depth. This Plan enhances our existing capabilities by directing the coordination, collaboration, and integration of United States Government national-level agency command centers, which includes for the purposes of this plan, operations centers. It enhances our capability to achieve coordinated, unified, timely, and effective planning and mission accomplishment to counter those threats that require immediate aviation response actions. This Plan supports the strategic objectives listed in NSPD-47/HSPD-16.

To execute the coordination requirements and response activities more effectively, this Plan directs lead and supporting Federal department and agency roles and responsibilities based on the following criteria: existing law, desired United States Government outcome, greatest potential impact of the threat, the response capabilities required, assets on-scene, and authority to act. This Plan directs immediate actions, generally short duration in nature, to counter the full range of airborne and ground-based aviation security threats. These threats include, but are not limited to, those identified in NSPD-47/HSPD-16: attacks using aircraft as weapons against ground-based targets; attacks against aircraft, including hijacking and air piracy; attacks using standoff weapons, including Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) or weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and attacks against Aviation Transportation System (ATS) infrastructure.

For the purposes of this plan, Aviation Operational Threat Response (AOTR) execution begins when intelligence or other information is received that an incident is occurring and that an immediate response is necessary. AOTR execution concludes when the threat has been defeated or otherwise resolved. Specific operational response activities include, but are not limited to, the following: airborne interception and surface-to-air operations; onboard law enforcement response; aviation law enforcement ground interdiction and response and counterterrorism operations; interdiction and disposition of designated tracks of interest; and operational response to a domestic attack, or threat of attack, using standoff weapons such as MANPADS. This Plan does not address steady-state security actions taken during ambiguous or generalized periods of threat or vulnerability, conducted in accordance with the ATS Security plan. It also does not include post-attack incident response activities, conducted in accordance with the ATS Recovery plan.

This Plan, together with the ATS Security and ATS Recovery plans, address the national-level prevention-response-recovery aspects of the United States Government efforts to counter direct threats to, and attacks on, the United States in the Air Domain. As such, these three plans are synchronized in function, and facilitate and require the further synchronization of prevention-response-recovery execution at the operational and tactical levels.

## **Purpose**

To promote active, layered, aviation security and defense in-depth, the AOTR plan directs the coordination, as appropriate, of the United States Government response when sufficient intelligence or other information is received that an incident is occurring and that an immediate response must be taken to interdict, apprehend, exploit, and when necessary, defeat or otherwise overcome that threat. The coordination, collaboration, and integration of national-level aviation command centers will enhance the unified, timely, and effective response to these threats or attacks. This integrated network includes existing command centers of the AOTR agencies<sup>2</sup> to ensure a coordinated response. AOTR includes the immediate deployment of appropriate assets, usually for short duration operations, and includes the use of force, including deadly force when required.

Additionally, this Plan identifies roles and responsibilities of the lead and supporting AOTR agencies, and defines the relationships and operational requirements necessary for the United States to act quickly and decisively to counter any threats or attacks. AOTR will not be handicapped, but rather will be enhanced, by the complementary authorities, capabilities, and capacities of agencies with the responsibility for response to these threats. Although specific threat and attack circumstances will dictate the AOTR lead agency designation and specific execution activities, identification of pre-incident AOTR leads, made using general threat circumstances and the principles listed below, is contained in the roles and responsibilities section, principally to aid in the execution of necessary planning and standardization requirements.

This Plan further refines and complements the requirements in the National Response Plan (NRP). It directs a unified and coordinated Federal response to threats or attacks in the Air Domain. All relevant actions and supporting directives, plans, and policies of all United States Government departments and agencies will be in compliance with this plan.

Nothing in this Plan is intended to impair or otherwise alter the authorities of Department Secretaries, including that of the Secretary of Defense over the Department of Defense (DOD) and the chain of command for military forces from the President to the Secretary of Defense, to the commander of military forces, or military command and control procedures.

## **Scope**

This Plan directs the following:

- The conduct of operational activities, usually short duration in nature and as appropriate, including, but not limited to, airborne interception and surface-to-air weapons system operations; onboard law enforcement response; aviation law enforcement ground interdiction and response and counterterrorism operations;

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<sup>2</sup> “AOTR agencies” are those Federal departments, agencies, and other Federal entities that have operational response assets or play a direct supporting role in the operational response to counter threats to the Air Domain. The primary AOTR agencies include the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Defense, Transportation, and State.

interdiction and disposition of designated tracks of interest; and operational response to a domestic attack, or threat of attack, using standoff weapons, such as Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS);

- Actions that directly support the conduct of AOTR response activities, including security measures related to airspace and air traffic management;
- Coordination, as appropriate, within the Federal government, and with private sector and international partners, in accordance with the Domestic and International Outreach plans, to prevent attacks and stop unlawful acts in the Air Domain; and
- Development of AOTR plans across the spectrum of operational activities, including those conducted by military, law enforcement, investigative, and other Federal, State, local, and tribal government agencies.

Execution of AOTR is based on the following prioritized nationally-coordinated outcomes: overcoming the threat; gaining information from investigation; using knowledge ascertained about the threat or actual attack to prosecute perpetrators; and preventing or defeating future threats in the Air Domain.

This Plan does not address AOTR for ballistic missile or cyber threats or attacks, as these are more appropriately addressed in other United States Government documents.

Further, this Plan does not address steady-state security actions taken to prevent attack or during generalized periods of increased threat or vulnerability, conducted in accordance with the ATS Security plan. It also does not address post-attack incident response activities, conducted in accordance with the ATS Recovery plan.

### **Guiding Principles**

This Plan first considers that any airborne threat approaching or within U.S. airspace might pose a threat to national security, and that the U.S. Government must therefore be capable of an appropriate, coordinated response to that threat.

AOTR agencies shall initiate appropriate AOTR coordination at the earliest opportunity upon receiving sufficient intelligence or other information that an incident is occurring and an immediate response is required by the U.S. Government to interdict, defeat, or otherwise overcome that threat.

Agencies that encounter a threat during routine security or law enforcement operations (such as materiel discovery during search or screening) will immediately:

- take those actions within their capacity and authority to control, resolve, or defeat the threat, including the use of deadly force if appropriate; and

- notify and coordinate or consult, as appropriate, with other agencies, and, when necessary, prepare for the orderly transition of leadership to another department or agency for continuing AOTR or post-response recovery actions.
- Execution priorities for AOTR are as follows:
  - preserve life and minimize risk to public safety;
  - prevent terrorist attacks, criminal acts, or hostile acts in, or the unlawful exploitation of, the Air Domain, including those acts involving WMD;
  - defeat attacks that are occurring and prepare additional assets to respond to potential concurrent or subsequent attacks;
  - minimize the impact on the ATS;
  - apprehend and prosecute individuals engaged in illegal acts and seize related materials; and
  - gather threat-related intelligence, and collect evidence for prosecution and for future tactical exploitation, consistent with U.S. law, Presidential orders, and national policy.

## **Considerations and Assumptions**

### Considerations

AOTR agencies will share information in accordance with U.S. law and Presidential orders, plans, and policies. Information sharing among these agencies will be maximized to the extent practicable and appropriate to take full advantage of shared situational awareness and coordination of interagency action.

AOTR agencies will consider the strategic importance of international trade, economic cooperation, and the free flow of commerce and passengers when planning for and conducting AOTR activities.

### Assumptions

Threats or attacks may appear at any time with little or no warning. They may take place in single or multiple geographic areas, be conducted in a multiple, simultaneous fashion, and may result in mass casualties. An airborne threat may present itself as either a compliant or non-compliant aircraft prior to affecting an attack, adding to the unpredictability of the current threat environment. A threat may also include the presence of a WMD aboard an aircraft.

Private industry will support responses to threats or attacks, where appropriate and when capable.

Allies and other international aviation partners will support planning and execution of this Plan, using bilateral and regional aviation security cooperation efforts to confront,

and when necessary and capable, defeat aviation threats and attacks as part of a coordinated global aviation security effort.

### **AOTR Concept of Operations**

AOTR agencies shall use the integrated national-level command centers, utilizing interoperable communications and common situational awareness tools, to facilitate unified, timely, and effective information flow. This integrated network will consist of existing command centers of AOTR agencies to achieve a coordinated response, if appropriate. These agencies shall maintain a 24-hour watch, linked with other command centers to ensure coordinated, unified, timely, and effective information flow. Agencies shall maintain operational control of their own personnel and assets, except as agreed upon by department or agency heads or when directed by the President and in accordance with statutory authority.

AOTR agencies shall have ready access to secure and non-secure computer and telephone connectivity and the capability to conduct coordination at appropriate classification levels. AOTR agencies will use the integrated command center network to provide current information to senior decision-makers.

### AOTR Lead Agency Mission Execution

The AOTR lead agency is the one that has the most direct role and responsibility with respect to a specific response. In addition to conducting operational activities, the principal responsibility for the AOTR lead agency is to coordinate, as appropriate, with the other AOTR agencies to ensure the most effective response through shared situational awareness and identification of required support activities during the response.

To maximize unity of effort, the AOTR lead agency will not change during a response, until the threat is under control, except when the response exceeds the AOTR lead agency's capabilities or authorities or when directed by higher authority in accordance with protocols in this plan. AOTR lead agency transition decisions and resolution of course of action disagreements should occur at the operational level whenever possible or at the level designated by the AOTR agencies.

During AOTR, time permitting, the lead agency will, as appropriate:

- Coordinate the range of aviation security activities and responses required to execute AOTR effectively under this plan to achieve the United States Government's desired outcome.
- Coordinate with other AOTR agencies to ensure unity of effort, achieve the desired outcome, and to facilitate the orderly transition of leadership to other agencies, as necessary and appropriate for other activities, including post-event investigation and/or mitigation or recovery.
- Lead any required interagency tactical crisis planning for mission execution.
- Coordinate operations using the integrated network of AOTR agency command centers to assist interagency support efforts, ensure appropriate interagency

connectivity, and keep all appropriate interagency aviation security partners informed and engaged during response, if possible. For aviation threats identified outside an area that might pose a direct threat to the United States or U.S. interests, more deliberate communications may be used to satisfy AOTR coordination requirements.

- Review and update the threat assessment and communicate the assessment to the other AOTR agencies.
- Determine which capabilities are required from the lead and supporting agencies.
- Identify and take advantage of opportunities for appropriate intelligence collection and investigative activities in coordination with other agencies.
- Ensure, when possible, Department of State (DOS) involvement during AOTR to identify potential effects on foreign affairs of the United States, including threats involving foreign-owned commercial, non-commercial, state aircraft, and incursion into foreign sovereign airspace.
- Coordinate public affairs activities, consistent with guidance provided in the NSPD-47/HSPD-16 directed Domestic Outreach plan, except where it is decided to take an action or to refrain from an action based primarily on considerations of foreign policy, where the DOS will lead public affairs activity.
- Notify the AOTR supporting agencies of any aviation threat response activity being conducted separately from the coordinated AOTR effort.

#### AOTR Supporting Agency Mission Execution

- During AOTR, the supporting agencies will:
- Provide expertise to support AOTR lead agency crisis planning and coordination efforts.
- Ensure connectivity with the lead agency, and provide appropriate information during ongoing operational response.
- Provide the AOTR lead agency with a list of potential supporting and response capabilities. Notify the AOTR lead agency of any aviation threat response activity being conducted separately from the coordinated AOTR effort.
- Prepare to assume the AOTR lead role in accordance with this plan.
- Support intelligence collection, investigation, mitigation, and recovery activities, consistent with law, Presidential orders, and national policy.
- Coordinate with the AOTR lead, consistent with the Domestic Outreach plan, for all public affairs activity.

#### **AOTR Agency Roles And Responsibilities**

The departments and agencies below have AOTR roles and responsibilities. Given the unique operating environment of the Air Domain, any of the AOTR agencies may need to perform a specific lead or supporting functional role based on the threat scenario and the outcome desired by the United States Government. In determining the appropriate Federal agency to lead the AOTR and conduct an AOTR activity, the following factors shall jointly be considered:

- Existing law

- Desired outcome
- Greatest potential impact of the threat
- Response capability required
- Assets on-scene
- Authority to act

The following general guidance applies to all AOTR agencies under the specified conditions:

- In a deliberate response to aviation terrorism threats in the United States, operational planning will be conducted by the appropriate Departments in close consultation with the appropriate Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Joint Terrorism Task Force(s), except those operations executed by DoD under the direction of the Secretary of Defense or the President. Counterterrorism planning shall be consistent with and complement the National Counterterrorism Center's strategic operational planning efforts.
- Response to radiation alarms and WMD events in the Air Domain shall be conducted in accordance with established authorities and protocols, and shall comply with the coordination and participation principles set forth in this plan. Post-incident domestic WMD mitigation and recovery will be in accordance with the NRP and ATS Recovery plan.
- To the maximum extent feasible, agencies (including field-level units) shall coordinate their activities with other Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, law enforcement and emergency response agencies, and appropriate private sector entities.

Due to their common characteristics in AOTR, those response activities associated with the specific threats identified in NSPD-47/HSPD-16 have been addressed in this section in three categories: airborne threats, ground threats, and general threats (not specific to air or ground methods of attack).

#### Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Upon AOTR execution, DHS shall establish and maintain communications with both AOTR and non-AOTR Federal agencies, appropriate State and local government agencies, and private industry to facilitate effective aviation operational response, and mitigate the effects of a successful or defeated attack.

The Secretary of Homeland Security is responsible for the following activities specific to AOTR, as appropriate:

- Airborne Threats
  - Acting through Customs and Border Protection (CBP), conducting aviation law enforcement operations, including detecting, identifying, and interdicting potential air threats to national security, as well as investigative case support for prosecution of criminal law violations within its jurisdiction.

- Acting through the U.S. Coast Guard, conducting aviation operations in support of National Defense, law enforcement, and National Security, including National Defense in the National Capital Region.
- Acting through Transportation Security Administration (TSA) personnel when present, conducting law enforcement activity onboard airborne aircraft to counter threats.
- Acting through TSA, monitoring, implementing security actions, and coordinating a response to a track of interest.
- Ground Threats
  - Acting through TSA, having exclusive responsibility to direct law enforcement activity related to the safety of passengers onboard aircraft that are involved in acts of hijacking or air piracy from the moment at which all external doors of the aircraft are closed following boarding until those doors are opened to allow passengers to leave the aircraft. TSA will coordinate with Federal Bureau of Investigation personnel on scene, and transfer coordination responsibilities during hijacking/air piracy events that require specialized hostage negotiation and rescue capabilities, or otherwise exceed their capabilities.
  - Detecting ground-based Air Domain threats, primarily within and near ATS infrastructure, including the airport environment. DHS will coordinate with other Federal law enforcement agencies, and State, local, and tribal law enforcement personnel, who may be the first responders to an aviation threat, to ensure the most effective AOTR, as well as to maximize the capability to deter and prevent further attacks.
- General Threats
  - Designating flights of interest that do not represent a direct, immediate threat to the United States or U.S. interests, but do require focused attention, coordination, and potential AOTR response.
  - Acting through the United States Secret Service (USSS), designing, coordinating, and implementing operational security plans for National Special Security Events (NSSE).
  - Acting through the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) and in conjunction with other AOTR agencies, improving the capability to detect and report unauthorized attempts to possess, store, develop, or transport nuclear or radiological materials.
  - Enhancing information sharing to assist in identifying potential or actual threats that may require AOTR. This capability will also enhance AOTR by providing additional information to assist in the determination of hostile intent of threats.

DHS shall be prepared to take a lead or supporting AOTR role to counter domestic terrorist or criminal threats.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

The Attorney General is responsible for the following activities specific to AOTR, as appropriate:

- Ground Threats
  - Acting through the FBI, having the primary responsibility for ground-based tactical response to aircraft hijackings and air piracy incidents in the U.S., as well as incidents involving other terrorist threats, including those involving WMD and the ATS infrastructure. The FBI will coordinate this response, including procedures to assume AOTR lead upon arrival on-scene, with DHS, State, local, tribal, and other Federal law enforcement personnel to maximize unity of effort and prevent subsequent threats and attacks.
- General Threats
  - Conducting investigation of terrorist acts or terrorist threats, or other criminal acts, as appropriate, by individuals or groups inside of the United States, or directed at U.S. citizens or institutions abroad, where such acts are within the Federal criminal jurisdiction of the United States, all of which may trigger AOTR.

DOJ shall be prepared to take a lead or supporting AOTR role to counter domestic terrorist or criminal threats.

#### Department of Transportation (DOT)

Upon AOTR execution, DOT, acting through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), shall initiate non-secure communications between FAA air traffic control facilities and other appropriate agencies. This communications link will facilitate safe flight of other air traffic during an operational response to an actual or potential aviation threat.

The Secretary of Transportation is responsible for the following activities specific to AOTR, as appropriate:

- Airborne Threats
  - Coordinating and managing the National Airspace System (NAS), including international airspace that has been delegated to the United States for the purposes of air navigation services. This includes supporting airborne operational threat response by expediting and deconflicting clearance and routing of DoD and DHS interdiction assets and providing air contact information to enhance airborne AOTR. The FAA also supports AOTR efforts and steady-state defense, security, and other airborne law enforcement and crisis response missions through the planning and implementation of a broad spectrum of airspace and air traffic management related measures, including establishment and enforcement of temporary flight restrictions and provision of real-time Air Traffic Control (ATC) support. These actions are taken by the FAA as the



Secretary of Defense or his designee. This includes the response to a threat against aircraft with U.S. persons onboard that occurs overseas, in coordination with DOS and the affected countries, as appropriate.

- Conducting air defense against airborne hostile military threats.
- General Threats
  - Conducting air defense against threats to DoD assets and infrastructure on DoD installations.
  - Taking a lead or supporting role for response to other aviation threats globally, including airborne or ground-based actions taken at the request of foreign partners, and when directed by the Secretary of Defense or the President.
  - Conducting defense support of civil authorities, including search for, and detection of, CBRNE materiel and counterterrorism support operations, to counter threats in the domestic Air Domain, as directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense.

#### Department of State (DOS)

The Secretary of State is responsible for the following activities specific to AOTR, as appropriate:

- Airborne Threats
  - Providing advice on the foreign policy implications of a U.S. airborne response to potential air threats.
- General Threats
  - Conducting global diplomatic coordination in support of AOTR, including coordination with affected countries to obtain required authorizations for operations and to facilitate U.S. Government assistance within the jurisdiction of those countries, when requested.
  - Leading the public affairs response when it is decided to take an action or to refrain from an action based primarily on considerations of foreign policy. In these cases, DOS coordinates with other applicable agencies in developing public statements regarding the response and in relaying appropriate press guidance to agencies requesting it.

#### Department of Energy (DOE)

The Secretary of Energy conducts the following activities specific to AOTR, as appropriate:

- General Threats
  - Provides scientific and technical expertise in nuclear weapons design and specially equipped teams to conduct search and support response, and to assist in recovery and consequence management operations during any radiological or nuclear incident. Additionally, DOE coordinates radiological contaminated debris management associated with disposition

of WMD-related materials and aircraft that may be affected by such materials or attacks, when requested.

#### Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)

The Director of National Intelligence conducts the following activities specific to AOTR, as appropriate:

- General Threats
  - Oversees efforts across the Intelligence Community to provide timely, accurate, and relevant intelligence and other information about imminent or actual threats to support effective AOTR activities.
  - The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) serves as the primary organization in the United States Government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence possessed or acquired by the United States Government pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism, excepting intelligence pertaining exclusively to domestic terrorists and domestic counterterrorism.
  - Through NCTC, provides access to intelligence needed by AOTR agencies to accomplish their assigned activities.

#### Office of the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center

The Director of the National Counterterrorism Center is responsible for the following activities specific to AOTR:

- Conducting strategic operational planning for counterterrorism activities, integrating all instruments of national power, including diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement activities within and among agencies.

### **Interagency Implementation Requirements**

Any budgetary requirements resulting from the following directed actions will be addressed within the context of agency, departmental, and government-wide budgetary decision-making processes.

#### AOTR Protocols

DoD, in coordination with DHS, DOJ, and DOT will develop and submit to the Border and Transportation Security Policy Coordinating Committee (BTS PCC) for approval, as appropriate, AOTR protocols within 120 days of approval of this plan. These Protocols will promote better understanding of the threat and identification of the full range of U.S. Government response options, to allow appropriate actions to attain the desired outcome.

The AOTR Protocols shall include:

- Regularly updated 24-hour contact information for the network of integrated command centers of the AOTR agencies to facilitate the initiation and administration of coordinating activities required by this plan.

- Processes for information flow, oversight, and decision-making by senior U.S. Government officials.
- Guidance on conducting coordination activities and conferencing.
- Integration of pre-existing and emerging coordination procedures and protocols.
- Enhanced integration of system safety and efficiency critical factors into planning and real-time decision making on operational response efforts.
- Process and points of contact for coordination in the event that Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government (COOP/COG) procedures are implemented.
- An AOTR agency participation matrix.
- Guidance on coordinating AOTR with aviation stakeholder elements.

### Planning Requirements

Within 180 days of approval of this plan, departments are directed to assess and update existing, or develop as necessary, detailed plans, approved at the Department level, to cover the following responsibilities. DHS, in coordination with DOT, DOJ, and DoD, and in consultation with other departments and agencies, will regularly assess the plans and coordinate any necessary updates.

- DHS, in coordination with DOJ, DOT and DoD, and in consultation with other agencies, will develop specific, detailed operational plans for synchronizing the respective responsibilities of AOTR agencies as defined in this plan, including plans to detect and respond to on-board threats, including the presence of no-fly passengers, possible or confirmed hijacking, or terrorists equipped with improvised explosive devices or a WMD. This will also include aviation security planning at NSSEs, conducted under Presidential-direction by the USSS, as well as other significant security events that have not been designated a NSSE.
- DHS, in coordination with DOT, DOJ, DOS, and DoD, shall document the procedures to coordinate the decision and execution of diverting tracks of interest.
- DOJ and DHS, in coordination with DOT, and other key stakeholders as needed, will develop a concept of operations to address ground-based aviation threats located at, or in the vicinity of, airport facilities that, at a minimum, include the following:
  - Both immediate and deliberate response, including multiple, simultaneous terrorist attacks.
  - MANPADS threats.
  - Other threats ranging from air piracy of large commercial aircraft on the ground to cargo with WMD devices or related materials on an aircraft on the ground or within the airport complex to other terrorist or criminal activity at large commercial and smaller general aviation airports.
  - Prevention, detection, and response to identified WMD or related materials at U.S. airports.
  - Specific procedures to ensure the coordination of intelligence collection and investigative activities related to aviation threat incidents.

- Tactical coordination procedures for response operations with appropriate State/local law enforcement agencies at airports where FBI tactical forces may not be immediately available.

All plans will include:

- Risk assessments associating threats with potential vulnerabilities and likely consequences.
- Detailed department and agency roles and responsibilities, command and control of assets, integration of supporting forces, user-defined operational picture requirements, and AOTR lead agency transition plans. All coordination protocols must include abbreviated procedures to address time-critical requirements.
- Effects on command, control, communications, and computer systems of catastrophic WMD attacks, including those associated with a nuclear detonation.
- Any necessary interagency agreements.
- Capability requirements, including assessments and gaps within DOT, DHS, DoD and DOJ, and those that will need to be provided by supporting agencies.
- Mitigation of risks associated with threat transition between the Maritime and Air Domains through synchronization of Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) and AOTR plans and protocols, as appropriate.

#### Standardization Requirements

The following actions are directed, in the identified timeframe, upon plan approval:

Immediately:

- DHS, in coordination with other appropriate agencies, will lead a national effort to synchronize the development of WMD detection capability in the Air Domain to enhance AOTR activities.
- DHS, in coordination with DOJ, DOT, DoD, and other AOTR agencies, shall on a regular basis review and provide recommendations for changes to department or agency roles, responsibilities, and plan protocols to the NSC/HSC.

Within 90 days:

- DHS, in coordination with DOJ, DOT, DoD, and other appropriate agencies, will assess the feasibility and desirability of establishing a national-level civilian aviation security coordination center, similar to the functionality of DHS's National Capital Region Coordination Center. The primary mission of this coordination center is enhanced unity of effort through rapid coordination and information exchange among AOTR agencies to affect a more effective operational response. The coordination center is not meant to be a substitute for, or to countermand the authority of, departments or agencies to maintain their own command centers within which they will exercise command and control of their assets performing aviation operational response.
- DoD, DHS, DOJ and DOT, in consultation with other Federal, State, and local agencies, will identify and prioritize existing COOP/COG and emergency

response programs and plans, both classified and non-classified, to ensure appropriate coordination and de-confliction with operational response activities during emergency situations.

Within 180 days:

- DHS, in coordination with DOT and other partners, will develop scalable requirements for temporary flight restrictions (to be planned and implemented by DOT, as necessary), combined with enhanced communications and coordination protocols and enhanced airport ground security measures, to address threats against major U.S. metropolitan areas and critical infrastructure to be activated when increased periods of threat dictate.
- DHS, in coordination with DOD, DOT, and other key stakeholders, will develop recommendations to enhance and clarify interagency efforts to monitor flights within the National Airspace System to vet the same for compliance with security and other requirements levied on air operators.

Within one year:

- DOJ and DHS, in coordination with DOT, will develop and implement tactical coordination procedures, including communications and use of deadly force protocols, to maximize effectiveness of ground response operations. Likewise, DoD and DHS, in coordination with DOT, will develop tactical coordination procedures for response operations against airborne aircraft.
- DHS, DoD, DOJ, and DOT will develop and implement tactical coordination procedures for other threats identified within this plan.

#### Exercise Requirements

- DHS will incorporate aviation threat scenarios into the existing National Exercise Program.
- DoD, DOT, and DOJ will ensure that department-level exercises include tactical-level aviation threat scenarios at least once per year. In addition to exercising appropriate level coordination and agency command and control functions, it is desirable to incorporate actual aviation force positioning and other activities into these events.

#### Performance Measures

DHS, DoD, DOT, and DOJ, in coordination with other departments and agencies, will, within one year of plan approval, jointly develop and implement:

- A comprehensive observations/lessons learned methodology that provides ready feedback to appropriate agencies in response to identified vulnerabilities and consequences.
- An aviation security evaluation mechanism that regularly assesses the adequacy of the capabilities of agencies conducting lead and supporting roles.

- An aviation security evaluation mechanism that regularly assesses the adequacy of current airspace control measures and enhanced communications and coordination protocols in place in the National Capital Region and elsewhere, as applicable.

## **Summary**

The effectiveness of the U.S. aviation security efforts relies greatly on measures to deter and prevent adversaries who intend to do us harm from acquiring the access, tools, and wherewithal to carry out an attack. In the event these measures fail, the United States Government will be in the right position with the right capabilities to resolve, or if necessary as a last resort, defeat threats to the United States or U.S. interests in the Air Domain.

This Plan directs the coordination, as appropriate, among the AOTR agencies to facilitate the most effective response against these threats in the Air Domain. AOTR will not be constrained, but rather will be enhanced, by the complementary authorities, capabilities, and capacities of agencies with the responsibility for response to these threats.

As a well-considered and exercised component of the overall aviation security effort, this Plan not only forms the “last line of defense” for the United States Government, but also adds tangibly to the overall deterrent of our aviation security measures and greatly mitigates the potential effects of our adversaries’ actions.