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Aviation Security: Illusion of Safety or Reality?

Sotirios Kalfoglou¹

Havacılıkta Güvenlik: Gerçek mi İllüzyon mu? Öz

Güvenlik, insanlara sağlanan ancak aynı zamanda hissedilebilmesi gereken karmaşık bir kavramdır. Güvenlik gereksinim oranı, risk hesaplamaları ile gerçekleşirken politika oluşturmak kişi psikolojisi ve duygularını da hesaba katarak gerçekleştirilmelidir. İnsanoğlu genellikle olağanüstü risklerden korkar ve kontrol edilebilir riskler daha az korkutucu gibi görünür. Oysa gerçek risk farklı olabilir. Örneğin hava taşımacılığı sayılara bakıldığında kara taşımacılığından çok daha az risklidir ancak hava taşımacılığından korkulur. Teknoloji ve medya, risklerle ilgili insanların farkındalığını sağlayan iki önemli parametredir. ABD'de 11 Eylül saldırısının ardından havacılık ve havayolu güvenliği medyanın da katkısı ile büyük önem kazandı. Bu saldırı sonunda insanlar güvenliği garanti etmek için özgürlüklerinden dahi vazgeçmeyi kabul eder duruma geldiler. Havaalanı güvenliği 11 Eylül'den önce önemsenmeyip, yolcular için bir güvenlik tiyatrosuna benzemekte idi. Havayolu şirketleri terörist saldırıların sınırlı olduğu kanısını paylaşırlardı. 11 Eylül'den sonra ABD'de sistem kontrollü hale getirilerek 50 000 taşımacılık güvenlik görevlisi yolcuları tarar hale gelmiştir. Güvenlik sistemine kokpit kapılarının sertleştirilmesi, mürettebat-yolcu direnişi sağlanması ve federal hava kolluk kuvvetleri hizmeti eklenmistir. Tüm bu önlemlere rağmen, mutlak güvenliğe ulaşılamaz olduğu anlaşılmaktadır, ancak her durumda, psikolojik parametrenin her zaman göz önünde bulundurulması gerektiği bir gerçektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Güvenlik, Risk, Havacılık, Terör, Güvenlik Tiyatrosu

Aviation Security: Illusion of Safety or Reality? Abstract

Security is a complicated concept where people have to be secure and also feel it. Serious risk calculations determine the fact but also the feeling has to be included in the policy development. Because people are generally are scared by spectacular risks. The controllable risks seem to be less scary but the uncontrollable are considered important. Therefore, aviation is believed to be higher than the driving whereas the contrary is the reality. Technology and media are the two parameters that count for the awareness of people concerning the risks. Aviation and airline security became very important following the 9/11 attack in USA. This attack ended up with a huge crisis and people were ready to give up their freedoms to guarantee security. It is known that airport security was fragmented before 9/11. It was not practiced seriously, it resembled a security theatre for the passengers and companies believed that terrorist attacks were limited. Things have changed today. Following 9/11 the system in USA became state controlled 50000 transportation security officers are scanning passengers. Hardening cockpit doors, crew passenger resistance and federal air marshal service are added to the security system. Despite all these precautions, absolute security cannot be reached but, in any case, the psychological parameter has always to be a matter to consider.

Keywords: Security, Risk, Aviation, Terror, Security Theatre

The development in technology leads to a real time information dissemination as a result of which, the whole world is inter-connected today(Baylis, Smith and Owens, 2008). This is favourable for the humanity as for the economy, the culture and the communication. However, according to Beck, because of that very fact we all are living in a risk society (Beck, 1992). People are aware of what's happening around, and they are seriously worried even for things that have nothing to do with them personally. "The more you know the more frightened you are" (Ropeik, Gray, 2002). Based on all of the above it can be said that security is a social need with a wide network of influence to the public, the governments the private sector and certainly the individuals (Newton, Van Deth, 2010). On the other hand, the security as a concept is very complicated and a lot of parameters have to be considered while developing policies. The main

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¹ Lecturer. Istanbul Yeni Yuzyil University, Department of Forensic Medicine, Istanbul, TURKEY. sotirios.kalfoglou@yeniyuzyil.edu.tr, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3397-0789

objective is to ensure that people are safe in reality, and they also feel safe psychologically (Schneier, 2009). In this paper the two fold character of security will be discussed. The main aim will be to analyse the issue practically, therefore the sticking example of 9/11 terrorist attack in the US will be used and the aviation security will be targeted. The pre and post event conditions will be contrasted concerning issues of security. The basic role of technology and media will be related to the feeling of security and the concept of risk. The essay will conclude with an analysis of the practical application of the real security and the so called security theatre.

According to Schneier "security is both feeling and reality and those two are not the same" (Schneier, 2008). To provide security, primarily the reality has to be determined. This determination is done by a risk calculation, based on various parameters and formulae. The calculation mentioned is not something new. Insurance companies reported on these calculations and estimations for years and they continue to use them today. Based on these risk calculations the needs for security are determined and models for safety and security are designed (Zack Phillips, 2007). However security is not only the reality, it includes also the feeling which is an extremely important parameter and has to be included seriously in the programming of it. This issue of feeling is complicated and it may be different for different individuals. A person can be safe in reality but he or she may feel unsafe or may be unsafe in reality but psychologically may think that is safe. (Schneier, 2008)

Some scholars say that there is no such a thing as absolute security (Zack Phillips, 2007). In order to be secure you have to compromise. You have to renounce in order to get security. You may exchange security for money (you may pay for it) or you may give up by some of your rights and freedoms. As a matter of fact we negotiate for security. The terms of this negotiation change according to circumstances and conditions. We compromise according to the importance or weight of the risk that we encounter. However as individuals we cannot always be aware of the degree of importance, the possibility of occurrence and the cost for effective overcome of a specific risk (Schneier, 2008). We cannot evaluate or understand the precise dimensions of the situation. We may underestimate a real risk and exaggerate a small risk. We can either spend extraordinary big amount of money for preventions for an unimportant risk or we may decide to spend less than the required for a serious condition. (Schneier, 2005)

The reason for such behaviour is the human psychology (Schneier, 2008). A classic example for such way of thinking is the following: All over the world a few hundreds of people lose their lives in airplane (aviation) accidents. On the other hand 40 000 people are killed in USA per year by traffic accidents. The Law Enforcement Agency in Turkey reports that this number is 10 000 for 75 million of inhabitants where as 1500 people per year lose their lives in Greece with 10 million people over all (Turkish National Police, 2013; Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection Greece, 2013). Nevertheless the general idea in all these three different cultures is that airplanes are more risky and people are scared when flying (Schneier, 2008; Zack Phillips, 2007).

Ropeik and Gray argue that when risks are evaluated by psychology, several parameters are seen as predominantly effective. People for example are scared by spectacular risks but common risks may be more important. The newly appearing risks are generally more effective than the risks that have been experienced earlier even if it is known that they are important. The man made risks are more scaring whereas the risks of the nature are more dangerous. We are scared about the nuclear energy and its disastrous consequences but we do not care about sun radiation and its risks. The controllable risks are less important to us than those that are uncontrollable. We are not scared from driving but we are scared when flying, we smoke happily but we seriously discuss the air pollution and its cancerous effects to our lungs. Finally human beings do not care so much about risks that include advantageous conditions for them (Ropeik, Gray,

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2002). For example it is known by now that the city of Istanbul is expecting a serious earthquake within 20 years (Le Pichon, Taymaz and Sengör, 1999). Nobody seems to be effected, nobody cares about the risk and nobody leaves the city to move somewhere else, because living in Istanbul is both economically and socially advantageous. On the contrary the city gets crowded by immigration every single day (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, 2010). People are scared from risks that they are aware of and that they know, where as they do not care about risks that they do not have an idea (Ropeik, Gray, 2002). We are frightened by terrorism because we are informed about it. But we really do not care as much as we should about climate change because we do not know many things about it, or we do not see its consequences in the very short run (Ropeik, Gray, 2002).

There are two main parameters that affect us on the issue of awareness and scaring because of awareness. These are technology and media (Schneier, 2008). Technological advancement plays a pivotal role in information dissemination today. Starting from telecommunication up to the tools used in social media everything changes and develops based on technology. As this technology develops, it becomes much easily reached because it becomes cheaper (Newton, Van Deth, 2010). Thus people are informed about every single event in all parts of the world. Media is another very important factor that actually uses perfectly this ease and progress in communication. Media informs and affects the public based on its ideals and ideas. The basic aim of media is certainly to make profit. This means that any activity or information or any material that is attractive, therefore profit generating, is preferred by media (Nacos, 2007). Thus terror and terrorism, being interesting and attractive, is given place by media. Terrorist activities are continuously in the news. Unfortunately this way the public is fully informed and exaggeratedly aware, therefore affected and worried. Different media companies broadcast by different perspectives because one man's terrorist may be a freedom fighter for another (Martin, 2013). Thus an event may be promoted or declined according to the understanding or the sympathy of media. As result terrorism is sensational, it is valuable, media uses it and the public is informed therefore scared (Shoshani, 2008). Terror affects human beings psychologically and media uses this fact. On the contrary terror uses media because this is the best way for terrorists to reach their own targets. They spread their rhetoric by the use of media and get good advantage out of it (Weimann, Winn, 1993).

The states dealt with the issue of responding to political violence and terrorism since a very long time. Responding to terrorism today can be stated as any action taken by a targeted interest in reply to a terrorist incident or a terrorist environment (Martin, 2013).

Responding to terrorism is evaluated as counterterrorism and antiterrorism. The aim of counterterrorism is to eliminate the terrorist groups and environments. Proactive policies are developed for this and the prevention of terrorist attacks is aimed. Antiterrorism on the other hand is deterring or preventing terrorism. The methodology of use is to harden the ways that terrorists reach their targets by using security actions (Martin, 2013).

The most important parameter of counterterrorism is intelligence because the basic aim is to drive the activity profile of terrorists. This requires information gathering and analysis of data collected. When we find out who they are we are in a position to speculate about the way they will act. This way we can predict their plans and we can find out how they are organized. However exact prediction is not possible. We can have a global idea about the place and time but we cannot be certain about it (Martin, 2013). Antiterrorism is the effort to harden to the terrorists the way to reach their target. Precautions and measures are taken so that the targets will be unreachable for them. Increased airport security, deployment of security personnel, putting of crash barriers to important entrances are some examples to this type of actions (Justin

V Hastings, Ryan J Chan, 2013). However this approach is problematic because practically it is not possible to protect every single target (Zack Phillips, 2007).

As it has been mentioned in the introduction, in order to discuss whether the counterterrorism is a security theatre or not we will be focused on the example of 9/11 and the drastic measures that have been taken following the attack in aviation.

Aviation and airline security became the focal point in all security discussions following the attack (Johnston, Nath, 2004). Both counterterrorism and antiterrorism components mentioned before were thoroughly used in aviation. Aviation is a real source of income for countries. It used to be symbolically important, and it was an indication of power for countries (Johnston, Nath, 2004). The number of airplanes used to be a matter of prestige and aviation industry was an indication of development. However with globalization, the transportation developed tremendously and aviation became a very serious business. The 7% of the GPD of USA is composed of this business. Today any negative effect on aviation may be catastrophic for the economy. Therefore the issue rather than symbolic is vital (Szyliowicz, 2004). However it is really difficult to protect and provide security in aviation because of the very complex organization of it. On the other hand this sector is really very attractive for the terrorists (Schneier, 2010). It is important to analyse the applied protective method or model that is used today and question whether there is a real security system or is the whole thing composed of a theatre.

In this essay, the above mentioned questions will be approached on the basis of a case as an example.

Some of the incidents that occurred during the history of humanity are cases that have affected deeply the way of thinking and even changed the general behaviour of the public. Pearl Harbour, Titanic, Hiroshima-Nagasaki are this type cases that deeply affected humanity. One of these types of cases is the terrorist attack in USA that happened on September 11th 2001 (9/11). This attack has been named and will be known from now on as "THE EVENT". 9/11 is one of the most sticking events and the most spectacular terrorist attack of the risk society that has been fuelled by globalisation. It is the first time that planes have been used as weapons in a terrorist attack (Russell, Preston, 2004).

This event has affected almost all human beings all over the world. Specifically in western countries, lives would never be as they were before 9/11. The way that this event happened in USA, reached and affected every single country in the globalized world is obvious. 9/11 was such a vivid episode that everybody started rethinking security issue (Harris, 2002). Following that huge crisis, people were ready to give up their freedoms to guarantee security and help prevent similar situations (Martin, 2013).

After 9/11 we see no similar terrorist activities in aviation up until now. This may be because of the effective policies that have been developed or because terrorists did not plan any attacks. But the known thing is that before 9/11 the Federal Government was not ready or prepared to encounter such an attack (Frederickson, LaPorte, 2002). Numerous warnings have been made up until then in the air terror history. Russell says that something similar was obvious and expected (Russell, Preston, 2004). There is a series of examples that indicated the danger, like a Peruvian airline was hijacked in 1930, USA had 12 attacks during 1930-1967 and 22 attacks in 1968. The Palestinian terror started in 1970 and continued during 1980-1990(Crenshaw, 1988).

In the pre 9/11 period, the airlines were undertaking the costs for the security. The airlines withdrew the security activities as soon as the effect of the attacks was softened once they did not want to lose money (Seidenstat, 2004). People were thinking that were safe and secure because of the general atmosphere that was created and they were not questioning the real

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situation. Things drastically changed following 9/11. The passengers started seriously questioning the security conditions that they were subject to (Russell, Preston, 2004).

According to Barnes and Yefet the state spent quite a good amount of money prior to 9/11 for safety but this expenditure was wrong and there was also an advertisement for things that were not practically applicable for security (Russell, Preston, 2004). There were serious weaknesses present which were uncovered after 9/11 and the passengers started to ask for real security and how it is practiced. There was no individualisation for luggage, suitcases could travel without a passenger, the unattended luggage were not collected, overworked security agents were service providers and poorly trained security agents were working(Szyliowicz, 2004). Additionally they were focused on baggage rather than passengers, the primary concern of gate agents was to fill up the plain on time with no interest to security, no screening of bags was performed and no coordination was present. Inconsistency was high, late arrived passengers were not checked at all and even the airport design by itself was problematic. Inspectors reported about the danger but nobody showed an interest (Seidenstat, 2004). Yefet in an advisory report that he prepared for aviation mentions that interview with each passenger is required, only the passengers should have the right to enter the airport, the passengers that arrive from suspicious places should be re-controlled, there should be a single security system for the whole airport, the seat next to suspicious passengers should left empty and a marshal should be seated there, bags should be x rayed, and should have the right to postpone a flight in case of reasonable suspicion. None of the above was done (Russell, Preston, 2004). The only practice was to teach the crew to cooperate with terrorists, because generally the issue for the terrorist was a negotiation and the attack was terminated when the attacker received what he wanted. However cooperation appeared to be non-applicable after certain time because suicide terrorism commenced and the terrorists did not want cooperation once their ultimate goal was to die (Stewart, Mueller, 2008).

The structure of airport security was fragmented before 9/11. Security was run by airport operators, airline and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as tripartite. Considering that there are 400 commercial airports and more than 100 carriers in the US independently run security by all these bodies could never be effective and successful. FAA had the regulatory responsibility for aviation security. FAA was responsible from policies, regulation and inspection (Crenshaw, 1988). The major activity components that were expected from this system were the screening of passengers for weapons and explosives, the screening of luggage and cargo, and the control and security of the complete airport. Additionally the Air Marshal institution which was established in 1958 was not effective (Seidenstat, 2004).

All the regulations and inspections were to be performed by FAA however there was no possibility for success because this body had no enforcement right. The companies and the airlines did not want to obey to the FAA regulations because they were expensive and difficult. A serious underinvestment was established by the companies, even though the issue was very serious (Szyliowicz, 2004). The companies were subcontracting security service with the lowest possible cost which in turn meant lower quality of service. The security officers were unknowledgeable, untalented, careless and sometimes even people with criminal background. In this sense, the aviation security was failing under the control of the private system. Private security system can be successful and effective but it should not be cheap and it has to obey to some standard rules. It has to involve proper training and serious inspection. US aviation did not fulfil those prior to 9/11(Seidenstat, 2004). With such low security standards they literally invited terror (Szyliowicz, 2004).

Regular risk assessments for terrorist attacks were done prior to 9/11 but the calculation mentality that was used by the private companies was not the expected. The results were showing that the risk of a terrorist attack numerically was very low. Therefore the companies were

indifferent in spending money for these calculated risks. The calculation was probably mathematically correct but the risk for a terrorist attack cannot be calculated by simple methods (Seidenstat, 2004). These attacks have very serious economic and social consequences that have to be taken into consideration. An attack like 9/11 has a worldwide impact and it affects all the aviation companies. It affects even the world economy. Thus its risk analysis cannot be limited to the understanding of individual companies (Seidenstat, 2004).

Following 9/11 US took the event very seriously from the very first moment. All flying planes were landed and no flight was allowed for 2 consequent days. This decision was very important because it affected seriously the economy. Naturally the public was scared and people started expressing their discomfort for travelling by planes. US had to take action (Schneier, 2012). According to Russell, as policy level they had to do the following:

To prevent further impacts of terrorist activity

To provide real security for airline passengers

To provide a sense of security for airline passengers and prospective airline passengers

To protect the fiscal integrity of airline industry (Russell, Preston, 2004)

Following the event the government decided to federalize the system for the application of all of the above. The whole security became state controlled and carried out centrally (Seidenstat, 2004). Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was established for this reason. TSA is a federal workforce to screen all commercial airline passengers and baggage. It has as its mission to establish guiding principles to maintain the security of the travelling public and continuously set the standard for excellence in transportation security (Transportation Security Agency). It functions under the Department of Homeland Security. TSA was decided to have its own personnel. Today 50,000 Transportation Security Officers screen more than 1.8 million passengers each day at more than 450 airports US-wide. Today, they have to screen literally everything. The screening quality is improved the employees are well trained and all the expensive screening equipment was provided by the State. The Air Marshall program decided to be run by TSA and the Department of Justice in common. The Air Marshalls can go into any domestic flight. FAA continues its research and development activity. The interesting issue is that all those points that were proposed by Yefet pre-9/11 were imposed by the state post 9/11(Russell, Preston, 2004). By this action the State establishes real security on one hand and develops a strong feeling of security on the other because people feel safe psychologically as well (Schneier, 2012). TSA established 20 security levels 14 of them applicable pre-boarding and the rest in-flight security (Stewart, Mueller, 2008).

In this essay 3 of these levels mainly crew passenger resistance, cockpit door hardening and Federal Air Marshalls will be discussed as to whether they are security theatre or real security matters, based on a cost and benefit analysis.

Hardening cockpit doors: Prior to 9/11 it was very easy to walk in the cockpit. This was perfect for the hijackers. Door hardening is a practical measure. The control of the flight is in the pilots. This practical measure was recommended by FAA but no attempt was done whatsoever up until 9/11. Following 9/11 USA decided to harden all the cockpit doors and the amount spent for this came up to be 40 million per year (Stewart, Mueller, 2008).

Crew passenger resistance: By that we mean the cooperation of crew with passengers to overcome the power of the terrorist/hijacker. Mathematically speaking, the crew + the passengers form a much higher force than a limited number of the terrorists. Even though they have weapons, the fight with them is possible if we consider the superiority in number. (Stewart, Mueller, 2008) However this is not applicable because the public cannot accept the possibility

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of leaving their security to crew and themselves. Psychologically passengers do not feel safe in this way. They are expecting more 'care' (Schneier, 2008; Zack Phillips, 2007).

Federal Air Marshall Service: Presently there are 50 000 officials flying together with passengers in domestic flights (Transportation Security Agency). Although this seems to be a big number, it is only adequate for the 5-10% of the flights. 90% of the flights do not have this service. In the meantime the cost for even this number of Marshalls is extremely high and comes up to 790 million dollars a year (Stewart, Mueller, 2008). How functional is it? Up until now it has been reported that 59 suspects were arrested by the Marshalls and none of these was related to terrorist activities (Stewart, Mueller, 2008). In any case the passengers do not know this fact and they fly with the feeling of security, believing that a Marshall possibly protects them during the flight; therefore psychologically it is extremely important (Schneier, 2008). The government does not take into account that Federal Air Marshalls are not effective and prefers to pay incredible amounts of money just to make passengers feel safe. This seems to be an irrational trade of for security. However no matter how bad the trade of is, it provides an illusion of security and safety therefore it is preferable (Schneier, 2008).

When we compare those three security measures according to Schneier's psychology of security theory we can conclude that the hardening cockpit doors and the crew passenger resistance fall into the reality of the security. Because the trade of is in an acceptable range (Stewart, Mueller, 2008). When we analyse the cost/benefit for the Air Marshall program we seed that it is an irrational trade of. Therefore it is a security theatre. The governments cannot respond based solely to reality. They have to take into serious consideration the feeling as well (Schneier, 2009). Generally in responding to terrorism, to overcome the perception of fear is very important. Therefore reality and psychology become equally important.

To conclude, security has two components, mainly the reality and the feeling. It is known that security is the result of a trade of either on money or on freedoms and practically it is based on the conceptualisation of risks. The risks are evaluated according to psychological conditions. Information, awareness and the media are factors that are primarily effective. Terrorism is one of the important risks that governments have to tackle. The most striking terrorist attack of the last decades was 9/11 in USA. The pre and post-event security practices are interestingly enough completely different. Nowadays the aviation security in this country is highly centralised, federal and very seriously undertaken. Within the practices of providing security we see that even it is not cost effective, governments spend a lot of money to provide real security but also to present a security theatre for the feelings of the citizens. Although absolute security cannot be reached, the implemented model has to include the psychological component in order to be successful.

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