

ICAO Seventh Symposium: Summary and Conclusions

Barry J. Kefauver—September, 15, 2011

Introduction

I am honored to be with you here today and very pleased that I have been asked to summarize this Symposium and to express my views with respect to the past as well as the future. The summary of last year's Symposium observed that the focus and content were different from the then-preceding five symposia. Again, this Seventh Symposium has a much different shape, form and meaning. Last year's format was essentially to look out over the next decade or so and develop a sense of purpose and direction and especially grapple with the needs of Governments in the travel document and border control and security arenas. This year, the primary sum total of the four days of presentations and discussions went toward conceptual anticipation and introspection, seeking a clearer sense of vision in a global frame. These important foundation-building deliberations were well leavened with presentations of technical, operational and how-to-do-it nature. The tenth anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, 2001 provided a very tangible and sobering point of departure that the Symposium met with reflection and expectation. This compelling backdrop of graphic reality brought together as never before the Symposium's thrusts of vision and pragmatics.

With that as an introductory perspective, I will comment on and pull together some of these component pieces and draw them into a cohesive whole. That whole in its entirety looks out over the coming years in shaping and defining the global role, nature and purposes of machine readable travel documents.

Summary of Seventh ICAO Symposium

These past four days have been filled with many issues, concerns, successes, failures, needs and realities, harking back to the past revolving around both before and after September 11, 2001, with the emphasis on lessons learned. And applying those lessons learned to chart the future. This Symposium in my view has posed a challenge to "summarize". Usually the presentations and discussions will aggregate themselves into several identifiable themes. This Symposium has covered a wide swath of the past as well as a broad view of the future. While the information shared has many complexions, I will cite what I consider to have been the Symposium's seven recurring threads of emphasis.

First, I will single out the **Workshops** because their intent and content are quite different from the overall Symposium and need to be "summarized" separately. Both of these formats were driven by the expressed needs of member States and the content of each was specifically developed to meet those expressed needs. Something I would characterize as capacity building information in its broadest context.

The procurement Workshop focused on one of the most complicated and difficult areas of deploying machine readable travel document issuance programs as well as meeting the tendering needs of the border management and control communities. The statement of requirements as captured in a tender or RFP is extremely important in defining the technical and operational end requirements for a successful MRTD program. This sets the stage for the technical foundations on which the program will reside. Done properly, savings in terms of costs as well as time can be substantial. Conversely, sometimes fatal flaws in this threshold tendering can ruin a well-intentioned procurement. This Workshop was filled with advice and best practices that deserve to be captured in an official ICAO guidance document.

The Workshop that focused on PKI and PKD brought together in one morning's presentations all of the urgent messages of the why and how of the PKD. In my view one of the most arcane areas of eTravel document foundations, these PKD and PKI matters are finally being recognized as quintessential components of a well structured program. This Workshop provided also an extremely clear and easily understood statement of procedure for joining the PKD. Again, as in the other Workshop, this material needs to be codified into a PKD roadmap manual.

Second, as it was at last year's Symposium, this year the very clear and increasingly urgent need to **use the electronic verification and integrity tools**, in particular PKI and PKD, that we have expended so much energy and time and money incorporating into the ePassports. Unless and until they are, the full return on the ePassport investments will not be realized, and, of perhaps greater concern, the use of the inadequately inspected document will yield a dangerous and false sense of credibility and security. With more than 350 million of these documents in circulation and growing each day, the Symposium in terms of several speakers strongly emphasized that the "e" of ePassport become an upper case letter in our border management vocabulary.

Third, over the decade since the tragic 9/11 events, the travel document community has increasingly called upon **partnerships** in order to meet the broadened and relentlessly resource-intensive global demands. The ICAO MRTD program is no stranger to the use of partnering in order to reach common goals. For years before and after 9/11, the development and maintenance of Document 9303 has demanded and received the unabiding commitments of governments and the ISO private sector in what has been recognized as a model for Government and industry joint endeavor.

However, in the past decade the forging of cooperative activities has been perhaps the single most important factor in even hoping to meet the demands of the burgeoned global needs of travel documents and both the security as well as the facilitation of the traveling public. While these demands have multiplied, the resources to carry them out have diminished. These partnering relationships must be strengthened and renewed if we are

going to be able to meet what must be met in order to accomplish our goals.

We have had some success in partnering to accomplish some of the capacity building needs that have arisen. Speakers, particularly on the first day, made clear that no nation or single entity alone can possibly address the worldwide challenges that we face. The call from this Symposium was loud and clear that more effective common purpose joint efforts must be the means for us to reach our end results.

Fourth, and related to but different from the above emphasis on partnership, the Symposium also spoke strongly to the critical need for **cooperation**. I distinguish this from partnership because as enunciated by this Symposium, cooperation transcends specific activities and goes to a number of programs and conduct of a continuing and even daily nature. Several speakers made clear that the threat from many fronts including terrorism knows no national or geographic boundaries. The events of 9/11 finally began to open our eyes to such global vulnerabilities, and the substance of this year's Symposium only demonstrates that the reach of threats has increased in scope and depth over those intervening years. Certainly not new as one speaker acknowledged the 80th anniversary of the first aircraft hijack, the changing face of terrorism, the crucial concern for anticipation rather than reaction and the corollary requirement for information and data sharing are among the most identifiable factors. One speaker called for all of civil society to become involved materially. One of the more alluring aspects of this Symposium element is that we, in this room, can contribute to go a long way toward this enhanced global cooperation.

Fifth, and admitting difficulty deriving a label for this set of themes, I generalize as the **global** nature of the myriad issues facing the travel document community which, by definition, cut across all of the thematic lines of the Symposium content. However, the pervasive nature of this factor and the differing ways in which the speakers noted its importance requires that I single this out as a separate and identifiable Symposium message. Especially evident in addressing the need for capacity building, it is clear that the countries of greatest concern are among the most vulnerable and at the same time least equipped to deal with what needs to be done. We also need to always keep in mind that it is these same countries that are not able to avail themselves of the roundtables of expertise such as NTWG, ICBWG or this Symposium. It is clear from presentations at this Symposium that the global interconnectivities that have always been with us are now at new heights of importance. Resources are always scarce, but we must use what we have as wisely as possible; we must even more carefully choose the highest priorities, but only after having clearly defined our most urgent goals.

Sixth, and something of a new and compelling theme for this forum of the Symposium, **risk-based management and decision making concepts** offer us more effective ways forward to deal with the geometric increases in complexity of identity management and

border security. We no longer can simply address every traveler in every context using all of the same ways. Our procedures, processes, technologies and human staff must be tempered by a realistic and comprehensive identification of risk, threat and vulnerability. We then must objectively assess the potential injury that each of those entails and the probability that such potential could be realized. Only then can we have a framework to anticipate threat and determine the right kinds of responses that will diminish or eliminate harmful results.

These concepts have obvious application in border passenger and cargo screening, but also not-so-obvious association with other MRTD-related activities such as issuance integrity and evidence of identity, the latter often colloquially referred to as “breeder documents”. How much vulnerability is associated with accepting a birth certificate as evidence of identity without cross checking the source of issuance of that document? What other risks lie sequentially in using that identity document for other purposes such as opening a bank account? The answer is, it depends. And knowing those dependencies so that sound situationally appropriate judgments can be reached comes through risk management.

Finally, *seventh*, a common thread that I heard woven throughout the fabric of the Symposium revolved around the observation that the ICAO MRTD program is, using the word from the Symposium, at a **crossroads**. Perhaps somewhat stung by having over the past decade accomplished so much with so little, the demands and consequent expectations on the MRTD resources in ICAO have never been greater. Nor have the opportunities to make significant change ever been greater. Within ICAO’s overarching institutional aviation security and safety reasons for being, the fit, role, relevance and mandate of the MRTD program needs sharpened clarity to insure full understanding and appreciation of the potential of this very visible constituency-building program.

Throughout the Symposium, but especially in the afternoon of the first day when senior ICAO officials spoke, the work of the MRTD program has been applauded and acknowledged as important and much needed. As Symposia usually do, we heard the observation that we have done much, but so much more remains yet to be done. True. But this year, among other senior officials, I heard Secretary General Benjamin pledge his full personal support and commitment to getting this work that remains done. What is the key tangible index of this commitment: Secretary General Benjamin said his intention is to make the MRTD program a part of the regular ICAO budget. Subsequent speakers have all expressed commitment such that his trust and confidence will be fulfilled.

Conclusions: Looking Toward the 20th Anniversary of 9/11

Just as the 10th anniversary of 9/11 has been an occasion for us all to take personal stock and reflect on our own priorities, challenges, frailties, strengths and hopes for the coming years, so is it a time for us of the travel document community to do the same thing. I

would characterize this Symposium in its totality as the frame in which the substance of our canvas can begin to be painted. There have been alternative avenues presented to the MRTD program in the past. Choosing to incorporate biometrics into passports entailed great risk; storing that data on a contactless chip in a paper document made that risk greater by magnitudes. The risks were weighed in terms of the anticipated benefits, and the fact that we have over 350 million chip-based biometric passports in circulation bears witness to the veracity of those decisions.

Now we are at another important phase of the MRTD evolution, referred to in this Symposium as a crossroad. The future abounds with unknowns. Before 9/11, after 9/11 and likely for all time, we have faced and will face uncertainties and dilemmas. But as long as we face them together, as we have in the past, we will prevail. In this maelstrom of unknowns and uncertainties, one galvanic constant feeds our cohesion and nurtures our resolve to move forward: ICAO is that center of the travel document universe.

We have had challenges in the past and we know we will have more yet to come. We have taken risks in the past and we will have to take more. We have fought for needed resources over the years and we must continue to fight harder. We have argued stridently among ourselves and we have found common ground in order to move forward, together with singularity of purpose and direction. Let us resolve that this Seventh Symposium ushers in renewed cooperation and unparalleled accomplishment. I thank all of you for your time and attention throughout the Symposium and I look forward to our next steps.