Out of Adversity comes opportunity

During the formative years of our nation founding father Ben Franklin is reputed to have said, "out of Adversity comes opportunity". I believe from a homeland security standpoint we saw this parable in operation over the past week. Adversity. DHS and the Administration lost an opportunity to have completed the appointment of permanent leadership for TSA; the post has now been vacant for one year. Next Congress took the homeland security and intelligence community to task for failing in their mission of information sharing and analysis with respect to the attempted bombing of NW 253 on Christmas day.

Opportunity. Later in the week DHS Secretary Napolitano traveled to Europe to meet with colleagues in Spain and to engage with the International Air Transport Association, IATA and their membership. What came of the meetings in Spain and later with IATA in Geneva may well prove to be the most proactive opportunity for aviation security since 9/11. It appears that IATA in conjunction with the CEO’s of 20 international airlines has agreed to enter into global public/private collaboration to strengthen security. This is an epoch event and a solid gold opportunity to cease an initiative long over due. Bringing together industry experts on operations and security with the USG is the Holy Grail. In order to not fall back into the abyss of adversity it is imperative that a non-political public private partnership be established to manage this information sharing and analysis operation. I recommend an independent body be formed reporting to the Office of the Secretary, DHS, comprised of experienced experts from industry and government as well as our international colleagues. This council will become the nexus for the sharing of data and a single point of contact between government and the aviation industry.

I personally applaud the Secretary for taking this opportunity to move forward, we cannot relive the past but rather learn form it. The global terrorist network has clearly demonstrated that they have every intention of continuing to attack the aviation industry. We now have an opportunity leveraging a collaborative effort to fight back - it takes networks to fight a networks.