

HIGHLIGHTS : Airport security technology technology

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Dec 29 - A failed attempt to blow up an airplane over Detroit has reignited debate about airport security and the role of new technology such as full-body scanners.

Following are comments from industry executives and analysts on the security picture and the need for upgrades.

* On the state of security now

"Eight years after September 11, flight security remains largely virtual and theoretical" -- Claude Moniquet, president of the European Strategic Intelligence & Security Center

"With respect to people screening technology, most governments I think have recognised for a long time, and certainly since 9/11, that the archway metal detector - which is ubiquitous in airports worldwide - was really quite insufficient by itself to detect the new threats that were emerging" -- Kevin Murphy, director of physical security at Qinetiq Group

* On scanning technology

"I think it has considerable advantages over archway metal detection but I do not believe that we should simply replace all of the archway metal detectors with body scanners, because the type of technology they are looking at, it does look underneath the clothing but it doesn't look inside the body, so there is a risk of it just responding to yet again the last attack rather than what might happen next time" -- Philip Baum, editor of Aviation Security International

"On liquids, there are scanner technologies available now that can detect whether a given substance is harmful. But the EU has been pussyfooting on this. It has put back until 2011 the deadline for introducing the machines for transit passengers, and until 2013 for all passengers. We need to get them in now. Forget about all the European regulatory issues. Sorting those out can come later. We need protection now" -- Jane's Aviation analyst Chris Yates

* On privacy and safety concerns

"If the nude scanners bring an added degree of security and do not harm the private sphere unreasonably, we must reconsider adopting them" -- Joachim Hermann, interior minister of the German state of Bavaria, to the mass-selling Bild newspaper

"The perception is that millimetre waves are safer than X-rays. It's not true but that's the perception out there" -- Qinetiq's Murphy.