

## **AVIATION ASSEMBLY CALL ON WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET, 28 FEBRUARY 2008**

### **US VISIT Exit Procedures**

- **Aviation Assembly an informal lobby group made up of aviation attaches drawn from 36 embassies in Washington DC, plus the Delegation of the European Commission**
- **We have been following the issue closely and have received instructions from our respective governments**
- **This small delegation is therefore speaking on behalf of all the members**
- **Our understanding is that draft NPRM will require airlines to fingerprint (10 digits?) and photograph all non-US citizens departing on international flights. 30-35 million passengers per annum**
- **Also understand that airlines will be required to purchase, install, run and maintain all associated IT and other equipment, and provide and train all required staff, as well as educate travelling public**
- **We recognise the mandate from Congress requiring an exit procedure and the security and immigration imperatives that drive it. That is not an issue on which any comment from us would be appropriate**
- **However, we are concerned that the execution of that procedure will be delegated to commercial airlines. We feel it is more correctly a function of government.**
- **Several of the governments represented by members of the Aviation Assembly have re-introduced immigration procedures on departure, but have required the relevant Immigration Service to run this government function**

- **We recognise that airlines in many airports around the world provide a basic immigration-style service on behalf of governments, for example in checking the validity of travel documents**
- **But the proposal here as we understand it would be far more detailed and resource-intensive than anything that is currently handled by airlines on immigration issues**
- **In common with US carriers, the airlines based on the territory of Aviation Assembly members have business models that call for significant reductions in ground staff located at check-in desks and gateways, relying instead on technology to assist passengers in an increasingly self-serve environment**
- **Requiring these carriers to reverse that model and to do so without any financial, technical and political support would place a significant burden on an industry that already operates to very tight margins**
- **We believe that there is scope for examining further whether US VISIT exit procedures could be conducted either as part of the TSA-led screening process (allowing for better use of SPOT techniques) or immediately after screening**
- **The Aviation Assembly stands ready and willing to discuss this issue further with the Administration and fully recognises that a solution acceptable to all ought to be a common goal**