

[From USA Today, Nov. 5, 2001]

WHY RELY ON LOW-BID AIRPORT SAFETY?

(By Paul C. Light)

Now that the House has passed its own airport-security bill, the stage is set for a showdown with the Senate over who gets the 28,000 jobs. The Senate wants federal employees at the baggage machines, while the House wants private contractors.

President Bush also favors private contractors. Only days after he expressed his appreciation to federal employees for "your dedication and integrity, your commitment to excellence and your love of our country," Bush was lobbying hard to prevent passage of a measure that would have set up a new federal workforce of airport screeners.

The Bush administration, facing a civil-service system that is slow on the hiring, weak on the firing, poor on the training and sluggish on the disciplining, believes there is no other choice. As Bush has explained, the House bill provides the "quickest, most effective way to increase aviation security," particularly by ensuring "that security managers can move aggressively to discipline or fire employees who fail to live up to the rigorous new standards."

Bush's support for a contract workforce crystallizes the problems facing the federal civil service. On the one hand, federal employees would almost certainly do a better job at airport security. According to recent surveys of federal and private employees by the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Service, a federal security service would be motivated more by the job's challenge and the public good, and less by pay. Federal employees would be more satisfied with benefits and job security, and therefore less likely to leave.

On the other hand, federal workers would be less likely than private employees to get the tools, training and technologies to do their jobs well. They would be hampered by a disciplinary process that their peers believe does little to address poor performance, and would join a workforce that is under-resourced, over-reformed and generally demoralized by a half-century of pay and hiring freezes.

New employees would be joining a federal workforce that is under duress. Three out of five federal workers told the Brookings center that their organizations only sometimes or rarely have the staff needed to perform well. Many believe the past few years of reinventing government made their jobs harder. And the vast majority say the federal hiring system is slow and confusing; a quarter refuse to call it fair.

The question is not whether federal employees often succeed against the odds; they do. Rather, the question is whether the federal government can find a private workforce that can outperform federal employees on anything other than fast hiring and firing.

The answer is mixed at best.

Private airport-security contractors can hire quickly, but they're poor at retaining. From 1998 to 1999, turnover among private contractors at the 19 largest U.S. airports averaged 126%, topped 200% at five and hit 416% at Lambert-St. Louis International.

Private contractors also have trouble complying with existing regulations. Just last year, one of the largest contractors, Argenbright Security, was fined more than \$1 million for assigning new employees to its screening check-points in Philadelphia without background checks or an audit system to detect what the U.S. attorney's office called "the astonishing and widespread criminal activities that occurred in this case."

In the best of all worlds, private contractors would hire and supervise federal employees, avoiding an awful civil-service hir-

ing and firing system that hasn't been reformed in decades. But given a choice between the two workforces, federal employees should get the job. No matter how stringent the oversight, airport security is too important to consign to the lowest bidder. That is how the security function fell into disrepair in the first place.

[From the Chicago Sun-Times, Nov. 5, 2001]

COPING WITH NEW TENSIONS

O'HARE ARREST TIED TO TERROR?

(By Susan Dodge)

A Nepalese man arrested at O'Hare Airport over the weekend with several knives, a stun gun and a can of Mace gave police the same home address that belonged to a suspect questioned in the Sept. 11 terrorist hijacking investigation.

But authorities were vague on whether there was any connection between Subash Gurung, who was arrested Saturday night at O'Hare, and Ayub Ali Khan, who is being held as a material witness to the attacks. Khan was one of two men with box cutters taken into federal custody Sept. 12 on a San Antonio-bound Amtrak train.

ABC-7 reported Sunday night that Gurung was being questioned for a second time by FBI officials.

He listed 1025 W. Hollywood, a Chicago apartment building, as his home address. Khan is believed to have lived at the same address for a time, authorities said. Khan, 34, is being held in a federal detention center in New York City.

Seven O'Hare Airport security workers—including a supervisor—who allegedly let Gurung pass through their checkpoint were fired Sunday, Chicago Aviation Department spokeswoman Monique Bond said.

Gurung was within minutes of boarding a United flight to Omaha, Neb., Saturday night when the stunning security breach was detected by airline employees who searched his carry-on bag, where the weapons were located, officials said.

Security officials confiscated two knives at a security check-point, but Gurung made it to the boarding gate with seven other knives, a stun gun and Mace in his carry-on, said Bond.

Police Supt. Terry Hillard and Thomas J. Kneir, head of the local FBI office, spoke about Gurung's arrest but decided they could not charge him with a federal crime "because he didn't board an airplane," said Chicago police spokesman David Bayless.

Gurung was arrested Saturday and charged with three misdemeanors: unlawful use of a weapon, attempting to board an aircraft with a weapon and carrying a dangerous weapon, said Chicago Police Officer Matthew Jackson, a department spokesman.

Exactly how did the 27-year-old Edgewater resident make it through the terminal checkpoint, which supposedly is more secure since the terrorist attacks?

"That's the million-dollar question," Bond said Sunday.

Equally uncertain was why Gurung was allegedly carrying the items.

The Federal Aviation Administration, the city's aviation department and United Airlines all were investigating the security breach.

United gate employees checked Gurung's carry-on bag as a random bag search, part of the airline's enhanced security measures, said United spokesman Joe Hopkins.

Gurung was questioned by the FBI and then released on bond early Sunday, police said. The FBI declined to comment Sunday, referring all questions to police.

Gurung, 27, told police that he's unemployed and originally from Nepal. He is scheduled to appear in court Dec. 19.

The breach was the latest by Argenbright Security Inc., which operates the checkpoint for United and has been roundly criticized for lax security and hiring workers with criminal backgrounds.

It came as Congress debated how to tighten airport security. The security lapse bolsters the case for making airport security workers federal employees, who would be higher paid and better trained, Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin said, adding, "You can't do it on the cheap."

But House Republican leaders argue that federalizing the security would expand bureaucracy and make it tougher to fire bad workers. House and Senate officials are expected to come up with compromise legislation on airport security.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VISA ENTRY REFORM ACT

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong support for S. 1267, the Visa Entry Reform Act of 2001. I am pleased to be an original cosponsor and to have contributed to the drafting of this important immigration control measure.

This bill will help America get back control of our borders. Illegal immigration has long been a serious problem in our country. Census data indicates that there are now about 7 or 8 million illegal aliens in the United States, and the problem is getting worse. This is at least double the number of illegals that were here in 1990.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 have demonstrated how dangerous it can be for us to fail to know who is coming into our country. Of the 19 men who apparently hijacked the commercial airliners on September 11, the Director of Immigration and Naturalization Service last month testified that his agency had no record of how some of them came to the United States.

The legislation would create one centralized database of all noncitizens. It would be updated as aliens entered and left the United States through a modern system of quickly swiping a card at border crossings.

Also, the database would be integrated with law enforcement and intelligence information so that all relevant agencies could share and have access to critical data. Moreover, all airlines, cruise ships, and cross-border bus lines would have to submit passenger manifests prior to departure so that foreigners could be pre-screened on the database before their arrival.

This bill would help address the rampant problem of document fraud, especially for immigration documents. It would require that all Federal identification and immigration papers, including visas and social security cards,

be fraud and tamper-resistant. Using modern technology, immigration documents would have to contain biometric data, such as photographs and fingerprints.

Further, the legislation would impose greater controls on foreigners who are here on student visas. It is noteworthy that, according to media reports, one of the hijackers from September 11 came into this country on a student visa but did not attend classes. This bill would help prevent this problem by requiring schools to report quarterly to the INS on the student's classes and whether he or she had problems with law enforcement during that period. If a foreign student dropped out, or failed to register or attend classes, the school would be required to notify the INS immediately. Further, background checks would have to be conducted prior to visas being issued, and additional background checks could be done when visas were renewed. The increased government costs for the student reforms would be paid in part through increased application fees for foreign students.

Another important provision would prohibit any visas from being issued for students from terrorist countries. While this is a significant first step, I believe we need to go further in the future and prohibit any visas from being issued to terrorist nations, except for limited refugee and humanitarian reasons.

One provision of the bill that was included at my request requires a General Accounting Office study on returning to annual registration of aliens. Annual registration is needed to determine whether temporary aliens are actually here for the reasons they were authorized to enter, such as attend school. This was a World War II-era program that was essentially abandoned about twenty years ago, although the Attorney General maintains the authority to require any classes or groups to register. I believe this reform could be very beneficial to our security. The terrorism threat we face today is no less serious than the more conventional wars we fought in the past.

I would also like to note a related problem. Increasing penalties for illegal immigration has little meaning if the laws are not followed. In a hearing which I chaired in the last Congress in the Criminal Justice Oversight Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, we showed that many criminals, especially illegal aliens at the Southwest Border, are routinely being sentenced far below what the law requires. To control the huge number of cases on the dockets in many border states, many defendants are being sentenced far below the ranges established in the Sentencing Guidelines in exchange for guilty pleas. Often, guilty pleas are for charges much less serious than the government could provide in court.

To address this problem, we need to increase judicial and related resources

in these areas. We should increase the number of authorized judgeships at the Southwest Border, which has already been proposed, and the Senate should quickly consider judicial nominations from the President for existing vacancies in these areas. Also, these areas have inconsistent policies, and the Justice Department needs to work with these districts to create consistency. It is critical that we strictly enforce the immigration laws that are already on the books.

We need to do more this year to address the growing threat of illegal immigration. This bill is an important part of that effort, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

TRIBUTE TO DR. FRED SAALFELD

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the professional dedication, vision and public service of Dr. Fred Saalfeld who is retiring from the Senior Executive Service, SES, where he serves as Executive Director and Technical Director of the U.S. Navy Office of Naval Research, ONR. It is a privilege for me to recognize the many outstanding achievements he has provided the Office of Naval Research, the Navy, and our great Nation.

In times of adversity and challenge, America has always been blessed with men and women who have stepped forward to fight our battles and serve our country. Dr. Fred Saalfeld is such a man, much like those Founding Fathers who were patriot scientists and dedicated public servants. I wish we had more like him.

The foundation of his professional career was laid at Southeast Missouri State University where he earned a B.S. degree cum laude with majors in Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics in 1957 and was a standout intercollegiate basketball player as well. Fred Saalfeld matriculated to Iowa State University, where he earned his M.S. in 1959 and Ph.D. in 1961, majoring in Physical Chemistry, with minors in Inorganic Chemistry and Mathematics.

Dr. Saalfeld joined the Naval Research Laboratory, NRL, in 1962, where he conducted and directed research in physical chemistry. From 1963 to 1976, he headed the Mass Spectrometry Section and later, the Physical Chemistry Branch. His research led to innovations in atmospheric monitoring and life support now widely used in nuclear submarines, firefighting gear, spacecraft and other equipment using recirculated air. In 1976, he was selected as Superintendent of the NRL Chemistry Division, where he directed programs involving approximately 250 chemists and a \$16 million budget. Dr. Saalfeld was selected as Chief Scientist and Scientific Director at the ONR Branch Office in London for the period 1979 to 1980. He returned to NRL from this special assignment. By 1982, he was Associate Director of Research for Material Sciences and Component Technology, involving over 600 scientists and a \$90 million budget.

Dr. Saalfeld was appointed Director of ONR's Research Department in 1982 and Associate Director of ONR in 1985. He was responsible for the Navy's \$220 million contract research program mostly aimed at basic research in American universities. From 1987 until 1993, Dr. Saalfeld was Director of ONR, responsible for the Navy's basic research and NRL. In 1993, he was appointed Technical Director of ONR and Deputy Chief of Naval Research. The title changed to Executive Director and Technical Director in 1998. As such, Dr. Saalfeld became responsible for the Navy and Marine Corps science and technology program. In effect, Dr. Saalfeld was the Chief Operating Officer of the Office of Naval Research, a "Department of Navy Corporation," including a budget of nearly \$2 billion and oversight of three international offices and the renowned national laboratory, the Naval Research Laboratory.

Dr. Saalfeld became a charter member of the Senior Executive Service, SES, under President Carter. President Reagan named him to the Presidential Meritorious Executive Rank in 1986, named to the Presidential Distinguished Executive Rank by President Bush in 1989, and Presidential Distinguished Executive Rank for a second time by President Clinton in 1996.

Dr. Saalfeld has been awarded Department of the Navy Meritorious, Superior and Distinguished Civilian Service Awards, and the Department of Defense Distinguished Civilian Service Award. In addition, Dr. Saalfeld has been recognized with the Captain Robert Dexter Conrad Award, the Navy's highest award for scientific achievement. He has won the Southeast Missouri State University Alumni Merit Award in 1988, been recognized by Washington Technology as one of the area's top technologists in 1989, and selected by the Federal Executive Institute as Federal Executive of the Year in 1991.

During his long and exemplary career, Dr. Saalfeld authored and co-authored more than 500 research papers, reports and presentations. He is active in scientific societies, including the Society for Applied Spectroscopy, the American Society for Mass Spectrometry, and the American Chemical Society. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, served as Secretary of the American Society for Mass Spectrometry, and served as President of the Chemical Society of Washington.

I could go on and on about the contributions made by Dr. Saalfeld throughout his long and distinguished career. There are almost too many to recount. I have in mind not only his professional, technical and scientific attainments and achievements, but also the courage with which he faces personal challenges, and the easy grace with which he wins friends. For Dr. Fred Saalfeld considers the entire community of military personnel, civilian employees and contractors who serve