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IBAC has designed a virtual, two-day course to help equip business aviation professionals with the essential tools to safeguard their operations. The course includes information about aircraft and passenger security, threats from emerging conflict zones, climate activism and information security.



# IBAC COURSE TEACHES SECURITY FUNDAMENTALS TO BUSINESS AIRCRAFT OWNERS/OPERATORS

**S**ecurity has long been a front-of-mind issue for commercial aircraft owners/operators. Security risks are just as real in the business aviation sector. Security threats to business aviation are everywhere, so businesses and individuals who operate in the business aviation community must make sure to have a plan in place that's active, effective and dynamic. Risks are incredibly varied and can be of a

geopolitical, social, cyber, weather or medical-related variety among others, security experts say.

In a bid to address these risks, the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) hosted an online course this past fall, entitled, "Business Aviation Security Fundamentals" (BASF). It was hosted by Dyami Security Intelligence and IBAC's International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO)/

International Standard for Business Aircraft Handling (IS-BAH).

According to the BASF course description, "this new live, virtual, two-day course is designed to equip business aviation professionals with the essential tools to safeguard their operations. Learn about aircraft and passenger security, threats from emerging conflict zones, climate activism, and information security. Participants



**By James Careless**

*Andrew Karas, IBAC's IS-BAO director*



*Eric Schouten, founder/CEO Dyami*



*Terry Yeomans, IBAC's IS-BAH director*



intelligence and expertise in espionage, terrorist plots, and the MH17 disaster that inspired him to create Dyami, aiming to make security and intelligence services accessible and affordable.”

During the two-day workshop, the business aviation topics covered included security rules and regulations, security awareness and culture, and risk assessment strategies and mitigation. The content was put together by Schouten, IBAC's IS-BAO director, Andrew Karas, and IBAC's IS-BAH director, Terry Yeomans.

In a wide-ranging discussion with Transport Security International after the BASF course was held, these three gentlemen explained the motivation for creating it, the security threats faced by business aviation, and the ideas that were shared to address these threats.

**Transport Security International: What was the impetus for creating the Business Aviation Security Fundamentals course, and who was it aimed at?**

**Andrew Karas:** Here at IBAC, we had thought about it for a couple of years. There's been a growing need for an awareness of security tailored to business aviation operations.

The course itself was designed to educate people such as flight department personnel, security managers, aviation professionals, and both air operations and ground handling to enhance their understanding of security and best practices as well as touch on some regulatory requirements.

We reached out to Eric and his Dyami team to get some subject matter expertise and bring to the table his experience and the experience of his team, so that they can educate business

aircraft operators as well as ground handling organizations on security.

**Terry Yeomans:** I think as the reach of safety management systems expands into the ground handling sector, that we need to work out how we're aligning the practices that we do with our standards and recommended practices between the IS-BAH and IS-BAO systems and how they can interface with security matters. After all, safety and security starts on the ground, and it's all about trying to get people to talk, to engage, and to understand where those interfaces are and how we can make everyone safer and more secure. So there was a very simple logic behind why we decided to do something.

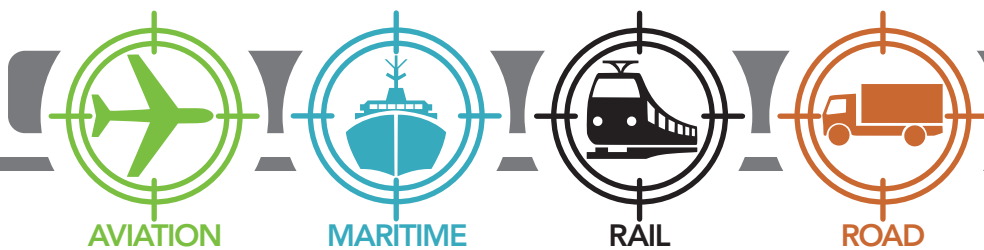
**Transport Security International: Eric, what is your expertise in business aviation security?**

**Eric Schouten:** As a former intelligence liaison from the Dutch Security and Intelligence Service, I have found that the business aviation industry really needs support in knowing how to handle the security threats that are out there. For the people who have to deal with it, who are not doing this on a daily basis or as a full-time job, they need to understand what threats are out there, how to discuss this with the leadership, and also how to deal with it within the budgets that they have in place.

I worked over 13 years at the Dutch Security and Intelligence Service, and most of the time I was the aviation liaison serving the aviation industry with intelligence reporting and awareness. I was dealing with airports, FBOs, and airlines, providing them with the intelligence they needed to have a safe

will gain a deeper understanding of effective risk-management strategies, integrating security practices into their organizational framework, and mitigating these potential threats. The course will provide insight into conforming to IS-BAO/IS-BAH standards and its security chapters.”

“Dyami founder and CEO Eric Schouten is the course presenter,” the BASF course description added. “He brings his aviation



and secure operation on a global level.

I was involved with MH17 crisis management. I shared intelligence on counter-terrorism and counter-espionage situations. And I discovered during my career at the agency that the business aviation industry really needed support in dealing with these threats because airlines usually have large security departments, while the business aviation industry does not. So they also need that same type of intelligence.

**Transport Security International: With respect to business aviation security, what are the threats facing the industry today?**

**Schouten:** The most common threat right now is what's happening in the world. The world is changing rapidly, and geopolitical risks are in place.

So you can't just run an aircraft operation like you did four to five years ago. Countries are in conflicts. You have to deal with overflight risks, and you also have to understand the destination and what's happening over there. Civil unrest is rising, which is why you have to understand what's happening in the country of destination. Is it safe to park your aircraft over there, and how do you deal with espionage risks for your clients?

When you look at security risks from an FBO/airport level, they're dealing with the rise of activism and it's not just climate activists. It could also be activists dealing with what's happening in another side of the country and all of a sudden your operation is affected. It could be that there is a facility at your airport that is providing services or is part of the supply chain of a war abroad and activists find you. So you really have to understand the why and how to counter this.

**Transport Security International: So how did you tackle this during the two-day BASF course?**

**Schouten:** Well, the first thing we did was to share stories together. We taught the students to drink coffee together

and to share information.

I personally think that's a very core principle of risk management. You have to be able to share information with others or be able to get help from other organizations, and then you have to identify what are the types of risks. Then you have to feed the risk management assessment with intelligence. You have to feed it by identifying what type of organization you are and what are the threats coming ahead of you.

As it turned out, we had a mix of students. Some of them are aircraft operators and others are FBO type of operations. They have different threat levels. An aircraft operator has to deal with geopolitical risk. What's happening over there? Meanwhile, the operation on the ground really has to deal with the local risks. So you have different risk appetites. (Note: The Institute of Risk Management defines a risk appetite as "the amount and type of risk that an organization is willing to take in order to meet their strategic objectives.")

**Transport Security International: What relationship does the notion of "risk appetites" have on business aviation security?**

**Karas:** I'll touch on that, and then I'll hand it over to Terry if he has any other comments.

My program is the International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO). Like the IS-BAH program, IS-BAO has a chapter that covers security. That chapter asks organizations to establish and maintain a security program that's proportional to the threats against the organization. So it asks their personnel and their facilities and their oversight to look at their vulnerabilities and see what requirements they need. Do they have regulatory requirements? Do they have corporate requirements? Do they have individual person requirements? So, our standards provide those questions for operators to answer.

**Yeomans:** Since the Pan Am incidents

(such as the Lockerbie bombing of Pan Am Flight 103), there's been increased heightened activity about airside activity and airside security. It's been about trying to get people to think about what their risk appetite is and to start considering what they need to do, not necessarily just to deal with the regulation, but going beyond what the regulation's looking for.

That being said, the regulation is really aimed at airline security. It's not designed for business aircraft security. And we do have different risk appetites in terms of the business structure that we have. So it's good to get people talking to open up and think about, "Well, maybe I'm not alone, maybe I can work this journey with other people that do this in the same way." And that's why we're trying to bring everybody together; ground handling, aircraft operations, security intelligence saying, "Okay, what is out there? What do you think has happened? What have you seen happen in the past? And how can we better educate everybody to think outside the box?"

**Transport Security International: So how was the BASF course structured?**

**Schouten:** It was a two-day online virtual course, and what's important to understand is that we truly made it an interactive course. It wasn't a PowerPoint slide deck that people see all the time. No, it was all about sharing stories and experiences and deep diving into that with best practices. The best practices are key.

The most important part of the course was to take assumptions away. What organization is doing this? Is that organization doing this for you within the company? Are people doing this or your client assumes that you are taking care of their security risk assessments? Well, in reality, you may not. So you really have to understand that the security culture has to be in place, and also how to work with your board because it's all about understanding.



**Transport Security International: So what did you students learn about business aviation security during the BASF course?**

**Schouten:** Basically what we noticed was a lot of eye-openers taking place.

For instance, the people in charge of business aviation security often get the task because they have backgrounds in the police force or in defense or something like that. And all of a sudden, they're responsible for the security part of this business aviation operation where there is a challenge and they can't do this alone. So we saw a lot of students really have an opening up like, "Oh wow, so this is all we need to do, but we need help with this." And that was very interesting to see.

What I noticed — and Andrew and Terry can correct me or at least add to it — is that business aviation is a fast business. "We have to be somewhere quickly and it'll be alright." However, given the world today with the new threats out there, you can't just operate like you used to.

Yet the assumption that everything will be fine is still there. I really notice it. I was at an aviation conference and you still see this mentality, and that really has to change. We have to change the security culture of assumptions about everything is still okay. We really need to change that.

**Karas:** To piggyback on what Eric said, from the aircraft operator side the assumptions are that the security situation will be handled at various steps to their destination; that there's already security measures in place that allow them to have the awareness of overflight risks; the security at their destination, at their hotel or transportation is in place; and that the security situation at the destination is being managed appropriately by the state or the local police authorities. Those are the assumptions that I think many operators have and those assumptions, like Eric probably alluded to, may no longer be valid. I'll pass it over to Terry because he

handles the ground operations side.


**Yeomans:** Generally all of aviation — particularly in our sector — is very much inward facing: "What's the security threat to me? What's the security threat to my company, my workers, my employees?"

What we're trying to get people to think about is how you can open up those silos; how you can bridge that and work together as a team, rather than that insular inward-looking focus all the time. Because by reaching out and speaking to people saying, "Okay, well what do you see? What do you hear? Can you help me with this?" — that's going to open up and make everybody much safer in the way we operate.

**Transport Security International: So how did the BASF course turn out? And does IBAC plan to offer it again?**

**Karas:** We had seven in this class. We are offering this course as schedules permit, but it'd be offered a few times a year. It's based on everybody's availability. We don't have anything set, but we do plan to offer it in the future.

**Schouten:** We are very willing to offer this every three months or every two months. And we're seeing interest in this because a lot of people are struggling with how to deal with the threats out there. Look at the situation right now in the Middle East; it's really a discussion point at this time. So people are interested in how to deal with emerging conflicts. It's becoming a topic, so they need guidance and IBAC is providing this now.

**Yeomans:** Everybody knows there's a risk, but they believe that it's covered or somebody else is covering it for them. This course is opening up a pathway to get people to talk about where the gaps are in business aviation security today, and how we can address those gaps. 

**STUDENT PRAISE FOR THE BUSINESS AVIATION SECURITY FUNDAMENTALS COURSE**

The best way to assess the quality of a product/service is to ask those who have bought it what they think of it.

In the case of the Business Aviation Security Fundamentals' course, here is what two of the attendees had to say. "The course was very interesting and well hosted by Mr. Schouten giving a lot of the floor time to the attendees," said Sergio Sergiou, station manager with Skylink Services. "There was a wide range of industry individuals with many years of experience in the field. I myself have been in the Ground Handling business for the last 27 years with over 21 years at Skylink so I believe I have a good knowledge of the industry security requirements on my side of the business but the best part for me was listening to the other side's demands and needs which is something we rarely get to hear. A lot of info was passed on by the flight crew and ops people from the operators side which was very eye-opening. I managed to get a lot of valuable info which I may not use directly but gives me a very good understanding now of the reason some requests and demands are made by our customers."

"I am a senior captain and security coordinator for a corporate flight department," said a second attendee identified as Gordon. "The Business Aviation Security course was very interactive and informative. Eric fostered a collaboration of best practices that gave me confidence in what we do as an organization, yet also pointed out some things we could do more effectively. The conference reinforced the idea that information sharing is key to ensure the widest understanding and increase our network for information sharing and resources."