

# AIRLINE PILOTS SECURITY ALLIANCE

2526 VINEYARD LANE CROFTON, MD 21114

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PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Pilots Encouraged by Prospective Air Marshal Appointee**

Airline pilots say Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff is moving in the right direction by considering an experienced field officer to head the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) when its current director retires next month. "It seems there's a real effort to find someone who truly has the background to listen to the frontline and find realistic solutions to address the threat of new 9/11's," said Captain David Mackett, President of the Airline Pilots Security Alliance (APSA). "As a pilot, it's gratifying to see candidates like Don Strange being interviewed for this critical position."

A former DEA Special Agent, Donald Strange previously managed the Atlanta field office of the Federal Air Marshal Service until his contract was cancelled for objecting to rules that made air marshals conspicuous. "He's got years of field experience, as well as a background in law enforcement and airline security. He's also earned the respect of his air marshals and hundreds of Federal Flight Deck Officers (FFDO), which is essential," says Dean Roberts, APSA spokesperson and himself a former DEA agent. "We think he's the kind of individual we need to return the FAMS and FFDO programs to the robust initiatives Congress originally sought to create."

"These programs are so crucial to our security, yet they have not been effectively managed," Roberts said. Air marshal attrition is through the roof and thousands of pilots won't volunteer to be trained to fly armed until improvements are made. We support Mr. Strange because we think he's the type of well-rounded, well-respected individual who could bring about lasting improvements and make the public safer from terrorists."

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*APSA is an aviation security working group, formed by airline pilots from every major airline in the U.S., after September 11, 2001. APSA's thousands of members work to shape public opinion and policy by educating other pilots and the general public and working with federal officials and policy makers. APSA was the core consultant on three major pieces of aviation security legislation and has briefed numerous White House, DOT, DOJ, FAA and Congressional officials.*

CONTACT:

CAPTAIN DAVID MACKETT, PRESIDENT  
615-479-4140, [davidmackett@secure-skies.org](mailto:davidmackett@secure-skies.org)

DEAN ROBERTS, APSA SPOKESPERSON  
321-693-6400, [speedbug@earthlink.net](mailto:speedbug@earthlink.net)