

Electronics ban on flights not a longterm solution: IATA boss

March 28 2017



Kuwaiti social media activist Thamer al-Dakheel Bourashed puts his laptop inside his suitcase at Kuwait International Airport in Kuwait City before boarding a flight to the United States on March 23, 2017

British and US bans on laptops and tablet computers in the cabin of flights are not sustainable in the long term, the head of the association representing airlines said Tuesday.

"The current measures are not acceptable as a long-term solution to whatever threat they are trying to mitigate," said Alexandre de Juniac, director general of the International Air Transport Association said Tuesday.

"Even in the short term, it is difficult to understand their effectiveness. And the commercial distortions they create are severe," he said in a speech in Montreal.

"We call on governments to work with the industry to find a way to keep flying secure without separating passengers from their personal electronics."

Washington last week banned electronic devices bigger than mobile phones on direct flights to the United States from 10 airports in seven Middle Eastern countries and Turkey.

Britain followed with a similar ban from five countries from the Middle East and northern Africa, and Turkey.

US officials said the measure was intended to thwart possible attacks on airliners with small explosive devices hidden in consumer electronics.

In theory, it would be harder to hide a bomb in checked luggage because these are usually scanned with more sophisticated equipment.

De Juniac lamented a lack of consultation with the airline industry and "little coordination by governments" in the measure's rollout.

He pointed to pushback from airlines and their passengers who are questioning the security measure, especially after other Western nations chose not to impose a ban.

"Why don't the US and the UK have a common list of airports?" he said.
"How can laptops be secure in the cabin on some flights and not others (from the same [airport](#))."

"And surely there must be a way to screen electronic equipment effectively at airport checkpoints," he concluded.

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Citation: Electronics ban on flights not a longterm solution: IATA boss (2017, March 28)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2017-03-electronics-flights-longterm-solution-iata.html>

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