

## Emirates, Turkish Airlines try to join Etihad off laptop ban

July 4 2017, by Jon Gambrell

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Passengers check into a flight at Abu Dhabi International Airport in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Tuesday, July 4, 2017. Travelers bound for the U.S. now enjoy something many others flying out of the Middle East can't—walking onto an airplane with their laptop. But what has changed in Abu Dhabi remains unclear as the laptop ban still affects nine other regional airports, including the world's busiest for international travel in nearby Dubai. (AP Photo/Jon Gambrell)

At Abu Dhabi International Airport, travelers bound for the United States on Tuesday enjoyed something many others flying out of the

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That may change Wednesday. Both Dubai-based Emirates and Turkish Airlines in Istanbul will host American officials to show they have complied with measures to be exempted from the ban as well, said David Lapan, a spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security.

At the Abu Dhabi [airport](#), the home of the UAE's state carrier Etihad, officials believe they'll see even more customers in the coming weeks as people learn they can keep their laptops and tablets on U.S.-bound flights. Etihad operates 45 flights a week between the UAE's capital and six cities in the U.S.

Asked about what changed, the airport's acting chief operations officer Ahmed al-Shamsi gave no details when he spoke with The Associated Press. Lapan previously said the airport had new procedures, "both seen and unseen," to protect flights.

"There was an assessment by the U.S. Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration, they're the ones who pass certain laws that airports have to follow," al-Shamsi said. "Based on these rules and how well airports follow them, they are the ones who decide when to lift the ban."



Ahmed al-Shamsi, the acting chief operations officer at Abu Dhabi International Airport, speaks to The Associated Press in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Tuesday, July 4, 2017. At Abu Dhabi International Airport, travelers bound for the U.S. now enjoy something many others flying out of the Middle East can't—walking onto an airplane with their laptop. (AP Photo/Jon Gambrell)

Abu Dhabi's airport already has a U.S. Customs and Border Protection facility that allows passengers to clear screening they'd otherwise have to go through when landing in America. That means passengers can walk right out of the airport on arrival.

The U.S. laptop ban, first announced in March as a security measure, now applies to nonstop U.S.-bound flights from nine international airports in Amman, Jordan; Kuwait City; Cairo; Istanbul; Jeddah and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Casablanca, Morocco; Doha, Qatar; and Dubai. In May, U.S. President Donald Trump shared highly classified intelligence about the Islamic State group wanting to use laptops to target aircraft

with senior Russian officials visiting the White House.

In Istanbul, Turkish Airlines CEO Bilal Eksi wrote on Twitter that he believed the laptop ban there would end as soon as Wednesday.

For Emirates, its Dubai hub has grown into the world's busiest airport for international traffic, in large part thanks to the long-haul carrier's expansion. Since the laptop ban, Emirates had been offering some passengers laptops they can use in [flight](#).



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Emirates said in a statement on Tuesday it is "working hard in coordination with various aviation stakeholders and the local authorities" to put the heightened security measures and protocols in place. It offered no specifics on what American authorities wanted.

"We hope that we will receive validation that all measures have been successfully implemented so that the electronics ban can be lifted as soon as possible for our U.S. flights," the airline said.

The laptop ban, as well as a Trump administration travel ban on six predominantly Muslim nations, has hurt Gulf carriers. Emirates has slashed 20 percent of its flights to America in the wake of those decisions.



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