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"Freedom of the Press belongs to those who own one."

A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker

September 25, 2001



Logan Airport Security

Commentary

Visiting the East Coast during this recent attack on America, I was struck by the strong response even from the very liberal Massachusetts where we spent our time. The most common immediate response from my very liberal family and friends was "Nuke 'em!" American flags were everywhere - a much higher density of American flags than I have found on the West Coast.

The problem with the use of Logan Airport as the major "weak link" was a HUGE embarrassment to Massachusetts, but it was fully expected, even predicted. There has been report after report over the years on the subject of bad security at Logan Airport, or "Massport" as it is commonly known here. For decades, Massport has been the center of political patronage in a state that is rife with political patronage.

Just look at the record: The current Governor of the state worked at Massport at a \$78,000+ patronage job when she lost her bid for Congress several years ago. The past three Directors of Massport have been appointed by previous Governors of the State from among their political supporters who had absolutely NO interest in or knowledge of aircraft transportation.

It is not just the Directors who were rewarded with political plums at Massport. The current Director of Security at Massport was the State Police driver for the previous Republican Governor of the State! He had absolutely no knowledge of or interest in security matters.



Massachusetts is facing this problem, belatedly and cautiously. This is a political state. It eats, sleeps, and lives on ward politics. The "Big Dig" - a tunnel designed to connect Massport with Boston - has become the most expensive single government boondoggle in history. That fiasco has grown from an estimated \$3 billion cost to well over \$15 billion and it has a LONG way to go. Corruption is endemic.

While that is both Federal and State money, most Americans do not much care. When terrorism uses Massport to destroy thousands of lives in New York and Washington, most Americans suddenly care but it has been a long time coming. The warnings of security problems have been ignored by the rest of America, but laughed off in Massachusetts because correcting those problems would require at least an acknowledgement of the current state of political corruption if not a complete overhaul of the very culture of the state.

Security at airports across America has been a joke for years, but nowhere has it been worse than at Massport's Logan Airport. NOW there are real calls for the "authorities" to do something. Late, very late, but the overall culture of the State is far beyond the ability of any suddenly-shined light that makes the cockroaches scurry.

There are many Massachusetts cockroaches hidden in the rotting walls. It is from Massachusetts that a major supply of money has flowed to the terrorists of the IRA over many, many years. Massachusetts has a lot to answer for, but any State that continues to elect Ted Kennedy and Barney Frank to public office is probably beyond even the reach of the RICO Statutes.

If those two politicians alone are not enough to gag a maggot, then the corruption at Massport's Logan Airport is not going to get corrected.

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"The founding fathers, in their wisdom, devised a method by which our republic can take one hundred of its most prominent numskulls and keep them out of the private sector where they might do actual harm."

P.J. O'Rourke on
the U.S. Senate

