



Aviation Week

October 6, 2003

CORRESPONDENCE

MANTRAP TO PILOTS' RESCUE

Every time I fly, I notice how easy it would be for a small group of terrorists to rush the cockpit while the door was momentarily open, get inside and then lock themselves into this armored fortress.

"Guns in the cockpit" controversy aside, there is one thing we can do to make airline cockpits nearly invulnerable, and now is the perfect time to do it. In the security industry, there is an apparatus known as a "mantrap," which is commonly used in high-security facilities. A mantrap is an entryway consisting of an outer door and an inner door and a small passageway in between. The locks of the two doors are controlled from within the secure facility, and electronically linked so both doors cannot be opened at once. To enter a cockpit through a mantrap, one would have to:

- Request that the cockpit crew unlock the outer door.
- Enter the mantrap.
- Shut the outer door and have it locked from behind.
- Only then could the inner door be unlocked by the cockpit crew.

A mantrap makes rushing a cockpit nearly impossible.

With Airbus currently developing the A380 and Boeing the 7E7, now is the perfect opportunity to incorporate mantraps into the flight deck layouts. By incorporating mantraps early in the design phase, a dramatic increase in security could be had for minimal cost, weight and space.

*Barney Greinke
Berkeley, Calif.*