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## Privatization

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What if security were left to somebody other than federal governments?

Jim Harper, director of information policy studies at the Washington-based **Cato Institute**, a free-market-oriented think tank, says airlines should be allowed to take charge of security at airports.

Especially since 9/11, the trend has been toward standardizing security procedures to ensure all airports follow the best practices. But Harper argues that decentralizing the responsibility would result in a mix of approaches - thereby making it harder for terrorists to use a single template in planning attacks.

"Passengers, too, prefer a uniform experience," he said. "But that's not necessarily the best security. It's better if sometimes we take your laptop out, sometimes we pat you down. Those are things that will really drive a terrorist batty - as if they're not batty already."

Harper concedes that privatizing airport security is probably wishful thinking, and the idea has not received any traction. He acknowledges it would be difficult to allay fears of gaping security holes if it were left to each airline or airport owner to decide its own approach.

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