

Editorial



This month we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the United States which killed almost 3,000 people and injured thousands more. The global impact of these abhorrent acts is still being felt today, including the way in which international trade and travel is conducted and regulated.

Following the attacks commercial international trade with the US came to a virtual standstill as the US authorities explored ways to ensure that the inbound supply chain was as secure as possible. With the assistance of members of the business community who were dependent on international trade, US Customs and Border Protection established the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) program which provided ‘trusted trader’ status to those businesses who could demonstrate that the risk of terrorist activity in their supply chains was being minimised by way of a variety of existing security standards.

This in turn led to the widespread adoption of the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE Framework), which has fundamentally changed the regulatory focus of customs administrations around the world. The architects of this progressive international instrument, with its central elements of Authorised Economic Operator and Mutual Recognition arrangements, clearly understood the need to establish mutually beneficial partnerships between Customs and business in order to effectively address supply chain security.

The WCO updates the SAFE Framework on a regular basis to build on its strengths, leverage lessons learned, incorporate best practices, and maintain its relevance in the face of new and emerging developments in the international supply chain.

As we commemorate the events of September 2001, we should also reflect on the efforts that continue to be made by Customs and other members of the international trading community who, through initiatives such as those embodied in the SAFE Framework, play their part in helping to make the world a safer place.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Widdowson'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large loop at the beginning and a trailing flourish at the end.

Professor David Widdowson AM
Editor-in-Chief