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Aiding the FBI's fight on terrorism

Bill would add funds for operations in seven cities

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WASHINGTON — The FBI's budget to combat terrorism within the United States would be increased by more than 50 percent under legislation introduced yesterday by Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D., Texas), a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Bentsen noted that although domestic terrorism has decreased in recent years, "we're an open target ... and we shouldn't wait for it to happen."

He said intelligence reports show that agents supporting Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini are "hidden in place in the United States, prepared to conduct terrorist actions whenever they receive word from Iran." Asked to elaborate, Bentsen said, "I'm afraid I can't."

In another move aimed at terrorists, the House voted yesterday to suspend foreign aid and air traffic to governments that refuse to tighten airport security and those that tolerate terrorist activities.

The proposal would suspend U.S. air service to countries and airports that were "high terrorist threats" because of lax security procedures or a tolerance for terrorists.

Bentsen said his legislation would add \$22 million to the FBI's \$40 million counterterrorism budget, enabling the bureau to hire 191 more agents and support personnel, to expand its anti-terrorist activities in four cities and to establish three new task forces.

The additional money would be "a wise investment to help the citizens of this country against the increasing danger of terrorist activities," he said.

"There are growing indications of informal cooperation between narcotics traffickers and established terrorist groups in Central America," and a current grand jury is investigating charges that agents of the Libyan government are "plotting to assassinate Libyan dissidents in the United States."

The FBI has twice sought to expand its counterterrorism forces by

asking for an \$11 million increase in its budget, but each time it has been turned down by the White House budget managers, said Bentsen.

An aide to Bentsen said the White House Office of Management and Budget, in rejecting the FBI's request last fall and again this year, had cited the federal budget deficit and suggested that state and local law enforcement be strengthened.

Bentsen called the White House action "one of the most foolish things I've seen since I've been up here [in the Senate]."

Since Bentsen's proposal follows the recent TWA hijacking and the arrests of four people on charges of spying for the Soviet Union, little opposition to it was expected.

In fact, during a news conference yesterday in Bentsen's office, House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D., Texas) walked in to give his support to the proposed additional money.

"I am told that one of the terrorists in this hostage-taking boasted that his greatest ambition would be to achieve martyrdom by committing acts of terrorism within the United States. So I think there is a real

danger, one that we ought not fail to take seriously."

Bentsen said his proposal would allow the FBI to expand task forces in Boston, Chicago, New York and Washington and to set up new forces in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Newark, N.J.

The amendment passed by the House, in addition to specifying actions against nations lax in their airport security measures, would also suspend U.S. air service to countries that continue air traffic with those nations.

It also calls for mandatory suspension of foreign aid to governments that tolerate terrorists. But it includes a provision allowing the aid to continue if the president deems it necessary "for reasons of national security or humanitarian purposes."

Approval by voice vote came as the House moved through a long list of proposed amendments to a two-year, \$25.4 billion foreign-aid authorization bill. On Tuesday, the House voted to withhold \$7.5 million in aid to Lebanon in 1986 and 1987 until seven U.S. hostages captured over the last 15 months were freed.