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Weekly Situation Report
on
International Terrorism

APPROVED FOR
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21 September 1976

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ARTICLES

TWA Hijackers Indicted; French Hard-Line Policy

The four men and a woman who hijacked a Trans World Airlines jet and ordered it flown to Europe on 10 September to gain publicity for Croatian independence were arraigned in New York City on air piracy charges on 13 September. Bail was set at \$1 million for each of them. They are also to be charged with the death of New York bomb squad officer Brian J. Murray, who was killed while trying to detonate a bomb left by the hijackers at Manhattan's Grand Central Station. (See the issue of 14 September.)

There was initial speculation that these hijackers might have been involved in the explosion at La Guardia airport last December in which 11 persons were killed and 75 injured. The leader of the hijackers, Zvonko Busic, has denied complicity in that bombing although he has admitted masterminding the seizure of the aircraft and constructing the bomb found at Grand Central that subsequently killed officer Murray.

The wisdom of the hard-line approach toward the hijackers on the part of French authorities has been the subject of considerable discussion in that country. When the hijacked plane landed at Paris, the French Minister of Interior gave orders to immobilize the aircraft by deflating its tires. He then had a message read to the hijackers by radio, giving them three choices--to be executed on the spot if they harmed the passengers or crew, to surrender to United States authorities, or to surrender to Yugoslav authorities.

President Giscard d'Estaing has issued a statement noting that the orders to act firmly in this incident will be the model for any future similar incident that may occur on French territory. It was reported that the French airline pilots' association had asked the Interior Minister not to take any action that could imperil the lives of the hostages aboard the aircraft, and one newspaper observed that the incident could have ended disastrously since the government, not knowing that the hijackers were actually not

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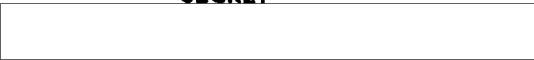
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armed, chose to risk the safety of the hostages by adopting its firm, no-nonsense stand with the hijackers. Nonetheless, the paper concluded that the government's handling of the incident constitutes a precedent which would seem to rule out any future possibility of taking a different attitude in similar incidents. 

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