

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT SKYJACKING?

José Martí International, this is Eastern flight number 9, requesting permission for an emergency landing. We have a passenger aboard who wants to go to Cuba.

CAPTAIN R. D. Smith last week calmly radioed what has become a routine message. Over northern Florida, a young man brandishing a Dominican Republic passport and a hand grenade had burst into the cockpit of the Miami-bound DC-8, shouting "Cuba! Cuba!" The jet held 171 passengers, the largest number skyjacked to date. The same day, four men armed with guns and dynamite took over an Ecuadorian airliner en route from Quito to Miami with 81 passengers and forced it to land in Havana. Both aircraft, with crews and passengers, were held briefly by Cuban authorities and released. Later in the week a National Airlines Key West-New York Boeing 727 with 47 aboard was diverted to Cuba by a young U.S. Navy deserter who said he preferred Cuban exile to duty in Viet Nam.

Last week's three incidents brought the number of planes skyjacked in the first three weeks of 1969 to eight. At that rate, this year should easily break the alarming 1968 record of 28. There have been 46 skyjackings to Cuba since the first U.S. airliner was forced to land there in May 1961, and despite the enormous risks of midair piracy, the skyjackings have miraculously caused no fatalities or even a single injury. The routine—including the standard radio message—has become well-established.

For more than a year, pilots of commercial flights serving the southeastern U.S. have carried in their chart bags an approach map for Havana's José Martí International Airport, showing electronic navigation aids and the course for an instrument landing approach. The Federal Aviation Agency's Miami Traffic Control Center notifies Havana of the skyjacking. An official of the Swiss embassy in Washington—which handles U.S. diplomatic contacts with Fidel Castro's Cuba—fills in the blanks on a prepared form asking the Cubans for prompt release of the aircraft and its passengers. U.S. air carriers in Miami have even issued bilingual cards to enable pilots to communicate with non-English-speaking skyjackers (*Nos iremos a Cuba como usted indica*—"Proceeding to Cuba as directed").

Assassin Types. Who are the skyjackers? Most are either criminals on the lam or men who are emotionally disturbed in one way or another. Dr. Peter Siegel, the FAA's air surgeon, has made a study of the scant available data and formulated what he calls the "skyjackers' syndrome": the skyjacker believes that he can prove himself a decisive, effective human being by taking control of a plane, its crew and passengers, and commanding it to go to Cuba.

There, in his fantasy, Castro will welcome him as a hero. But skyjacking is self-defeating, an example of what psychiatrists call "the Indian coup phenomenon." Explains Dr. Siegel: "You scalp yourself. After that, what have you got?"

Few psychiatrists or psychologists have ever examined one, but they theorize that the skyjacker is making a grand attention-getting gesture that he thinks will forever remove him from anonymity and impotence among the faceless millions of a mass society. "Behind it is the omnipotent fantasy," reasons Dr. Frederick Hacker, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Southern California. "To steal an airplane has a lot to do with feelings of masculinity

do so without great difficulty on one of the six airlines that fly there regularly: Mexicana, Iberia, Air Canada, Soviet Russia's Aeroflot, Czechoslovak Airlines, and Cubana.

Neither psychiatry nor technology has yet come up with a way to stop the growing wave of skyjacking. Because of the obvious danger an armed skyjacker poses to airplane and passengers, pilots simply go along with his wishes. An unhinged desperado could easily cause a crash or midair explosion that would kill all aboard. Only six attempts have failed, all on flukes. Sheriff's deputies shot out the tires of a skyjacked Continental Boeing 707 trying to take off from El Paso. Daniel Richards, 33, an Ohio mental patient who tried to commandeer a Delta flight suddenly dropped his gun, curled up in his seat and began weeping. He said he was "dying of



WOULD-BE SKYJACKER RICHARDS BEING LED AWAY BY AUTHORITIES IN MIAMI
The grand gesture and the omnipotent fantasy.

that need strengthening." Says Dr. Leonard Olinger, who teaches abnormal psychology at U.S.C.: "He's in the same class as the assassin, the same sort of acting-out character. You'd have to say there is a marked degree of emotional disturbance."

Failed on Flukes. Dr. Olinger discounts political motives in skyjacking. "The skyjacker is making a symbolic gesture of protest, and this makes it unlikely that his political reasons count for much," he argues. Beverly Hills Psychiatrist Ralph Greenson agrees. "Skyjacking is a typical mechanism of people who resort to irrational violence," he says. "With the temporarily omnipotent feelings the skyjacker gets, he actually is in control of his own destiny and the destinies of others. He's next to God, literally, flying to Cuba. With this one grand gesture of power, the skyjacker shows his contempt for the establishment." Any rational political refugee who wanted to get to Cuba could

"cancer" and did not care what happened. Two weeks ago aboard another Delta flight, a pilot refused to obey the orders of a skyjacker who tried to take over the jet on its final landing approach to Miami International. No one has attempted to disarm a skyjacker. A single bullet fired through the fuselage of a pressurized airliner will not necessarily result in explosive decompression, but one shot in the instrument-packed cockpit could bring disaster even if none of the crew were hit.

An Overnight Delay. A host of remedies, some of them far out, have been proposed. None of them are foolproof. Locking the cockpit door is a usual precaution, but a gunman can still force a stewardess to relay orders to the pilot by intercom. The International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations plans a resolution boycotting flights to any country that fails to release a skyjacked plane within 48 hours, but of the airlines flying to Cuba, only Mex-

icana, Iberia and Air Canada have I.F.A.L.P.A. pilots. In any case, the Cubans have so far been careful to free skyjacked planes and passengers after no more than an overnight delay. The airlines and electronics firms are working on weapons-detection systems to spot armed passengers during boarding. One company has developed a device that it claims can distinguish a gun or knife from other metal objects, at a cost of under \$1,000 per installation. While each skyjacking costs an airline around \$8,500, the carriers are reluctant to spend the amount necessary to search each passenger on every plane that might conceivably be skyjacked.

In 1961 the U.S. passed a law imposing penalties ranging from 20 years in jail to death for skyjacking, but few are caught—and none has been returned by Castro. A U.S. proposal to Cuba for a regular Miami-Havana charter flight for all would-be defectors has met no response as yet. In any case, it would not satisfy the pathological urges that apparently impel most skyjackers. Last week aviation rumor had it that Castro sentences skyjackers to five years' hard labor, but that is simply not the case. A few have been detained for extended questioning, and two are in psychiatric hospitals, but the rest have gone free.

Inadvertent Visitors. The FAA sends plainclothes "sky marshals" along on Miami-bound flights selected at random, and no flight with an FAA man aboard has yet been skyjacked—but there is little that a lawman could do to prevent plane piracy without increasing the already considerable danger to all on board. In any case, putting marshals aboard the hundreds of flights daily that might be skyjacked would be prohibitively costly. The wildest potential remedies include a trap door that would drop the skyjacker into the blue yonder at the push of a button, or hidden circuits that would stun him with an electric shock. But a passenger or stewardess could be inadvertently zapped as readily as the culprit.

Nonetheless, pilots and psychiatrists concur in an important conclusion: if Castro were to return a single skyjacker to face U.S. justice, the airborne stampede to Havana would soon stop. He is not likely to do that, for the skyjacking epidemic has become an increasingly perplexing embarrassment to the U.S. Cuba has already earned about \$100,000 in landing fees and other charges imposed on the hapless U.S. airlines. Ironically, 2,500 Americans have visited Cuba unintentionally since the end of 1967—nearly four times the number officially permitted to go there since Castro overthrew Batista in 1959. Knut Hammarskjöld, director-general of the International Air Transport Association and a nephew of the late U.N. Secretary-General, visited Havana last week but kept mum about what progress he had made, if any.

Despite the growing risk that an innocent jaunt to Miami will turn out to in-

clude a side trip to Havana, the airlines so far have detected no falloff in Florida-bound traffic. That situation may not last. Miami's WLDB-TV asked its audience last week: "In view of the skyjacking situation, are you afraid to travel by air?" Of those who called in to answer, 73% said yes. U.S. Government officials, at least, are deserting commercial flights to Florida in increasing numbers. With the winter White House now in Key Biscayne, Nixon staffers and high-ranking visitors can use Air Force Lockheed JetStars that have been placed on 24-hour White House call. When CIA men head for Florida on business these days, they take the train.



YOUTH WORKER WARREN
Antithesis of the stereotype.

YOUTH

Can LUV Conquer All?

American youth stormed on the national political scene in 1968 with galvanic gusto. Yet for all their efforts, both creative and disruptive, the young dissidents remained on the outside looking in on the American political process. For the most part, they were not old enough to back up their beliefs with ballots. Now, displaying the same kinetic enthusiasm that the kids did during the campaign, a youthful movement called LUV ("Let Us Vote") is spearheading a drive to amend the Constitution to enfranchise 18-year-olds.

A National Coalition. Next week, forming a coalition aimed at attaining those goals, LUV plans to join with the National Education Association, the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the National Student Association, the national Young Republican and Young Democratic clubs, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the U.S. Youth Council. Though other groups

have tried in the past to lower the voting age in individual states, the coalition will mark the first time that students will have merged with other interest groups to achieve the goal on a national basis.

LUV's founder and moving spirit is Dennis Warren, 21, a prelaw student at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, Calif. The very antithesis of the stereotype student radical, Warren wears his hair closely cropped, dresses in conservative pinstripe suits and black shoes. As a sophomore, he won two gold medals at the Pi Kappa Delta national debating tournament.

Warren uses all of his forensic skills as he goes about advocating the lowered voting age. Only four states now allow voting before age 21: Georgia and Kentucky at 18, Alaska at 19 and Hawaii at 20. Yet, contends Warren, "the average age of those who fight and die in war is under 21. These men and women rightfully deserve a voice in selecting the government that determines whether there should be a war."

In the six weeks since he organized LUV, Warren has seen it expand from a campus-wide drive at his own college into a nationwide movement that now has 327 college chapters and 3,000 high school divisions. More than 20,000 letters inquiring about LUV have flooded into Warren's busy headquarters on the Stockton campus. Only three of these have been critical—and only one contained a contribution, for \$1.23.

Reforms Proposed. LUV's labors are coming at a time when support is gathering for broad-based reform of the nation's electoral process, including lowering the voting age and abolishing the Electoral College. Richard Nixon repeatedly advocated lowering the voting-age requirement during the campaign, and both Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and Senate Minority Leader Everett McKinley Dirksen are on record as supporting the move. Recently, Mansfield and Vermont's Senator George D. Aiken co-sponsored a resolution to lower the voting age to 18 and introduce a system of direct election that would put the President in office for a six-year term. Last week the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments began to review proposed alternatives to the Electoral College formula.

Nonetheless, the advocates of reform still must overcome Capitol Hill's longstanding reluctance to change the electoral process. A total of 153 congressional resolutions (including the Mansfield-Aiken proposal) to amend the Constitution to allow 18-year-olds to vote has been introduced in Congress since 1943. All have failed. Today, moreover, many middle-class voters are disillusioned with the militant youths who fought the police in Chicago during the Democratic Convention and have turned college campuses into battlegrounds. LUV Leader Warren is not concerned, however. He is confident that LUV will conquer all.