

## SKYJACKING

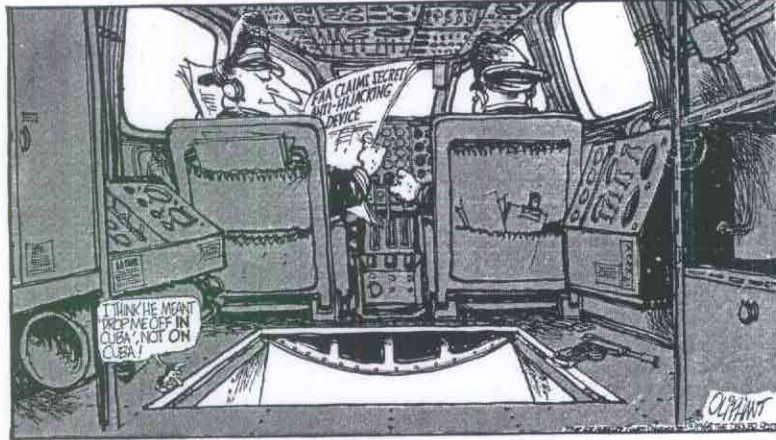
### To Catch a Thief

With contemptuous ease, skyjackers continue to make flying practically anywhere in the Americas a dubious and dangerous venture.

Last week yet another Miami-bound Eastern Airlines flight was forced to fly to Havana, the ninth American plane to be commandeered so far this year; on the same day another attempt was aborted when two youths were fooled into capture. They were convinced by the pilot that the plane did not have enough fuel to reach Cuba, and when the jet landed at Miami, FBI agents arrested the pair. Two days later, a Colombian airliner en route to Medellín, Colombia, was taken over and forced to fly to Santiago de Cuba by a Co-

Helpful Hints. As serious as the situation is, there is a light side. Hundreds of suggestions have flooded the Federal Aviation Administration offering helpful hints to halt the hijacking, indicating that the American public is always anxious to help. Sometimes too anxious. One letter writer recommends stripping passengers nude on flights headed for Miami "so that everybody can see everything and nobody can hide a weapon." Another suggests that only the sexiest stewardesses should be assigned to southbound flights so that, if the need arose, they could seduce the skyjacker in mid-air.

Where sex failed, sentiment might succeed. One proposal is that the flight captain make a standard announcement before takeoff appealing to the better nature of a would-be skyjacker: "Folks,"



CARTOONIST OLIPHANT'S SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

lombian airport guard who idolized the late Che Guevara.

Frustrated by their inability to stop the stream of airborne thefts, the Federal Government has now turned to the one man who can put a halt to the hazardous hijackings to Cuba: Fidel Castro. Since the U.S. has had no diplomatic relations with Cuba since early 1961, the State Department is conducting talks with Castro indirectly through the Mexican government and the Swiss embassy in Havana.

**Agreements Sought.** These discussions so far have not been able to achieve what most lawyers and airline executives think would be the most effective deterrent to the crimes: a bilateral agreement between Cuba and the U.S. to return skyjackers to America for prosecution, which could result in sentences ranging from 20 years' imprisonment to death. However, they may at least result in the swifter return of the skyjacked passengers, crews and planes. Frank Loy, deputy assistant secretary of state for transportation and telecommunications, told a congressional committee last week that Castro is "fed up" with the skyjackings. If they continue at their present rate, he said, the Cuban government "may adopt measures of its own" to stop them.

the message goes, "we have lots of sick people aboard today, all bound for their health to the sun of Miami, and we don't wish to cause them any distress." A science-oriented writer suggests gradually depressurizing the cabin until all the passengers, including the skyjacker, lose consciousness due to a lack of oxygen. Or maybe the crew could spray a small dose of a tranquilizer into the passenger area, turning the culprit—along with everyone else—into a contented, harmless heap. Still another suggestion is that the guns firing darts dipped in tranquilizers to fell animals without injury be used on airline pirates. More elaborate is a recommendation to construct a bogus airport south of Miami to resemble Havana's José Martí International. Plastered with *Bienvenido a la Habana* signs and staffed by Cuban refugees, the airfield presumably would fool skyjackers long enough to ensure their arrest upon landing.

For the time being, however, the airlines will stick to their present procedure of avoiding airborne disaster by giving the sky pirate what he wants—a free trip to Havana. And the Government will continue its efforts to change Cuba from a haven for skyjackers into a nonscheduled stop with a return flight to a federal penitentiary.