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Stewardesses Refuse

By Ralph Craib

Sixteen stewardesses of Trans International Airlines were grounded yesterday and are "subject to dismissal" for refusing to staff a charter flight to remove American bank employees from Saigon.

"We did not mind flying out there when there was American military protection," said one anonymous stewardess with six years of employment with TIA.

"But we all know what

happened to the World Airways flight to Da Nang. I love my job, but I don't think the company has a right to put me in a position where I may have to fight a panicky mob for my seat on the airplane."

"They expect us to go into Saigon where there will be no protection for an airplane that would stay on the ground for a minimum of two hours," said another defiant hostess.

"We know that there are ground-to-air rockets all

around the airport. We know that airplane might be attacked and that there is no American military to provide protection."

And, said a third stewardess. "I don't think that I am capable of fighting back an onslaught on the plane. The company said this was just a normal flight. I don't think so."

Trans International, a subsidiary of Transamerica Corporation, has some 430 cabin attendants working out of its Metropolitan Oak-

land International Airport headquarters. Some 200 of these are on furlough, a union spokesman said.

The cabin attendants' revolt began Friday night when TIA prepared to send a stretch DC-8 jet to Tokyo, thence to Saigon, to pick up employees of a major U.S. bank. Company officials would not name the charter client, believed to be the Chase Manhattan Bank.

TIA's stewardesses work on a four-hour flight alert notice; they must report to

Saigon Flight

Oakland airport ready for the trip in that time limit.

When word spread Friday night, one stewardess said, she and friends simply let their phones ring. "They tried to call me at least 15 times, but I just let that phone ring," she said.

Teamsters' Local 2707, which represents the TIA cabin crews and other Bay Area airline workers, said it stands behind the stewardesses to the utmost of its power.

TIA's major competitor in

the supplemental airline business, World Airways, already has made Saigon flights a voluntary matter for all crew personnel, the union spokesman said.

The union knows of 16 of its members in TIA who have been placed "off flight status, subject to dismissal." The spokesman said the union hopes to conciliate the matter with the management.

If the company made trips to Saigon a matter of volunteering, the union said, "We

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are sure enough people would volunteer."

The company said that the planned bank charter would later canceled when TIA did not get landing rights from the South Vietnamese government. Both TIA and World Airways have made many trips to Saigon, but on charter to the U.S. Department of Defense, not for private business.