

# Cuba Will Try 3 Hijackers; Accepts Proposal on Talks

## U.S. Sees Moves on Southern Airways Seizure and Pact as New Progress on Piracy Problem With Havana

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 20—Cuba has informed the United States that she will put on trial the three hijackers who demanded and received \$2-million in ransom and forced a Southern Airways jet to land in Havana eight days ago, the State Department announced today.

At the same time, Charles W. Bray 3d, the department spokesman, said that the Cuban Government had accepted American proposals made last week to begin formal negotiations on an agreement to curb hijacking.

These talks will be held through the Swiss Embassy in Havana, which represents American interests there, and are expected to begin soon, Mr. Bray said. One source said Cuba had suggested that the negotiations begin this week

and that Washington was expected to reply promptly.

Both of these developments were viewed by the Administration as further signs of progress toward resolving the hijacking problem with Cuba, which for years has been a destination for American hijackers.

In the last week, Cuba and the United States have both called publicly for broad measures to curb aerial piracy. The United States, encouraged by Cuba's attitude, has gone to unusual lengths to praise Havana's actions. The two countries have had no diplomatic relations since 1961.

The new developments have come after two well-publicized hijackings to Cuba.

The first, Oct. 29, involved

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an Eastern Airlines jet seized by four men in Houston. The four have since been charged with the slaying of a bank official and a police officer during an attempted bank hold-up in Arlington, Va., and with the killing of an Eastern Airlines ticket agent before the Houston hijacking.

### 29-Hour Ordeal

The second, hijacking, Nov. 11, and 12, involved a Southern Airways jet seized in flight by three men and taken to Canada, various points in the United States and twice to Cuba before the 29-hour ordeal ended for the 31 passengers and crew.

When the Southern Airways plane first landed at Havana's José Martí airport, the hijackers had a sharp exchange with Cuban authorities and ordered the jet back to the United States. While the plane was on the ground at Orlando, Fla., agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation shot out the tires, but the plane was able to take off and make an emergency landing at Havana.

Mr. Bray said that two days ago Cuba told the United States, in a note presented to the Swiss Embassy, that the three Southern hijackers of the Southern Airways plane would be put on trial before a Cuban court, charged with offenses committed while the plane was on the ground in Havana the first time.

A State Department official said these charges included threatening the life of the pilot, threatening to blow up the aircraft and extorting fuel and other supplies from Cuban authorities. The Cuban note said that the \$2-million ransom had been turned over to the court, apparently as evidence.

### Extradition Requested

A State Department official said that this was believed to be the first time that Cuba had informed the United States in advance that any hijackers were to be tried, although several hijackers in the past were believed to have been brought before Cuban courts.

The United States has asked for the extradition of the Southern Airways and Eastern Airlines hijackers for trial in this country, but an official said that American policy had always included the option that hijackers could be punished by the country in which they landed instead of being extradited.

"This seems a useful first response to our request," the official said.

Mr. Bray said, "We hope this step will serve to deter others who may have been contemplating hijacking."

The three hijackers have been identified by American authorities at Lewis D. Moore and Henry D. Jackson, charged with rape in Detroit, and Melvin C. Cale, who escaped from a Tennessee jail.

Cuban authorities have the four hijackers of the Eastern Airlines plane in custody but have not said what they would do with them. They have been identified as Charles A. Tuller Jr., a former Commerce Department official, his two sons, Bryce and Jonathan, and a friend of the sons, William White Graham.

The United States originally proposed an agreement to combat hijacking in 1969, but talks broke down in 1970 over Cuban efforts to include provisions in the agreement for the return of illegal Cuban refugees.

In her recent statements, Cuba has expressed unhappiness with being considered a haven for criminal hijackers. Cuba has also asked that the coming negotiations end what she considers hostile actions against her by the United States particularly the continued activity carried out by anti-Castro groups in the United States.