

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Forwarded to:

Honorable Alexander P. Butterfield
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D. C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-75-2 thru 5

On September 8, 1974, Trans World Airlines Flight 841, a B-707-331B, crashed in the Ionian Sea, about 50 miles west of Cephalonia, Greece. The aircraft was on a flight from Tel Aviv, Israel, to New York, New York, with scheduled stops in Athens, Greece, and Rome, Italy.

The results of the laboratory examination of certain items in the recovered flotsam establish conclusively that the detonation of a high order explosive took place in the aircraft's aft cargo compartment.

Subsequent to the accident it was determined that an aft cargo compartment fire on a similar flight on August 26, 1974, was caused by a malfunctioning explosive device contained in a suitcase. In both instances, the passengers' checked baggage at the last boarding point was not examined, nor was this required. Trans World Airlines' procedures now include the examination of checked baggage at that boarding point.

The National Transportation Safety Board is aware of the problems in maintaining an adequate level of aircraft security without undue costs, delays, or passenger irritation, especially when an air carrier operates in other countries. Since aircraft security, in most cases, is a joint responsibility of the air carrier, the airport authority, and the regulatory agency involved, it is apparent that close coordination among all parties involved is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of the security program. The Federal Aviation Administration's Aviation Security Technical Assistance Program plays a vital role in adapting security programs to the needs of time and locale. Although many nations have already availed themselves of this program, it has not yet reached all countries where American flag carriers make scheduled stops.

Honorable Alexander P. Butterfield (2)

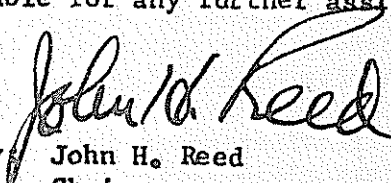
The Safety Board notes that, with the exception of the FAA's Regional headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, for Europe, Africa and Middle East, all regional headquarters have security offices. The establishment of such an office in your Brussels headquarters would provide a much-needed focal point for the coordination of aircraft security measures in the area served by that headquarters.

Although aircraft sabotage can take many forms, it appears that, in most cases, some type of high explosive is involved. The Safety Board is aware of the ongoing research in the development of explosives detection equipment and believes that the use of suitable detection equipment would not only simplify examination procedures but serve as a deterrent.

Accordingly, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

1. Reemphasize to the nations served by American flag carriers the importance of participating in the Aviation Security Technical Assistance Program.
2. Establish an Aviation Security Office in the Federal Aviation Administration's Europe, Africa and Middle East Regional Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.
3. Expedite the development and use of suitable explosives detection equipment to preclude the introduction of explosive devices on board an aircraft.
4. Ensure that the aircraft security programs of U.S. air carriers, as prescribed by 14 CFR 121.538, contain provisions that are more responsive to high risk situations in international as well as domestic operations.

Our technical staff is available for any further assistance they may be able to provide.


By John H. Reed
Chairman

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE ISSUE DATE SHOWN ABOVE. NO PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE MADE PRIOR TO THAT DATE.