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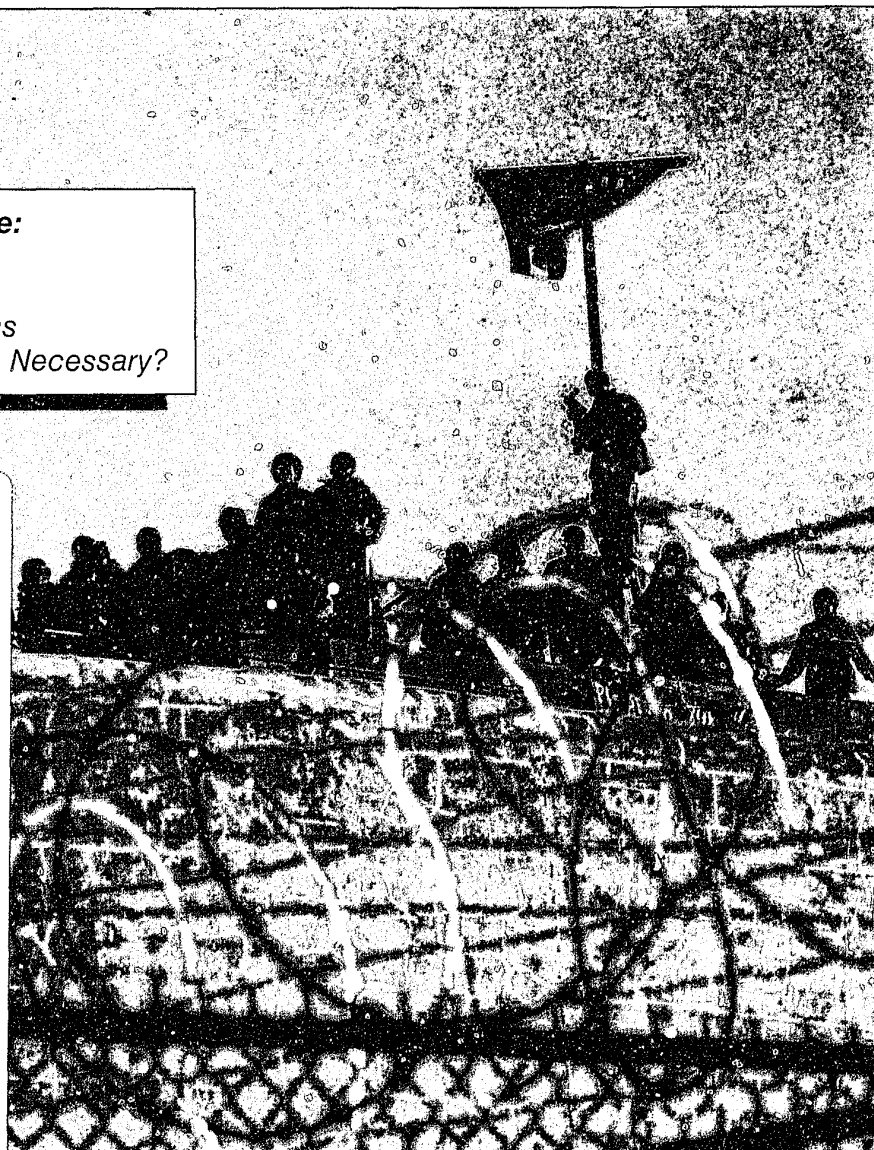
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The Oakdale and Atlanta Prison Sieges

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The Cover: The Oakdale and Atlanta prison sieges, occurring simultaneously in November 1987, became catalysts for the largest crisis management mobilization in FBI history. See article on page 1.

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Aviation Security

Special Issue

By

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—Investigations

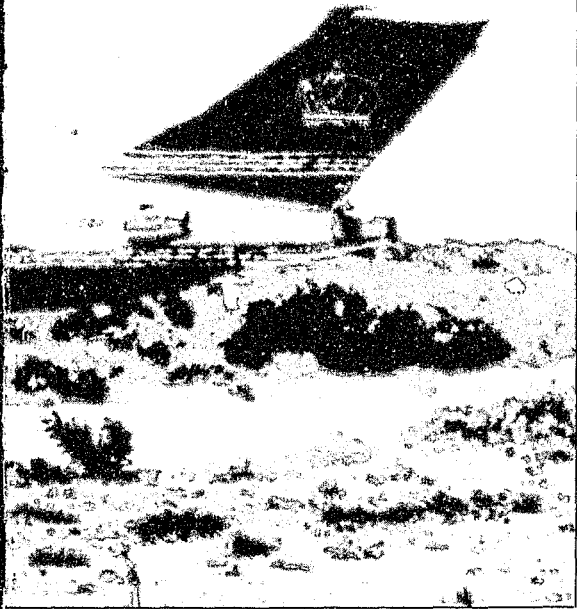
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, DC

On December 21, 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 crashed in Lockerbie, Scotland—the result of an explosive device. While en route from Heathrow Airport in London, England, to John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, the aircraft suddenly disappeared from radar at 31,000 feet. The detonation of an explosive device, which had been placed inside a radio cassette recorder in the forward baggage compartment, spread debris and the contents of the aircraft over an 845-square mile area. All 243 passengers, 16 flight crew members, and 11 people on the ground were killed. In addition, seven people from Lockerbie are still missing and presumed dead.

This was yet just another tragic reminder that civil aviation security is an extremely important global issue on which law enforcement must focus. As the designated, lead Federal agency combating terrorism within the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has a two-fold mission: To prevent terrorist incidents and to respond to such incidents when they occur. Obviously, the FBI cannot begin to fulfill its mission alone. All law enforcement agencies must work together, both here and abroad, to keep American citizens and aviation activities safe from terrorist attacks. This article discusses airport security, and more specifically, the scope of the problem and possible solutions.

A Royal Jordanian airliner is blown up by hijackers after releasing the crew and passengers.



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The Problem

Inadequate security in many airports heightens the probability and leaves an open door to the possibility of terrorist attacks, which have become a major cause of human casualties and the destruction of aircraft. Since 1982, terrorists have been involved in at least 30 incidents of aircraft hijackings and bombings. Although at first glance, this may not seem like an inordinate number of attacks, the real threat goes much deeper. Today, as in the past, terrorists view using force or violence against people or property as a means to intimidate or coerce a government or an individual citizen to further their political or social objectives.

Many airports around the world are particularly vulnerable to terrorist attacks. For example, a TWA aircraft en route from Athens, Greece, to Rome, Italy, was hijacked in June 1985. At the time, the Athens airport's security was extremely lax, despite being the center of the Middle Eastern air traffic and a focal point of several terrorist groups. Following the hijacking incident, the U.S. Department of State issued an advisory to all Americans to avoid the Athens airport. However, the advisory was lifted 5 weeks later, when a Department of State report concluded that security measures had improved to meet international airport security requirements.

Even within the United States, airport security measures can be inadequate, and a tragic example of this was the crash of Pacific Southwest Airlines Flight 1771 on December 7, 1987. On this date, a Pacific Southwest Airlines employee, who had been fired, smuggled a handgun aboard the flight by using his employee identification badge to bypass the security checkpoint at Los Angeles International Airport. Directly following this incident, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) instituted new security regulations which required all airlines and airport employees to go through screening checkpoints before boarding commercial flights.

In February 1988, the United States joined other International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) members in signing, in Montreal, Canada, the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful

Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation. This protocol supplements and extends the legal framework of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation, adopted at Montreal on September 21, 1971 (the Montreal Convention). The protocol addresses acts of violence committed at airports which serve international civil aviation, even where such acts do not endanger the safety of aircraft in flight. It was a response to several terrorist acts at international airports, including the attacks in December 1985, at the Rome and Vienna airports. Presently, the protocol has been transmitted to the U.S. Senate for its advice and consent and is awaiting ratification.¹

Toward a Solution

To begin solving the problem, aviation security must be made a higher priority for law enforcement, government agencies, and the airlines industry. This can be accomplished by expanded jurisdiction, prevention, and cooperation.

Expanded jurisdiction may well act as a significant deterrent to would-be terrorists. Even though the FAA has the primary responsibility for airport and in-flight security within the United States, and for flag carriers overseas, the FBI investigates terrorist incidents when laws of the United States have been violated.

The FBI's jurisdiction mainly deals with matters of aircraft piracy, interference with flight crew members, and with certain crimes aboard aircraft in flight

within the United States pertinent to Title 49, U.S. Code, Sect. 1472. Outside the United States, the FBI has actively investigated terrorist incidents committed against U.S. interests beyond U.S. borders since 1985. The Bureau received this jurisdiction primarily as part of the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984 and later as part of the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986.

In September 1987, as a result of an undercover operation, this expanded jurisdiction was used to arrest Fawaz Younis, a member of Amal, a Lebanese Shia organization, in international waters. Younis was charged in connection with the hijacking of Royal Jordanian Airline flight 402. Later, a nine-count indictment was filed charging Younis with air piracy, placing a destructive device on board an aircraft, committing violence aboard an aircraft, and aiding and abetting a hijacking. On March 14, 1989, Younis was convicted of conspiracy, hostage taking and air piracy.

This marks the first time that an individual was successfully prosecuted under the 1984 Hostage Taking Act. This conviction sends a clear, unmistakable message to terrorists: They will be aggressively pursued and brought to justice in the United States for acts of terrorism against Americans or U.S. interests abroad.

However, expanded jurisdiction is not the only answer. Prevention is also an absolutely essential element of any plan to make airports more secure. All involved parties, both law enforcement and the airlines industry, must actively support prevention. One way this can be accomplished is through collecting intelligence to increase our knowledge base. This can also be done through interviews with those involved in the terrorist incident, through the use of well-developed informants, undercover operations and through physical and court-ordered electronic surveillance. Sharing information with the FAA, commercial airlines and with various

law enforcement agencies here and abroad also aids prevention.

Finally, expanded cooperation can and already has had an effect on the security of airports. To illustrate, in May 1986, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) arrested five Sikhs who were conspiring to come to the United States to put a bomb aboard an Air India Airliner at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York in exchange for money or drugs. This information, developed by the RCMP and the FBI, was instrumental in convictions and sentences for those found guilty.

In addition, the FBI has increased its experience and operational capabilities through a joint training exercise. This exercise, which was conducted in November 1988, included the FAA, FBI, State and local law enforcement agencies and the private sector. The exercise included a mock seizure of a U.S. aircraft in the United States by "terrorists" and the eventual landing and resolution of the incident at a different location.

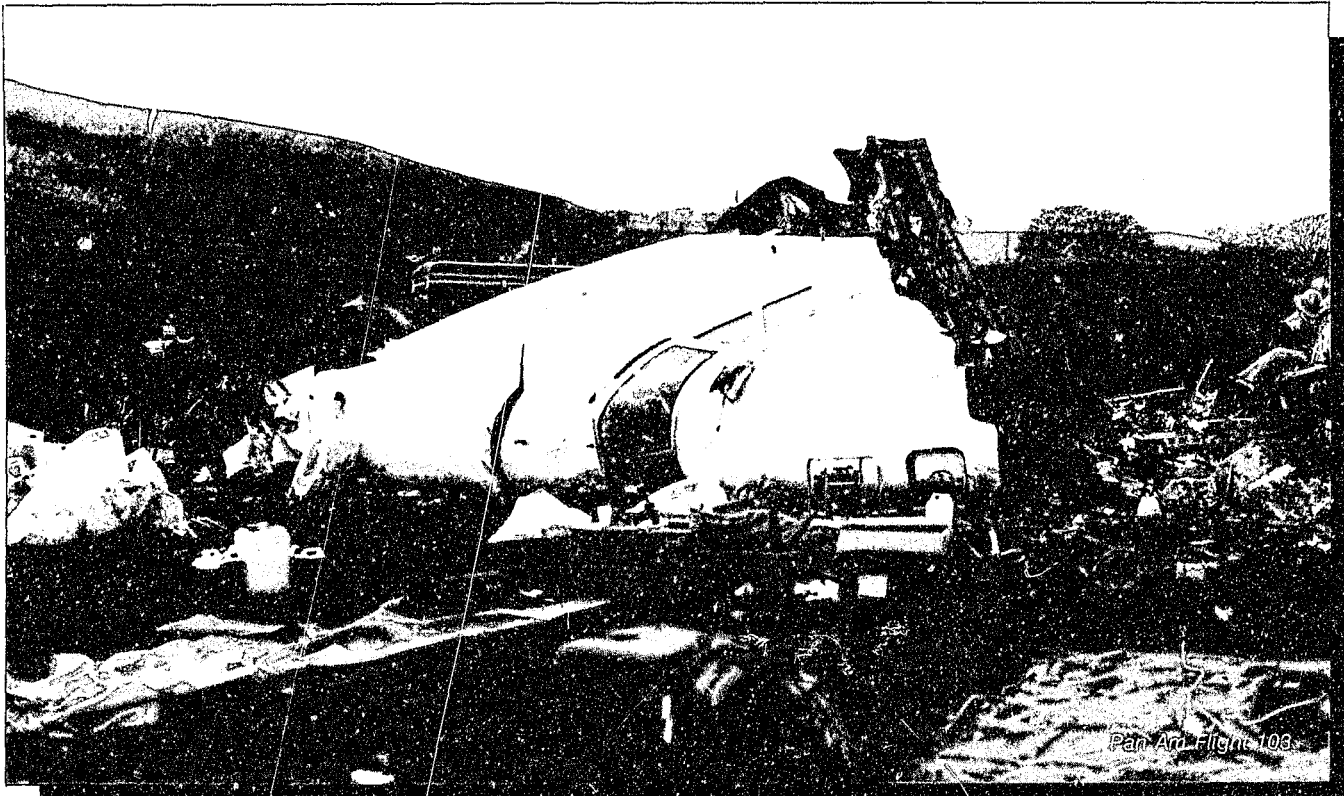
During the exercise the "terrorists" seized the aircraft and held the "passengers" hostage. Ultimately, the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team assaulted the aircraft and subdued the "hijackers." This particular type of joint exercise tests everyone's capabilities to react to such a crisis and helps to ensure that appropriate measures can be put into effect in the event of an actual terrorist hijacking.

Unfortunately, this commitment to cooperation was put to use on December 21, 1988, when Pan Am Flight 103 exploded and



EAD Revell

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security is an
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”



crashed in Lockerbie, Scotland. As the agency responsible for investigation of terrorist attacks on U.S. persons and civil aviation, the FBI continually uses its resources to coordinate the investigation both in the United States and with its counterpart agencies abroad.

Since the outset of this tragedy, the investigation has been conducted in complete cooperation with Scottish, English, German and U.S. law enforcement agencies. The FBI has provided laboratory experts and has assisted in the aircraft reconstruction in Scotland. Moreover, Scottish and English authorities have detailed officers to the FBI's Washington Metropolitan Field Office to also provide assistance. All of the involved agencies, here and abroad, are committed to provid-

ing the necessary resources to bring those responsible to justice.

Conclusion

Today, terrorism has become a routine tactic used by extremist groups. According to U.S. Depart-

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”

ment of State data, there were 856 international terrorist incidents in 1988 resulting in 658 deaths and 1,131 injuries.² Terrorism continues to be a dangerous threat to aviation worldwide. Therefore,

there must be a renewed commitment to aviation security.

Everyone involved in aviation security must work diligently to gather information and to continue to enhance the intelligence base. Law enforcement around the globe must be especially determined in its resolve to deal effectively with terrorism. This determination demands strong, effective cooperation and investigative coordination among law enforcement agencies around the world. By continuing to work vigilantly and positively with the aviation industry, law enforcement can ensure that the sky will always belong to the public, not to the terrorist.

Footnotes

¹*Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1988*, Office of the Secretary of State, Ambassador-at-Large for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, March 1989, p. 6.

²*Ibid.*, p. 6.