

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOLE RESOLUTION CALLS FOR COMMITMENT BY U.N. MEMBERS TO DENY SANCTUARY TO HIJACKERS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole today introduced a Resolution calling on all member nations of the United Nations to deny sanctuary to hijackers, and to strengthen airport security measures.

Following is the text of remarks Dole made when he introduced the measure:

Mr. President, I am today introducing a Senate Resolution which has, as its objective, the deterrence of international airline hijacking. To accomplish this, my resolution calls upon the President -- working with his Ambassador to the United Nations -- to encourage all members of the United Nations to cooperate in specific efforts to discourage air-piracy.

My resolution expresses the sense of the Senate that the President should instruct the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. to (1) submit a General Assembly Resolution denying sanctuary in any country to persons engaging in international hijackings; (2) direct our delegation's work within the U.N. towards securing full international cooperation in related areas, including improvement in airport security systems, worldwide; and (3) call upon other member nations to adhere to the 1970 Hague Convention for suppressing international air-piracy.

THE PROBLEM

Mr. President, just last week a West German airliner was commandeered by four hijackers over the Mediterranean Ocean, and eighty-six hostages -- including two Americans -- were terrorized for hours until they were freed in Somalia by a West German commando raid. The scenario is familiar to us all; it has happened far too often. During the first six months of this year, fourteen hijacking attempts were made outside the United States. Since June, another nine have occurred. That the incidence of airline hijacking within the United States is much lower -- only four attempts during 1976 -- is largely due to superior security precautions taken at all major U.S. airports. Unfortunately, the government of Cuba recently refused to renew an anti-hijacking accord with the United States that had been in effect since 1973, and I truly hope that this action does not encourage hijacking in this country.

But security at airports and aboard airlines varies widely from nation-to-nation. Hijacking precautions in Spain, Greece, and certain Arab states, I understand, are far more lax than in Western Europe or the United States. Certainly, careless security measures in some countries undermine the responsible efforts of others. By the same token, a willingness on the part of some nations to harbor hijackers defeats the common effort to suppress the despicable action.

Late last week, the International Federation of Airline Pilots Association threatened an international strike, which was averted only by an agreement to raise the hijacking issue in the United Nations General Assembly this week. The Pilots Association is looking for assurances from U.N. Members of greater protections against air-piracy and guarantees against providing sanctuary for hijackers. I understand that the General Assembly debate will begin today, and it is for that reason that I believe the United States should take positive initiatives at this time to achieve greater cooperation in preventing international hijackings.

THE SOLUTION

A solution to the rampant hijacking activity, it seems to me, lies both in strengthening internal security and in taking collective international action to punish terrorism. This will require, on the part of all nations, a strengthening and standardization of airport security measures, so that there are no "weak links" in the chain of internal security. In addition -- and most importantly -- it will require universal refusal to grant asylum to those who engage in hijacking activity. The full exercising of extradition and prosecution measures, through international cooperation, will be the best disincentives to this terrorist action.

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This will require, in particular, the full cooperation of the nations of Africa and Asia. If the potential terrorist knows in advance that he will have no place to run after committing his crime, the chances of his carrying it through will be far lessened.

There have been earlier international efforts to curb hijacking activity, most notably the 1970 Hague Convention for the suppression of unlawful seizure of aircraft, and the 1971 Montreal Convention for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of civil aircraft. These conventions provided a distinct service in classifying air-piracy as an international crime and in calling for the extradition and prosecution of hijackers. But the effects of these conventions have been limited. Approximately one-third of the members of the United Nations do not adhere to the pacts, and some nations apparently see the conventions as an infringement on national sovereignty. Further efforts in this direction, however, are both necessary & timely.

DOLE RESOLUTION

Although the need for universal cooperation in discouraging airline hijackings has been addressed before, previous United Nations efforts have fallen short. A renewed effort, led by the United States, would be most appropriate at this time.

COMPLEMENTS RIBICOFF BILL

The Resolution I am proposing will supplement single-handed efforts by the United States to discourage international hijackings. I commend the distinguished Senator from Connecticut, Mr. Ribicoff, for his proposal to suspend U.S. aid and airline service to nations which refuse to cooperate in the extradition and prosecution of airline hijackers. The Senator from Kansas believes his resolution will properly coordinate with, and supplement the efforts by the Senator from Connecticut. The United Nations is an excellent forum for our efforts to obtain full international cooperation in this regard, and the General Assembly debate on the issue this week makes this effort all the more timely.

It must be emphasized that an agreement not to provide sanctuary to airline hijackers does not constitute -- in the proper sense -- a limit on national sovereignty, but rather a joint cooperative effort for the universal good. International airline hijacking has become a serious threat to the lives, to the health, and to the comfort of passengers and crew of all nationalities. Sanctuary for terrorists can be construed as nothing other than irresponsible sovereign action, and should be condemned by all humanitarian governments.

More and more, we are witnessing a "tough" reaction by concerned governments in combating the hijacking phenomenon. We have witnessed commando raids in Uganda and Somalia which freed scores of innocent passengers from the terrorist nightmare. Those who risked their own lives to free the innocent are to be highly commended for their selflessness.

But we must concentrate as well on "preventatives," and this is what the Senator from Kansas seeks to promote by offering this resolution. I urge the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to act expeditiously in reporting the resolution so that the full Senate may express itself on the issue.

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