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Marsh

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 30, 1975

MEETING ON LAGUARDIA AIRPORT EXPLOSION

Tuesday, December 30, 1975

6:30 p.m. (30 minutes)

Cabinet Room

From: Mike Duval

I. PURPOSE

You asked for this meeting to be briefed by Secretary Coleman, Deputy Attorney General Tyler, and other Transportation and Justice Department officials on the LaGuardia Airport explosion.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS AND PRESS PLAN

A. Background

At about 6:33 p.m. last night, a bomb exploded at New York's LaGuardia Airport killing at least 11 and injuring 74.

The bomb had an estimated force of 20 to 25 sticks of dynamite and appears to have been placed in a locker in a baggage claim area used by TWA and Delta.

The FAA and FBI are assisting local officials. LaGuardia has been closed to all traffic for 24 hours but is expected to reopen at 10 p.m. tonight. In addition there have been numerous bomb threats throughout the country.

Reportedly UPI received a call from a man claiming responsibility for the Palestinian Liberation Organization. However, PLO spokesmen here and abroad have disclaimed any responsibility.

So far there are no indications of "terrorist" type activity thus FBI involvement is "informal".

B. Participants

Secretary William T. Coleman
 Administrator John L. McLucas, FAA

Deputy Attorney General Harold R. Tyler, Jr.
 (Ed Levi is out of the country)

Asst to the Director James B. Adams, FBI

Phil Buchen
 Dick Cheney
 Jack Marsh
 Mike Duval
 Steve McConahey (Domestic Council)

C. Press Plan

Meeting has been announced. Press photo after greetings are concluded and the serious meeting has begun.

III. AGENDA AND TALKING POINTS

- 1) Bill Coleman and John McLucas will brief on the situation as it has impacted airport security and interstate air commerce. See Tab A (10 minutes)
- 2) Harold Tyler and Jim Adams will brief on the investigation. (5 minutes)
- 3) Discussion and questions.
- 4) You may wish to make the following points in closing:
 - We must avoid generating unnecessary publicity concerning this tragedy least our response triggers additional bombings or threats.
 - Bill Coleman and John McLucas should continue their efforts to review airport security with focus on whether "checked" baggage should be searched.
 - Harold Tyler and Jim Adams should ensure that local New York authorities receive appropriate assistance from the FBI.



OFFICE OF
THE ADMINISTRATOR

December 30, 1975

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

This report is in response to your concern over the tragic and senseless bomb blast in La Guardia Airport last night. It summarizes the events during and after the incident; reflects the results of preliminary investigations; and reports on immediate actions initiated to deter recurrence; and identifies measures under consideration for future application.

Summary of event: On December 29, 1975, at about 6:30 p.m., with no advance warning, a high intensity explosive device detonated in the baggage claim area of La Guardia Airport, New York City. Contrary to initial reports that the device was in arriving baggage, it is now most probable that it had been deposited in a coin operated public locker adjacent to the airline baggage claim area.

The explosive charge was high intensity indicating the use of plastic or other military type explosives as contrasted with dynamite and black powder. The blast caused major structural damage, and latest reports indicate 12 persons killed and 74 injured. So intense was the blast, it tore a 4x6 foot hole in the reinforced concrete ceiling above the locker area and again damaged the ceiling of the upper level. The La Guardia Airport terminal was evacuated, and airport operations were terminated. Full operations are scheduled to resume tonight.

Follow-on events: Intensive investigation is underway by both local and federal authorities. At this time there are no identified suspects, nor have claims of responsibility for the incident been validated. To aid investigation the Air Transport Association in behalf of the nation's airlines has offered a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of those responsible.

As is usually the case in widely publicized incidents of this type, numerous bomb threats directed at airport and airline operations have been received. Nationwide, almost 50 have been reported since the La Guardia incident. A number of these threats disrupted airline and airport operations causing the evacuation of airport facilities, diversions of flights and extensive airport and aircraft search operations. All searches were conducted with negative results.

Actions taken: To marshal the participation, input and support of the full air transportation community, Secretary Coleman chaired an early morning meeting of government and aviation industry officials. The Secretary called for a full examination of the bombing with a view toward preventing future similar occurrences. He also called for an analysis of baggage and public locker operations from the standpoint of improving safeguards in public terminal areas.

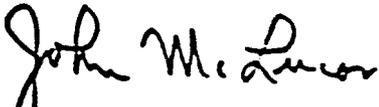
I have been designated by the Secretary to head a special effort which will include participation and consultation with representatives of government, aviation, industry and other affected private organizations.

The first meeting in furtherance of this special effort is being held at 4:00 p.m. this afternoon. Government representation includes the Office of the Secretary of Transportation, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Customs Service.

Representing the air transportation industry are officials of the Air Transport Association, the Airport Operators Council International, the American Association of Airport Executives and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The facts available concerning the La Guardia incident do not indicate any weakness in the existing civil aviation security procedures required of airlines and air carrier airports pursuant to current Federal Aviation Regulations. However, the Federal Aviation Administration did, last night, issue a formal alert to all airlines and airport operators. They were advised to make certain that established security requirements and procedures were being followed in all respects, with emphasis on those security measures related to baggage and air cargo operations.

Respectfully,



John L. McLucas
Administrator

INFO.

JAN 16 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 16, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR

JACK MARSH

FROM:

MIKE DUVAL *Mike*

SUBJECT:

LA GUARDIA BOMBING

By way of update, Judge Tyler advises me that there may be some progress in the La Guardia bombing case.

The debris has been taken to the Army Ordnance people, and they are beginning to put together what appears to be a crude bomb. They haven't identified what kind of bomb it was, but they do believe that the timing device was made out of an ordinary wind-up clock.

The FBI and New York police have three new suspects, although there is nothing solid that they will, in fact, turn out to be the bombers. They may be terrorists, although they do not have the normal patterns of these groups.

I don't think this is enough information to pass to the President, but I did want to keep you informed.

*President
has
seen*

