

The original documents are located in Box 35, folder “New York - La Guardia Airport Bombing” of the Philip Buchen Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald R. Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

December 30, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Enclosed is the initial report of Dr. John McLucas, Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, covering the tragic bomb explosion at LaGuardia Airport on the evening of December 29, 1975. As you know, since you got involved last evening soon after the event, the FAA and Department of Transportation have been active in the investigation since 7:00 p.m. last night.

I have appointed Dr. McLucas Chairman of a joint Government-Industry task force to investigate and report to me on courses of action which can be taken immediately to prevent, if at all possible, disasters such as occurred last evening. Additionally, the task force will develop alternatives which, if implemented in the future, will increase passenger safety inside the terminal as well as in the air. This report will be submitted to me by 12:00 noon, Friday, January 9, 1976. In the meantime, the FAA, the airlines and the airports have already started increased security activity.

Respectfully,

William T. Coleman, Jr.

Enclosure



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590



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

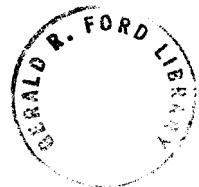


Attendees at Meeting on Tuesday, December 30, 1975,
at 8:30 a.m. in re LaGuardia Airport Bombing

From DOT:

The Secretary
The Deputy Secretary
Dr. John McLucas, FAA Administrator
Mr. James Dow, FAA Deputy Administrator
Mrs. Judith Connor, Assistant Secretary for
Environment, Safety and Consumer Affairs
Mr. Charles Anderson, FAA Deputy Chief Counsel
Mr. Dan Ward, Director, Office of Transportation
Security, OST
Mr. Richard Lally, Director, FAA Civil Aviation
Security Service
Mr. John Goodwin, FAA Airport Services
Mr. John Leyden, FAA Public Affairs
Mr. Frank Stanton, Director, Office of Investigations
and Security, OST

Mr. Paul Ignatius, President, Air Transport Association, ATA
Mr. Jim Landry, Counsel, Air Transport Association, ATA
Mr. Norm Phillion, Air Transport Association, ATA
Mr. Jim Murphy, Air Transport Association Security, ATA
Mr. J.J. O'Donnell, President, Airline Pilots Association
Mr. Don Reilly, Airport Operators Council International
Mr. Russell Hoyt, American Association of Airport Executives



Talking Points

12/29/75

- 6:30 p.m. High intensity explosive charge placed in coin operated public locker adjacent to TWA baggage claim area.
- Killed 12.
- Injured 74 - some seriously.
- 7:00 p.m. Secretary and FAA Administrator confer
 - FAA made formal alert to all airlines and airports.
 - Offered all possible assistance to LaGuardia Officials.
 - Received and acted on 45 additional bomb threats.
 - National Airport terminal closed and evacuated.
 - Detroit and Phoenix were among those threatened.
- Secretary contacted Government and Industry representatives to discuss action to be taken.



12/30/75

- 8:30 a.m. Met with representative group.

- Complex problem. LaGuardia alone has

38,844 passengers/day

25,000 visitors/day

63,844 people/day in main terminal

- Nationwide 1,106,000 passengers/day

- Equipment for search is expensive,

1 X Ray machine for baggage screening

- Personnel requirements high

#40,000
\$1,000,000 for

Possible additional security measures related to lockers
and checked baggage

A. Lockers

1. Assign patrols to locker areas.
2. Keep all locker keys at central control points.
3. Post notice and carry out random locker checks.
4. Install closed-circuit TV in locker area.
5. Move security barrier outside locker areas.
6. Put explosive sniffer at doors.
7. Put up convex mirrors to give impression of and
to allow increased surveillance.

B. Checked Baggage

1. Insure that name on baggage matches name on ticket.
2. Hold all checked baggage at planeside for passenger
identification before boarding.



- Task Force formed. Met at 4:00 p.m. today. Will meet
again next week.

- Report due 12:00 Noon, Friday, January 9, 1976.

FAA has a number of research and development initiatives underway to achieve more effective explosive device detectors. One is expected to yield an unattended x-ray machine which will screen baggage and set aside suspicious bags for later inspection. Another relates to an improved "sniffer" which could be placed at entrances to the terminal for detecting explosives. We will reassess the desirability of speeding up this work.

*Seems above all, that in public discussion,
we wish to avoid emphasis of the enormity
of the problem.*



Buchanan

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

*Advisory
Committee
Act*

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

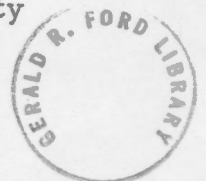
At about 6:33 p.m. last night, a bomb exploded at New York's LaGuardia Airport killing at least 11 and injuring 74.

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 lest 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.



A



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590



OFFICE OF
THE ADMINISTRATOR

December 30, 1975

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

Dear Mr. President:

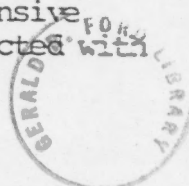
This report is in response to your concern over the tragic and senseless bomb blast in La Guardia Airport last night. It summarizes the events during and after the incident; reflects the results of preliminary investigations; and reports on immediate actions initiated to deter recurrence; and identifies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

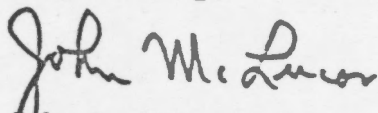
I have been designated by the Secretary to head a special effort which will include participation and consultation with representatives of government, aviation, industry and other affected private organizations.

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

INSIDE LABOR
By Victor Riesel

Release on Receipt
Dispatched 12/30/75

*Make
copy for
Dural
return this
to me.
1/7*
*sent
1/2/76*

Sanctuary For Terrorists?
Police Forced to Destroy
Vital Files on Subversives

NEW YORK -- Tears and sympathy won't help those killed or maimed (as was one FBI agent) by the ghastly LaGuardia Airport terrorist bombing. But an understanding of the escalation of "radicalization" will help prevent a repetition.

Also there is need for comprehension of the sheer lack of realism by the courts which forced the New York City Police Department's special intelligence unit to destroy its file of neo-revolutionary subversives.

And it would help if the harassment of the revamped FBI would cease.

The Bureau has a new, low-visibility, terrorism research and management unit. It can function fully to protect the innocents abroad in this land only by traditional intelligence gathering -- and that means surveillance leading to computerized files.

To prevent the gruesome dismemberment and decapitation of homebound travelers such as the horror at LaGuardia there is no other way these nihilistic days.

Informers are crucial. Otherwise a chunk of Kennedy



Airport would have been blown to bits by bombs in a car parked by terrorists outside the El Al area March 7, 1973. A tip prevented that one.

And there was a near miss at Boston's Logan Airport Oct. 8, 1974. The police reported a fire in the TWA luggage area. That was no fire -- that was a bomb with almost the force of the one which hit LaGuardia the other night.

On Nov. 17, 1974, the state police disclosed that the explosive had gone off in a suitcase, which had been trans-shipped from New York via Allegheny Airlines for the luggage compartment of a TWA Boston flight to Europe and the Middle East. An alert clerk doublechecked the passengers. The loudspeaker had called on the 63 travelers to identify their luggage. Only 60 showed up. A bag was withheld; the plane flew safely on to Tel Aviv. Shortly after take-off the bomb went off.

"But," as one top Federal Aviation Administration official points out, "these bombs were noticeable because airports are highly visible."

Commerical aviation isn't the target. America's the target. Almost 200 bombs a month are planted and explode



in the mainland and Puerto Rico. Scores are killed yearly. Some explosions have been detonated in, or at the side of, banks, skyscrapers, warehouses and supermarkets.

This is terrorism for terrorism's sake. It seeps up from the Argentine ERP (Peoples' Revolutionary Army). It wafts over from the Middle East where any 20 men and a chairman can become a "liberating" force. The PLO is an umbrella group for some 10 to 12 "armies." And there are scores of other killer squads.

These are roving bands. They cross continents. They are Japanese Red Army fanatics, cool anarchists of Germany's Bader-Meinhof organization and simple American copies of 19th-century revolutionists whose histories the neo-radicals have read.

They are the first risings of "industrial guerrillas."

They are aware they've achieved a public romantic aura despite their cruelties. The record supports this.

They believe Americans have a built-in sense of forgiveness. The record proves this.

Yet the record also discloses that there have been near misses -- of bombs -- at other airports, on other lines.



"Who knows what they really want," mused the FAA official. "They've put the bombs in bus stations, government buildings and communication towers. All this is a collective case for a psychiatrist as much as for the investigators."

And the bombers get uglier. Mostly there have been warnings. Before the LaGuardia holocaust -- nothing. The intent to kill by setting the time device at 6:30 p.m., the height of the arrivals, was meant to terrorize and not just demonstrate.

How fight the bombers? In the first 10 months of 1975, they killed 51 persons and injured 259. Not much notice, though the FBI released the bloody statistics springing from almost 1,700 "incidents."

FBI director Clarence Kelley laid it on the line not too long ago. He warned that a "relentless bombardment" of criticism was eroding the Bureau's ability and time needed to fight off the nation's enemies.

"You should be aware," he told a group, "that terrorists have vowed to 'bring the fireworks' to our nation's Bicentennial celebration next year. I believe some will try."



Then he put it to the nation:

"You must decide whether it is the FBI or extremists and terrorists who menace America's 200-year tradition of liberty. You are more likely these days to hear about the number of doors the FBI breaks through in search of an armed fugitive revolutionary than statistics on terrorist activity."

Few rational beings defend the invasion of privacy. But few, especially those who've been out to LaGuardia or seen film and picture coverage of the carnage, can with cause object to the routine gathering of intelligence -- including infiltration and use of informers. Philosophical dissent, yes. Sanctuary for urban guerrillas, no. What was that word so many used to laugh at mockingly? "Bombthrowers." Not very funny these days.

All Rights Reserved





Office of the Attorney General

Washington, D. C. 20530

January 2, 1976

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

Re: LaGuardia Airport Bombing, December 29, 1975

Dear Mr. President:

There follows a brief synopsis of up-to-date investigative efforts in regard to the LaGuardia bombing incident of December 29, 1975:

300 Special Agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation continue to be actively involved in assisting officers and agents of the New York City Police Department in the investigation. Up until this afternoon, approximately 600 interviews have been conducted by FBI agents and police officers. A high proportion of these interviews have been devoted to the report that two men were seen running from the baggage area prior to the explosion. The interviews so far have not been productive of leads or identifications.

The debris from the location of the blast has been systematically removed to Hanger #1 at LaGuardia Airport. As you are aware, damage evaluation on December 30 established that the explosive device detonated inside one of the 12 public locker units located within the Trans World Airlines' baggage area. The New York City Crime Laboratory has commenced systematic examination of evidentiary materials associated with the blast. Laboratory specialists from the New York FBI Field Office continue to assist the New York police experts in this work.



You should be aware that agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) of the Department of Treasury are working with the FBI and the New York City Police Department on the scene. In brief, ATF is assisting in investigative work, with emphasis on checking back for thefts or mysterious disappearances of explosives within recent weeks.

The press reported incident of the young woman who called in information about a telephone conversation of two men before the explosion, which she allegedly overheard, has not proved to be productive or worthwhile information. Specifically, the young woman called "911" but failed or refused to identify herself. Despite broadcast pleas for her to come forward again, she has yet to do so.

There are no solid leads to date as to the identity and motives of the perpetrator or perpetrators. Indeed, the laboratory specialists have not yet been able to completely reassemble the triggering or firing device for this explosion. In part, as you know, this is due to the tremendous force of the blast, and to the fact that so much luggage was involved containing travelling clocks, alarm clocks and the like.

Finally, the FBI has approved payment of up to \$50,000 for information which might result in the arrest and conviction of the subjects responsible for this affair. This offer of a reward is being disseminated by the FBI to its informants and not being publicly announced so as to avoid exciting crank calls offering information which is not pertinent or helpful.

Respectfully,


Harold R. Tyler, Jr.
Acting Attorney General



N.Y. - Bombing

Wednesday 1/7/76

3:05 Richard Holwill of National Public Radio wanted to talk with whoever our liaison man in the New York bombing is. Transferred him to Mike Duval -- at the suggestion of Barry Roth.

785-6459

Mentioned he has received some information that the FBI thinks some of those involved in the bombing were killed by the blast -- wanted to check that out. Information was that the White House had that information.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*LA Guardia
Banking*

January 20, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

JACK MARSH

FROM:

PHIL BUCHEN *P.*

My suggestion is that we hold up submitting this to the President until we can meet once more with Bill Coleman, Judge Tyler and John McLucas. Steve McConahey will set up such a meeting for Thursday or Friday of this week. However, I suggest you read this material before then.

Attachment



EYES ONLY/CLOSE HOLD THE WHITE HOUSE
ACTION MEMORANDUM WASHINGTON

LOG NO.:

PLEASE CIRCULATE

Date: January 19, 1976

Time:

FOR ACTION:

cc (for information):

Phil Buchen
Jack Marsh

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

DUE: Date: Wednesday, January 21 Time: 10 A.M.

SUBJECT:

Jim Cannon memo 1/16/76 re
Secretary Coleman's Report on
LaGuardia Bombing

ACTION REQUESTED:

☐ For Necessary Action

☒ For Your Recommendations

☐ Prepare Agenda and Brief

☐ Draft Reply

☒ For Your Comments

☐ Draft Remarks

REMARKS:

EYES ONLY/CLOSE HOLD is necessary on
Secretary Coleman's report attached.
Only one copy is available, therefore, would
appreciate Mr. Buchen's secretary carrying to
Mr. Marsh's office when he has completed his
review. Thank you.

*Shaw-McNulty
20-50
65-10*

PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a
delay in submitting the required material, please
telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

James E. Connor
For the President



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*La Guardia
7/11*

January 20, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: JACK MARSH

FROM: PHIL BUCHEN *P.*

My suggestion is that we hold up submitting this to the President until we can meet once more with Bill Coleman, Judge Tyler and John McLucas. Steve McConahey will set up such a meeting for Thursday or Friday of this week. However, I suggest you read this material before then.

Attachment



McConahey FYI

THE WHITE HOUSE

ACTION

WASHINGTON

January 16, 1976

To Connor Jan 19 am

*File
LaGuardia
Bombing*

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

JIM CANNON *[Signature]*

SUBJECT:

Secretary Coleman's Report on
LaGuardia Bombing

Attached for your review is a memorandum from Secretary Coleman summarizing the report of the Department of Transportation's task force study on the recent LaGuardia bombing (attached A).

Also attached is a copy of the task force report and a cover memorandum from John McLucas, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration. (attachment C)

The Domestic Council and OMB staff have reviewed this report and discussed the recommendations with representatives of DOT and FAA. The report contains a number of short term steps that the Secretary plans to implement immediately. It also contains recommendations for an analysis and evaluation of longer term steps to meet transportation security problems. In this process, the Secretary has assured us that maximum use will be made of experience gained by other agencies.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that we respond to Secretary Coleman, thanking him for his efforts and urging him to continue his efforts to seek permanent solutions to transportation security problems. Attached is a letter from you to Secretary Coleman thanking him for his efforts and urging him to continue his work in this area (attachment B). The text of the letter has been approved by Paul Theis.

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

January 12, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I am enclosing herewith as Attachment B the initial report of the Task Force on Airport Security formed as a consequence of the bombing at LaGuardia Airport in New York City.

This Task Force, under the chairmanship of the Federal Aviation Administrator, Dr. John L. McLucas, responded quickly. I believe the enclosed report is an excellent example of what government and industry cooperation can do when faced with a serious problem of national consequence.

As a result of their efforts, the FAA is able to take positive actions which are outlined in their letter of transmittal (Attachment A). I have studied this report and agree with its recommendations. Dr. McLucas will make these actions public later this week.

In summary the immediate action which will be taken includes:

- (1) Immediate on-site surveys of the nation's air carrier airports under the leadership of FAA Explosives Security Specialists to identify measures that airport operators can introduce quickly to prevent or deter the introduction of explosives or to reduce the effects of explosions, and to develop longer range airport counter-measures.
- (2) Continue the repositioning of airport public lockers in secure areas or to take other steps to control access, increase effective surveillance or reduce the effect of explosions.
- (3) Develop with the air carriers an effective and efficient system to reduce the possibility of explosives being placed aboard planes in checked baggage.
- (4) Develop procedures which will permit a better detection of explosives in bags.



In addition to the actions to be taken immediately, I am considering certain legislative initiatives which would improve the security situation at our nation's airports. I will submit them to you as they are developed.

I am also concerned that this problem of airport security extends to the other transportation modes. To answer this concern, I have directed action within my own office to make recommendations to increase security at all transportation terminals.

I very much appreciate your active concern and leadership in this process. I assure you that this Department will pursue a vigorous program of close cooperation with other concerned Federal and local agencies to insure the maximum practicable protection of passengers of this nation's transportation system. I will continue to advise you of further developments.

Respectfully,

William T. Coleman, Jr.
William T. Coleman, Jr.

Attachments



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Dear Secretary Coleman:

You and your staff, as well as others from within the Government and from the airline industry, are to be commended for your diligent work in responding to the recent LaGuardia Airport tragedy.

Your assessment of the issues we face in seeking permanent solutions to the problems of air transportation security correctly identifies the need to evaluate specific actions in terms of their legal, economic and operational impact. To this end, I am pleased to learn of your plans to continue the close cooperation with responsible local officials, other Federal agencies and industry representatives.

Safe and timely air transportation is an essential element of our Nation's economic vitality, national security and general well-being. We must, therefore, protect airline passengers and our airline system from outrageous acts of violence and destruction. The achievement of this goal will require the cooperation of officials at all levels of Government, of the transportation industry and of the general public. I urge all parties involved to cooperate in this effort and request your continued efforts to develop and implement comprehensive improvements in air transportation security.

Sincerely,

The Honorable William T. Coleman
Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590



OFFICE OF
THE ADMINISTRATOR

January 9, 1976

Honorable William T. Coleman, Jr.
Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In accordance with your instructions, I brought together experts from government and industry to review aviation security in light of the tragic explosion at LaGuardia Airport on December 29, 1975.

We do not now know whether the LaGuardia explosion was targeted against aviation or merely happened to occur in one of the lockers which are common to transportation terminals and other facilities serving the public. Whatever the connection, any strengthened security alternatives must be considered within the context of the U.S. air transportation system. There are 32 scheduled airlines operating a jet fleet of some 2,500 aircraft enplaning 500,000 passengers and more than 1,000,000 pieces of baggage on some 15,000 flights each day. The airlines serve almost 500 United States airports each of which is different in many respects. Accordingly, security alternatives must weigh carefully the impact on efficient movement of passengers, baggage and cargo, especially whether passengers can or should be expected to arrive at airports hours in advance of flight departures, and whether U.S. airports can or should be converted into fortress-like transportation facilities.

Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, the comprehensive working papers and studies should be carefully controlled. In the interests of aviation safety, I have accordingly determined that the detailed documentation not be circulated outside of authorized channels.

Based on the enclosed report, I am moving ahead on the following major initiatives:

Lockers: The LaGuardia explosion focused immediate attention on the security of public lockers. However, there are only 14,000 public-use lockers at airports and only 140 of the 500 air carrier airports in the country have any at all. And, the majority of these lockers are located at the 20 major airport terminals. So, securing



lockers is not the only answer. However, we are recommending that, where feasible, lockers be located within secure areas. Where this is not feasible, other means should be taken to control access, increase effective surveillance or reduce the effects of explosions.

FAA is conducting an immediate on-the-spot survey of the nation's airports to identify measures that can be introduced quickly and gather data to help develop long-range countermeasures.

Increased attention will be directed toward the redesign of lockers, locker areas and terminals. New designs might include modifications, for example, that would permit visual detection of stored baggage or restructuring the locker to direct the explosion blast away from persons nearby. Tests of current and modified lockers will provide guidelines on the best courses to pursue.

Checked Baggage and Cargo: Although the LaGuardia explosion occurred in a locker, it drew attention to other aspects of airport security, including current security requirements for checked baggage. Strengthened measures range from examining each piece of baggage to the development of less time-consuming but effective methods to determine quickly baggage and cargo that require special security attention. We also reviewed stricter application of or modifications to the procedures for handling baggage by authorized airline personnel, and more stringent measures for safeguarding luggage once it has been accepted. Some of these procedures will go into effect immediately; others are being refined and will be selected for implementation within 30 days.

Explosives Detection Techniques: FAA will immediately begin modifying existing x-ray absorption systems for operation at selected airports to detect explosives. The FAA also will step up efforts already underway to determine the feasibility of:

1. Using the x-ray fluorescence concept as an explosive detection technique.
2. Using nuclear magnetic resonance to detect different types of explosives.
3. Applying explosive vapor detection techniques to the inspection of hold baggage, cargo and the aircraft itself. Technology has not yet been able to come up with a mechanical "sniffer" that can compete with the nose of a trained dog, and therefore, we intend to increase their use.
4. Adapting a thermal neutron detection concept to examine checked baggage and cargo.



There are several criteria that must be used in the development of new equipment and procedures. They must be quick and effective. They must be reliable, easily maintained and operable by relatively unskilled personnel. They must not present any hazards to persons or the environment nor damage luggage or its contents. And airports, airlines and passengers must be able to afford them.

Based upon our final assessments, we may be asking for your assistance in obtaining additional funds required to carry out the expanded activities I have outlined if further funding appears necessary. We will, of course, explore the activities of other Federal agencies as they may relate to these initiatives to assure full utilization of appropriate Federal capabilities and to avoid any duplication of effort.

Ultimately, better methods and machines are not the entire answer, particularly if they induce a sense of complacency or relaxation of vigilance. When the FAA released its latest report on the number of hijackings and other criminal acts against aviation, some felt that the strict procedures introduced a few years back were no longer needed. But, the fact is that the threat is with us and our major concern is that people will not recognize this because of the program's success. So, too, with bombings. We must develop the best equipment and measures. But we all must realize that continued vigilance is equally vital.

After the LaGuardia bombing, I visited the LaGuardia, Dulles and National Airports to check their security devices and procedures, and I spoke to many airport and airline personnel. There is obviously a heightened level of awareness to the threat which is perhaps our most important immediate defense. All these people, from the sky-cap or the ticket agent who may first greet the travelers to the captain who flies them to their destination are the human factors on whom safety depends. Any technological help we give them to do their job is a plus, not the solution itself.

I am confident, in summary, that just as the anti-hijacking program has been extremely effective, we can be equally effective in preventing and deterring other criminal acts against aviation.

Sincerely,

John McLucas
John L. McLucas
Administrator

Enclosure



EYES ONLY/CLOSE HOLD THE WHITE HOUSE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

WASHINGTON

LOG NO.:

Date: January 19, 1976

Time:

PLEASE CIRCULATE

FOR ACTION:

cc (for information):

Phil Buchen

Jack Marsh

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

DUE: Date: Wednesday, January 21 Time: 10 A. M.

SUBJECT:

Jim Cannon memo 1/16/76 re
Secretary Coleman's Report on
LaGuardia Bombing

ACTION REQUESTED:

☐ For Necessary Action

☒ For Your Recommendations

☐ Prepare Agenda and Brief

☐ Draft Reply

☒ For Your Comments

☐ Draft Remarks

REMARKS:

EYES ONLY/CLOSE HOLD is necessary on
Secretary Coleman's report attached.
Only one copy is available, therefore, would
appreciate Mr. Buchen's secretary carrying to
Mr. Marsh's office when he has completed his
review. Thank you.

PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a
delay in submitting the required material, please
telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

James E. Connor
For the President



*Sto ve McConathy
70 290
6560*

THE WHITE HOUSE

ACTION

WASHINGTON

January 16, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

JIM CANNON

SUBJECT:

Secretary Coleman's Report on
LaGuardia Bombing

Attached for your review is a memorandum from Secretary Coleman summarizing the report of the Department of Transportation's task force study on the recent LaGuardia bombing (attached A).

Also attached is a copy of the task force report and a cover memorandum from John McLucas, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration. (attachment C)

The Domestic Council and OMB staff have reviewed this report and discussed the recommendations with representatives of DOT and FAA. The report contains a number of short term steps that the Secretary plans to implement immediately. It also contains recommendations for an analysis and evaluation of longer term steps to meet transportation security problems. In this process, the Secretary has assured us that maximum use will be made of experience gained by other agencies.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that we respond to Secretary Coleman, thanking him for his efforts and urging him to continue his efforts to seek permanent solutions to transportation security problems. Attached is a letter from you to Secretary Coleman thanking him for his efforts and urging him to continue his work in this area (attachment B). The text of the letter has been approved by Paul Theis.

_____ Approve

_____ Disapprove





THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

January 12, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I am enclosing herewith as Attachment B the initial report of the Task Force on Airport Security formed as a consequence of the bombing at LaGuardia Airport in New York City.

This Task Force, under the chairmanship of the Federal Aviation Administrator, Dr. John L. McLucas, responded quickly. I believe the enclosed report is an excellent example of what government and industry cooperation can do when faced with a serious problem of national consequence.

As a result of their efforts, the FAA is able to take positive actions which are outlined in their letter of transmittal (Attachment A). I have studied this report and agree with its recommendations. Dr. McLucas will make these actions public later this week.

In summary the immediate action which will be taken includes:

- (1) Immediate on-site surveys of the nation's air carrier airports under the leadership of FAA Explosives Security Specialists to identify measures that airport operators can introduce quickly to prevent or deter the introduction of explosives or to reduce the effects of explosions, and to develop longer range airport counter-measures.
- (2) Continue the repositioning of airport public lockers in secure areas or to take other steps to control access, increase effective surveillance or reduce the effect of explosions.
- (3) Develop with the air carriers an effective and efficient system to reduce the possibility of explosives being placed aboard planes in checked baggage.
- (4) Develop procedures which will permit a better detection of explosives in bags.



In addition to the actions to be taken immediately, I am considering certain legislative initiatives which would improve the security situation at our nation's airports. I will submit them to you as they are developed.

I am also concerned that this problem of airport security extends to the other transportation modes. To answer this concern, I have directed action within my own office to make recommendations to increase security at all transportation terminals.

I very much appreciate your active concern and leadership in this process. I assure you that this Department will pursue a vigorous program of close cooperation with other concerned Federal and local agencies to insure the maximum practicable protection of passengers of this nation's transportation system. I will continue to advise you of further developments.

Respectfully,

William T. Coleman, Jr.
William T. Coleman, Jr.

Attachments



E WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. Secretary:

You and your staff, as well as others from within the Government and from the airline industry, are to be commended for your diligent work in responding to the recent LaGuardia Airport tragedy.

Your assessment of the issues we face in seeking permanent solutions to the problems of air transportation security correctly identifies the need to evaluate specific actions in terms of their legal, economic and operational impact. To this end, I am pleased to learn of your plans to continue the close cooperation with responsible local officials, other Federal agencies and industry representatives.

Safe and timely air transportation is an essential element of our Nation's economic vitality, national security and general well-being. We must, therefore, protect airline passengers and our airline system from outrageous acts of violence and destruction. The achievement of this goal will require the cooperation of officials at all levels of Government, of the transportation industry and of the general public. I urge all parties involved to cooperate in this effort and request your continued efforts to develop and implement comprehensive improvements in air transportation security.

Sincerely,

The Honorable William T. Coleman
Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

Strike



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590



OFFICE OF
THE ADMINISTRATOR

January 9, 1976

Honorable William T. Coleman, Jr.
Secretary of Transportation
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In accordance with your instructions, I brought together experts from government and industry to review aviation security in light of the tragic explosion at LaGuardia Airport on December 29, 1975.

We do not now know whether the LaGuardia explosion was targeted against aviation or merely happened to occur in one of the lockers which are common to transportation terminals and other facilities serving the public. Whatever the connection, any strengthened security alternatives must be considered within the context of the U.S. air transportation system. There are 32 scheduled airlines operating a jet fleet of some 2,500 aircraft enplaning 500,000 passengers and more than 1,000,000 pieces of baggage on some 15,000 flights each day. The airlines serve almost 500 United States airports each of which is different in many respects. Accordingly, security alternatives must weigh carefully the impact on efficient movement of passengers, baggage and cargo, especially whether passengers can or should be expected to arrive at airports hours in advance of flight departures, and whether U.S. airports can or should be converted into fortress-like transportation facilities.

Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, the comprehensive working papers and studies should be carefully controlled. In the interests of aviation safety, I have accordingly determined that the detailed documentation not be circulated outside of authorized channels.

Based on the enclosed report, I am moving ahead on the following major initiatives:

Lockers: The LaGuardia explosion focused immediate attention on the security of public lockers. However, there are only 14,000 public-use lockers at airports and only 140 of the 500 air carrier airports in the country have any at all. And, the majority of these lockers are located at the 20 major airport terminals. So, securing



lockers is not the only answer. However, we are recommending that, where feasible, lockers be located within secure areas. Where this is not feasible, other means should be taken to control access, increase effective surveillance or reduce the effects of explosions.

FAA is conducting an immediate on-the-spot survey of the nation's airports to identify measures that can be introduced quickly and gather data to help develop long-range countermeasures.

Increased attention will be directed toward the redesign of lockers, locker areas and terminals. New designs might include modifications, for example, that would permit visual detection of stored baggage or restructuring the locker to direct the explosion blast away from persons nearby. Tests of current and modified lockers will provide guidelines on the best courses to pursue.

Checked Baggage and Cargo: Although the LaGuardia explosion occurred in a locker, it drew attention to other aspects of airport security, including current security requirements for checked baggage. Strengthened measures range from examining each piece of baggage to the development of less time-consuming but effective methods to determine quickly baggage and cargo that require special security attention. We also reviewed stricter application of or modifications to the procedures for handling baggage by authorized airline personnel, and more stringent measures for safeguarding luggage once it has been accepted. Some of these procedures will go into effect immediately; others are being refined and will be selected for implementation within 30 days.

Explosives Detection Techniques: FAA will immediately begin modifying existing x-ray absorption systems for operation at selected airports to detect explosives. The FAA also will step up efforts already underway to determine the feasibility of:

1. Using the x-ray fluorescence concept as an explosive detection technique.
2. Using nuclear magnetic resonance to detect different types of explosives.
3. Applying explosive vapor detection techniques to the inspection of hold baggage, cargo and the aircraft itself. Technology has not yet been able to come up with a mechanical "sniffer" that can compete with the nose of a trained dog, and therefore, we intend to increase their use.
4. Adapting a thermal neutron detection concept to examine checked baggage and cargo.



There are several criteria that must be used in the development of new equipment and procedures. They must be quick and effective. They must be reliable, easily maintained and operable by relatively unskilled personnel. They must not present any hazards to persons or the environment nor damage luggage or its contents. And airports, airlines and passengers must be able to afford them.

Based upon our final assessments, we may be asking for your assistance in obtaining additional funds required to carry out the expanded activities I have outlined if further funding appears necessary. We will, of course, explore the activities of other Federal agencies as they may relate to these initiatives to assure full utilization of appropriate Federal capabilities and to avoid any duplication of effort.

Ultimately, better methods and machines are not the entire answer, particularly if they induce a sense of complacency or relaxation of vigilance. When the FAA released its latest report on the number of hijackings and other criminal acts against aviation, some felt that the strict procedures introduced a few years back were no longer needed. But, the fact is that the threat is with us and our major concern is that people will not recognize this because of the program's success. So, too, with bombings. We must develop the best equipment and measures. But we all must realize that continued vigilance is equally vital.

After the LaGuardia bombing, I visited the LaGuardia, Dulles and National Airports to check their security devices and procedures, and I spoke to many airport and airline personnel. There is obviously a heightened level of awareness to the threat which is perhaps our most important immediate defense. All these people, from the sky-cap or the ticket agent who may first greet the travelers to the captain who flies them to their destination are the human factors on whom safety depends. Any technological help we give them to do their job is a plus, not the solution itself.

I am confident, in summary, that just as the anti-hijacking program has been extremely effective, we can be equally effective in preventing and deterring other criminal acts against aviation.

Sincerely,

John McLucas
John L. McLucas
Administrator

Enclosure

