

ratifying existing international conventions. This encouraging development, however, was not apparent until very recently, and is attributable, to a great extent, to the train of events and difficult choices triggered by the original Canada/United States initiative. It can at least now be said that practically no state is hospitable to hijackers. Recent incidents show that hijacked planes have to wander from state to state before finding even a semi-haven.

In the North American context, increased security measures have undoubtedly been the most important single factor in the dramatic decrease of incidents. Also significant, however, is the deterrent effect of the bilateral hijacking agreements entered into separately with Cuba on February 15, 1973, by Canada and the United States (followed on June 7, 1973, by the bilateral agreement between Cuba and Mexico). Canada first proposed the negotiation of such a bilateral treaty with Cuba in 1969, after the Cuban Government had announced its intention not to become a party to any international hijacking conventions but rather to negotiate bilaterally, taking into account its relations with individual countries. Well before these bilateral agreements came into force, it had become clear that a hijacker's lot in Cuba was not often a happy one. These agreements and the attendant publicity now provide clear confirmation of this fact.

It is evident that the time has not yet come when governments can relax and pretend that the hijacking problem has been solved. Incidents still continue to occur too frequently throughout the world. Governments and airlines will not be able to drop their guard in the foreseeable future. Certainly, however, the across-the-board attack on the interrelated aspects of the problem has directly and indirectly produced some positive results. As a result, individuals who might in the past have been tempted to commit hijacking and related offences now seem to be more aware that the gamble is not worth the risks, since there are very few places left where punishment can be avoided entirely. It is to be hoped that they are not now using their diabolic ingenuity to devise new methods of terrorizing innocent citizens.

(This article was written before the Arab terrorist hijacking incident which began at the Rome airport on December 17. The incident does not change the article's basic premise. Universal condemnation of the incident should spur governments to take further measures to eliminate the problem.)

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