

MARCH 25

Blasts rock Kennedy terminal, 2 N.J. firms

From Tribune Wire Services

NEW YORK—A powerful bomb exploded Sunday night at a TWA baggage terminal at Kennedy International Airport, two others went off at New Jersey firms, and a militant anti-Castro group claimed responsibility for all three.

Four baggage handlers suffered minor injuries in the airport bombing.

The two New Jersey firms reportedly do business with Cuba. There were no injuries in those blasts.

A man telephoned the United Press International and the Associated Press early Monday and claimed to represent an anti-Castro group, Omega 7. He said the bombs were in protest of tourist flights between the United States and Cuba.

He said the bombings were only the

beginning of a campaign against organizations it considers sympathetic to Cuban President and Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

THE BOMB at Kennedy Airport was in a suitcase and exploded just before it was to have been loaded onto TWA Flight 17, a non-stop flight to Los Angeles with 181 passengers on board.

Later, bombs exploded outside buildings in Weehawken and Union City, N.J. Police said the Weehawken building housed the New Jersey Cuban Refugee Program and the Union City target was a pharmaceutical firm selling drugs to the island nation.

The caller, however, had said travel agencies were located there.

He said the bombs had been placed to protest the travel agencies setting up

tourist flights from the United States to Cuba and TWA's providing planes for those flights.

"OF THE TWA plane at Kennedy Airport, we intended to blow up the plane without anyone on it," the caller said.

"These actions were executed in retaliation for the work presently performed by the agencies and enterprises in mutual agreement with the tyranny of Fidel Castro.

Police in New York and New Jersey said they had received no calls from anyone claiming responsibility.

"I was expecting this," said E. J. Negrin, head of the refugee program, which supports closer ties with Cuba. "People who did this don't want us to be reunited with Cuba," he said.

OMEGA 7 is part of a larger Cuban nationalist group known as the Congress of United Revolutionary Organizations. Members of this unit have been involved in terrorist attacks in southern Florida, including eight bombings in 1977.

Omega 7 claimed responsibility for a bombing that caused extensive damage to the Cuban mission to the United Nations and another at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in December, 1978.

There were no injuries in either incident.

The caller told AP the explosions were directed at "the Fifth Column created by Castro in the United States to satisfy his need for American dollars."

Before hanging up, the caller warned: "Similar actions will continue until we shut down this source of cash in the U.S."

A **TWA SPOKESMAN** said the airport blast "appears to have been a good-sized explosion." Police said it appeared three sticks of dynamite were used.

"Thank God the plane wasn't in the air. It would have blown up," a police spokesman said. Flight 17 was to take off a short while after the explosion, TWA officials said.

Police said an unidentified man made three telephone calls to warn that the bomb was in luggage intended for Flight 17, but the calls were received after the explosion and authorities speculated the device went off prematurely.

The plane was evacuated and a police bomb squad scoured the baggage section and the plane's hold for other explosives.

A TWA employe said the baggage was being placed on metal carts for transfer to the plane at the time of the blast.