

Suitcase Blows Up on Way to Plane

AP and UPI

New York, N.Y. — A suitcase on its way to the belly of an airliner carrying 157 people blew up and two New Jersey buildings were bombed in what was allegedly a new terrorist assault by anti-Castro Cubans.

The blasts Sunday night were the responsibility of an anti-Castro group known as Omega 7, according to a telephone call received by the Associated Press. The male caller, speaking with a Spanish accent, promised that "similar actions will continue."

Police said a bag containing at least three sticks of dynamite exploded in the Trans World Airlines baggage area at Kennedy Airport at 8:48 p.m. The suitcase was among luggage that workers were preparing to take to TWA Flight 17, waiting for a flight to Los Angeles at 9 p.m.

Four baggage handlers suffered minor injuries from the blast, which police and airline officials said probably would have caused substantial damage had it detonated inside the jet's baggage compartment.

Plane Delayed 5 Hours

Witnesses said the explosion sent workers sprawling and that bags and clothing were strewn over the area. Part of an outside wall also was damaged.

Passengers were evacuated from the plane as local and federal authorities searched for additional explosives and for the person who checked the bag onto the flight. Passengers reboarded and the plane left five hours late.

Several calls warning of the bomb were received by various police agencies and TWA, but all the calls came after the device had exploded, prompting speculation that it triggered prematurely.

"It was our intention to blow up the plane and not injure anyone," the caller to the AP said.

About two hours later, the explosions in New Jersey damaged the offices of the New Jersey Cuban Program in Weehawken and the Elmaceen Pharmacia in Union City.

Windows were shattered within a block of the Weehawken blast and the shock wave was felt for 25 blocks.

Dynamite Detonated

Union City police said a stick of dynamite apparently had been detonated near the Elmaceen Pharmacia, which had been bombed earlier this year.

The three sites were attacked because they were "operating in mutual agreement with the tyranny of Fidel Castro," the caller said.

TWA has flown to Cuba, the Cuban Program is working to free political prisoners

in that country and Elmaceen Pharmacia exports medical products to Cuba.

The caller said the three organizations "are part of a fifth column created by Castro in the United States to satisfy his need for American dollars."

"Similar actions will continue until we shut down this source of cash in the US," he said.

Omega 7, a terrorist group of Cuban exiles, has been active in the New York area, most recently on Dec. 29, when it claimed responsibility for explosions that damaged the Cuban Mission to the United Nations and Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center.