Defending Our Planes And Cities

September 26, 2001

The act of war that was committed against America on 9-11 has changed the way we look at many things. I guess we won't hear much now from the conspiracy-debunkers; it had to be a criminal conspiracy that planned and carried out the simultaneous hijacking of four airliners.
President's Bush's plan to identify and target the enemy is brilliant. Tell all our so-called friends and allies in other lands: you have to make a choice: you're either with us to stamp out terrorism or we will consider you are against us.

Cooperate in handing over the criminals or we will consider you the enemy! For starters, any NATO country that doesn't fully cooperate should be automatically expelled from NATO; isn't that what the NATO treaty says -- an attack on one country is an attack on all?

At the same time, Americans have some soul-searching to do about our security. Why were our FBI and CIA caught so completely by surprise?

Why have they been spending their resources chasing after a few people who were no harm to society, such as one loner on a mountaintop at Ruby Ridge and a pathetic religious group in Waco, while the plotting foreign terrorists crossed our borders and lived in our country illegally, got their flight training in Florida, and freely boarded our planes under their own names?

The terrorists are foreigners, most or all of whom should never have been in our country, and they have sophisticated techniques with which to manifest their hatred. The policy of opening our borders to anyone who wants to sneak into our country illegally must be exposed and terminated.

Early reports suggest that some of the hijackers who crashed into the World Trade Center entered Canada and snuck over our porous border into Maine, Vermont or New Hampshire. FBI Director Robert Mueller said that at least some of the hijackers were "out of status," i.e., they had no proper immigration documents.

Canada has a no-questions-asked immigration policy, many border crossings between the United States and Canada are unmanned, and our State Department has a laissez faire policy on issuing visas. This easy access into the United States has repeatedly been exploited by aliens bent on terrorism, so it should have been no surprise that it was used by last week's hijackers.

The criminals who were convicted of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, of the murders in front of the CIA headquarters in 1993, and who were involved in a 1998 plot to bomb New York's subway system all were Middle East aliens who should not have been in the United States. They either were granted a visa that should never have been issued or had overstayed a visa and should have been expelled.

It is inexcusable that visa applicants aren't screened more carefully, and that aliens aren't expelled when their visa expires. Immigrations officials don't even know how many people are in the United States on visas or how many are so-called "overstays," but it's clearly a substantial factor in illegal immigration.

The chance of a group of U.S. citizens hijacking a plane on a suicide mission is infinitely smaller than the chance of foreign enemies doing the same. Why are all passengers interrogated about their luggage rather than about their citizenship?

Let's bring back the House Committee on Un-American Activities. We need congressional watchdogs to close the cracks in our internal security.

Attorney General John Ashcroft's announcement that some planes will carry armed guards is a good move. We want security measures that will put the criminals at risk, not harass law-abiding citizens.

It's time to rethink the rule that an airplane be a gun-free zone. If the foreign masterminds behind this attack had thought that the crew or passengers were armed, they might not have invested so much in this type of terrorism.

The courageous actions of passengers against the hijackers on the flight that crashed in Pennsylvania apparently prevented the plane from reaching its target where many more people would have been killed. Self-help is essential in emergency when no law enforcement officials are available.

Many new airport security measures are making airline travel longer and more difficult. The question should be asked how any of these measures, if they had been in place, would have prevented hijackings.

While we worry about hijacked planes today, we may soon worry about hijacked foreign missile silos. Terrorists who would commit the unspeakable crimes of last week would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons.

Congress should move forward on the missile defense system needed to protect our cities against foreign attack. Our government should spend the taxpayers' money for the most important business of government, providing for the common defense.