

Northwest jetliners collide on runway

Planes Collide on Detroit Runway

Two Northwest Airlines planes, a DC-9 series 10 and a Boeing 727-200, collided on a runway Monday at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport.



The Collision

A 727 with 146 passengers aboard, collided with a DC-9 with 39 passengers aboard. The tip of the 727's right wing hit the right side of the DC-9 behind the cockpit, raked along its fuselage at about window height and knocked off its right tail engine.

ROMULUS, Mich. - A jetliner clipped another while preparing to take off from the Detroit airport in heavy fog Monday, igniting a fire that left one plane in smoking ruins. At least eight people were killed and 20 injured, officials said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the collision between a DC-9 and a Boeing 727-200, both operated by Northwest Airlines. A spokesman for air traffic controllers said the DC-9 appeared to have become lost on a slick, foggy taxiway and strayed into the 727's path.

For nearly an hour after the accident, smoke billowed out of the fuselage of the DC-9, where passengers apparently became trapped by the fast-moving fire. By the time the fire was extinguished, much of the plane's roof was open to the overcast sky.

Officials had initially said that 19 people were killed, but Northwest officials and Wayne County Executive Edward McNamara later said that was wrong.

McNamara said the medical examiner had "swept through the wreckage twice and found nine bodies," while Northwest spokesman Bob Gibbons said the coroner "told a Northwest representative that there were eight dead."

Gibbons stressed that authorities were not ruling out further changes in the death toll.

"This is probably going to go up or down all evening," he said shortly after 7 p.m.

The DC-9, Flight 1482 to Pitts-

burgh, was carrying 39 passengers and four crewmembers, according to the airline. The 727, Flight 299 to Memphis, was carrying 146 passengers.

Both flights had originated in Detroit, said Patrick McCann, a Northwest spokesman at its headquarters in Eagan, Minn.

"Apparently the right wing of the 727 hit the aft section, the engine, of the DC-9, taking the engine off," said Alan Muncaster, another Northwest spokesman. "That resulted in the fire. That, at this point, is all we know."

At the time of the crash, visibility was poor and the ground was wet from a morning snow and sleet storm that delayed flights at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Muncaster said the airport had been closed to inbound traffic but planes were being allowed to take off.

Tony Dresden, a spokesman for the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, said there was about a quarter-mile visibility in the air, but only about 800 feet on the ground.

"We've had some discussions with our people out there," Dresden said. "The DC-9 pilot became lost on the runways. The pilot gave the ground controller erroneous information about his position and turned right onto the runway where the 727 was taxiing."

"The DC-9 pilot discovered at the very last moment where he was, and so the ground controller told him to immediately get off that runway, but it was too late."

He stressed that this information was preliminary. The Federal Aviation Administration, which supervises air traffic controllers, did not immediately comment about Dresden's statement.

Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board were being dispatched to begin a probe aimed at determining the cause of the accident, a safety board spokesman said.

The 727 did not appear to have been seriously damaged in the collision.

Wayne County Executive Edward McNamara said the only injuries on the Boeing were those that occurred during the plane's evacuation. He did not say how many people were injured on the DC-9, but said there were survivors.

Linda Kalinsky of the Taylor Ambulance Co. said there were 50 or 60 injuries altogether, including some burn victims.

At Annapolis Hospital in Wayne, seven passengers were in stable condition and one in critical condition, spokeswoman Pat O'Dowd said. Two of the victims at that hospital were transferred to the University of Michigan Medical Center Burn Center at Ann Arbor.

At least two of the people taken to Annapolis were Northwest employees, O'Dowd said.

Four people were in stable condition at Heritage Hospital in Taylor, spokeswoman Barbara Nicholson said. None of their injuries were burns.

Bush trip to Argentina still on

BRASILIA, Brazil - Vowing not to skip a visit to Buenos Aires, President Bush shrugged off a military revolt in Argentina and proclaimed "a new era of hope" in newly democratic South America as he opened a five-nation tour Monday.

The administration expressed confidence the uprising would be quelled quickly, but Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said: "If the situation became such that there was a real danger to his security, I'm sure we'd take another look at it."

The Argentine crisis threw a cloud over Bush's week-long mission, intended to celebrate the sweep of democracy throughout the hemisphere. It also obscured Bush's message that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was driving up oil prices and forcing poor countries to pay high fuel bills that they could ill afford.

Francisco Rezek, foreign minister of Brazil, called the revolt in Argentina "a step backward for democracy in Latin America."

White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater told reporters Monday evening that the situation in Buenos Aires "does appear to be improving" and that Argentine President Carlos Menem was in control.

"It is not a large-scale uprising," Fitzwater said. "My argument would be that fundamentally democracy in Argentina is working and when this is over it will demonstrate the roots of democracy in Argentina are fairly deep."

Bush said he would not abandon a planned stop Wednesday in Buenos Aires, where Menem declared a state of siege, suspending constitutional guarantees, after the fourth military uprising in four years.

"I have great confidence in the security there," Bush said.

There also was violence in Chile, another stop on Bush's trip, as bombs exploded in a chapel and in the offices of two right-wing political parties. There were no injuries. An anonymous caller said the blasts were a protest of Bush's visit.

Bush arrived in Brasilia at dawn after an overnight flight from Wash-

Military rebellion put down

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina - The last of several hundred rebels who tried to force a shake-up of the army high command surrendered Monday to end a one-day uprising that left at least eight people dead, the government news agency reported.

The insurrection by right-wing rebels occurred two days before President Bush was to visit.

Telem, the government news agency, said the surrender ended a series of firefights Monday between loyalist troops and army rebels in and near this capital city of nearly 11 million residents. At one point, air force planes bombed a column of rebel tanks on public roads.

The rebel tanks were rendered "useless," the local news agency Noticias Argentinas reported.

President Carlos Menem and army chief Gen. Martin Bonnet refused to negotiate with rebels who demanded a shake-up of the high command and a bigger military budget.

Menem, in his 16th month of power, early Monday declared a nationwide state of siege that suspended constitutional guarantees and gave him sweeping powers to ensure public order. He threatened



to declare martial law, under which rebels could be executed.

Casualties were not disclosed, but at least three soldiers and five civilians died as a result of the rebellion. Five people died and at least 20 were injured elsewhere in this city when a tank collided with a bus.

ington, accompanied by a mostly junior staff. He was greeted by a 21-gun salute and military pageantry at the pillared Plantalto Palace, the workplace of President Fernando Collor de Mello.

The day ended with announcement of approval by Bush to license the sale of a high-performance computer sought by Brazil for more than two years. The step was taken to reward Brazil for agreeing, along with Argentina, to renounce any intention to proceed with nuclear programs with a military dimension.

Secretary of State James A. Baker III remained in Washington to testify before Congress on the Persian Gulf. The White House chief of staff, John Sununu, and the national security

adviser, Brent Scowcroft, also found reasons to stay home.

While celebrating the rebirth of democracy in South America, Bush put a strong emphasis on the Persian gulf crisis and Iraq's takeover of Kuwait.

Bush visited Czechoslovakia, where he visited last month, is paying \$1.5 billion in additional fuel costs because of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's refusal to retreat.

Collor, during a picture-taking session with Bush, said Brazil is paying \$5 billion more for oil.

Bush responded, "That's why, (when) people say to me, 'Well, this can go on and on and on,' I say, 'No,'" Bush said.

GULF

u p d a t e

Cheney provides explanation for gulf actions to committee

WASHINGTON - The United States cannot be sure economic sanctions will ever force Iraq out of Kuwait, and waiting for such an uncertain outcome would risk erosion of the international coalition behind military force, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said Monday.

Cheney, laying out to the Senate Armed Services Committee the administration's rationale for building up a military force for possible attack in the Persian Gulf, gave the most pessimistic view yet on the potential of sanctions to work.

"Given the nature of the regime, given Saddam Hussein's brutality to his own people, his very tight control of that society, his ability to allocate resources for the military, their ability to produce their own food... he can ride them out," Cheney told the committee.

Several of the panel's Democrats, including chairman Sam Nunn of Georgia, contended the administration seemed to be dismissing sanctions too easily.

"If we go to war, we never will know whether they would have worked," Nunn said.

Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, voiced misgivings about a "Chicken Little approach to our policy. The sky is falling and the only option is war."

Cheney spelled out in detail the U.S. position that American and international interests are in jeopardy in the gulf crisis, contending that Saddam might gain a stranglehold on oil, that he is destroying Kuwait and that his continued military buildup that could mean further aggression.

"It is not so clear that time is altogether on our side," Cheney said, a statement that appeared in conflict with earlier administration pronouncements. As recently as Oct. 15, Cheney himself had said the opposite.

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