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Records Centre, Singapore.

MC.OCT.47/77 (HOME AFFAIRS)

5 NOV 1977

## HIJACKED AIRCRAFT

Acc. No. NARC  
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At 1705 hours yesterday (October 29, 1977), a Vietnam Airline aircraft contacted the Control Tower at Paya Lebar International Airport to request landing permission as it was running out of fuel. As the aircraft approached Paya Lebar it was diverted to Seletar Air Base where it landed at 1730 hours. It had a total of 39 persons on board, besides two persons who had been killed and one seriously injured. Of these, 13 were men of ages ranging from 64 years to 23 years; 13 females of ages ranging from 46 to 20 years; and nine children of ages ranging from 10 months to 19 years. There were four hijackers, all males, one of whom was armed with a .38 revolver, while the others were armed with knives.

According to the pilot Nguyen Van La, the plane took off from Ho Chi Minh City for Phuquoc Island at 0635 hours (Vietnam Time) that morning. Fifteen minutes after take-off he heard some shots. On looking back he saw two of his friends - the flight engineer and the radio operator - dead. The hijackers had used the revolver and knives to kill the two. They were shot and then killed with knives. In addition one was seriously injured. Two of the hijackers threatened the pilot and co-pilot with the revolver and knives and directed them to head for Utapao in Thailand.

The other two were holding up the passengers. After refuelling, they left Utapao at 12 noon and were directed to proceed to any airport in Malaysia. While flying along the east coast of Malaysia, the hijackers ordered them to proceed to Singapore. Singapore airport was contacted when the aircraft was near Mersing.

After the aircraft landed in Selatar Air Base, the pilot asked for the injured steward to be given medical attention. This was acceded to and the injured person is now hospitalised, in an

unconscious state ...2/-

unconscious state. Before the passengers alighted, the four hijackers were persuaded to surrender their arms, which they did.

Following the request by the pilots for assistance to enable them to return to Vietnam, the aircraft was supplied with food and drinks, the necessary fuel and engineering services. Staff of several companies concerned with refuelling, engineering servicing and ground handling worked throughout the night to prepare the aircraft for departure this morning. The passengers and crew left after having a full breakfast in the air base. The aircraft left Singapore this morning at 0937 hours for Ho Chi Minh City, with 34 persons, including the pilots and the air hostess, who asked to return. The bodies of the two killed were also taken back on the aircraft.

Before departure, one passenger, a bachelor, aged 26 years, refused to go back and asked to stay until he could find another place to go to. He was not pressed to leave and enquiries will be made to ascertain where he wants to go to.

The four hijackers who are now in custody are now being questioned by the police.

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS.

October 30, 1977.

National Archives of Singapore