

Submitted to the Fairbanks Daily News Miner

28 September 2001

Dear fellow air travelers,

Yesterday George W was busy doing a National Commercial for getting us flying Americans back into the air travel routine. All well and good for him to advocate, but then he does get to use Air Force One, doesn't he?

In today's News-Miner (9/28) there are two very ominous articles. The first is the notice that two generals in the Air Force , one just for Alaska (not so nice to be special in this case...) and one in Florida who now have the authority to say yes to shooting down any suspicious COMMERCIAL airliner.

In the same paper, a few pages later we read that an Air Canada flight has already met with a situation, in which a passenger who was caught smoking in the lavatory, then threatened an attendant and shortly thereafter the plane was flown back to Los Angeles, it's origin, escorted by two F-16 fighters.

Now excuse me, but how does this make me want to just get confidently back into an airliner? It doesn't take a great leap of imagination to conclude that it is now totally feasible for another hijacker to act in such a way as to get the US military to shoot down our own planes in a terror situation. If I can figure this out, what the heck is the sense of this kind of strategy for helping us counter a threat? It seems to me the first of many rather crazy overreactions to the Horrible Terror. But let's not be too hasty about what we consider valid protection. As many letter-writers have stated in many good letters to the editor in the past weeks, let's not make the cure worse than the disease. Air travel and support is way too important to Alaska for this kind of reaction to work.

Not filing my flight plan just yet,

Rich Seifert