

# Air Force plane crashes

## Three dead, seven injured in fiery landing on busy Honduras street

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — A U.S. Air Force cargo plane overshot a runway, crashed into a busy street and burst into flames Tuesday, killing three of those aboard.

After touching down on the runway of Tocontin International Airport in the Honduran capital, the plane rose into the air again.

But it dropped down again, went off the end of the runway and slid 200 yards into the road, said Col. Fernando Soto, chief of the government civil aeronautics office at the airport.

The plane caught fire as it came to a stop on a major artery, often crowded with cars and pedestrians and lined with offices, stores and fast-food restaurants. It wound up about 100 yards from two gasoline stations.

"I had just gotten off of a bus when I saw the plane was coming right at me," said Luis Armando Montoya. "I ran desperately for the other side of the

street. It is a miracle I am safe, but I am still frightened."

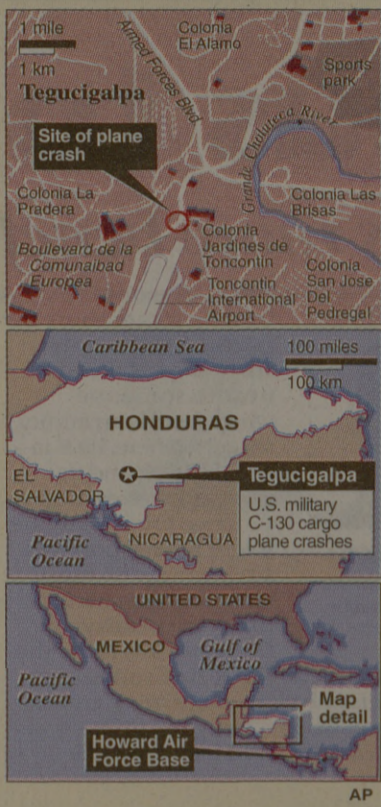
The spokeswoman for the U.S. Embassy, Marti Estell, said three people aboard the C-130 died and all seven others were injured. Their names were withheld pending notification of relatives.

No one on the ground was reported injured.

Soto said it was not clear what caused the crash. The Air Force was investigating.

The plane was part of the 440th Airlift Wing based at General Mitchell International Airport in Wisconsin and was flying out of Howard Air Force Base in Panama. U.S. officials said it was carrying food and electronic goods for U.S. servicemen based in Honduras.

The United States has at least 800 personnel based at Palmerola air base, 40 miles north of the capital. The three most seriously injured were taken there for treatment, Capt. Jerry Warner said at the base.



# Senator faces conflict of interest

## Fred Thompson could alienate certain groups by trying to evaluate congressional finances.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fred Thompson, head of the Senate investigation into campaign finances, faces some tough choices. He must resolve whether Democrats on his panel can subpoena 11 tax-exempt groups with ties to Republicans.

The National Right to Life Committee spent \$14,970 on Thompson's behalf during the 1994 and 1996 elections. Another tax-exempt group featured the Tennessee Republican in TV ads, while a third took over a project that featured him in a TV broadcast.

The Democratic request demonstrates one of the thorny issues that Thompson must soon resolve as his Senate Governmental Affairs Committee prepares for hearings.

And his decisions may have an impact beyond the investigation

since he has been mentioned as a potential presidential contender in 2000.

"The committee assignment is a double-edged sword," said John Geer, professor of political science at Vanderbilt University in Thompson's home state. "If he plays it right, he could have increased clout with the Republican Party and appeal to the public at large."

The Democrats have been negotiating the subpoenas with Thompson, who does not need full committee approval to issue them. Controversial subpoenas can go to the full Governmental Affairs Committee.

Paul Clark, spokesman for Thompson, said the senator will base his decisions "on the merits" in consultation with other committee members.

Among the tough decisions awaiting Thompson:

—Whether the committee's probe of prohibited political activity by tax-exempt organizations should include the Christian Coalition in addition to the National Right to Life Committee, two groups frequently aligned with Republicans. Both groups are at the top of the

Democrats' subpoena list.

—Whether to investigate organizations that Republican used heavy-handed appeals to donors, telling committee their access to lawmakers be threatened by continuing contributions to Democrats.

In one incident, Majority Leader Trent Lott, quoted by The Commercial Appeal in Memphis, Tennessee, December as saying committee political committees "squirm considerably" if they assisted in giving to Democrats.

Lott specifically complained in the interview about Federal Express PAC, the active political action committee in Thompson's home state of Tennessee. The PAC \$19,000 to Thompson over last four years.

—Whether to grant Democratic-sought subpoena the tax-exempt Coalition for Children's Future, Thompson's 1995 TV spot for the group, noting a balanced budget.

Thompson's 30-second spot on balancing the budget November 1995, Clark said.

# Attempt to destroy school buses in Gaza Strip leaves four dead

NETZARIM, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli troops shot and killed two Palestinians and two others blew themselves up in bungled suicide bombings Tuesday, one of the deadliest days yet in a growing crisis in Middle East peacemaking.

The bombers apparently had meant to destroy Israeli school buses outside Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, Israelis said.

The attacks come during a deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, which broke down last month over new Israeli construction in disputed east Jerusalem, and triggered new accusations from both sides.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted that the suicide bombings showed that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has sanctioned attacks by Islamic militants.

"Today's twin attacks (are) proof that the terror campaign continues," Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu later decided to make a 12-hour visit Monday to the United States to talk with President Clinton on the crisis, the prime minister's spokesman said.

Netanyahu also will address the pro-Israeli lobby AIPAC and Christian organizations that support Israel and will meet with U.S. Jewish leaders, spokesman Shai Bazak said in a statement.

Israel's Channel 2 television said Clinton intended to propose a compromise to Netanyahu.

Arafat said it was Israel's prolonged security closure of Palestinian areas that created a climate of violence. "We are all doing our best ... to control the situation," Arafat said.

Both sides refuse to resume peace talks unless the other makes key compromises.

The Palestinians demand that Israel stop construction of a Jewish neighborhood in east Jerusalem, the sector they claim as a future capital.

Until the work stops, Palestinians say they will refuse to help Israel on security, such as detecting Islamic militants plotting attacks on Israelis.

Netanyahu insists that Arafat restore order and peace before negotiations resume. He refuses to halt the construction.

In Washington, President Clinton dis-

cussed the growing crisis with King Hussein of Jordan, who recently and dramatically blamed Netanyahu for the breakdown in relations. Clinton declared Middle East leaders should show "zero tolerance" for terrorism.

Clinton said he would send Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to the region once he decides on a strategy to end the negotiating impasse.

Tuesday's first explosion went off about a mile from the Jewish settlement of Netzarim, south of Gaza City. A Netzarim school bus was running late, which meant it was away from the site when the bomb exploded.

Palestinian police disputed Israeli allegations that the other explosion, at Kfar Darom, was a suicide bombing. They said Israeli troops threw explosives at a taxi and a donkey cart, killing a Palestinian bystander and wounding seven taxi passengers.

But Israel's military chief, Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak, said Islamic militants set off both blasts. He said the suicide bombers wore Palestinian police uniforms and were Islamic militants belonging to

either the Hamas or Islamic Jihad groups.

Israel TV said the explosive kits were similar to one used by a Hamas-affiliated suicide bomber who killed three Israeli women in a Tel Aviv cafe on March 21.

A caller to Israel Radio claimed responsibility in the name of Hamas, but Hamas political leaders and the Izzedine al-Qassem military wing of the group denied involvement.

Two other callers to Israel TV and Israel Radio's Arabic service claimed the attacks on behalf of other, previously unknown groups.

North of the West Bank city of Nablus, about 1,000 Palestinians clashed with troops at an Israeli army checkpoint.

Israeli troops there shot and killed a plainclothes Palestinian policeman, Haitham Mansour, Palestinians said. Hospitals treated 32 protesters for wounds from rubber bullets and for tear gas inhalation.

Mansour had been sent to the scene to try and subdue the protesters, said a colleague, Mohammed Abu Sanfa.

He was buried within hours of his killing. Palestinian police fired 21 shots into the air in salute.

## Two suicide bombings in Gaza



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