

Hijack

Indian Airlines flight IC

# Millennium Hijack: interviewing the crew

**Eleven months after Indian Airlines flight IC 814 was hijacked Philip Baum visited them in New Delhi and Hyderabad to hear their tale.**

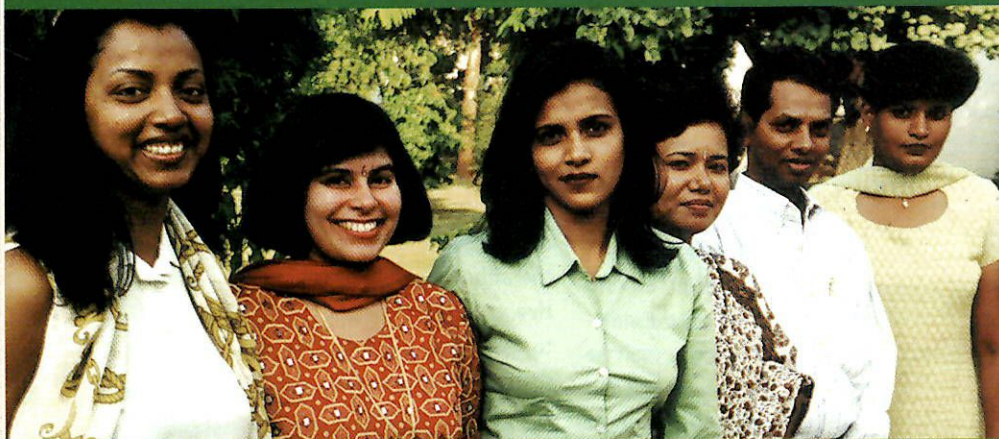
Hijacks are rare. Terrorist hijackings rarer still. Indeed the latter phenomena seemed to go out of vogue in the last decade of the 20th Century. The vast majority of acts of aerial piracy were perpetrated by asylum seekers, criminals and psychologically disturbed individuals and ended without loss of life and within hours rather than days. There were, of course, notable exceptions, including the Air France hijack from Algiers to Marseille on Christmas Eve 1995.

Recent criminal acts against aviation seem to indicate that the industry could once again be becoming the arena for international terrorism. Nowhere was that more apparent than aboard Indian Airlines flight IC 814 when it was hijacked shortly after its departure from Kathmandu, Nepal in 1999. The date was, once again, Christmas Eve. The incident was to end on the eve of the new millennium in Qandahar, Afghanistan.

Naturally there are many lessons one can learn from such an incident, most of which are related to airport-based preventative measures. Yet if we accept, and I urge you to, the maxim that there is no such thing as 100% security, then we also need to learn how best to handle such incidents when they do occur.

Many American and European crew members and security personnel will have seen the excellent FAA video interview with Captain John Testrake and flight pursuer Ulli Derrickson, in which they tell of the dramatic events aboard TWA flight 847 in 1985. Yet, with airline SEP instructors ever-searching for new training material in respect of security, it seemed that we could benefit from the experience of the Indian Airlines crew members.

Thanks to the cooperation of Indian Airlines, and especially the Director of Security, Mr. Himmat Singh, I was able to meet with the crew in New Delhi and Hyderabad last November, some eleven months after the incident. We were able to video the interviews in order to have a permanent record that could enhance security ab initio and recurrent training for other aircrew around the world.



Some of the cabin crew of IC 814

