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News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

Contact: Jennifer Hillings
Tele: (202) 426-4570

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE AERO CLUB
AVIATION PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD
TO CAPTAIN JOHN L. TESTRAKE
FEBRUARY 25, 1986
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Once in a while something very special occurs -- a display of unusual strength, courage --something almost superhuman that inspires people all across this country and throughout the world. Often it comes through adversity. Today, we focus on just such qualities -- as we honor Captain John Testrake and the entire crew of the TWA Jetliner hijacked on June 14, 1985. We honor them with the prestigious Aero Club's "Aviation Achievement Award," given to an individual -- or in this case, a group -- which has done the most during the year to advance and honor aviation, showing distinctive leadership.

Indeed, a friend of mine said, "I'm really envious. You get to shake his hand. Just think of all the people who'd like to have that honor, to shake his hand."

Captain John Testrake had already distinguished himself at TWA, -- having served in the company for over 30 years, before the events of last June. I'm sure Richard Pearson will readily agree with me on that.

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As a member of the TWA "family," Captain Testrake had long been known for his integrity, his professionalism, his warmth and ability to create a bit of a smile on people's faces when they seemed to need it the most.

But no question, adversity tests the mettle of a man or woman. On June 19th, with a gunman holding a pistol to his head, that smiling face appeared reassuringly on camera for 11 minutes. Of all that occurred during that period, what I remember best were his words: "I would like for my wife and my family and all my friends to know that the Lord has taken good care of us so far. And he has seen us through many trying times and will see us through the end."

With so many reasons to emulate this man, I suggest that those words will change many lives, and have a lasting effect as a major facet of his brilliant responses and performance.

Indeed the bravery of those aboard Flight 847 inspires the best in us - the 153 people who were hijacked, the 36 passengers and three TWA crew members held hostage for 17 days and most especially, the young Navy diver who lost his life. Today, we honor each of those outstanding Americans and especially the crew members of that flight -- first Officer Philip G. Maresca; Flight Engineer Christian Zimmermann; Flight Attendants Judy Cox, Hazel Heep, Elizabeth Howes and Helen Sheahan; and Purser Uli Derickson, credited by passengers with saving lives by dealing firmly with the hijackers.

Looking to the future, I look forward to working with each of you as we strive to ensure that no stone is left unturned in addressing security both at home and abroad. While I feel strongly that the United States has the best aviation security system in the world, we are always striving to improve it. We continue our monitoring of airports around the world.

My safety task force, FAA and the industry, will make certain that last summer's initiatives with regard to domestic security, are being properly implemented.

Five teams will address in-depth: the airport perimeter and airline operations area: security coordinators; screening of passengers; screening of checked baggage; and explosive detection.

I will work with the Congress to get expeditious enactment of my legislation that would -- for the first time -- make it a federal crime to enter airport secured areas without authority. The bill would also provide authority for criminal background investigations for employees having access to secure airport areas.

ICAO is responding to our call for tougher standards and international teams to verify that member states are complying with those standards. I

welcome your advice and counsel of these and many other issues of mutual concern.

And as we work together to do all in our power to protect Americans and prevent any further terrorist acts, let us be buoyed by the strong will and faith of the man we honor today. It is my privilege to present the AERO Club's "Aviation Achievement Award," to Captain John Testrake, who is accepting it on behalf of the entire cockpit and cabin crew, a team of brave able servants of the public who deserve our undying gratitude and respect.

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