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PRESS CLIPPINGS

United Is Seeking Cockpit Stun Guns To Foil Hijackings

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CHICAGO—To thwart hijackings, United Airlines proposed equipping its cockpits with electronic stun guns and introducing more training for its flight attendants to help them protect themselves and passengers.

The stun-gun proposal, which is subject to approval by the Federal Aviation Administration, and the new training pro-

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gram are a first by a major airline in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist hijackings. Since then, airlines have reinforced their cockpit doors to keep out hijackers, and now are considering additional ways to foil attackers—from giving pilots firearms to installing cameras in the cabins so pilots can keep watch over the passengers.

A spokesman for the FAA said that under current regulations stun guns, firearms and other deadly or dangerous weapons are not allowed on airplanes except in the hands of federal sky marshals. He said the agency will review United's proposal.

UAL Corp.'s United said it intends to present to the FAA all its research on the engineering, security and training issues relevant to installing **Taser International Inc.** weapons in electronically coded lockboxes on its planes. Taser shares soared 23% yesterday, while UAL's rose 6.9%.

The weapons United wants to purchase fire a 26-watt electrical charge for six seconds from a distance of as much as 21 feet, said Rick Smith, chief executive of Taser, of Scottsdale, Ariz. The charge instantly disables the assailant, allowing time for him or her to be restrained.

Mr. Smith said the bulk of his company's sales are to police departments, but it also sells to consumers. **Mesa Air Group Inc.**, a regional airline based in Phoenix, was the first U.S. carrier to announce plans to seek FAA approval to put stun guns on its planes. Mr. Smith said the United order could include as many as 1,400 units. The model United in which is interested costs \$400 to \$600, he said.

Since Sept. 11, the Air Line Pilots Association, which represents pilots at United and a number of other U.S. and Canadian carriers, has advocated the installation of nonlethal stun guns on the flight deck. An aircraft-security panel appointed by Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta after the attacks also supported the idea, and recommended that the FAA evaluate the effectiveness of such devices within six months. But the FAA so far hasn't shown much enthusiasm.

The United spokesman wouldn't say how much the program is expected to cost. He also declined to comment on the nature of the planned flight-attendant training.

"We obviously need new training," said a spokesman for the Association of Flight Attendants. "We've been working with United, but the training program hasn't been fully developed and is far from complete."

UAL shares rose 82 cents to \$12.71 in 4 p.m. New York Stock Exchange composite trading. Taser shares jumped \$2.46 to \$13.26 on the Nasdaq Stock Market.
