806 FLIGHT International, 2 April 1977

W rid news
58 0 killed in Tenerife collision
TWO BOEING 747s, belonging to Pan
American Airways and KLM Royal
Dutch Airlines, collided on the run-
way at Tenerife Santa Cruz airport
last Sunday, March 27, at 1714hr GMT.
Casualties were 580 killed, including all 235 passengers and 14 crew aboard
the KLM airoraft. The Pan Am charter
flight had originated at Los Angeles
with 364 passengers and 14 more had boarded the flight at New York Kennedy. Sixteen crew were on the

TENERIFE WEATHE R REPORTS ON MARC H 27

Time *

Surface wind
Visibility
Weather

Cloud

1500

320/14
10km +

2/8 at 1,000ft

1600 1700

340/18 Var/14
1,500m 2,500m
Intermittent
slight drizzle
2/8 at Oft 2/8 at Oft
2/8 at 100ft 2/8 at 100ft
3/8 at 600ft 4/8 at 400ft

1800 1900

330/18 330/20
100m Zero
Continuous drizzle

8/8 at Oft 8/8 at Oft

flight at Tenerife, having joined the flight at Kennedy. Two Pan Am staff joined the aircraft at Tenerife, making a total of 396 occupants. Seven of the crew—including the captain, the first officer and the flight engineer—were among the 65 known survivors.
Both aircraft were on charter flights to Las Palmas, Pan Am B150 from Los Angeles and New York and KL4805 from Amsterdam. Both were diverted to Tenerife when Las Palmas Airport was closed after a bomb planted by a terrorist group exploded in the terminal.
The Pan Am aircraft had been on the ground three hours when Las Palmas re-opened and both 747s pre-pared to leave. The Pan-Am aircraft at least had refuelled. At 1700hr visibility was reported as 2,500m with a variable 14kt wind. By 1800hr, after the accident, it had dropped to 100m with continuous drizzle. Over the same period patches of cloud were drifting across the airfield surface, and coverage by 1800hr was eight-eighths on the ground. By 1900hr visibility was zero. Visibility at the time of the accident was probably patchy, variable and worsening. Tenerife has no surface-movement radar.

The KLM aircraft was apparently taking off along the single main run-way (30) at 1714hr when it struck the taxiing Pan American aircraft. Accord-ing to KLM chairman Mr Sergio-Orlandini, drawing on initial reports in Amsterdam shortly after the accident, the KLM aircraft was travelling at some 155 m.p.h. at the time of the

collision. Accounts of the accident vary, but the fact that survivors in-cluded the flight-deck crew and some first-class passengers from the Pan Am aircraft suggests that the KLM 747 struck it side-on or from the rear. Fire broke out and according to one report it was nine hours before the last flames were extinguished.
Investigators from the Dutch authorities and the US National Trans-portation Safety Board were in Tenerife by Monday morning. By that time one of the interested parties—the Civil Governor of Tenerife—had already judged the issue, saying that the Spanish controllers were not to blame for the accident and that the correct taxiing instructions had been given. As Flight closes for press the investigators—the United States and the Netherlands have a right under international agreement to representa-

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The Jeppesen airfield chart for Tenerife shows
a single 11,155ft runway equipped with centreline and runway-edge lights. The parallel taxiway and its associated runway links are edge-lit and the control tower is about 300m from the runway

tion on the investigation board—are listening to the recorded dialogue be-tween the pilots and the controllers.
It appears that the Pan Am aircraft may have left the Tenerife apron by one of the direct taxiways leading— either obliquely or at right angles— across the main runway (see diagram this page), instead of taking the main taxiway which runs parallel to run-way 30. Late reports suggest that the Pan Am aircraft had been cleared by ground control to back-track along the runway.
The investigation will concentrate on the reasons for the collision but will also cover Tenerife's ability to accept large aircraft. The NTSB's attention has been focused recently on survivable accidents by the investi-gators at the Overseas National DC-10 crash at New York Kennedy, and evacuation procedures and airport fire services will also be studied.
The Tenerife collision is the fourth
in Europe to involve airliners over the past four years.

More IMato Awacs problems ...
BRITAIN has reserved the right to use
"at its best convenience" the money
earmarked for airborne early warning
(AEW) aircraft to replace the RAF's
obsolescent Shackletons. This guarded
comment emerged in the final com-munique from the special Nato Defence Planning Committee meeting in Brussels on March 25.
The meeting, called largely at the insistence of British Defence Secretary Fred Mulley, lasted no less than nine hours and is reported to have been "very tough". Mulley often reminded

his opposite numbers that Britain had backed the common E-3A force all along but could no longer afford to fund both this Nato project and its own AEW Nimrod fall-back pro-gramme.
The collapse of the Nato Awacs pro-gramme seems to grow more likely with every meeting. Italy can afford no more than a symbolic participa-tion, as opposed to the $100 million or so she has been asked for. Denmark's budget has been settled for the next four years and there is no