

Germanwings co-pilot practiced descents hours before crash

- 1) PARIS (AP) -- The co-pilot of Germanwings Flight 9525 appears to have practiced sending the jetliner into a deadly descent on another flight, just two hours before he intentionally crashed it into the French Alps, investigators said Wednesday.
 - 2) The revelation appeared to support the theory that the Germanwings crash was not only deliberate but premeditated. It came in a 30-page interim report from the French accident investigation agency BEA.
 - 3) Authorities are still puzzling over why Andreas Lubitz, who had suffered from suicidal tendencies and depression in the past, locked the captain out of the cockpit on March 24 and sent the Airbus A320 hurtling into a mountain, killing all 150 people on board.
 - 4) Lubitz seemed to be toying with the airplane's settings on the earlier flight from Duesseldorf to Barcelona, programming it for a sharp descent multiple times in a 4 1/2-minute period while the pilot was out of the cockpit before resetting the controls, the report said. Unlike the later flight, he did not lock the pilot out of the cockpit.
 - 5) The plane's "selected altitude" changed repeatedly and several times was set as low as 100 feet (30 meters) above sea level. The report says Lubitz also put the engines on idle, which gives the plane the ability to quickly descend.
 - 6) On the doomed flight from Barcelona to Duesseldorf, Lubitz also set a 100-foot altitude before the plane crashed into the Alps. Aviation experts say it would be highly unusual for a pilot to repeatedly set a plane for such a low altitude for no apparent reason. The report said Lubitz did so while air traffic controllers were asking him to bring the airplane down gradually from 35,000 feet to 21,000 feet for its descent to Barcelona. A BEA chart showed the plane didn't actually descend sharply while Lubitz was repeatedly adjusting the settings, so the passengers and crew might not have noticed any change.
 - 7) Lufthansa, the parent company of Germanwings, had no immediate comment. The BEA report didn't analyze why Lubitz repeatedly tried to descend the plane going into Barcelona. But the agency said it was continuing to look at "systemic failings that may have led to this accident or similar events."
 - 8) The BEA investigators said they are focusing on "the current balance between medical confidentiality and flight safety" -- a reference to whether German rules on patient privacy may have prevented Lufthansa from being fully aware of Lubitz' mental health issues.
 - 9) The agency is also looking at "compromises" made on security following the Sept. 11 attacks in the U.S., notably on cockpit door locking systems meant to protect pilots from terrorists. Since the Germanwings crash, several airlines have imposed rules requiring two people in the cockpit at all times. German authorities say Lubitz researched suicide methods and cockpit door security online in the week before the crash. 【May 07, 2015 / Mainichi Japan 一部省略】
- descent: 降下 revelation: 意外な新事実 deliberate: 故意の、意図的な premeditated: 予謀した toy with: いくじる BEA=Air Accident Investigation Bureau(仏の航空事故調査委員会) confidentiality: 秘密性



★Ice breaker for active discussion★

1. What is your first impression about the Germanwings plane crash?
2. When you learned that the plane was deliberately crashed, what came into your mind?
3. Did it affect your future plans of using airplanes?
4. What types or precautionary measures should airline companies do to prevent this type of incident from happening again?
5. What do you think about reinforced cockpit doors?
6. Share your opinion over the balance between medical confidentiality and flight safety
7. Make sentences using the following words: descent, revelation, deliberate, premeditated, toy with, puzzling and confidentiality.

意図的に飛行機を墜落させたドイツ人のアンドレアス・ルビッツ副操縦士のうつ病や視力の問題などが明らかになってきた。医師の守秘義務のため航空会社には伝わっていなかった。2001年の米同時多発テロ以降に強化された安全対策が、機長がコックピットに戻れず副操縦士の暴走を阻止できなかったことにつながった。各航空会社は「操縦室には常時2人」をルール化するなどの安全対策強化に乗り出した。