~~SECRET~~

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

14585

Sept 25, 1969

~~E X D I S~~

9/25/69

TO : The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM : NEA - Rodger P. Davies

SUBJECT: Message to Syrian President Regarding TWA Incident - ACTION MEMORANDUM

Background:

In the course of your conversation with Israeli Foreign Minister Eban, Eban suggested that a message to Syrian President Nureddin al-Atassi might be useful in securing the release of the two detained Israeli passengers. As I understand you wished, we have prepared the attached oral message from you to the Syrian President.

Recommendation:

That you approve the attached telegram conveying your request that the Syrian Government promptly release the two Israeli passengers.

Cleared by S + sent 9/25/69

Attachment:

Telegram conveying oral message.

NEA/ARN:BHBaas:dmg 9/25/69 Clearance:NEA/ARN:TWSeelye

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GROUP 3
~~Downgraded at 12-year intervals; not automatically declassified~~

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 22, 2004

INDICATE:
☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TO

Department of State
TELEGRAM

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SUBJECT TWA Hijacking

1. Although we have sought to avoid statements and actions that might serve to make Syrians more obdurate, prolonged detention of two Israeli passengers will increasingly generate pressures for retaliatory actions. Department is in process of replying to letter from Senator Cranston signed by 41 members of the Congress urging that a case against Syria be made in the Security Council. Embassy will have noted also militant statements by Israeli Minister of Transport Carmel and Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Rafael (Tel Aviv 3629).

DRAFTED BY:	DRAFTING DATE	TEL. EXT.	APPROVED BY:
NEA/ARN:BHBaas/NEA:RPDavies:gvl	9/24/69	20695	THE SECRETARY

CLEARANCES: NEA/ARN - TWSeelye
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ACTION:

2. Inasmuch as Italian approaches to SARG have been through the Foreign Ministry, Embassy requested to raise with Italians the possibility of Ambassador Riccardi delivering or transmitting to President Atassi an oral message from the Secretary.

3. If no objection is perceived, you should request that Italian Embassy Damascus deliver to President Atassi the following oral message from Secretary Rogers:

4. QUOTE Mr. President: The United States Government remains profoundly concerned over the continued detention by your government of two passengers from the Trans-World Airlines aircraft that was hijacked to Damascus on August 29. Although aware of the underlying issue of the Arab-Israel conflict, our concern stems not from the nationality of the passengers involved, but from the obligation the United States Government feels for passengers choosing to fly on

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ACTION:

a United States flag aircraft. This consideration is fundamental and should also be a matter of very great concern to the Syrian Government, which itself operates an international airline.

5. I believe continued detention of the passengers will tend to encourage hijacking and other unlawful interference with international civil aviation. This clearly puts the safety of civil aviation in grave jeopardy. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, as a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization, is certainly aware of its international obligations in this respect, and I am sure it is also aware that its failure to meet these obligations will have an adverse effect on world opinion.

6. In conclusion, despite the absence of relations between our two countries but in view of our common interest in the safety of international civil aviation, I urge that

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ACTION:

your government urgently release the two remaining passengers from the hijacked aircraft. Sincerely, William P. Rogers. UNQUOTE

GP-3

END

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