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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION 21880

~~SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HAJ fr.*

SUBJECT: Evening Report on the Hijacking Situation

Below are described the main developments since my mid-day memorandum to you on the aircraft hijacking situation.

Passengers, Aircraft and Negotiations

Red Cross representative Rochat reports that:

--The deadline on the ultimatum has now been "postponed" with no specific expiration. The negotiations are now considered to be open as far as time is concerned and he anticipates a very long negotiating process.

--The situation is "extremely serious." He hopes that a clear position will emerge from the PFLP side by tomorrow morning, although he considers their demands to remain "extremely tough." He will meet with them again "very early" tomorrow morning.

--The passengers on all three aircraft are safe and the Red Cross has a medical team permanently on the site. A second Red Cross plane with unspecified supplies has been requested.

--He may have reason to call on the U. S. for unspecified support on short notice.

Our embassy reports that things are now relatively quiet at the hotel where the passengers removed from the aircraft are staying. Morale seems to be reasonably good given the strain of the situation. Earlier in the day they had to take shelter in the basement when heavy fighting broke out in the vicinity.

With the addition of the hijacked BOAC aircraft today, there are now some 300 hostages at the airstrip where the planes are being held. The BOAC plane has some 105 passengers including 3 U. S. citizens and 24 unattached children.

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Situation in Amman

The fighting in Amman seems to have died down this afternoon after the more moderate fedayeen leaders responded favorably to a call by Army Chief of Staff Haditha for all sides to observe a cease-fire. It seems quite possible, however, that this is only another overnight lull.

The embassy reports that so far there have been no injuries among local American residents. Three embassy personnel, however, are missing and presumably being held by the guerrillas.

U. S. Actions

The UN Security Council is expected now to meet this evening. It was originally scheduled -- at our request -- to meet this afternoon but the pre-meeting consultations have dragged on longer than expected. We are working for a resolution calling for the immediate release of the passengers and crews and urging that all possible measures be taken to insure against further hijacking or interference with international aviation.

We are still working with the Swiss, Germans and British to maintain a common front against the fedayeen demands and efforts to split us. We have also informed the Israelis that we find the message they asked us to forward to King Hussein to be unnecessarily threatening (it held his government fully responsible) and suggest they use their own direct channels to the Jordanians.