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MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION



April 1, 1975

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*
SUBJECT: Progress in Combating Terrorism

The Deputy Secretary of State has submitted a report (Tab A) informing you of actions taken over the past eighteen months under the aegis of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism.

The anti-terrorist programs and activities of twenty departments and agencies are currently being coordinated through the very active Working Group of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism. This cooperative effort has contributed to significant progress in a wide variety of areas, outlined in Mr. Ingersoll's memorandum, including tighter security at points-of-entry into the U. S., intensified training of security personnel, increased cooperation with international agencies, and sponsorship of a variety of research projects on the problem of terrorism. The intelligence community provides indispensable support to the Working Group in collecting and analyzing intelligence on overseas terrorist threats, as does the FBI domestically.

One of the major accomplishments of the Working Group has been the preparation, coordination and issuance of policy guidelines for dealing with international terrorist incidents (Tab 2 of Mr. Ingersoll's memorandum). These guidelines have enhanced the USG's ability to respond effectively to such incidents, particularly when U. S. nationals are held as hostages. They establish that in such cases U. S. policy is:

- To refuse the payment of official ransom and to discourage others from making such payments. In the case of ransom demands in this country, where FBI recovery of both ransoms and kidnapers is very effective, greater flexibility is possible than in the case of ransom payments by other governments, companies, or individuals;



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- To refuse demands for the release of American prisoners and to advise other governments to resist such demands unless some flexibility is advantageous in cases of foreign "political prisoners";
- To retain the option of acceding to the free departure of a terrorist in return for the release of hostages (the "Bangkok solution");
- To avoid any suggestion of a willingness to grant domestic amnesty to a terrorist unless the life of a hostage is clearly at stake.

In handling hostage situations, the basic strategy is to protract, to the extent possible, the negotiations in the hopes of wearing-down the terrorists. This may provide an opening for the hostages to escape or be rescued or lead to a resolution of the impasse consistent with the above guidelines.

The guidelines serve as the basis for the advice and assistance given by the USG to concerned foreign governments who properly have jurisdiction in the case of Americans held hostage overseas. They also guide the response of the FBI, charged with overall management of domestic incidents.

The management of the USG's response to terrorist incidents involving Americans abroad has been significantly improved through the issuance of comprehensive procedures by the State Department (Tab 3 of Mr. Ingersoll's memorandum). These provide precise instructions for the establishment and operation of task forces both at the Department and affected overseas mission in the event of an incident. These procedures, utilized successfully several times in actual incidents, are continually refined through experience. The Working Group serves as focal point for bringing the full resources of the government to bear in response to terrorist incidents as needed.

Although no level of effort can provide absolute security, the USG has made over the past few years a significant contribution to the protection of the innocent individuals -- both American and foreign -- who are the chief victims of international terrorism. A review of the list of major terrorist incidents since July, 1973, at Tab 1 of Mr. Ingersoll's memorandum (and the recent tragic event in Argentina), serve as a reminder of the continuing seriousness of this problem. Consequently, the vigorous efforts of the USG to combat terrorism must and will continue in the future.

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