



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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O 201455Z NOV 69  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE. 7586  
BT  
~~SECRET~~ TEL AVIV 4348

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1969 NOV 20 PM 12:00

ACTION COPY

SUBJECT: TWA HIJACKING

1. DIRGEN RAFAEL NOVEMBER 20 CALLED IN DCM AND TOLD HIM THREE-CORNERED PLAN TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF DAMASCUS DETAINEES APPEARED TO HAVE FALLEN APART. SAID FONMIN EBAN DESIRED INFORMATION TO BE BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF SECRETARY ROGERS.

2. AS WE KNEW, RAFAEL SAID, ICRC HAD SUBMITTED TO GOI ON BEHALF OF UAR PROPOSAL FOR EXCHANGE TO INCLUDE TWO SYRIAN PILOTS. THIS HAD BEEN ACCEPTED BY GOI. ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN NO MOVEMENT SINCE, THERE WAS ALL REASON TO BELIEVE GOI WAS ON RIGHT TRACK. ITS DECISION WAS INFLUENCED BY HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING ISRAEL PILOT IN EGYPT AND TWA PASSENGERS IN DAMASCUS. LAST WEEK GOI HAD BEEN INFORMED BY USG OF TWA EFFORTS IN DAMASCUS WHICH WERE APPRECIATED AND REGARDED AS IMPORTANT. AT USG SUGGESTION, GOI HAD REQUESTED ICRC TO CONVEY TO SARG ON ITS OWN PROPOSAL THAT DETAINEES BE ALLOWED TO DEPART DAMASCUS ON TWO PLANE WHEN IT LEAVES. ICRC HAD DONE THIS.

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3. IN RESPONSE TO ICRC PROPOSAL, SARG HAD YESTERDAY REPLIED TO ICRC REPRESENTATIVE DAMASCUS, WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE TO UAR PROPOSED THREE-CORNERED EXCHANGE, THAT ISRAEL SHOULD GIVE ASSUANCES IT WOULD BRING TWO SYRIAN PILOTS, AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL SYRIANS DETAINED IN ISRAEL, TO CEASEFIRE LINE IN EXCHANGE FOR DEPARTURE OF DETAINEES. RAFAEL REPEATED SYRIANS MADE NO REFERENCE WHATSOEVER TO UAR PPROPOSAL. GOI REACTION TO SARG DEMAND IS FLAT REFUSAL.

4. RAFAEL, WITH CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS, SAID THAT ISRAEL, BY HAVING GOTTEN ICRC TO MAKE PROPOSAL TO SARG WHICH IT HAD BEEN THOUGHT WOULD SUPPORT THE UAR EXCHANGE DEAL, HAD MADE A MESS OF WHOLE THING. SITUATION WAS NOW SPLIT WIDE OPEN. ISRAEL HAD NOT INTENTION TO EFFECT EXCHANGE WITH SYRIA. HAD NEVER HAD THIS IN MIND. HAD BEEN MOTIVATED TO ACCEPT ICRC PROPOSAL BECAUSE EGYPT HAD SAID INCLUSION OF TWO SYRIANS WAS SINE QUA NON AND BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN UNDERSTOOD PROPOSAL HAD BEEN COORDINATED AT HIGHEST LEVEL BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT.

*Handwritten notes:*  
Tel Aviv 4348  
11/20/69  
AV 12415  
R Soe 3 REO (Ross)  
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DECLASSIFIED  
PA/HO, Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
June 22, 2004

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-2- TEL AVIV 4348, NOVEMBER 20 (NOBIS)

5. WHILE ISRAEL WAS WAITING FOR OUTCOME OF ICRC INITIATIVE, RAFAEL CONTINUED, IT HAD CEASED ALL OTHER ACTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. HAD ISRAEL KNOWN IN ADVANCE THIS WOULD BE OUTCOME, IT WOULD NOT HAVE COMMITTED ITSELF AND WOULD HAVE BEEN PURSUING OTHER ACTIONS, POLITICAL AND PERHAPS OTHERWISE. GOI HAD NO COMPLAINT AGAINST USG FOR HAVING ADVANCED IDEA, BUT RESULT IS THAT BABY WHICH WAS NOT ISRAEL'S HAS BEEN PASSED INTO ISRAEL'S HANDS. EBAN ASKS THAT SECRETARY ROGERS BE REMINDED OF HIS LETTER TO EBAN DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 14, WHICH EXPRESSED PROFOUND CONCERN OF USG REGARDING DETENTION OF PASSENGERS, ASSURED GOI THAT EVERY POSSIBLE COURSE OF ACTION TO SECURE THEIR RELEASE WAS BEING EXPLORED, AND PROMISED THAT USG WOULD NOT RELAX ITS EFFORTS UNTIL THEY ARE RELEASED AND REPATRIATED. ISRAEL FEELS IT SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN LEFT ALONE IN THIS MATTER. GOI DESIRES TO RETURN TO POSITION THAT IT IS RESPONSIBILITY OF US FLAG CARRIER TO BRING PASSENGERS TO DESTINATION, AS WOULD BE CASE FOR ANY AIRLINER INVOLVED IN MISHAP. GOI AGAIN REQUESTS US TO QUOTE REACTIVATE ITSELF UNQUOTE WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO IT.

6. RAFAEL SAID STRICT WORD HAS BEEN GIVEN ICRC IN GENEVA AND ISRAEL THAT GOI WILL NOT REPEAT NOT ACCEPT ANY SOLUTION OTHER THAN THAT NEGOTIATED AND AGREED UPON CONCERNING EXCHANGE AS PROPOSED BY UAR, AND WILL NOT BUDGE FROM THAT POSITION OR ENTER INTO BARGAINING WITH SYRIA.

7. RAFAEL CONTINUED THAT USG HAS FULL RIGHT ASK RELEASE OF DETAINEES AND IT IS HIGH TIME SARG IS BROUGHT TO ITS SENSES. HOPED USG WOULD IMPRESS ON SARG THAT TIME FOR DALLYING IS OVER. GOI HAS TWO SPECIFIC THINGS TO ASK: (1) GOI FIRMLY HOPES TWA PLANE WILL NOT LEAVE DAMASCUS WITHOUT PASSENGERS, BOTH FOR LEVERAGE THIS WILL GIVE FOR EXCHANGE OPERATION AND FOR QUOTE GOOD NAME UNQUOTE OF TWA; (2) USG HAD INTIMATED SOME TIME AGO AMERICAN OFFICIAL MIGHT VISIT DAMASCUS. GOI SUGGESTS THAT SOMEONE FROM USG GO THERE WHO CAN QUOTE TALK SENSE TO THOSE PEOPLE UNQUOTE.

8. RAFAEL WENT ON THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO GIVE SOMBER WARNINGS TO SARG, BUT ISRAEL WILL HAVE TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS OWN INTERESTS. SOMEONE MUST MAKE CLEAR TO SYRIA THAT ISRAEL'S PATIENCE IS NOW ALL EXHAUSTED. ITS DISAPPOINTMENT AFTER ITS HOPES HAD BEEN RAISED IS ALL THE DEEPER. RAFAEL DID NOT KNOW WHAT COUNSELS WOULD PREVAIL IN GOI. HE BELIEVES A MAJOR AND MASSIVE EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE. HE FELT THERE WAS NO NEED TO MENTION GOI'S WILLINGNESS TO MAKE CONTRIBUTION TO SOLUTION, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN DEMONSTRATED, BUT ISRAEL CAN DO NOTHING MORE.

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-3- TEL AVIV 4348, NOVEMBER 20 (NODIS)

9. IN CLOSING, RAFAEL SAID FONOFF LEGAL ADVISOR MERON, WHO HAS BEEN HANDLING TALKS WITH ICRC IN GENEVA, HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO PACK AND COME HOME.

17. DCM EXPRESSED REGRET MATTERS HAD NOT YET WORKED OUT AS HOPED FOR. USG AND TWA, JUST AS HAD GOI, HAD BEEN LOOKING FORWARD EAGERLY TO MOMENT WHEN DETAINEES WOULD BE RELEASED FROM DAMASCUS. POINTED OUT USG SUGGESTION THAT GOI ASK ICRC TO GO TO SARG HAD BEEN MADE AFTER RAFAEL HAD ASKED USG TO ASSIST IN ANY POSSIBLE WAY. RE GOI REQUEST THAT USG OFFICIAL GO TO DAMASCUS TO TALK SENSE INTO SYRIANS, NOTED PREVIOUS IDEA HAD ONLY BEEN FOR POSSIBLE WORKING LEVEL VISIT BY MIDDLE GRADE EMBASSY OFFICER, NOT VISIT BY POLICY LEVEL OFFICIAL. NOTED USG HAS LITTLE IF ANY LEVERAGE TO USE WITH SARG. NEVERTHELESS AGREED TO INFORM DEPARTMENT FULLY AT ONCE ON RAFAEL'S DEMARCHE.

1. COMMENT: AS ONE STEP, RECOMMEND THE DEPARTMENT ASK US MISSION GENEVA TO MAKE STRONG PITCH TO ICRC TO GET ORIGINAL UAR THREE-CORNERED PROPOSAL BACK ON TRACKS. IN ADDITION, SINCE ITALIANS ALREADY APPRISED BY ICRC OF THREE-CORNERED PROPOSAL MIGHT BE USEFUL ASK THEM TO IMPRESS UPON SYRIANS THAT UAR PROPOSAL HAD STRONG ADVANTAGES OF ALLOWING SARG TO RELEASE PASSENGERS AND THUS FULFILL INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS WHILE AT SAME TIME GETTING OWN TWO PILOTS BACK, DECISION WHICH GOI HAD PREVIOUSLY ADAMANTLY REFUSED. WE STRONGLY ENDORSE IDEA THAT PLANE SHOULD NOT LEAVE DAMASCUS WITHOUT PASSENGERS, AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE, SINCE THIS LIKELY TO RE-AROUSE STORMY ISRAELI PUBLIC RECRIMINATIONS.  
GP-3.

BARBOUR

NODIS REVIEW	
<u>Cat. A</u>	- Caption removed: transferred to O/FADRC
Cat. B	- Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S
Cat. C	- Caption and custody retained by S/S
Reviewed by: Ambassador W. Witman, II	
Date:	4/29 1975

*W. W.*

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