

September 13, 1970

~~SECRET~~
HAK
MEMORANDUM FOR GEN. HAIG

FROM: Hal Saunders *Hal*

SUBJECT: Hijacking--Late Afternoon Situation Report

Sunday continues to be a day of digesting the new situation and waiting for new information on it.

The next concrete action--barring the unexpected--will be a meeting of the Bern group sometime after midnight (Bern time). At this meeting, the Red Cross representatives just back from Amman will report. The U. S. representative will make a strong pitch for keeping the Red Cross engaged in the negotiations. We understand that the Red Cross president is already inclined in the same direction, although the recommendation of the vice president who has been in Amman may modify his stand.

The kinds of information we are seeking as a basis for next decisions are:

- Exactly who are the hostages? [The Red Cross man was given a list by the Palestinians just before he left Amman. He should produce it at the meeting.]
- Where are the hostages and in whose custody are they? [There may still be a possibility, according to some reports, that the less militant Palestinians have access to them. Even Jordanian security forces may still be involved.]
- What are the fedayeen demands now? [For all the week's talk, we have never had a precise formulation. The fedayeen said they would produce one when the Israelis accepted the principle of an exchange. But now the Palestinian Red Crescent is reportedly talking about some specifics. The Red Cross representatives may shed some light.]
- How long are the Europeans prepared to negotiate without breaking ranks? [The U. S. will press tonight for continuing the united stand.]
- How can we exploit the split in the fedayeen ranks?

One emerging piece of information that may come out soon is that the slain would-be hijacker of the El Al plane last weekend now appears to be an American by birth, although he was operating on a forged Honduran passport. This could be a complication in that his body is part of the deal already offered by the UK. If he is American, his next of kin has something to say about the disposition of the body.