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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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September 10, 1970

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: Evening Report on Hijacking Situation

From H. A. Kissinger

The Negotiations

As you are aware from my mid-day report, the Palestinians have made a counter proposal to the Red Cross representative stating that they are willing to release the women, children and sick passengers in return for the release of the seven fedayeen held prisoners by the British, Germans and Swiss. The remaining male hostages, according to this offer, would be released in exchange for an as yet unspecified number of fedayeen held by the Israelis.

The purpose of this counter-offer was apparently to get the UK, Switzerland, West Germany and U. S. off the hook of discriminating against Israelis. It would also make non-Israeli nationals hostages for the Israeli-held fedayeen for the first time, thereby maximizing pressure on Israel.

Before that counter-proposal was discussed at a meeting of the five governments involved with the Red Cross this afternoon in Bern, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban sent a private message to Foreign Minister Home to the effect that if the Americans, Swiss, British and Germans would continue to act together holding out for the release of all passengers, Israel would reconsider its position on release of some of its fedayeen prisoners. This is in sharp contrast to the hard line the Israelis are taking in public. Mrs. Meir may, however, have been paving the way for a change in the Israeli position when she said the situation had deteriorated to the point where the world could only "pay ransom and liberate criminals."

At the meeting in Bern this afternoon, the Red Cross representative opened with a hard position against the Palestinian offer, terming it discriminatory. The U. K., Swiss and West German representatives

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then followed suit. Then the British representative turned to the Israeli and said that it is now time to know the Israeli position on the principal of exchanging fedayeen prisoners for the passengers. The Israeli representative said he was without instructions; he was requested to get instructions and return to another meeting of the group at 6 p. m. EDT this evening. The British will also request discussion this evening of a proposal to put a UN force in the area near Amman where the hijacked planes are located.

Situation in Amman

The Jordanian government and the fedayeen central committee have arranged another cease-fire--the fourth this week. It seems to have held up fairly well throughout the afternoon and there have been no reports of heavy fighting. This could be a critical turning point since, [REDACTED] this is the last agreement King Hussein intends to make. He reportedly believes that if this cease-fire agreement breaks down there would be no point in any further attempts to negotiate.

Another one of our missing embassy officers has turned up safe. He was returned to the embassy after being detained by the fedayeen. This means that only one U. S. official is still in the hands of the fedayeen.

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