

DIST.

SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE OPERATIONS CENTER  
TWA HIJACKING WORKING GROUP  
SITUATION REPORT NO. 26  
SITUATION AS OF 1700 EDT JUNE 26, 1985

*Return to Paul Charles*

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At a press conference today in Beirut, Nabih Barri announced that he had decided to release hostage Jimmy Dell Palmer when ICRC doctors found that Palmer's blood pressure and heart condition were growing worse and that it "would be dangerous for him to stay." Barri also said that he was looking further into the medical condition of hostage Simon Grossmayer, who might also be released. Palmer later flew to Larnaca where Cypriot doctors found him fit for immediate onward travel. Palmer will arrive tonight in London. Barri also announced that agreement had been reached to release French journalists Jean-Paul Kaufmann and Michel Seurat (who were kidnapped in late May) along with the TWA hostages, once the Lebanese prisoners in Atlit are freed. No mention was made of the seven Americans, the two French diplomats and the British UNRWA employee who are also still missing.

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According to press reports, Barri also proposed transferring all of the hostages to "a western embassy in Beirut," provided the government concerned would agree not to release them until the Atlit prisoners were released. Alternatively, the hostages could all be flown "somewhere else, like Damascus," where they would remain until the detainees were released. (In a subsequent conversation with Ambassador Bartholomew, Barri made no mention of this proposal.) Barri also said the U.S. should withdraw its naval ships from the Lebanese coast and pledge not to retaliate after release of the hostages.

TWA co-pilot Philip Maresca was taken to American University Hospital today for a medical examination and later returned to the aircraft. In order to get a doctor more quickly, the hijackers initially told the tower they had a "dying man" aboard. Maresca is apparently suffering from an infected insect bite.

We are limiting our responses to all media inquiries regarding the hostage situation to the following: "The proper solution is the prompt release of all the hostages."

*Grant Smith*  
Grant Smith  
Co-Coordinator TWAHWG

*Sheldon Krebs*  
Sheldon Krebs  
Senior Watch Officer

State Dept. review completed

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DECL:OADR