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DEPARTMENT OF STATE OPERATIONS CENTER
 TWA HIJACKING WORKING GROUP
 SITUATION REPORT NO.14
 SITUATION AS OF 1700 EDT, JUNE 20, 1985

At 1504 EDT Nabih Barri allowed reporters to interview a selected group of five hostages: Allyn Conwell, Peter Hill, Thomas Cullins, Vincente Garza, and Arthur Toga. Acting as the spokesman, Conwell read a statement beseeching the U.S. to refrain from any military action, condemning all forms of hijacking or terrorism and calling for the planned release of the Lebanese detained in Israel to be expedited. Conwell said he had personally visited earlier in the day all the hostages except for the three crew still aboard the aircraft and could vouch that they were all being treated well. He read a list of the names of the 37 hostages he had seen which matched our own list of those still held. In response to a question, Conwell said that if the Israeli prisoners were not released, the U.S. hostages would be turned over to the original hijackers, a prospect they found "most unappealing."

Akif Haydar, Amal's Politburo Chairman, confirmed in an earlier press conference today that hostages with "Jewish-sounding" names were being held separately from the other hostages. Haydar said this had been done because of suspicion that they had "Zionist links." Haydar indicated that the negotiations were not going well and said that the TWA hostages would not be released until the Lebanese detained by Israel were freed. Haydar claimed that the hostages were not held directly by Amal but Amal trusted those who were holding them. (According to an unconfirmed Phalange radio report, the hostages of Jewish origin have been transferred to Ba'labakk.)

Barri told reporters today that the release of the U.S. hostages and the Israeli detainees could take place in Switzerland. Haydar said, however, that Amal would refuse to transfer the hostages to the ICRC since if they were all in one group, they would be a target for military intervention.

There have been unconfirmed press reports that one of the hostages, Jim Palmer, who has a heart condition, would be released tonight. ABC has a charter aircraft standing by in Beirut to fly Palmer to Larnaca if he is released.

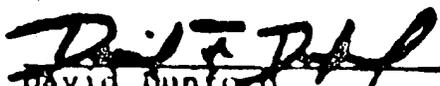
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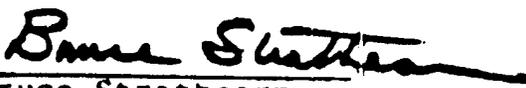
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Ambassador Bartholomew conveyed a message today from Secretary Shultz to President Gemayel expressing appreciation for his personal involvement in efforts to free the hostages and requesting continuing cooperation. In his continuing effort to mobilize pressure on Barri, Reg also spoke today to former President Camille Chamoun, Transportation Minister Walid Jumblatt, and acting Interior Minister Joseph Skaff. Chamoun later issued a strong statement calling for the unconditional release of the hostages.

In an interview published today, Israeli Defense Minister Rabin said that as long as the U.S. did not ask Israel "in the most explicit and formal manner" to release the Shia detainees to enable the TWA hostages in Lebanon to be released, he would not "lend a hand" in releasing the Shia held in Israel. In contrast, Prime Minister Peres told reporters he respected and admired the U.S. position on the hijacking, but would not comment on the issue further because "we are not responsible for the rescue of the people who were hijacked."


David Dunford
Co-Coordinator TWAHWC


Bruce Strathearn
Senior Watch Officer

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