

2 Planes in Jordan — Trade Sought for Guerrillas

By LINDA CHARLTON

Arab commandos held as hostages in the Jordanian desert yesterday at least 150 of the passengers aboard two of the four New York-bound jetliners they hijacked Sunday. As ransom, the commandos demanded the release of Arab guerrillas held prisoner in Israel, Britain, Switzerland and West Germany.

A group of 127 passengers, believed to be women and children, were released at the desert plateau where the planes landed, about 25 miles from Amman. The passengers were then taken to a hotel in the Jordanian capital.

The two planes held in Jordan were among the four hijacked by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The aircraft were:

¶A Swissair DC-8 from Zurich, with 155 passengers and crew, diverted to the landing strip in the Jordanian desert.

¶A Trans World Airlines Boeing 707 from Frankfurt, with 151 passengers and crew, also diverted to the "revolution airstrip."

¶An El Al Israel Airlines 707 from Amsterdam, whose crew and passengers thwarted a mid-air hijacking by two young Arabs, one of whom was killed. All 148 passengers, and a new crew of 10, arrived in New York early yesterday from London, where the jet had made an emergency landing after the abortive hijacking.

¶A Pan American World Airways 747 jumbo jet, hijacked first to Beirut and then to Cairo, where the \$23-million aircraft was blown up on the runway minutes after the 169 passengers and crew members were evacuated. Late yesterday a special Pan Am flight was bringing back to New York 137 of those aboard. Two remained in Cairo and 30 in Rome, where the flight made a stopover.

Spokesmen for the Popular Front in Amman said that the remaining Swissair and T.W.A.

passengers—or at least the American, British and West German men—would be held hostage for the imprisoned commandos. They set a dead-

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line of 10 P.M. Wednesday, New York time.

There were early reports from commando spokesmen in Beirut that the release of Sirhan B. Sirhan, the assassin of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, was also a condition for the release of the passengers and planes. But these reports were denied by the Popular Front in Amman last night. The Beirut spokesman acknowledged that final decisions for the guerrilla organization were made in Amman.

The commando demands forced a day of intense diplomatic negotiation in both Europe and the United States, including a meeting of representatives of Britain, Israel, Switzerland and West Germany with Secretary of State William P. Rogers in Washington.

Return of Body Sought

The release of one of two El Al hijackers, 24-year-old Leila Khaled, and the body of her male colleague, who was shot and killed during their attempt to seize the jet, were among the initial demands of the commandos.

They also demanded the release of three Arabs jailed in Switzerland for their part in an attack on an Israeli airliner at Zurich's airport last year, and of three guerrillas jailed in West Germany for an attack last February on Israelis at an airport lounge in Munich.

In return, the commandos offered to free the passengers and crew of the T.W.A. Boeing 707, valued at about \$8-million, and of the Swissair DC-8, which an airline spokesman said had a value of about \$10-million.

The commandos later added to these terms. They said that the release of Israeli passengers and passengers holding dual Israeli and American citizenship would be dependent on the release of an unspecified number of Arab guerrillas held in Israel. A commando spokesman said that about 3,000 guerrillas were interned in Israel and that the exact number whose freedom would be required would be stipulated later.

Swiss Accept Terms

The Swiss federal and cantonal (state) governments announced early yesterday that

they had agreed to the terms and would ask the International Committee of the Red Cross to negotiate the exchange.

A spokesman for the West German Interior Ministry said after an all-day meeting of Cabinet officials that the Government "had decided to take measures to counter the ultimatum of the kidnapers." Later, an authoritative source said unofficially that the West German Government planned to release the three commandos.

In London, Prime Minister Heath met with advisers to discuss the British response. No decision was announced last night, and another meeting was scheduled for this morning.

Excited by the success of three of their four hijacking attempts Sunday, officials of the Popular Front seemed to be trying to gain as much tactical

and propaganda advantage as possible yesterday. Addressing reporters in a downtown Beirut information center, one spokesman said the commandos had blown up the hijacked Pan American jumbo jet in Cairo to "symbolize our protest against the acceptance of the American peace plan by the United Arab Republic." This called for a 90-day cease-fire, which began Aug. 7, to allow indirect peace talks, which have broken down.

Jordanian a Negotiator

The release of some of the Swissair and T.W.A. passengers was made, a commando spokesman said, because "they could not endure" conditions aboard the planes. The spokesman said they were free to go as they pleased from Amman. Their release came after negotiations between the commandos and Lieut. Gen. Mashhour Haditha, the chief of staff of the Jordanian Army.

The planes, according to Michael Clayton of the British Broadcasting Corporation, are a two-hour drive from Amman, "on a hard plateau, not on an airstrip."

"Palestine commandos are standing by the aircraft with guns," he said. "The passengers are inside the aircraft under the blazing sun amid the baking expanse. In a complete ring outside the commandos are more than 50 tanks and armored cars of the Jordanian Army. Both sides are playing an appalling game of bluff. There is a threat of battle if either side makes a false move."

There was no formal comment from the Jordanian Government about the hijackings, and no move by the Jordanian Army to try to rescue the passengers or to take possession of the planes.

Army Buses Used

The released prisoners were brought to the Hotel Jordan Intercontinental in Jordanian Army buses. One passenger on the Swissair flight, Gerry Tomiatti, a beautician from Queens, said her first indication of a hijacking came when a voice said over the plane's

Arabs Holding Hostages in Jets

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The Proceedings In the U.N. Today

Sept. 8, 1970

SECURITY COUNCIL

Subcommittee on South-West Africa—3 P.M.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space—10:30 A.M. and 3 P.M.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination—10:30 A.M. and 3 P.M.

Group on Tax Reform Planning—10:30 A.M. and 3 P.M.

Committee for Program and Coordination—3 P.M.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Governing Council—10:30 A.M. and 3 P.M.

Tickets may be obtained at the public desk, main lobby, United Nations Headquarters. Tours: 9:15 A.M. to 4:45 P.M.

loudspeaker: "Good evening. You now have a new captain."

The passengers said that the planes had been undamaged during the desert landing, but that two passengers—one with a broken wrist and another with a broken leg—had been treated at Amman's hospitals. The passengers said they had spent the night strapped into the plane seats.

Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross were reportedly allowed to bring blankets and other supplies to the passengers remaining in the planes. In Geneva last night, the organization announced that, in response to an urgent request from the Swiss Government, it was sending a special mission to Jordan to try to negotiate the release of the passengers and crew members of the two planes.

The committee said it was acting on behalf of "interested governments" to attempt to work out the release of all the occupants of the two planes "without regard to nationality."

Selective Basis Possible

Spokesmen for the Popular Front indicated that passengers might be released on a selective basis, by nationality, with British, American and West German men passengers held until the young woman held in Britain and the three Arabs held in West Germany were released, as well as the Arabs in Swiss custody.

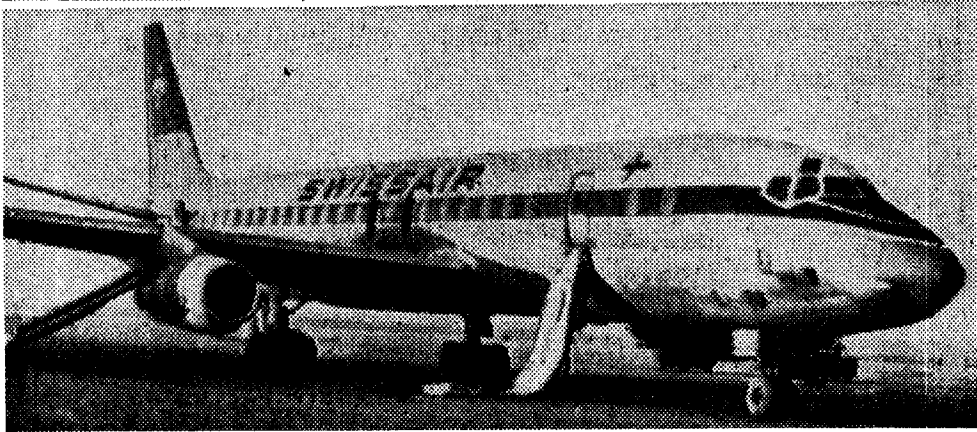
All other passengers would be released, the spokesman said, and two Indian men were among the passengers allowed to leave for Amman yesterday. As for what the Commandos planned to do with the aircraft, a spokesman at the group's office in Beirut replied: "You will get the answer—but not now."

In London yesterday, a telephoned bomb scare led to the removal of 80 passengers and crew members from the first El Al flight from New York, but no explosives were found aboard the Boeing 707. The bomb threat was received after the jet had arrived and was parked away from the terminal, ringed by police cars. All baggage was taken off and searched, and the passengers, who had already reboarded for the flight to Tel Aviv, debarked again.

A guerrilla spokesman in Beirut yesterday protested the presence of armed security guards aboard El Al flights as "a gross violation of international law."

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Arabs Holding 150 Hostages In Hijacked Jets in Desert



Associated Press

Hijacked Trans World Airlines and Swissair jets standing on a desert airstrip in Jordan.

