

4 NATIONS AGREE ON JOINT EFFORT TO FREE HOSTAGES

Work Through Red Cross as
About 200 Are Still Held
in Airliners in Desert

AIDES ARRIVE IN AMMAN

A 3-Man Mission Represents
U.S., British, West German
and Swiss Governments

By LINDA CHARLTON

As some 200 passengers from two hijacked jetliners waited out their second day as hostages in the Jordanian desert yesterday, Britain, Switzerland, West Germany and the United States agreed to coordinate efforts to obtain their release.

Three men from the International Committee of the Red Cross—named by the four Governments as a liaison group—arrived in Amman to confer with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The Arab commando group hijacked four New York-bound airliners Sunday and is holding the passengers aboard two of them and has demanded an exchange for commandos held prisoner in four countries.

The mission to Amman came amid conflicting reports of changes in the conditions set by the Popular Front for the release of the passengers.

Deadline Is Tonight

The Red Cross mission sought first to obtain an extension of the deadline of 10 o'clock, tonight (New York time) set by the commandos for their demands to be met. A spokesman for the commando group has threatened that the two planes will be blown up if the demands are not met.

Israel, to whose Government the commandos have also made specific ransom demands, was reportedly interested in the

joint diplomatic effort, particularly as a way to prevent piecemeal concessions by the individual governments. But Israel was said to be unwilling to use the Red Cross itself or to consider herself bound by any resolution worked out on behalf of the other countries.

Thus far the Popular Front has made no ransom demands on the United States. American companies operated two of the hijacked planes—the Trans World Airlines Boeing 707 that is being held in Jordan and a Pan American World Airways 747 jumbo jet that was blown up shortly after it landed at Cairo Sunday night—and a number of the detained passengers are United States citizens.

Surrounded by Soldiers

On a desert plateau about 40 miles northeast of Amman, the passengers and the planes remained under the guard of commandos, who were ringed by Jordanian Army troops. Aside from the uncertainty of the passengers' position, there was the discomfort of living aboard the grounded jets: "It's cold by night and hot by day and it smells," a T.W.A. steward

Continued on Page 18, Column 7

Federal Aviation Agency and representatives of other Government agencies, airlines and pilots groups for similar discussions was scheduled in Washington today.

Arabs See Rogers

Ambassadors of 10 Arab countries met with Secretary of State William P. Rogers in the capital today. A spokesman for the Arab diplomats, Talat al-Ghoussein, the Ambassador of Kuwait, said that the hijackings "do not serve the cause of the Palestinian people" and that their Governments would try to persuade the guerrillas to release the passengers. Mr. Rogers met at the White House with President Nixon, members of the Cabinet and the directors of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Although Secretary General Thant yesterday denounced the hijackings as "savagely and inhuman acts" and, at the United Nations, called on the international community to "take prompt and effective measures to put a stop to this return to the jungle," there was no evidence of international action beyond that of the Red Cross mission headed by Andre Rochat.

Mr. Rochat met at an unknown location in Amman yesterday with leaders of the Popular Front and with Jordanian Government officials. The extension of the deadline was reportedly high on Mr. Rochat's agenda.

The 127 passengers, mostly women and children, who were allowed to leave the planes for Amman on Monday remained at two hotels in the capital, the Jordan Intercontinental and the Philadelphia. An official of the Jordanian Foreign Ministry said that they were free to leave, but they were without travel documents or luggage, and there were no flights from Amman yesterday.

The uncertainty about the fate of the passengers still being held hostages was intensified by a flurry of conflicting statements yesterday from both the commandos and two of the Governments involved. Both Switzerland and West Germany, appeared yesterday, to have agreed to the demand for the release of seven imprisoned Arab guerrillas, but later announced their decision to abide by results of the Red Cross mission.

And the popular Front, which had tentatively accepted the West German and Swiss agreements, then hardened its position by saying that none of the hostages would be freed unless Britain agreed to release

Leila Khaled, the 24-year-old woman seized on the El Al jet. Her return of the body of Miss Khaled's male accomplice, who was killed during the hijacking, was also made a condition.

PICK UP 5TH ADD HIJACK

"If England says it will not release the commando girl, we will not release anyone," said a Popular Front leader known as Bassam at a news conference in Jordan yesterday. "Now Mr. Heath is discussing the problem." The announcement of Britain's decision to join the four-country effort was made after a morning Cabinet meeting, the second such emergency meeting in the last two days.

No Discussion on Israelis

What Bassam did not discuss were the commando's terms for the release of the Israeli passengers. The guerrilla group has said that the approximately 50 Israeli passengers would be freed only upon the release of two Algerian security officials held in Israel and of an unspecified number of guerrillas interned in Israel—whether all or some of the 3,000 the Popular Front asserts are in Israeli custody was not made clear.

The four hijackings Sunday seemed yesterday to have inspired a flurry of bomb threats that delayed many flights, including nine from Beirut. Other flights were also delayed by stricter security checks to prevent any repetition of the hijacking.

The captain of the Boeing 747 hijacked to Cairo, however, said on his arrival in New York early yesterday that before his take-off from Amsterdam he had personally searched the two men who later hijacked the plane at gunpoint. Alerted by the control tower that the two had been denied passage on an El Al jet, Capt. John Priddy said he "patted them all over and then searched their attaché cases and found nothing."

The small pistol they used was apparently concealed in the seat, while the explosives used to blow up the \$23-million jet at Cairo, identified by a Pan Am spokesman yesterday as "plastique" and dynamite, were brought on board during the plane's stopover in Beirut. In Cairo last night, the official Middle East News Agency reported that an unexploded time bomb had been found in the wreckage of the plane, along with passengers' belongings.

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

ardess said.

There were these other developments yesterday:

¶Switzerland and West Germany reserved their decisions to meet the commando demands by releasing seven Arab guerrillas held in the two countries, and instead agreed to the joint effort. Britain had made no decision on the release of a 24-year-old woman captured during Sunday's abortive hijacking of an Israeli jetliner, which landed in London.

¶Security was tightened at airports around the world as flights here and abroad were delayed by bomb threats. Among the delayed travelers Mrs. Mary Sirhan, the mother of Sirhan B. Sirhan, the assassin of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Mrs. Sirhan was en route to Jordan in response to reports, later officially denied by the Popular Front, that Sirhan's freedom was also a condition for the release of the hostages.

¶An international pilots group met in London to discuss the present crisis and long-range measures to prevent hijacking. A meeting of officials of the