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Folder Title: [TWA 847 Hijacking
June 1985-July 1985] (6 of 8)

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Collection Name POINDEXTER, JOHN: FILES

Withdrawer

CAS 7/25/2007

File Folder [TWA HIJACKING JUNE 1985-JULY 1985] (6)

FOIA

F1792

Box Number 2

BATTLE

30

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
39175	REPORT	HIJACKING CHRONOLOGY FROM WHITE HOUSE CRISIS MANGEMENT CENTER	5	6/29/1985	B1
39177	CABLE	REAGAN LETTER TO ASSAD	2	6/29/1985	B1
39179	CABLE	291343Z JUN 85	2	6/29/1985	B1
39181	CABLE	291332Z JUN 85	3	6/29/1985	B1
39182	CABLE	300344Z JUN 85	2	6/30/1985	B1
39184	CABLE	300848Z JUN 85	2	6/30/1985	B1

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39186 CABLE	300050Z JUN 85	4	6/30/1985	B1
39188 CABLE	300725Z JUN 85	1	6/30/1985	B1

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SITUATION ROOM

MESSAGE NO. 001631 CLASSIFICATION S/S No. Pages 2
FROM: KEN QUINN S/S 8448 7224
(Officer name) (Office symbol) (Extension) (Room number)
MESSAGE DESCRIPTION CABLE TO DAMASCUS RE PRESIDENTIAL LETTER TO
ASAD -- REVISED TEXT

TO: (Agency)	DELIVER TO:	Extension	Room No.
<u>NSC</u>	<u>R. PEARSON</u>		
<u>NSC</u>	<u>SECRETARIAT</u>		
<u>NSC</u>	<u>J. COVEY</u>		
	<u>Teicher</u>		
	<u>Martin</u>		

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S/S Officer: [Signature]

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	<i>Document Description</i>	<i>pages</i>		<i>tions</i>

39177 CABLE

2 6/29/1985 B1

REAGAN LETTER TO ASSAD

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National Security Council
The White House

System # _____

Package # _____

	SEQUENCE TO	HAS SEEN	DISPOSITION
Bob Pearson	_____	_____	_____
William Martin	_____	_____	_____
John Poindexter	1	<i>[Signature]</i>	_____
Paul Thompson	_____	_____	_____
Wilma Hall	_____	_____	_____
Bud McFarlane	2	<i>[Signature]</i>	I
William Martin	_____	_____	_____
NSC Secretariat	_____	_____	_____
Situation Room	3	<i>[Signature]</i>	_____

I = Information A = Action R = Retain D = Dispatch N = No further Action

cc: VP Regan Buchanan Other _____

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39179	CABLE 291343Z JUN 85	2	6/29/1985	B1

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V **2417374**

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TO: **EYES ONLY FOR ADM. HENRY POINDEXTER, NSC**
(Name) (Office Symbol) (Room No.) (Bldg.)

PART V
DATE
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39181	CABLE 291332Z JUN 85	3	6/29/1985	B1

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39182	CABLE 300344Z JUN 85	2	6/30/1985	B1

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39184 CABLE

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NSC E. O. POINDEXTER BY COURIER

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Adm. Poindexter

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 30, 1985

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

The Hijacking of TWA Flight 847

All times EDT: Beirut and Damascus and Athens are plus 7 hours; Algiers plus 5 hours:

Friday, June 14

- Boeing 727 jet departs Athens en route to Rome with 153 people on board, including 129 American passengers, 14 foreign passengers, six American crew members, two foreign crew members and two Lebanese hijackers.
- At about 3:10 a.m., flight is diverted to Beirut, where it lands just before 5:00 a.m. over the protests of Lebanese controllers. Nineteen passengers, 17 women and two children, are released and the aircraft is refueled.
- The President's national security advisers begin a series of secure telephone conference calls which will continue throughout the hijacking situation. Initial interagency meeting scheduled. Task Force organized at State Department.
- Shortly before leaving Beirut for Algiers, 1,800 miles away, at 6:30 a.m., the hijackers list their initial demands, which include release of Lebanese held in Israeli prisons.
- At 10:00 a.m., initial interagency meeting held at White House.
- U.S. requests Algeria to allow plane to land and not depart.
- Plane arrives at 10:30 a.m. and spends several hours in Algiers, where 21 additional passengers are released. The plane is again refueled. Hijackers threaten to execute hostages if aircraft is not permitted to depart.
- U.S. urges government of Lebanon not to allow aircraft to return to Beirut and urges governments of Syria and Cyprus to accept the aircraft if diverted from Beirut.
- At 3:25 p.m., aircraft departs again for Beirut, landing at 7:20 p.m. over Lebanese objections. When requested Amal intermediary does not arrive, Navy Petty Officer Second Class Robert Stethem is shot in the head and murdered. His body is thrown onto tarmac.
- About a dozen heavily armed men, apparently Hizballah and Amal militia, board the plane and take control from the original hijackers.
- Certain passengers are then singled out, and 13 are taken off the plane.

Friday, June 14 (continued)

- Plane departs Beirut at 10:40 p.m. U.S. requests Algiers to allow aircraft to land and not take off again.
- In high level diplomatic communication, U.S. urges Syria to contact Iranian/Shia leaders to influence hijackers to release prisoners to Algerian authorities.

Saturday, June 15

- TWA plane arrives in Algiers at 2:50 a.m.
- In Algiers, 61 passengers and all five flight attendants are released in stages. International Committee of the Red Cross and Algerian officials are permitted to board the aircraft to check the health of the hostages and hear the demands of the hijackers.
- U.S. requests Algeria to keep aircraft in Algiers.

Sunday, June 16

- After 25 hours, the plane leaves Algiers for Beirut, landing for third time at about 7:45 a.m.
- Secure telephone consultations among the President's national security advisers are followed by the President's early return to White House from Camp David. His scheduled afternoon events are cancelled.
- Upon arrival at the White House from Camp David, President takes questions from the press and says "... we're doing everything we can do, but I'm not going to talk about details, I don't think that would be proper." Asked if he is ruling out military response, he replies: "I'm not going to comment on anything of that kind." Is he still opposed to negotiating with terrorists? "This has always been a position of ours, yes." Asked if he has talked to any government that morning, the President replies: "We've been in contact with the governments of Lebanon and Syria and Israel, but again, I can't go any further in any details."
- At 1:02 p.m., the President enters White House Situation Room to begin a meeting with his national security advisors. In the the meeting the President reaffirms basic policy not to negotiate; focuses attention on Amal, which now has claimed responsibility for the safety of the hostages. Meeting ends at 2:15 p.m.
- Remaining 29 passengers removed from plane. Three flight crewmen remain onboard with unknown number of hijackers.
- Amal leader Berri enters discussions for first time. Berri frees hostage Robert Peel, Sr.

Monday, June 17

- In early morning hours, National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane makes 30-minute phone call to Amal leader Berri; tells him U.S. will not make concessions or ask anyone else to do so.
- Secretary Shultz makes statement at noon briefing: "We call upon those holding the hostages to treat them properly and to release them immediately ... we will not make deals with terrorists and will not encourage others to do so."

Monday, June 17 (continued)

- At 1:00 p.m. press briefing, Principal Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes confirms McFarlane/Berri phone call. Says "we have made it plain what we want Berri to do, and that is to use his influence to resolve this situation. We believe he's capable of doing that. We believe he is the key to the solution there and if he wishes to step forward and take that leadership role and use his influence, then we think it could go a long way toward resolving the problems involved -- the complex problems involved in this situation, perhaps including the releases of the Israeli detainees."

Tuesday, June 18

- Berri frees three more hostages, including Greek singer, leaving 40 hostages, all believed to be Americans.
- U.S. sends demarches to various countries and international organizations, requesting they use their good auspices to influence the situation.
- U.S. decides to issue travel advisory warning to U.S. citizens about travel through Athens Airport.
- U.S. contacts with government of Syria and others focus on the need to release hostages quickly and transfer them out of Lebanon.
- The President, in the opening statement of a regularly scheduled nationally-televised press conference, announces measures to deal with airport security and terrorism. He calls for the immediate safe release of our citizens. Hijacking issue dominates news conference questions.

Wednesday, June 19

- U.S. requests International Committee of the Red Cross to see the hostages and check their welfare.
- ABC News correspondents allowed to approach airliner to interview pilot John Testrake and crew, the first of many media interviews with the hostages arranged by their captors.
- President offers thoughts at a question-and-answer session with members of the Mooresville Chamber of Commerce in Indiana: "To the families of those here from your own state, I think we all are praying -- that's all -- I've been praying ceaselessly for them and for their safety."
- President meets with hostage families in Indianapolis.
- At the Annual Convention of the U.S. Jaycees in Indianapolis, the President says: "We're continuing to do everything that we can to bring all credible influence to bear, to get our people freed and returned home safe and sound ... but let me say, we must not yield to the terrorist demands that invite more terrorism. We cannot reward their grisly deeds. We will not cave in."
- Terrorists in San Salvador kill 15, including four unarmed off-duty U.S. Marines not in uniform and two U.S. businessmen.

Thursday, June 20

- The President meets with his national security advisers in the White House Situation Room, 10:06 a.m. until 11:15 a.m.

Thursday, June 20 (continued)

- The President issues a statement on the killing of Americans in El Salvador, saying he has appointed the Vice President to take the lead within the U.S. government and with our allies "to determine what actions, military and otherwise, we and our similarly threatened friends can take to end this increasingly violent and indiscriminate but purposeful affront to humanity. ... No nation on earth has been more generous to others in need. But we also have our limits -- and our limits have been reached. We cannot allow our people to be placed at risk simply because they are blessed in being citizens of this great Republic."

Friday, June 21

- Diplomatic efforts continue.
- President meets with hostage families in Dallas.
- In the President's address to the Lions Club International Convention in Dallas, he talks about terrorism:
"In the last few days, it has become even more clear that the criminal threat to civilization is no mere domestic problem. Wednesday night in El Salvador, four young Marines in civilian clothes, along with civilians from America and several other countries were gunned down in a sidewalk cafe. This event was preceded by the wanton bombing of an air terminal in Frankfurt, Germany; the hijacking of one of our airlines; and the seizure of a Jordanian aircraft. The killers in El Salvador are no different than those other perpetrators of inhumane acts."

Saturday, June 22

- Diplomatic efforts continue.
- The President says in his weekly radio address to the Nation: "We will carry with us all of the grief and sorrow and rising anger of a nation whose patience has been stretched to its limit."

Sunday, June 23

- Diplomatic efforts continue. By now, numerous countries, including many in the Middle East, have condemned the hijacking.

Monday, June 24

- Israel releases 31 Lebanese detainees from Atlit prison, but says their release resulted from judicial processes and is not linked to hijackers' demands.
- In Beirut, Nabih Berri announces a new demand: that U.S. Navy ships in the area leave before the hostages can be released.
- Meeting with his national security advisors in the White House Situation Room, the President decides to let diplomatic action play out; Syria the focus of diplomatic efforts. Meeting, which began at 2:07 p.m., ends at 3:38 p.m.

Tuesday, June 25

- At 9:15 a.m. press briefing, Larry Speakes discusses options the President may consider, including limiting goods and services to Beirut and limiting use of Beirut International Airport.

Tuesday, June 25 (continued)

- At 1:47 p.m., the President chairs a meeting of national security advisors in the White House Situation Room; reviews plans to extricate the hostages and to press forward with a campaign against terrorism. Meeting ends at 3:00 p.m.
- Interagency meeting refines planning directed by the President.
- In a 4:00 p.m. press briefing, Larry Speakes reports that the President met with national security advisors, receiving a top-to-bottom review of current diplomatic efforts and the full range of future options for bringing full pressure to bear on those holding U.S. citizens. Speakes says that the review covered ongoing efforts and the assessment as to whether they will bear fruit. According to Speakes, the President also reviewed a wide-ranging series of options that could be applied to the situation should the hostages be held for a longer period. Speakes closes the briefing by saying: "The President will let diplomacy run its full course before taking further steps, but he is prepared to take whatever actions are necessary."

Wednesday, June 26

- From 10:03 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., the President chairs another meeting of his national security advisors in the White House Situation Room. Defers other steps pending diplomatic developments.
- News blackout begins.
- Another hostage, Jimmy Palmer, is released because of a worsening heart condition.
- Berri reiterates his demand that U.S. warships pull away from the Lebanese coast. He adds a new demand: that neither the U.S. nor Israel retaliate once the situation is resolved. Berri announces proposal to transfer all hostages to a Western embassy in Beirut or to Damascus, where they would remain until Atlit detainees are released.

Thursday, June 27

- Interagency group develops contingency plans.
- Wide speculation in media about whether hostages will be transferred to the French or another Western embassy. Europeans won't accept conditions.
- Secretary of State Shultz's call for release of 46 U.S. hostages (including seven who were missing in Lebanon prior to the TWA hijacking) is widely reported in media as a "new U.S. demand."

Friday, June 28

- Interagency group meets again, prepares agenda for consideration by the President and his advisors.
- More hostage interviews by television networks.
- President meets with hostage families in Chicago.
- At a luncheon with community leaders of Chicago Heights, Illinois, the President says, in response to a question about one of the hostages' critical comments on the linkage of the seven kidnapped hostages to the 39 hijacking hostages: "I don't think anything that attempts to get people back who have been kidnapped by thugs and murderers and barbarians is wrong to do. And we are going to do everything that we can to get all of the Americans back that are held in that way."

-more-

Friday, June 28 (continued)

- In his remarks to the citizens of Chicago Heights, the President says: "When terrorism strikes, civilization itself is under attack. No nation is immune. There's no safety in silence or neutrality. If we permit terrorism to succeed anywhere, it will spread like a cancer, eating away at civilized societies and sowing fear and chaos everywhere. This barbarism is abhorrent. And all of those who support it, encourage it and profit from it are abhorrent. They are barbarians... We cannot accept these repeated and vicious attacks against our nation and its citizens. Terrorists, and those who support them, must, and will, be held to account."
- After returning from Chicago trip, the President chairs another meeting in White House Situation Room, from 5:11 p.m. until 6:10 p.m. -- reviews developments and determines courses of action to be taken in various contingencies.
- More television interviews with hostages.
- At about 7:00 p.m, press reports from the Middle East say hostages will be released. White House, in change from complete news blackout, says: "We have heard the reports. We are in touch with appropriate authorities in both countries (Lebanon and Syria). We have no further comment."

Saturday, June 29

- U.S. C-141 military transport aircraft with reception team departs Washington for Frankfurt. Another C-141 goes to Damascus.
- At about 4:00 a.m., hostages are reported released, en route to Syria. There are conflicting reports on their exact status and location. Syria announces "the hostages were freed today and will be transferred to Damascus where they are expected later today."
- Later reporting, confirmed around 7:00 a.m., indicates hostages still in Beirut, with Berri apparently seeking guarantees concerning U.S. non-retaliation.
- More television interviews with hostages.
- President mentions hostage situation briefly at beginning of his weekly radio address; confers with national security advisors in Oval Office; consults with other advisors by telephone.
- At about 10:00 p.m., the following statement, approved by the President as a restatement of longstanding policy regarding Lebanon, is issued by the Department of State: "The United States reaffirms its longstanding support for the preservation of Lebanon, its government, its stability and security, and for the mitigation of the suffering of its people."

Sunday, June 30

- At 3:30 a.m., Syrian officials in Damascus tell the U.S. Embassy "Syria has solved" the problem that delayed release of 39 TWA hijacking hostages.
- Press reports from Beirut and Damascus indicate preparations are being made for hostage release.
- At 6:00 a.m., arriving at the White House, National Security Advisor McFarlane tells reporters he talked to the President several times the previous evening and says "we just hope for the best."

Sunday, June 30 (continued)

- Hostages are reported by media to be en route Damascus. Other reports conflict with this.
- U.S. officials in Syria advise Washington that shortly before 1:30 p.m., hostages crossed the border into Syria from Lebanon. The exact number of hostages released, believed to be all 39, is not yet confirmed.
- Advised of the hostage release by McFarlane, the President says, "That's very welcome news. Let me know when they are wheels up."
- President addresses the Nation by television from the Oval Office: "The 39 Americans held hostage ...are free, safe, and at this moment, on their way to Frankfurt, Germany. They will be home again soon... We will not rest until justice is done. We will not rest until the world community meets its responsibility: We call upon those who helped secure the release of these TWA passengers to show even greater energy and commitment to secure the release of all others held captive in Lebanon. And, we call upon the world community to strengthen its cooperation to stamp out this ugly, vicious evil of terrorism."

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