

PRIME MINISTER

HIGHJACKING OF KUWAITI AIRCRAFT

Shortly after you approved a message to the Kuwaiti Government, we received a strong recommendation from the Embassy in Teheran not to send such a message. The reason was that, if it became public, it would direct the hijackers attention to the two Britons on the aircraft and thus increase the risk to them. Subsequently the hijackers released a number of passengers but have kept the Americans, Kuwaiti and British hostages. This has, of course, made the two Britons more exposed.

In the circumstances, it seemed best to suspend despatch of your message, for fear that it would put the two British hostages in greater danger. We continue to hold it up. I hope you will agree that this is the right course.

C.D. Powell

8 December, 1984

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CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 December 1984

233 4780

Suspected.

CD 19/12
2

PS/No 10

New Private Secretary,

Charles,

Tel attached

see 8/12

KUWAITI AIRCRAFT HI-JACKING

1. HMA Kuwait has recommended a message from the Prime Minister to Shaikh Sa'ad al Abdullah expressing sympathy and support for the Kuwaitis. A secondary purpose of the message would be to enable Mr Melhuish to call on the Crown Prince (or at least on his office), and find out how Kuwaitis' views are evolving. The text of the message has been approved by the Secretary of State and the Private Secretary has agreed I should write to you direct.
- / 2. I attach the text of a telegram to Kuwait.

Jensen

S P Day
Head of Middle East Department

CONFIDENTIAL

OUT TELEGRAM

	Classification and Caveats CONFIDENTIAL	Precedence/Deskby FLASH
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ZCZC
GRS
CLASS
CAVEATS
DESKBY
FM FCO
PRE/ADD
TEL NO

1	ZCZC
2	GRS
3	CONFIDENTIAL
4	
5	
6	FM FCO 081230Z DEC 84
7	FLASH KUWAIT
8	TELEGRAM NUMBER
9	AND TO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, ² TERHAN, BEIRUT, ISLAMABAD
10	
11	YOUR TELNOS 445 AND 446
12	KUWAITI AIRCRAFT HI-JACKING
13	1. You should personally deliver the following message from the
14	Prime Minister to The Crown Prince Shaikh Saad al Abdullah or at
15	least ensure that he himself gets it as soon as possible.
16	2. Message is as follows:
17	BEGINS.
18	I am following with admiration and deep sympathy the Kuwaiti
19	Government's handling of the hi-jacking of a Kuwaiti Airways
20	airbus to Tehran airport. The tragic murder of innocent
21	passengers by evil men is an act of wanton savagery which the
22	whole world should condemn. It is imperative that such acts
23	should never be seen to succeed and I applaud the Kuwaiti
24	Government's resolute stand in its rejection of the terrorists'
25	demands. The families of the British pilot and Chief Engineer

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/

NXXX ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword are
File number	Dept MED	Distribution INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM
Drafted by (Block capitals) S P DAY		
Telephone number 233 5877		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

Classification and Caveats

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1 <<<<

2 are very much in my mind at this critical time, and I know you
3 must be most concerned about the Kuwaitis and others still on
4 board the aircraft. We are in close contact with a number of
5 other Governments and have, of course, addressed appeals for
6 quick and effective action to the Iranians. Please let me know
7 if there is anything more you believe the British Government
8 could usefully do? We will ensure that Mr Melhuish is kept fully
9 in the picture.

10 With my best regards,

11 MARGARET THATCHER

12 ENDS.

13 ~~3. Latest reports suggested the Kuwaitis are still refusing a~~
14 ~~private deal whereby more passengers would be released if the~~
15 ~~Kuwaitis agreed to broadcast on Kuwaiti radio the text of the~~
16 ~~hi-jackers' statement. Is this still a live issue? We hope the~~
17 ~~Prime Minister's message will enable you to make your own~~
18 ~~assessment of Kuwaiti resolve. Without in any way questioning~~
19 ~~their handling of the incident so far, we should be interested to~~
20 ~~see any further evidence you can gather of Kuwaiti thinking.~~

21 4. Once the message has been delivered we should like to make it
22 known publicly that the Prime Minister has expressed sympathy
23 and support for the Kuwaitis but would not release the text.

24
25 HOWE

26 NNNN

*If you can find out anything further
on Kuwaiti thinking or on further news
we should be glad to know.*

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34
NNNN ends
telegram

BLANK

Catchword