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August 5, 1975

KUALA LUMPUR TERRORIST INCIDENT

Background Report:

After talking to one of the two reluctant prisoners in Japan, the terrorists in Kuala Lumpur agreed to the departure from Tokyo of the JAL DC-8 with five of the demanded seven prisoners aboard. The plane arrived in Kuala Lumpur this morning.

Japanese Embassy officers in Kuala Lumpur talked to the terrorists who refused to discuss the release of the hostages, the details of transport to the airport, or onward travel plans. A press report states, however, that the terrorists have demanded that the Japanese Ambassador, a Malaysian minister, and the Swedish and American diplomats accompany the terrorists and prisoners on the plane when it leaves Malaysia. In Tokyo, the Japanese parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs called in our political counselor to express the Government of Japan regrets over the incident and its determination to do all in its power to protect the lives of the hostages.

Now that the plane has landed, the next steps must be to determine how to arrange the exchange of prisoners and hostages.

\* \* \* \*

FYI: Our public comments should remain the same.

Q. What is the President's reaction to the events in Kuala Lumpur?

A. The President is being advised and is following the situation closely.

Q. It appears that the Japanese Government policy in giving in to terrorist demands is different than U. S. policy.

A. This is a question for the Malaysian and Japanese Authorities to decide. -- The Japanese Government has agreed to their present procedure. -- The USG policy on this question is well known.

Q. Did we ask the Malaysian and Japanese governments to meet the terrorist demands?

A. No.

Q. What is the U. S. attitude on the possible release of the hostages? *We deplore this and similar acts of violence.*

A. We are, of course, ~~pleased and~~ hopeful that the hostages will be released unharmed.

August 6, 1975

KUALA LUMPUR TERRORIST INCIDENT

Background Update:

Just after midnight Washington time, the five armed terrorists left the consular section, went to Kuala Lumpur airport and boarded the JAL aircraft. The terrorists took with them 15 hostages, including Consul Stebbins, two private American citizens and the Swedish charge. The five prisoners released from prison in Japan and the JAL crew are at the airport but not aboard the aircraft. Malaysian Home Minister Ghazali is at the airport in communication with the terrorists aboard the plane and is attempting to negotiate the conditions under which the plane will depart Kuala Lumpur. The principal problem is that the GOJ insists that the plane's destination must be known before it is permitted to take off. Other issues to be resolved are whether and/or which hostages will be aboard the plane when it departs, under what conditions the terrorists will be permitted to retain their weapons and ammunition when the plane takes off and the size of the plane's crew.

The GOJ has approached several governments about receiving the JAL flight and giving safe conduct to the terrorists. (Syria, Algeria, Libya and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen). The Libyans have apparently agreed to accept the terrorists.

\* \* \* \*

Our public comments should remain the same, emphasizing:

1. The President is being kept informed.
2. The Statements by Miki made yesterday.
3. The idea that extensive public comment can only jeopardize the safety of the hostages.

August 7, 1975

STATUS OF KUALA LUMPUR TERRORISTS

The exchange of hostages was completed early this morning with all Americans being released. The aircraft has departed Kuala Lumpur and is en route to Libya.

Negotiations last night were concerned with getting confirmation that Libya would allow the JAL aircraft to land at Benghazi and obtaining the necessary overflight clearances. After a series of contradictory responses from various Libyan officials, the Libyan deputy interior minister finally told the Japanese that Libya would allow the landing "for humanitarian reasons."

The State Department is responding to queries on Kuala Lumpur terrorist incident on an if-asked basis as follows:

"We are pleased and relieved that all of the hostages in Kuala Lumpur have been released unharmed. And we hope that the Japanese and Malaysians accompanying the terrorists will complete their mission safely."

We are advised to respond similarly avoiding any statements deploring terrorism or violence until the Japanese and Malaysians have been released unharmed.