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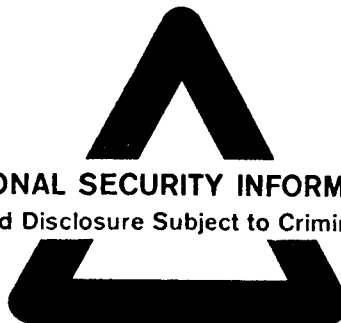
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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 05866-85  
26 November 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Captain Jim Stark  
National Security Council

FROM: Charles E. Allen  
National Intelligence Officer for Counterterrorism  
and Narcotics

SUBJECT: Responsibility for Hijacking Egypt Air 648

Attached is our preliminary analysis of who was responsible for the hijacking which was prepared with the assistance of CIA's Directorate of Intelligence and the Directorate of Operations. The judgments reached are based on our assessment of the limited available evidence and are therefore tentative.

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Charles E. Allen

Attachment [REDACTED] (b)(3)

cc: Ambassador Oakley

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## Who Hijacked Egypt Air Flight 648?

### Summary

The true identity of the hijackers remains unclear. They identified themselves as "Egyptian Revolutionaries." We do not yet know in fact if they were members of the so-called "Egyptian Revolution" or if they represented other groups or state sponsors who could have been motivated to carry out the hijacking. Radical Egyptian dissidents, Libya, and various Palestinian groups all had reason to conduct such an act. Based on the available evidence, we believe it is likely that more than one was involved. We know that Mubarak is predisposed to blame Libya and the Abu Nidal group for the hijacking and he has accused them publicly. Although the evidence does not conclusively point to Libya,

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the subsequent distribution of "Egyptian Revolution" leaflets in Kuwait by Libyan Bureau there suggests at least some Libyan involvement. At a minimum, Qadhafi moved quickly to exploit the hijacking in an effort to destabilize Mubarak's regime.

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DiscussionThe Egyptian Revolution

[redacted] (b)(1)  
[redacted] A self-described nationalist movement violently opposed to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, the group has claimed credit for at least two attacks against Israeli officials in Cairo. (On 4 June 1984 an attache was shot and wounded. On 20 August 1985 an Israeli diplomat was killed.) [redacted] (b)(1)

[redacted] (b)(3)  
The Egyptian Foreign Minister claims no knowledge of the so-called "Egyptian Revolution".

--We believe it is probably a cover name for radicals who could have hijacked the aircraft to embarrass the Mubarak regime and to thwart any improvement in Egyptian-Israeli relations. Moreover, the timing could have been keyed to take advantage of Mubarak's political unsteadiness in the wake of the Achille Lauro affair and to discourage a resumption of talks with Israel--scheduled for early December--over the disputed Taba enclave.

Evidence of Libyan Involvement

[redacted] (b)(1)  
[redacted] (b)(3)  
[redacted] the hijackers wanted to be flown to Tunisia or Tripoli. However, once on the ground, the hijackers at one point requested to be flown to Sigonella. The plane apparently was forced to land at Malta because of damage to the aircraft from the shootout between the hijackers and Egyptian sky marshalls. (b)(1)

--Early in the hijacking the Libyan Ambassador arrived at the tower and he asked to speak with the hijackers who requested that the plane must first be refueled. He talked with the Maltese Foreign Minister and met at one point with the Maltese Cabinet.

[redacted] (b)(1)  
--The hijackers requested communication with the Algerian and Libyan Ambassadors. Two hours later the tower informed the hijackers that the Libyan Ambassador contacted other Libyan officials who reportedly condemned the hijacking and said the plane would not be allowed to land in Tripoli.

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### Possible Libyan Motives

--The timing of the hijacking may have been designed to exact revenge on Mubarak for several successful Egyptian "sting operations" against Libyan hit squads in Egypt this year, and for Egypt's growing support for Libyan dissidents.

--Qadhafi is also committed to increasing pressure on Egypt to abrogate the Camp David accords and adopt a more militant posture toward Israel.

--Last week Mubarak also publicly embarrassed Qadhafi by mentioning Qadhafi's attempts to meet with him secretly in an apparent reconciliation gesture.

--Individual assassinations of Libyan dissidents have not garnered Qadhafi the international spotlight he craves

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If he can present the hijacking as an event that demonstrates anti-Mubarak sentiment--without taking public credit for it--it would be consistent with his tactic of using surrogates to accomplish a mission he himself will not risk for fear of US retaliation.

--The hijacking would also help satisfy Qadhafi's anti-US sentiments. He may have felt he can strike out at Mubarak at this time, capitalizing on pro-Palestinian and anti-American sentiments. Qadhafi has stepped up his anti-American rhetoric in the past weeks, and may be frustrated by his abortive plans to show up in Geneva last week to lead a "peace march". He has always found it easier to punish US friends rather than direct terrorist operations against US personnel.

### Evidence of Palestinian Involvement

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--In an interview in September with a Kuwaiti correspondent in Libya, a man claiming to be Sabri al-Banna (Abu Nidal) stated that his group supported the Organization of Egypt's Revolution and implied that the support included material assistance.

--On Monday, the Arab Revolutionary Brigades, a nom de guerre for Abu Nidal, claimed joint responsibility with the "Egyptian Revolution for the hijacking."

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Palestinian Motives

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--The Abu Nidal group may have wanted to assist Egyptian dissidents trying to dismantle the Camp David accords.

--Palestinians loyal to Front for the Liberation of Palestine chief Abu Abbas could have conducted the hijacking to exact retribution for the interception of the Achille Lauro hijackers and to find some means to obtain the release of the hijackers from prison in Italy. Three hours after the plane landed in Malta, the hijackers demanded that it be flown to Sigonella.

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**SUBJECT: Responsibility for Hijacking Egypt Air 648**

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