

SECRET

RELEASED IN FULL

PAGE 01 STATE 301867  
ORIGIN SS-05

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 /005 R

DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:MFENN  
APPROVED BY:S/S-O:MFENN  
S/S-O:MFENN

-----126236 240648Z /17

O 210527Z NOV 79  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 301867

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA'S 6,7&8)

FOLLOWING REPEAT JIDDA 7993 SENT ACTION STATE DHAHRAN RIYADH  
BAGHDAD MANAMA DAMASCUS KUWAIT SANA NOV 20.

QUOTE S E C R E T JIDDA 7993

DEPT ALSO PASS TO A/SY/CC/TAGS

E O 12065: GDS 11/20/85 (WEST, JOHN C.) OR-M  
TAGS: PINS, ASEC, AFSP, SA  
SUBJ: (S) OCCUPATION OF GRND MOSQUE, MECCA

REFS: A) JIDDA 7971, B) JIDDA 7981

- 1. S-ENTIRE TEXT
- 2. SUMMARY. OCCUPATION OF THE GRAND MOSQUE IN MECCA CONTINUES BY AS YET UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS. SAG HAS SEALED OFF MECCA. NORTHERN BORDERS CLOSED TO NON-SAUDIS. SAG APPEARS PREPARING TO EXPEL INTRUDERS FROM THE MOSQUE WITH FORCE IF NECESSARY. EMBASSY HAS TIGHTENED ITS SECURITY. JIDDA REMAINS NORMAL. END SUMMARY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 301867

- 3. EMBASSY IS CONTINUING TO RECEIVED INFORMATION -- SOME OF IT CONFLICTING -- CONCERNING OCCUPATION OF THE GRAND MOSQUE IN MECCA. IT IS STILL NOT KNOWN FOR CERTAIN WHO IS OCCUPYING

UNCLASSIFIED

MOSQUE, ALTHOUGH IT APPEARS THEY ARE VERY WELL ARMED. WE HAVE RECEIVED REPORTS INDICATING OCCUPIERS COULD BE IRANIAN OR YEMENI, ALTHOUGH SOME REPORTS FROM SAUDI SOURCES STATE OCCUPIERS ARE SAUDI TRIBESMEN SUPPORTING SOME AS YET UNIDENTIFIED GROUP OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS.

4. LATEST VERSION OF EVENTS RELATED TO EMBASSY LOCAL NATIONAL BY FRIEND WHO STATES HE WAS IN MOSQUE AT TIME OF OCCUPATION. ACCRDIING TO THIS INFORMANT WHO SAYS HE MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM MOSQUE, NUMBER OF ARMED WORSHIPPERS CLOSED DOORS TO MOSQUE FOLLOWING EARLY MORNING PRAYERS (0518 LOCAL) AND ANNOUNED TO CROWD IN ARABIC THAT "MECCA, UMEDINA AND JIDDA WERE NOW IN THEIR HANDS ". FOR A PERIOD OF ABOUT TWOD HOURS, CIRCUMNAMBULATION OF THE KA'ABA WAS PREVENTED BUT LATER ALLOWED TO RESUME. AT ONE POINT IN THE EARLY MORNING, S SHOOT-OUT WITH SAUDI SECURITY PERSONNEL OCCURRED, AND INFORMANT INDICATED THAT 5-7 POLICEMEN WERE KILLED. IN ADDTION, A FEW PILGRIMS IN MOSQUE WERE WOUNDED IN CROSS-FIRE.

5. IN ANOTHER REPORT, TWO AMERICANS PILOTING SAUDI CIVIL DEFENSE HELICOPTER OVER MECCA TOLD POLOFF THIS AFTERNOON THAT THEY WERE AROUSED AT THEIR JIDDA BASE AT 0630 HOURS WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO PROEED IMMEDIATELY TO AIRFIELD NEAR MECCA WHERE THEY EMBARKED TWO SAUDI GID OFFICERS. AT THEIR INSTRUCTION, HELICOPTER BEGAN MAKING LOW PASSES OVER MECCA IN VICINITY OF GRAND MOSQUE BEGINNING AT ABOUT 0900 HOURS. ON THEIR FIRST SWING OVER MOSQUE, EVERYTHING SEEMED NORMAL. IN APPARENT CONFIRMATION OF REPORT IN PARA 4, APPROX 1000 WERE SEEN CIRCUMNABULATING HOLY KA'ABA AND THERE WAS MODERATE TRAFFIC CIRCULATING IN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 301867

STREETS AROUND MOSQUE ITSELF. SAUDI SECURITY FORCES WERE IN EVIDENCE IN LARGE NUMBERS, HOWEVER, AND HAD TAKEN UP POSITIONS ON STREETS AND ROOFTOPS AROUND MOSQUE.

5. AT APPROX 1145 LOCAL, PILOTS STATED THEY MADE ANOTHER LOW PASS OVER MOSQUE ON INSTRUCTION OF SAUDI OFFICERS ON BOARD. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN COURTYARD OF MOSQUE HAD DWINDLED TO ONLY ONE OR TWO HUNDRED, ALTHOUGH THERE APPEARED TO BE LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE IN SHADOWS TO ONE SIDE OF COURTYARD. AS HELI- COPTER FLEW TO NE OF THE MOSQUE, THREE VERY DISTINCT RIFLE SHOTS WERE HEARD. PILOTS SAID THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE TARGET OF SHOTS AND IMMEDIATELY INCREASED ALTITUDE. PILOTS STATE THAT SITUATION ON MOSQUE FOLLOWING THESE SHOTS CHANGED PERCEPTIBLY. TRAFFIC IN AREA WAS IMMEDIATELY CLEARED, AND ROADBLOCKS WERE THROWN UP IN STREETS IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDING

UNCLASSIFIED

## UNCLASSIFIED

MOSQUE. FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING THEIR SEVERAL PASSES OVER MOSQUE, COURTYARD APPEARED DEVOID OF HUMANITY. PILOTS SAID THAT SAUDI COMMANDER OF THEIR HELICOPTER WING, A CAPTAIN ALWANI, TOLD THEM MOSQUE WAS OCCUPIED BY "IRANIANS", AND THAT SECURITY FORCES INTENDED CLEAR THEM OUT. SAUDI OFFICER STATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN ARMED INCIDENT AT MOSQUE FOLLOWING EARLY MORNING PRAYER AND THAT OCCUPATION OF MOSQUE HAD FOLLOWED. OCCUPATION WAS CONTINUING AND THIS WAS REASON HELICOPTER REQUIRED IN MECCA.

7. RELIABLE SOURCES REPORTED IN LATE AFTERNOON THAT INTERMITTANT GUNFIRE IS BEING EXCHANGED WITH THE GROUP OCCUPYING MOSQUE. THESE SOURCES ESTIMATED THAT APPROX 300 PERSONS ARE OCCUPYING MOSQUE WITH 100 OTHERS ALSO IN BUILDING. OCCUPIERS APPARENTLY DEMANDED AT ONE POINT THIS MORNING THAT RADIO MECCA BE TURNED OVER TO THEM. THE SAUDI FRONTIER WITH JORDAN, IRAQ AND KUWAIT HAS NOW BEEN CLOSED TO ALL NON-SAUDIS. HOWEVER, SAUDI AIRLINES HAS NOT INTERRUPTED ITS FLIGHT SCHEDULE, ALTHOUGH RESERVE PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT HAVE BEEN PLACED ON STAND-BY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 301867

8. SPECIAL SECURITY FORCES UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MINISTRY OF INTERIOR RATHER THAN NATIONAL GUARDSMEN HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN ORDERED TO RESTORE ORDER, BY FORCE IF NECESSARY. CONSIDERABLE MILITARY AIR TRAFFIC (C-130 TRANSPORTS) REPORTED AT BOTH JIDDA AND RIYADH AND SECURITY HAS BEEN TIGHTENED AT ALL MILITARY FACILITIES. IN ADDITION, MODA HOSPITALS IN JIDDA AND RIYADH ARE ON FULL ALERT. US HELICOPTER PILOTS CONFIRM THAT BOTH DEFENSE MINISTER PRINCE SULTAN AND INTERIOR MINISTER PRINCE NAYIF HAVE BEEN ON THE SCENE IN MECCA SINCE THE EARLY MORNING HOURS. GENERAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR PRINCE TURKI AL-FAYSAL IS RETURNING FROM TUNIS.

9. SAUDI NATIONAL GUARD UNIT WHICH SECURES EMBASSY COMPOUND PERIMETER HAS BEEN AUGMENTED. EMBASSY HAS ALSO TAKEN OTHER MEASURES TO HEIGHTEN SECURITY INTERNALLY AND HAS CAUTIONED ALL EMPLOYEES AGAINST UNNECESSARY MOVEMENT. ATMOSPHERE IN JIDDA REMAINS NORMAL. WEST UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

UNCLASSIFIED