

SECRET

RELEASED IN FULL

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 FBO-05 MCT-02 HA-05 SR-04 AID-05
CCO-00 PM-06 H-01 INR-10 L-03 ACDA-12 SP-02
OC-06 OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 CA-01 A-02 OCS-06
OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 SES-01 SSN-02
SPH-01 SSM-03 FS-01 PER-01 MMO-01 SYE-00 ANAE-00
/116 W

-----127211 240936Z /21

O 240830Z NOV 79
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8053
USLO RIYADH IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T JIDDA 8094

E.O. 21065: GDS 11/24/85 (PLACKE JAMES A)
TAGS: PINS ASEC SA
SUBJ : (S) OCCUPATION OF THE GRAND MOSQUE, MECCA:
SITUATION AS OF 0600Z NOV 24

4REF: JIDDA 8088 DTG 231404Z NOV 79

1. S - ENTIRE TEXT
2. SITUATION IN MECCA HAS APPARENTLY NOT CHANGED

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CDRAMATICALLY SINCE REFTTEL. WELL-ARMED ISLAMIC DISSIDENTS
CONTINUE TO HOLD ESTIMATED 20 PERCENT OF THE GRAND MOSQUE,
LARGELY ON THE TOP FLOOR AND SOME OF THE MINARETS. OVER PAST
TWELVE HOURS, SAUDI NATIONAL GUARDSMEN, WHO HAVE BEEN PRINCIPALLY

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INVOLVED IN RESECURING THE MOSQUE, HAVE CONSOLIDATED THEIR HOLD OVER OTHER AREAS OF THE MOSQUE. POCKETS OF RESISTANCE IN THE BASEMENT HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN ELIMINATED WITH UNKNOWN NUMBER OF DISSIDENTS KILLED OR CAPTURED AND WITH THE HOSTAGES BEING HELD THERE RELEASED. CASULTIES IN GENERAL ON THE GOVERNMENT SIDE ARE REPORTED AS MODERATE AND ARE LARGELY BEING TREATED AT THE NATIONAL GUARD HOSPITAL IN MECCA. SAUDI AUTHORITIES TELL US THAT TUSFAR RELATIVELY FEW OF THE DISSIDENTS HAVE BEEN TAKEN ALIVE.

3 MECCA REMAINS LARGELY SEALED OFF. TRAVELLORS FROM TAIF WHICH IS LOCATED SOME 60 MILES BEYOND MECCA REPORT THAT ALL VEHICLES DEPARTING THAT CITY ARE BEING CAREFULLY SEARCHED BY SECURITY AUTHORITIES. SAUDI OFFICER TOLD EMBOFF NOV 23 THAT SAG IS SOMEWHAT CONCERNED THAT SOME OF THE DISSIDENTS HAVE MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM MECCA, DESPITE THE TIGHT CORDON THROWN AROUND THE GRAND MOSQUE.

4. OFFICIAL SAUDI COMMENT ON THE SITUATION IN MECCA CONTINUES TO EMPHASIZE THAT SITUATION IS STABLE AND THAT SECURITY FORCES NOW IN TOTAL CONTROL FO THE MOSQUE AND IN THE PROCESS OF ARRESTING THE REMNANTS OF THE GROUP WHICH OCCUPIED IT. SAUDI OFFICIAL COMMENT IS BEING SUPPLEMENTED BY LOCAL PRESS ARTICLES (INCLUDING AN EDITORIAL IN A SPECIAL EDITION OF LOCAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER NOV 23) WHICH EMPHASIZE THAT WHILE SAG IS IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION, A LEADING SAUDI CONCERN AT THE MOMENT IS TO PREVENT ANY DAMAGE TO THE MOSQUE AND TO MINIMIZE CASUALTIES.

5. EVENTS AT THE GRAND MOSQUE IN MECCA WERE ALSO THE SUBJECT OF THE FRIDAY PRAYERS AT MOSQUES THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM NOV 23.

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BROADCAST BY LOUDSPEAKERS FROM THE MINARETS (A NOT UNCOMMON PRACTICE), THE PRAYER LEADERS CONDEMNED WHAT THEY CALLED A HEINOUS ACT BY A GROUP OF RENEGADES AGAINST ISLAM AND DEMANDED THAT THE MOST SEVERE PUNISHMENT BE IMPOSED ON THE GROUP.

6. RUMORS ABOUND AS TO FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE OCCUPATION OF THE MOSQUE, WITH MOST OF THE FINGERS AT PRESENT BEING POINTED AT SOUTH YEMEN. SAG CONTINUES TO DENY ANY FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT. IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, SAUDI INFORMATION MINISTER DR MUHAMMAD YAMANI CHARACTERIZED AS BOTH BASELESS AND A COMPLETE CALUMNY A TASS REPORT THAT US COMMANDOS HAVE BEEN SENT TO DHAHRAN. IN A NEWS ITEM CARRIED BY RADIO RIYADH NOV 23 (SEE FBIS LONDON LD 231826), YAMANI SAID THAT SUCH REPORTS WERE INTENDED TO QUOTE CREATE CONFUSION UNQUOTE. WEST

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