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RELEASED IN FULL

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ACTION MCT-04

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-05 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
NSCE-00 ARA-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 SY-05 L-02 AMAD-01  
TRSE-00 PM-05 PA-02 INRE-00 CA-02 A-02 USSS-00  
SYE-00 FBIE-00 FAIM-01 SLPD-01 /030 W

-----225636 072356Z /38

O 072350Z NOV 85 ZFF4  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3525  
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN IMMEDIATE  
DEA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
CONTADORA COLLECTIVE  
USIA WASHDC 6577

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 13811

TERREP

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PTER, CO  
SUBJECT: SITREP, AS OF 1700 HOURS LOCAL TIME,  
- TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE PALACE OF JUSTICE

REFS: A. BOGOTA 13778  
- B. DEPIRRO/PETERS TELCON

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

2. WITH THE END OF FIGHTING AT THE PALACE OF JUSTICE (REF A), THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS IN BOGOTA APPEARS TO BE OVER. FALLOUT ON THE UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, THE PRESTIGE OF PRESIDENT BETANCUR, AND THE FUTURE OF THE GOC PEACE PROCESS WITH THE GUERRILLAS ARE LIKELY TO BE EXTENSIVE, AND WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY. MEANWHILE, WE ANTICIPATE THAT (BARRING A RESUMPTION OF MAJOR FIGHTING SOMEWHERE  
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IN THE CITY), THIS WILL BE OUR LAST NIACT SITREP.

3. SUCH A RESUMPTION OF FIGHTING CANNOT BY ANY MEANS BE RULED OUT. A RUNNING GUN BATTLE, SIZE

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UNSPECIFIED, IS GOING ON IN SOUTHERN BOGOTA BETWEEN M-19 GUERRILLAS AND POLICE. ANOTHER, VERY DISTURBING REPORT TO THE EMBASSY FROM GOC POLICE STATES THAT A WHITE SEDAN WAS STOLEN THIS AFTERNOON. THE OWNER WAS BEATEN BUT RELEASED; HE REPORTEDLY TOLD POLICE THAT HE OVERHEARD HIS ATTACKERS DISCUSSING USE OF THE CAR FOR A BOMB ATTACK. EMBASSY IS TAKING ALL APPROPRIATE MEASURES.

4. WRAPPING UP THE DETAILS FROM THE PALACE OF JUSTICE, AS BEST WE HAVE THEM:

-- IT HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BY A HIGH LEVEL MILITARY SOURCE THAT SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT, ALFONSO REYES ECHANDIA, AND MAGISTRATE MARIA INES RAMOS WERE KILLED BY M-19 LEADER ANDRES ALMARALES LAST NIGHT. ALMARALES, THE APPARENT LEADER OF THE OPERATION, IS REPORTEDLY DEAD. THE SURVIVING GUERRILLAS HAVE ALL BEEN TAKEN PRISONER.

-- THE RESCUED HOSTAGES ARE BEING EVACUATED BY AMBULANCES, MANY OF THEM WOUNDED. THE GOC HAS ISSUED A CALL FOR AMBULANCES TO GO TO THE PLAZA DE BOLIVAR AND FOR VOLUNTEERS TO GIVE BLOOD FOR THE WOUNDED.

-- LENGTHY FIGHTING IN THE PALACE WAS REPORTEDLY DUE TO FIERCE M-19 RESISTANCE. ALSO, THE FIRES INSIDE THE BUILDING AT VARIOUS MOMENTS OBLIGED GOVERNMENT FORCES TO PULL BACK. APPARENTLY, M-19 USED THESE

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WITHDRAWALS TO RECOVER GROUND PREVIOUSLY LOST. AFTER BEING PENNED WITHIN A SMALL AREA OF THE FOURTH AND THIRD FLOORS AT ONE POINT, GUERRILLAS WERE LATER ENCOUNTERED IN ISOLATED HIDEOUTS VIRTUALLY THROUGH THE LARGE BUILDING. FINAL CASUALTY FIGURES NOT YET AVAILABLE.

5. EMBASSY MATTERS:

-- THREAT CALL AT BNC BARRANQUILLA: THIS MORNING THE BNC AT BARRANQUILLA RECEIVED A TELEPHONE BOMB THREAT FROM A CALLER WHO SAID "ALL OF YOU WILL EXPLODE TOO." A SEARCH WAS CONDUCTED WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS AND APPROPRIATE LOCAL OFFICIALS WERE ADVISED.

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-- FOLLOWING UP ON EMBASSY RESTRICTIONS REPORTED EARLIER: THE MARINE CORPS BALL SCHEDULED NOVEMBER 9 HAS BEEN POSTPONED.

6. LOCAL FLAVOR: AMIDST THE CRISIS OVER THE PALACE OF JUSTICE ATTACK, THE PREVIOUSLY-ANNOUNCED COCKTAIL IN HONOR OF THE SOVIET NATIONAL DAY TOOK PLACE AS SCHEDULED THE AFTERNOON OF NOVEMBER 7 AT THE USSR EMBASSY. EMBASSY BOGOTA WAS REPRESENTED, IN LINE WITH DEPARTMENTAL GUIDANCE, BY ONE FIRST SECRETARY. EMBOFF NOTICED INCREASED SECURITY AROUND THE EMBASSY, AND ASKED IF THIS REFLECTED THE CURRENT INCIDENT. SOVIET OFFICER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY WAS PROBABLY NOT A PRIME TARGET, BUT ADDED THAT WITH SO MANY DIFFERENT "LINEAS POLITICAS" IN THIS COUNTRY, EVEN THE SOVIETS CAN NOT RULE OUT THE CHANCE THAT SOME GROUP WILL MAKE AN ATTEMPT. GILLESPIE

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