SECRET

PAGE 01

TORRENS

PLEASE PASS TO DEA HQS WASHDC ALONG WITH REFTELS

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, CO
SUBJECT: TERRORIST ATTACK ON COLOMBIAN PALACE OF
- JUSTICE

REF: A. BOGOTA 13647
   B. BOGOTA 13648

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT FIVE GOC-SWAT-TEAMS
   (TWO POLICE, TWO ARMY, ONE ARMY FORCE) HAVE BEEN DIS-
   PATCHED TO PALACE OF JUSTICE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ORDERS
   ARE TO USE ALL NECESSARY FORCE TO RETAKE BUILDING.

3. WE HAVE TAKEN ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS HERE. ALL
   EMPLOYEES (AMERICAN AND COLOMBIAN) HAVE BEEN ADVISED NOT
   TO LEAVE EMBASSY FOR THE TIME BEING. ALL
   DEPENDENTS ARE BEING ADVISED TO REMAIN AT HOME.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02

PARTICIPANTS IN DEA CONFERENCE AT BOGOTA PLAZA HAVE
BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REMAIN IN HOTEL; MOBILE PATROLS
IN AREA HAVE BEEN REINFORCED.

GILLESPIE
CONFIDENTIAL

CORRECTED COPY (PARAS 2 & 3)

TERREP

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, CO
SUBJECT: TERRORIST ATTACK ON COLOMBIAN PALACE OF JUSTICE

REF: (A) BOGOTA 13647
     (B) BOGOTA 13648
     (C) BOGOTA 13650

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. AS OF 15:30 LOCAL TIME, THE INCIDENT AT THE PALACE OF JUSTICE IS CONTINUING. OFFICIAL CONFIRMATIONS ON ANY POINT ARE FEW; THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES HAVE MUCH ON THEIR MINDS. FROM WHAT WE HAVE HEARD, PLUS MONITORING RADIOS, IT APPEARS THAT GOVERNMENT FORCES ARE GAINING THE UPPERS HAND. THE FIRE AT THE PALACE IS NOT OUT, CONFIDENTIAL

BUT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE GETTING WORSE. REPORTEDLY, FIRES IN THE ARCHIVES AND COURT LIBRARY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SMOKE. GOVERNMENT FORCES ARE ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE PALACE, AND ARE ESCORTING SOME OF THE NON-COMBATANTS TO SAFETY. AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE IS STILL HEARD OCCASIONALLY. SURVIVING M-19 PERSONNEL SEEM TO BE MAINLY ON THE FOURTH FLOOR. AMBULANCES ARE
EVACUATING WOUNDED.

3. GOC ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN SHUTTLING REINFORCEMENTS TO THE AREA BY GROUND VEHICLES AND HELICOPTER. AN EYEWITNESS TOLD EMBASSY THAT NINE HELICOPTERS LOADED WITH TROOPS LANDED ON THE ROOF OF THE JUSTICE MINISTRY, FOUR BLOCKS FROM THE PALACE.

4. UNOFFICIAL RADIO REPORTS STATE THAT ONE POLICE OFFICER AND THREE OTHER CIVILIANS ARE DEAD, AND TWO GUERRILLAS. A SEPARATE RADIO REPORT STATES THAT AS MANY AS 15-18 M-19 GUERRILLAS MAY HAVE BEEN KILLED.

5. THE MAIN IMPOUNDERABLE AT THIS POINT IS WHETHER THE M-19 PERSONNEL HAVE TAKEN HOSTAGES. GOC PERSONNEL INSIDE THE BUILDING HAVE CONTINUED TALKING TO BOGOTA RADIO STATIONS: THEY SAY NO ONE IS HOSTAGE TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE. BUT AN UNCONFIRMED RADIO REPORT EARLIER CLAIMED THAT FOUR PERSONS FROM THE COUNCIL OF STATE (RANK UNSTATED) HAD BEEN TAKEN HOSTAGE. A RADIO REPORT STATED THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLOMBIAN SENATE HAD SPOKEN TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COURT, WHO WAS AN M-19 HOSTAGE AND WAS ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE WITH HIS CAPTORS.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 13671 0622302


7. FURTHER UPDATES: A 1600 NEWS BULLETIN REPORTS THAT ARMED FORCES HAVE NOW SECURED BASEMENT, PLUS FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS OF PALACE, THUS CONFINING GUERRILLAS TO FOURTH FLOOR.

8. EMBASSY HAS JUST RECEIVED NOTICE FROM GOC THAT THEY ARE FACING A METAL DOOR ON THE FOURTH FLOOR.

9. FYI: WE ARE REPEATING REFCON 1 TO ALL ADDRESSEES.

GILLESPIE

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED