

TELEGRAM

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FROM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA CLASSIFICATION ~~SECRET~~

E.O. ~~12958~~ 12356: DECL: ~~XXXXXX~~ 9/23/90 CN: 8229 7
TAGS: PINS, PINT, HO
SUBJECT: SAN PEDRO HOSTAGE INCIDENT: CALLS ON MINISTER FLORES AND
GENERAL ALVAREZ
ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO: USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
COMJSOC FT BRAEG NC IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE
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1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT
2. Morning September 23, I took crisis manager Gary Roberts, psychiatrist Doctor Blum and JSOC Commander Paschall to first brief Minister of ^{Presidency} ~~Government~~ Flores and then to General Alvarez on their views of hostage situation.
3. Following key points emerged. First of all we believe terrorists appear to be behaving from weakness. The negotiation is shifting from emphasis on political demands to terrorists' concern for their personal ~~xxx~~ safety.
4. Doctor Blum believed this aspect was especially

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CLEARANCES:

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CLASSIFICATION

OPTIONAL FORM 153
(Formerly FS-413)
January 1975
Dept. of State

50153-101

Dept of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
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susceptible of psychological exploitation. He recommended to General Alvarez that government begin to take line with terrorists that they have committed a crime but because no one has yet been killed the government will be lenient in their treatment when they surrender. In other words, government should continue to maintain a hard line while making its positions appear to be concessions.

5. On question of role of ~~XX~~ Bishop of San Pedro and Papal Nuncio, Blum questioned their reliability as intermediaries on at least one specific point. Government position has been, and remains, that terrorists' safety will be guaranteed; but government has not rpt not offered safe conduct. On at least one occasion, however, Blum heard Papal Nuncio to say that he had told terrorists on his own initiative that he thought he could secure safe conduct. We brought this point to attention of both Flores and Alvarez and ascertained that safety, not safe conduct, remains their position although Flores said that GOE cannot absolutely rule out safe conduct if circumstances so dictate.

6. On intelligence aspects, Gary Roberts briefed Flores and Alvarez (in somewhat greater detail) on various steps being taken to improve understanding of what is happening inside Chamber building. Principal point made

was that the longer time that goes by, the better picture we will have of exactly what is happening inside.

7. Turning to question of a possible assault on the building, principal advice offered by both Paschall and Blum was that there appeared to be no reason for an assault at this time. The terrorists are releasing hostages and the psychological and intelligence situations appear to be moving in government's direction. In any event one would hope that the number of hostages inside the building could be reduced as far as absolutely possible before initiating an assault. Also, it was Colonel Paschall's judgment that GOH assault forces needed some additional training in use of equipment just received, although their plan has improved substantially over what it was several days ago.

8. On question of care for released hostages, we pointed out the risk of psychological identification by former hostages with their captors. Both Flores and Alvarez seemed to accept and understand this point and took aboard our suggestion that President Suazo consider visiting those hostages who have been released. An added consideration is that once present group of released hostages has had time and opportunity to acquire balanced perspective of situation, they themselves will become helpful with any subsequent group which might be released.

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9. Doctor Blum and the rest of us were careful to qualify our assessment of situation but pointing out the distinct possibility that terrorists have radio communication with outside point of contact from whom they are receiving instructions. Roberts explained measures being taken in effort to verify whether this in fact the case and locate outside contact point.

10. One final point which was discussed was possibility that, if terrorists are enjoying active and continued outside support, then some other incident may soon take place. We speculated about possibility that another group of terrorists might hijack an aircraft in order to acquire additional leverage and means of safe conduct. We urged Alvarez to consider additional security precautions at Honduran airports.

11. COMMENT: I believe GOH is handling this situation as well as can be expected. The important points are that no one has been killed; more than forty hostages are now free; and GOH leadership appears to be taking matters more or less in stride.

12; Contributing U.S. elements have been working extremely well together, their assistance is proving to be extremely useful and their advice is most definitely being taken into account by the GOH. We are grateful for the support which has been provided by all concerned. Their profile has been low and does not thus far appear to have caused any problems.

Classification

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OPTIONAL FORM 153A
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January 1975
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