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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SES-01 SSN-02 SY-05 SYE-00 MCT-02
HA-05 CIAE-00 PM-06 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KWUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 8217

E.O. 12065: GDS 11/28/85 (BOVIS H. EUGENE) OR-P
TAGS: PINS, ASEC SA
SUBJECT: (U) SAUDI MILITARY SPOKESMAN ON MOSQUE RECAPTURE

REF: JIDDA 8180

1. (U) ON EVENING NOVEMBER 27, LOCAL TIME, MILITARY
SPOKESMAN FOR SAUDI GOVERNMENT GAVE OFFICIAL VERSION
OF OPERATION TO RETAKE GRAND MOSQUE OF MECCA ON
TELEVISION. FOLLOWING ARE PORTIONS OF REPORT PUBLISHED
NOVEMBER 28 IN ENGLISH-LAUGUAGE ARAB NEWS THAT EMBASSY
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FEELS WILL BE OF INTEREST TO DEPARTMENT. SPOKESMAN
WAS SPECIAL FORCES MAJOR MUHAMMAD ZUWAYD AL-NIFAI.

2. (U) BEGIN TEXT: BY TUESDAY NIGHT THE MAJORITY OF

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 22 JUN 2006 200505106

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(THE RENEGADES) HAD SURRENDERED, THOUGH HEAVY CASUALTIES WERE SUFFERED ON BOTH SIDES - AND AMONG INNOCENT CITIZENS -- THROUGHOUT THE SIEGE.

3. (U) AT ONE POINT THE RENEGADES WERE IN CONTROL OF A LARGE PORTION OF THE CITY, INCLUDING HILLS OVERLOOKING THE MOSQUE COMPLEX. SNIPERS AMONG THE RENEGADES KILLED INNOCENT WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

4. (U) FOUR SEPARATE UNITS OF SAUDI TROOPS -- FROM THE ARMY, THE NATIONAL GUARD, THE SPECIAL FORCES, AND THE SECURITY FORCE -- WERE INVOLVED IN THE SUCCESSFUL DRIVE TO RETAKE THE MOSQUE. ORDERS TO THE TROOPS CAME THROUGH TWO COMMANDS, A POLITICAL COMMAND AND A MILITARY

COMMAND, BOTH LOCATED IN MECCA AND BOTH IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH KING KHALED.

5. (U) ON SATURDAY, SAUDI TROOPS BEGAN USING TEAR GAS AND ASPHIXIATING GAS AGAINST THE RENEGADES AND GRADUALLY FORCED THEM TO DO BATTLE IN AREAS THE ARMED FORCES HAD PICKED, RATHER THAN THE AREAS THEY HAD CHOSEN, THE RENEGADES USED MATTRESSES AND BEDCOVERS TO TRY AND KEEP THE GAS OUT, BUT THEIR RESISTANCE GRADUALLY WEAKENED.

6. (U) MONDAY AND TUESDAY WERE DEVOTED TO ATTEMPTING TO CLEAR THEM OUT, WITH MORE GAS, SHELLING, SNIPING, AND APPEALS TO SURRENDER.

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7. (U) FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SURRENDERED, THE SECURITY FORCES NOW KNOW THE LOCATIONS AND NUMBERS OF THOSE REMAINING INSIDE THE BASEMENT. END TEXT.

8. (C) COMMENT: THIS IS BY FAR THE MOST DETAILED PUBLIC STATEMENT ON MOSQUE OCCUPATION. EMBASSY NOTES WITH INTEREST PARAS 2 AND 3. WE HAVE SEEN REPORTS THAT GUNMEN HAD OCCUPIED HILLS OVERLOOKING MOSQUE, BUT NOT THAT THEY CONTROLLED PARTS OF CITY. APR 3 IS FIRST CONFIRMATION THAT TROOPS OTHER THAN NATIONAL GUARD WERE INVOLVED IN RECAPTURE EFFORT.
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