

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OPERATIONS CENTER

Serving U.S. Diplomacy

1961-2011



Diplomatic crises at the beginning of the administration of President John F. Kennedy in 1961, such as Berlin, Congo, and the Bay of Pigs, severely tested the traditional Department system of coordinating communications and urgent policy making.

Theodore Achilles, career Foreign Service Officer and former Counselor of the Department, was charged by Secretary of State Rusk with establishing the Operations Center. Stephen Smith, President Kennedy's brother-in-law, was seconded from the White House and appointed Special Assistant to Achilles to help design the center.



Duty Officer John P. Hoover is one of several who man the duty room on a 24-hour basis. White phone is a direct line to the White House. (Department of State Photo)



Theodore Achilles
(Department of
State Photo)

The new Operations Center was to be manned 24 hours a day, with communications links to the Pentagon, CIA, White House, and senior Department officials. It would receive urgent communications from overseas posts and monitor news service tickers.

Secretary Rusk announced the establishment of the Operations Center in late April 1961, and it began functioning on April 30.

The establishment of the Operations Center spurred other agencies to create their own comparable installations. The White House later set up its own Situation Room, and various existing Pentagon facilities were reorganized as the National Military Command Center in October 1962.

This exhibit conveys how Ops has been the center of diplomacy during some of the seminal events of U.S. foreign policy over the last half century.

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS • OCTOBER 15, 1962 • RUSK

The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis was an important test of the Operations Center in its early years. In the period between October 15, when aerial reconnaissance showed Soviet medium range ballistic missiles in Cuba, and October 22, when President Kennedy announced a naval quarantine to halt missile shipments to Cuba, utmost secrecy needed to be maintained while U.S. Embassies overseas informed and consulted with allies. Over the weekend of October 20-21, the Department transmitted messages, letters, and documents, often in code and Top Secret, to 441 recipients, straining the Department's communication facilities to the limit.

"The Department and the Cuban Crisis",
Department of State Magazine, December 1962.



U.S. Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson confronts Soviet delegate Valerian Zorin with reconnaissance photos of Soviet offensive missiles during an emergency UNSC session. (AP/WWWP)

"There was a big map and I had to plot Soviet ships as they were approaching Cuba. We got our data from our Navy about where the ships were. You could see them kind of coming, and then they [the Soviets] stopped... We didn't have World War III."

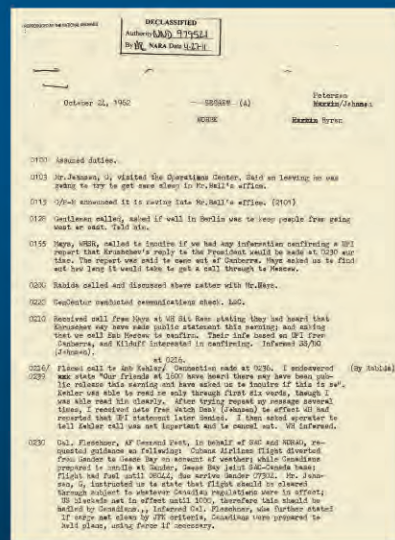
But it was a very tense time and the real crisis didn't last that long. That was October 1962. We went on to other crises and things in the Ops Center after that. It was always kind of "one damn thing after another" as they say about history.

Dean sent for me about 12:30.

"Set up a crisis center right now," he said. "Figure out how to get rid of Castro and then we'll see what else there is for the Center to do. You'll get any help you want in the Department. Get going."

I said: "Yes, sir," and got going.

The account, taken from Ambassador Theodore Achilles' private memoirs, is provided courtesy of his daughter Anne O'Brien.



ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY • NOVEMBER 23, 1963 • RUSK

The Operations Center connected Under Secretary Ball to Secretary Rusk, then on a plane to Tokyo, to communicate the news of the fatal shooting of President Kennedy. The plane turned around in mid-air, and the Secretary arrived at the Department later that night.

Ops sent FLASH telegram messages regarding the assassination and the assumption of office by President Johnson to all diplomatic and consular posts. The Watch Team on duty was augmented, and regional and functional bureau representatives gathered in the large adjoining conference room.

Five large charts, one for each regional bureau, lining the conference room walls tracked dignitary information such as country, delegation names, flight details, and which Department officer would meet the delegations. Extra telephone equipment and call directors were brought in so that up to seven conversations could be conducted simultaneously.

Adapted from Department of State News Letter,
No. 32, Dec. 1963



A corner of the Operations Center on a day following the President's assassination.
(Department of State Photo)

DECLASSIFIED	
AUTHORITY: E.O. 13526	
BY: NARA CON-1122	
CLASSIFICATION	
WATCH TEAM LOG SHEET	
OPERATIONS CENTER	
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT	
DATE: Friday	WATCH OFFICERS: [redacted]
DATE: November 23, 1963	[redacted]
1342	Upon receipt of news item re attempt on the PRESIDENT's life, S/S-O began alerting all Assistant Secretaries. A call was placed to the SECRETARY's airplane, the ACTING SECRETARY spoke to the SECRETARY. Notified Pierre Salinger that the SECRETARY will return to Honolulu, with ETA .
1440	Requested BC/T to cut cable traffic outgoing to absolute minimum.
1446	Notified Gov. Stevenson's aide that the ACTING SECRETARY has sent a circular cable announcing the PRESIDENT's death.
1450	[redacted]
1455	[redacted]
1500	[redacted]
1505	[redacted]
1510	[redacted]
1515	[redacted]
1520	[redacted]
1525	[redacted]
1530	[redacted]
1535	[redacted]
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1545	[redacted]
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1950	[redacted]
1955	[redacted]
1960	[redacted]
1965	[redacted]
1970	[redacted]
1975	[redacted]
1980	[redacted]
1985	[redacted]
1990	[redacted]
1995	[redacted]
2000	[redacted]

1972

SECRETARY ROGERS MODERNIZES OPS



Secretary Rogers inspects the latest Operations Center technology.
(Department of State Photo)

In 1971, Secretary of State William Rogers, determined to maintain a preeminent foreign affairs communication center, directed the reconstruction and further modernization of the Executive Secretariat and the Operations Center. The new facility was completed in November 1972.

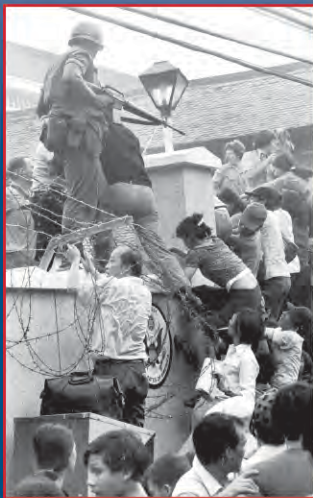
A wide array of the newest telephone, telegraph, and computer equipment permitted the watch officers to reach major

diplomatic posts abroad at a moment's notice, and linked the Operations Center to the worldwide military communications network.

The 1972 modernization included the construction of a specially designed Task Force area adjacent to the Operations Center. Several crisis task forces could now work simultaneously in an area equipped with conference rooms, telephones, and audio-visual displays.

Source: Department of State, Office of the Historian, Historical Research Memorandum No. 1481, March 1986

FALL OF SAIGON • APRIL 30, 1975 • KISSINGER



External wall of U.S. Embassy Saigon.
(AP/WWP)

"They set up a task force in the task force area which is adjacent to the Ops Center, so you could bring in people who were just concentrating on that. Again, there would be an open line [to the Embassy in Saigon]. I can remember Larry Eagleburger being in the Ops Center when the evacuation started. Then, I went off shift. But, I was there when the order went out to bring in the choppers. It was just time, it was so late. People were sad, there were people who were crying."

Anne O. Cary, Ops Center 1974-1975
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Diplomatic Studies and Training
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PAGE 01 STATE 074136

66

ORIGIN EA-10

INFO OCT-01 180-00 89-15 85
DRAFTED BY EA: WHELEBE/SB
APPROVED BY SA - MR. HABIB
----- 07407

O 021936Z APR 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 074136

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, VS, CB

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF INDOCHINA TASK FORCE

DEPARTMENT IS ESTABLISHING INDOCHINA TASK FORCE UNDER DIRECTION OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB. TASK FORCE SHOULD BE OPERATIONAL BY C.O.B. APRIL 2. TASK FORCE WILL INCLUDE APPROPRIATE OTHER AGENCY REPRESENTATION. IT WILL BE LOCATED IN OPERATIONS CENTER AND MANNED 24 HOURS. TELEPHONE NUMBER IS 632-9381. THERE IS ALSO A SECURE PHONE (KY-3): X5228. KISSINGER

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SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF INDOCHINA TASK FORCE

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0006

The Watch tubed to OC/T a FLASH cable concerning the evacuation of Saigon for transmission to Bangkok, Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, and Hong Kong. OC/T was alerted.

0018

Mr. L. Eagleburger, S, entered the Watch, called the Secretary at the White House, and subsequently departed for the Task Force area.

0025

The Watch alerted Mr. J. Bremer, S, concerning events in Saigon.

Comment	Time	Item
	2400	Assumed the Watch. The Indochina Task Force continues in operation under the direction of Mr. A. Wenzel, EA/W. The Inter-Agency Task Force continues under Amb. D. Brown.
	0006	The Watch tubed to OC/T a FLASH cable concerning the evacuation of Saigon for transmission to Bangkok, Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, and Hong Kong.
		Entered the Watch, called the Secretary, and subsequently departed for the Task Force area.
		Mr. L. Eagleburger, S, entered the Watch, called the Secretary at the White House, and subsequently departed for the Task Force area.
		The Watch alerted Mr. J. Bremer, S, concerning events in Saigon.
	0635	Mr. F. Ortiz, S/S, called and was briefed by the DDO.

IRAN HOSTAGE CRISIS • NOVEMBER 4, 1979 • VANCE



Iranian demonstrators gathered at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. (AP/WWP)

"I happened to be on the Watch some months later [after the takeover] when the Canadian Foreign Minister ... called for Secretary Vance ... and ... said cryptically, 'It's about the six.' I connected the call to the Secretary's office ... About 24 hours later the story broke that the six [American hostages] had been exfiltrated safely from their hiding place with the Canadians."

Mildred Patterson, Watch Officer, 1979-1980

"[Overnight] Shift One, an era before 24-hour television: Embassy Tehran calls. Crowds are much larger this time and they are starting to climb over the walls. Over the next two hours, alerts will start with the Country Director and rapidly accelerate through layers to the Secretary. An open line is maintained... [We hear on the phone] an order to secure the firearms in the face of such overwhelming numbers of people... Updates come in continuously... finally, a calm voice from Embassy Tehran says: 'We have to hang up now.' Then silence."

David T. Johnson, Watch Officer, 1979-1981

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 11341 040813Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ADS-08 CIAB-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SBO-00 ICAR-00 INRE-00 PRO-00 SVR-10 RCT-02 RA-00
SR-04 AID-03 CCO-10 PW-06 H-01 TMB-10 2-03
ACSA-12 NSC-05 SF-02 OC-08 OPR-02 FA-01 OSR-00
CA-11 A-02 OCS-06 OMB-01 SS-13 SY-05 ANAS-00
/111 R

Z 040813Z NOV 79 22F-4
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 4590

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 11341

DEPT PASS TO OPS CENTER
E.O. 12065; GDS 11/04/89 (BROGHE)
TAGS: PHS

SUBJECT: DEMONSTRATORS INSIDE EMBASSY COMPOUND

1. OUR RSO IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH APPARENT LEADER OF FORCE ATTACKING COMPOUND. THESE FORCE DEMAND AT PRESENT SEEMS TO BE TO OCCUPY EMBASSY AS SYMBOLIC GESTURE. LEADER OCCUPYING FORCE INDICATED THAT THEY HAVE NO DESIRE TO CAUSE ANY HARM TO ANY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. DEMONSTRATORS CARRYING SIGN SAYING - WE ARE NOT HERE TO HARM YOU...WE WANT TO STAGE SIT IN. LAINGEN

UNCLASSIFIED

PHS

As
L. Vance

Dept. of State, Adj. Secy, Management, Control, Dir.
() Release () Denial () Derog / or Exclusion
Date Exemption

1. OUR RSO IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH APPARENT LEADER OF FORCE ATTACKING COMPOUND. THEIR PRIME DEMAND AT PRESENT SEEMS TO BE TO OCCUPY EMBASSY AS SYMBOLIC GESTURE. LEADER OCCUPYING FORCE INDICATED THAT THEY HAVE NO DESIRE TO CAUSE ANY HARM TO ANY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. DEMONSTRATORS CARRYING SIGN SAYING - WE ARE NOT HERE TO HARM YOU...WE WANT TO STAGE SIT IN. LAINGEN

SUBJECT: OCCUPATION OF EMBASSY TEHRAN

1. EMBASSY TEHRAN WAS TAKEN BY DEMONSTRATORS THIS MORNING AT 11:00 A.M. TODAY TEHRAN TIME.
2. ALL EMBASSY PERSONNEL ARE APPARENTLY PRISONERS OF A LARGE MOB.
3. URGENT MAKE CONTACT WITH IRANIAN PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER WHO WE UNDERSTAND ARE EITHER IN ALGIERS OR HEADED FOR ALGIERS
4. PLEASE CALL OPERATIONS CENTER ASAP TO REPORT. VANCE

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PAGE 01 STATE 288434
ORIGIN NEA-11

INFO OCT-00 ADS-08 SS-15 SY-05 NSCE-00 INR-10
INRE-00 CIAB-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OPR-02 A-02 OC-06
CCO-00 SBO-00 ANAS-00 /051 R

DRAFTED BY S/S-O
APPROVED BY S/S-O
-----115168 041032Z /11
Z 041017Z NOV 79 22F-4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS FLASH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 288434

E.O. 12065/N/A
TAGS: APOD

SUBJECT: OCCUPATION OF EMBASSY TEHRAN

1. EMBASSY TEHRAN WAS TAKEN BY DEMONSTRATORS THIS MORNING AT 11:00 A.M. TODAY TEHRAN TIME.
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4. PLEASE CALL OPERATIONS CENTER ASAP TO REPORT. VANCE

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1980

SECRETARY MUSKIE EXPANDS OPS CRISIS RESPONSIBILITIES

In 1980, Secretary of State Muskie directed the Operations Center to assume responsibilities for coordinating the planning and implementation of plans of the Department and the Executive branch for the protection and evacuation of U.S. citizens abroad in emergencies.



An early crisis response team. (Department of State Photo/Dennis Brack, Black Star)



A crisis Task Force at work. (Department of State Photo)



The 2004 Asian Tsunami Task Force. (Department of State Photo)

The Operations Center also received lead responsibility to insure continuity of essential operations of the Department at emergency operating centers in the event of a national emergency.

As part of the crisis coordination function, the Operations Center supported 442 Task Forces, Monitoring Groups, and Working Groups in the period between 1982 and 2010 in response to natural disasters, terrorism, civil unrest, or sudden shifts in the policy environment.

COLUMBIA SPACE SHUTTLE FLIGHT • APRIL 12, 1981 • HAIG



The Columbia shuttle lifts off from Kennedy Space Center. (AP/WWP)

The Operations Center's involvement with the NASA space program dates back to the Mercury launches in 1962. In the event of an unplanned emergency landing in foreign territory, the Department of State would work to obtain assistance from that country to return the astronaut and the capsule.

4. THE DEPARTMENT WILL MAINTAIN A SPECIAL SPACE SHUTTLE WORKING GROUP IN THE OPERATIONS CENTER DURING CRITICAL PHASES OF THE MISSION. THE WORKING GROUP WILL BE ON STANDBY THROUGHOUT OTHER PORTIONS OF THE FLIGHT.

DECONTROL

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PAGE 01 STATE 089326 TOSEC 020219
ORIGIN CES-09
INFO OCT-00 ADD-00 SS-15 NEA-06 SSO-00 CCC-00 /030 R
DRAFTED BY CES/SCI:GKOVACH:BJ
APPROVED BY CES/HMARSBALL
T:50
C A CES/S:ANTURBENTINE
S/S:JREELLY
S/S-00:JSTAYLOR
-----200679 090026Z /67
O P 090010Z APR 81 TPTK
FM SECRETARY WASHDC
TO USSEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE
INFO UNDERSECRARY MURKAY PRIORITY
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 089326 TOSEC 020219
MUSCAT FOR UNDERSECRETARY ROCKLEY
E.O. 14176; R/A
TAGS: TPTK
SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: SPACE SHUTTLE MISSION STS-1
FOR SECRETARY FROM ORG - H.MARSBALL, ACTING
1. THE COUNTDOWN FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST MANNED ORBITAL FLIGHT OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE ORBITER COLUMBIA CONTINUES ON SCHEDULE AT THE NASA KENNEDY SPACE CENTER. LIFT-OFF IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 10, 1981 AT 1150 GMT. THE SCHEDULED MISSION DURATION IS FIFTY-FOUR AND ONE-HALF HOURS WITH LANDING AT THE ROGERS DRY LAKE BED AT EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA.
2. WE HAVE PROVIDED INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS AND INTEREST SECTIONS ON PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY LANDING IN FOREIGN TERRITORY. WE HAVE FURTHER PROVIDED INSTRUCTIONS TO SELECTED POSTS TO HANDLE COUNTRIES IN WHICH WE DO NOT MAINTAIN A DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION OR INTEREST SECTION.
3. WE HAVE AGREEMENTS IN PLACE WITH THE GOVERNMENTS OF JAPAN AND SPAIN FOR THE USE OF KAGURA AIR BASE, OKINAWA AND ROTA NAVAL STATION, SPAIN AS CONTINGENCY LANDING SITES OUTSIDE OF THE US FOR THE SHUTTLE.
4. THE DEPARTMENT WILL MAINTAIN A SPECIAL SPACE SHUTTLE WORKING GROUP IN THE OPERATIONS CENTER DURING CRITICAL PHASES OF THE MISSION. THE WORKING GROUP WILL BE ON STANDBY THROUGHOUT OTHER PORTIONS OF THE FLIGHT.

POPE JOHN PAUL II SHOT • MAY 13, 1981 • HAIG



Pope John Paul II after being shot in St. Peter's Square. (AP/WWP)

POPE JOHN PAUL II WAS SHOT AT 1517 GMT IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE AND IS NOW BEING OPERATED ON. EMBASSY IS REPORTING DEVELOPMENTS OVER OPEN LINE TO OPS CENTER. PAGANELLI

UNCLASSIFIED 1 of 1

UNCLASSIFIED

FADE 01 ROME 11628 131708Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ADM-00 INR-10 SE-15 CIAB-00 DOOR-00 BUCK-00
USAS-00 SISA-00 ST-05 PA-02 OCT-02 CIO-00 TRNS-00
AMAS-00 USSS-00 ICAB-06 SYE-00 SP-02 PLS-00 SPS-02
/651 W -----330626 131711Z /44

Z 131708Z MAY 81 EFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECRETARY WASHDC FLASH 3058
UNCLAS ROME 11428

DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT AS DESIRED
E.O. 12065, N/A
TAGS: OVIP IT
SUBJECT: ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

POPE JOHN PAUL II WAS SHOT AT 1517 GMT IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE AND IS NOW BEING OPERATED ON. EMBASSY IS REPORTING DEVELOPMENTS OVER OPEN LINE TO OPS CENTER. PAGANELLI

UNCLASSIFIED 1 of 1

In the era before 24-hour news broadcasts and widely available e-mail, a cable from post was often the way of alerting the Department of State to breaking news. The Operations Center is the first to receive highly-classified and tightly restricted cables (NODIS, EXDIS, CRITIC). It also alerts Department offices to incoming NIACT (Night Action) and FLASH cables. FLASH precedence, as shown here, designates an extremely urgent telegram containing vital information on foreign relations and emergencies which require instant action by the addressee, regardless of time of day or night. Recipients must acknowledge receipt to the originator.

See also 5 FAH-1 H-222.

HIJACKING OF TWA FLIGHT 847 • JUNE 14, 1985 • SCHULTZ

Although airline hijacking reached its peak in the late 1960s, there were 11 cases in the 1980s for which the Operations Center formed Working Groups. The TWA 847 Working Group lasted from June 14 to July 3, 1985.

TWA Flight 847 was hijacked June 14 after taking off from Athens en route to Rome. The hijacked plane flew initially to Beirut, then to Algiers, and back to Beirut. On board were 143 people, including 82 American citizens. The plane would fly again to Algiers and return to Beirut June 15. U.S. Navy diver Robert Stethem was shot and killed by the hijackers on June 15. All other passengers were released by June 30.



A hijacker looks out from TWA 847 at the Beirut International Airport. (AP/WWP)

"It was a Friday afternoon during Ramadan. The phone rang and the Operations Center from the State Department said, 'A TWA airplane has been hijacked from Athens. It is reportedly headed towards Algiers. It will be there momentarily. You are to get in touch with the President of Algeria and ask that they let the plane land.'"

Michael H. Newlin, U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, 1981-1985
The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
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CRASH OF PAN AM 103 • DECEMBER 21, 1988 • SCHULTZ

The bombing of Pan Am 103 led to several changes in how the U.S. Government informs U.S. citizens and nationals of potential threats to their health or safety abroad. The Department of State applies a “no double standard” policy to important security threat information: such information, if shared by the Department with the *official* U.S. community, generally should be made available to the *non-official* U.S. community if the underlying threat applies to both official and non-official Americans.

See also 7 FAM 051 and 7 FAM 052



(AP/WWP Photo)

1. A 747 JUMBO JET, PAN AM 103, HAS CRASHED NEAR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS TOWN OF LOCKERBIE, 15 MILES NORTH OF THE ENGLISH BORDER. THE PLANE TOOK OFF FROM HEATHROW AIRPORT IN LONDON AT 1800 GMT BOUND FOR JFK. AT 1908 THE GROUND CONTROLLERS AT PRESTWICK AIRPORT IN SCOTLAND LOST CONTACT WITH THE PLANE AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER THE CRASH OCCURED IN LOCKERBIE.

UNCLASSIFIED
PAGE 01 EDINBUR 00339 212214Z
ACTION EUR-010
INFO LOG-00 ADM-00 SMO-00 AMM-01 OCS-06 CA-02 /009 W
.....134471 212226Z /30
212502 DEC 88 ZFF-4
PANORAMA EDINBURGH
SECRETARY MANSUC WIACT IMMEDIATE 4596
NO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
CLASS EDINBURGH 0339
PARTNEY FOR EUR/SE AND THE OPS CENTER
O. 12354; N/A
INFO: CMC, UK
SUBJECT: PAN AM CRASH IN SCOTLAND
1. A 747 JUMBO JET, PAN AM 103, HAS CRASHED NEAR THE SCOTTISH BORDERS TOWN OF LOCKERBIE, 15 MILES NORTH OF THE ENGLISH BORDER. THE PLANE TOOK OFF FROM HEATHROW AIRPORT IN LONDON AT 1800 GMT BOUND FOR JFK. AT 1908 THE GROUND CONTROLLERS AT PRESTWICK AIRPORT IN SCOTLAND LOST CONTACT WITH THE PLANE AND A FEW MOMENTS LATER THE CRASH OCCURED IN LOCKERBIE. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, THE AIRCRAFT HIT SEVERAL CARS AND HOUSES IN LOCKERBIE AS WELL AS A SERVICE STATION. CASUALTY FIGURES ARE NOT AVAILABLE, BUT THERE WILL BE CASUALTIES ON THE GROUND AS WELL AS TO THE 250 PASSENGERS. THE FLIGHT ORIGINATED IN FRANKFURT AND NO PASSENGER LISTS ARE YET AVAILABLE.
2. ALL ROADS TO THE AREA ARE CLOSED. EMERGENCY RESCUE HELICOPTER TEAMS ARE BEING FLOWN IN AT THIS TIME. NO CAUSE HAS BEEN GIVEN FOR THE CRASH AND APPARENTLY NO OTHER AIRCRAFT WAS INVOLVED, BUT THERE WAS HEAVY AIR TURBULENCE OVER SOUTHERN SCOTLAND AT THE TIME OF THE CRASH.
3. THE CORDEX IS FULLY STAFFED AND IN CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT AND RESCUE OFFICIALS, BUT WE ARE NOT ABLE TO REACH THE AFFECTED AREA, WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY 80 MILES SOUTH OF EDINBURGH. CONSUL GENERAL JONES AND VICE CONSUL LEIGHTON CAN BE REACHED ON THE REGULAR ENCLIBROAD NUMBER (011) 536-4215 OR ON AN UNLISTED NUMBER (011) 557 2991. THE LONDON EMERGENCY NUMBER GIVEN OVER BBC TELEVISION IS (01) 897-4333.
J. JONES
UNCLASSIFIED
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IRAQI INVASION OF KUWAIT • AUGUST 1, 1990 • BAKER

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait led to one of the longest running task forces in Department of State history. The Kuwait Task Force issued 778 situation reports while active from August 1, 1990, to July 19, 1991.

2034

Ambassador W. Howell, Embassy Kuwait, called the Watch to advise that Iraqi forces crossed the Kuwait border at 0330 hrs local and are moving east to Uniqasr. Iraqi forces are holding Kuwait border posts. There is limited resistance from Kuwait, and Kuwait City is quiet. The Watch alerted as follows: the Acting Secretary; Mr. M. Malinowski, P; Mr. S. Wesche, P; Mr. R. Boucher, PA; Assistant Secretary J. Mullens, H; Ms. G. Rogers, CA; Assistant Secretary J. Kelly, NEA; Mr. D. Mack, NEA; Assistant Secretary R. Clarke, PM; Mr. R. Pearson, SS; ExecSec Roy; Mr. M. Foulon, C; Mr. W. Duffy, M; LTC W. Chambers, MR; Ms. L. McKune, SS with the Secretary's party in Irkutsk; and Ms. K. Kenney, SSO.



U.S. Army trucks head north on a road in eastern Saudi Arabia leading to Kuwait. (AP/WWP)

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SECRET~~

DATE: August 1, 1990
SHIFT: 11Z

WATCH LOG CONTINUATION SHEET

COMMENT	TIME	ICM
1853		The Watch patched the Secretary in Irkutsk to Secretary Mosbacher, Commerce, in Jakarta.
1931		The Watch patched Ambassador Busby to the Acting Secretary.
1933		Ambassador Busby called the Watch to be patched to Deputy Secretary Eagleburger. On being informed that the Deputy Secretary is on leave, Ambassador Busby cancelled the request.
2032		The Watch patched Assistant Secretary K. Clarke, FA, to the Acting Secretary.
2034		Ambassador W. Howell, Embassy Kuwait, called the Watch to advise that Iraqi forces crossed the Kuwait border at 0330 hrs local and are moving east to Uniqasr. Iraqi forces are holding Kuwait border posts. There is limited resistance from Kuwait, and Kuwait City is quiet. The Watch alerted as follows: the Acting Secretary; Mr. M. Malinowski, P; Mr. S. Wesche, P; Mr. R. Boucher, PA; Assistant Secretary J. Mullens, H; Ms. G. Rogers, CA; Assistant Secretary J. Kelly, NEA; Mr. D. Mack, NEA; Assistant Secretary R. Clarke, PM; Mr. R. Pearson, SS; ExecSec Roy; Mr. M. Foulon, C; Mr. W. Duffy, M; LTC W. Chambers, MR; Ms. L. McKune, SS with the Secretary's party in Irkutsk; and Ms. K. Kenney, SSO.
2036		The Watch patched Assistant Secretary Kelly to the Acting Secretary.
2040		The SMO called Mr. D. Mack, NEA, to establish an Iraq/Kuwait Informal Working Group.

~~SECRET~~ Page 2 of 4
DECL: OADR
UNCLASSIFIED

• (U) Ambassador Gnehm and his team recaptured the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait and raised the flag. (CNN)

UNCLASSIFIED 2/2 312/441
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

RECEIPTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center
ATTENTION: KUWAIT TASK FORCE
SITUATION REPORT NO. 343
SITUATION AS OF 0605 EST, 09/01/91

TO: DIRECTOR
FROM: AMEMBASSY KUWAIT (09/01/91)
SUBJECT: KUWAIT TASK FORCE SITUATION REPORT NO. 343

• (U) Ambassador Gnehm and his team recaptured the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait and raised the flag. (CNN)

• (C) The five USMC Personnel Members are scheduled to meet at 0930 hrs morning to continue work on the next USMC report on the date. The Secretary General has named UN Undersecretary Abilakali to lead a humanitarian needs assessment group of Iraq and Kuwait. Timing for the trip is not yet set. (USDR 875, 874)

• (U) Soviet FM Shevardnadze said February 28 that the USSR wanted to exclude further military action in the

opponent government is likely to be set up in Hama shortly, and Saudi King Fahd and Egyptian President Mubarak have reportedly said they would support an attempt to replace Saddam Hussein. (UPI)

• (C) The legislation for Japan's USD 9 billion Gulf contribution has passed the lower chamber and is expected to pass the upper house March 6. US officials said that most of the money will go to the U.S., Hawaii, the Philippines and Japan will seek compensation from Iraq for suffering and damage caused to Japanese residents in Iraq and Kuwait. (Tokyo 338, 395)

• (C) Australia is getting ready to enter the Iraqi grain market as soon as sanctions are lifted, even though Iraq still owes it US\$ 475 million from previous sales. (Canberra 1348)

John Ford
Coordinator

Robert M. Mansbach
Senior Watch Officer

Part of this document is classified (U) Secret (S) Confidential (C) Declassify on: []

UNCLASSIFIED

COUP AGAINST GORBACHEV • AUGUST 19, 1991 • BAKER



People climb aboard a personnel carrier to block its advance near Red Square. (AP/WWP)

S/S 810037/694

UNCLASSIFIED PEARSON
ITOM LA MANTIA
-SECRET-

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center
Watch Log

Copies to:
S/S-TEM (1) Files (4)
S/S Head Watch
S/S PIRAP
S/S (1) Log Book
S/S-O (2) OMS

Date: August 18, 1991
Shift: III

Senior Watch Officer: Mr. Marshall
Watch Officer: Mr. Bellaw
Emergency Action Officer: Mr. Roberto
Operations Assistant: Mr. Hockley
Communicator: Mr. Lochner
ISR Representative: Mr. Roberto
NSRC Representative: Mr. Bellwig

Comment	Time	Item
	1600	Assumed the Watch.
	1708	The Watch patched Under Secretary Kimmitt, in Canada, to Mr. D. Welch, P.
	1822	The Watch attempted to patch Mr. Welch, P. to Under Secretary Kimmitt, who was unavailable.
	1841	Acting Secretary Eagleburger called to inform the Watch of his whereabouts.
	2330	Upon receipt of a Reuter's news ticker, critic message #31 from FBIS, and a NOIWON called by NSA, reporting a replacement of Gorbachev as President, the Watch alerted the Acting Secretary; D. Welch, P; W. Montgomery, D; D. Satterfield, S/S; K. Kenney, S/S-O; M. Beck, PA; M. Phillips, INR/CIS; W. Moffit, EUR; and J. Garrison, EUR/SOV.
	2400	Relinquished the Watch. Dictaphone cleared. REARCS: 48. LDM sent/received: 1/1. MDDIS sequence checked and reconciled.

Approved by: *[Signature]*
Senior Watch Officer

-SECRET-
DECL: OADR
Page 1 of 1

UNCLASSIFIED

Dep. of State, A/SECDEF, Management & Control, Dir.
[Offense] [Insure] [Ident] [Security]
Date: 1/1/91 Exemption

2330

Upon receipt of a Reuter's news ticker, critic message 4-91 from FBIS, and a NOIWON called by NSA, reporting a replacement of Gorbachev as President, the Watch alerted the Acting Secretary; D. Welch, P; W. Montgomery, D; D. Satterfield, S/S; K. Kenney, S/S-O; M. Beck, PA; M. Phillips, INR/CIS; W. Moffit, EUR; and J. Garrison, EUR/SOV.

MAASTRICHT TREATY • DECEMBER 13, 1992 • EAGLEBURGER



The Secretary of State usually travels in a U.S. Air Force C-32 aircraft.
(AP/WWP)

Communications with the Secretary: The Operations Center serves as a link between the Department and the Secretary's party when the Secretary is traveling. The Operations Center connects calls for the Secretary and his or her traveling staff with counterparts in the Department and the interagency, as well as foreign officials. The Operations Center provides telephone briefings and sends written analysis and other information to the Secretary's plane and travel locations by e-mail, cable, and fax. The Overnight Brief shown here was sent as a cable to Secretary Eagleburger during a visit to Geneva.

SUBJECT: OVERNIGHT BRIEF NO. 1
AS OF 2300 EST, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1992

EC SUMMIT

(U) EC LEADERS EXEMPTED DENMARK FROM SEVERAL MAASTRICHT PROVISIONS, CLEARING THE WAY FOR A SECOND DANISH VOTE ON THE TREATY. (REUTER)

(U) THE SUMMIT APPROVED A NEW SEVEN-YEAR BUDGET ACCORDING TO SPANISH-LED DEMANDS FOR INCREASED AID TO POORER MEMBERS. (AP)

(U) THE EC WILL BEGIN MEMBERSHIP NEGOTIATIONS WITH AUSTRIA, SWEDEN AND FINLAND IN 1993. (AP)

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~~CONTROL~~

PAGE 01

ORIGIN 88-00

INFO LOG-00 88AD-01 CCO-00 ORNY-00 ASB-00 /0018
DRAFTED BY: S/P-D/DAARISH
APPROVED BY: S/P-O/DOUGHERTILL
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION:
TO: S 26-4, 26D

-----85738A 130358Z /38

O 130358Z DEC 92 ZPTA

FM SECRETATE WASHINGTON

TO RUEHH SECRETARY WYATC IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 401584 TOSFC 230025

R.O.: 12356; N/A

TAGS: OVP (EAGLEBURGER, LAWRENCE S.)

SUBJECT: OVERNIGHT BRIEF NO. 1

AS OF 2300 EST, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1992

EC SUMMIT

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(U) THE SUMMIT APPROVED A NEW SEVEN-YEAR BUDGET ACCORDING TO SPANISH-LED DEMANDS FOR INCREASED AID TO POORER MEMBERS. (AP)

(U) THE EC WILL BEGIN MEMBERSHIP NEGOTIATIONS WITH AUSTRIA, SWEDEN AND FINLAND IN 1993. (AP)

RUSSEA

(U) AS PART OF A NINE-POINT COMPROMISE REACHED BY YELTSIN AND KLINTANOV, CONGRESS AGREED TO HOLD AN APRIL 11 REFERENDUM ON THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF A NEW CONSTITUTION. (WATCH/EMBASSY MOSCOW TELCOM, REUTER)

TAINE

(U) THE CHRISTIAN LAY COMMITTEE, A POWERFUL CHURCH GROUP, CALLED FOR MASS UPRISINGS DECEMBER 18 TO OUST KOBOTOV. (REUTER)

(U) VIRTUALLY ALL SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS PLACED IN CHARGE OF GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES BY KOBOTOV HAVE DECLINED TO SERVE. (IRISHADA 7482)

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THE SECRETARY'S NERVE CENTER



President Johnson and Secretary Rusk visited the Operations Center in 1965. (Department of State Photo/Herbert J. Meyle)



In 1994, President and First Lady Clinton visited Ops with Secretary Christopher and Executive Secretary Marc Grossman, where they viewed the original Johnson photo. (Department of State Photo)



Secretary Rice with the Operations Center Staff, 2008. (Department of State Photo)



Secretary Schultz during a visit to the Ops Center in 1986. (Department of State Photo)

BATTLE OF MOGADISHU • OCTOBER 4, 1993 • CHRISTOPHER



U.S. Marines in Mogadishu airport. (AP/WWP)

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SECRET~~
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

9 3228 23

Spot Report
Somalia: Rangers Captured
0000 EDT, Monday, October 4, 1993

HEAVY FIRE Rangers and UNOSOM forces engaged Somali militiamen in heavy fighting for close to 24 hours. USLO Mogadishu reports use of anti-aircraft weapons by Aided supporters for the first time since July 1993. The forces are searching for missing Americans and could engage the Somalis as the mission progresses. (Watch/USLO Mogadishu telcom, CINR)

Two helicopters were downed by small arms fire, while three others were badly damaged. Replacement choppers and Bradley tanks are scheduled to arrive within a few hours. (Watch/USLO Mogadishu telcom, Mogadishu 2178)

CASUALTIES Aided captured at least one Ranger according to press reports. USLO Mogadishu is unable to confirm the report, but counts six Rangers as missing since a helicopter crashed in an area overrun by Aided supporters. (Watch/USLO Mogadishu telcom, Reuter)

A western journalist reports seeing deceased American soldiers being dragged through Mogadishu streets. (CINR)

US casualties number 11 dead and 58 wounded, some seriously. At least one Malaysian was killed, with nine wounded. (Watch/USLO Mogadishu telcom, Mogadishu 2180)

BODIES RECOVERED Combined UNOSOM and Quick Reaction Forces reached a second crash site and recovered the bodies of the victims and evacuated the wounded. (Watch/USLO Mogadishu telcom)

SOMALIS DETAINED Rangers captured 24 Somalis, including Omar Salad, a top Aided advisor. Also captured was Hassan Awale, an Aided spokesman. Three of the captured Somalis later died from wounds sustained in the battle. (Mogadishu 2179, CINR)

USLO Three USLO marine posts received incoming rounds, with one round returned. USLO believes one target was hit, but is unable to confirm. (Watch/USLO Mogadishu telcom, Mogadishu 2179)

SECURITY UNOSOM has advised everyone to stay at home and to specifically avoid the markets and ports. (Watch/USLO Mogadishu telcom)

Drafted: DAUS
Distribution: S D P C I E SST M H SP PA SSO IHR SSS USUNW
Dep. of Sec. Affairs, Mogadishu Public Co.
(7) Public () Radio () Data () Security
Date: 10/04/93 By: [Signature]

Approved: HKThomas
SECURITY INFORMATION
UNCLASSIFIED
~~SECRET~~
DECLASSIFY ON: []

- 1326 The Serbian-Montenegrin Sanctions Task Force moved its operations from TF1 to Room 1117A.
- 1402 The Moscow Monitoring Group moved its operations to TF1.
- 1403 At the direction of ExecSec Grossman, the Somalia Monitoring Group convened in TF3 under the direction of Ambassador D. Shinn, AF.

UNCLASSIFIED ~~SECRET/NOFORN~~

DATE: October 4, 1993
SHEET: II

MATCH LOG CONTINUATION SHEET

Time	Item
1331	The Watch attempted to patch Mr. L. Forth, OPV, to Ambassador Talbot, who was unavailable.
1324	The Serbian-Montenegrin Sanctions Task Force moved its operations from TF1 to Room 1117A.
1402	The Moscow Monitoring Group moved its operations to TF1.
1403	At the direction of Executive Grossman, the Somalia Monitoring Group convened in TF3 under the direction of Ambassador D. Shinn, AF.
1443	The Watch attempted to patch Ambassador Talbot to Ambassador Pickering, who was unavailable.
1518	Ambassador Talbot passed through the Watch en route to the SVTH conference room.
1600	Relinquished the Watch. Telephone cleared. LHM sent/rec'd 23/30.

Approved by: [Signature]
[Signature]
Watch Match Officer

Dep. of Sec. Affairs, Mogadishu Public Co.
(7) Public () Radio () Data () Security
Date: 10/04/93 By: [Signature]

UNCLASSIFIED ~~SECRET/NOFORN~~
DECLASSIFY ON: []

Page 3 of 3

SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS • APRIL 26, 1994 • CHRISTOPHER

Afternoon and Overnight Briefs: The Operations Center sends to the Secretary a written brief on breaking developments each day at 0530 and 1500. If the Secretary is traveling, the brief is published at 0530 and 1500 *Secretary's* time, no matter what time it is in Washington. For example the Afternoon Brief shown here was sent at 1000 EDT because Secretary Christopher was in London.

A brief item contains a sentence summarizing the news, and then adds a sentence or two from the relevant U.S. Embassy or State Department office to add context and value not found in open source media.



President Nelson Mandela acknowledges cheers from the crowd. (AP/WWP)

SOUTH AFRICA'S ELECTIONS BEGIN

(LOU) Elections began in South Africa, with extra police and troops guarding the polling stations. The first day of voting is reserved for the elderly and infirm, with the general population to begin voting April 27. Police offered a record reward for information on recent bombings, widely believed to be the work of white radicals. South Africans living overseas are also voting; the South African Embassy in Washington estimates there are one hundred thousand qualified voters in the U.S.

(Watch/Consulate Cape Town telcon, Reuter, AP)

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

9409746

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center
Afternoon Brief No. 2
1000 EDT, Tuesday, April 26, 1994

ISRAELIS WITHDRAWING FROM GAZA

(C) The Sabra continue to withdraw to the 20-kilometer exclusion zone UNHCR and ICRC officials cautioned against any evacuation of refugees from Gaza without prior approval from all parties, according to US Mission Geneva. There is also skepticism among the NGOs about a potential invasion. (Washington/Israeli sources telcon, (unrec'd), SSC)

PALESTINIANS GROWING LESS SUPPORTIVE OF DOE AND ARAFAT

(C) Dates and tough compromises involved in implementing the Declaration of Principles and Israeli security measures have contributed to diminished support for West Bank Palestinians for the DOE and Arafat. The PLO leadership has alienated local moderates, who fear Palestinian authority will start as a cloak-and-sword and will be forced to deal with a cynical population in a separate development. Israeli security forces said they captured Hamas activists responsible for the Hebron suicide bombing. (Jerusalem 1474, Reuter)

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YELTSIN VISIT TO KIEV PREDICTED

(C) Yeltsin will visit Kiev after May 15 with the aim of signing the long-dormant Russo-Ukrainian Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. Ukrainian chief domestic political advisor told the Embassy. During the visit, an effort will be made to resolve the Black Sea fleet (BSF) problem, which the US and Ukraine hope to work out a BSF solution alone. It may be necessary to request U.S. and NATO assistance to help finance housing in Russia for those people who would move there as part of the division of the fleet. (Watch Embassy Kiev telcon, Ken-2364)

Drafted: TCG/MS/DB/SK/AV Approved: SEE/MS/BR/AV
Distribution: S D P C E S S T M H SP SRPP PA SSO IWR SSS CMS USUNW

CONFIDENTIAL
DECL. OADR

Dep. of State, ASIA/PAF, Operations & Outreach, Dir.
1.1 Subject 1.1 Element 1.1 Policy 1.1 Document
Date: 11/11/94, 11/11/94

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

BOSNIAN SERBS ACCEPT DAYTON • NOVEMBER 24, 1995 • CHRISTOPHER



Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke and General Wesley Clark at Sarajevo airport. (AP/WWP)

Since 1961, a Department of Defense military liaison officer (called "MILAD") has been detailed to the Operations Center. The MILAD provides military advice to the Executive Secretariat and coordinates Department of State requests for diplomatic, humanitarian, and other crisis-related military support. These interagency requests take the form of an "ExecSec memo," like the one shown here from the Department of State Executive Secretary to the Department of Defense requesting airlift to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, site of the 1995 Balkan peace negotiations.

MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL ROBERT P. MCALEER, USMC
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Availability of DOD Aircraft

The Department of State requests that DOD make available, on a non-reimbursable basis, airlift to and from Wright Patterson Air Force Base on Thursday, October 19, 1995, to transport an interagency team to finalize planning for the Bosnia Proximity Talks that will begin before the end of the month.

The Department of State requests that DOD make available, on a non-reimbursable basis, airlift to and from Wright Patterson Air Force Base on Thursday, October 19, 1995, to transport an interagency team to finalize planning for the Bosnia Proximity Talks that will begin before the end of the month.

Military airlift is requested to expedite the travel of the team to Ohio, facilitating their work on this work priority and to return to Washington the same day to report on agreements to policy level officials in Washington. Given the importance of these talks to U.S. policy, their compactness and the short time frame involved, expedition travel to and from Wright Patterson Air Force Base for this planning team is very important.

There is a minimum twelve person team, the cost of which for commercial transport is \$8,416. No particular size aircraft is requested and the party could be split between two small aircraft if this would result in the highest degree of efficiency and economy.

The Department's Legal Adviser has reviewed and cleared this request.

Richard C. Will
Richard C. Will
Executive Secretary

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center
Overnight Brief
Friday, November 24, 1995

BOSNIAN SERBS ACCEPT DAYTON DEAL

(U) Bosnian Serb leaders agreed to the terms of the Balkan peace plan negotiated by Milosevic, reports Embassy Belgrade. (Watch/Embassy Belgrade telcon, AP, Reuter)

ABSTRACT REPORT: BNAKES MEXICO

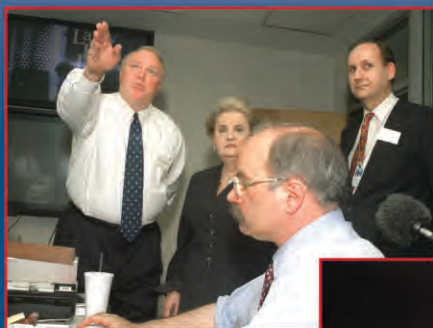
BOSNIAN SERBS ACCEPT DAYTON DEAL

(U) Bosnian Serb leaders agreed to the terms of the Balkan peace plan negotiated by Milosevic, reports Embassy Belgrade. (Watch/Embassy Belgrade telcon, AP, Reuter)

Drafted: JGardner
DOD S P O E T M H SP SRPP 95 550 SSS PA 001 0001 0000 0000
RFB R02 USA INW

UNCLASSIFIED

Y2K ROLLOVER • DECEMBER 31, 1999 • ALBRIGHT



Y2K Task Force Deputy Director Doug Ryan with Secretary Albright. (AP/WWP)



Fireworks over Sydney harbor welcome the year 2000. (AP/WWP)

"Of all my nights on the Watch, the Y2K rollover stands out for its peacefulness. We watched a world poised for global chaos brace itself hour by hour, and then relax into the joy of simply welcoming the start of another year. We were prepared for infrastructure, financial, and security disasters, and for our own potential shut-down (the most frightening possibility of all!). Instead, we spent the night wishing our officers around the world a happy new year once each assured us that all was well in their neck of the woods. The world never felt so small or so in harmony — not always the case after a night in Ops."

Micaela Schweitzer-Bluhm, Watch Officer
1999-2000

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

SPOT REPORT NO. 1 9923552

Y2K Rollover
Friday, December 31, 1999
0830 EST

FIRST Y2K COUNTRIES REPORT NO INITIAL PROBLEMS

As the New Year made its way around the globe, the first Y2K countries reported no initial problems. Embassy Suva said power, telephones, and other public services were functioning normally. The Embassy had been in touch with the Peace Corps mission in Tonga, which reported all systems were operating normally there as well. New Zealand entered the New Year without any glitches, reports Embassy Wellington. (Watch/Embassy Suva telcon, Watch/Embassy Wellington electronic report, CNN)

FIRST RUSSIAN NUCLEAR PLANT TO MEET Y2K REPORTS ALL WELL

The U.S. Department of Energy reports the Russian nuclear power plant in Barents is back to the first time to pass the New Year, noted over operators with no reported problems. (Watch/DOE confidence source)

POSSIBLE POWER PLANT PROBLEM IN VANUATU

Unconfirmed reports indicate a power plant in Vanuatu may have encountered Y2K-related problems. (CNN)

Y2K CELEBRATIONS IN SYDNEY COMMENCE

While Consulate General Sydney will not report until 0900 EST, press coverage revealed no power outages as celebrations began in Sydney to mark the New Year. (CNN)

Drafted: MicaelaSchweitzer
Star: Stan of Hawaii, CIA, NSC, USIA

Approved: [Signature]

UNCLASSIFIED

SPOT REPORT NO. 1 9923552

Y2K Rollover
Friday, December 31, 1999
0830 EST

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AMERICA ATTACKED • SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 • POWELL

"I took the call from a former Operations Center watchstander who had moved to the private sector and was working in lower Manhattan. He told me he had just watched an airplane fly into the World Trade Center, and I remember that we discussed how it must have been a plane that had had a catastrophic loss of flight control... Later, I took a call from a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Political Military Affairs Bureau, who had just arrived at the Pentagon and watched a plane fly into it. He wasn't aware of the other attacks. When I told him about New York City, he immediately said, "then it's obviously terrorism."

Anthony Clare, Watch Officer, 2001

In response to the September 11, 2001, attacks, the Department of State established five Task Forces to handle different elements of the crisis, such as overall diplomatic coordination, consular concerns, security and mission drawdown efforts, political military issues, and public outreach activities. In the first 11 days after 9/11, the Operations Center assisted the Secretary with 88 calls to foreign counterparts and received condolence messages from more than 190 countries and entities.



(AP/WWP)

"As the second plane hit the South tower, the Acting Executive Secretary realized the unfolding events were not accidental. She proceeded to the Operations Center to alert Crisis Management Support to prepare a Task Force. A team was dispatched to start up the Alternate Operations Center. The Watch became crowded, even after the building was evacuated."

Source: S/ES-IRM archive

Newsticker from May 01, 2011

From: OpsAlert
Sent: Sunday, May 01, 2011 11:45 PM
Subject: President confirms Osama bin Laden killed in Pakistan

(U) The President said Osama bin Laden was killed in a compound in Pakistan by U.S. forces during a firefight.

Automatic electronic distribution to: S, D(S), D(N), P, E, C, M, DG, T, R, PA, G, AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, WHA, IO, S/CRS, S/CT, S/HSC, H, DS, CA, PMAT, INR, AVC, IIR, ISN, CMS, S/ES, S/ES-O, NSOC, and WHSR.

RE-OPENING OF U.S. EMBASSY KABUL • JANUARY 17, 2002 • POWELL

The U.S. Embassy building in Kabul stood empty from January 31, 1989, when the last of its American staff departed Afghanistan, to December 17, 2001, when the building opened as a liaison office after the fall of the Taliban. Ryan Crocker was appointed Chargé d'Affaires on January 2, 2002, and Secretary Powell officiated at the Embassy re-opening ceremony on January 17, 2002.



Secretary Powell addresses the crowd at U.S. Embassy Kabul. (AP/WWP)

"At that time, we were working from an embassy with 20 years of dust on it. Ops dealt patiently with my satellite phone, a beast which required you to stand motionless in a fixed location with the antenna up. When security concerns threatened to derail the entire stop, Ops kept us informed and connected despite the technological difficulties."

Julie Fisher, S/ES-S Line Officer, Kabul

Advance, 2002

2339 Mr. W. McManus, S/ES-IRM, in Kabul, telephoned to inform the Watch the Secretary's aircraft arrived at Kabul at 2323. The Watch alerted Mr. C. Moore, MSMC; Ms. M. Caler, WHSR; Signal Operator No. 3, WHCA; and S/ES-O, S/ES, S, D and P via electronic mail.

0325 Mr. C. Kelly, S, with the Secretary's party in Kabul, telephoned the Watch for a briefing.

0358 Mr. C. Kelly telephoned the Watch with a message.

0449 Ms. J. Fisher, S/ES-S, called to inform the Watch the Secretary's aircraft departed Bagram at 0448. The Watch alerted Mr. M. Micaller, S/ES-S, with the Secretary's advance team in Islamabad; Mr. R. Schubert, WHSR; Signal Operator 23, WHCA; Mr. C. Moore, MSMC; and S/ES-O, S/ES, S, D and P via electronic mail.

"Two advance teams prepositioned in the Gulf, ready to deploy at a moment's notice. Ops got word to us immediately when the decision was made that Secretary Powell would travel to Kabul and Islamabad. Given the need for close coordination, Ops kept our teams connected throughout the visit. In those difficult days, Ops was always a welcome voice at the other end of the phone. 'Watch, please stay on the line – we may need your assistance,' we would always ask."

Manuel Micaller, S/ES-S Line Officer, Islamabad Advance, 2002

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UNCLASSIFIED

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

WATCH LOG
Wednesday, January 16 - Thursday, January 17, 2002
Shift 1

Time	Item
2339	Mr. W. McManus, S/ES-IRM, in Kabul, telephoned to inform the Watch the Secretary's aircraft arrived at Kabul at 2323. The Watch alerted Mr. C. Moore, MSMC; Ms. M. Caler, WHSR; Signal Operator No. 3, WHCA; and S/ES-O, S/ES, S, D and P via electronic mail.
2359	Relinquished the Watch. Dismphons cleared. WASHFAXES sent/received 20/14.
0000	Assumed the Watch. The Continion Working Group continued.
0135	The Watch attempted to patch Ambassador D. Welch, Embassy Cairo, to Assistant Secretary W. Burns, NSA, in Rome, who was unavailable.
0325	Mr. C. Kelly, S, with the Secretary's party in Kabul, telephoned the Watch for a briefing.
0358	Mr. C. Kelly telephoned the Watch with a message.
0449	Ms. J. Fisher, S/ES-S, called to inform the Watch the Secretary's aircraft departed Bagram at 0448. The Watch alerted Mr. M. Micaller, S/ES-S, with the Secretary's advance team in Islamabad; Mr. R. Schubert, WHSR; Signal Operator 23, WHCA; Mr. C. Moore, MSMC; and S/ES-O, S/ES, S, D and P via electronic mail.
0508	The Watch patched A/S Burns, in Aden, to Ambassador D. Kurtzer, Embassy Tel Aviv.

Dist: S/ES S/ES-O S/ES-IRM S/ES-EX INT

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

Dept. of State, ADDRESS, Subject: D. Powell, D. G.
() Release () Distribution () Copy () Priority
Date: 1/17/02 Exemption:

EVACUATION OF LEBANON • JULY 12, 2006 • RICE



American citizens evacuating from a beach in Beirut to Cyprus. (AP/WWP)

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center 200615258

SITUATION REPORT NUMBER 039
TASK FORCE
0130 EDT Sunday, July 30, 2006

DECONTROL

ASSISTED DEPARTURE UPDATE

(SBU) An estimated 14,700 Amcits have departed Lebanon since July 16. Approximately 11,082 have returned or are en route to the United States. (Task Force/EUCOM e-mail, Task Force/Embassy Nicosia telcon)

(SBU) According to Embassy Beirut, most Amcits who wanted to depart Lebanon have done so. No further ships are scheduled. (Task Force/Embassy Beirut telcon)

(SBU) Roughly 570 Amcits and family members are at the Nicosia airgrounds and approximately 40 are in hotels. In addition, 342 are en route to Atlanta. One flight is scheduled to depart July 31 with a capacity of 355 and another is projected for August 1. (Task Force/Embassy Nicosia telcon)


(SBU) The final flight out of Incirlik AFB departed carrying approximately 290 Amcits. Approximately 21 people in 9 families remain at Incirlik due to documentation problems. (Task Force/Embassy Ankara telcon)

(SBU) Embassy Beirut requests guidance how to handle requests for assisted departure now that the bulk of the demand for departures has been addressed and no additional commercial vehicles are scheduled to transport departees from Beirut. (Task Force/Embassy Beirut telcon)

POLITICAL/MILITARY SITUATION

(U) An Israeli air strike in the village of Qana, resulting in at least 40 civilian casualties. (Reuters)

(CNSF) The Australian government is sending the Deputy Secretary of the MFA and the Vice Chief of the Australian Defense Force to the force generation meeting in New York. Australia's MFA Middle East Director explained the size of Australia's contribution would be limited as the Australian Defense Force is committed elsewhere. (Cunbarra 1152)


 Dept. of State, A/Asst. Sec. for Operations and Planning, Global, Dir.
 () Release () Reclass () Desc () Dissem () Other

Directed G Alvarado/Winterbury, Coordinator Date: 7/30/06 Exemption Approved: SP/VT/Prager
 Sent: Sat 7/30/06 08:09 AM To: W/Asst. Sec. for Operations and Planning, Global, Dir. () Release () Reclass () Desc () Dissem () Other
 COUNCIL: USIA/WH/OP/PAK/ELB
 UNCLASSIFIED
 Classified by GAlvarado/Winterbury on 07/30/06

SITUATION REPORT NUMBER 039 DECONTROL TASK FORCE

0530 EDT Sunday, July 30, 2006

ASSISTED DEPARTURE UPDATE

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American citizens board a U.S. Government flight in Larnaca, Cyprus. (Department of State Photo)

HAITI EARTHQUAKE • JANUARY 12, 2010 • CLINTON



(AP/WWP)

"It was almost five o'clock when a U.S. Geological Survey earthquake ticker popped up on my screen. It read 7.3 magnitude, eight kilometers deep. I thought, "Wow, that's big. Where is it?" I read down the page... "25 kilometers WSW of Port-au-Prince, Haiti." I felt my stomach turn. My first tour was in Haiti - I knew it would be bad. I yelled out to the Watch, "Call Port-au-Prince, there's been a huge earthquake!" Consul General Donald Moore called in and began describing what he saw. As we spoke, he saw a wall collapse across the street. I think the next time I sat down at my desk was sometime in March."

Bridget Premont, Crisis Management Support, 2009-2011

Watch Alert

(U) 7.3m earthquake hits Haiti; tsunami watch issued

(U) The earthquake occurred at 1653 EST 10 miles SW of Port-au-Prince. A tsunami watch is in effect for Haiti, Cuba, the Bahamas, and the Dominican Republic. Embassy Port-au-Prince is currently accounting for all staff, but reports landlines and cell phone communication are down in the capital, and some structures across from the embassy have collapsed.

Automatic electronic distribution to: S, D(S), D(L), P, E, C, M, DG, T, R, PA, G, AF, EAP, EUR, NEA, SCA, WHA, IO, SICRS, SICT, H, DS, CA, PMAT, INR, IIP, CMS, S/ES, S/ES-O, NSOC, and WHSR.



American citizens prepare to board a U.S. Air Force C-17. (Department of State photo)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED



EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

SITUATION REPORT NO. 3

Haiti Earthquake Task Force TFHA01

Wednesday, January 13, 2010
1300 EST

EMBASSY STATUS, CASUALTIES, RESPONSE

- (SBU) The Port-au-Prince airport is open. Airport runway and apron areas are functional. Commercial operations are limited to emergency flights. U.S. airlines have suspended operations. U.S. Special Operations units will arrive at 1500 to establish ATC services and airport security. (TFI/Embassy Port-au-Prince telcon)
- (SBU) Three seriously injured employees have been evacuated by U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to GTMO for treatment. State MED is directing the deployment of additional medical supplies to treat Embassy staff. (TFI/Embassy Port-au-Prince telcon)
- (SBU) The Embassy is preparing for ordered departure of non-emergency staff. USCG is planning to deploy two C-130s to transport Embassy personnel to Santo Domingo for onward travel to CONUS. (TFI/Embassy Port-au-Prince telcon)

AMERICAN CITIZEN WELFARE

- (SBU) Six seriously injured private U.S. citizens are being treated at the Embassy; their condition is critical and a USCG medevac is being coordinated. Forty-two non-injured Amcits are being provided with refuge at the Embassy. The Consular Call Center has received over 850 Amcit welfare-and-whereabouts reports. (TFI/Consular e-mail)

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- (SBU) An OFDA Disaster Assistance Response Team will arrive at 1330, a SAR Team will arrive at 1500, an additional Search and Rescue team will arrive before January 14. U.S. Navy reports that the hospital ship USNS Comfort will arrive in approximately one week; the U.S. aircraft carrier Carl Vincennes will be within range in 48 hours to provide assistance; and two Amphibious Ready Groups will arrive within five days. (TFI/Embassy Port-au-Prince telcon)

INFRASTRUCTURE SEVERELY AFFECTED

- (SBU) USCG C-130 over flight indicates that Port-au-Prince has sustained extensive damage, although there was little visible damage outside the city. (TFI/Embassy Port-au-Prince telcon)

Drafted: CCAshc

Approved: MTPascual

Dist: State (all bureaus), NSC, HSC, OSD, NMCC, JCS, CIA, FBIS, NCTC, DHS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA PROTESTS • 2010 - 2011 • CLINTON



Anti-government demonstrators in Cairo's Tahrir Square. (AP/WWP)

Newstickers: Since 1961, at least one individual in the Operations Center has constantly monitored the news wires from the major press organizations. Breaking news is often a one sentence burst from a reporter or stringer on location, followed by a more complete paragraph a few minutes later once the wire service can assemble more information. The advent of e-mail and handheld mobile devices allows the Operations Center to quickly alert the Department to breaking news.

Sidi Bouzid was the site of protests in recent days following a suicide attempt by a fruit and vegetable merchant whose merchandise was seized by local authorities.

From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Wednesday, December 22, 2010 8:55 PM
To: NEWS-NEA; SES-O_SNR-III; SES-O_OS
Subject: Suicide ignites clashes in tense Tunisian town (AP)

TUNIS (AP) - Police in a central Tunisian town fired tear gas at stone-throwing protesters after simmering tensions linked to unemployment erupted after a demonstrator committed suicide the night of December 22. The victim was a 24-year-old jobless protester who was electrocuted after announcing he wanted to end his life and mounting a high-voltage electricity pole in the town of Sidi Bouzid, Attia Athmoun of the POP opposition party told The Associated Press. The state news agency TAP reported the suicide and said the government ordered a judicial inquiry. The suicide angered young protesters, who hurled stones at police and were met by volleys of tear gas. Protesters in a nearby town set an administrative building on fire, said Mohamed Ben Fadhel, a local leader of a teachers' union. Sidi Bouzid was the site of protests in recent days following a suicide attempt by a fruit and vegetable merchant whose merchandise was seized by local authorities. It is about 165 miles south of the capital Tunis. The 26-year-old merchant, who tried to set himself on fire, has a university diploma but has been unable to find work other than as a street merchant, according to opposition politicians. The high level of unemployment in the region, including among people with diplomas, has been at the heart of the tensions.

- (U) Following the biggest day of protests yet, Vice President Soliman's announcement on national TV that President Mubarak stepped down set off celebrations around Egypt.

MINISTRY OF UNCLASSIFIED

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center

SITUATION REPORT No. 28
Egypt Update TFEEOI
Friday, February 11, 2011
1500 EST

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- (U) Following the biggest day of protests yet, Vice President Soliman's announcement on national TV that President Mubarak stepped down set off celebrations around Egypt. Protesters chanted, "The people ousted the president," and "Goodbye, goodbye." (AP)
- (U) A military spokesman said the Supreme Military Council recognized the people's demands to implement radical changes and will issue another statement that will define next steps. He added "there is no other way forward than the legitimate one aspired to by the people." (Al Jazeera)
- (SBU) The Supreme Council, under Defense Minister Tantawi, will dissolve the Parliament, dismiss the Cabinet and rule in coordination with the leader of the Supreme Constitutional Court, according to press. Embassy Cairo comments if the Supreme Council follows the provisions of the constitution, it must convene presidential elections within 60 days, which likely would not allow time for amending the constitution to permit multiparty elections. (TFEEOI/Embassy Cairo telcom, Reuters)
- (U) Mubarak and his family left Cairo from a military airbase and traveled to Sharm el-Sheikh. (Al Jazeera)

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

- (U) Opposition figure ElBaradei said it was the "greatest day" of his life. (Reuters)
- (U) A senior Muslim Brotherhood official said Egyptians had achieved the main goal of their popular uprising and Mubarak's resignation was a "victory for the Egyptian people." (Reuters)
- (U) El-Ghali chairman and 2005 presidential candidate Ayman Nour said Egypt had been reborn and the army understood its mission to prepare for civilian rule. (Reuters)
- (U) Google executive Wael Ghonim tweeted, "They lied to us. Told us Egypt died 30 days ago, but millions of Egyptians decided to search and they found their country in 18 days." (Reuters)
- (U) Arab League SVG Mousa said he looks forward to building a national consensus, but declined to say if he would run for president in the future. (Reuters)

CONSULAR AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- (SBU) No emergency calls were received from American citizens. The last four TDY consular officers departed Cairo. The airport departure hall was crowded but operating normally. The arrival hall was virtually empty. (TFEEOI/Embassy Cairo email)



The Watch floor in 1971. (Department of State Photo)



The Watch floor in 1987. (Department of State Photo)

“202-647-1512: It’s not just another phone number, it’s the lifeline for anyone involved in the conduct of our national security and foreign policy, particularly during the most trying of times and circumstances.”

Dean Thompson, Watch Officer, 1999-2000, Deputy Director, 2007-2009



The Watch floor in 2010. (Department of State Photo)

SUPPORTING U.S. DIPLOMACY FOR FIFTY YEARS

In 2010, the Operations Center handled 350,204 phone calls, issued 1208 alerts, and supported 14 Task Forces and Monitoring Groups over 185 days. The busiest call day was January 13, with 4309 inbound and outbound calls. The Operations Center supported the Secretary for 347 calls to foreign leaders and during 87 days of official travel to 53 countries.

Here's what we're following as we begin our next 50 years:

**“The [Operations] Center grows
in importance as the years go by.
It is not often in the news,
but it is always on the watch.”**

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