



Director of
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National Intelligence Daily

Thursday
28 February 1980

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAY 2001

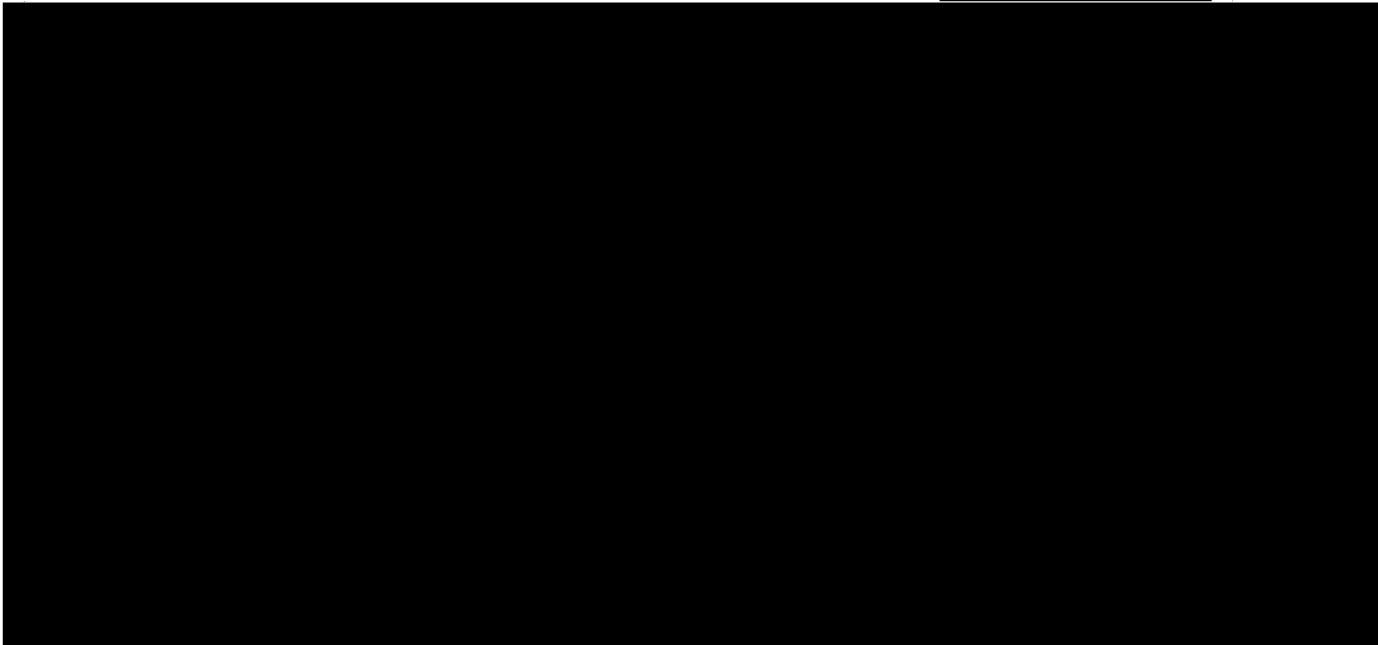
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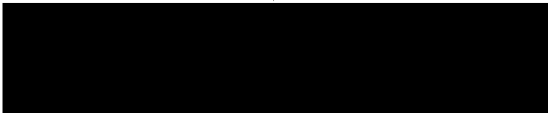
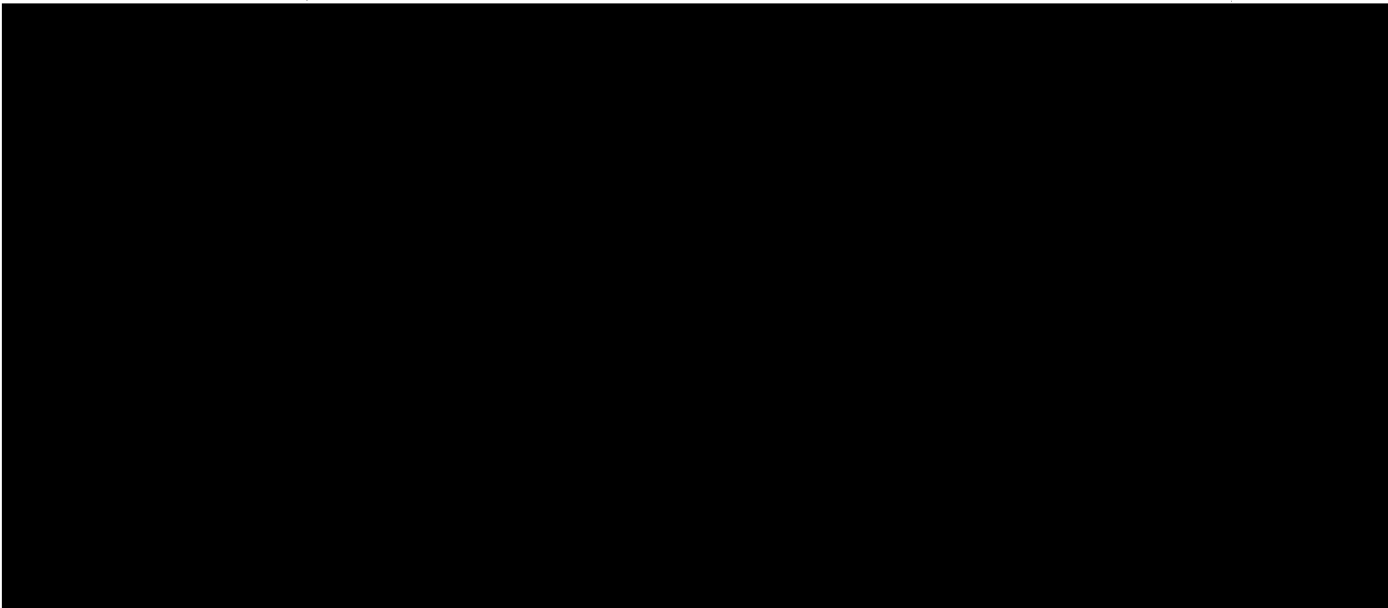
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Colombia: *Occupation of Embassy* 7



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COLOMBIA: Occupation of Embassy

The terrorists occupying the Dominican Embassy in Bogota and holding some 80 hostages probably belong to the leftist Colombian 19th of April Movement (M-19), the country's most active urban guerrilla group. [REDACTED]

US Ambassador Asencio, one of the hostages, is reported unhurt. The National Police have cordoned off the area, and Colombian President Turbay has told US Embassy officials that he will avoid provoking the terrorists, who have threatened to blow up the Dominican Embassy. The government, plagued with an endemic guerrilla problem, has not yielded to terrorist demands in the past and is unlikely to reach a quick compromise. [REDACTED]

The group's objectives are not yet clear, but the occupation coincides with the trial of 219 M-19 members accused of subversive activities. The terrorists have demanded the release of all political prisoners and probably expect their fellow members to be included. They may also seek to embarrass the government shortly before the midterm elections of 9 March, and to provoke the military to react with force. [REDACTED]