

[REDACTED]

July 30, 1990

TRINIDAD AND  
TOBAGO:

### Hostage Situation Still Unresolved

*The situation in Trinidad and Tobago remains highly fluid as government and security officials differ over tactics to secure the release of Prime Minister Robinson and several other government officials held hostage by a small radical Muslim group. (S NF)*

Rebel forces led by radical Muslim leader Yasin Abu Bakr remain in control of the Parliament building as well as a local radio and television station. [REDACTED] a negotiated settlement was scuttled twice over the weekend by security units that defied orders and shot at rebel troops and moved against the Parliament building. Robinson [REDACTED] had agreed to resign, establish an interim government to hold elections within 90 days, and grant amnesty to rebel forces. [REDACTED]

(S NF)

Talks brokered by church leaders collapsed last night, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The 200- to 250-man rebel group has almost no domestic support—Muslims are roughly 6 percent of the population and mostly conservative—and is greatly outnumbered by the security forces, comprising some 5,000 police and 2,400 troops. The security situation is deteriorating outside the capital, which has been gutted by fires and looting. There are no reports of harm to the roughly 6,000 US citizens. (S NF)

Regional leaders have condemned the coup attempt and pledged military assistance if requested by Trinidadian authorities. Jamaica reportedly has agreed to pre-position troops in Barbados, where representatives of the seven-nation Regional Security System and Venezuelan and Jamaican officials met last night. (S NF)

**Comment:** The security forces' hardline attitude severely limits the flexibility of the government, headed by Acting President Emmanuel Carter, in resolving the crisis without resorting to force. Unless the security forces can be convinced that any further efforts to negotiate a settlement that entails amnesty are nonbinding, some units again may try to sabotage a deal through unilateral military action. The apparent conviction by security officials that government troops could easily overwhelm rebel forces probably would be strengthened further by the arrival of any regional units. [REDACTED]

(S NF) NC -CIA

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