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SUBJECT MIDDLE EAST BRIEF [REDACTED] FOR 22 SEPTEMBER 1989.

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3. SAUDI ARABIA-KUWAIT: EXECUTIONS RISK SHIA TERRORISM

SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT ARE BRACING FOR TERRORIST RETALIATIONS FOR THE EXECUTIONS IN MECCA YESTERDAY OF 16 SHIAS INVOLVED IN BOMBINGS DURING THE HAJJ IN JULY. THIRTEEN OF THOSE EXECUTED WERE KUWAITIS, TWO WERE SAUDIS, AND ONE WAS A QATARI; A SAUDI GOVERNMENT STATEMENT SAYS MOST OF THEM WERE OF IRANIAN DESCENT. RIYADH PREVIOUSLY CLAIMED IT HAD PROOF OF TEHRAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE ATTACKS.

COMMENT: IRAN IS CERTAIN TO CONDEMN THE EXECUTIONS, FREEZING TENTATIVE INITIATIVES BY SOME OFFICIALS IN TEHRAN TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH RIYADH. HARDLINE IRANIAN LEADERS WILL URGE A MORE ACTIVE RESPONSE, INCLUDING DEMONSTRATIONS OR TERRORISM DIRECTED AT SAUDI OFFICIALS.

OUTGOING
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