



Officials from external affairs, the prime minister's office, the Privy Council office, the RCMP and other agencies were assigned to the crisis task force

External affairs' top official, Ed Ritchie, whose office is just down the corridor, was often in the centre directing operations.

East Block's hot spot

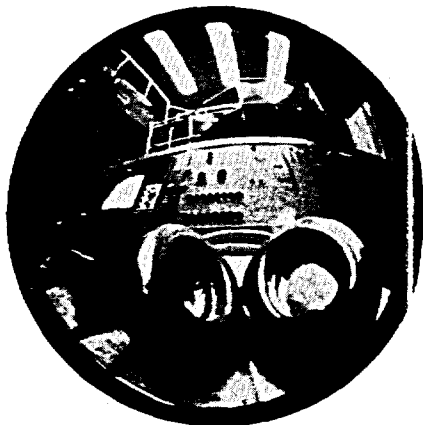
By The Canadian Press

A steel spiked gate, a dingy corridor and a blue cubicle separate the operations centre from the rest of the century-old East Block on Parliament Hill.

The centre was busier than usual Tuesday night. It is being used as federal headquarters in the effort to get kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross back alive.

Undersecretary of State E. A. Ritchie and others of his rank spent much of the night in or near the centre. The government wants to establish contact with the kidnappers. Telephone operators were told to route any calls about the kidnapping to the centre.

A representative from the British High Commission was invited to sit in so that he could keep his government informed on developments concerning trade commissioner Cross.



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