

Explosion Hits U.S. Embassy in Athens

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By THE NEW YORK TIMES

ATHENS, Friday, Jan. 12 — A powerful explosion, reportedly caused by a rocket, rocked the American Embassy in Athens Friday morning.

Reuters, quoting the police and embassy officials, said that a rocket had been fired at the complex but that no one was hurt. The private-television station MEGA also reported that the cause was a rocket.

“This was a rocket attack launched from a building across the street,” a senior police official told Reuters. “It landed inside a toilet on the third floor of the embassy.”

Greek anti-terrorist officers were on the scene.

“This is an act of terrorism. We don’t know where from,” said the Attica police chief, Asimakis Golfis. “There was a shell that exploded in the toilets of the building.” He said it had been fired from street level.

The police cordoned off the block and were searching nearby apartment buildings and a hospital.

The police said the explosion occurred at 5:55 a.m., but they released little other information.

Early accounts from witnesses indicated that it had occurred at the embassy’s front entrance, near the eagle emblem, Agence France-Presse said. Greek news media reported that a window near the emblem has been smashed, but there was no indication of further damage.

“The explosion sounded in the courtyard, then a fire broke out over the central entrance, where the emblem is situated,” a Greek motorist told private Skai radio.