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Prime Minister (2)



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 February, 1984

Dear John,

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Lebanon Evacuation

As you know the evacuation of British nationals who wished to leave Beirut took place on 10 February. A total of 518 people left under British auspices: 190 British nationals; 126 Commonwealth citizens and 202 others (many of them nationals of EC states). The Americans took a further 52 British nationals.

The fighting in Beirut made it necessary to mount separate evacuations from West Beirut and from the port of Jounieh for those in East Beirut. A Consular officer from the Embassy in Beirut was flown by RFA Reliant helicopter to Jounieh on 9 February and instructions to British nationals were broadcast on the BBC World Service. A team of six officials from the High Commission at Nicosia was flown to RFA Reliant off Beirut to help out where necessary; some assisted at Jounieh.

Evacuees from West Beirut were lifted out by helicopter to RFA Reliant and then onward to Akrotiri again by helicopter. The evacuation from East Beirut (from Jounieh Port) was delayed by bad weather, which prevented the chartered ship Sol Ghiorgios from docking. Helicopters were therefore used as for West Beirut and 90 were lifted out on 10 February. Fewer nationals travelled from Jounieh than we had expected; the Americans took off some early arrivals.

Almost all those evacuated were able to make their own arrangements for onward travel from Cyprus; 9 have already been repatriated at public expense against signed undertakings to repay but the numbers requiring such assistance are not likely to be large. 10 foreign nationals with British spouses and children were given clearance to enter the UK. We have received no reports of foreign nationals refusing to proceed from Cyprus to their own countries, or of foreign governments refusing to accept their nationals evacuated from Beirut.

Sir Geoffrey Howe has sent a telegram to HM Ambassador Beirut thanking him and his staff for their effort (I enclose a copy).

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD)

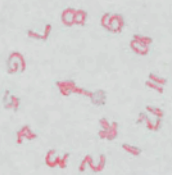
Yours ever,
Peter Ricketts

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SE1 7SA



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TO FLASH BEIRUT

TELEGRAM NUMBER 78 OF 11 FEBRUARY

WE ARE ALL DELIGHTED AT THE WAY IN WHICH THE EVACUATION HAS GONE AND I KNOW HOW MUCH THIS REFLECTS THE SKILL AND HARD WORK YOU AND YOUR STAFF PUT INTO IT, IN THE MOST DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. PLEASE TELL THEM ALL HOW VERY GRATEFUL I AM.
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LIMITED

CONSULAR D

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MR EGERTON

SIR J LEAHY

LORD N G LENNOX

PS/PUS

PS

PS/MR LUCE

PS/MR WHITNEY

CHIEF CLERK

MR WRIGHT

SIR J BULLARD



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 February 1984

Lebanon Evacuation

Thank you for your letter of 13 February,
the contents of which the Prime Minister has
noted.

A. J. COLES

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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