



SUBJECT

cc. MASTER OPS.

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION · LONDON

AUSTRALIA HOUSE STRAND WC2B 4LA TEL. 01-438 8209

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T 32/84

A.F.C.  $\frac{10}{2}$

10 February 1984

*mf*

*My dear Prime Minister*

Mr Hawke has asked me to pass to you the following message concerning the evacuation of Australian staff from Beirut:

Text begins

Dear Margaret,

The Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, has informed me of the safe evacuation from Lebanon of Australian staff from our mission in Beirut by British Military helicopters.

I should like to express to you my Government's deep appreciation of the assistance rendered by your Armed Services in this emergency. Please convey our thanks to the unit involved in the operation.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Hawke

Text ends.

*Yours sincerely*

*A.R. Parsons*

(A.R. Parsons)

The Rt Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

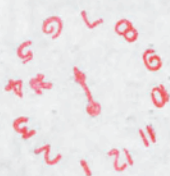


AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION · LONDON

AUSTRALIA HOUSE · STRAND · WC2R 4LA · TEL: 01-433 8209



THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



10 FEB 1984





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RW

cc: FCO

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

13 February, 1984

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 10 February containing a message to her from the Prime Minister of Australia about the evacuation of Australian staff from Beirut.

Mrs. Thatcher is glad that we were able to help you in this way.

A. J. COLES

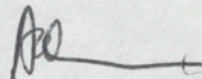
His Excellency Mr. A.R. Parsons

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1. I attach a copy of an Australian press release sent to me by the Australian High Commission in London. Paragraph 4 is particularly generous in its praise of the assistance provided by HMG.



A G McMahon  
Beirut Emergency Unit

10 February 1984

Distribution:

PS/No 10 ✓ A.J.C. 13/10  
PS  
PS/Mr Luce  
PS/Mr Whitney  
PS/PUS  
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Defence Situation Centre, MOD.  
Mr Egerton  
Lord N Gordon Lennox  
News Dept  
Consular Dept  
NENAD



Mr T. McMahon

*With the Compliments  
of the  
Political Affairs Branch*

J.M.L. Woods

10 February 1984

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION,  
AUSTRALIA HOUSE STRAND,  
LONDON WC2B 4LA



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AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION  
INWARD CABLEGRAM

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TO.

II LONDON/7058 WASHINGTON/7226 DAMASCUS/4489  
II CAIRO/2426 NICOSIA/498 OTTAWA/1239  
II TEL AVIV/267 COPENHAGEN/2301 STOCKHOLM/9417

RP.

RR ALL POSTS/6844

FM. CANBERRA /

U N C L A S S I F I E D

BEIRUT EVACUATION

FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE WAS ISSUED 10 FEBRUARY.

BEIRUT : SAFETY OF AUSTRALIAN STAFF

1. THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR BILL HAYDEN, M.P., SAID TODAY THAT AUSTRALIAN STAFF OF THE MISSION IN BEIRUT HAVE BEEN SAFELY EVACUATED FROM LEBANON BY BRITISH MILITARY HELICOPTERS. THE STAFF MEMBERS ARE: PERRY NOLAN, JOHN MCANULTY AND HIS WIFE MICHELLE, AND JILL MORTIMER. THEY ARE PRESENTLY IN CYPRUS AND ARE FIT AND WELL IN SPIITE OF HAVING BEEN THROUGH A GRUELLING AND TENSE EXPERIENCE.
2. "THEY HAVE DISCHARGED THEIR DUTIES IN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES WITH GREAT FORTITUDE AND COMMENDABLE DEDICATION. I AM SURE THAT ALL AUSTRALIANS ARE PROUD OF THEIR EFFORTS," MR HAYDEN SAID.
3. MR HAYDEN ESPECIALLY COMMENDED THE EMBASSY'S EFFORTS IN LOOKING AFTER THE INTERESTS OF AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS, RIGHT UP TO THE LAST MINUTE OF DEPARTURE. THROUGHOUT THE RECENT MONTHS WHEN THE SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT HAD BEEN PROGRESSIVELY DETERIORATING, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAD CONTINUED TO CARRY OUT THEIR CONSULAR RESPONSIBILITIES OFTEN AT CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL RISK. THIS HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY SO DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS, WHEN AN INTENSIVE EFFORT HAD BEEN MADE TO

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AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION

INWARD CABLEGRAM

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REACH AS MANY CITIZENS AS POSSIBLE.

4. MR HAYDEN SAID, "I AM ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL TO THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES AND THEIR ARMED SERVICES FOR THE GENEROUS SPIRIT OF HELPFULNESS WHICH RESULTED IN THIS SUCCESSFUL EVACUATION. I HAVE ALREADY CONVEYED MY APPRECIATION TO THE BRITISH FOREIGN MINISTER, SIR GEOFFREY HOWE. I AM SURE THE PRIME MINISTER - WHO HAS BEEN KEPT CONSTANTLY INFORMED - WILL BE CONTACTING THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER TO EXPRESS THE GOVERNMENT'S GRATITUDE FOR THE HELP OF THE BRITISH. THE INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE OF THE BRITISH SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.

5. "TWO EARLIER ATTEMPTS TO EVACUATE STAFF FAILED., FIRST BY SEA BECAUSE OF ROCKET AND GUNFIRE IN THE HARBOUR AREA MAKING THE EXERCISE UNACCEPTABLY HAZARDOUS., AND THE SECOND BY ROAD, BECAUSE OF THE FAILURE TO NEGOTIATE A SAFE PASSAGE WITH ALL FACTIONS IN POSITION ALONG THE ROUTE AND THE CONCURRENT DISCLOSURE THAT KEY PARTS OF THE ROAD HAD BEEN MINED.

6. "THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT WORSENS BY THE DAY. BECAUSE OF THE SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED AND RAPID COLLAPSE OF THE SITUATION IN BEIRUT IT BECAME ESSENTIAL THAT OUR STAFF BE EVACUATED FROM THERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME, IT WAS NECESSARY TO AVOID RAISING HOPES AND THEN RISK CREATING UNDERSTANDABLE FEARS BY ANNOUNCING EVACUATION PLANS PREMATURELY WHICH MIGHT SUBSEQUENTLY FAIL, AS INDEED DID EVENTUATE ON THE TWO OCCASIONS I MENTIONED. THERE WAS ALSO A NEED TO TRY TO MAINTAIN SECURITY ABOUT ANY PROPOSED EVACUATION WHICH IS NO EASY MATTER IN BEIRUT AT THE BEST OF TIMES AND IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE IN CIRCUMSTANCES LIKE THOSE AT THE PRESENT. PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF EVACUATION ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT HAVE CREATED SOME RISK FOR THE PLAN.

7. "I MENTION THESE FACTORS BECAUSE IT IS A MATTER OF REGRET TO ME THAT I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO COMMUNICATE MORE FULLY ON THESE MATTERS EARLIER BUT ON THE OTHER HAND I AM SURE THAT IS UNDERSTOOD IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES."

8. PERRY NOLAN, JOHN MCANULTY AND JILL MORTIMER WILL RETURN TO AUSTRALIA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOR DEBRIEFING AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, CANBERRA, FOR SOME REST AND RECUPERATION AND FOR REUNION WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

AC. ADVANCE ACTION COPY TO MR PARSONS 1240/10TH

ACTION: POL

LBBD

HC  
RGR

DHC  
COPA

MIN  
GEN-ENG

OS

AIS

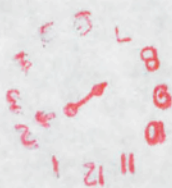
CA

CC

INWARD

INWARD





1 FEB 1984