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GULF CRISIS: SITUATION REPORT

Plans for the evacuation of Canadian women and children from Iraq and Kuwait are proceeding, but the departure of Canadians remains subject to the complicated and often lengthy procedure of obtaining Iraqi exit visas.

In addition, accurate figures on the number of Canadian citizens and other members of the Canadian community in the two countries have become increasingly difficult to ascertain because of conditions on the ground and independent departures by dual nationals.

The Canadian Consul from Baghdad has just returned to the Iraqi capital from Kuwait. He reports that, because of the ability of dual nationals to depart in larger numbers in the last few days, the size of the Canadian community in Kuwait has now been significantly reduced to about 275, of which about 150 are women and children. Similarly, the estimate for Iraq is that the Canadian community totals approximately 175. Our Baghdad Embassy reports that of these, about 25 are women and children seeking to leave the country.

Seven Canadians plus one Canadian landed immigrant today succeeded in reaching Jordan from Iraq. Six of them were among passengers stranded in Kuwait when their British Airways flight landed there shortly after the Iraqi invasion.

It was expected that some western nationals who have been formally detained by the government in Iraq--as distinct from those who have been unable to obtain exit visas--would leave the country today on a special flight. It was expected that two Canadians (the Lakhani sisters of Toronto), held on the basis of their dual British nationality, would leave on that Iraqi Airways flight. A few Canadians were also expected to depart Baghdad on a Lufthansa charter today.

The Canadian Embassy in Baghdad is exploring the safest and most effective way of transporting Canadians out of Kuwait and out of Iraq. It is working in conjunction with our Embassy in Kuwait which continues to operate and to maintain regular contact, albeit under difficult conditions, with as many members of the Canadian community as possible. They are reported to be safe.

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