

MEMORANDUM

TO: H. Ross Perot

FROM: Merv Stauffer & Jay Coburn

DATE: November 2, 1981

SUBJECT: The December, 1978 Evacuation of Employees and Dependents

In order to set the proper stage for the evacuation of employees and dependents (approximately 350 Americans and third country nationals), a brief description of the general situation for a few weeks leading up to the actual evacuation.

The normal day to day work routine and family life was being intercepted by ongoing demonstrations in the streets. The military was present but was not using force to quiet these. As a result they became increasingly violent.

Some of our employees were receiving threatening notes posted on their homes and verbally hassled on the streets. The news media back home was displaying the violence in such a manner that relatives were concerned and putting pressure on employees to leave.

The U.S. Embassy's weekly security briefings included warnings to stay away from crowds and inside as much as possible, but the Iranian government was in control and there was no reason to evacuate.

The rumors were spreading stories with more fiction than fact, and our employees population became more and more concerned. We had conducted a practice emergency communications and evacuation exercise and felt comfortable about extracting everyone on short notice.

A few American companies began to actually evacuate their employees and all this reached a fevered pitch the week leading up to the religious holiday of Ashura, December 9 & 10. On this weekend there was to be a Holy War with an anti-American theme.

Our management decided to evacuate all employees and dependents during the evening of December 5th. There was a curfew in effect from 9 p.m. until 5 a.m. I was contacted by phone around 2 a.m. on the 6th of December. The emergency plan called for a different organization during an evacuation. For purposes of communication and ease of transportation, the city was divided into sectors and a team leader for each. A support group for logistics had also been assembled. I notified this group to meet at the Bucharest office shortly after curfew lifted. The buses required for local transportation were secured, communications procedures firmed up, handouts prepared for evacuees and airplane reservations secured. We briefed the team leaders on the afternoon of the 6th and they began contacting their people.

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The actual evacuation was to begin the next morning after curfew. We sent the airport advance party to aid in securing tickets, checking luggage, getting through passport control. There was positive communication with the Bucharest support team throughout the day and all persons were accounted for at the airport. There were considerable delays with flights and we took food to the airport.

By the evening of December 8th we received positive confirmation that all had departed safely. Our planning paid off.

T. J. Marquez and Merv Stauffer arrived in Istanbul, Turkey on December 8, 1978--a few hours before the evacuees from Tehran arrived.

Arrangements were made for rooms at the Istanbul Sheraton. A local Turk was hired to assist in getting everyone and their luggage through customs. Buses were secured for the ride to the hotel. T. J. went with the Turk to meet the airplane.

While this was happening, Merv worked with the hotel to get everyone pre-registered. Since the arrival was after midnight, the people had been without a good meal for 18 hours; so arrangements were made with the hotel to serve a hot meal when they arrived. (This included hamburgers and hot chocolate for the children).

After their safe arrival, plans were immediately started for the continuation of their evacuation to the United States. Tom Walter, working in Dallas, was able to secure plane reservations for the group on Sunday, December 10, and Monday, December 11.

Meanwhile, T. J. and the local Turk arranged sight seeing tours of Istanbul. This seemed to be fairly important. The group was obviously in need of "unwinding" due to the stress they had experienced in Iran. It was obvious they were pleased to be safely out of Iran.

The first group departed for the U.S. on Sunday. Upon their arrival in New York, they were met by Ross and a team of EDS'ers who assisted in making connecting flights to their final destinations. The people expressed, to Ross, their appreciation for EDS getting them out of Iran.

The second group arrived in New York on Monday.

Ten people remained in Tehran, hiding out during Ashura weekend, and maintaining some order of business the following week. This was important to show stability to our Iranian National employees; and, that we intended to remain and do business when the trouble was over.

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We brought approximately 20 employees back in the following week to try and maintain as much of a business posture as possible. Those of us who remained for Ashura went home for Christmas on the 22nd of December. Paul and Bill were arrested on the 28th and the evacuation started again.

We had few employees and dependents this time, but transportation out of Tehran was more difficult. All except the negotiating team was extracted by December 31st.

Left on the 21st. Paul & Bill

See Jay. 77

See Jay.

Keep going