



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 September 1982

[Handwritten signature]
Prime Minister

Dear Sir,

[Handwritten initials]
JHCasualties in the Lebanon

I understand that this question came up at the Prime Minister's lunch for M. Thorn on 14 September.

Israeli government casualty figures have dried up recently but on the basis of earlier official figures our best estimate is 340 killed and over 2,000 wounded. On the Arab side we have tried hard to get accurate figures of the number of casualties. The various authorities who might be able to help (the Governments, UNRWA, UN, ICRC) all have their own reasons for refusing to help, or alternatively providing statistics which one must assume are distorted either deliberately or by the real difficulties.

At the beginning of September the Lebanese police published figures of 17,285 killed in Lebanon since 4 June of whom 5,515 were in Beirut and 30,103 wounded of whom 11,139 were in Beirut. Even this figure must be suspect for the reasons given above.

We are left with the probability that the total number killed is somewhere between ten and twenty thousand. But we are not even in a position to use such vague figures as this without being challenged.

[Handwritten signature]
John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

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