



Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 30 November 2012

Did the British embassy in Kabul ever close and relocate from an address close to the British consulate in Kabul to its current address there?

An article from The Times on the closure of the British embassy in Kabul in 1989 states:

“Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, has ordered Mr Ian Mackley, the Charge d'Affaires, and the five staff members at the British Embassy in Kabul to close the mission and return to Britain because of the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. They will leave by the end of next week in the lead-up to the final withdrawal of Soviet troops, due to be completed by February 15.” (The Times (28 January 1989) *Britain follows US lead to close down embassy in Kabul; Withdrawal from Afghanistan*)

See also article from The Guardian which states:

“Britain, France, and Italy have ordered the 'temporary closure' of their embassies in Kabul, acknowledging their helplessness in the face of Afghanistan's disintegration, and turning the exodus of Western diplomats into a mass flight. With the Americans also leaving, all Western Embassies in Kabul will have closed their doors by the end of next week.” (The Guardian (28 January 1989) *British embassy joins West's exodus from Afghan capital*)

A Daily Telegraph article states:

“The old British embassy was situated on a secluded hillside above Kabul. The building was an impressive example of 1920s architecture, with a ballroom and an oak-panelled library. The 26-acre grounds had three tennis courts, a hockey pitch and squash courts. In 1994 it was given to the Pakistan government for safekeeping but was razed by a mob. It is hoped that Mr Evans will be able to find accommodation somewhere in the compound, which once had a cluster of English-style country houses.” (The Daily Telegraph (16 November 2001) *Diplomat's mission to reopen embassy*)

See also Daily Telegraph article which states:

“The original embassy building was burnt down by a mob after it was handed over to Pakistan in 1994. The new premises are in the grounds of the hospital adjacent to the old embassy.” (The Daily Telegraph (20 November 2001) *Britain reopens its embassy as 'commitment to better future' Diplomacy*)

An article from The People states:

"The Union Jack fluttered proudly over Afghanistan's capital Kabul yesterday as the British Embassy opened again after 12 years in darkness. Royal Marines stood to attention and saluted as diplomats formally reclaimed the compound as a little piece of Britain. Charge D'Affaire Andrew Tesoriere slowly hoisted the flag up the pole with the help of a fellow civil servant. Then the national anthem was played for the first time since February 1989, when British officials fled the troubled country as Taleban extremists seized control." (The People (23 December 2001) *Flag Flies in Kabul after 12 Year Gap*)

A page on the website of the British Embassy in Kabul gives the current address of the embassy as follows:

British Embassy
15th Street, Roundabout Wazir Akbar Khan
PO Box 334
Kabul
Afghanistan
(UK in Afghanistan (30 November 2012) *Afghanistan, Kabul, British Embassy*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

References:

The Daily Telegraph (20 November 2001) *Britain reopens its embassy as 'commitment to better future' Diplomacy*

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

(Accessed 30 November 2012)

This is a subscription database

The Daily Telegraph (16 November 2001) *Diplomat's mission to reopen embassy*

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

(Accessed 30 November 2012)

This is a subscription database

The Guardian (28 January 1989) *British embassy joins West's exodus from Afghan capital*

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

(Accessed 30 November 2012)

This is a subscription database

The People (23 December 2001) *Flag Flies in Kabul after 12 Year Gap*

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

(Accessed 30 November 2012)

This is a subscription database

The Times (28 January 1989) *Britain follows US lead to close down embassy in Kabul; Withdrawal from Afghanistan*

<http://www.lexisnexis.com>

(Accessed 30 November 2012)

This is a subscription database

UK in Afghanistan (30 November 2012) *Afghanistan, Kabul, British Embassy*

<http://ukinafghanistan.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/contact>

(Accessed 30 November 2012)

Sources Consulted:

Electronic Immigration Network

Embassy of the United Kingdom in Afghanistan

European Country of Origin Information Network

Google

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Refugee Review Tribunal

UNHCR Refworld