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By ROBERT B. SEMPLE Jr. Special to The New York Times
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WASHINGTON, June 6—The United States took the first steps today to evacuate 40,000 American citizens now in the Middle East.

The Pentagon said 20 military transport planes were being flown from Western Europe to Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya to move United States citizens to safety if necessary.

The action, taken at the request of Ambassador David D. Newsom, was described by a Defense Department spokesman as a "precautionary measure." There are 8,900 Americans in Libya, mostly servicemen, their dependents or oil company employes.

The State Department said chartered civilian planes were flying to Beirut to evacuate some of the 4,900 Americans in Lebanon.

About 44,000 American citizens remain in Israel and in the 13 Arab nations involved in the war. They include 4,900 Government employes, 7,700 dependents of Government employes, 29,000 residents and 2,000 tourists.

The State Department also lists as "potential evacuees" about 8,000 "others," most of them aliens who have married employes of American oil companies.

10,000 Have Left Region

As a result of the earlier warnings by the State Department, 10,000 American citizens have already left the Middle East, mostly by commercial transport. Commercial service has now been interrupted by the hostilities.

The 10,000 came from Israel, Jordan, Syria and Egypt. The State Department press officer, Robert J. McCloskey, said 2,200 Americans had left the United Arab Republic. About 900 remaining there are permanent or official personnel in Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said.

The Associated Press reported from Cairo this evening that all remaining Americans had been ordered out by the Government of the United Arab Republic.

The United States' concern for the safety of its citizens derives from growing Arab hostility as reflected in attacks on United States installations.

No official United States personnel have been killed or injured in the attacks, but the number of incidents has been sufficient to convince the Government that Americans who remain in the Middle East are inviting danger. Following is a rundown of these incidents, based on fragmentary information received by the State Department:

Alexandria, United Arab Republic: American consulate sacked and "badly damaged."

Cairo: March on Embassy thwarted by local police.

Beirut, Lebanon: Minor damage inflicted on American Embassy.

Benghazi, Libya: Damage to the embassy office and "serious damage" to the United States Information Service Center.

Tripoli, Libya: Embassy stoned by rock-throwing crowds.

Baghdad, Iraq: Windows of an American vehicle smashed, minor damage at the embassy, books destroyed in the American Library.

Damascus, Syria: Windows broken in embassy; station wagon belonging to the United States Information Agency damaged by a crowd of 60 demonstrators.

Kuwait: Demonstrations in front of embassy, no damage reported.

Khartoum, the Sudan: embassy stoned by rock-throwing crowd.

Sana, Yemen: Windows broken in embassy during demonstration.

Tunis: British and American Embassies damaged by crowds yesterday, drawing apology from Tunisian Government

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