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BA Fli Kuwai

By Gordon Core
Security correspo

5 days ago



GETTY IMAGES

The plane was destroyed on the runway after the hostages had disembarked

The foreign secretary has admitted that Parliament and the public were misled for decades about a British Airways flight which landed in Kuwait during an Iraqi invasion in 1990.

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But files released today to the National Archives show the British Ambassador called the resident clerk at the Foreign Office around midnight with reports that an invasion of Kuwait had begun.

This was passed to the Foreign Office Middle East department and to Downing Street, as well as MI6, the Cabinet Office and Ministry of Defence. But British Airways was not told.

The call was not publicly acknowledged or disclosed until now.



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The plane landed in the early hours of the morning. Less than an hour later, the airport was closed and the passengers and crew were trapped. Many were taken hostage.

Some were mistreated, sexually assaulted and kept in near-starvation conditions before they were released that December.



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Five-year-old
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The files suggest the British ambassador was unclear whether the Iraqi
incursion was limited or large-scale. The invasion also swept through Kuwait
far faster than many expected when it first began.

The episode has aroused particular controversy because of persistent reports
that a team of undercover operatives were on board the plane as part of a
mission to be inserted into Kuwait to carry out surveillance.

"I am convinced that the military intelligence exploitation of British Airways
Flight 149 did take place, despite repeated official denials," Anthony Paice,

the world the

who was serving at the British Embassy at the time and has been previously named as an MI6 officer, said earlier this year.



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"This was a deliberate act by the British government to use a civilian airliner as a military transport into what turned out to be a live-fire war zone," he said.

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