

UK expels Iran diplomats

Closes its Iran embassy after attack

AFP, Tehran

Britain expelled all Iranian diplomats from London and closed its Tehran embassy yesterday as part of a "very tough" response to the storming of the mission the day before by Iranian protesters.

Foreign Secretary William Hague said he had ordered the immediate closure of the Iranian embassy in London and ordered diplomats to leave UK within 48 hours.

The pull-out of all British embassy staff from Iran to Dubai in the neighbouring United Arab Emirates was completed by late yesterday, Western diplomats told AFP.

Meanwhile, Iran's foreign ministry called the British move "hasty", state TV reported, according to Reuters. It said Iran would take "further appropriate action".

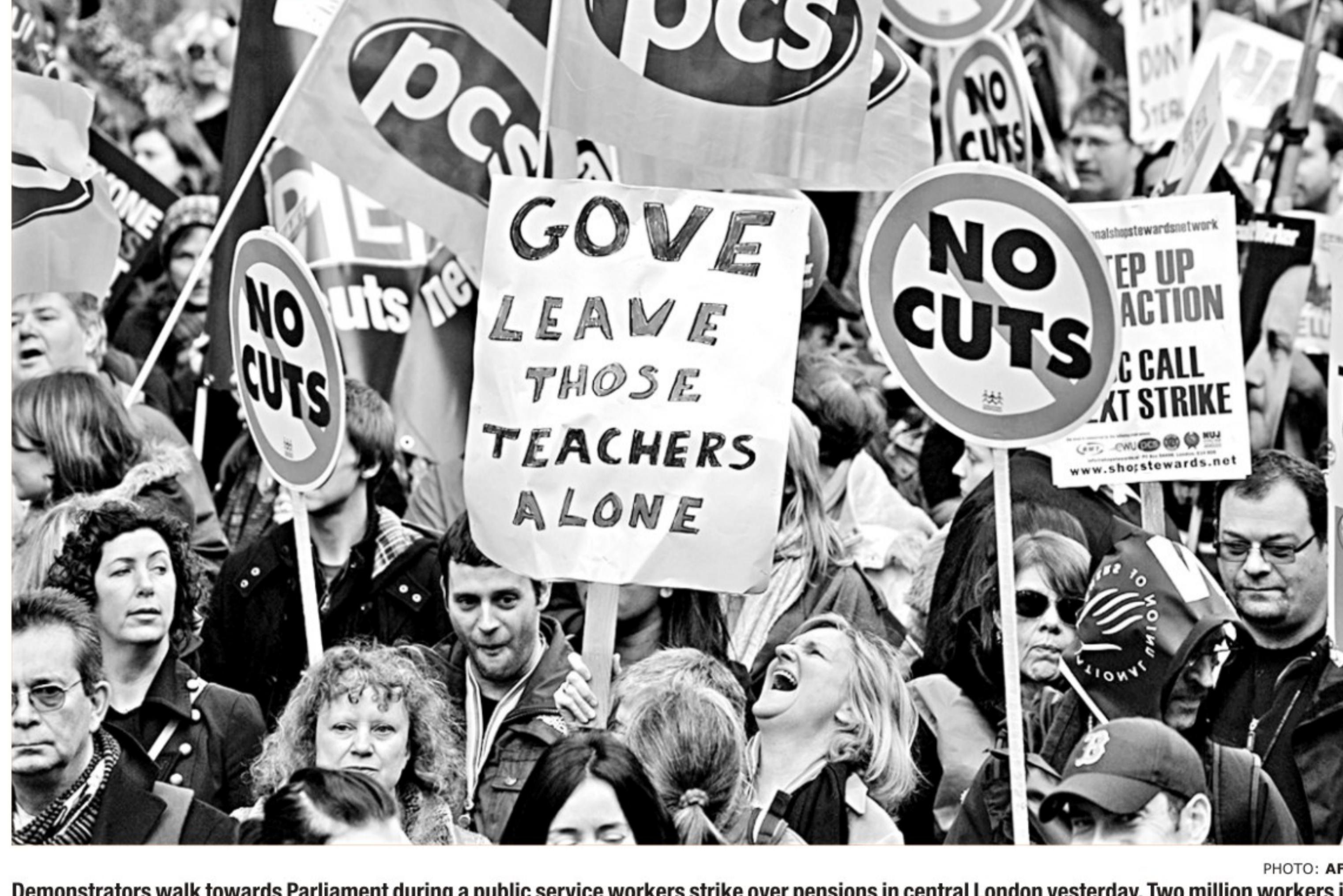
Also on Wednesday, Germany and France announced they were temporarily recalling their ambassadors to Tehran. Norway also said it had temporarily closed its embassy.

Other European missions were evaluating the situation.

Britain's moves followed violent scenes Tuesday, when protesters rampaged for hours through its two diplomatic compounds in Tehran.

They tore down the British flag, smashed windows, trashed embassy offices, set documents alight, and briefly blocked the movements of six British diplomats. No British personnel were hurt, having taken refuge in secure areas.

Iranian police, initially inactive, ultimately forced the protesters to leave after firing tear gas and clashing with them.



Demonstrators walk towards Parliament during a public service workers strike over pensions in central London yesterday. Two million workers in Britain went on strike over changes to their pensions in the biggest walkout for decades, closing thousands of schools and disrupting transport.

PHOTO: AFP

Turkey slaps Syria with sanctions

BBC ONLINE

Turkey yesterday announced a raft of economic and financial sanctions on Syria over its violent crackdown on protesters.

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said President Bashar al-Assad's government had "come to the end of the road".

Meanwhile, The UN Human Rights Council will hold a special session on the situation in Syria tomorrow following a request by the European Union, a diplomatic source said.

The move follows a report published Monday by the UN-appointed investigators who found Syrian security forces had committed crimes against humanity, including the killing and torture of children, on orders from the top of Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The Arab League announced sanctions on Sunday. It has already suspended Syria over its failure to implement proposals it had agreed to.

The Arab League's decision marks the first time the body has imposed such punitive measures on one of its own members.

Turkey's sanctions mostly target the Syrian leadership. The foreign minister said all those responsible for violence against civilians, and businesses close to President Assad, are banned from travelling to Turkey, and their assets there will be frozen.

Hillary on historic Myanmar tour

AFP, Naypyidaw

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton arrived in Myanmar yesterday on the first top-level US visit for half a century, seeking to encourage a "movement for change" in the military-dominated nation.

Hillary flew into a little-used airport in Naypyidaw, the remote city where Myanmar's generals abruptly moved their capital in 2005, in a stark test of US efforts to engage the strategic but long-isolated country.

Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, has surprised observers with a series of reformist moves in the past year, including releasing opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest and nominally ending decades of military rule.

President Barack Obama personally announced Hillary's trip during a visit to Asia earlier this month, citing "flickers" of hope. But his administration has sought to keep expectations low, mindful of other false dawns in Myanmar.



Hillary arrived in Myanmar yesterday

Meanwhile, Beijing welcomed Myanmar's moves to engage with the West, as a state newspaper said China would not allow its interests there to be "stamped on".

During a stop in South Korea for an aid conference, Hillary said the United States and other nations hoped that the flickers "will be ignited into a movement for change that will benefit the people of the country".

Hillary has said she will insist that Myanmar free all political prisoners -- activists' estimates vary between 500 and more than 1,600 -- and move to end long-running ethnic conflicts that have displaced thousands of people.

Senior administration officials said Clinton would not announce an end to sweeping economic sanctions on Myanmar, a step that would require approval by Congress. But top US diplomats rarely undertake such high-profile visits without being ready to offer some incentives for further action.

She was scheduled to meet yesterday President Thein Sein, a former general now at the vanguard of reforms, before flying later to the main city Yangon for talks with Suu Kyi.

A senior State Department official travelling with Hillary said he expected Myanmar would move forward on one key US concern -- allegations of past military cooperation with nuclear-armed North Korea.

Israel to release Palestinian funds

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel said yesterday it will resume sending millions of dollars in customs duties to the Palestinian Authority, nearly a month after it froze transfers over the Palestinians' admission to Unesco.

"Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved the renewal of the transfer of tax monies, for the time being, to the Palestinian Authority," the Israeli leader's office said.

Every month, Israel transfers tens of millions of dollars in customs duties which are levied on goods destined for Palestinian markets that transit through Israeli ports, and which constitute a large percentage of the Palestinian budget.

The fund transfers were halted after Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas successfully secured Palestinian membership in the UN cultural agency Unesco last month, over objections from Israel and Washington.

Army radio, citing sources at the Forum, said ministers would reconsider the transfers if the Palestinians renewed their UN bid, if Hamas became involved in Palestinian policy or if the funds were channelled to "terror activity".

Israel had been expected to release the funds this week, after international criticism of the freeze and comments from Netanyahu.



An anti-Wall Street demonstrator with a question on a placard checks messages on her cellphone on Tuesday in Los Angeles.

OCCUPY WALL STREET MOVEMENT Police dismantle two camps in US

AFP, Los Angeles

Hundreds of riot police flooded into downtown Los Angeles and Philadelphia yesterday to clear anti-Wall Street protest camps in mostly peaceful operations that saw dozens arrested.

The latest moves targeting the two-month-old protest movement against corporate greed and inequality came days after announced eviction deadlines and did not bring the running clashes and tear gas that have marked previous raids.

In Los Angeles, dozens of officers in helmets formed lines to seal off an area around the City Hall park camp, while others began arresting around a dozen protesters and leading them away in plastic handcuffs.

At around the same time as the Los Angeles operation, riot police converged on a similar Occupy Wall Street camp in the eastern city of Philadelphia, clearing a tent camp and setting off an hours-long march through downtown.

After the initial burst of action the calm returned, as police gently pushed the crowds out of the central protest area and began arresting a stream of people and dismantling tents.

The operation got under way two days after a midnight Sunday deadline set by LA.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa to clear the camp, which has been in place since October 1.

Hundreds of protesters -- up to 500 according to one estimate -- had been congregating in the area when the police action began.

Costliest mistake in history! 1/10th of Apple was sold for \$800

THE DAILYMAIL ONLINE

Even a few years ago, the idea of computer memorabilia fetching five-digit sums at auction would have seemed hilarious.

But Sotheby's NY is not selling an ordinary piece of business memorabilia. It's the contract where Ronald Wayne -- the little-known 'third partner' in Apple -- sold his share for \$800, leaving the company to Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak.

Wayne -- a 'father figure' to Jobs, according to Walter Isaacson's recent biography -- owned 10 per cent of the fledgling company, then in severe financial trouble. It would now be worth \$35b.



Ronald Wayne

Wayne had had financial difficulties with start-up firms before, and decided the time was ripe to leave Apple -- then a start-up company run from a garage, where Steve Wozniak answered all phone calls.

In an interview with Bloomberg News, Wayne described both Wozniak and Jobs as 'intellectual giants', but said that he had made the right decision leaving Apple. Wayne claims he helped the young, hippyish Jobs to grapple with business reality.

'I'd stayed with them, I'd have ended up the richest man in the cemetery,' he said.

Wayne has written a book entitled, 'Adventures of an Apple Founder.'

REPORT ON TALIBAN Pakistan may summon BBC

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan said yesterday it was looking at summoning the BBC to demand an explanation over a documentary about the Taliban that has left the BBC World News channel blocked nationwide.

Cable operators pulled the channel late Tuesday amid anger over Nato air strikes that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers.

The row relates to a two-part BBC documentary, "Secret Pakistan", which questions Pakistan's commitment to tackling Taliban militancy.

The BBC said it was deeply concerned by the move.

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