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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 February 1980

*Checked that
Press Office not
attending.*

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M.P.*

Dear Michael,

Iranian Anniversary Celebrations

The Iranian Embassy in London will be holding a reception on 11 February. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary believes that it would not be appropriate for Ministers or senior officials to be seen attending such a celebration on Iranian Embassy premises while the American Embassy hostages are still being held.

At the same time, however, we do not wish to prejudice our chances for improving relations with Iran once the hostages are released. Lord Carrington has decided therefore that the right response would be to limit official attendance at the Iranian reception to those who deal with the Embassy at working level. As far as the FCO is concerned, this will in practice mean attendance is only by officers of First Secretary rank and below. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary attaches importance to the public service as a whole observing a common line and therefore suggests that attendance by officials in other Government Departments should be limited to the rank of Principal and below, and to the equivalent rank in the case of officers in HM Forces.

Our posts overseas are being similarly advised. We are also trying to secure agreement by the other members of the European community that this should be a common line.

I should be grateful if the recipients of this letter would ensure that everyone in their Department who needs to know is made aware of this policy.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of the Cabinet and to David Wright (Cabinet Office).

Yours etc

Paul
(P Lever)

Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street

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