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Press Office

Iran

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

8 April 1980

Dear Stephen.

IRAN

As you know, the Prime Minister spoke with the Lord Privy Seal on the telephone this afternoon.

The Lord Privy told the Prime Minister that Ambassador Brewster had called on him and had handed over an aide-memoire asking us to intensify sanctions and break off diplomatic relations with the Iranians. He intended to consult colleagues on how we should respond to this aide-memoire. But Ambassador Brewster had also raised a question on which an urgent decision was needed - whether we would be prepared to give temporary sanctuary to fifteen Iranians whom, because they were out of sympathy with the Iranian regime or were married to Americans, the United States Administration did not wish to expel. Provided their number was limited to fifteen, and provided we were able to obtain an assurance from the Americans that they would be taken back within a few weeks at most, he was inclined to agree to the American proposal.

The Prime Minister said that she agreed, even though there was a slight risk of retaliation by the Iranians against our diplomats in Tehran. She hoped that the decision would be given as little publicity as possible, and to the extent that anything was said, it should be made clear that the Iranians concerned were being allowed to stop off in the U.K. only temporarily. She also asked that Sir John Graham should be warned. The Lord Privy said that he would ensure that this was done.

I am copying this letter to John Chilcot (Home Office).

*[Handwritten signature]*

*[Handwritten signature]*

S. J. Gomersall, Esq.,  
Lord Privy Seal's Office.

*[Handwritten initials]*