



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

7 August 2012

Richard Ottaway MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

Dear Richard,

As you will be aware, our embassy in Tehran was forced to close last November. I am pleased to report that the Iranian Government has confirmed its acceptance of Sweden as our Protecting Power in Tehran. This does not represent an improvement in bilateral relations. Rather it is the long overdue acceptance of the arrangement to which we are entitled under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations following the attack on our Embassy. We have also accepted Oman as Iran's protecting power in the UK.

Swedish representatives looked after UK interests in the 1980s and will once again be responsible for a British Interests Section in Tehran. The British Interests Section will provide limited consular assistance to British nationals in Iran for emergencies only and will also manage the staff and property of the British Embassy in Tehran. We hope one day to be able to re-open our Embassy when the conditions are right and we can be assured that Iran will meet its obligations under the Vienna Convention to protect our staff and property. In the meantime we are very grateful to the Government of Sweden for performing this role for us.

I am also arranging for a copy of this letter to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Yours ever
Alistair

ALISTAIR BURT
Minister for the Middle East and North Africa