



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 September 1979

Dear Michael,

Chile: Exchange of Ambassadors

In his minute of 17 September to the Prime Minister, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary sought agreement to his proposal that he should in the coming weeks tell the Chilean Government that we agree to the reinstatement of Ambassadors.

It was reported in the press on 17 September that Mr John Heath, who until July was serving as Consul-General in Chicago, would be taking up the post of Ambassador in Santiago. We do not know the origin of these reports: but they were accurate in suggesting that the Government had Mr Heath in mind for the post of Ambassador in Santiago when relations with Chile were restored to that level.

While serving in Chicago, Mr Heath was chosen to go to Santiago as Charge d'Affaires. His personal effects were consigned to Santiago and it is possible that their arrival in Chile has led to the press story. In selecting Mr Heath for the post, we had in mind that he would be suitable for promotion to Ambassador if a decision to restore Ambassadors was taken. However, on 5 September, the Chileans made it clear that they would not wish us to up-grade our Charge d'Affaires to Ambassador. It was, therefore, decided that Mr Heath (who is still briefing himself for his new appointment) should not go to Santiago until a decision on the reinstatement of Ambassadors had been taken.

The FCO's News Department will continue to take the line, in answer to enquiries, that no decision has been taken on the reinstatement of Ambassadors. If asked about Mr Heath, they will stress that we have not sought agreement from the Chilean Government for the post of Ambassador.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of OD and to the Attorney-General, and to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

Yours own

Paul Davis

PP

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

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