



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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London SW1A 2AH

19 December 1990

Des David,

CSJ.

will request of next

Visit by Mr Howarth to the UAE and Bahrain

Thank you for your letter of 14 December giving the advice of MISC 136 on Mr Howarth's proposed visit.

We await the decision of the Secretary of State for Education on whether Mr Howarth's departmental commitments will prevent him from travelling overseas at that time. In the Foreign Secretary's view this is the main question.

If Mr Howarth has no domestic constraints, we would support his wish to visit Dubai and Bahrain as planned, unless there is firm evidence of a specific security risk to him. The visit will be over before the UN deadline of 15 January. Other sources continue to indicate that the Iraqis will not attack the allies unless we initiate operations against them. We have no intention of doing so before 15 January except in response to Iraqi provocation. We therefore see little prospect of the kind of terrorist incident described in your letter. Furthermore, three Cabinet Ministers have already visited the UAE since the Iraqi invasion and the Foreign Secretary is planning to go there again after Mr Howarth. Lastly, our Ambassador in Abu Dhabi is confident that the UAE authorities will take all the action necessary to protect Mr Howarth at his one public appearance and indeed throughout his visit. The Foreign Secretary is frankly surprised at the line taken by MISC 136.

As Mr Hogg said in his letter of 22 November to Mr Howarth, the Dubai Gulf Education Exhibition is a major exercise of its type. We are sure that the DES would derive significant credit if Mr Howarth were there to support the British participants and organisers; and his involvement would continue the series of high level visits that we have been seeking to maintain during the Gulf crisis. We have made a significant investment in backing the Gulf states against Iraqi aggression and we are doing all that we can to encourage British companies to tough out the present difficulties so that they are poised after the Gulf crisis to benefit from the significant export and investment opportunities which should be ours for the asking. Mr Howarth's attendance would help keep our end up. The DTI share our view.

For these reasons we hope that Mr Howarth will be able to spare the time to go to Dubai and Bahrain at this crucial time in the Gulf crisis.

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I am copying this letter to Charles Powell (No 10) and to Mr Howarth's Private Secretary in the Department of Education and Science.

James
Stephen Wall

(J S Wall)
Private Secretary

D J Gowan Esq
Cabinet Office

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I am enclosing this letter to the Honorable (No 10) and to
Mr. Secretary's Private Secretary in the Department of Education
and Science.

*John
Robertson*

(2 2/11)
Private Secretary

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General Office



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