



File No
Iraq

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 April 1981

VISIT BY THE IRAQI MINISTER OF TRADE

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to Mike Pattison of 24 April about the visit to this country of the Iraqi Minister of Trade. She has agreed to receive Mr. Hassan Ali for a short courtesy call at 0930 on Tuesday, 23 June.

I am sending copies of this letter to Francis Richards (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Jonathan Dawson (Ministry of Defence).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

John Rhodes, Esq.,
Department of Trade.

A



From the Secretary of State

Mike Pattison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London, SW1

Handwritten:
 (1) Alexander
 (2) Prime Minister
 wd you be
 happy to see the
 Iraqi Minister of Trade
 I cd fit him in for a
 2 hour time 25/4

Handwritten:
 Yes
 24 April 1981
 mt

Handwritten:
 Dear Mike,

VISIT TO LONDON OF THE IRAQI MINISTER OF TRADE

The Iraqi Minister of Trade has accepted my Secretary of State's invitation to make a 3 day visit to London beginning on 22 June.

Our main objective is to further cultivate our relations with Iraq. At present, and in part because of the stresses from the war with Iran, the Iraqi regime is looking for an improvement in its standing with this country and with other EC countries. The Iraqi Foreign Minister came to London in March this year, the first Iraqi Ministerial visit since the Government took office. The proposed visit by the Trade Minister, Hassan Ali, is another step forward. As a member of the Revolutionary Command Council he is more important in the Iraqi hierarchy than the Foreign Minister and is certainly closer to President Hussain. He is, in short, a key member of the Iraqi regime and we need to treat him accordingly.

The political importance of the visit is certainly greater than its benefit to trade. But in terms of trade too Iraq is a market in which our exporters have made considerable progress recently. United Kingdom exports in 1980 rose by 60% to over £320m, and in the first two months of 1981 were twice that of the corresponding period last year. For the first time United Kingdom companies are winning large projects - 4 worth over £40m each since the start of the year - a clear sign of our political favour. It is also intended that a centrepiece of the visit will be the signing of an Economic Co-operation Agreement. If we can maintain or improve our relations with Iraq it is a market that offers greater scope than most for future growth.

The Ministry of Defence also have a keen interest in the visit, and we are approaching Mr Nott's office for an appointment.

Hassan Ali knows that his politically junior colleague (the Foreign Minister) called on the Prime Minister in March. In Belgium and Italy on recent visits Hassan Ali has been received by both Prime and Foreign Ministers. Both my Secretary of State and Lord Carrington have agreed to see Hassan Ali, and strongly recommend that he is also received by the Prime Minister. Even a short courtesy call



From the Secretary of State

would have a big impact. If the Prime Minister agrees I would be grateful if you could let me know when she would be free.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Francis Richards (FCO) and Jonathan Dawson (Ministry of Defence).

Yours sincerely,
JR

JOHN RHODES
Private Secretary