

16 Feb or 19 March

J. Peeg

FIVE

SW



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 January, 1983

Visit by First Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq

Thank you for your letter of 7 January. The Prime Minister could offer Mr. Ramadhan talks at noon followed by lunch on either 16 or 25 February.

I am copying this letter to John Rhodes (Department of Trade), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry) and Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Iraq.



10 DOWNING STREET

Note for File

25th Feb is no longer a suitable date for PM to give a lunch for the Deputy PM of Iraq. This is one of the dates set aside for Anglo/Italian Summit.

Steve

17/1/83



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

You could offer the Iraqi
Deputy Prime Minister talks
followed by lunch on
either 16 or 25 Feb?
Contact?

7 January 1983

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Yes
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Dear John,

Visit by Mr Taha Ramadhan, First Deputy Prime Minister

Francis Richards wrote to Michael Alexander on 23 November 1981 with a proposal that the First Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr Taha Ramadhan, should be invited by the Prime Minister to visit the United Kingdom as her guest. Michael Alexander's reply of 25 November 1981 recorded the Prime Minister's agreement.

Iraq's preoccupation with the war against Iran and Mr Ramadhan's ministerial responsibilities have prevented him from taking up the invitation before but he has spoken warmly of his interest in coming at the earliest possible time. He has now told us that he would like the visit to take place in late January or February. We understand that the Prime Minister's diary over both these periods is such that while she might be able to receive Mr Ramadhan for talks, she would be unable to offer him a meal.

Mr Pym believes that a visit by Mr Ramadhan soon would be useful. There has been a steady improvement in our bilateral relations over the past three years. Exports have risen steadily. 1982 figures seem certain to outstrip comfortably the 1981 record total of £680 million. Iraq's current economic problems caused by the war mean that we, and our competitors, are unlikely to sustain these levels next year. But when the war ends, Iraq promises to be a very lucrative market for our exporters. It is a difficult regime. There remain a number of thorny problems in our bilateral relations, mainly consular cases, but we have much to gain from developing closer links. Mr Ramadhan continues to be the economic overlord in Iraq. His visit would provide us with an opportunity to show him British industry and in particular to promote specific projects in which he will have a direct interest, eg Nimrod and Hawk.

/Unfortunately



Unfortunately, Mr Ramadhan can be very touchy about protocol. We need to offer him a programme which takes account of this and of his position as number two in the Ba'ath regime. So far as the official part of the programme is concerned, Mr Pym envisages a round of calls, as well as hospitality. He hopes that the Prime Minister ~~as nominal host~~ will agree to talks and a meal (as envisaged in Francis Richards's letter under reference). A call at noon followed by lunch might be the best arrangement. Mr Pym believes that it would jeopardise the success of the visit if the programme did not include the offer of a meal hosted by the Prime Minister. It would be better therefore to offer dates some way ahead, if necessary, than to offer earlier dates without the prospect of hospitality by Mrs Thatcher. Our Ambassador in Baghdad has advised that Mr Ramadhan will probably refuse to come if he is not offered hospitality by the Prime Minister.

I should be grateful to know if the Prime Minister would agree to talks and a meal as proposed, and if you could let me have perhaps alternative dates which we could put to the Iraqis for the visit.

I am copying this letter to John Rhodes (Department of Trade), Ian Ellison (Department of Industry) and David Oman (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever

John Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

Iraq, Nov '81, visit by Mr Ramadan

17 JAN 1983

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