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cc: PC

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 November, 1985

VISIT OF HASSAN ALI

Thank you for your letter of 18 November about the visit of Hassan Ali.

The Prime Minister agrees to see Mr. Hassan Ali for fifteen minutes at 0930 hrs on 29 November. This is the only time available in her diary and we can offer no alternative. You should be aware that the Prime Minister will use the meeting to raise the cases of Mr. Smith and Mr. Hagger, and you will wish to ensure that this is fully covered in the briefing, which should reach us by 1600 hrs on 28 November.

I am copying this letter to Peter Ricketts (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

(C.D. Powell)

M. Cocks, Esq.,
Department of Trade and Industry.

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JB

9.30/29

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From the Minister for Trade

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
1-19 VICTORIA STREET
LONDON SW1H 0ET

Telephone (Direct dialling) 01-215 5144
GTN 215
(Switchboard) 215 7877

Prime Minister

This is a bore.
But quite a lot of trade
could hang on it: and you
could raise Smith
& Hagger.

9.30 -
9.45
Feb 29 Nov

Charles Powell Esq
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1

18 November 1985

Agree to find
him 15 minutes?

CDP 10/ki

Dear Charles

VISIT OF HASSAN ALI, IRAQI TRADE MINISTER, WEEK BEGINNING 25 NOVEMBER

Mr Hassan Ali, the Iraqi Trade Minister, is visiting London as co-chairman of the UK/Iraq Joint Commission and has asked for calls on the Prime Minister, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr Biffen and Mr Tebbit as well as Mr Brittan (Mr Channon as UK co-chairman will be his host).

Mr Hassan Ali has met the Prime Minister twice before on visits to London, in June 1981 when he came to sign the UK Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation, and again in 1983 when he called on her with Mr Ramadhan, the First Deputy Prime Minister. Mr Hassan Ali has met Sir Geoffrey Howe in the UK previously, and knows Mr Biffen, who signed the Agreement establishing the Joint Commission and was the first UK co-chairman with Mr Hassan Ali. He would like to meet Mr Tebbit because he did not have the opportunity to do so when he was Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (he is aware that Mr Tebbit is Chairman of the Conservative Party).

As a member of the Revolutionary Command Council, Hassan Ali is a leading figure in the Iraqi Government. Like all senior Iraqis he sets great store by the level at which he is received on overseas visits. During Lord Jellicoe's recent call on him in Baghdad he underlined the importance which he personally attaches to renewing his acquaintance with the Prime Minister during his forthcoming visit and hinted that disappointment would not help bilateral commercial relations - which have improved over the past two years following the provision of successive tranches in medium term credit. Our Ambassador in Baghdad recommends in favour of a brief courtesy call; Lord Jellicoe strongly supports that recommendation.

Mr Brittan is aware that the Prime Minister has agreed to see Tariq Assiz, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, on 4 December and recognises that she might be reluctant to spare time to receive a call from a more junior Iraqi Minister a few days earlier. He feels, however,

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Charles Powell Esq

November 1985

that Hassan Ali, by virtue of his office as Minister of Trade and role of co-chairman of the Joint Commission, could if disappointed use his influence to the disadvantage of British exporters. UK exports to Iraq, most of them to the public sector, are running at an annual rate of £450m and are up 45% in the first nine months of 1985 - well above the trend for the Middle East and worldwide. Mr Brittan is most anxious to encourage this favourable trend and not to jeopardise the good bilateral relations painstakingly built up in the past four years. He would, therefore, be extremely grateful if the Prime Minister could find time to receive a brief courtesy call from Hassan Ali lasting no more than 15 minutes, which would give him much personal satisfaction and protect our important and growing commercial interests in Iraq. The substance of the discussion could be confined to economic matters and need not anticipate the subsequent discussion with the Foreign Minister on wider political questions. The main purpose would be to welcome progress in trade relations, to underline the importance of payments being made on time, and to indicate our general willingness to provide further credit without making any specific commitment.

Mr Brittan would also be grateful if the Foreign Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Lord Privy Seal could spare a few minutes to receive brief courtesy calls from Hassan Ali, which would help to maintain the good relations from which UK exporters could continue to benefit.

Mr Hassan Ali is, at present, expected to arrive in the UK about midday on Tuesday 26 November and to leave on Friday 29 November. He would be available to call on Ministers on the morning of 27 November and at any time other than late morning on 28 November. If the Prime Minister and the other Ministers concerned are willing to receive him, perhaps you and their Private Offices would suggest convenient times so that we may finalise a programme.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Lord Privy Seal.

Yours

Matthew Cocks

MATTHEW COCKS
Private Secretary to the
Minister for Trade (Paul Channon)

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