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Tel

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 November 1981

VISIT BY THE FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF IRAQ

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 23 November suggesting that the First Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Taha Ramadhan, should be invited to this country. The Prime Minister is content that an invitation should be issued. You may, therefore, like to arrange for the despatch of the telegram enclosed with your letter.

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

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Francis Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 November 1981

*NOT a very attractive guest,
I fear, but the visit might
be lucrative in the long run.*

Dear Michael,

Appl?

Amul. 23/x1

Yes mt

Lord Carrington has read with interest Mr Biffen's report to the Prime Minister of his successful visit to Baghdad at the beginning of October.

*filed on
Iraq July 89
Iraqi Iraq relations*

Lord Carrington has been considering proposals for further inward visits by Iraqi Ministers, and in particular a recommendation that the Prime Minister should be asked to extend an invitation to Mr Taha Ramadhan, the First Deputy Prime Minister, to come here as a guest of the Government.

The steady improvement in our relations with the Iraqis over the past year or so is encouraging. High-level visits have undoubtedly played a very valuable part in strengthening our links. The visits this year of the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Trade Minister, and Oil Minister provided opportunities for frank exchanges on bilateral, regional and international issues. The Iraqis place much importance on these visits. Lord Carrington believes that they have contributed enormously towards improving our bilateral relations with the Iraqis. We are reaping the rewards in trade. As Mr Biffen has pointed out, Iraq is a lucrative market, albeit one which, for political reasons, we must watch carefully. The prospects are good, with exports currently running at a rate of £700 m.p.a.

Lord Carrington thinks that we need to keep up the momentum. He therefore believes that it would be appropriate for the Prime Minister to invite Taha Ramadhan to pay an official visit.

Ramadhan is in charge of Iraq's overall economic policy, is Commander of the People's Army, a 200,000 strong party militia, and is a senior member of the Revolutionary Command Council, second only to Saddam Hussein. His standing has grown since the war with Iran started to go wrong. He has considerable influence in the awarding of major contracts in industries immediately within his control. A visit here would provide an occasion for him to have useful talks and to see something of our industry. Ramadhan considers himself to be of Prime Ministerial rank (rather like Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia, also a 'First Deputy Prime Minister'). This would necessarily mean some involvement by the Prime Minister with his programme, for the Iraqis are very conscious

/of their



of their dignity (and Taha Ramadhan can be personally very awkward on occasion). Lord Carrington would envisage therefore a round of official talks, and the Prime Minister being host at a lunch or dinner. In inviting Taha Ramadhan here, we would have to accept that he would be likely to invite the Prime Minister to repay his visit, perhaps in 1983. While the war with Iran continues, this would be out of the question. But if and when it ended, there could be arguments in favour of her accepting, perhaps including Iraq as part of a trip to other countries, eg Jordan or Turkey.

I should be grateful to know if the Prime Minister would agree in principle to invite Mr Taha Ramadhan sometime in May/June 1982. The Iraqis will be preoccupied next year with arrangements for the November Non-Aligned Movement summit, to which they are host, and this might lead them to use the summit as an excuse for putting off their acceptance until later in the year. But it would be appropriate, nevertheless, to put in our offer soon to demonstrate our interest. I enclose a draft of a telegram which subject to the Prime Minister's views we would propose to send to Baghdad.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Rhodes (Dept of Trade), Ian Ellison (Dept of Industry) and David Omand (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Francis Richards".

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

OUT TELEGRAM

	Classification and Caveats	Precedence/Deskby
	CONFIDENTIAL	PRIORITY

ZCZC
GRS
CLASS
CAVEATS
DESKBY
FM FCO
PRE/ADD
TEL NO

1	ZCZC
2	GRS
3	CONFIDENTIAL
4	
5	
6	FM FCO 241745Z NOV 81
7	TO PRIORITY BAGHDAD
8	TELEGRAM NUMBER
9	YOUR TEL 682: INWARD MINISTERIAL VISITS FROM IRAQ
10	1. The Prime Minister has agreed to invite Taha Ramadhan to
11	pay an official visit and to act as his nominal host. You
12	should seek an early opportunity to discuss a visit with
13	Taha Ramdhan and to seek his views on possible timings. The
14	best dates from our point of view would be 2/3 days around
15	either 7 May or 16 June, on either of which the Prime Minister
16	would be free to take part in his programme. You will need to
17	stress that once dates have been agreed, it will be very
18	difficult to alter them.
19	2. When dates have been agreed, we shall arrange for a formal
20	invitation from the Prime Minister to be forwarded to you for
21	delivery.
22	///
23	//
24	/
25	

NNNN ends telegram		BLANK	Catchword	
File number		Dept	Distribution Limited	PS/Mr Hurd
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PRIVATE SECRETARY			NENAD	PS
Telephone number			News Dept	PS/PUS
233 4831			PCD	
Authorised for despatch			Mr Moberly	
			Sir J Graham	
Comcen reference	Time of despatch			

12 4 NOV 1981

