



da
Iraq

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 March 1983

Visit of First Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq

Thank you for your letter of 15 March.

The only day in the period between mid May and 12 June when the Prime Minister could hold talks and give lunch to Mr. Taha Ramadhan is Friday, 10 June. I have today seen John Rhodes' letter to you of 24 March which suggests that the Secretary of State for Trade may have some difficulty about this date. If that difficulty can be resolved, the Prime Minister would be content for you to put the new date to the Iraqis.

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

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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From the Secretary of State

John Holmes Esq
Private Secretary to the
Secretary of State for
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
London, SW1A 2AL

24 March 1983

Dear John,

VISIT OF TAHA RAMADHAN, FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF IRAQ

in box
I have seen a copy of your 15 March letter to John Coles, suggesting revised dates for Mr Ramadhan's visit of sometime between mid-May and 12 June.

The Secretary of State is thinking in terms of making overseas visits during this period. I am not yet in a position to approach you formally for the Foreign Secretary's approval, but it is very probable that he will be making a European visit between Thursday 26 May-Tuesday 31 May inclusive, and quite likely that he will be looking to make a Far Eastern visit very shortly afterwards in the first two weeks of June.

From the Secretary of State's point of view, therefore, it would clearly be preferable if any visit by Mr Ramadhan took place in the third or fourth weeks of May, and preferably the third week beginning Monday 16 May. Clearly, real difficulties could arise if, in the event, the Secretary of State was expected to co-chair a Joint Commission with Mr Ramadhan.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Coles (Number 10) and to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

Yours sincerely,

JOHN RHODES
Private Secretary

Irak : Proposed visit by 1st Dep. P.M
11/87

24 MAR 1983





Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 March 1983

The only possibility
is later followed by lunch
on Friday, 10 June.

Agree?

A.F.C. 15/3.

*Simply that is
in the situation
means? If not - yes.*

Dear John,

Visit of Taha Ramadhan, First Deputy Prime
Minister of Iraq

As you know, the above visit, which was to have taken place between 8-10 March, was postponed late in February by the Iraqis. They pleaded the war, the deteriorating economy and the call of the NAM Summit. They suggested rescheduling the visit to the second half of May or the month of June. The UK/Iraqi Joint Commission talks, and visit of Trade Minister Hassan Ali, due to take place between 8-10 March, were also postponed.

The Prime Minister's invitation to Mr Ramadhan has now been open for over a year. The arguments in favour of Mr Ramadhan's visit to the United Kingdom were set out in my letter to you of 7 January. These arguments remain valid, and while Iraqi behaviour so far is tiresome and there can be no guarantee that things will be better next time round, Mr Pym believes that it is in our best interests that the visit should go ahead, preferably before 12 June (since the fasting month of Ramadhan begins then, which could lead to complications for a visit later in the month). The Iraqis have asked that the Joint Commission talks should also be rescheduled to June, so that Taha Ramadhan can 'take the chair' on the Iraqi side. We and the Department of Trade are content to go along with this, but we have made it clear to our Ambassador in Baghdad that the Prime Minister would take no substantive part in the talks on the UK side, though some association between the joint Commission and the high level visit may in the event be appropriate.

The essential part of the programme for a visit by Ramadhan would be talks with the Prime Minister, followed by a meal. I should therefore be grateful to know if the Prime Minister would agree to reschedule the arrangements

/for

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for talks and a meal to some time between mid-May and 12 June and if you could offer a specific date for this which we could put to the Iraqis.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Rhodes (Department of Trade) and to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever
J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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Tracy, Nisi,
visit of
deputy PM

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