



bc: PC

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 January 1985

Visit of Iraqi Foreign Minister to London

Thank you for your letter of 30 January about the forthcoming visit of the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz, to London.

The Prime Minister will be able to see Tariq Aziz on 26 February at 1100 for half an hour.

BE/

The Prime Minister has had reports that both the Iraqis and a number of Governments in the Gulf believe that considerable quantities of British arms, ammunition and spare parts beyond the limited quantities authorised by Ministers are still reaching Iran; and that Tariq Aziz is likely to make a great deal of this during his visit to the United Kingdom. I should be grateful if the briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting could provide a firm, comprehensive defence against these allegations.

I am sending copies of this letter to Steve Nicklen (Department of Trade and Industry) and Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

Charles Powell

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

LS

26 Feb 11.1130

CONFIDENTIAL

CCP ①



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

30 January, 1985

Prime Minister
Agree to see Iraqi
Foreign Minister? (Its after the
Washington visit).
CDP
30/1

Dear Charles,

Visit of Iraqi Foreign Minister to London

In November Sir Geoffrey Howe invited the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz, to stop off in London for talks on his way to an official visit to Washington. In the event, Tariq Aziz was unable to travel to London due to the death of his mother, but Mr Luce (during his visit to Baghdad in November) subsequently invited the Foreign Minister to reinstate the visit, some time in the New Year.

We should now like to suggest firm dates to the Iraqis and have identified 25-27 February as a convenient period. However, in proposing these dates to the Iraqis we shall, at the same time, have to give them some idea of what the programme is likely to include. Our Ambassador in Baghdad has strongly recommended a call on the Prime Minister, pointing out that as well as being Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz holds the rank of Deputy Prime Minister and is a member of the influential Baath Party junta, the Revolutionary Command Council. Apart from arranging a call on the Prime Minister, we would also propose to arrange calls for Tariz Aziz on Mr Heseltine and Mr Channon.

Sir Geoffrey Howe believes that a visit by Tariz Aziz soon would be useful, and endorses our Ambassador's view that the success of the visit is likely to depend on the level of Ministerial attention. Our relations with Iraq have always been difficult, but the atmosphere has improved in recent months, following the visits by Mr Luce and Mr Channon at the end of last year. We are keen to build on this improvement by having a further round of exchanges with Tariz Aziz. We continue to regard Iraq as an important market in the future for British companies (our visible exports are evn now running at £330m per year); prospects in the medium and long-term should be enhanced when the conflict with Iran is over and Iraq resumes her position as a leading oil exporter in the Middle East. In addition, we would value another opportunity to make further high level representations on behalf of the two British subjects imprisoned in Iraq, John Smith and Donald Hagger, and if necessary explain further our policy on the question of UK defence sales to Iran, which has been a contentious issue with the Iraqis and their Araballies.

CONFIDENTIAL

/Sir Geoffrey

CONFIDENTIAL



Sir Geoffrey appreciates that the Prime Minister's diary for this period will already be very full, but would be grateful if she could consider receiving Tariz Aziz for a brief meeting at some time during the dates we intend to propose to the Iraqis, ie on 25 or 26 February.

I am sending copies of this letter to Stephen Nickeln (DTI) and Richard Mottram (MOD).

*Yours ever,
Peter Ricketts*

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL