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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 December 1982

*Dear John,*

Call by Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister  
10 December at 1000

/ I attach a brief for this meeting, together with a personality note on Dr Salem.

As the Secretary of State mentioned to the Prime Minister, at his meeting with Mr Pym yesterday Dr Salem repeated with some feeling the Lebanese Government's request for British participation, however small, in the Multinational Force in Lebanon. The current position is that Mr Pym is considering further with Mr Nott what response we might be able to give to the Lebanese Government, before coming back to the Prime Minister. Dr Salem is likely to raise the issue. The Prime Minister can assure him that we are fully aware of the importance the Lebanese Government attaches to British participation.

Dr Salem (pronounced SAHLEM not SAYLEM) speaks fluent English and is no mean orator.

I am copying this to Jane Ridley (MOD).

*Yours ever*  
*John Holmes*

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street

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CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY LEBANESE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
AND FOREIGN MINISTER, Dr ELIE SALEM - 10 DECEMBER at 10 a.m.

Points to make

1. Glad to see Dr Salem in London. Very useful to have first hand assessment of situation in Lebanon.
  
2. Fully support Lebanese wish to see all foreign forces out of Lebanon as soon as possible. Doing all we can diplomatically direct with US and Israel. (If raised) Also considering very carefully request for British contribution to Multinational Force. Our commitments worldwide make this very difficult for us but will respond as soon as we can.
  
3. Glad to have been able to provide aid for emergency relief needs. We are also ready to consider modest contribution to reconstruction. Hope to see UK/Lebanese trade prosper.



CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY LEBANESE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER, DR ELIE SALEM, 10 DECEMBER AT 10 AM

Essential Facts

1. Dr Salem is on an official visit to London as Mr Pym's guest. This is the first official visit to the UK by a Lebanese Foreign Minister.
2. Dr Salem is an academic rather than a politician (CV attached), one of a small Cabinet of technocrats appointed in October 1982, whose main tasks are the restoration of the machinery of government as far as possible throughout the country and making a start with reconstruction. New elections to Parliament are planned for April/May 1983, after which the various political factions will insist on their share of power.
3. The optimism surrounding the election of Amin Gemayel as President in September 1982, following his brother Bashir's assassination, is now fading. The government's writ runs only in the immediate area of Beirut and even here security has deteriorated with the Druze (Muslim) leader Mr Jumblatt narrowly avoiding assassination in a car bomb explosion on 1 December. The government's weakness elsewhere is illustrated by recurrent clashes in the mountains south-east of Beirut between Christian and Druze militias. There has also been trouble in Eastern Lebanon where pro-Iranian/Lebanese Shia Muslims aided by Iranian Revolutionary Guards recently attacked a Lebanese Army barracks.
4. During his recent trip to the area Habib made no progress. Israel is still insisting that negotiations should take place alternately in Beirut and Jerusalem. They seem ready to leave their forces (18,000) in Lebanon for several months if necessary to extract concessions on security arrangements (early warning stations, overflights) and normalisation eg of trade and travel. Lack of progress is making life more difficult for President Gemayel who is under pressures from Kataib (Christian) hawks to make concessions to Israel, but



knows that such concessions would undermine the internal Christian/Muslim consensus.

5. In his meeting with Mr Pym on 8 December, Dr Salem emphasised the dangers of lack of progress in the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon (record attached). He repeated the Lebanese Government's request, first made in a letter from Dr Salem to Mr Pym on 11 November, that Britain should participate in the Multinational Force. Dr Salem made clear that even a symbolic British presence was important and that a refusal to participate would be a hard blow for Lebanon. Mr Pym will be considering further with Mr Nott what response should be given to the Lebanese government.

6. HMG has provided £4 m of emergency relief aid since the Israeli invasion: £2 m through the EC, £1 m food aid via UNRWA and £0.5 m bilaterally through voluntary agencies and the ICRC. The Lebanese Government has estimated that reconstruction will cost approximately \$12-15 billion but has yet to establish priorities. We supported the US idea that the World Bank should coordinate reconstruction aid and are awaiting the report of a recent Bank mission to Lebanon. The Ten are committed to help with reconstruction and will produce proposals in January 1983. Ministers have not yet agreed on a bilateral UK contribution but provisional agreement has been reached on the allocation of £2.5 million in 1983/84 from ODA's unallocated reserve for reconstruction and assistance to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Near East and North Africa Department  
9 December 1982

DR ELIE SALEM

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Born 1930 Koura (North Lebanon). Greek Orthodox. Graduate of the American University of Beirut and various universities in the United States of America. PHD in Political Science from the AUB 1953. Dean of various colleges in Lebanon and abroad. Since 1974 Dean of the Faculty of Science and Arts at AUB. Author of various books.

Despite being a political scientist he admits to knowing nothing about the new job. Intends to improve the working of his Ministry by delegating work downwards (long overdue). Although formerly something of a left-winger he has moved to the right and was a close friend of the late Bashir Gemayel. Nonetheless claims through his students still to be in touch with the Left-wing/Muslim National Movement. A charming and cultivated man. His wife is American and he is very much orientated towards the USA. Speaks fluent English (English rather than American).

His wife, Phyllis Salem, was born in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, in 1930. They met in Washington in 1951, when he was a graduate student and she was working at the State Department. They married in Lebanon in 1954. She has an MA in Philosophy from the American University of Beirut. She is relaxed and informal. She is very interested in Lebanese affairs and speaks quite good Arabic. They have four children.

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*Lebanon*

6 December 1982

*BF*

Visit to UK of Lebanese Deputy Prime  
Minister

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Thank you for your letter of 2 December.

The Prime Minister will be glad to see  
Dr. Salem at 1000 on Friday 10 December.

JOHN COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

2 December 1982

Dear John,

*Prime Minister*

*Yes Mr*

*Agree to see him at 10.00  
on Friday, 10 December?*

*AD 2.  
12*

Visit to UK of Lebanese Deputy  
Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

The Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Dr Elie Salem, will be paying an official visit to Britain as Mr Pym's guest from 8-10 December.

This will be the first official visit to Britain by a Lebanese Foreign Minister and our first substantial contact at ministerial level with the new Lebanese Government.

The main subject which Dr Salem will wish to discuss here will be the Lebanese Government's request for a British contribution to the Multinational Force. Mr Pym will explain to Dr Salem the reasons why we cannot meet this request. As you know, the Secretary of State for Defence will shortly be putting to the Prime Minister proposals for military training. If approved, these will be put to Dr Salem and will, we hope, go some way to reducing Lebanese disappointment at our response over the Multinational Force.

You may remember that we asked for a courtesy call on the Prime Minister by the previous Foreign Minister of Lebanon, Mr Boutros, who was due here in June. The Prime Minister was not at that time able to receive him, and the visit was in any case postponed due to the Israeli invasion.

Mr Pym believes that on this occasion we should do everything we can to demonstrate that, after the terrible suffering Lebanon has endured recently, we remain sympathetic to the Lebanese Government's aim of ridding the country of foreign occupying forces and restoring Lebanon's independence. Gestures of moral support are useful in this context, particularly since we shall have to disappoint the Lebanese on their MNF request, to which they attach considerable importance. Mr Pym therefore recommends that if possible Dr Salem, who is Deputy Prime Minister as well as Foreign Minister, should be invited to pay a courtesy call on the Prime Minister. As the programme now stands, 10 December would be the best day for such a call, but time could also be found on 8 or 9 December.

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)  
Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 9AT



20 DEC 1982

