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Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Agree to offer President

London SW1A 2AH

Gemayel talks at 12.15

1 December, 1983

followed by a small lunch

on Wednesday, 14 December

A-J.C. $\frac{1}{12}$

Yes not

Dear John,

Visit by President Gemayel of Lebanon

As you know, we have been trying to arrange suitable dates for a working visit to London by President Gemayel. Although the Prime Minister agreed while in New Delhi to see him on 30 November, this date did not in the event fit in with his plans for his current visit to Rome and Washington.

We have told the Lebanese that we nevertheless hope that President Gemayel will come to London soon and that Ministers are likely to be available in the week beginning 12 December. HM Ambassador at Beirut thinks it would help to clinch the visit if we could offer a definite time when the Prime Minister could receive President Gemayel. I enclose a copy of Beirut telno 681.

Sir Geoffrey Howe recommends that the Prime Minister receive President Gemayel. This would be a good opportunity to get over our concern at the slow rate of progress towards national reconciliation. We could also underline that it will be difficult to justify to public opinion our continued participation in the MNF unless all parties are willing to make real concessions in order to achieve a new national consensus.

If the Prime Minister were free to do so she might wish to offer some hospitality. Sir Geoffrey would propose to see President Gemayel for talks as well; HM Ambassador Beirut has suggested that Gemayel might also see the Secretary of State for Defence.

As to the rest of the programme, we know that the President would like to make contact with members of Parliament and the press. He may also ask to call on The Queen. When we know which date is suitable for the Prime Minister we shall check whether The Queen would be available to receive him. We know that The Queen is not free on 12 or 16 December.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD).

Yours ever,
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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