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cc: Egypt - visit of Mubarak

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Mrs mt

16 December 1981

Prime Minister

I had hoped to spare you the but I recommend that you see him for 10 minutes at 12.30 on 17 Dec (there is only one item on the OD agenda). Agree? A. S. Cole 16/12

Dear John,

We spoke the other day about a request by the Egyptian Ambassador for a call on the Prime Minister to deliver a message from President Mubarak. We agreed that a call on a Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister would suffice and the Lord Privy Seal agreed to see Mr Abou Seeda on 17 December.

The Ambassador has reacted strongly to this suggestion. His message, he says, is for Mrs Thatcher personally. Refusal by the Prime Minister to see him would place him in a difficult position and give him no alternative but to return the message to Cairo undelivered. This would be regarded by the President as a slight.

The Ambassador is due to leave London on Friday 18 December for Cairo, where he will spend the Christmas holidays. Although Lord Carrington is reluctant to submit to a reaction that comes close to blackmail, it is clear that if a 5 or 10 minute gap could be found in the Prime Minister's diary, a potentially embarrassing incident could be avoided. The Egyptians are feeling vulnerable at the moment, particularly after the Israeli announcement on the Golan Heights; and Lord Carrington believes that we should not give them grounds for believing that our relations with them are anything less than the best.

I should be grateful to know if the Prime Minister can agree to see Mr Abou Seeda very briefly to receive the message.

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

Francis Richards

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