Prime Minister

The main point is to tell him that you have already urged President Reagan to revive his Middle East initiative: and will do so again when you go to Washington.

CDP 1/2.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 February 1985

Dear Charles,

Call by the Egyptian Foreign Minister

I enclose briefing for the Prime Minister's meeting with Dr Esmat Abdel Meguid on 5 February. As agreed, Mr Luce will be present. Sir Geoffrey Howe will be in Switzerland.

The meeting is primarily a courtesy call as the culmination of Dr Abdel Meguid's first visit here as Foreign Minister. It will also help to set the tone for President Mubarak's short visit here on 14 March (when he will have talks and dinner with the Prime Minister, and lunch with The Queen). We do not expect him to raise any difficulties.

Sir Geoffrey Howe and Mr Luce will have discussed with Dr Abdel Meguid a wide range of regional and other international issues in two sessions of talks on 4 February. Sir Geoffrey Howe believes that Dr Abdel Meguid would particularly welcome the Prime Minister's personal comments on Middle East problems. He will be going on from London to Washington to prepare for President Mubarak's visit there in March. The Egyptians are keen to persuade the Prime Minister to visit Cairo. Dr Meguid may well mention this too.

The Prime Minister will wish to be aware that Egypt's move from a positive vote to an abstention on the Falklands resolution at the United Nations last autumn owed much to Dr Abdel Meguid's personal intervention. He is a great UN expert, having come to the Foreign Ministry direct from the Egyptian Mission at New York. Egypt is a member of the Security Council at present.

Yours ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

CALL BY THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, DR ESMAT ABDEL MEGUID, ON THE PRIME MINISTER, 10.30 am 5 FEBRUARY

POINTS TO MAKE

Bilateral

1. Relations excellent in a wide range of fields. We are naturally keen to do better with the leading Arab country (with its well-known moderate policies). Important to maintain exchanges of Ministerial visits. Look forward to meeting President Mubarak again in March.

(Defensive) Welcome the opportunity to visit Egypt as soon as programme permits. Many conflicting pressures.

Arab/Israel

2. Arab/Israel problem remains central. Progress towards negotiation needed urgently. Input required from both sides. Egypt particularly well placed to help.

3. Welcomed restoration of Egypt/Jordan relations. Recognise need to support King Hussein's initiative and have urged US to take it seriously. What prospect of PLO taking up King Hussein's challenge? Need for clearer moderate Arab acceptance of King Hussein's proposals.

4. International Conference attractive in principle but not realistic until parties much closer. What are Egyptian tactics for President Mubarak's visit to Washington? President Reagan committed to 1982 proposals, but concerned not to endanger Peres' coalition. Soviet Union still on sidelines. UK/Ten determined to pursue positive role on basis of established European positions.

Lebanon

5. Encouraged by Israeli announcement of early withdrawal. But it must be coordinated, to promote effective restoration of Lebanese government authority and reduce risk of violence. Israel/Lebanon must cooperate over security arrangements: both have responsibility for safety of civilians. Discussed situation with UN Secretary-General on 23 January.

6. Support Lebanese efforts to promote national reconciliation. Future can only be assured by cooperation between Lebanese communities. Fresh outbreaks of violence following Israeli withdrawal would seriously harm prospects How can Egypt help?

PRESS LINE

Visit of the Egyptian Foreign Minister

Dr Esmat Abdel Meguid paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister this morning during his two-day visit to London. Their discussion focussed on the Arab/Israel dispute and other Middle Eastern questions. There was a wide similarity of views, in particular on the need for urgent progress in tackling this dangerous and damaging dispute by means of peaceful negotiations. The Prime Minister stressed Britain's and the European Community's support for moderate forces in the Middle East. It was agreed that Britain and Egypt should work closely together in future.

Dr Abdel Meguid's programme includes substantive talks with Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr Luce and Mr Raison at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with the Secretary of State for Defence and with the Minister of Trade, as well as Parliamentary and other contacts. As a member of the Security Council and the leading Arab State, Egypt has wide international interests. This is Dr Abdel Meguid's first visit to Britain as Foreign Minister. He is leaving for Washington on 6 February.

VISIT OF DR ESMAT ABDEL MEGUID, EGYPTIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 4-5 FEBRUARY 1985

1. The visit of the new Egyptian Foreign Minister is at the invitation of the Secretary of State. There have been few recent senior Egyptian visitors to London. President Mubarak was last here in February 1983, the Egyptian Minister of Defence, Field Marshal Abu Ghazala in March 1984 and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr Boutros Ghali, in July 1984 . Recent ministerial visits to Cairo include Lord Cockfield (March 1983,), Mr Kenneth Clarke (October 1983), Mr Luce (November 1983), the Secretary of State (January 1984), Mr Heseltine (October 1984) and Mr Raison (December 1984). Dr Abdel Meguid will travel to Washington on 6 February in preparation for a visit by President Mubarak to the United States in early March. President Mubarak will visit London on 14 March when he will lunch with The Queen and hold talks with the Prime Minister.

2. Our main objectives are:

(a) to emphasise and sustain our political dialogue with the region s natural leader, since January 1984 also a member of the UN Security Council;

(b) to probe Egyptian policy and to explain our own on major Middle Eastern problems, including Arab/Israel, Iran/Iraq and Lebanon, East/West relations and disarmament;

(c) to sound Egyptian views on developments in Sudan and discuss other African topics.

3. Egyptian objectives will be:

(a) to urge Britain and Europe to play a more active role in the search for a Middle East peace settlement;

(b) to urge us to use our influence to modify US policies towards the region, and particularly Israel;

(c) to sound our views on Southern Africa, Cyprus and the

Falklands as well as on general economic questions (specifically North/South, the next summit of industrialised countries and oil prices);

(d) to strengthen bilateral cooperation in political contacts, aid, trade and defence.

4. Dr Abdel Meguid, accompanied by three officials, Ambassador Omran el Shafei, Mr Mohamed el Zoeiby and Mr Teymur Sirri, arrives in London on the afternoon of 2 February. His official programme begins on 4 February with two hours of talks with the Secretary of State followed by lunch. Mr Luce will hold further talks in the afternoon and will give a theatre party that evening. Dr Abdel Meguid is to pay a courtesy call on the Prime Minister on 5 February and will also call on Mr Heseltine, Mr Channon and Mr Raison. He will lunch with the Anglo-Egyptian Parliamentary Group. Mr Luce and Mr Raison will attend a dinner given by the Egyptian Ambassador that evening.

5. Relatively free elections for a new National Assembly on 27 May 1984 produced a healthy but not over- powering challenge to the ossified ruling National Democratic Party and marked a break for President Mubarak from his Sadat inheritance. The death of the elderly and cautious Prime Minister, Dr Fuad Mohieddin, and his replacement by the then Foreign Minister, Kamal Hassan Ali, raised hopes that a more dynamic economic team might be appointed but so far these have been disappointed, and little progress has been made in reforming Egypt s cumbersome economic structures.

6. Mubarak's authority seems unchallenged but he has so far made little impression on Egypt s serious problems of over-population, corruption and bureaucracy. Internal security and the economy have top priority. The Government have achieved some limited success in controlling Islamic extremism. A minor success in the economic field happened when the bread subsidy was reduced by sleight of hand without adverse reaction in November 1984.

7. In foreign policy Mubarak has achieved the modest targets he has set himself. His lowkey approach to reintegration in the Arab world is bearing fruit. Egypt was elected to the Security Council from January 1984 and readmitted to the Islamic Conference Organisation in the same month. The restoration of full diplomatic relations between Egypt and Jordan in September 1984 has not been followed by other Arab states but Egypt has active missions in all but Syria, Libya and Aden. Further progress in the restoration of full diplomatic relations is unlikely in the absence of an Arab summit; even then the Egypt/Israel peace treaty of April 1979 wil be hard for many Arabs to swallow. Relations with Israel remain strained. Since the massacre of Palestinians in Beirut in September 1982 the Egyptianns have refused to return an Ambassador to Tel Aviv until the Israeli withdraw from Lebanon and the disputed frontier problem of Taba is resolved. Yasser Arafat s call on President Mubarak on 27 December 1983, a publicity coup for the Egyptians, upset the Israelis. But US economic aid encourages the Egyptians to be faithful to Camp David and Mubarak is a man of his word.

8. In Ministerial talks with Dr Abdel Meguid we should concentrate on Middle East topics. On Arab/Israel, Egyptian efforts to encourage the PLO to make positive proposals have been so far unsuccessful. Egypt is committed to support King Hussein's efforts to create a moderate Arab front which could negotiate with Israel. The Egyptians wish to see faster progress now that the US Presidential election is out of the way. Dr Abdel Meguid will wish to discuss ideas for giving new momentum to the peace process and will stress the importance of the Ten s role. Egyptian views on developments in the PLO/Jordan relationship will be of interest. As a major supporter of Iraq, Egypt will want to have our assessment of the prospects for an end to the Gulf War. Egyptian views will also be of interest. Though not actively involved in Lebanon, the Egyptians see the crisis there as a distraction from the main Arab/Israel dispute and want to see an early Israeli withdrawal.

9. The Egyptians share our concern about the disastrous course of events in Sudan: despite their close links these ties have had no success in restraining President Nimeiri. Regular contacts between Egyptians and Sudanese have achieved nothing and the Egyptians seem reluctant to press too hard in case they reawaken traditional Sudanese antipathy towards them. The Egyptians will also welcome an exchange of views on Libya: Mubarak is acutely concerned at the dangers of Libyan subversion. They will also wish to exchange views on events in the Maghreb. Egyptian views on African topics, on which they have expended considerable diplomatic effort, will be of interest and the Egyptians will welcome our special knowledge of Southern Africa and the Horn. As fellow members of the Security Council, the Egyptians will also be interested in discussing a wide range of current international problems eg Cyprus, disarmament and economic topics (North/South, oil).

10. Bilateral relations are cordial though we have some minor irritants to raise. Two particular long running claims cases are a source of continuing embarrassment for both governments. We still wish to raise the case of Messrs Gill and Shiner, detained by the Egyptians following the alleged Libyan plot to assassinate former Prime Minister Bakush. They have been detained for over 10 weeks without charge. We hope that they can give us some idea of how the case will develop. Our trade with Egypt is in surplus but Egyptian insistence of soft financing has made the market less attractive: the previous decline in market share seems to have been halted in 1984. Egypt is a potentially important market for defence sales but British performance against US subsidies and French competition has been disappointing. British aid to Egypt is substantial: the lion's share of it on the Cairo Waste Water scheme to improve the capital's sewage. The Egyptians are particularly keen that the Prime Minster should visit Egypt in the near future: no British Prime Minister has visited Cairo since Mr Churchill during the war.

NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA DEPARTMENT
31 JANUARY 1985