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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

12 March, 1985

Dear Charles,

Prime Minister
Agree to see him
for 15 minutes?
CD 14/3.

Visit by the Speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly

Dr Rif'at al Mahgub, Speaker of the Egyptian People's Assembly, is visiting Britain as a Category I Sponsored visitor from 18-20 March.

Accompanied by Dr Mohamed Abdillah, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the People's Assembly, Dr Mahgub will be having dinner with the Speaker and meetings with the IPU and the Anglo-Egyptian Parliamentary Group. Mr Luce will host a lunch on 18 March and Sir Geoffrey Howe will see him on 20 March. Meetings will also be arranged with the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding and the Lord Mayor of London

Dr Mahgub has set great store by an opportunity to meet the Prime Minister again. We understand that he met the Prime Minister during her visit to Cairo as Leader of the Opposition in 1976, when he was Professor of Economics at Cairo University. Dr Mahgub is now an important figure within Egypt. He ranks second in the Egyptian hierarchy behind the President and would succeed him if anything were to happen. He is widely tipped to be the next Prime Minister if the present incumbent, Kamal Hassan Ali, is forced to resign through ill-health.

X | We are of course very conscious of the pressures on the Prime Minister's diary and the very many overseas visitors she receives. On the other hand, this is a classic case of a visitor, prominent in his own country if not yet in the first rank, who hopes for a call on the Prime Minister on the basis of previous acquaintance, and who will clearly be disappointed if he is refused. We are concerned to avoid such visitors taking up any more than the minimum of the Prime Minister's time. Given that, and the Parliamentary connection, we wonder whether the Prime Minister might see Dr Mahgub for ten minutes after Questions on Tuesday 19 March in her room at the House. We could arrange for Dr Mahgub to be in

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the Gallery during Questions; this arrangement should make it possible to keep the call on the Prime Minister's time as short as possible.

Yr ever,
Peter Ricketts

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Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
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File No

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 March 1985

VISIT BY THE SPEAKER OF THE EGYPTIAN
PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

Thank you for your letter of 12 March about the visit of Dr. Rif'at al Mahgub.

I am bound to say that I think this is a pretty marginal case and it would have been better not to put it forward, especially so soon after President Mubarak's visit. However, the Prime Minister has reluctantly agreed to see him for 15 minutes at 1545 on 20 March.

BF ||

CHARLES POWELL

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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