

**United States Department of State***Assistant Secretary of State for  
Near Eastern Affairs**Washington, D.C. 20520-6258*

June 20, 2002

Dear Mr. Salem:

Thank you for your invitation to address the International Maronite Congress this weekend. Although I will be unable to attend, I want you to know that we appreciate your support for our ongoing efforts to find a way to end violence and put the region back on the path toward peace. We recognize the important role that people of all faiths must play in rebuilding Lebanon and realizing the vision of a comprehensive peace.

We share your goal of an independent, democratic, and prosperous Lebanon that is free of all foreign forces and that is a factor for peace and stability in the region. As a practical matter, we believe we can most effectively advance these goals by working within a framework to achieve comprehensive regional peace based on UN resolutions. Please accept my wishes for a successful conference.

Sincerely,



William J. Burns

Mr. Edward M. Salem  
Chairman

International Maronite Foundation  
9330 Pecan St.  
Cypress, CA 90630