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FM OTTAWA 292235Z FEB 84
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 143 OF 29 FEBRUARY
INFO PRIORITY TO MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO, PARIS
INFO SAVING TO WASHINGTON

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU

1. MR TRUDEAU TODAY ANNOUNCED HIS DECISION TO RESIGN FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LIBERAL PARTY. THIS IS NOT UNEXPECTED - FOR BACKGROUND SEE MY ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1983, MY TELNO 52 AND BAKER'S AND MY LETTERS OF 16 FEBRUARY. HE HAS ASKED THAT A LEADERSHIP CONVENTION BE CALLED TO CHOOSE HIS SUCCESSOR, AND WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE AS LEADER, AND AS PRIME MINISTER, UNTIL THEN.
2. THE LIBERAL PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE WILL MEET THIS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY TO DECIDE THE DATE AND LOCATION FOR THE CONVENTION. THE PARTY'S PRESIDENT, IONA CAMPAGNOLO, HAS SAID THAT SHE WILL BE AIMING FOR A CONVENTION AT THE END OF JUNE. IT THEREFORE APPEARS LIKELY THAT TRUDEAU WILL STILL BE PRIME MINISTER AT THE TIME OF THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT IN LONDON AND THE D-DAY CELEBRATIONS.
3. TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT MAKES A GENERAL ELECTION LIKELY IN NOVEMBER (THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT WANT TO START THE CAMPAIGN UNTIL THE POPE HAS LEFT).
4. MR TRUDEAU HAS CHARACTERISTICALLY CHOSEN AN UNUSUAL LEAP YEAR DATE FOR HIS ANNOUNCEMENT. HE IS ALLEGED TO HAVE REACHED HIS DECISION WHILE WALKING ABOUT IN A BLIZZARD LAST NIGHT, BUT IT SHOWS SIGNS OF CALCULATION. HE APPEARS FOR EXAMPLE TO HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO PICK A DAY WHEN THE LEADING CONTENDER FOR THE SUCCESSION, MR TURNER, IS OUT OF THE COUNTRY, SO THAT THE MEDIA CANNOT EASILY RUSH TO MR TURNER FOR HIS COMMENTS.
5. FCO PLEASE ADVANCE TO 10 DOWNING STREET AND CABINET OFFICE.

MORAN

FCO/WHITEHALL D

NAD

(ADVANCED AS REQUESTED)

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