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 21 November 1983

THE PRIME MINISTER

Your Majesty,

I am grateful to you for your letter of 26 October with which you enclosed copies of your recent letters to President Reagan about the situation in Lebanon and the future of the Middle East. Richard Luce has subsequently given me an account of his discussions with you in Amman. It is most useful to have your ideas about the dangers threatening the region.

When the Foreign Ministers of the four contributors to the multi-national force met in Paris on 27 October, they reaffirmed their commitment to the MNF and stressed the urgent need for all the parties involved in the Geneva talks to take the steps necessary to achieve national reconciliation. The task is a difficult one. The first results from Geneva are not discouraging, but the news of further violence in Lebanon in recent days shows how urgent it is that a lasting political solution be reached. We shall do what we can to help the reconciliation process along and so create conditions in which the presence of the MNF is no longer necessary. I see the advantages of your idea of a framework for the withdrawal of Israeli, Syrian (and indeed PLO) forces linked to a timetable. Indeed we have been developing some thoughts of our own along similar lines.

I share your concern that the pressure of events in Lebanon has diverted attention from the need to make progress towards a wider peace in the region. Richard Luce has reported to me the

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feelings of despair and frustration which he found on his recent tour, especially in the Occupied Territories, as a result of the lack of progress towards an overall settlement. The tragic fighting now taking place in Northern Lebanon underlines the urgent need for renewed efforts to solve the Palestinian problem, and highlights the difficulties facing those who would like to make faster progress. Under the circumstances I can understand Your Majesty's wish to consider whether there are steps which Jordan might take to this end. I realise that the recall of the Jordanian Parliament would have far reaching implications. Your Majesty will no doubt be looking to other Arab countries to provide backing for such an important step.

As for Britain, you can count on our support for any move which helps to break the current deadlock. We stand ready to do all we can to help promote peace in the region.

With my warmest and deepest regards
and respects for Your Majesty at this
most difficult time,

Yours sincerely

Raymond Shabta

His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal