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*Prime Minister*

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TO IMMEDIATE F C O  
TELEGRAM NUMBER 62 OF 4 FEBRUARY 1984  
INFO IMMEDIATE MODUK AND WASHINGTON  
INFO PRIORITY PARIS, ROME, DAMASCUS, TEL AVIV, AMMAN, JEDDA,  
UKMIS NEW YORK AND CBFC  
INFO SAVING BRITFORLEB

*MS*

MY TELNO 2 TO BUDAPEST (NOT TO ALL): LEBANON.

1. COUNSELLOR SPOKE AS INSTRUCTED IN YOUR TELNO 218 TO WASHINGTON TO THE LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER ON THE TELEPHONE THIS MORNING (4 FEB). IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO VISIT HIM AT BAABDA BECAUSE OF SHELLING.
2. IN WHAT WAS NECESSARILY A GUARDED CONVERSATION SALEM RE-ITERATED THE ASSURANCES HE GAVE YOU IN LONDON ON 20 JANUARY (YOUR TELNO 26) ABOUT CONSULTATION WITH MNF PARTICIPANTS. HE SAID THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WERE NOT (NOT) CURRENTLY PLANNING ANY OFFENSIVE OPERATION. HE WAS WELL AWARE OF OUR CONCERNS.



3. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT SALEM SAID THAT THE PICTURE WAS NOT ENCOURAGING. HE COULD SEE LITTLE SIGN OF EARLY BREAKTHROUGH ON THE ISSUE OF PROMOTIONS. JUMBLATT STILL SEEMED UNWILLING TO ACCEPT "FIRMLY" THE GOVERNMENT'S COMPROMISE PROPOSALS FOR RESOLVING IT. THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO NEW INITIATIVE BEYOND FLOATING SOME GENERAL IDEAS TO KEEP THE DIALOGUE GOING. (THE PRIME MINISTER WAS WIDELY REPORTED IN TO-DAY'S LOCAL PRESS AS CALLING FOR THE CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE FORMATION OF A BROADER-BASED GOVERNMENT SOON.)

4. SALEM HAD NO COMMENT ON THE LATEST PROPOSALS FOR RE-STARTING THE RECONCILIATION PROCESS ANNOUNCED BY THE NATIONAL SALVATION FRONT IN ZGHORTA ON 3 FEBRUARY. THESE INCLUDE A CEASEFIRE, ABROGATION OF THE 17 MAY AGREEMENT, WITHDRAWAL OF THE MNF (AND REPLACING IT WITH "NEUTRAL" FORCES) AND REMOVING THE ARMY FROM THE INTERNAL CONFLICT (HE NOT LETTING IT HAVE AN INTERNAL SECURITY ROLE). IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER OR NOT THESE ARE PRE-CONDITIONS FOR RESUMPTION. IF THEY ARE THEY REPRESENT A HARDENING OF THE NSF POSITION.

5. THE SCALE OF FIGHTING HAS INCREASED THIS MORNING. BRITFORLEB HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT IN THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS OF BEIRUT THE ARMY ARE TRYING TO PREVENT AMAL FROM OCCUPYING BUILDINGS FROM WHICH THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO DOMINATE THE ARMY'S POSITIONS AT GALERIE SEMA'AN (ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE "NO-GO" AREA). SHELLING HAS INTENSIFIED: THE LOCAL RADIO ANNOUNCED AT MID-DAY THAT THE PSP AND ALLIES HAD ORDERED THE BOMBARDMENT ONCE AGAIN OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF EAST BEIRUT AND THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVE.

MERS

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