

CONFIDENTIAL

Canada

GRS 280

CONFIDENTIAL

FM OTTAWA 042100Z FEB 80
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 83 OF 4 FEBRUARY



CANADIAN ELECTION

WITH A FORTNIGHT TO GO UNTIL ELECTION DAY THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN ONLY LAST WEEK BEGAN TO COME TO LIFE; AND FOREIGN POLICY HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF EMERGING AS A MAJOR ISSUE AS A RESULT OF PUBLIC DISQUIET OVER AFGHANISTAN.

2. TRUDEAU HAS ATTACKED CLARK FOR BEING WEAK AND INCOMPETENT GENERALLY AND IN PARTICULAR FOR NOT BEING ROBUST ENOUGH IN SUPPORT OF THE USA OVER IRAN. YET HE HAS DISAGREED WITH CLARK FOR HIS STRONG STAND WITH PRESIDENT CARTER ON BOYCOTTING OLYMPICS IN MOSCOW.

3. FOR HIS PART CLARK HAS CASTIGATED TRUDEAU FOR HIS AMBIVALENT ATTITUDE TO NATO AND SOVIET UNION WHICH LED HIM TO NEGLECT CANADA'S DEFENCE FORCES AND OFTEN TREAT THE SOVIET UNION ON A PAR WITH THE USA; AND HE IS STRESSING THAT CANADA MUST NOW LOOK TO HER DEFENCES AND HER REAL ALLIES.

4. THE NDP, BECAUSE OF THEIR PAST PACIFIST IDEAS, ARE TRYING TO AVOID FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES AND ARE CLEARLY EMBARRASSED BY THIS TURN OF EVENTS. WE MUST RECOGNISE, HOWEVER, THAT AN NDP SUPPORTED MINORITY LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD PLAY ON TRUDEAU'S COLDNESS TOWARDS PREVENTIVE MILITARY PREPAREDNESS AND NATO.

CONFIDENTIAL

/5. FOR ALL

CONFIDENTIAL

5. FOR ALL ITS INEXPERIENCE THE RETURN OF THE CLARK GOVERNMENT (A POSSIBILITY WHICH IS STILL NOT TO BE EXCLUDED AS THE LATEST POLLS SHOW THE ELECTORATE IN A VOLATILE MOOD WITH THE LIBERAL LEAD ERODING) WOULD, I BELIEVE, BE IN OUR AND THE US BEST INTERESTS AS WELL AS CANADA'S. ANY OVERT ACTION TO HELP THE CLARK GOVERNMENT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE: BUT I THINK THAT ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO SHOW APPRECIATION OF MR CLARK'S AND MISS MACDONALD'S ROBUSTNESS WOULD BE HELPFUL, E.G. IF MRS THATCHER, WHO IS MUCH ADMIRER HERE, COULD REFER TO CANADA'S ROBUST LINE IN TALKING ABOUT OLYMPICS AND IF YOU COULD FIND OCCASION OVER THE NEXT TWO WEEKS TO MENTION IN WARM TERMS CANADA'S RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORLD DIPLOMACY, E.G. AT TOKYO, LUSAKA AND NATO MEETINGS.

FORD

DEPARTMENTAL DISTN.

N AM D

EESD

MED

SAD

CRD

CABINET OFFICE

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10
DOWNING ST]

2

CONFIDENTIAL