

I TRUST THAT YOUR MEETINGS WITH THE OTHER HEADS OF GOVERNMENT FROM THE COMMONWEALTH ARE GOING WELL AND THAT YOU ARE ENJOYING AN AUSTRALIAN SPRING. THE COMMONWEALTH REMAINS A REMARKABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS RETAINED AN IMPORTANT ROLE OVER THE DECADES IN A CHANGING WORLD.

THIS MESSAGE, ALONG WITH A SIMILAR ONE I AM SENDING TO MALCOLM FRASER, CONCERNS BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN THE SINAI MULTINATIONAL FORCE AND OBSERVERS (MFO) WHICH WE ARE ORGANIZING IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI

FORCES FROM THE SINAI. I WOULD LIKE TO URGE PERSONALLY THAT GREAT BRITAIN CONTRIBUTE A SMALL COMMUNICATIONS UNIT (APPROXIMATELY 100 MEN) TO THIS FORCE. TIME IS GROWING SHORT FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MFO, AND IF WE ARE TO MEET THE MARCH 20, 1982, DEADLINE, WE MUST HAVE ANSWERS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE OTHER COUNTRIES WE HAVE APPROACHED, PREFERABLY WITHIN THE NEXT ONE TO TWO WEEKS. THE PRESENCE IN MELBOURNE OF THE LEADERS OF FOUR OF OUR OLDEST AND CLOSEST ALLIES -- YOURSELF, MALCOLM FRASER, ROB MULDOON AND PIERRE TRUDEAU -- AFFORDS AN ELEVENTH HOUR OPPORTUNITY FOR CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE SITUATION WHICH I BRIEFLY OUTLINE BELOW.

CURRENTLY, WE HAVE COMMITMENTS FROM FIJI AND COLOMBIA TO PROVIDE TWO OF THE THREE BATTALIONS OF INFANTRY, WHICH, WITH A U.S. BATTALION, WILL MAKE UP THE CORE OF THE FORCE. NORWAY HAS AGREED TO MAKE AVAILABLE ONE OF ITS ABLEST OFFICERS, LT. GENERAL BULL-HANSEN, TO COMMAND THE FORCE. IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE MFO'S COMPOSITION, WE NEED AN AVIATION SUPPORT UNIT, A COASTAL PATROL UNIT FOR THE STRAITS OF TIRAN, AND A COMMUNICATIONS (SIGNALS) UNIT. THESE NON-COMBAT UNITS WOULD INVOLVE ONLY SEVERAL HUNDRED TROOPS. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE HIGHLY PREFERABLE FOR THE SIGNALS AND AIR SUPPORT UNITS TO BE PROVIDED BY ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES TO FACILITATE SMOOTH COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE FORCE.

AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND JOINTLY PROVIDE THE AIR SUPPORT UNIT AND THAT YOUR COUNTRY OR CANADA, OR BOTH, PROVIDE THE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT. ITALY HAS INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE THE COASTAL PATROL UNIT IF OTHER MAJOR WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ARE INVOLVED. WE ALSO HAVE SUPPORTED AN EGYPTIAN REQUEST TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT FOR A POSSIBLE FRENCH CONTRIBUTION.

I KNOW THAT AL HAIG AND PETER CARRINGTON HAVE DISCUSSED THIS MATTER IN NEW YORK, AND THAT PETER HAS RESERVATIONS ABOUT BRITISH PARTICIPATION. HE FEELS THAT PARTICIPATION COULD JEOPARDIZE OTHER EFFORTS YOU ARE MAKING ON BEHALF OF PEACE IN YOUR CAPACITY AS EUROPEAN COMMUNITY PRESIDENT. I WOULD OFFER THE COUNTER OPINION -- THAT YOU HAVE MUCH TO GAIN BY DEMONSTRATING TO EGYPT AND ISRAEL YOUR COMMITMENT TO WHAT THEY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED EVEN AS YOU SEEK NEW WAYS TO FURTHER THE PEACE PROCESS.

THE REASONS WHY WE BELIEVE IT OF SUCH IMPORTANCE TO BE ABLE TO DEPLOY A PEACEKEEPING FORCE THAT HAS THE BROADEST POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONVEYED TO YOUR GOVERNMENT, AND I DO NOT NEED TO RECAPITULATE THEM HERE. I DO, HOWEVER, WANT TO LEAVE WITH YOU MY STRONG PERSONAL CONVICTION THAT OUR ABILITY TO PUT TOGETHER AN EFFECTIVE FORCE IS ESSENTIAL TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EGYPT-ISRAEL TREATY AND TO MOVING BEYOND THIS TO FURTHER STAGES OF A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST PEACE.

OPs  
Subject filed  
in Middle East  
Pt 7: St.  
  
PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T133A/8

1. 10.8



I WOULD NOT TROUBLE YOU WITH THIS PERSONAL REQUEST IF I DID NOT CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM PARTICIPATE IN THIS EFFORT. IT IS NOW INDISPENSABLE THAT WE KNOW IF OUR ALLIES WILL ASSIST US IN ENSURING THE TREATY'S FULL IMPLEMENTATION. I WOULD HOPE TO HAVE YOUR DECISION AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE.

NANCY STILL GLOWS WHEN SHE RECOUNTS HER VISIT TO ENGLAND FOR THE ROYAL WEDDING. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU NEXT MONTH AT CANCUN, AND I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS AT THE COMMONWEALTH MEETINGS.

WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS,

SINCERELY, RONALD REAGAN.

// B

SECRET