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PRIME MINISTER

Sinai Multinational Force

1. When you spoke to President Reagan on the telephone on 12 October, you said that you would arrange for the question of possible contributions to the Force from European countries to be discussed in the European Community. As you know, Foreign Ministers of the Ten met in London on 13 October and I took the occasion to follow this up.

2. The response was in part predictable. The smaller countries tacitly assumed that the question of participation was not for them; the Germans said that they had not been asked, did not expect to be asked and for historical and constitutional reasons would not be able to provide a contribution; and the French and Italians made it clear that there would be no question of their participating if we did not. The rest was rather more surprising.

3. Cheysson, having made it clear that the French would do nothing without the agreement of the Ten, explained that - although originally very much opposed to the idea of participation - he had changed his mind in the light of the assassination of Sadat and felt strongly that it would be right for there to be a European contribution. Colombo supported Cheysson, though in the lower key. (He no doubt had in mind, though he did not mention, President Mitterrand's visit to Washington on 17 October.) Genscher, having explained the German position on the lines I have

/summarised



summarised above, said that he would support whatever decision was taken by the French, Italians and ourselves and urged the rest of the Ten to do likewise. They readily agreed, while making clear their sympathy for Cheysson's arguments in favour of participation.

4. There is no doubt that, had I been prepared to go along, there would there and then have been a decision by the Foreign Ministers of the Ten that there should be a European element in the Force and that it should be provided by the French, Italians and ourselves. I do not need to rehearse the difficulties this would have caused. On the other hand, it would have been extremely damaging to our relations with the Americans had I taken a line which others could have reported to Washington as British obstruction of a general European willingness to come to the aid of the United States. (As it is, Haig seems to have got the idea that we were seeking to persuade the Europeans not to participate, and I had to speak to him from Strasbourg yesterday to sort things out.) I therefore proposed that we should explore the possibility of making our willingness to participate conditional on our getting from the Americans and Israelis something which would not only serve to protect us against Arab criticism but provide them with some evidence of progress in the direction of Venice. There was general agreement that this suggestion should be followed up, and it was left that we would discuss it further with the French and Italians. The others made it clear that they would support whatever we decided.

5. At Cheysson's insistence these tripartite discussions have got under way rather quicker than I would have wished. We have also found it difficult, given the apparent French
/enthusiasm



enthusiasm for participation, to persuade them and the Italians to think seriously about what price we might get from the Americans: left to their own devices, they would be happy with a statement which did little more than put on record our continuing attachment to Venice. Negotiations in the three are proceeding ad referendum, and I enclose a text which we are discussing with our partners.

6. If this text is accepted by the three and subsequently by the Americans and Israelis (the latter no doubt only under pressure from the former) we shall have gained something in terms of US understanding of the position of the Ten. (The Egyptians should present no problem.) We should also have a good basis on which to explain our action to Arab critics, for whom the statement contains two or three points to which they attach importance, while creating no problem for us. But from the point of view of damage limitation the main point of course is that we should be acting only with the French and Italians and in implementation of a policy decision taken by the Ten collectively. We should not therefore be exposed as we would have been had we decided to act alone or with countries such as Australia and Canada who are clearly not in the same Middle East league as France and Italy.


(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

15 October 1981



Sinai Peace-Keeping Force (MFO)

Draft Statement

The Governments of France, Italy and the United Kingdom, in consultation and agreement with their partners in the Ten, have decided to contribute to the Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai, at the request of the Governments of Egypt, Israel and the United States.

This decision is a symbol of their determination to achieve a comprehensive peace settlement following negotiations between the parties which would bring justice for all the peoples and security for all the states of the area. They welcomed the achievement of peace between Israel and Egypt as a first step towards that goal. Similarly they welcome the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai as the first step towards the realisation of the call for withdrawal contained in Security Council Resolution 242, which specifically declared illegal the acquisition of territory by war, and they believe that the international community has a duty to play its part, as necessary and with the agreement of the parties concerned, in peace arrangements in the Middle East.

In addition, the three Governments express their firm support for the Egyptian Government and people and

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their belief in the need for stability and continuity in Egypt.

The decision of the three Governments to participate in the MFO follows from their policy, as stated in the Declaration issued at Venice in June 1980. This policy, while insisting on guarantees for the security of the State of Israel, places equal emphasis on justice for the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, including the right to an independent state if that is their chosen course. It also holds that the PLO must be involved in the process leading to a comprehensive peace.

The three Governments state that their participation in the MFO is based on the understanding that:

- (i) the Force exists solely for the purpose of maintaining peace in Sinai following Israeli withdrawal and thus facilitating that withdrawal. It has no other role;
- (ii) the Force is being established in its present form in the absence of a UN decision on an international force and its position will be reviewed should such a decision become possible; and

/(iii)



(iii) participation by the three Governments in the Force will not be taken either as committing them to or excluding them from participating in such further international peace-keeping arrangements as may be established in the region.

The three Governments pledge themselves to support the MFO. They have received confirmation from the Government of the United States that it recognises that the European contribution to the Force is made on the basis described above.

For their part the three Governments, with their partners in the Ten, will continue to work for the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of the principles to which they hold and the US Government have welcomed this.



Passage for Inclusion in the Messages to President
Reagan

In deciding to accede to the request, the three Governments believe it would be right for them to put out / the attached public statement of their position, which is in full conformity with their known policy. In doing so they recognise that you will not necessarily feel able to endorse the positions stated. Nevertheless we feel it is important that you should accept that it will be on the basis of this statement that we shall make our contributions to the MFO. I should be glad also to receive your confirmation that you welcome continued activity by the Ten directed towards giving effect to the principles of the Venice Declaration as the basis for a comprehensive peace in the region.