

FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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EEC states "back a global agreement" in the Mideast with which the Palestine Liberation Organization "should be associated." This was a reaffirmation of the EEC Foreign Ministers' Venice declaration of June 1980 which Israel rejected on the grounds that it sets aside the Camp David agreements. Part of the announced statement stressed that the four countries considered their participation in the MFO as "helping to implement Resolution 242." A subsequent paragraph explained that their decision "stems from their policy as defined in the Venice declaration."

The joint statement added: "While emphasizing guarantees for the security of the State of Israel, this policy also insists on justice for the Palestinian people and its right to self-determination. It also implies that the PLO should be associated with the peace process leading to global peace." The announcement and accompanying statement were relayed to Israel, Egypt and the U.S. through diplomatic channels.

The Reagan Administration in Washington declared that it "warmly welcomes" the decision by the four countries to participate in the MFO. A State Department statement said the U.S. views the Egyptian - Israeli peace treaty "as the first step toward a broader, just and durable peace in the Middle East and remains convinced that negotiations based on the Camp David framework agreed to at Camp David can help realize that goal."

In Cairo, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali expressed hope that European participation would encourage other countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand to join the force. The U.S. is already committed to provide half of the 2,500 member MFO. Fiji, Uruguay and Colombia have also said they could participate, according to Washington.

Israel, however, is clearly worried by the announcement and subsequent elaborations by

French and British spokesmen. A Foreign Ministry spokesman in Jerusalem, responding to questions, told reporters that "the statements made so far would seem to contradict the Camp David agreements." Unofficially, Israeli sources seemed dismayed by the reference of the 10 member - states of the EEC to Palestinian self - determination in the context of the decision to participate in the MFO. The sources saw this as gratuitous and as a potential trouble - spot for Israel's acceptance of European participation. Nevertheless, the source stressed that the Foreign Ministry's cautious statement was "not intended to slam any door."

But two days later Israel's Ambassador to the United States, Ephraim Evron, met for 90 minutes with U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig at the State Department in Washington to explain why Israel is unlikely to accept the participation of the four European countries in the Sinai peacekeeping force. Haig, however, urged Israel not to reject the role of the Europeans, arguing that their participation will help the Camp David process. There was speculation, after the meeting that the U.S. may offer Israel a declaration stressing that the Camp David is the only binding framework for the Sinai peacekeeping force.

EEC diplomats had said earlier that the announcement by the four powers would be

tailored to meet with Israeli approval -- the reference to Camp David the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty and Resolution 242. The diplomats acknowledged, however that the accompanying statement on behalf of the 10 EEC states might contain awkward references as far as Israel is concerned. They warned that statements by the individual governments to their respective parliaments were not Israel's business and should not shape Israel's response.

The Israelis, no doubt, were seriously disturbed by assertions made in Paris by a French spokesman and to the House of Commons in London by British Deputy Foreign Secretary Humphrey Atkins in connection with the MFO announcement.

According to the French spokesman, European participation in the MFO rests on four basic principles, the first of which is "the security of all states in the region, including the future Palestinian state which would be able to live in peace within mutually agreed borders." The three other points deal with the right "of the Palestinian people to forge its own destiny which will naturally aim at the creation of a state."

The British Foreign Office made other points of clarification which may not be to the liking of Israel. It states that since the MFO was being set up outside the UN, it might be reviewed if circumstances required. The British

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