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PM/81/50

PRIME MINISTER

Ronni Pinter

You are already familiar with a good deal of this but you may like to see the whole problem set out coherently. If you agree, I will put round a two line letter saying that you agree with the way the Sinai MFO question is being handled.

Yes. not

Hand 28/x

1. You will recall that I mentioned in Cabinet on Tuesday that it seemed probable that small scale British participation in the proposed Sinai Multinational Force would be essential in order to avoid the danger of Israel refusing to hand back the rest of Sinai to Egypt on the due date in the spring of 1982. Things have since moved rather quickly and it may be helpful if I set out the current position and a summary of the relevant background.

2. The background is briefly that, once agreement in the Security Council on a UN Force as provided for by the Egypt-Israel peace treaty had proved impossible, the Americans were obliged to set up an alternative non-UN Force. They prevailed upon the Fijians and Colombians to provide a battalion each and are providing a further battalion themselves (the Force will be some 2,000 men altogether). Requests to the Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians and Italians to provide back-up (coastal patrol, air patrol, logistics and communications) led eventually to these countries making their participation in effect conditional upon our own. The US therefore approached us in September, saying that our participation was essential to the formation of an effective Force which was in turn essential to ensure Israeli withdrawal. The French were also asked.

3. After lengthy discussions in the Ten, and between the French, Italians and ourselves (and subsequently the Dutch, who volunteered to participate), it was finally agreed on 26 October that the US request should be met, despite the difficulties this was likely to cause for us in the Arab world. To refuse could put at risk the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and therefore

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adversely affect Egyptian stability in the wake of Sadat's death. It would also have placed a very great strain on our relations with the US, whose influence it is essential to mobilise if progress is to be made towards a comprehensive settlement. Participation also flows naturally from our commitment in the Venice Declaration to participate as necessary in Middle East peacekeeping arrangements on the ground. It was nevertheless agreed, both to preserve our independent role and to mitigate possible adverse Arab reactions that, the four participating governments and the rest of the Ten should make clear publicly that our commitment to the Venice approach to the Middle East remained firm and that our participation in the Sinai Force did not imply support for other aspects of the Camp David process. I / attach a copy of the statement which the four countries propose to make with the agreement of the rest of the Ten.

4. I believe that this response will satisfy the US, while allowing us to maintain a common European line and to limit any damage to our position in the Arab world. Preliminary soundings in Arab capitals tend to confirm this. Moreover our agreement to the US request despite its difficulty for us, which the Americans acknowledge, will put us in a sounder position both to influence US Middle East policy in our direction once the Sinai withdrawal is completed next April and to act as a bridge between the US and Egypt on the one hand and the Arabs opposed to Camp David on the other.

5. On the practical side, the Force will be stationed in the Sinai (mainly in the shaded areas in Zone C shown on the attached / map). The US will be generally responsible for the overall organisation and direction of the Force, and the Commander will be General Bull Hansen from Norway. The details of the status of our personnel in the Force, and their command and control are among the practical and legal arrangements on which the statement of the four makes it clear that agreement will have to be reached.

/They



They will have to be discussed in more detail with the US. We shall also be making clear to the Americans that we reserve the right to withdraw our contribution at any time.

6. The Americans have asked us to provide a Signals Unit of up to one hundred men to operate two communications centres, but we are in a strong position to persuade the Americans to let us assume a different task if the Defence Secretary would prefer. The fact of our participation is more important than its form.

7. On cost, the original US request made clear that the MFO (in practice no doubt the Americans themselves) would pay all the extra costs (transport to and from Sinai, food, lodging, local transportation in Sinai, maintenance of communications equipment, etc). We would be expected to pay 'garrison costs' (ie basic pay and allowances). I understand that officials of the FCO, MOD and Treasury have already been in touch about how the cost to HMG should be met, given that the MOD do not feel that it should be on their vote. There can be no question of the existing FCO vote covering this and my own strong view is that the money should be found from the Central Contingencies Fund. A note is attached setting out the range of possible costs, depending on the nature and size of our contribution.

8. I am sending messages to the Foreign Ministers of the US, Egypt and Israel informing them of where things stand and of the terms in which the intentions of the four European countries will be announced. I am also sending messages to Arab Foreign Ministers to forewarn them of the announcement and put across to them the overriding reasons which led us to take the decision. I anticipate a good deal of public Arab grumbling, particularly from the rejectionist countries, but do not expect their reaction to be taken to the point where it

/would



would damage our economic and commercial interests. It is particularly important in this respect that we have the company of three other members of the Ten, including the French, and the endorsement of the rest.

9. I am copying this minute to other members of OD and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'C' with a horizontal stroke underneath.

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, SW1

28 October 1981



STATEMENT BY THE FOUR PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS

The Governments of France, Italy, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, in consultation and agreement with their partners in the Ten, have decided, subject to their constitutional procedures and to agreement on the practical and legal arrangements, to contribute to the Multinational Force and Observers in Sinai, at the request of the Governments of Egypt, Israel and the United States.

The 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 inadmissible 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. They are ready to participate also in such arrangements in the other territories currently occupied in the context of Israeli withdrawal. They regard their support for the arrangements associated with Israel's withdrawal from Sinai as quite distinct from the rest of the Camp David process.

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In addition, the four governments express their firm support for the Egyptian Government and people and their belief in the need for stability and continuity in Egypt. The decision of the four governments to participate in the MFO follows from their policy, as stated in the declaration issued at Venice in June 1980 and in subsequent statements. 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. It also holds that the PLO must be involved in the process leading to a comprehensive peace.

The four 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) Participation by the four governments in the Force will not be taken either as committing them to or excluding them from participating in such other international peace-keeping arrangements as have been or may be established in the region.

The four governments pledge themselves to support the MFO. They have informed the Governments of Egypt, Israel and the

/United



United States that the European contribution to the Force is made on the basis described above. For their part the four governments, with their partners in the Ten, will continue to work for the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East in all ways consistent with the principles to which they hold.

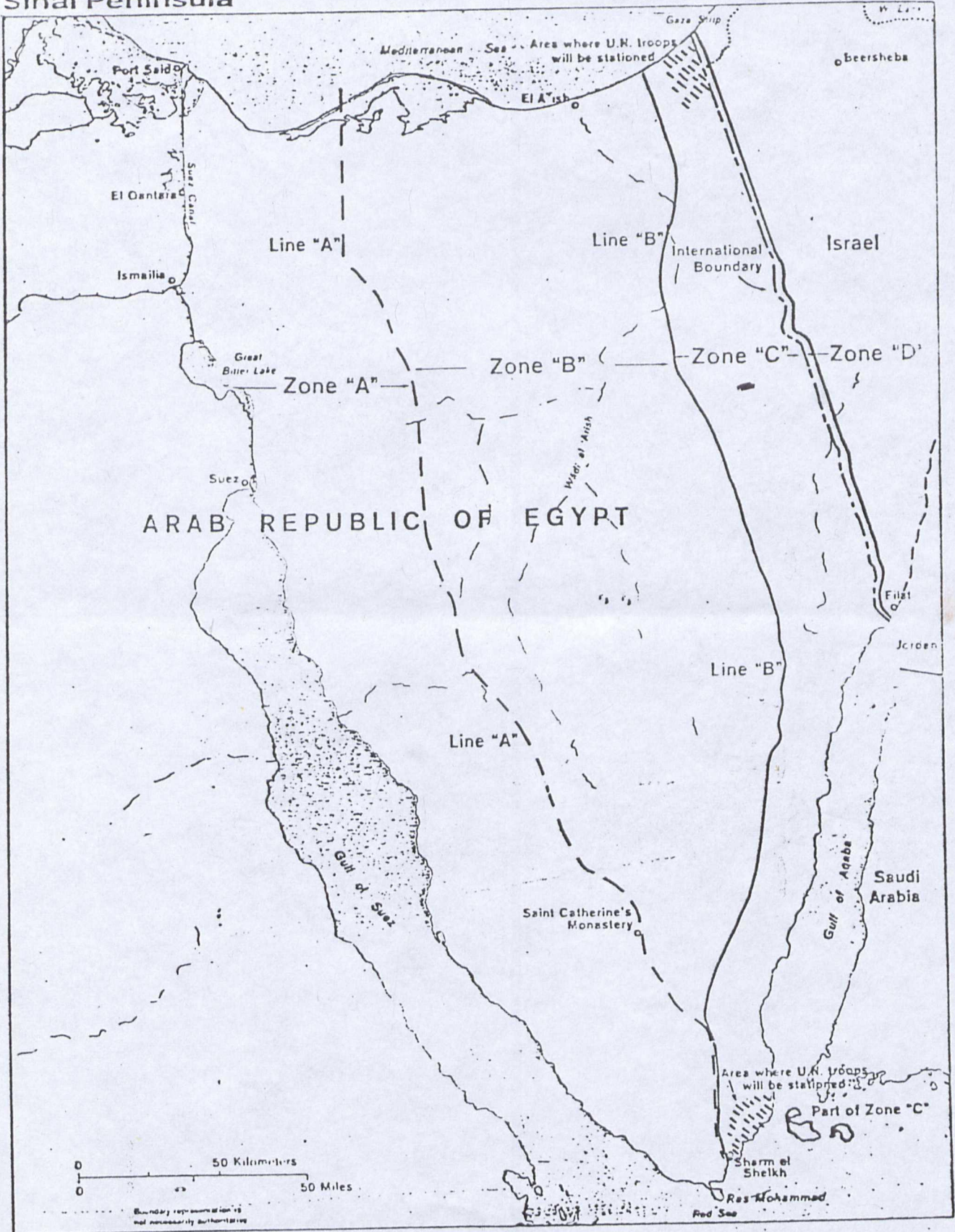
STATEMENT BY THE REST OF THE TEN

Les partenaires de la France, de l'Italie, des Pays Bas et du Royaume-Uni dans la Communauté Européenne ont été informés par les gouvernements de ces pays de leur intention de répondre favorablement à la demande des gouvernements d'Égypte, d'Israël et des États-Unis, de participer à la Force Multinationale dans le Sinaï.

Ils approuvent la décision de ces quatre gouvernements ainsi que les vues qu'ils ont exprimées à cette occasion. Ils considèrent que la participation à la Force Multinationale est pleinement conforme à la volonté maintes fois exprimée par les dix de faciliter tout progrès en direction d'un règlement global de paix au Moyen-Orient sur la base des principes définis dans la Déclaration de Venise.

Sinai Peninsula

MAP 1





OPTIONS FOR UK CONTRIBUTION TO SINAI MFO

(in order of preference)

<u>Option</u>	<u>Manpower</u>	<u>Cost (£m)</u>
<u>ENGINEERS</u>		
either an RE troop or a squadron	60 140-190	0.7 2.2
<u>OBSERVER TEAMS</u>		
10 teams plus administration and command HQ	55	0.88
<u>SIGNALS</u>		
either a squadron or COMCEN detachment	120 1 12	1.5 0.15
<u>LOGISTICS</u>		
various possibilities (medical, transport, ordnance, etc)	variable to	0.075 0.429
<u>INFANTRY</u>		
either one battalion or one company	550 112	6.25 1.62

NOTE

No equipment costs are included since these would fall to the MFO.