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# Western Europe Keeping Out Of Middle East Crisis Moves

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Western Europe's bystander role in the 20-year-old Middle East crisis—unable to influence events yet deeply affected by them—became even more evident yesterday in the unfolding superpower diplomacy.

According to U.S. sources, the American actions in response to possible Soviet "unilateral" moves were first conveyed to the Europeans in Brussels yesterday. The implication was that there was no advance consultation or warning.

The sources said that the United States was in touch with members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's standing council sometime after a U.S. National Security Council meeting broke up at 3 a.m. in Washington.

The military alert ordered by the United States apparently did not extend to the forces of the West European countries, most of which have been trying as best they can to disassociate themselves from American support of Israel and, in recent days, from the U.S. military resupply of that country.

A West German defense

ministry spokesman said in Bonn yesterday that West Germany and other NATO troops did not join U.S. forces in their alert.

Diplomatic and other observers took the view yesterday that the independent U.S. action could only deepen the tensions between the United States and Europe flowing from their sharply divergent interests and policies in the Middle East crisis.

West Germany yesterday offered a fresh example of this when it demanded that the United States immediately stop reinforcing Israel from American military bases in Germany.

The foreign ministry in Bonn charged that weapons deliveries originating from German territory violated the "strict neutrality" policy of the government.

There have been unconfirmed reports of German acquiescence in the re-supply operations for days. Diplomatic sources here said this announcement therefore appeared to be intended mainly to protect Bonn against possible Arab retaliation.

Fear that the Arab countries (which supply roughly 80 per cent of Western Europe's oil) would impose total embargoes has been the primary factor in the neutrality of Europeans.

Of all the NATO countries, only Portugal offered the United States landing facilities for its re-supply operations. Last week, Sen. Harry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) announced that Italy, France, Spain and Britain had all refused to cooperate in the re-supply effort.

Jackson said the Portuguese government, one of the two dictatorships in NATO, gave permission for U.S. military aircraft en route to Israel from the East Coast to refuel in the Azores.

The State Department denied last week that the United States had either asked for or been refused landing rights or military overflight permission by the governments named by Jackson. However, U.S. officials said that there had been was that some major governments made clear from the start that they would stay neutral.

"Nobody could deny that some Europeans were irritated," one official source said. He added that "individual views" had been

expressed in NATO forums that "they wouldn't be in the position they are on oil if the U.S. had not engaged in the re-supply of Israel."

When asked if France was one of the countries, he replied, "certainement."

Since the start of the crisis on Oct. 6 there have been at least four major meetings of the NATO council at which the Middle East has been discussed.

U.S. sources in Washington said that the American position at these meetings was "tough." These sources described the attitude of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger regarding Europe's oil worries as uncompromising.

"He made clear that the U.S. was going to re-supply Israel in order to maintain the military balance in the Middle East, and that was that," one source said.

At the same time, the United States was reported to be disappointed that Greece and Turkey, two countries which receive military assistance, had stayed neutral and had refused to allow the use of their facilities in the air lift. The United States maintains its own air bases in Greece. In Turkey, these bases are run jointly with the local government.

The lifting of the complex series of restrictions on production and export of oil imposed by the Arabs in the last seven days could reduce some of the immediate European-U.S. strains which have emerged in the present crisis.

However, American officials say that obvious divergence between European and U.S. interests in the crisis will affect the atmosphere for months.

The United States and the Europeans are now seeking to working out declarations of common principles about the future of NATO.

According to U.S. officials, European governments were angered by a recent proposal in Congress by Senator Jackson and Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.). It would make U.S. troop levels in Europe contingent on European readiness to offset fully the balance of payments drain on the United States caused by the stationing of U.S. troops abroad.

More than \$1 billion in U.S. balance of payments costs resulting from troops are still not covered by the Europeans.

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