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NEWS

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TOP EC FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS TO TAKE PART IN MIDEAST DONOR CONFERENCE

Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister Willy Claes and EC Commissioner for External Political Relations Hans van den Broek will be in Washington October 1 to participate in the international donor conference called by the Clinton Administration in support of the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Claes is President of the EC Council of Ministers since Belgium assumed the six-month EC Council Presidency on July 1. Both men come to Washington from New York where they are attending the 48th United Nations General Assembly.

From 2 pm-3 pm on October 1, Mr. Claes and Mr. van den Broek will participate in a general press conference in the Dean Acheson Auditorium of the State Department. Press accreditation will be necessary for admission.

The EC Commission proposed today a special aid package for the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza totalling 500 million ECU* (not including EC member state monies) to be disbursed over five years (1994-98), half in grants from the EC budget and half in long-term loans from the European Investment Bank. The EC is also proposing an extension and upgrading of the 1975 EC-Israel trade and cooperation agreement. Another proposal encourages further cooperation between all the partners in the Middle East as well as upgrading the Community dialogue with each of the countries in the region.

Debate in the European Parliament on September 14 revealed overwhelmingly a willingness to support the Palestinians in their steps towards a new administration.

In response to the September 13 signing of the peace accord by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization at the White House, the EC Council of Ministers immediately decided to increase the EC's 1993 aid allocation for the Occupied Territories from 70 million ECU to 90 million ECU. The EC has been a substantial actor in the Middle East in the way of aid and trade.

For more information on the Community's proposals and role in the Middle East see EC News No. 45/93.

*1 ECU = \$1.18 at today's exchange rates.

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Biographical Notes

Willy Claes

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium

Willy Claes has been Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs since March 1992. A member of the Belgian Socialist Party (BSP), he has served in both offices in numerous governments. His first ministerial post (in the Department of Education) was in the Eyskens government in 1972.

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Mr. Claes has been Spokesman of the BSP since 1971. He was first elected to the Belgian House of Representatives in 1968. His first public office was on the Limburg city council, to which he was elected in 1964.

Mr. Claes is author of numerous publications written in French and in Flemish. He graduated in diplomatic and political sciences in 1960 from the Brussels Free University. Son of a prominent Belgian musician, he has directed numerous performances of the Belgian Symphony Orchestra. He was born on November 24, 1938, is married and has two children.

Hans van den Broek

EC Commissioner for External Political Affairs

Before joining the third Delors Commission in January 1993, Mr. van den Broek was Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in the third government of Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers elected in 1989. Mr. van den Broek - a member of the Dutch Catholic People's Party (KVP) - also served as Foreign Minister in Prime Minister Lubbers second (1986-1989) and first (1982-1986) governments. He was State Secretary for Foreign Affairs (a cabinet-level position one step below Minister) in former Dutch Prime Minister Andreas van Agt's second and third governments (1981-1982).

Mr. van den Broek was a member of the Dutch Lower House of the States-General (Parliament) from 1976 to 1981 and became a member of the KVP's executive council in 1978. He entered politics in 1970 when he became a member of the Rheden municipal council until 1974. At the time he was involved in the management of ENKA BV, a multinational textiles and chemicals company in Arnhem, first as secretary of the board, and later as its commercial secretary (1973-1976).

A law graduate of the University of Utrecht, Mr. van den Broek practiced law in Rotterdam from 1965 to 1968. He was born in Paris on December 11, 1936. He is married and has two children.

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