

PUBLIC CEREMONY - GREECE

Lord Ismay's Message:

"I am very sorry that I cannot myself be present at this hand-over ceremony. Apart from the gratification all of us in the Atlantic Alliance draw from the strengthening of our means to defend ourselves against aggression, I have a particular, personal interest in these particular Sabrejets.

"I saw them drawn up on St. Hubert's airfield, near Montreal, in Canada, in March, 1953, just before their Royal Canadian Air Force crews were to take off in them across the Atlantic to add their impressive weight to NATO's defences. It was an icy-cold, wintry day at St. Hubert's, when the Canadian Defence Minister, Mr. Brooke Claxton and I had the honour of wishing good fortune and happy landings to that magnificent body of men.

"But that does not end my association with these particular Sabrejets, for I was privileged to see them again at Grostenquin in France, when that airbase was formally handed over by the French Government to the Canadians.

"It would have given me great pleasure to be present in Greece today to see these aircraft turned over to the capable hands of the Royal Hellenic Air Force for assignment in a new country, but always for the same cause, the preservation of peace."