

121. By this time Mr. Pearson had decided that, since the United States continued to press strongly for according Greece and Turkey full membership and had made it clear that no NATO bases would be involved, which reduced the provocation to the Soviet Union, and since all other countries, except Norway and Canada, seemed prepared to fall in with U.S. wishes, it would be undesirable to have further delay and controversy. He so reported to Cabinet on August 8. There was general agreement that "if an aggression were launched against Greece and Turkey it would likely be met by a collective effort, as in Korea, and that it was doubtful if Canada would be more involved through having Greece and Turkey in NATO than by the hard facts of the present world situation". The Cabinet therefore decided that the Minister should support the admission of Greece and Turkey at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Ottawa and should so inform the governments of Greece and Turkey. Since it was still unclear that the question could be settled at the Ottawa meeting on September 15, Greece and Turkey were not immediately informed. By August 23, the Minister felt sufficiently confident of the outcome to tell the Counsellor of the Turkish Embassy that the Canadian Government hoped to see a favourable decision reached at the forthcoming meeting. He had also decided not to support the view of the United Kingdom Government that the question of command arrangements in the Middle East should be resolved before the decision on membership was taken.

122. On September 18 Mr. Pearson formally stated the Government's position at the Council. He conceded that Canada had adopted a "fairly cautious attitude" on the issue - a caution which was dictated by concern for the future of NATO "lest by setting a precedent for extending membership in this way its original purpose and character be lost and the whole organization be converted into a purely military alliance of anti-Communist states". He also expressed concern that the considerations which appeared so strong in the case of Greece and Turkey might not be raised in the future in the case of other countries in the Middle East involved in defence planning for the Middle East. It was his view that Greece and Turkey should from the first be regarded as full members "glad to accept all the obligations as well as to receive all the rights of membership" . . . The Minister concluded by saying that:

"Having regard to all these considerations and the necessity, as we see it, of taking action without delay on this matter, the Canadian Government has come to the conclusion that, despite the obvious merits of a Mediterranean pact, admission of Greece and Turkey to full membership in NATO is the only practical solution at this time".

In telegrams to Ankara(1) and Athens giving this information, the Department commented that:

"Although the objections of some countries have still to be overcome, the announcement of Canada's position will probably be an important factor in eventually securing unanimous approval".

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(1) This action greatly eased things for General Odium, who had been reporting on Turkish sensitivity over procrastination about admission, which he described as the "apex of Turkey's short-term ambitions", and his increasing difficulties in avoiding comment.