

Hage said some commentators had raised the question whether a long-standing peacekeeping force might become part of the problem rather than a part of a solution. Peacekeeping may have precluded peacemaking as it may have allowed the parties to put serious issues on the back-burner. Nevertheless, Canadians have gained insight into the Cyprus problem and built expertise in peacekeeping. Today Canada could help ease tensions through de-mining initiatives and offer its experience in Constitutional law. Interest also exists in helping to connect people through new telecommunication technologies. He recalled the last Canadian peacekeeper to die in Cyprus (1974). It is also in tribute to him, he said, that we should continue helping to resolve the dispute.

Hage addressed the resumption of UN-sponsored proximity talks. He noted the G-8 call for renewed dialogue in Cologne (June 1999) which went unanswered until the earthquake disasters gave rise to "seismic" diplomacy. Glafcos Clerides, the representative of the Greek Cypriot community and the internationally recognised president of Cyprus, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktas, went separately to New York on December 3, 1999, to meet with the UN Secretary General. The second round of talks with UN officials took place in Geneva. A third round is scheduled for May. Canada hopes that the two sides can meet directly on key issues addressed in the talks, including territory, property and constitutional arrangements. In the meantime, Canada can play a bridge role. Today's roundtable and other such discussions might help to define what this role can be.

3. The International Context: EU and U.S. Track II Diplomacy

Most participants agreed that the regional and international context for resolving the Cyprus conflict has changed in the recent past and an environment conducive to negotiations may now exist. The rapprochement between the Greek and Turkish governments, following the devastating earthquakes in both Turkey and Greece, was considered the most significant regional development.¹ It resulted in the support of the Greek government for Turkey's long-awaited candidacy for EU membership.² Some perceived this development as a great step forward since a larger and unified European Union could serve as a framework to resolving disputes in the

¹ The growing threat of contamination of Southern Europe by the growing instability in the Balkans and the inclination of the two Foreign Ministers to address the long-standing discord may have also played a role in this recent detente. The renewed dialogue has resulted in high level official visits, signing of "low politics" bi-lateral agreements and various unofficial exchanges. These events culminated with the first visit of the Greek Foreign Minister, George Papandreou, to Ankara in 38 years and the reciprocal visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister, Ismail Cem to Athens, the first in 40 years.

² The Greek government officially endorsed Turkey's candidacy during the EU Summit in Helsinki in December 1999.