

Peacekeeping must never be considered as an end in itself or as a substitute for political leadership, negotiation and honourable compromise. The basis for any peacekeeping operation has always been an agreement by the parties involved to work towards a political settlement.

Whether or not Canadian troops remain in Cyprus, Greek and Turkish Cypriots bear the ultimate responsibility for resolving the dispute. But it appears that, instead of taking advantage of the peace and order that the UN mission has afforded, some political leaders have used the presence of UN forces to avoid making difficult choices, to avoid making the compromises required to ensure peaceful co-existence.

At a time when there are increasing demands for peacekeeping around the world, we must ensure that we establish our priorities carefully, and manage our resources and contributions effectively.

Mr. Speaker, in deciding to withdraw our troops, we are not saying that the United Nations should put an end to its peacekeeping mission in Cyprus. That is a matter for the Security Council, the Secretary-General, and the parties involved to consider.

Furthermore, I assure the House that we will continue to support the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts to find a peaceful, negotiated solution. In that regard, Canada once again calls upon the parties involved to implement Security Resolution 789 and to work with the Secretary-General. If circumstances change, Canada would consider contributing directly to new UN efforts towards a peaceful settlement in Cyprus, or to its implementation.

Mr. Speaker, as Mrs. McDougall told the UN General Assembly last September, the Government of Canada endorses the Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace and, in particular, the peacemaking and peacekeeping themes in that document. That is why Canada will continue to play a leading role in international efforts to secure peace. Though we are turning the page in this particular chapter of our history, our passion for peace remains as fervent as it was almost 30 years ago when our soldiers donned the blue beret and went to Cyprus.

With over 4,000 troops participating in peace missions from Cambodia to Bosnia, from Croatia to Central America and the Middle East, the words "Canada" and "peacekeeping" will always be closely associated in the eyes of Canadians and in the eyes of the world.

Thank you.

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