

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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Text of a speech made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, to the Ottawa Branch of the United Nations Association, at the International House, Ottawa, May 4, 1964.

I am grateful for this opportunity to discuss the Cyprus problem with the Ottawa Branch of the United Nations Association. There have been some misconceptions of the reasons for Canadian participation in the United Nations peace-keeping operation in Cyprus, and some misunderstandings of what the Canadian contingent is expected to do on that island. Consequently I welcome this opportunity to explain the situation, particularly because comment on our participation, on the actions of our troops and on the performance of the United Nations in Cyprus should be constructive if it is to serve the objective we all seek -- the restoration of order and tranquillity in that island and the maintenance of international peace.

The reasons for Canadian participation in the Cyprus peace-keeping operation may be summarized as follows:

- (a) The urgent need for international co-operation to preserve peace in Cyprus had become increasingly evident in the months and weeks preceding the United Nations Security Council resolution of March 4, 1964. The need for leadership in constituting a peace-keeping force became urgent in the days just before the Canadian decision of March 13, 1964, to contribute.
- (b) The future of the United Nations was at stake, because, if the world organization had not fulfilled its purpose and acted to maintain peace and security in Cyprus, confidence in the United Nations would have been seriously undermined.
- (c) Our participation in NATO obligates us to do our utmost to prevent conflict between Greece and Turkey and exposure of the Eastern flank of the alliance.
- (d) Cyprus and Britain are members of the Commonwealth, and we could not ignore the difficulties in which they had become involved.
- (e) The suffering of the people of Cyprus - the victims of tragic inter-ethnic strife that threatened to engulf the island - demanded the attention of all who believe in human decency and dignity.