

Lesson of Two Wars

In two World Wars Canadians have learned at great cost -- and our Governor General very recently drew attention to that cost in terms of the gaps in our contemporary society -- that we cannot live in isolation. Canada's own security and vital interests are affected by conflict in any part of the world; hostilities, even of a small or limited nature, can easily escalate into catastrophic international conflict unless effective action is taken immediately to prevent, to confine or to limit them. The price of peace is constant vigilance and willingness to make sacrifices for its preservation.

As the situation in Cyprus evolved during the early part of this year, it became increasingly evident that, if international peace and security was to be preserved, international intervention on the island would be necessary. Finally, the Security Council of the United Nations recommended the establishment of a peace-keeping force for a period of three months "in the interests of preserving international peace and security, to use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting, and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions".

It soon became apparent that, unless the peace-keeping force could be established quickly in Cyprus, intervention by outside countries might occur and it would be difficult or impossible to control the consequences. The possibility of outside intervention had become imminent by March 13.

Unfortunately, however, there was no rush to the colours, to the blue and white of the United Nations, and some of the reasons for this were obvious -- the great powers, other than Britain, which was already involved as one of the treaty guarantors, could not participate. Some United Nations member nations were precluded from assisting because their armed forces were urgently required for their own self-defence, and some of the smaller nations lacked financial or military resources. Many members were unable to contribute because their armed forces were not adequately trained and equipped for the task.

Canada Shows the Way

Fortunately, Canada was prepared -- in every sense of that word -- to provide the necessary leadership. Canadians have demonstrated, by their support of peace-keeping action in Kashmir, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Yemen, the United Nations Emergency Force in Gaza, in the Congo, and now in Cyprus, their conviction that the United Nations must not fail in its vital peace-keeping function and their determination that Canada shall play its full part in these endeavours.

Canada was also conscious of other international obligations in the defence of freedom. NATO is one of the essential elements in that defence and we recognized the dangers to alliance solidarity of disunity, and of continuing instability in the Eastern Mediterranean. I would like to stress that peace-keeping activities under the United Nations complement the stabilizing influence of NATO in a host of areas where a military alliance cannot operate.