

*Bilateral*

The sorry tale of events on that unhappy island is too long to be recounted here. Suffice it to say that the presence of the UN Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) plays a vital role in preventing a renewal of fighting between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. The Security Council mandate for the Force comes up for renewal every six months, on June 15 and December 15, and the debate on the enabling resolution serves as a platform on which both sides can ventilate their views on the situation and on what should be done about it. Up to now, for varying reasons, both sides have wanted UNFICYP maintained but, because in principle their consent to the renewal of the mandate is required, they have attempted to use this as a means of obtaining changes in the text of the resolutions in their favour.

It so happened that, in accordance with the Council's practice of monthly rotation of the presidency, Canada was in the chair in June 1977. In my innocence, I thought that, after one or two private consultations with the parties concerned a few days prior to the expiration of the mandate, we could obtain agreement on the text of a resolution, similar to the one that had been adopted six months earlier, and have the Council approve it in ample time. How wrong I was! Both sides advanced claims as to what should be in the resolution, and neither would budge.

As the deadline of midnight June 15 drew closer, I enlisted the aid of the Secretary-General and several members of the Council to attempt to influence the parties, but late that evening we were still locked in informal consultation in a small conference room in the basement of the UN Building. We finally got agreement on a text at 11:45 p.m., and raced upstairs to the Council Chamber to adopt the resolution formally at 10 seconds to midnight. My colleague, the Bolivian Ambassador, who presided over the Council this last June, was even less fortunate than I was. We had to "stop the clock" at midnight and it took until 5:00 a.m. before the Council was able to act.

The Council took up the subject of Cyprus again in November 1978 at the request of the Government of Cyprus, which wished to have "a political debate" without the constraints imposed by the time-limit for renewal of the mandate for UNFICYP. The goal of the Cypriots was to have the Council set a deadline for the withdrawal of the Turkish Army from Cyprus, failing which the Council would take appropriate action, presumably under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. This goal was unrealistic, and the climate for the debate was made more difficult by some by-play behind the scenes over who should be allowed to participate in the debate and under what auspices. In the end, the Council adopted a simple resolution calling on all concerned to work towards a solution of the problem in accordance with principles previously laid down by the Council and asking the Secretary-General to report on progress next May.

It is easy for those of us not caught up in the Cyprus dispute to say that the two communities must learn to live with each other in peace, and to be impatient with their failure to do so. But there are very great problems for them to overcome — problems compounded by cultural, social and economic differences and, though renewed efforts are being made to get negotiations going again, there is no general air of confidence in success. Instead there is a current of opinion, particularly among the main contributors to UNFICYP, that, instead of providing an incentive to peace, the Force is serving as a shelter for the two sides to take intransigent positions. The views of UNFICYP contributors are also influenced by the failure of some countries that have an active interest in peace in Europe to share in carrying the financial burden. It will be interesting to see if this sense of concern is given tangible expression when the UNFICYP mandate comes before the Security Council again next June.

**Personalities**

Inevitably the personalities and capacities of the individual delegates significantly affect the way the Council works. There were a few "weak sisters", but most were fine men, who, while advocating and defending the positions of their governments with great skill and energy, at the same time were conscious of their obligation to do their best to contribute to the reputation and effectiveness of the Council.

The representatives of the five permanent members of the Council have the advantage of continuity of service, but in fact all were strong personalities and effective representatives of their governments. I shall never forget the blunt, undiplomatic candour of Andy Young, the gentle but firm interventions of Jacques Leprette, the razor-sharp wit of Ivor Richard, the cheerful friendliness of Oleg Troyanovsky, and the dialectical talents of Chen Chu when the opportunity arose to point the finger at some of his colleagues.

The non-permanent members have the disadvantage of transient status, and positions that most or all of them may favour can be blocked by a veto from one or another of the permanent members, but, by the same token, their support is essential to any agreement on a course of action. The non-aligned (that is to say, the members from Africa, Latin America and Asia, except for China) caucus on every issue, and participate actively in the drafting of texts. During our period on the Council, the contribution of Rikhi Jaipal, the Indian representative, was particularly noteworthy in this regard.

Finally, I should like to say a word about the role of the two Western non-permanent delegations, the Federal Republic of Germany and Canada. We were both anxious to demonstrate that, while we could be expected to share a general identity of views with the permanent Western members, we should be acting