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UNFICYP mandate-renewal gave Security Council a tense time

The early sun had already started to rise over the divided capital of the island Republic of Cyprus. In a once thriving area in the middle of Nicosia, a unit of the United Nations peacekeeping force was patrolling a weed-choked path, bordered on each side by concrete bunkers and sandbagged firing positions from which Cypriots of Turkish and Greek ethnic origin were peering at each other with hostility. This patrol along the path — dividing Cypriots from Cypriots and Turkish forces from Greek forces — was drawn from the ranks of the 515 Canadians whose pale blue berets identified them as members of the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

At the United Nations Assembly in New York it was almost midnight. There was no time to eat, no time for social activities. Five days of tense negotiation had yielded no solution to a problem — time was fast running out.

As of midnight on June 15, 1977, the

mandate of the United Nations Forces in Cyprus was scheduled for renewal for a further six months.

Renewal used to be routine

When UNFICYP was established in 1964, under a mandate of the Security Council, it was agreed that the need for its continued presence on the troubled island would be reviewed regularly by the Council itself. A Canadian contingent has been part of the Force since its inception. Despite all the political and military changes that have taken place since then — including the 1974 *coup d'état* against the late Archbishop Makarios by Anthony Sampson and the subsequent invasion by the Turkish army — the mandate of UNFICYP had been renewed, more or less routinely, ever since.

Since the events of 1974, however, one or other of the parties — either the Government of Cyprus (the Greek Cypriots) or the so-called Turkish Cypriot Federated



A Canadian contingent has formed part of the United Nations peacekeeping force in Cyprus since 1964, when UNFICYP was established. (Above) Canadians on tank patrol.

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