

body's capacity to provide logistical support for peacekeeping operations.

We are also addressing several other issues, such as the urgent needs both at UN headquarters and in the field to ensure professional operation, and the establishment of a clear command structure, standard procedures and a fair degree of inter-operability between national forces.

There is another important lesson that the international community will have to learn -- and that it is how to disengage from an operation before its presence becomes part of the problem rather than part of the solution. Our decision to withdraw our troops from Cyprus, after more than two decades, is the result of just such an assessment, and, before committing ourselves further in Bosnia or any other place, we should specify the conditions under which an operation can be terminated.

I should note my pleasure at the appointment of my colleague, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, as the UN Special Envoy to resolve the situation in Cyprus. And I am sure that this Committee will share my enthusiasm for this appointment and wish him well in his undertaking.

Another important illustration of how the priorities of Canadian foreign policy have been translated into concrete actions is to be found in our assistance program to Central and Eastern Europe and the former U.S.S.R. Our efforts are concentrated on helping these countries make the difficult and critical transition toward democracy and a free-market economy. We remain conscious of the security risks and of the potential human tragedy that could unfold if the economies and the nascent democratic regimes emerging in these countries should founder.

But we have been steadfast in our attempts to assist this important region of the world. We took an early lead in pledging and delivering financial, technical and humanitarian assistance. We did not hesitate in April, at the Vancouver Summit, to double the amount of our assistance to Russia. We are one of the highest per capita contributors in the world. Our faith in what is going on in Russia was borne out in the results of the recent referendum, which indicated support not only for President Yeltsin but for the reform package, which was something that was not widely foreseen. I think the reform process has put down more roots in Russia than perhaps had been expected. The collective response of the G-7 [Group of Seven leading industrialized] countries was doubtless instrumental in reassuring Russian voters that there was some light at the end of the tunnel, but mostly it is their own efforts that are going to make economic development and democratic development succeed.