

The Cyprus situation raised such a demand yet, when the call came for the United Nations to establish a peace force in Cyprus, the response from member governments was on the whole disappointing. Canada was among the first countries to be approached for assistance. We were the first country to commit itself definitely to provide troops. Other nations joined us in this move and I pay warm tribute to Sweden, Finland and Ireland, whose contingents are to serve with Canadians in the Cyprus operation. I make special mention to the United Kingdom, which is continuing under the United Nations flag to contribute substantially to the cause of peace in that troubled island.

Why was the response restricted in size and slow in execution? If we examine some of the factors, we may detect some basic cause of weakness and see ways of strengthening the United Nations capacity to meet peace-keeping demands.

Hesitancy of UN Members

At the United Nations, the general attitude toward the Cyprus crisis was one of hesitation. The great powers were divided on the issue - but this was not unusual. A large number of countries appeared indifferent to the deterioration of a situation which threatened to explode into international conflict. A few states wanted to take advantage of the situation for their own mischief-making, but most states seemed reluctant to have the United Nations involved at all. There was a marked unwillingness either to provide contingents for the force or to contribute the necessary funds for the operation.

We can take comfort from the fact that the Security Council on March 4 decided to establish a force and appoint a mediator; that, after some delay, five member governments agreed to provide contingents and ten to make contributions to the voluntary fund for financing the operation. The force is now operational under General Gyani and the mediator has taken up his difficult assignment.

Now, I realize that the situation in Cyprus poses a very difficult problem for the United Nations. It will not be easy to arrive at a political solution. It may not be easy to maintain order. There is latent danger in the bitterness and distrust which past violence and bloodshed have engendered in the two communities inhabiting the island. The United Nations mediator and the United Nations policemen on the Cyprus beat will require courage, patience and endurance. They will have to choose their way carefully through the maze of difficulties and dangers.

But in the past the United Nations has not shirked its peace-keeping responsibilities merely because of difficult situations. The Congo operation had its share of complication and risk. What it did not have, and what is needed most in these situations, is the wholehearted support of United Nations members. This means not only political and moral support but men, materials and money. The United Nations must have adequate resources to perform its tasks.