

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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UN Peace-Keeping Operations in Cyprus

Notes for a Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, to the Canadian Club in Brantford, Ontario, on March 19, 1964.

I am particularly pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the Canadian Club in Brantford this evening. Last Thursday I had occasion to speak in London and to express my concern about United Nations involvement in peace-keeping operations just as the Cyprus situation was reaching a very critical stage. This past week has been one of intense diplomatic activity — not without elements of risk — as the United Nations moved to establish an international military force in Cyprus.

A week ago this evening I met with the United Nations Secretary-General in New York to reassure him of Canada's willingness to play its full part in establishing in Cyprus an effective United Nations force to keep the peace. On the following day we were in direct touch with other countries whose participation was required to make it possible for the Secretary-General to state that a United Nations peace-keeping force had been constituted. Their response was prompt and favourable, providing a solid basis for Canadian participation once Parliament had approved it. We are embarking on this new responsibility not only with the British but also contingents from Sweden, Finland and Ireland, with whom we shall be proud to serve.

Preparations for UN Action in Cyprus

The Canadian Government was deeply concerned about the delays which occurred even after the Security Council had adopted a resolution on March 4 calling for the establishment of the force. We watched with anxiety the steady deterioration of the situation in and around Cyprus. We pressed vigorously for the clarification of the United Nations mandate and the operating conditions for the force, including its financing.

Canadian action in this regard was nothing less than what the complex situation required of a country with long experience of peace-keeping operations of this kind. To provide a reasonable opportunity for the success of the operation and to encourage other governments to support it actively, we believed it necessary and desirable to reach a satisfactory understanding with the Secretary-General and with the parties directly involved in the Cyprus question on the role which the United Nations would be assuming.

The course of these events has been explained fully in Parliament during the past week or so, and in my speech in London I placed these developments in the broader context of the difficulties facing the United Nations in pursuing its peace-keeping responsibilities. There is reason for gratification that the United Nations did succeed last weekend in overcoming the obstacles to the despatch of United Nations military contingents to Cyprus. These new police men for peace are now on the beat -- following the fine tradition of their comrades in Gaza, the Congo, West New Guinea, Yemen, and indeed in Kashmir and Palestine.

Hard Facts of the Situation

Canadians can take renewed pride in the fact that their armed services have once more responded quickly and efficiently to the urgent call of United Nations duty. We should not delude ourselves, however, about two hard facts of the contemporary situation on which I should like to comment briefly.

The first is that the United Nations job in Cyprus is not over, it is just beginning. The organization faces yet another task fraught with complication and danger. Its military servants will be required to discharge their duties with the highest degree of skill, endurance and restraint. They will be exposed to risks and provocations. They must rely largely on their presence and forbearance to bring about the much-needed conditions of calm in the relations between two communities currently in a state of severe emotional upset.

The two communities on the island are sharply divided. There is a legacy of tragic violence. There are elements in the situation which could lead to further disturbance even if the opposing factions have the best will in the world co-operate. The voluntary laying down of arms may be the principal requisite for the easing of basic tensions and therefore of the successful promotion of stability by the United Nations force.

Like any police body, the United Nations force is in Cyprus to assist in the establishment and preservation of order. It is not there as an army of occupation. I do not believe a military solution would be lasting even if the United Nations force were so empowered. A solution will be best pursued by a process of accommodation between the opposing factions with the assistance of a United Nations mediator. The military force is expected to contribute to this process -- by demonstrating the United Nations impartiality, by setting an example of restraint and discipline, by restoring calm, by instilling confidence among the Cypriots generally that they will not be subjected to further violence and bloodshed, and by reassuring interested powers outside the island that negotiation can yield a solution, while the United Nations maintains order.

Mediation and Co-operation

All this underlines two essential needs -- the need for appointing a United Nations mediator at the earliest possible date and the need for the fullest co-operation from the two communities and the parties to the treaty of guarantee. The present Security Council resolution authorizes the stationing of the peace-keeping force for only three months. No time must be lost in appointing a mediator because the opening of the mediation process must be co-terminous with the operational deployment of the peace force.

In short, the international community must seize the nettle of the crisis in Cyprus. Undue delay in improving the political situation could quickly lead to a new deterioration in security and a possible erosion of United Nations influence. There is no room for a leisurely approach to the central political dispute between the two communities.

The second main fact which has once more become glaringly apparent is that the United Nations should strengthen its capacity to engage in peace-keeping operations. I emphasized this in London. The Prime Minister re-stated well-known Canadian views in Parliament. These are reflections of the Government's conviction that United Nations preparedness in the field of peace-keeping falls short of the new demands which are being made on the organization with increasing frequency.

Improving Peace-Keeping Methods

I hope, and I believe, that there is a growing resolve among United Nations members that United Nations peace-keeping methods must be improved. More and more countries have come to recognize that international military forces cannot be assembled and deployed without some degree of advance planning both in the United Nations headquarters and in national capitals. The policy of earmarking national contingents -- which in Canada's case proved its worth at the critical stage last weekend -- is now being pursued in a number of countries which, like Canada, have been called upon time after time to respond urgently to the United Nations call. I have no doubt that the example of these countries is generating practical interest in others.

The requirements of peace in our time may not wait upon gradual realization. The growing interest in improving peace-keeping methods must be stimulated. The actual United Nations experience must be kept alive. Canada is determined to draw on its own experience in this field in a way which will give leadership and encouragement to others.

We are also determined that the United Nations shall not fail in its primary responsibility for peace through lack of adequate financial arrangements. For more than five years, in all the appropriate bodies of the United Nations, Canadian spokesmen have been insisting that political decisions to promote peace must be solidly backed by suitable administrative and budgetary provisions. The only sensible basis for this backing is the principle of collective responsibility.

Like the conduct of the peace-keeping operations themselves, the task of persuading the membership to share in the financial burden has been a long journey uphill. Urgent demands of the moment have obliged Canada and like-minded countries to accept temporary financing expedients which detract from the basic principle. But they have not deterred us from pursuing the goal of collective responsibility -- not as a slogan but in the form of concrete proposals embodying it.

The whole problem is one of continuing examination and growing urgency. Discussion will shortly be resumed in the General Assembly's Working Group of Twenty-One on the Examination of Administrative and Budgetary Procedures. As a member of that group, Canada will pursue with vigour its efforts to reach a long-term solution which has important implications -- political and financial --

for the future effectiveness of the United Nations. This is why we are willing to explore every avenue for reaching the desired goal. To do less would be to deprive the courageous United Nations soldiers for peace, in Cyprus and in many other vital theatres, of the material and moral support which they so richly deserve.

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