Statements and Speeches

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PEACE-KEEPING AND CYPRUS: THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

A Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honour-
able Allan J. MacEachen, to the United Nations Seminar at Mount
Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, on July 4, 1975.

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...As the minister responsible for Canada's external relations, I
am deeply interested in the fact that your subject for continuing
study is the United Nations. You have -- if I may say so -- chosen
well. This unique international institution is essential to our
efforts at some kind of rational ordering of affairs among nation
states. Whatever its faults, we cannot get along without it; there
is no real alternative to this universal diplomatic forum. At the
present time the United Nations is going through a period of par-
ticular strain; and, as always in a time of crisis, the clouds of
critics around it grow more clamourous. In these circumstances,
support for the UN is vital. It is a fundamental objective of Can-
adian foreign policy that the Government continue to provide such
support. But, to be effective, this, in turn, must be backed up by
an informed and sympathetic public. This seminar contributes in no
small way to the creation of that kind of public.

I understand that during this past week one of the two main subjects
you have discussed is Cyprus. From the standpoint of both the United
Nations and Canada, this inevitably entails peace-keeping.

Last autumn, in speaking to the General Assembly of the United
Nations, I singled out peace-keeping as a matter of particular con-
cern to the international community. As I said at the time, "the
nuclear threat to our security may be dramatic and awe-inspiring
but we cannot neglect the more prosaic but lethal threat from the
use of conventional force". For, after all, since the end of the
Second World War, no one has lost his life as a result of the use
of nuclear weapons but many thousands have been killed in conflicts
involving the use of conventional weapons. The fact is that one of
the few useful tools that the international community has developed
to deal with the problem of conventional conflicts is peace-keeping.
There is, alas, little prospect that we are rid of crises in the
world giving rise to the use of conventional force and consequently
we must strive to improve substantially the means by which these
crises can be contained and ultimately resolved.

The preservation of peace and the promotion of international security was one of the primary motives behind the founding of the United Nations in 1945. It was hoped that the UN, with the provision for collective-security arrangements in Chapter VII of the Charter, would be able to take action to deal with any threat to peace or act of aggression. However, within a few years of the founding of the United Nations, it became apparent that the Cold War and the consequent disputes among the great powers rendered the collective-security system of the UN ineffective. At the same time, it became apparent that there were crises which were not serious enough to warrant enforcement action under Chapter VII of the Charter but were sufficiently serious to require intervention by the UN with the consent of the parties to the disputes. It was out of this situation that the conception of peace-keeping began to take shape in the immediate postwar years -- the idea of internationally-sponsored and neutral bodies of men drawn primarily from the small and middle powers to separate disputants and to supervise cease-fires.

From the outset, Canada has played a major role in the development of peace-keeping. We recognize its importance in the preservation of international peace and security. Consequently, it is a continuing objective of Canadian foreign policy to help strengthen the authority of the UN in its capacity as a peacekeeping agency. Canadians have participated in almost all UN peacekeeping operations to date -- in Egypt, Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Korea, India, Pakistan, West New Guinea, the Congo, Yemen and Nigeria. Today, about 1,600 Canadians are serving in five UN peacekeeping operations, the most important of which are in the Middle East and Cyprus. As a result of this lengthy and intensive experience, Canada has become recognized as the peace-keeper *par excellence*, with an international reputation for objectivity and professional competence.

I said a moment ago that the peacekeeping operation on Cyprus is one of the two most important peacekeeping assignments being carried out at present under the UN. It is also one of the most protracted and, in some ways, the most difficult assignments. Let us take a closer look at the peacekeeping situation in Cyprus in order to determine what the particular difficulties are and what may be done to overcome them.

History has created on Cyprus two indigenous communities of wholly different social and religious characteristics -- a Greek Cypriot community of about 450,000 (that is, four-fifths of the total population) and a Turkish Cypriot community of almost 130,000 (that is, one-fifth of the total population). In spite of the geographical intermixture of these two communities and of the obvious need to co-exist on a small island, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots have

never come to terms with each other, and intercommunal relations are characterized by a lack of co-operation and mutual distrust. The Greek Cypriot community, although it has never been under the rule of the Greek mainland, shares a common culture with the Greek people and many Greek Cypriots support the conception of *Enosis*, or union with Greece. The Turkish Cypriots, for their part, are descendants of colonists brought to the island after its conquest by the Ottoman Turks in 1571, and their primary concern as a religious and ethnic minority has been in securing and ensuring their rights.

The constitution, under which Cyprus achieved independence in 1960, attempted to provide these guarantees through a complicated system of checks and balances. The Turkish community was given a specific portion of posts in the ministries, the National Parliament, the police and the civil service; and both the Greek President and the Turkish Vice-President had right of veto over decisions concerning foreign affairs, defence and security. However, the constitution never worked. Its greatest defect was that it accentuated the separatism of the two communities at the very moment when close co-operation was needed. The Greeks were soon accusing the Turks of obstructing legislation and economic development by insisting upon their privileges, while the Turks accused the Greeks of violating their constitutional rights by governing in spite of them.

On November 30, 1963, Archbishop Makarios formally proposed some 13 constitutional amendments to Dr. Kutchuk, the Turkish Vice-President. These amendments would have had the effect of doing away with the presidential and vice-presidential vetoes, achieving greater unity in the House of Representatives, abolishing the separate Turkish municipalities and cutting down Turkish representation in the public service, the police and the armed forces.

Tensions quickly mounted and intercommunal violence broke out four days before Christmas. The Security Council met to consider the Cyprus issue on December 27, 1963, and in the meantime British troops stationed on the island sought to restore order. However, it was quite evident that this task could not be exercised by Britain alone for an indefinite period, and on March 4, 1964, the Security Council passed a resolution, the heart of which authorized the establishment of an international peacekeeping force and the appointment of a mediator.

Canada was asked to contribute to this force and, meeting in an emergency session on Friday, March 13, 1964, Parliament authorized a contingent of 1,150 officers and men. This country's decision to respond favourably to the request of the United Nations Secretary-General was based on the fact that the Canadian -- and the general --

interest would be served by UN collective action to prevent inter-communal conflict while a political settlement was being sought.

The first Canadians landed in Nicosia on March 16, 1964, and other national contingents from Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Austria arrived during the following weeks to join the British, who were already on Cyprus. The force became operational on March 27, 1964. It was charged with the tasks of (1) preventing a recurrence of fighting, (2) contributing to the restoration and maintenance of order, and (3) contributing to the return to normal conditions.

During the next 11 years, the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was largely successful in carrying out its principal objective of preventing a recurrence of fighting. Although the fundamental fric-tions and animosities remained, no major outbreaks of violence occur-red. In fact, tensions on the island were reduced to such a degree during this period that it eventually proved possible to implement major changes in both the size and duties of the peacekeeping force. By 1974, the size of the force had been reduced to 2,800 men from an original strength of 6,200 military personnel. In addition, its role was altered. Although the main task of the force continued to be the prevention of violence, greater emphasis was placed on preventative action involving measures such as patrolling, persuasion and nego-tiation rather than the deployment of forces interposed between the two contesting parties.

But this restructuring of the force occurred also as a reaction to one of the fundamental difficulties in the peacekeeping and peace-making process.

Peace-keeping is designed to assist the parties to a dispute to draw back from conflict when they recognize that this is in their best interests, and to help create circumstances in which their differen-ces can be settled by negotiation. Peace-keeping is a military task involving the placement of an international force between quarrelling parties. It is not an end in itself. It is intended to create the conditions for the process of peacemaking -- that is, the diplomatic search for a solution to the underlying causes of a conflict.

But in Cyprus there was a distinct lack of progress towards a poli-tical settlement. So successful was the UN force in peace-keeping that it came to be viewed as almost a permanent fixture on Cyprus, with the result that there was relatively little incentive for the two sides to make the difficult compromises that are necessary for a political settlement. The countries contributing troops to the UN force expressed concern about this lack of progress, and consequently its restructuring was undertaken in the hope that this would induce

the parties to realize that they could not depend indefinitely on an outside force for their security.

Then, in July 1974, the situation in Cyprus changed dramatically. In response to an attempted *coup d'état* against the Makarios administration by the Greek-led Cypriot National Guard, Turkey landed forces on Cyprus and rapidly occupied about 40 per cent of the island.

This altered radically the position of the peacekeeping force. It had been created to police the cease-fire between the two communities, but now the major confrontation was between the Turkish armed forces and the Cypriot National Guard. To cope with this situation, the Canadian contingent, along with those of the other contributing countries, was increased at the request of the UN Secretary-General. With this increase in size, the force was able to respond successfully to this new challenge and to keep further fighting to a minimum. Nevertheless, the situation today continues to be volatile, and renewed violence could occur at any time.

The experience in peace-keeping in Cyprus merits close study, for it reveals the basic problems in UN peacekeeping and peacemaking procedures.

Peace-keeping cannot be made a substitute for peacemaking. If it is to serve a useful purpose, peace-keeping must be accompanied by a parallel effort on the political level, especially by the parties most directly concerned, to convert the temporary peace that a peace-keeping force is asked to maintain into something more durable. If this is not done, peace-keeping will only perpetuate an uneasy status quo, which, in due course, is likely to break down, as it did in Cyprus. There, despite the presence of the peacekeeping force, fighting on an unprecedented scale finally occurred because the fundamental political problem remained unresolved. In addition, if the contributors to peace-keeping are faced with indefinite prolongation of their hazardous task, governments and their peoples, feeling themselves caught in a seemingly fruitless endeavour, will be less willing to respond to future requests to take part in peacekeeping operations. Although Canadians continue to appreciate the importance of peace-keeping, they are less inclined today to accept without question the burden of participation. Eleven years is a long time and, although negotiations towards a settlement were recently renewed, the end is not yet in sight.

It may be that we should also alter our approach to peace-keeping and peacemaking. Canada has traditionally followed the policy that, to be effective in peace-keeping, it is essential to remain *persona grata* with the two sides to the dispute and consequently to avoid

becoming involved in the peacemaking process. Perhaps our experience in Cyprus has shown that we should, as circumstances warrant, seek to take a more active part in peacemaking. We could, for example, seek more actively to find ways of moving negotiations in the right direction, and we could be more forceful in our reminders to those directly engaged in negotiations that our participation in peace-keeping has its limits.

Another problem in peace-keeping is the lack of adequate financial support from the international community. This has put an unfair burden on countries like Canada that are perennial contributors. More effective arrangements must be found in order to ensure a sound financial foundation and a broader sharing of the burden among members of the international community.

The majority of regular contributors to peacekeeping forces to date have come from a relatively small number of countries that may be roughly described as Western. There is a real need to broaden the base of participation and to involve a more representative cross-section of the UN membership. This would ease the burden for those who have been regular participants in peace-keeping. But, equally important, it would help to produce among UN members a greater under-standing of and support for this important UN activity.

The peacekeeping operations in Cyprus and elsewhere have been mounted on a "crash-program" basis. But peace-keeping is likely to be contin-uing activity of the UN. This surely calls for advance planning, with a small administrative cadre at UN headquarters and a set of ac-cepted principles on the organization of a force. Among other things, there should be a set of guidelines for the peacekeeping operation under the overall authority of the Security Council, with a system of responsibilities shared among the Council, the Secretary-General, the troop contributors, and the parties involved in the dispute in question.

The experience with the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East, the most recently established UN peacekeeping operation, pro-vides a guide for the future. The contributors to the UNEF have been drawn from a broader group of countries than in the past. A general assessment of United Nations membership has provided a sounder financial basis for the operation. And there is an improved system for direction and control of the force.

But we must ensure that these innovations, which are contributing to effective peace-keeping in the Middle East at present, are translated into established principles for the future.

Peace-keeping has proved to be an endless, expensive, and at times dangerous, job. At the beginning of the operation in Cyprus, a Canadian contingent of 1,150 officers and men was authorized. Today we have 518 military personnel in the force. Four Canadians have been killed on active duty. The force is in its eleventh year of existence, and we have just approved a further extension to our participation of six months from June 15. The total net cost to Canada over the ten-year period from March 1964 to December 1974 has been roughly $25 million.

Undoubtedly the burden of peace-keeping is great and there are times when one would like to rid oneself of the onerous task. But the responsibility cannot be shirked. Instead we must work towards making the conception of peace-keeping more effective. It is, after all, one of the few useful tools available to the United Nations in the continuing effort to prevent the use of force in the settlement of international disputes.

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