CANADIAN POLICY IN CYPRUS

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RÉSUMÉ

Le Canada a joué un rôle secondaire mais significatif par rapport à la "question chypriote" depuis l'arrivé de ses troupes à Nicosie pendant le conflit intercommunautaire de 1964. Le Royaume Uni voulait envoyer une force de l'OTAN ou du Commonwealth, mais une présence si ouverte était écartée par la République de Chypre et d'autres pays. On s'est entendu sur une force de la paix de l'ONU avec une forte participation de l'OTAN. Sur la scène internationale, le Canada plaide souvent en faveur de la neutralité à cause de son rôle de gardien de la paix, mais à plusieurs reprises le Canada a démontré qu'il privilégie les intérêts de l'OTAN. En 1978, le "Western framework", rédigé par les États-Unis, le Royaume Uni et le Canada, fut jugé inacceptable par le gouvernement de Chypre, parce que la formule favorisait les visées territoriales turques, et proposait un projet de constitution qui donnerait à la minorité turque un pouvoir exagéré eu égard à son importance. Récemment, lors des sessions de l'ONU, le Canada a démontré que, si on lui donne le choix entre son rôle de gardien de la paix et celui de membre de l'OTAN, c'est ce dernier que le gouvernement d'Ottawa va choisir.

ABSTRACT

Canada has played a secondary but significant role in the "Cyprus question" since its troops took up positions in Nicosia during the intercommunal strife of 1964. Britain had hoped to send a NATO or Commonwealth force, but such an overt presence was ruled out by the Republic of Cyprus and others. The compromise was a UN peacekeeping force with a strong NATO component. In international fora Canada has frequently pleaded "neutrality" because of its peacekeeping function, but on several occasions has shown it places NATO's interests foremost. A 1978 "Western framework" authored by the US, the UK and Canada was unacceptable to Cyprus because it favoured Turkey's territorial ambitions and proposed a constitutional arrangement that gave the Turkish minority political power out of all proportion to its importance. In recent UN voting, Canada has shown that offered the choice between its "NATO function" and its "peacekeeping function", the former will prevail.

INTRODUCTION

At first glance, the two countries could hardly have less in common. Yet history has brought Canada and Cyprus together. Both, of course, are former British colonies and current members of the Commonwealth. Canada, however, acquired virtual autonomy as a privileged "white" Dominion, while Cyprus remained a "Crown colony" until anti-colonial fighters wrestled from London a possession it had once said it would never give up. Canada and Cyprus have both savoured the joys of federalism, though here similarities could be exaggerated. In Canada's case, federalism was a means of both protecting and eventually assimilating the French-speaking nation. In Cyprus, on the contrary, federalism was imposed by London as the price of decolonization, and gave undue power to the Turkish minority. Nor was Cypriot federalism based on geographic divisions. Rather it was a form of "personal" federalism with each community formally represented in the state administration.

Canada became intimately involved in Cyprus during the 1963-1964 intercommunal strife, brought on by the unworkability of its notorious federal constitution. Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson relished his role as an international peacemaker, and

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jumped at the chance to help Britain police the island it had "liberated" only three years earlier. Canadians went as *casques bleus*, under the control of the United Nations. But what was seen as a temporary mission has evolved, and twenty years later Canadians still patrol a "Green Line" that is as unstable as ever. The troops were sent in reaction to Turkish threats to invade the island, and they have always been perceived as necessary protectors of Greek-speaking Cypriots from irridentist Ankara. Were they to leave, as Canadian politicians have from time to time threatened, the result would be more suffering for Cyprus. Yet it would be wrong to perceive Canadian troops as altruistic peacemakers: they have, for twenty years, performed a role for NATO that neither the US nor the UK could themselves accomplish.

BACKGROUND TO THE "CYPRUS PROBLEM"

Though a Greek-speaking island since the Acheans settled there in the 13th century B.C., because of its exposed and highly strategic geographic position, Cyprus has been the victim of a long succession of conquerors. The Ottomans ruled the island from 1571 until 1878 when they handed it over to the British in return for protection from Czarist Russia. The Cypriots had little to say in the change of rulers. They had sought to be part of revolutionary Greece since the early nineteenth century, but like many of the islands, including Crete and Rhodes, independence would follow a different timetable.

The British coveted Cyprus for its strategic position, and though military tactics have changed since 1878, the value of such an outpost in the Eastern Mediterranean has, if anything, increased. As late as 1954, in the heyday of decolonization, the British Minister of State for the Colonies, Henry Hopkinson, would say of Cyprus: "It has always been understood and agreed that there are certain territories in the Commonwealth which, owing to their particular circumstances, can never expect to be fully independent."[1]

Hopkinson's "never" precipitated an anti-colonial struggle by the patient Cypriots, and within a few years EOKA's bombs had already reduced it to a "maybe". The courageous Cypriots quickly convinced world opinion that independence was inevitable. The British, however, as they had successfully done in India and other ex-colonies, tried to mitigate the damage by inciting racial warfare. Their tool was the Turkish minority, 18% of the island's population. When Britain took Cyprus from Turkey in 1878, it had kept much of the Ottoman colonial administration in place, and even in 1950s most of the island's policemen were still Turks. Turkey itself, though it had abandoned all legal claims to Cyprus with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, still nurtured hopes of recovering this lost part of "greater Anatolia". Against EOKA, then, Britain sent a Turkish minority that preferred partnership with the colonizers to the prospect of life in a newly independent democracy. Perhaps there is no greater confirmation of this than the personality of Rauf Denktash, currently the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community. In the 1950s, Denktash was the British Crown prosecutor who sent Michael Karaolis and other Cypriot nationalists to the gallows.

As the revolutionary Cypriots fought on, Britain sought a compromise that would ensure the spirit, if not the letter, of Hopkinson's famous "never". In 1959, Archbishop Makarios, the political leader of the struggle, reluctantly accepted the "independence" that London, with the cooperation of NATO partners in Athens and Ankara, had cooked up. The London-Zurich agreements imposed a cumbersome federalist constitution. Cyprus was divided into two communities on the basis of ethnic origin: the president, by law, would be a Greek-Cypriot, while the vice-president would be a Turkish-Cypriot. The vice-president possessed a veto on important legislation. Turkish Cypriots, though only 18% of the population, would hold 30% of civil service positions and make up 40% of the police force and army. The president of the High Court was a foreign jurist (in fact, one of the first was a Canadian, John C. Wilson, formerly of the Ontario Supreme Court).[2] The Treaty of Guarantee also established the UK, Turkey and Greece as "guarantor powers", with the right to intervene if the constitutional framework were ever threatened. Finally, Britain's military presence on the island was assured. Not only would it keep two sovereign base areas, but Her Majesty's troops would have unrestricted access to the island's

highways, use of the international airport and a variety of other concessions that helped make Cypriot independence more of an illusion than a reality.[3]

The Greek Cypriots soon realized that they had been sold a bill of goods. Rather than being a stepping stone to full sovereignty, as no doubt Makarios had hoped, the London-Zurich agreements cut short a promising liberation struggle, and imprisoned the Cypriots in a political *cul-de-sac*. Still, Makarios did his best to make the bizarre constitution work; in 1963 when he proposed amendments that would remove some of the more obstructive Turkish vetoes, the vice-president declared that the Republic of Cyprus had ceased to exist and withdrew from the government. The week before Christmas, 1963, there was fighting in the streets of Nicosia.[4]

CANADIAN PEACEKEEPERS TO CYPRUS

A conference of the three guarantor powers was convoked in London on January 15, 1964. The UK's initial solution, submitted after consultations with the US, was to occupy temporarily the island with a NATO force.[5] From the standpoint of Washington and London, this was a NATO problem, because two key NATO powers, Greece and Turkey, as well as important military bases, were involved. Yet Cyprus was not a NATO member. Archbishop Makarios, who was also President, had already made abundantly clear his anti-imperialist sentiments and his association with the non-aligned world. The Cypriot government declared that "peacekeeping" by a NATO force was unacceptable.[6]

Britain's next proposal was a Commonwealth force, but the suggestion was dropped when only Canada was prepared to contribute troops.[7] British Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas-Home visited Ottawa in early February, 1964. That Britain was counting on Canadian soldiers to police a Cyprus ceasefire was already common knowledge, and Canada had indicated its sympathy to the idea. Lester Pearson, Nobel Peace Prize winner, was Canada's Prime Minister. Since the mid-1950s Pearson advocated the creation of a permanent U.N. peacekeeping force, so he provided a sympathetic audience when the dispatch of troops to Cyprus was first suggested.

The English-Canadian press was enthusiastic about the proposal, and *The Globe and Mail* urged that Canada be "well to the front" of an international peacekeeping effort.[8] For a Quebec well in the throes of its quiet revolution, however, sending Canadian soldiers to help the British smacked of colonialism and brought memories of the Boer War. Ottawa was "never so happy", said *La Presse*, as when it was asked "to concern itself with conflicts that are none of its business".[9] The editorial in *Le Devoir* was entitled "De la guerre des Boers à la crise de Chypre":

> "Devons-nous engager ainsi dans une complication inquiétante de la guerre froide pour tirer le gouvernement anglais d'une situation embarrassante? Nous pouvons sympathiser ou non avec la minorité turque-chypriote qui recourt à la violence et à l'émeute pour défendre des droits qu'elle juge menacés par la majorité grecque; mais est-ce bien le rôle du Canada de s'aventurer dans ce conflit? Notre principal motif serait d'aider Londres, mais nous ne sommes plus à l'époque ou Laurier envoyait des troupes canadiennes en Afrique du Sud."[10]

Le Devoir distinguished between NATO or Commonwealth forces, and a peacekeeping body that would come under the aegis of the United Nations. The distinction was made elsewhere as well: if England wished to send troups back into Cyprus, three years after independence, they would require a modest level of international credibility. Canada was the perfect "peacekeeper", as it could be equally at home in a NATO, Commonwealth or U.N. force.

The United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was created by a Security Council resolution of March 4, 1964.[11] The government of Cyprus gave its consent to a mandate that was to last three months. (The mandate would be renewed in June, and thereafter until the present at regular intervals.) The Secretary-General, at the time U Thant, was to determine the peacekeeping force's composition, in consultation with the three guarantor powers and Cyprus herself.

Formation of the force was hastened by a Turkish ultimatum on March 11 that threatened intervention. Cyprus considered an invasion to be imminent, and called on the Security Council to take prompt action. Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin met U Thant in New York, and then personally undertook the recruitment of the force's member nations. It has been said that had Martin been less concerned, the force would not have been formed, and Turkey would indeed have invaded the island.

A telephone call from US president Lyndon Johnson gave Martin and Pearson some encouragement: "We're told that the Turks are embarking troops to invade Cyprus," Johnson is reported to have told Pearson by telephone. "Unless some kind of United Nations force gets there in the next few days, there might be war. You're the only country that could possibly get your men there in time. Can you do it?"

Pearson told Johnson what he wanted to hear. "We'll have our troops airborne by tonight."[12] At 6.30 PM on March 13 Pearson made good his commitment, and a reconnaissance party of Royal Canadian Dragoons left the airforce base in Trenton, Ontario for Cyprus. By March 27, the 1st batallion of the Royal 22nd Regiment (the "Van Doos") was operational, and the HMCS *Bonaventure* arrived on March 30 with supplies. The Swedish and the Irish were also active participants in the early days of UNFICYP.

Canadian troops took on some of the most difficult missions, including the strategic Nicosia-Kyrenia road and the Nicosia "Green Line" which divided the Turkish enclave from the rest of Cyprus. The Canadian soldiers were commended in the Western press for their maturity and tact. Before the close of 1964, Cyprus was a household word in Canada, "the Cyprus force had become...part of Canadian life."[13]

The Canadian force had also become part of life in Cyprus. "The Greek Cypriots became rapidly disillusioned with the UN when they found it was neither prepared to disarm the Turks nor to take over the Nicosia-Kyrenia road from them by force," according to historian Nancy Crawshaw.[14] Keep the peace it would, but the UN forces were also perpetuating the status quo, supervising the transition of a ceasefire line into a virtual international boundary. The net effect of UN peacekeeping was to police the Zurich-London accords and the developing division of the island, something the Turks and the British had always sought and the Greek Cypriots had always resisted.

INVASION AND PARTITION

The 1967 overthrow of the elected Greek government threatened to bring more trouble to Cyprus. Makarios, a progressive whom Kissinger would later dub "the Castro of the Mediterranean", was no friend of the Athens junta. The Greek colonels soon began stimulating a right wing terrorist opposition to President Makarios. The group was called "EOKA B", exploiting the prestige of the original EOKA, and of its leader, General Grivas. When Grivas died in early 1974 it was hoped tensions within the Greek Cypriot community would be relaxed. But instead pro-junta forces, encouraged by the colonels in Athens, undertook a coup d'état on July 15, 1974. The Turkish government seized upon the coup as a pretext to invade Cyprus and accomplish the partition it had sought since the 1950s.

On July 20, 1974, 40,000 Turkish troops, aided by air and naval forces, invaded the island. Over the month that followed, while Turkey consolidated its positions, the UN Security Council[15] called for a ceasefire and troop withdrawals, as well as Turkey's respect of agreements it signed at a late-July meeting of the three guarantor powers in Geneva. Turkey, however, launched a second invasion on August 14 that brought 40% of the island's territory under its control.

Turkey's intentions had been declared as recently as February 1974, only five months prior to the invasion. Following a government crisis that resulted from the 1973 general elections, Premier Bulent Ecevit's coalition government signed a protocol declaring that only federation could be accepted in Cyprus.[16] But federation was hard to accomplish in an island with such a heterogeneous population; the two peoples had lived side by side for

decades. War and accompanying terror enabled Turkey to drive the Greeks in the northern half of Cyprus from their homes, and create distinct national boundaries.

Canadian soldiers were in the middle of much of the fighting. When Turkey attempted to seize the Nicosia airport on July 24, Canadian soldiers held off the attack, and are credited with saving the airport. Canadian Defence Minister James Richardson later said that the Canadian troops should have surrendered to the Turkish forces, rather than attempt to defend the airport against Turkish tanks when they were not adequately equipped.[17]

On July 21, in an official statement, Secretary of State for External Affairs Mitchell Sharp said Canada had played an active role in preventing armed conflict, particularly after the Turkish invasion. He confirmed that nine Canadians had sustained minor injuries.[18] On July 25, responding to requests from the UN Secretary-General, the Canadian government decided to increase the size of its UNFICYP contingent to the capability of an infantry batallion, roughly doubling the number of soldiers stationed in Cyprus, to approximately 950. Sharp and Richardson also announced that Canadian peacekeeping troops would be equipped with heavier weapons, including 101-millimetre recoilless rifles, M72 anti-tank rocket launchers, M113 armoured personnel carriers equipped with .50-calibre machine guns, N577A1 command-post carriers, 84-millimetre Carl Gustav anti-tank weapons and Lynx command and reconnaissance vehicles.[19]

Canada was active on the diplomatic front during the 1974 invasion. Sharp insisted that Canada had a special interest in the Cyprus question, despite the fact it was not then a member of the Security Council. He announced that Canada's permanent representative to NATO was actively participating in consultations with other NATO governments on the question.[20] In August more Canadian troops were sent to Cyprus, "a reflection of the importance we attach to preventing open conflict" in the area, said Sharp's successor, Allan MacEachan.[21]

On February 13, 1975 Turkey announced that it was establishing "the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus". The move was denounced by most countries, including Canada. In a statement released on February 19, 1975, MacEachan said Canada had "learned with concern" of Turkey's plans. He noted that Canada has sought to avoid taking sides in the dispute between the two communities while trying to encourage representatives of both sides from undertaking meaningful negotiations. MacEachan said it was "difficult to avoid the conclusion that they (the negotiations) have received a serious setback by the recent unilateral action of the Turkish Cypriot administration. MacEachan also "noted with satisfaction the Turkish-Cypriot statement that their action is not intended to constitute partition of the Island nor to create a separate independent state."[22]

Several rounds of frustrating and fruitless negotiations over the years that followed attempted to find some solution to the "Cyprus problem". In 1977, in an attempt to break the impasse, Makarios offered to meet Denktash under the auspices of the United Nations. The Cypriot government even agreed to "a major and painful concession", acceptance of a confederal Cyprus in which a Turkish state would have full autonomy over matters within its competence.[23] The Turks replied to Cypriot concessions with accelerated threats of a UDI — "unilateral declaration of independence".

THE "WESTERN FRAMEWORK"

Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Donald Jamieson travelled to Cyprus in June, 1978, for a meeting with President Kyprianou. Press reports said Jamieson was sceptical about a solution to the Cyprus problem, as both sides seemed "entrenched". However, the atmosphere during Jamieson's visit cannot have been helped by the fact he had arrived following a cordial visit to Ankara. While in Turkey, Jamieson told the Turkish government he expected it to play "a full, viable, and totally active role" in NATO. Jamieson expressed Canada's agreement with a NATO communique of May 1978 that stated it was essential Turkey be provided with adequate military supplies and equipment. While in Ankara, Jamieson also suggested that Canada was getting tired of its peace-keeping role in Cyprus. He said "we are beginning to feel that we are now part of the problem instead of being part of the solution.»[24]

The following October, in his annual speech to the UN General Assembly, Jamieson called for a Western initiative to resolve the Cyprus problem. The "Western framework" was produced by Canada, the US and the UK, and submitted by Washington to the Cyprus government and the Turkish Cypriot leadership in November 1978. The plan called for resumption of intercommunal talks, but also provided an outline for a solution of the Cyprus problem. It proposed a bicommunal federal state with two constituent regions, one to be inhabited by Greek Cypriots, the other predominantly by Turkish Cypriots. The new constitutional structure was to be negotiated based on the Makarios-Denktash declaration of February 1977, relevant elements of the 1960 constitutions, and UN resolutions. The "Western framework" provided for a bicameral legislature, with the upper chamber representing the two communities on a basis of equality, and the lower chamber elected in proportion to the population. Turkish communal representatives would hold 30% of the ministerial portfolios. In the event the requisite majority in the upper house could not be obtained, a bill could pass with a two-thirds vote in the lower chamber, provided it had the support of at least three-eighths of the representatives of each community.[25]

The Canada-US-UK proposal was sharply criticized by the Cyprus government. It pointed out that the plan relegated the UN resolutions to a secondary role in the solution of the Cyprus problem. The plan addressed in detail the constitutional proposals, an area of interest to the Turks, but passed briefly over recovery of territory in the occupied zone, the preoccupation of the Greek Cypriots. Nor did it provide any effective means of resettlement for refugees displaced by the war. The elaborate voting procedure proposed in the "Western framework" did little more than reinstitute the Turkish veto that had been enshrined in the 1960 constitution, and that had led to the breakdown in 1963. Finally, the document conflicted with UN resolutions on a number of points, including the withdrawal of all foreign troops. The General Assembly had called for immediate withdrawal of all foreign military presence, but the Canada-US-UK document indicated that some foreign forces might remain in Cyprus, even after resolution of "the problem".[26]

As a general rule, Canada and the Western powers mitigate the role of the United Nations in international affairs, and the Cyprus case is no exception. UN Resolutions are dismissed as pious sentiments, of little value compared with a bilateral agreement or conference under the stewardship of some Western state. Even within the UN, the West prefers to marginalize the General Assembly, a fundamentally democratic body in which it is, however, the minority, in favour of the Security Council, which it can more often control, and the Secretary-General, who must dutifully defer to the "realities" of international relations.

There are nuances to be made within Canada concerning attitudes towards the Cyprus question, as the surprise election of Conservatives in 1979 demonstrated. With the exception of Joe Clark's brief reign in 1979-1980, the Liberal Party has held power throughout Canada's association with the "Cyprus problem". The Conservatives had some original theories about Canadian foreign policy: Joe Clark soon made Canada a laughing stock with his proposal to move Canada's Israel embassy to Jerusalem, something even Israel's most steadfast Western allies had refused to do. Soon rumours were circulating that Canada wanted to review its participation in the Cyprus peacekeeping force. Clark's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Flora MacDonald, claimed that the Canadian government was tired of spending money on peacekeeping in Cyprus. "There does come a point when you wonder whether or not your presence has not just become a security blanket, a reason for the disputants to the situation turning their backs on having to realistically deal with the problem, trying to come to some solution," she told the Standing Committee on External Affairs.[27]

Upon their return to office in early 1980, the Liberals reassured Canadians that withdrawal of the peacekeeping troops was not being seriously considered. The new Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mark MacGuigan, said that "...through the United Nations we have made attempts to bring about a settlement of the issue. Every indication we have is that the issue is not ripe for settlement and that our withdrawal would really precipitate more problems." MacGuigan said that an ultimatum to withdraw the Canadian

troops, in the hopes it would provoque a settlement, was unlikely to "produce the desired results. I suppose there is only one way to find out for sure, but I would rather not take the risk."[28]

MISSING PERSONS AND THE THIRD COMMITTEE

Canada's role in the Cyprus conflict has been characterized by considerable ambiguity: a neutral peacekeeper, on the one hand, but a loyal member of NATO on the other. With the Conservatives in office, the soup has perhaps a little more NATO and a little less "peace-keeper", but causes the same indigestion in both major political parties. This ambivalence was effectively demonstrated in Canada's response to a recent UN resolution on missing persons in Cyprus. There are still 2,000 persons whose whereabouts since the invasion in 1974 cannot be determined. Some of them have been identified in photos appearing in Turkish newspapers, indicating they were taken prisoner, but the Turkish government refuses to account for them.

In November, 1982, the UN Third Committee was presented with a resolution on the subject. With the hopes of achieving broad support among member nations of the UN, the proposers of the resolution toned down its contents. Argument broke out in the Third Committee over the status that representatives of the Turkish Cypriots should be accorded. The Cypriot government successfully convinced the UN body that the Turkish delegation should not be given status at the conference, as it did not represent a legal government. Canada did not agree, however, and abstained during the vote in the Third Committee (99 voted in favour, four against and 18 abstained.) According to Julie Loranger, director of the UN Social and Humanitarian Affairs Division of Canada's Department of External Affairs, "Canada had to maintain its balanced bilateral relations with two NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, and in particular had to underline its credibility and impartiality as the second-largest peacekeeping contributor in Cyprus."[30] Canada later joined the consensus which adopted the resolution in plenary.

The question of status for Turkish Cypriot representatives is a difficult one for the Canadian government. The Turkish administration is illegal by any definition of interna-tional law,[31] having been imposed by armed invasion. Yet even in its most sympathetic light, it is a secessionist government seeking to create a new "confederal state" and rewrite an existing constitution. Largely because of nationalism in Quebec, the Canadian govern-ment has traditionally been in the forefront of states that maintain members of a federation have no status in international relations. Such, at any rate, was its position during the Vienna Conference on the Law of Treaties, during which Canada successfully led a campaign to refuse members of a federal state a role in treaty-making.[32] Thus, the behaviour of Canadian diplomats during the Third Committee seems to contradict one of the tenets of Canada's international outlook.

Nor is the concern about Canada's credibility as a peacekeeper a convincing argument. The Resolution in the Third Committee won the support of every state contributing to UNFICYP — Australia, Austria, Denmark, Eire, Finland and Sweden — with two exceptions, the UK and Canada. According Julie Loranger of the Department of External Affairs, "Only Canada, the UK and Denmark among Western countries had both the NATO and the peacekeeping angles to consider in their vote in the Assembly committee. The UK reached the same conclusion to abstain as Canada, while Denmark was presuma-bly much less constrained by its much smaller peacekeeping commitment."[33]. The distinc-tion with Denmark defies logic: presumably a "much smaller peacekeeping commitment" would make Denmark less sensitive to "the peacekeeping angle", not more so. Nor is, in reality, Denmark's contribution that different from Canada's. Denmark has 341 soldiers in Cyprus compared with Canada's 515, and the UK's 761. The real explanation for Canada's behaviour in the Third Committee is that, given the choice between the "NATO angle" and the "peacekeeping angle", the former will prevail.

A comparable voting pattern was repeated in the General Assembly's most recent Resolution on the Cyprus question. Adopted on May 13, 1983, it called for "the immediate withdrawal of all occupation forces from the Republic of Cyprus", and for "meaningful,

result-oriented, constructive and substantive negotiations between the representatives of the two communities, under the auspices of the Secretary-General." The Resolution was adopted with a majority of 103, five voting against and 20 abstentions, including Canada. The five opposed were Turkey, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan and Somalia. The abstainers included Canada, West Germany, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Japan, the US and the UK.[34]

CONCLUSION

"Peacekeeping" is often a mighty euphemism, and Cyprus can consider itself fortunate to have avoided "peacekeepers" like those who have descended upon Beirut or Grenada. Still, many Cypriots quite justifiably ask if UN troops have merely policed the Turkish and British objective of a divided Cyprus. When the first *casques bleus* arrived in 1964, the "Green Line" defined a relatively small enclave with a substantial Turkish population. Yet already the principle of a geographic division in an island that had hitherto had a heterogeneous population was established. Twenty-five years after the anti-colonial war, Britain and Turkey have cut the island in two and fulfilled by war the redistribution of populations that they could never have achieved by negotiation.

Canada has helped to accomplish this. The Canadian government has enabled NATO to survive a crisis that for more than 20 years has threatened its vulnerable southern flank. No doubt, many Canadian soldiers have behaved with courage and considerable sympathy towards the Greek Cypriots. Their actions during the 1974 war, specifically their defence of the Nicosia airport when they were badly outgunned, earned them much respect. A sudden withdrawal of UN troops would only further expose the Republic of Cyprus to Turkish aggression. But even large-hearted missionaries may objectively perform quite another function.

Canada's fundamental loyalty to the NATO-British-US view of Cyprus was underscored by its participation in the 1978 "Western framework". Canada linked itself with a sterile and unfair "solution" of the Cyprus problem, largely a rehash of the disastrous 1960 constitution, combined with an entrenchment of Turkish territorial sovereignty over a piece of Cyprus far greater than its share of the total population would warrant. During recent UN sessions, Canada has shown that, forced to choose between NATO and the neutrality that is expected of a "peacekeeper", NATO comes first.

The Cyprus problem is so complicated that even most Greek Cypriots see with difficulty any realistic and respectable solution in the short term. If the clock could be set back to 1959, few today would accept the wisdom of Makarios' reluctant compromise in London. The Zurich-London agreements and the constitution that consolidated them cut short the anti-colonial war. Cypriots have been paying for it ever since. Canada's role in Cypriot politics has been a secondary though significant one. Garbed as a neutral peacekeeper, it has in reality served the strategic imperatives of London and Washington in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. In that sense, Prime Minister Trudeau unintentionally hit the nail on the head when he said, during his August 1983 visit to Athens, that perhaps Canada "was part of the problem, rather than part of the solution."[35]

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