

*Taking Care of Business:
Canada's Forgotten Cold War Conflict
in Cyprus, July-August, 1974*

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Canada's cold war history has often had a passive reputation. While American and Soviet officials plotted against each other during the East-West confrontation, all too often Canadians appeared to be looking the other way for a Northern airstrike that never materialized. However, Canada's cold war experience holds far more excitement than is generally perceived. The Cyprus crisis of 1974, a moment where Canadian peacekeepers stood strong amid a cold war conflict, is a case in point. Canada's response to this crisis is at the centre of this study.

In July 1974, the world stood transfixed by the Watergate Scandal that threatened to topple the Presidency of Richard Nixon. Beyond the high drama in Washington, however, events in Cyprus threatened the stability of the NATO alliance at the height of the Cold War. The sudden invasion of Cyprus left NATO allies scrambling to calm the situation. It was at that moment that the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), including a substantial contingent of Canadian peacekeepers, was put directly in the line of fire as they protected civilians and deprived critical infrastructure from the belligerents. Canada's quick response to bolster the force with heavy weaponry was a precedent setting show of force and arms not seen since the Korean War. Despite these actions, the Cyprus crisis remains a little known event in Canadian history.

This article has two main aims. First, a critical re-assessment is made of Canada's 1974 peacekeeping mission in Cyprus. This is necessary as surprisingly little academic

research has been done on Canada's role, beyond the original M.A and Ph.D dissertations by historian Robert Gravelle; the last of which was completed in 1995. Though other historians have tackled the 1974 events, the studies were often over-generalized or included within studies unrelated to Cyprus, such as the 1993 Somalia affair.¹ Two recent memoirs by former UNFICYP officers, Canadian commander Brigadier General Clayton Beattie (Retired) and British Brigadier Francis Henn (Retired), have revived the topic, though their personal involvement in the events could mean their studies lack proper historical objectivity. This study draws on their unique perspectives, though not without seeking validation from additional sources including veteran interviews gathered by the author, radio logs from peacekeepers, and diplomatic exchanges. These provide a stronger contextual and personal account of Canada's true impact during the Cyprus crisis.

Second, this study also sheds light on how the conflict in Cyprus altered the cold war and Canada's response to it. The decision to augment Canada's contingent with offensive weapons and reinforcements indicated a profound willingness to do whatever was necessary to maintain NATO cohesion and UN stability in Cyprus. Canada's response to the Cyprus crisis casts off the myth of uneventful peacekeeping to instead reveal the active and interventionist role Canada readily adopted when its international commitments were at risk. This monumental change would later lay the groundwork for its future involvement in peacekeeping and peacemaking worldwide.

The year 1974 marked the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). After ten years of relative calm, new Canadian peacekeepers could be forgiven for not understanding what Cyprus was like when their first comrades

1 Some books that offer at least a brief mention the Canadian contingent in Cyprus include: *Canada and UN Peacekeeping: Cold War by Other Means, 1945-1970* by Sean Maloney, Fred Gaffen's *In the Eye of the Storm*, David Bercuson's *Significant Incident*, Scott Taylor's *Tested Mettle*. Other works focus more generally on UNFICYP as a whole. For further information on the invasion of Cyprus in 1974 from a broader perspective, please consult: Karl Th. Birgisson, "United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus." In Durch, William J., ed. *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Analysis*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. pp. 219-236; Van Coufoudakis, "United Nations Peacekeeping and Peacemaking and the Cyprus Question." In *The Western Political Quarterly*. Vol. 29, No. 3, September 1976. pp. 457-473; Francis Henn, "A Business of Some Heat: The United Nations Force in Cyprus Before and During the 1974 Turkish Invasion." Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Books, Ltd, 2004.

arrived in March 1964. Ethnic conflict raged in Cyprus in early 1964 as a constitutional battle pitted the island's majority Greek Cypriots against the less numerous Turkish Cypriots. The situation would have garnered little international attention except that the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities on the island were supported by Greece and Turkey; both of which were NATO allies. Concern grew, within the NATO membership, for the security of the alliance. The countries involved in the conflict, known collectively as NATO's Southern flank, extended NATO's intelligence and missile range due to their close proximity to the Soviet Union.² The British bases in Cyprus also offered a significant strategic advantage for NATO since its airfields supported U2 spy aircraft and nuclear-equipped bombers.³ With instability jeopardizing the entire southern flank of its area of operation, the Cyprus crisis shook NATO's ability to detect and respond to threats.

Canada played a significant role in Cyprus during its constitutional crisis of 1963-1964. As a member of both NATO and the British Commonwealth, of which Cyprus also held membership, Canada understood the consequences of instability within its international groupings. Though both organizations tried to assemble a peacekeeping force between January and March, the Cypriots continually vetoed the proposals in favour of the United Nations.⁴ The UN Security Council, however, failed to resolve the conflict quickly when diplomatic efforts became deadlocked over the costs and the membership of any possible force. The Turkish ultimatum of 12 March, 1964, reawakened efforts to resolve the crisis. Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin Sr. responded with assertive diplomacy. Martin successfully led a personal telephone campaign to gain assurances that Britain, Canada, Ireland and Sweden would participate in a UN force.⁵ By 6:00 p.m. on 13 March, 1964, UN Secretary-General U Thant announced that a UN force would be established consisting of these nations, along with possible commitments from Finland and Austria.⁶ Even as

2 Sean M. Maloney, *Canada and UN Peacekeeping: Cold War by Other Means, 1945-1970* (St. Catherines, ON: Vanwell Publishing Ltd., 2002), p 191.

3 Ibid., 191.

4 "Makarios Still Opposed," *New York Times* (February 14, 1964), p. 2.

5 Paul Martin, *A Very Public Life, Volume II: So Many Worlds* (Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1985), p. 547.

6 Gordon, J. King, "The UN in Cyprus." In *International Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 3. p. 340.

the House of Commons voted for participation, Canada had soldiers airborne.⁷ It had seized an important opportunity to protect NATO's southern flank at a time when it appeared that war within the alliance was immanent. As UNFICYP became a more established presence on the island, the situation settled down and appeared to stabilize into the early 1970s.

The Coup d'Etat: 15 July, 1974

The relative stability and agreeable Mediterranean climate made service in UNFICYP one of the more pleasant peacekeeping assignments in the late 1960s. Canadian contingents would arrive for eight month rotations and would patrol the Cypriot capital Nicosia to monitor and report ethnic violence.⁸ Though there were exchanges of fire across the line from time to time, Cyprus had largely settled into an uneasy peace governed by UN protection. By 1974, many in the Canadian military had grown accustomed to the routine and relative calm that a posting to Cyprus offered. However, the situation was different for the Canadian Airborne Regiment. In April 1974, the arrival of 486 paratroopers of the Regiment's 1 Commando unit held special significance as it was the first overseas mission for the fledgling regiment, established only in 1968.⁹ Despite their enthusiasm, the Cyprus question appeared to drag on without any clear answer.

After a decade of peace, it took less than a month for Cyprus to unravel. Tensions increased on 2 July, 1974 when Cyprus President Archbishop Makarios III sent an angry letter to Greek President Phaedon Ghizikis in which he denounced Greece and called for the withdrawal of all mainland forces from Cyprus.¹⁰ The published letter humiliated the Greek government since Makarios openly rejected their Greek patronage

⁷ Paul Hellyer, *Damn the Torpedoes: My Fight to Unify the Canadian Armed Forces*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), p. 66.

⁸ Fred Gaffen, *In the Eye of the Storm: A History of Canadian Peacekeeping*. Toronto: Deneau & Wayne Publishers, 1987, pg. 94

⁹ Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. "Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry: The Canadian Airborne Regiment," 1997. <<http://www.dnd.ca/Somalia/vol1/v1c9.htm>>

¹⁰ Polyvios, G. Polyviou, *Cyprus: Conflict and Negotiation, 1960-1980*, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980), p. 154.

in favour of independent freedom of action.¹¹ These sudden developments led the Greek military junta in Athens to quickly formulate a response to the situation or risk losing its influence over the Greek Cypriot population indefinitely.

At first light on 15 July, Canadian UNFICYP personnel witnessed the opening moves in the coup against President Makarios. Operations Officer Captain Ian Nicol on helicopter patrol noticed plumes of smoke at approximately 8:30 a.m coming from the Presidential Palace surrounded by Greek National Guard vehicles.¹² Corporal Claude Gratton of the 1 Commando reconnaissance platoon also witnessed the unfolding situation from a different perspective. Fellow Canadian paratrooper Alain Gaudet recalled in his combat diary for 15 July: "We are listening to Corporal Gratton on the set. He is pinned down right in the middle of crossfire at Melachus Square with his jeep.... He is describing everything on his jeep's radio set...you can hear the rounds banging away at him."¹³ The coup attempt surprised President Makarios: however, as poor execution gave the leader time to escape. The UN Secretary General had ordered UNFICYP to guarantee the President's safety.¹⁴ Makarios was quickly whisked away to the British base Akrotiri in southern Cyprus where he was then evacuated to safety.

As news of the coup spread around the world, the issue of Cyprus returned to centre-stage at the United Nations. Threats abounded between the Turkish, Greek, and Cypriot delegations as they each blamed each other. On 18 July, the situation escalated when the Soviet Union entered the fray by officially blaming NATO and the Greek government in Athens for trying to "conceal its involvement in this criminal act."¹⁵ Soviet pressure dramatically raised the stakes and Cyprus became a potential cold war battleground for the superpowers. After four days of unproductive negotiations, British and American negotiators failed to find a solution that would meet with the approval of all parties and the talks fell apart. At 6:30 a.m. on 20 July, the Turkish Prime Minister thanked the British and American negotiators but announced on Turkish radio that "the

11 Ibid., p. 154.

12 Ian Nicol, "Cyprus [Part 1 of 3]." *The Sentinel*. Vol.8, (1974), p. 16.

13 Alain Pierre Gaudet. "Combat Diary. April 1 to December 12,1974. Part 1, p.1.

14 "The Battle for Cyprus." *Newsweek*. (July 29,1974), p. 47; Kurt Waldheim. *The Challenge of Peace* (London: Weiridenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 65; Gravelle, "A New Mandate for UNFICYP: The Canadian Contingent in Cyprus, July-August 1974." Unpublished MA Thesis. Wilfrid Laurier University, 1989.

15 United Nations *Security Council Document*, S/11340 (July 18, 1974).

Turkish armed forces have begun landing in Cyprus” to assist the Turkish Cypriot population.¹⁶ The Turkish invasion was imminent, with dangerous implications for the NATO alliance.

Operation Attila: The First Phase, 20-23 July 1974

British Brigadier-General Francis Henn telephoned Nicosia District headquarters with urgent news at 3:30 a.m. on 20 July. Canadian commander Colonel Clayton Beattie was informed that “visitors” were incoming from the north and that the Canadian contingent had to be ready for action.¹⁷ His 486-man contingent was immediately placed on full alert with orders sent to all UN Observation Posts (OPs) that they were to be double-manned and were to report immediately all activity in their areas.¹⁸ It did not take long for the attack to materialize as Turkish fighter jets pounded Greek National Guard encampments and towns while they also protected the transport aircraft dropping paratroopers onto the plain North of Nicosia.¹⁹ When the Turkish naval vessels held their position off the coast of Kyrenia at 7:30 a.m., UNFICYP Headquarters understood that the invaders intended to secure the Kyrenia harbour for an incursion deeper into Cyprus.²⁰

The Turkish assault on Cyprus placed the Canadian contingent in the centre of an expanding war zone. By 7:02 a.m., two of the ten Canadian observation posts were abandoned, with two more severely threatened by Cypriots using the chaotic situation to carry out ethnic violence.²¹ UNFICYP headquarters, as well as the Canadian and Finnish Contingent camps, were adjacent to the strategically important Nicosia International Airport. The combination of Turkish strafing runs and mortar barrages from both sides put UNFICYP forces continuously in the line of fire.

The afternoon brought the danger of the unfolding invasion closer to home for the Canadian contingent in Nicosia. For paratrooper Alain Gaudet and the others of 1

16 Ibid., p. 49.

17 Headquarters Nicosia District. *Daily Operational Log sheet*, Canadian Contingent (July 20, 1974), p. 1.

18 Ibid., p. 2.

19 Ibid., pp. 2, 5-6.

20 Ibid., p. 9.

21 Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Commando, being shot at was a new and unnerving experience. Gaudet, stationed at OP Paphos II, wrote in his journal:

They have been shooting on us since 1200hrs, all this is happening too fast. We are taking cover where we can below...on the second floor sniper bullets are going through the walls. Everyone's morale is low because of the snipers.²²

With Canadian OPs and bases being targeted directly, casualties quickly mounted. The first four casualties occurred at 12:24 p.m. when Warrant Officer Moeller, Corporal Meister, Corporal Lapierre, and Trooper Gernier were struck by mortar shrapnel at the Wolseley Barracks camp.²³ Two others were wounded soon after as Sergeant Adcock suffered a shrapnel wound and two hours later Private Levesque was shot in the leg.²⁴ The rest of the day saw more observation posts evacuated. By 7:40 a.m. the following day, only OP Flour Mill was occupied as the contingent struggled to reorganize itself within the ever-changing battlefield.²⁵

Apart from Nicosia, the other major area of activity over the first two days of the Turkish incursion occurred in the Kyrenia district patrolled by the Finnish contingent. The Finns spent the early morning hours of the invasion under intense fire as Turkish forces battled Greek defenders to the north of Nicosia.²⁶ The Kyrenia Pass, over which they fought, was a significant objective for the Turkish forces as it effectively connected the Turkish enclave in the capital to its invasion beachhead. The battle escalated throughout the following day, putting Finnish OP Hilltop in danger and subjecting it to direct fire. By late afternoon, the Turkish forces successfully evicted the Greeks and claimed the high ground surrounding OP Hilltop.²⁷ By holding this vital area, the

22 Alain Pierre Gaudet. *Combat Diary. April 2 to December 15, 1974.* Part 1, p. 3.

23 Headquarters Nicosia District. *Daily Operational Log sheet, Canadian Contingent.* (July 20, 1974), p. 23.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 27.

25 "The Regiment in Cyprus." *The Maroon Beret: The Newsletter of the Canadian Airborne Regiment.* Vol.1, No. 4 (January 1975). <<http://www.airborneassociation.com/cgi/history-histoire/history-cyprus.php>>

26 Clayton E. Beattie with Michael S. Baxendale, *The Bullet proof Flag: Canadian Peacekeeping Forces and the War in Cyprus* (Maxville, ON: Optimum Publishing International, 2007), p. 54.

27 Beattie, p. 81.

Turkish forces successfully completed their primary objective by linking the Nicosia enclave to the coast.

Despite the considerable challenges facing UNFICYP, members of the Canadian contingent distinguished themselves during the street-to-street fighting. In one notable incident, a detachment of the 1 Commando reconnaissance platoon came under direct fire from Greek Cypriots while on patrol. Without cover in the narrow streets, Private François Gasse was shot in the leg by the attacking Greek Cypriots and fell to the ground in pain. Corporal Claude Gratton and Private Michel Gingras managed to drag him along the Green line back to their outpost at Maple Leaf Manor in spite of the bullets filling the air around them.²⁸ After the incident, Gasse remarked to Gratton, "You were covering me. I saw what was going on. We could see the ricochet of the bullets in front of every step you made as on the right-side wall, as you ran!"²⁹ For their courage under fire, Gratton and Gringras each received the Medal of Bravery and became the first of nine members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment to receive decorations during the 1974 Cyprus conflict.

The rise of "Peacekeeping by Confrontation," 21-25 July, 1974

The period between 20 July and 23 July, 1974, known as the first phase of the crisis, was a significant moment for the Canadian contingent and the UNFICYP force more generally. The nature of this phase is demonstrated by Canada's approach to the Ledra Palace Hotel situation between 21 July and 22 July. The hotel was sought after and attacked by both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots as its position overlooking the Green Line made it a prime vantage point for either force.³⁰ Upon recognizing the situation on early 20 July, Canadian Deputy Commanding Officer Don Manuel and a small team went to the hotel to protect the guests and ease tensions. Though initial

28 Claude Gratton. Interview by David Kielstra (22 May, 2008).

29 Ibid.

30 "We Will Eat the Turks!" *Time* (July 29, 1974), p. 32.

negotiations were positive, repeated warnings from Manuel's men failed to get both sides to forge a ceasefire and release the guests trapped inside.³¹

Without any improvement in the Ledra situation, Manuel, in his capacity as Nicosia Sector commander, took significant action to prevent both sides from using the hotel. According to Col. Beattie, Manuel ordered his twelve men into the hotel and told his counterpart with the Greek National Guard,

"It's time to go. Get your men together and get them out of here. You're compromising the lives of civilians. This is UN territory. If you are afraid the Turks will fire on you, I will personally escort you and your men out of the Hotel."³²

This action set an important precedent for the UN force in Cyprus: Canadians had seized a position from a belligerent force in an effort to restore the peace. Historian Robert Gravelle termed the hard-line stance taken by the contingent during the entire 1974 crisis as "peacekeeping by confrontation."³³ For Gravelle, the Ledra situation "demonstrated the capability and willingness of the Canadian contingent to place itself in extreme danger to affect humanitarian assistance under difficult circumstances."³⁴ By asserting themselves, UNFICYP peacekeepers fulfilled two elements of their UN mandate: first, to "contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order" and, second, to "contribute to a return to normal conditions."³⁵ Though the hotel guests were to spend a further evening and morning on the battlefield, the Greeks permitted the tourists to leave in the afternoon. By 4:44 p.m., the standoff was over and the Greeks turned the hotel over to the Canadians. The hotel complex became the first UN

31 Maroon Beret, p. 4; Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 267; "By Courtesy of the RAF." *The Economist* (July 27, 1974), p. 23.

32 Beattie, p. 78.

33 Robert J.A.R Gravelle, *A Different Shade of Blue: Peacekeeping By Confrontation. The Canadian Contingent in Cyprus, 1964-1975* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1995), p. 183.

34 Ibid. p. 183.

35 United Nations. *Security Council Document. S/5671* (April 29, 1964), App. 1.

protected area of the conflict and a testament to the active role the Canadians played in peacefully resolving the dispute.³⁶

Beyond the Ledra Palace Hotel standoff, the Canadian contingent soon was faced with a far more serious confrontation over the Nicosia International Airport. The crisis originated early on 22 July when aircraft from the Greek mainland performed a daring re-supply mission of the Greek Cypriot at the airport.³⁷ The severe damage to the runway took its toll (three aircraft crashed during their landing); however, eleven aircraft landed, delivering a total of 200 commandos and supplies.³⁸ This daring action proved that the Airport still had strategic value; Greece could potentially re-supply its allies faster than Turkey (which was limited to airdrops or its new port at Kyrenia). The situation forced the Turkish forces to remedy the situation quickly. The cost of inaction was to risk losing their gains by further Greek re-supply efforts.

Considering the Turkish position, it is surprising that the dramatic events at the airport did not hamper ceasefire negotiations. By first light, UNFICYP headquarters had received assurances from both Greek and Turkish negotiators that an island-wide ceasefire would still be established at 6:00 p.m. local time.³⁹ It is difficult to understand why the Turkish government would choose that moment to accept a ceasefire, except that it possibly believed it could destroy much of the airport before the deadline. Some accounts suggest that communication problems may have existed leading Turkish officials to believe that their forces were already in possession of the airport.⁴⁰ If so, the Turkish government must have felt that it had met all of its objectives and a ceasefire would solidify their gains. Regardless of the rationale behind the move, the ceasefire became the first sign of improvement in Cyprus since the invasion began.

Intelligence reports received throughout the night noted that Turkish tanks were on the move near the Morphou road, the outer boundary of the airport.⁴¹ These reports were substantiated when British forces at Camp UNFICYP found Turkish advance units attempting to penetrate the camp fence and busloads of Greek defenders reinforcing the

36 Headquarters Nicosia District. Daily Operational Log sheet, Canadian Contingent (July 21, 1974).

37 Headquarters Nicosia District. Daily Operational Log sheet, Canadian Contingent, (July 22).

38 LAC, RG25 Vol.9409, File 20-22-5-CYP, Pt. 2, "Situation Report, 221917Z July 1974".

39 Beattie, p. 84.

40 Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 379.

41 Beattie, p. 92.

Airport.⁴² Fearing an imminent Turkish attack, Canadian Colonel Clayton Beattie, as Deputy Chief of Staff for UNFICYP, led a small detachment to the Turkish front lines. Beattie managed to secure a meeting with the local Turkish Commander at 10:00 a.m. after considerable difficulty.⁴³ It quickly became clear to Beattie that the Turks were making final preparations to advance on the Greek-held airport. Beattie nevertheless, felt that his actions were not in vain. In his memoirs, he argued, "Besides buying valuable time, my representations to the Battalion Commander gave more time to HQ UNFICYP to develop a plan in the event we were unsuccessful there on the ground."⁴⁴ Despite his best efforts, Beattie's negotiations came too late to change the mind of the Turkish commander.

At 11:00 a.m., the Turkish attack commenced. The assault began by directing mortar, rocket, and tank shells towards the main terminal complex while Turkish soldiers advanced over the flat and open terrain surrounding the airport.⁴⁵ The terrain proved fatal for the Turkish offensive as the Greek Cypriots occupied commanding positions within the control tower and other buildings. Ricocheting rounds also caused havoc as they ignited the parched fields in the dry Mediterranean climate.⁴⁶ These small fires created an unintended natural barrier to the attackers as smoke and flames were disorienting for the Turkish forces.

After an hour of battle, both the Greek and Turkish forces were ready to negotiate. Colonel Beattie began pressing for a local cease-fire arrangement. This gave the UN forces situated only metres away an opportunity to once again interpose themselves between the belligerents and fulfill their mandate. After considerable coaxing, the Turkish commander joined his Greek counterpart to conclude a local ceasefire under the United Nations flag.⁴⁷ For British Major D.W Miles observing the meeting, language difficulties may have aided the negotiations to give the UN a minor

42 Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 367; Robert J.A.R Gravelle, "A New Mandate for UNFICYP: The Canadian Contingent in Cyprus, July-August 1974." M.A Thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1989, p. 59.

43 Beattie, p. 98.

44 Ibid., p. 98.

45 Ibid., p. 98.

46 Ibid., pp. 98-99.

47 Ibid., p. 100.

miracle. German was the only language understood by both a Turkish soldier and a UN peacekeeper. Miles later recalled in an interview that:

I believe we were incredibly fortunate to have a ceasefire at all...the problem of German to Greek to English translation was compounded by the fact that neither Mr. Birch (UNFICYP translator), nor the Turkish NCO spoke really fluent German. I suppose in retrospect we were aided by the fact that it added to the confusion and allowed us to persuade the Turks to give up what was, after all, a very serious course of action which must have considerably lessened their bargaining power.⁴⁸

The agreement at the airport was the work of UNFICYP Chief of Staff Brigadier General Francis Henn and had received the approval of the UN in New York. The "Henn Plan" put the UN in control of the airport while each side would evacuate the new protected area and would remain at least 500 metres from the perimeter.⁴⁹ The UN force had once again seized territory in order to achieve peace. Though subsequent events would demonstrate the peace was not as solid as it appeared, for the moment Canadian Colonel Beattie had performed a significant feat.

With the ceasefire established, UNFICYP faced the challenge of holding the Airport. The airport fell within the jurisdiction of the Canadian sector, however the past days had drained the strength from Canada's reserves as they re-established or guarded UN bases including the Ledra Palace Hotel. As a sign of desperation, the Canadian contingent enlisted the help of its non-combat logistics company personnel such as cooks and clerks.⁵⁰ Men who had been behind desks only hours before were suddenly ordered to man machine-gun emplacements on the airport's perimeter. As a temporary solution, Major D. Harries of the Canadian logistics base at Blue Beret Camp was put in charge of a token multinational force including British, Canadian, and Finnish platoons.⁵¹ Severely undermanned and under-strength, the Canadians spent the night of 23-24 July on the tarmac.⁵² With an entire Turkish battalion less than 500 metres away,

48 "Cyprus, 1974 Interview with Major D.W Miles. [Sound Recording]." From Brig.-Gen. Clayton Beattie Collection, *Canadian War Museum*. Accessed by the author, June 13, 2008.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

50 *Maroon Beret*, p. 7.

51 Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 372.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the few dozen Canadian forces at the airport demonstrated their resolve to put their words into action by defending the UN mandate.

On the Turkish mainland, the failure to capture the Nicosia Airport was likely hidden from government officials because of ongoing communication problems. Radio Ankara reported on 24 July that Turkish forces held the Airport. The Turkish Vice President's Office also began issuing threats and statements stating that Turkish forces should not be denied access to the airport as they already held de-facto control over it before the UN arrived.⁵³ To clarify the situation and ease tensions, UNFICYP Commander General Prem Chand brought journalists to Nicosia to show that the UN held it to the exclusion of all others. However, Turkish tanks continued to move closer to the airfield and indicated major chain-of-command problems between the Turkish military and Turkish government officials.

At midnight, the British High Commission received reports that the Turkish government had issued an ultimatum and intended to seize the airport during the night.⁵⁴ The reports galvanized UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim and the British government into action. Given the Turkish threat to the UN peacekeepers, Waldheim recalled, "If they didn't (leave), (the Turkish soldiers) would attack. Clearly that put the United Nations in an intolerable position....I was thus forced to conclude that under the circumstances, the Blue Berets would have to defend the airport."⁵⁵ This strong stance taken by the UN Secretary-General demonstrates that the organization offered its approval for a stronger UN response in light of the Turkish threat.

The British government was also alarmed and therefore urged Waldheim to accept British reinforcements for UNFICYP and, upon approval, immediately authorized the deployment of 12 RAF Phantom aircraft to Cyprus. They arrived at 5:00 a.m. on 25 July.⁵⁶ British armoured reconnaissance reinforcements from British bases in Southern Cyprus soon followed as additions to UNFICYP.⁵⁷ The 16/5 Lancers provided

53 Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 379.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 381.

55 Waldheim, p. 67.

56 Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 382.

57 Henn, "The Nicosia Airport Incident: A Peacekeeping Gamble," p. 93.

the strength, equipment and weaponry that the Canadians had been lacking the previous night, and their arrival marked the turning point for the Airport crisis. The stronger British forces meant that Turkey no longer faced a lightly armed UN force but was confronted by the weight of well-equipped military forces. The Turkish threat subsided immediately in the face this newfound strength. A vital lesson had been learned by the UNFICYP force that it was far easier to operate from a position of strength.

Confrontation at Camp Kronberg

A third situation during the first phase of the Cyprus War became precedent setting for the Canadian contingent. On 23 July at Camp Kronberg, Turkish Cypriots fled into the UN camp for protection against superior Greek forces.⁵⁸ To ease tensions and avoid releasing the Turkish Cypriots to their deaths, Captain Normand Blaquière of the Canadian contingent quickly formulated a plan to send the Turkish Cypriots across the Pedieos River at the rear of the camp and away from the Greek militiamen.⁵⁹ Though the plan initially succeeded, some of the Turkish Cypriots were caught mid-stream by Greek machine-gun fire. The ambush also left Canadians wounded and Blaquière was among those hit. He tumbled to the ground shouting: "My leg is broken. I can't feel it."⁶⁰ Private Michael Plouffe, who witnessed the events, later recalled that he hurried to the wounded Canadian officer despite the continuing Greek fire.⁶¹ Help soon arrived, but not before Plouffe was struck in the jaw by a bullet. According to Alain Gaudet, another witness of the attack, Plouffe was so focused on the task at hand that he simply "took out the hot bullet from his jaw and kept on bandaging Captain Blaquière."⁶² Plouffe later joked to Blaquière that "they should have hit the other side where I've got a cavity!"⁶³ Captain Alain Forand at the river bank called for two UN

58 J. L. Granatstein and Douglas Lavander. *Shadows of War, Faces of Peace*. (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1992), p. 116.

59 Alain Pierre Gaudet, *Combat Diary. April 2 to December 15, 1974*. Part 1, p.7.

60 Granatstein and Lavander, p. 116.

61 Ibid., p. 116.

62 Alain Pierre Gaudet, *Combat Diary. April 2 to December 15, 1974*. Part 1, p. 7.

63 Beattie, p. 106.

scout cars to arrive which were quickly ordered to fire on the Greek position. Alain Gaudet recalled in his diary:

Once a bunker had been worked over, and was quiet (the scout cars) switched to another and silenced it...When changing 50 cal gun belts, we all [covered] the area with individual fire to keep the enemy down....with all our training, this happened automatically and we didn't need anyone to tell us what to do.⁶⁴

The Canadians at the UN camp responded with heavy covering fire to silence the Greek machine-gun emplacement. The Canadians at Kronberg estimated that they fired 600 rounds of .50 and .30 calibre ammunition at the Greek forces and killed between two and six Greeks in the process.⁶⁵ According to a briefing officer after the firefight, the Canadians had been ordered by the UN Command to prepare to resist "forced entry" by elements of the Greek-Cypriot National Guard that were advancing on the Canadian camp. The briefing officer later commented the quick ceasefire may have been because the Greeks were "so astonished that the Canadians fired on them that they just quit."⁶⁶ It was later determined by *The Globe and Mail* that the events at Camp Kronberg saw Canadians return fire and kill for the first time since the Korean War.⁶⁷

The order to open fire was a significant development in the Cyprus mission. Historian Robert Gravelle argues that the Kronberg incident set two important precedents: the UN signalled its willingness to keep out camp intruders that might compromise UN safety, and that "armed resistance would be employed should forced entry be contemplated by either side."⁶⁸ Though Gravelle successfully argues that UN safety was compromised, his second point is distorted by the apparent condition that UNFICYP was simply protecting its camp boundaries. A stronger case must be made instead that the Canadians once again proved themselves willing to intervene directly in the conflict to prevent further bloodshed. Before Camp Kronberg was even fired

64 Alain Pierre Gaudet, *Combat Diary. April 2 to December 15, 1974*. Part 1, p. 8.

65 *The Maroon Beret*, p. 6.

66 "U.S Will Airlift 200 Finns to Cyprus," *The Globe and Mail* (July 25, 1974), p. 10.

67 Hugh Winsor, "Canada is Doubling Cyprus Peace Force." *The Globe and Mail* (July 26, 1974), p. 1.

68 Gravelle, *A Different Shade of Blue*, p. 232.

upon, the Canadians chose to take the small Turkish force under its protection, usher them through their camp (to the rear for safety), and took active measures to protect the river crossing. These actions put the UN force in a dangerous position; however, the assumption of this risk was necessary to protect the asylum-seekers. It is unfair to simply categorize the decision to return fire as a self-defence response. When the Canadians fired on the Greek ambushers, it was as much an extension of their offer of protection to the Turks as it was protection of their own forces.

The Canadian Reaction

As Canadian peacekeepers were setting new precedents in Cyprus, the Canadian government and general public were trying to grasp the severity of the situation. Media reports of Canadian soldiers in an active war zone did not fit with the stereotypical peacekeeping missions that they had come to expect, consisting of long hours spent observing ceasefires. With Canadian tourists threatened and the island in chaos, attention turned in the domestic media to the Canadian peacekeepers still in the country.

In the absence of polling data, Canadian media coverage provides an insight into how Canadians understood unfolding events. Éric Perron recently observed a pattern among editorials. *The Toronto Star*, *Le Devoir*, and *The Vancouver Sun* each carried arguments which focused on collective security as the primary reason for remaining in Cyprus.⁶⁹ Only *The Globe and Mail* chose to argue for the removal of Canadian soldiers. Its main editorial on 23 July argued that the UN mission strained Canada's under-equipped armed forces further and at a time "when peacekeeping experience [is already] monopolized by only a few countries."⁷⁰ The article concluded by arguing that "the mandate under which Canadian troops were sent to Cyprus ten years ago is now clearly irrelevant.... It is time to bring them home." Without the benefit of information now available, the newspaper could not see Canadians actively pursuing ceasefires or occupying strategic areas to deny their use by belligerents. While the mandate had been

69 Éric Perron, M.A thesis, University of Ottawa, 2008. pp. 152-153. Éric Perron's recent M.A thesis analyzed the media coverage in Canada during the crisis and found that editorials were generally positive about Canada's continued role in Cyprus.

70 "The Canadian presence in Cyprus Should End," *The Globe and Mail* (July 23,1974), p. 6.

severely tattered by the war, Canadians continued to interpose themselves rather than to passively watch a decade of peace fade away.

Towards a new Canadian Peacekeeping Doctrine

In the aftermath of the Airport and Kronberg incidents, the Cyprus crisis became a significant issue in Canadian federal government Cabinet discussions. The Cabinet met on 25 July to determine the fate of the Canadian UNFICYP mission and to debate the Waldheim request for more UN troops. While Cabinet agreed in principal, the proposal to send heavy anti-tank weapons was polarizing. Charles M. Drury, the President of the Treasury Board, disliked the anti-tank proposal and questioned the risk Canadian Forces being engaged in combat.⁷¹ Defence Minister Richardson countered this argument by stating that the presence at the airport of British vehicles capable of destroying tanks had proven the importance of having heavy weapons as a deterrent. The strong stance taken by the Canadians and British forces had clearly become a lesson for the government. Canada now had a clear indication that the threat in Cyprus could only be matched with a more robust force capable of deterrence.

According to *The Globe and Mail*, the Cabinet decision to send reinforcements was described as a “serious rethinking of the peacekeeping role of the government.”⁷² Secretary of State for External Affairs Mitchell Sharp and Minister of National Defence James Richardson emerged with a plan to send the 2nd Commando of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, increasing the force to a battalion size of 950 from the 486 currently serving in Cyprus.⁷³ Though the reinforcements were welcomed by the UNFICYP, the decision on the type of armaments the force would be taking with them was significant decision. The new equipment provided to them consisted of:

- 101mm Recoilless Rifles: light-weight weapons designed for anti-tank and anti-personnel roles;

71 Library and Archives of Canada, “United Nations Force in Cyprus.” *Cabinet Conclusions*. RG2, Privy Council Office. Series A-5-a, Vol. 6436, (July 25, 1974), p. 16.

72 “Canada is Doubling Cyprus Force,” *The Globe and Mail* (July 26, 1974), p. 1.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

- M72 Anti-Tank rocket launchers that can be carried by infantrymen;
- M113 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) equipped with .50 calibre machine guns and radio equipment;
- N577A1 Command Post Carriers
- 84mm Carl Gustav Anti-Tank (AT) weapons;
- Lynx Command and Reconnaissance Vehicles which are mobile, armoured, and armed with 50 calibre Machine guns.⁷⁴

The provision of this equipment represented a new era in Canadian peacekeeping history. The offensive nature of these weapons gave the Canadian forces a stronger disposition and reflected Cabinet members' concern for the dangerous situations in which the Canadians had been placed. More importantly, the Cabinet decision significantly alters the contemporary view of Trudeau-era foreign policy. The decision to re-equip the UNFICYP contingent appears more akin to the Pearsonian "helpful fixer" approach that the Trudeau government once shunned in favour of more practical foreign policy based on clear national interests rather than idealism.⁷⁵ Trudeau was clearly not driven by economic "dollar diplomacy" alone, a claim once argued by Granatstein and Bothwell.⁷⁶ Instead, the stunning policy shift suggests that the Trudeau government had begun to recognize the value of having peacekeepers able to stand firm for regional and international peace. Peacekeeping could now be both helpful and practical; a method of conducting the cold war by other means just as Sean Maloney argued was in existence for the earlier 1945-1970 era.⁷⁷ As UNFICYP moved from passive peacekeeping to an active peace-making mission, the armaments gave Canada

74 Gravelle, *A New Mandate for UNFICYP*, p. 73.

75 J.L. Granatstein and Robert Bothwell, *Pirouette: Pierre Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 33.

76 Granatstein and Bothwell, p. 33.

77 See Sean Maloney "Canada and UN Peacekeeping: Cold War by Other Means, 1945-1970" (Toronto: Vanwell Publishing, 2002). Maloney puts forward the thesis that Canada and NATO had always used U.N peacekeeping as a means to an end, a way of defending against outside pressure while peace was being negotiated. Unfortunately, his argument was limited to 1970, a scant four years before the Cyprus events would take place. Cyprus 1974's Cold War implications offer a further justification for Maloney's thesis.

and the UN the clout needed to maintain the fragile cease-fire and assert itself in the face of danger.

Putting it into Practice: The Second Phase, 14-19 August, 1974

When the Canadian reinforcements first arrived on 5 August, it was a homecoming as the majority of the Canadian Airborne Regiment was in an overseas theatre for the first time.⁷⁸ Together with members of the Lord Strathcona's Horse, the total Canadian contingent now amounted to 950 personnel.⁷⁹ Their arrival with a full arsenal of weaponry, ammunition and protective flak jackets was a welcome relief. Beneath the goodwill, however, there was also a small element of resentment. According to former Captain Ian Nicol of 1 Commando:

On the one hand, we were glad to have the rest of the regiment join us, because it meant that we'd be together after an absence of six months. On the other hand, there was some feeling that we had done it all, and "where were they when we needed them?"⁸⁰

This feeling was echoed by former Master Corporal Donald Mackenzie of 2 Commando who summarized the awkward feeling to be "as if your ex-husband showed up at your wedding party"; the 2 Commando soldiers were appearing after the conflict appeared to have already been resolved.⁸¹ Despite the animosity, UNFICYP was given a greater number of soldiers to place on patrols, to man observation posts, or simply for protection if the situation worsened. By 5 August, UNFICYP as a whole had doubled from its 15 July strength of 2197 to 4128 personnel as other member nations also increased their forces.⁸²

78 An additional portion of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, 3 Commando, was left in its deployment as part of the NATO force in Germany. This mechanized component was replaced with the Lord Strathcona force instead.

79 Ibid., p. 17.

80 Ibid., p. 16.

81 Donald Mackenzie, Interview by David Kielstra, 12 May, 2008.

82 Gravelle, *A New Mandate for UNFICYP*, p. 71.

Tragedy struck the next day when Canadian Private Gilbert Perron was shot and killed on an evening patrol in Nicosia. The cause of his death remains somewhat of a mystery. All that is known is that the UN jeep carrying Perron was shot at while Lieutenant Pierre Leblanc was speaking with Turkish sentries at a border checkpoint.⁸³ The loss was hard on the Canadian contingent. Deaths in battle were understandable, but Nicol reminisced that “to have a man shot, apparently deliberately, at a roadblock without being able to defend himself or take any evasive action, was a bitter pill for us to swallow.”⁸⁴ The death of Perron came as a fresh indication that Cyprus remained unsettled and was a startling reminder of the danger facing Canadians wearing the Blue Beret.

The situation into which the Canadian reinforcements were inserted was less than ideal, to say the least. A nominal ceasefire was in place since July 22, which allowed for the United Nations to re-establish OPs along the line and also actively intervene by negotiating border disputes when arguments arose. UNFICYP’s neutral position also allowed it to conduct humanitarian aid before the Red Cross arrived including food, blankets, and anything else they could spare for the growing number of refugees.⁸⁵ Behind the diplomacy, however, each side used the cease-fire as an opportunity to replenish their depleted forces. The Turkish forces were active, landing munitions and tanks on the island, resulting in approximately 30,000 Turkish troops with tanks and artillery crowded into the “Turkish triangle” beachhead.⁸⁶ These actions indicated that a lasting peace was still far from certain. After less than two weeks, the peace began to quickly unravel. The second round of the Geneva peace negotiations failed to reach a decision on a new Cypriot government. Turkish frustration led it to abandon diplomacy on 13 August and to instead attempt to achieve its aims through a renewed offensive.⁸⁷

UNFICYP, at this point, however, was far more prepared for the prospect of renewed hostilities. Yet, radio logs from the Canadian contingent recorded instructions from UNFICYP commander Prem Chand in which he recognized that UNFICYP did

83 Ian Nicol, “Cyprus: The Second of Three Parts.” *The Sentinel*, No. 9 (1974), p. 18.

84 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

85 Ian Nicol, “Cyprus: The Second of Three Parts.” *The Sentinel*. Vol. 9 (1974), p. 17.

86 Andrew Borowiec, *Cyprus: A Troubled Island*, (London: Praeger, 2000), p. 90.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

not have the means or authority to resist a Turkish attack and, therefore, UN troops should be withdrawn if exposed to fighting.⁸⁸ This admission is difficult to understand in light of the confrontational language used earlier in July; however, the reasons were clear to those involved. According to Brigadier-General Henn's memoirs, "those in UNFICYP who had witnessed at close quarters the operations of the Turkish forces during the first offensive had few illusions as to what was to be expected now that these forces had been substantially reinforced."⁸⁹ UNFICYP chose to ensure it survived into the post-conflict period and did not endanger its neutrality by resisting one force in favour of another.

The Canadians were some of the first members of UNFICYP to recognize the breakdown of peace. Trenches were manned by Greek and Turkish Cypriots early on 14 August, followed soon after by sounds of artillery and aircraft filling the air.⁹⁰ By evening, all Canadian OPs had been withdrawn after significant direct fire from artillery and small arms.⁹¹ With the OPs evacuated, the Canadian contingent consolidated itself at its main bases in Nicosia and at the airport. Alain Gaudet at Camp Kronberg recalled in his diary for 14 August: "At first we were getting 5-6 mortar rounds per hour and now in a period of 15 minutes we got hit 29 times... we are armed, flak vest and helmet on. It is hitting directly in our camp."⁹² Canadians were still under attack at the bases, but they had an impressive vantage point of the unfolding Turkish offensives. Cyprus veteran Donald Mackenzie recalled watching as the war played out below him as artillery and aircraft bombardments were followed by small arms fire throughout the sector.⁹³ Canadians did not observe for long before a developing situation outside the Nicosia Airport seized their attention.

The renewed Turkish offensive consisted of a two pronged attack from the east and west of the Turkish enclave. Each axis comprised of tanks, infantry assaults, and

88 Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 447.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 447.

90 Headquarters Nicosia District. Daily Operational Log sheet, Canadian Contingent. Aug. 14, p. 2.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

92 Alain Pierre Gaudet, *Combat Diary. April 2 to December 15, 1974*. Part 2, p. 6.

93 Donald Mackenzie, Interview by David Kielstra, 12 May, 2008.

significant air cover from Turkish jets.⁹⁴ Greek forces were left scrambling in the face of the advancing Turkish forces and offered little resistance. The westward Turkish offensive put it once again into striking distance of the Nicosia International Airport. This time, rather than risk another standoff at the airport, the Turkish forces sought to encircle the complex, capture a key road juncture leading to the airport, and effectively cut off the UN defenders.⁹⁵ This strategy led to the most protracted fighting between the Greek and Turkish forces during the second phase.

Amid the fighting, UN Camp Kykko and its Finnish contingent were stranded in the direct line of fire and were heavily shelled on 15 August. Fearing for the safety of the trapped Finnish soldiers, the Canadian contingent sent its armoured personnel carriers (APCs) through the heavy shelling to rescue the Finnish units.⁹⁶ Photographs of this mission in the Canadian Airborne Regiment newsletter, *The Maroon Beret*, show the considerable danger the Canadians faced during the daring rescue. Plumes of black smoke from napalm surround their white APCs as they traversed the flat plains near the camp.⁹⁷ The successful Camp Kykko evacuation demonstrated Canada's commitment during the crisis and was also a vindication of the decision to send heavy reinforcements. Though the OPs were overrun, Canadians used all available means to actively protect peace by aiding their fellow peacekeepers in a dire situation.

Throughout the island, the second phase of the conflict brought Canadian and other UNFICYP forces deeper into the conflict around them. Canadian radio logs are filled with entries which warn both the Greek and Turkish forces to stop firing on UN property, vehicles, or personnel.⁹⁸ The situation worsened when Greek and Turkish forces began putting "UN" markings on their vehicles to get around roadblocks.⁹⁹ The result was a complete disregard for the UN banner which, in turn, led to shots being fired at anyone carrying binoculars, maps or radios.¹⁰⁰ This confusion proved to be fatal

94 Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 434.

95 Ian Nicol, Part 2, p. 21; *The Maroon Beret*, p. 12.

96 *The Maroon Beret*, p. 12.

97 *The Maroon Beret*, [photograph]. p. 13.

98 Headquarters Nicosia District. Daily Operational Log sheet, Canadian Contingent, August 14, pp. 8, 10, 11, 15.

99 Claude Gratton, Interview by David Kielstra, (22 May, 2008); Headquarters Nicosia District. Daily Operational Log sheet, Canadian Contingent, (Aug. 14), p. 16.

100 Claude Gratton, Interview by David Kielstra, (22 May, 2008).

for three Austrian peacekeepers in a UN jeep that was bombed by Turkish aircraft on 14 August.¹⁰¹ The UN banner no longer provided protection for the UNFICYP forces.

By 19 August, the major operations of the Cyprus conflict ended and the ceasefire held throughout the island. As the dust settled, the results of the Turkish offensives were apparent. Since 14 August, the Turkish forces had branched out in two directions from their enclave to occupy 37 percent of the island.¹⁰² Brigadier-General Henn noted in his memoirs that “it soon become apparent that it was the Turk’s deliberate tactic to allow Greek civilians the opportunity to flee before them, thus achieving the ‘ethnic cleansing’ of the area they intended to occupy.”¹⁰³ If the plan was to create a refugee problem, it was successful. Red Cross and Greek Cypriot officials estimated that between 100,000 and 180,000 Greek Cypriot refugees - approximately one-third of the entire community - were created by the conflict.¹⁰⁴ The Turkish forces paced their offensive to partition the island rather than seek a full annexation.

Major hostilities ended in August 1974, but the Canadian Airborne contingent remained in Cyprus until December of that year. Before the Regiment left, it recorded its second fatality when Private Claude Berger was killed while on patrol in October.¹⁰⁵ The death of Berger was a vivid reminder of the continuing dangers that faced Canadian UNFICYP personnel as the island grappled with its uneasy peace. Periodic acts of violence would continue, though a return to full-scale hostilities did not occur.

In its final months, the Canadians occupied the new frontier between the Turkish and Greek occupation zones, returning to their pre-war mandate. The new posts such as OP Mojave were often established only meters from Turkish and Greek fortifications, with machine guns bristling on both sides.¹⁰⁶ In one tense situation, when a Turkish tank directed its guns towards the OP, Major Keith Courbould told Corporal Donald Mackenzie: “We know damn well if they really want this hill, they can take it. But I want you to keep the OP where it is.” In response, Mackenzie boasted, “we’ll stay right

101 United Nations, *Security Council Document*. S/11353. Add. 24, p. 45.

102 James Ker-Lindsay and Oliver P. Richmond, p. 83.

103 Henn, *A Business of Some Heat*, p. 434.

104 “The Lyssarides Intervention.” *The Economist*. Vol. 252 (August 24, 1974), p. 34-35.

105 *The Maroon Beret*, p. 15.

106 Donald Mackenzie, Interview by David Kielstra, (12 May, 2008).

here unless they park a tank on top of us.”¹⁰⁷ Turning to a reporter nearby, Mackenzie asserted, “We are doing our job for a change.”¹⁰⁸ Such statements highlighted the continuing ambition of the Canadians to strongly assert themselves. The close proximity of the new Ops, ironically, gave the UN soldiers an opportunity to befriend the belligerents and enjoy each other’s company. In the strange reality of peacekeeping between NATO allies, pleasantries were exchanged as often as threats.

The aftermath of the second phase of the Cyprus War struck NATO directly to the core. The worst fears of the alliance were realized as the war led to severe Greek and Turkish tensions that prompted the Greek government in Athens to withdraw from NATO.¹⁰⁹ The announcement stunned NATO members, its southern flank jeopardized by the move. Not surprisingly, the Soviet Union capitalized on the moment by moving three destroyers down the Dardanelles Strait following the announcement.¹¹⁰ Though the situation appeared dire, analysts realized the threat was not as great as initially thought since it had occurred within the easing of East-West tensions during Détente, giving NATO time to mend. NATO was spared a wider crisis, as the conflict never escalated beyond Cyprus. Furthermore, Greece only partially left NATO, remaining in the alliance but withdrawing from the military command.¹¹¹ So long as Turkey remained in the fold, the alliance maintained a considerable presence along the southern flank. As a result, the loss of Greece proved to be more of a blow to NATO’s pride than to its effectiveness.

Conclusion

Canada’s experience in Cyprus was far from the mundane peacekeeping stereotype often assigned to it. True, the majority of Canada’s UNFICYP commitment occurred in times of relative peace on an island baked by the Mediterranean sun. However, this paper provides a different view of the Cyprus mission. Canadian

107 “Keeping the Peace: Looking Down Gun Barrels Makes Adrenalin Flow,” *The Globe and Mail* (August 19, 1974), p. 1.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

109 “The Russians are Coming Out of it Laughing,” *The Economist*, (August 17, 1974), p. 29.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

111 “Where’s The Hole?” *The Economist* (August 24, 1974), p. 34.

peacekeepers were tasked with containing an unforgiving and complex ethnic rivalry amid an equally hostile regional and international situation. Given this environment, the survival of UNFICYP in the midst of the July-August 1974 violence was remarkable. UNFICYP survived to reassert itself and contribute towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Focusing specifically on the Canadian context, it immediately becomes apparent how wide-spread the Canadian actions in Cyprus were. Though its observation posts were targeted, Canadians still found opportunities to assert themselves actively in the peace process. This was most evident at the Ledra Palace and the Nicosia International Airport where Canadians played a lead role in negotiating ceasefires and guarding the fragile agreements. At Camp Kronberg, Canadians also asserted themselves, however this time using lethal force for the first time since the Korean War in the early 1950s. Canadian actions ensured that fellow peacekeepers and Cypriots were protected during the ambush. This action set an important precedent that Canadians were prepared to protect themselves when fired upon.

This paper also casts greater light on the Canadian context of the crisis, including the debates in the media and Cabinet that led to a more robust Canadian presence in Cyprus. The government took the unprecedented step of supplying Canadian soldiers with the means to actively defend themselves in the event of further hostilities. This move indicates that the Trudeau government had not fully done away with the helpful-fixer style foreign policy that it had earlier rejected. Instead, the acceptance of greater risk and UN responsibility in Cyprus indicates that Trudeau was never driven only by the economic “dollar diplomacy” that Granatstein and Bothwell once argued.¹¹² By doubling the force in Cyprus and sending heavy weaponry, the Trudeau government clearly recognized that peacekeeping missions could have both a practical and idealistic aspect to them. With Canada’s peacekeepers on the ground, it could protect its own national interest, while still helping its international commitments in NATO and the United Nations. Cyprus allowed the government to pursue a more balanced approach to its international priorities.

¹¹² Granatstein and Bothwell, p. 33.

Though elements remained of the old Pearsonian ideal of passive and neutral peacekeepers remained, Cyprus demonstrated that neutrality did not mean that UN forces would topple at the first sign of trouble. UNFICYP's restraint in the second phase also indicates that the force understood and respected the limits of its mandate and operational capabilities as well. The more bold and robust peacekeeping practiced by UNFICYP demonstrated that when threatened, the UN forces would hold their positions to ensure peace. No longer did the UN simply have words to fight its diplomatic battles. When the United Nations was threatened, it now had the force and will to back itself up.

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