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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
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EXERCISE/EXERCICE NEW HORIZONS

By/par Lieutenant-Commander A.M. Bellas

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Cyprus - Was Canada Right to Withdraw from the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus?

Abstract

Almost 16 years have elapsed since Canada's withdrawal from Operation Snowgoose, the Canadian contribution to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). During this time, little progress has been made to resolve the conflict on the island between the Greek and Turkish factions, although some gains have been made in terms of economic stability and living conditions for the populations on both sides of the border. This paper examines the impact of Canada's withdrawal from the mission by studying the military, national and international implications of the action. By looking at these various considerations and assessing their relative impact, it becomes apparent that the decision to withdraw from UNFICYP was a good one from a purely political standpoint, but not advantageous from a military perspective.

Introduction

In June of 1993, following an announcement by the Conservative government late in the previous year¹, Canada withdrew its force of peacekeepers from the island of Cyprus. Canada had supported the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) since 1964 under the title Operation Snowgoose. In total, Canada had spent a total of 29 years in this operation and rotated 58 contingents of troops through the island during the course of the operation². By all accounts, this was a successful mission with the Canadian contingent performing sterling service on the island, so after having expended significant resources in treasure and the lives of servicemen, the question remains whether the withdrawal from Operation Snowgoose was the right thing to do. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of Canada's withdrawal and, with the benefit of hindsight, answer the key question "was Canada right to withdraw her support from UNFICYP?"

To answer this question, a variety of considerations will be examined in light of their historic impact and also in light of current national and international conditions. By considering the impact of military, economic, diplomatic and other factors, it is anticipated that it will become apparent as to whether Canada's withdrawal from UNFICYP had a generally positive or negative impact on the island and on Canada. The interpretation of "right" in this particular context is whether a right-minded person would make the same decision today, given the same set of circumstances.

¹ Michael Friscolanti and Danylo Hawaleskha. Maclean's 31 July 2006.

² National Defence and the Canadian Forces. "Canadian Expeditionary Force Command."

<http://www.comfec-cefcom.forces.gc.ca/pa-ap/ops/snowgoose/index-eng.asp>; Internet; accessed 7 January 2009.

Background

Cyprus is an island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, the third largest in the Mediterranean, and approximately 75% larger than Prince Edward Island. It lies just 75 kms from the south coast of Turkey and 100 kms to the west of the Syrian coast. Due to its location with respect to the middle east and the Adriatic and Black Seas, it enjoys a strategic position that has resulted in a turbulent history, with invasions and occupations by the Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Venetians and Turks to name a few.³ Closer to Turkey than Greece, it has been fiercely contested by both countries since the 16th century when the Ottoman Turks took possession.⁴



Figure 1 - Cyprus Map

³ Robert Mitchell. Peacekeeping and Peacemaking in Cyprus, 1.

⁴ Robert Macdonald The Problem of Cyprus, 234.

Instability on the island between the Greek and Turkish factions during the latter period of 1963 led to the establishment of UNFICYP under UN Security Council Resolution 186. The 1974 invasion of the island by Turkish forces precipitated a further UN Resolution, which condemned the invasion and called for “the withdrawal of the occupation force and a speedy and acceptable solution to the problem.”⁵

Canada’s involvement in UNFICYP under Operation Snowgoose post-1974 centred around patrolling the “green line” through the capital Nicosia, with a mandate to ensure no gains were made by Greek or Turkish Cypriots in terms of position or defences.⁶ The final contingent, completed by 2 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, departed in June 1993, although one officer remains as part of the Operations staff at UNFICYP headquarters in Nicosia.⁷ The reasons for the withdrawal were not fully clear at the time, but included the Canadian government’s recognition that there was a need to cut back on military expenditures in general, and to devote more personnel resources to the escalating problem in the former Yugoslav republics; however, for the purposes of this paper, the reasons for the withdrawal are unimportant, rather, it is the impact of that move that is to be examined. On balance, for the different considerations assessed, the various advantages and disadvantages will be weighed against each other in order to reach a conclusion as to whether Canada was in fact right to withdraw from UNFICYP.

Military Considerations

Beginning with the purely military considerations, there were a number of advantages and disadvantages realized as a result of Canada’s withdrawal from UNFICYP. Some of these

⁵ Constantine Callogas. The Cyprus Question NATO’s Sixteen Nations April 1987, 106.

⁶ The Middle East: CCUNFICYP Part 1: Aphrodite’s Realm.

⁷ United Nations. “Cyprus - UNFICYP - Facts and Figures.”

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unficyp/facts.html>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2009.

factors are tangible while some are harder to define but nonetheless perceived. Of the tangible factors, the most obvious are the real savings in personnel costs, transport and administration costs, wear and tear on vehicles and equipment, etc. Although no exact dollar figure is available for Canada's total contribution to the mission, the total UNFICYP budget for 1993 was US\$47 million, and Canada's budget for 1987 alone was C\$8.4 million.⁸ Given that these were real costs that came from National Defence's Operations and Maintenance budget, the savings realized by withdrawing from the mission allowed for the reallocation of those funds to other military requirements, such as those supporting the Balkan operations. The continuing cost of supporting the operation was also an international political consideration and will be touched on later in this paper.

The fact that Canada was among the first countries to send troops, and subsequently extended the contribution to UNFICYP for 29 years, enhanced the reputation of Canada's military with her NATO partners and other allied forces. This position of esteem is not to be taken lightly when some of the key partners working alongside Canada in the region were from influential and valued allies such as the United Kingdom and Australia⁹. The value gained from this cannot be measured directly but is one of those key elements that contributes to a greater level of cooperation and ease of communication between foreign militaries; and so there is some degree of loss from not working alongside these nations in Cyprus any longer.

During the long period of support for UNFICYP, Canada's military gained a solid reputation for a strong capability in peacekeeping operations. This has been a two-edged sword: on the one hand it has enhanced our reputation on the world stage and given Canada a leading role in a number of other peacekeeping missions (including the ill-fated Rwanda mission but also

⁸ Robert Mitchell. *Peacekeeping and Peacemaking in Cyprus*, 7.

in the successful missions in East Timor and Haiti), but on the other hand it misled the general public into believing that Canada's military was an army of peacekeepers and not capable of offensive missions. Sean Maloney's 2002 article in Maclean's pointed out this myth of the perennial Canadian peacekeeper after he encountered strong public opposition to the commitment of Canadian troops to operations in Afghanistan. "Canadians don't fight wars. We're peacekeepers!" was heard, which Maloney took as an indication of the lack of understanding in the mind of the general public. In his view, "These all too common misperceptions are the cultural by-product of those who think Canada is a neutral, morally superior nation unencumbered by national interests."¹⁰ So, did Canada's withdrawal from UNFICYP and subsequent operations in the Balkans enhance her army's reputation as a fighting force? And if so, is this absolutely a positive outcome? Certainly it doesn't appear to have totally registered with the Canadian public since almost nine years had passed between the withdrawal and Maloney's article on the negative reaction to operations in Afghanistan.

From the perspective of gaining operational and tactical experience, Operation Snowgoose provided a valuable training ground for future leaders of the army. Practical experience in dealing with real issues, even in a relatively benign environment such as Cyprus was, for the vast majority of the period that Canadian troops were there, a rare and valuable commodity at the time when the majority of western nations were still focussed on the Soviet threat. According to one senior officer at the time of the operation, "For senior commanders and officers, moreover, peacekeeping offers significant opportunities for professional development in the areas of resource allocation, training, international relations, mediation and negotiation."¹¹

⁹ Robert Mitchell. *Peacekeeping and Peacemaking in Cyprus*, 3.

¹⁰ Sean Maloney. *Maclean's*, 21 October 2002.

¹¹ Robert Mitchell. *Peacekeeping and Peacemaking in Cyprus*, 7.

According to a retired officer of the 1983 contingent, troop leaders (platoon commanders) at the Lieutenant/Captain rank gained the most from this experience, in addition to the Master Corporal section leaders. For perhaps the first time in their careers, they had a troop of personnel who were their own sole responsibility - troops who were dedicated and committed, without the rapid change outs of personnel experienced in garrison. Having the responsibility for these personnel and a particular mission provided excellent leadership experience.¹²

Even for the junior soldiers participating in Operation Snowgoose, the opportunity provided a good “broadening” experience for the average soldier from remote corners of Canada who had little or no previous experience in dealing with different peoples, languages, cultures and complex problems like the one seen in Cyprus. Everyone in the contingent gained from this exposure to a new culture, including the witnessing of one unfortunate Turkish soldier who was summarily executed by his own company commander after accidentally straying into Greek territory and being innocently handed back by the Canadian troops. This experience, among many, provided the harsh lesson that Canada’s values, particularly with respect to human rights and due process, are not necessarily followed by other countries. Religion and religious customs were also evident to the troops, along with the hypocrisy and neglect of seemingly rigid Islamic customs such as the abstinence from alcohol, which was freely consumed by the Turkish troops even during Ramadan.¹³

Another loss resulting from Canada’s withdrawal from UNFICYP was the regular professional interaction between Canadian troops and those of other professional armies, particularly the Danes and Austrians. This is another of the intangible benefits that are a direct

¹² Major (ret’d) Georges Vanasse, interview with author, 9 April 2009.

¹³ *Ibid.*

result of working together in allied operations, and is a loss that could have a negative impact on future combined operations.¹⁴

A valuable lesson for the soldiers involved in Operation Snowgoose was how to conduct the fine art of negotiation between hostile parties. Based on the higher direction that all negotiations should be conducted at the lowest possible level, this resulted in junior ranking soldiers engaging in the mediation of bitter disputes between Greek and Turkish forces over such mundane issues as the size of a sandbag. While the problem might seem trivial to a modern observer, to the two opposing sides this was one of the main issues of the period, and for the troops involved in the delicate negotiations between the two, it provided experience in negotiating that would potentially go on to be used in other theatres such as the Balkans. One amusing anecdote involved the negotiation of a delicate issue with a senior Turkish officer, which resulted in a successful outcome simply because a Canadian officer held a particular recipe that the Turkish officer's wife sorely wanted. These simple lessons in culture and values were there for all members of the contingent to observe and digest.¹⁵

With respect to the differences in a troubled region that could be readily observed by the Canadian troops, one striking example for Canadians accustomed to wide open spaces and pristine landscapes were the mined beaches at Famagusta, which had been a popular tourist destination up to the 1974 invasion.¹⁶

The final main lesson that participants could take away from their experience in Operation Snowgoose was the observation of the direct link between action at the political level and subsequent action at the tactical level. One example of this was the rapid escalation of rhetoric between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders one day, with a sudden escalation in the

¹⁴ Major (ret'd) Georges Vanasse, interview with author, 9 April 2009.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

number of so-called “rock-throwing” incidents the next day. To the observant soldier on the green line, this was clear evidence of the link between the action and intent at the higher (strategic) level being followed shortly afterwards at the lower (tactical) levels.¹⁷

One major advantage resulting from Canada’s withdrawal from UNFICYP was the increased availability of army units for employment in the Balkans, which became a hotspot in 1991 following the break-up of the former Soviet Union. At the time, the problems in the Balkans and their potential for escalation drew attention away from the problems in Cyprus in that “...world attention has been focussed on the immense tragedy in the former Yugoslavia...Seen from a distance, the Cyprus stalemate seems almost insignificant...”¹⁸

Considering the advantages and disadvantages to the army as a result of withdrawing from UNFICYP, it is clear that while there were savings in costs and gains in the availability of units, there were significant losses in the areas of training and relevant operational experience. The loss of all of these valuable training opportunities could have been a major loss for the army; however, in the light of subsequent operations in the Balkans, and still on-going in Afghanistan, it can be argued that these losses have been more than compensated for in a new and harsher training ground.

Strategic considerations

As previously mentioned, Cyprus enjoys a location of considerable strategic value in the eastern Mediterranean. This location has led the island to be used for a variety of purposes over the years by the Canadian Forces and by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), and there are other uses for the island that could be employed if Canada enjoyed

¹⁶ Major (ret’d) Georges Vanasse, interview with author, 9 April 2009.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

stronger relations with the country. It is not suggested that continued participation in UNFICYP would guarantee these uses but it is highly likely that it would help Canada's cause in any new request for use of the island.

Since 2003 when Canada's participation in Afghanistan through Operation Athena commenced, Cyprus has provided a useful venue as a decompression area for troops returning from active duty in Afghanistan, as reported in an AFP news article, "Battle-hardened Canadian soldiers are being indulged in the five-star luxury of the holiday island of Cyprus to re-acclimatise them to civilian life after enduring Afghanistan's war zones".¹⁹ While this continues smoothly for the most part, there are occasional minor crimes and misdemeanours caused by some troops in high spirits, which are the source of some tension with the Greek Cypriot government. The Vancouver Sun reported that, "Two Canadian soldiers, on a stopover in Cyprus after a tour of duty in Afghanistan, have been found guilty of assault and paid a fine of \$3,700. The charge resulted from a drunken brawl on the Mediterranean island over the weekend."²⁰ It is quite likely that if Canada was still a contributing member of UNFICYP then the closer relations between the two countries would lead problems of this nature to be less of an issue.

Another example of the potential value of the island is as a forward logistic site for operations in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, such as NATO's Operation Active Endeavour. From the author's personal experience, having access to a logistic site in Cyprus for fuel and provisions would have been highly beneficial to the operational capability and flexibility of the NATO contingent operating there in the period after December 2001. Cyprus could also have served as a key re-fuelling stop for Canadian warships en route and returning from the Suez,

¹⁸ Robert Mitchell. Peacekeeping and Peacemaking in Cyprus, 2.

¹⁹ AFP News Article. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_kmafp/is_200708/ai_n19398133/; Internet; accessed 9 April 2009.

where there is a significant transit between refuelling in the Red Sea and the next suitable port at Crete. While the absence of Canadian troops on the island does not preclude the fuelling and reprovisioning of transiting ships, there is a significant advantage in having access to a Canadian contact in any foreign port in order to expedite preparations and provide useful contacts.

During the 2006 Lebanon offensive with Israel, Cyprus was considered for use by DFAIT in the preparations and execution of operations to extract Canadians of Lebanese descent from Lebanon. Since this region still faces considerable instability, the possible requirement for further non-combatant extraction operations is not remote. The presence of Canadian troops on the island would have been an invaluable aid to any relief operation, by providing intelligence, local contacts, transportation and administrative assistance. One of the plans considered was “to shuttle 4,500 people a day to Cyprus and Turkey, where chartered planes would continue the journey to Montreal and Toronto”; however, in the event, the passengers were ferried directly out of Beirut.²¹

The withdrawal from UNFICYP, and the lack of any other significant Canadian presence on the island, makes any further potential employment of the island’s strategic value less likely.

Political Considerations

In December 1992 the Canadian Defence Minister Mary Collins announced that the Canadian Contingent of UNFICYP would be withdrawn by June 1993. In the parliament at Ottawa she expressed her government’s disappointment over the results so far by stating, “...it is time to face reality. The UN peacekeeping force has not achieved any political settlement of the conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, but may even have provided both sides a

²⁰ Bal Brach. The Vancouver Sun. 5 March 2008.

²¹ Michael Friscolanti and Danylo Hawaleskha. Maclean’s. 31 July 2006.

convenient excuse to ignore their own responsibility for trying to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict.²²

Were there any repercussions or indications of disapproval from international bodies or other nations following Canada's withdrawal from UNFICYP? If there were, then Canada was certainly not alone in receipt of their criticism; in another clear sign of the international frustration at seeing zero progress in the protracted conflict, a number of countries expressed their dissatisfaction to the UN and indicated in no uncertain terms that continued support of the mission was in jeopardy. One foreign minister put his country's position in blunt terms, "I cannot explain to our taxpayers that they are financing the peaceful development of the economy of Cyprus...while the Cypriot leaders have the luxury to reject every settlement proposal they do not embrace 100%. To hell with them."²³ The Commonwealth, of which Cyprus is a member, offered no condemnation of the withdrawal of Canadian forces from the island. Indeed, this can be seen as yet another indication of the level of frustration with the protracted conflict and lack of progress towards a peaceful settlement. There is a general feeling of pessimism with respect to the mid-term prospects for a lasting peace on the island; for this reason, the need for UNFICYP is likely to continue well into the next decade, and in the meantime it achieves the effect of "shifting the odds on the roulette wheel away from war".²⁴ Given the lack of criticism from other countries and the apparent agreement by some that the conflict had already gone on for too long, there is no suggestion therefore that Canada lost any respect or approval on the world stage.

²² Richard Mead. U.N. in Cyprus, 204.

²³ Tad Szulc. Peacekeeping and Diplomacy in Cyprus: 1964-1993, 8.

Canada's Relations with Greece and Turkey

Canada enjoyed good diplomatic relations with both Greece and Turkey during Operation Snowgoose, and continues to enjoy good relations with both countries up to this day. Roughly 240,000 Canadians claim Greek descent, and the response from this community has been muted throughout the Cyprus conflict.²⁵ The size of the Turkish Community in Canada is estimated at approximately 50,000, and again the community has been apparently silent on the Cyprus issue. The only source of some friction between the two countries is the Armenian situation, where “Due to the support of Canada to baseless Armenian allegations regarding the 1915 events, there has not been any high level visit between the two countries for a long time.”²⁶ The reaction of the Greek community in Canada to the withdrawal is unknown, and based on the personal experience of a member of the Turkish community, the withdrawal did not even register in the community as an event of any import.²⁷ It can be safely ventured then that both the Greek and Turkish communities in Canada did not object strongly to the withdrawal, and therefore do not harbour any grudge on this account towards their adopted country.

Success of the mission

In the view of a retired officer of the 1983 contingent, the success of the mission created a paradox in which UNFICYP ultimately became a victim of its own success; by creating and maintaining stable conditions on the island there was little incentive for the two parties to come to any kind of meaningful agreement.²⁸ The problems are unlikely to be solved in the near future

²⁴ Oliver P. Richmond. *The Work of the UN in Cyprus: Promoting Peace and Security*, 94.

²⁵ Greek Embassy. “Information.”

<http://geo.international.gc.ca/canada-europa/greece/geo/greece-bb-en.aspx>; Internet; accessed 2 April 2009.

²⁶ Turkish Embassy. “Information.”

http://www.turkishembassy.com/II/O/Turkish_Canadian_relations.htm; Internet; accessed 2 April 2009.

²⁷ Hulya Oyman, Toronto Reference Library, interview with the author 20 April 2009.

²⁸ Major (ret'd) Georges Vanasse, interview with author, 9 April 2009.

as, in the words of one academic on the subject, “The Cyprus problem transcends plain politics and economics, having to do with ancient and modern history, ethnicity, culture and religion.”²⁹

If this assessment is accepted as fact then it begs the following questions: how long will the conflict last and how long are the contributing countries expected to support the UNFICYP mission? It is not unreasonable to suggest that after 29 years and 27 lives lost, Canada has done her fair share.³⁰

It has been questioned if the Cypriots even truly understand what UNFICYP does for them, and whether they are aware of the measure of safety, security and stability that the force’s presence brings to the island. With an estimated 1000 incidents having been safely controlled in the year 2000, there is some speculation that this number would be significantly higher without the stabilizing presence of the UN force.³¹ However, it is worth noting that the number of incidents was roughly equal some 10 years earlier, “...a large number of incidents still occurred - during the first ten months of 1990 alone over 800 incidents were registered.”³² Two conclusions can be drawn from this, the first being that the presence of UNFICYP is still required.³³ The second conclusion must take into account Canada’s withdrawal from UNFICYP; given the fact that by the year 2000 Canada had been absent from the island for over six years, this is clearly a solid indicator that the mission continues to be successful without her participation, and that Canada’s withdrawal did not have an adverse effect on the effectiveness of the operation.

On the other hand, opposing opinions have been expressed to suggest that there would not be any escalation of incidents even if the entire UNFICYP force was withdrawn. This comes

²⁹ Tad Szulc. *Peacekeeping and Diplomacy in Cyprus: 1964-1993*, 3.

³⁰ Robert Mitchell. *Peacekeeping and Peacemaking in Cyprus*, 7.

³¹ Oliver P. Richmond. *The Work of the UN in Cyprus: Promoting Peace and Security*, 94.

³² Richard Mead. *U.N. in Cyprus*, 203.

from the recognition that the island has developed a stable economy and that the lucrative tourism industry on both sides of the green line is performing well; more recently, the Republic of Cyprus was admitted to the European Union in 2003. Given the current conditions of relative stability and wealth, the argument goes, there is little chance for any escalation of activity that could jeopardize these favourable conditions. As Tad Szulc puts it, “Greek Cypriots have become impressively affluent as Cyprus has become a hugely popular Mediterranean tourist centre...They know that tourism would dry up at the first sign of fighting”.³⁴ This line of reasoning could be argued to suggest that Canada’s withdrawal from UNFICYP had no adverse impact on the improvement of conditions on the island; however, it should be kept in mind that the relative wealth and stability of the island was not quite so clear back in 1993 when the decision was taken.

Canadian Values

Most Canadians would support the notion that Canadian values include freedom, justice, fairness and the right to pursue personal interests, and it would therefore be reasonable to expect that the government would promote those values in any dealings with international political issues. It is interesting therefore to note that an issue of racial discrimination surfaced during the early days of the preparations for UNFICYP. This sensitive issue may or may not have rankled the Canadian government and helped tip the balance in favour of ceasing support of the mission; given that Canada supported the operation for 29 years this seems a tenuous argument even in light of stronger feelings regarding racial issues in the 1990s than in 1963. The issue being referred to concerned the source of troops for the mission and it has been reported that, “Several

³³ Richard Mead. U.N. in Cyprus, 203.

³⁴ Tad Szulc. Peacekeeping and Diplomacy in Cyprus: 1964-1993, 2.

sources alleged that Greek Cypriots vetoed Third World troops - especially Africans - for racial reasons. Other sources contend that Turkey vetoed Third World troops due to Ankara's fear that...would lead Third World contingents to discriminate against the secessionist Turkish community on Cyprus."³⁵ If this account were correct then there would certainly be reasonable grounds for the average Canadian to object to Canada's participation in UNFICYP unless these racial stipulations were removed. Evidence from the UN website clearly indicates that contributors of both military and police personnel were from Canada and European and Latin-American countries only, although the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission is Ethiopian.³⁶

A second point concerning Canadian values as they apply to international affairs is that of the possibility that the Canadian government's desire to raise the country's profile on the international stage pushed towards the withdrawal from UNFICYP. This argument could hold water based on the almost simultaneous movement of direct military support to high-profile operations in the former Yugoslavia. Support for this particular argument comes from Laura Neak's book in which, *inter alia*, she points to the "... assertion that Canadians are merely seeking to stake a claim as a great power as evidenced by their withdrawal from UNFICYP and shift in participation in PKOs that attract more media attention."³⁷ If this were in fact the case, then there would be the possibility of support from some quarters for the government's action. As seen recently by the government's weak response to industrial activity in Sudan by Canadian companies, and little in the way of disapproval from the general public, there is a good deal of hypocrisy when it comes to applying national values to international affairs. The situation in

³⁵ Frederick H. Fleitz. *Peacekeeping Fiascos of the 1990s*, 61.

³⁶ United Nations. "Cyprus - UNFICYP - Facts and Figures."

<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unficy/facts.html>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2009.

Sudan showed that the government and shareholders are willing to compromise when it comes to a question of profits. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that values were again compromised when it came to a question of elevating Canada's position in the national media for political gain. As expressed by Lieutenant Colonel Magee, "Nations develop doctrine based on a number of factors - capability, national culture, goals and views on the use of the military to achieve national goals."³⁸ So, while it is true that nations including Canada have a national approach to peacekeeping operations, when the goals are those of the political masters in government then there is some room for manoeuvre.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there were some definite benefits to Canada at the military, national and international level, resulting from the withdrawal from UNFICYP; equally there were some definite losses. In addition, many intangibles were lost as a result of this action. The major military gains included the increased availability of fighting units, and the reduction in direct costs of supporting the operation. The major military losses, however, were somewhat greater: these included the loss of valuable training and experience for all levels of service personnel involved in the operation, as well as the loss of experience gained by working alongside allies. On the national level, there was no apparent backlash from either the Greek or Turkish community as a result of the withdrawal, and the general public continued to believe that Canadian soldiers were only capable of conducting peacekeeping operations.

Still at the national level, it could be argued that Canada was right to withdraw based on the conflict between participation in the mission and the government's values. Note that these are

³⁷ Laura Neack. *Elusive Security: States First, People Last*, 95.

³⁸ LCol Colin G. Magee. *Apples and Oranges? A Comparison of Peace Operations Doctrine*, 26.

not necessarily the typical Canadian “soft” values but rather more hard-nosed values based on Canada’s image on the world stage and on economic gain.

At the international level, Canada was not alone in expressing dissatisfaction with the lack of progress made by both sides in the conflict, and followed up words with deeds by withdrawing from UNFICYP. If anything, Canada appears to have been at the forefront of a chorus of international disapproval of the state of affairs in Cyprus after so many years of UN support.

A key question to address is whether UNFICYP has suffered as a result of Canada’s withdrawal; based on the continued stability on the island, the success of the tourism industry among others, and the recent ascension to the EU, the answer is a definite “no”. Following the examination of various considerations it appears that while Canada may not have been entirely right to withdraw from UNFICYP, there certainly appears to be no lasting damage from the action. So the answer to the key question “was Canada right to withdraw?” the answer is “it depends”. If looked at from a purely military perspective then the answer is not so clear; but from a political view, this was the right thing for Canada to do at the time.

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