

The Blue Beret

March 2003



- The Hague -



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SG's Statement on Iraq

Today, despite the best efforts of the international community and the United Nations, war has come to Iraq for the third time in a quarter of a century.

Perhaps if we had persevered a little longer, Iraq could yet have been disarmed peacefully or – if not – the world could have taken action to solve this problem by a collective decision, endowing it with greater legitimacy, and therefore commanding wider support, than is now the case.

But let us not dwell on the divisions of the past. Let us confront the realities of the present, however harsh, and look for ways to forge stronger unity in the future.

My thoughts today are with the Iraqi people, who face yet another ordeal. I hope that all parties will scrupulously observe the requirements of international humanitarian law, and will do everything in their power to shield the civilian population from the grim consequences of war. The United Nations, for its part, will do whatever it can to bring them assistance and support. Let us hope the future will be much brighter for the Iraqi people than the recent past, and that they will soon have the chance to rebuild their country in peace and freedom, under the rule of law.

Over the past weeks, the peoples of the world have shown what great importance they attach to the legitimacy conveyed by the authority of the United Nations. They have made clear that, in confronting uncertainty and danger, they want to see power harnessed to legitimacy. They want their leaders to come together, in the United Nations, to tackle the problems shared by all humanity.

I will do my utmost to ensure that the United Nations rises to this challenge.

- New York, 20 March 2003 -

Editorial

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Front Cover: The Hague

UN/DPI Photos by Evan Schneider

Back Cover: UN Flight Deck

Closure of Mr. de Soto's Office in Cyprus

After the talks reached the end of the road on 11 March in The Hague, Mr. Alvaro de Soto's office in Cyprus is closing, having been opened in January last year when the direct talks began.

Mr. de Soto did not return to Cyprus after The Hague, as the Secretary-General directed him to proceed to New York. Mr. de Soto's team returned to the island to close the office, and the various team members are gradually leaving Cyprus during March and early April.

The closure of the office marks the end of the most intensive negotiations ever held to solve the Cyprus problem. While the talks have not ended in agreement, they have produced the most comprehensive Cyprus settlement plan ever. Unlike all previous plans, which were framework proposals, the "Annan plan", as it is widely known, is a truly comprehensive peace proposal. It represents a best effort by the United Nations, drawing not only on the last three years of intense effort but on the decades of UN effort before that, to help the two sides in Cyprus come to a mutually satisfactory solution.

As the Secretary-General said in The Hague on 11 March, he shares with all peace-loving Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Greeks and Turks a deep sense of sadness that the opportunity to reach a settlement, so that Cyprus could sign the treaty join the EU united, has been squandered.

Nevertheless, the Secretary-General, who visited the island twice during the process, has not forgotten about Cyprus. On the contrary, when the political will is clear and apparent from both sides and both motherlands to finalize a solution on the basis of his plan, he will be ready to assist them.

Although the process has not ended in success, it has achieved major progress towards a comprehensive settlement. Perhaps, above all, the people have seen what a settlement will, in reality, look like. It does not satisfy the maximal demands of either side, but the Secretary-General believes it meets their minimum requirements and protects their core interests. The plan shows that the accommodation of the key concerns of

one side need not come at the expense of the key concerns of the other. With creativity and flexibility, agreement is clearly possible. The plan remains on the table. The question is whether, and when, the two sides on the island will be ready to grasp it.

Naturally, the good offices team and all in the UN share the sadness of the Secretary-General that a solution has not yet been reached and this opportunity has been missed. But as we leave Cyprus, we remember the many kindnesses we received from both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and the extraordinary support given to us by all in the UN family in Cyprus. For both we are extremely grateful and these are the sources of our fondest memories of Cyprus.

Robert Dann

Special Assistant to Mr. de Soto

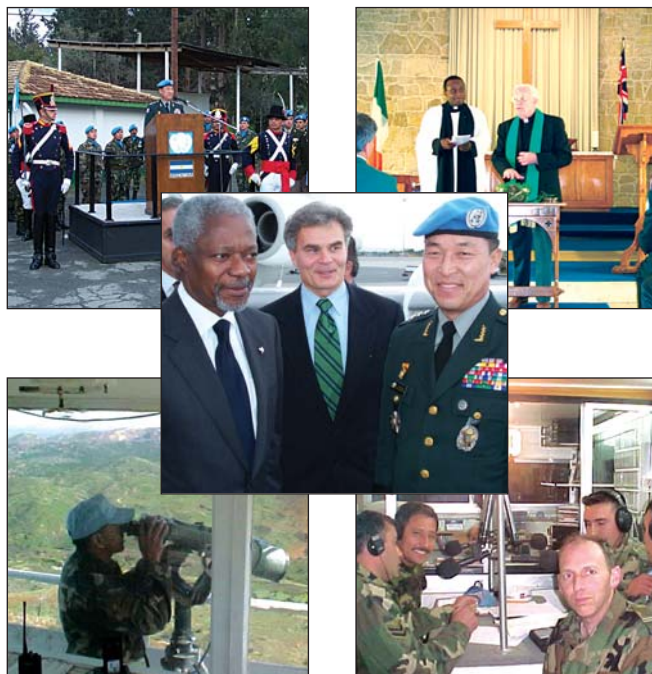


Mr. de Soto's office held a farewell party on Thursday 20 March at the Nicosia Conference Centre. Laura Vaccari, Senior Political Officer, thanked all those who had supported the Good Offices during its tenure in Cyprus.

The Cyprus talks, to use the Secretary-General's expression, reached the end of the road at The Hague on 11 March. Prior to that, the Secretary-General spent the last week of February in the region, visiting Ankara, Athens and Nicosia in a bid to promote a Cyprus settlement. On the following pages, The Blue Beret highlights some of the events in the sequence that led to The Hague and the decision to close the Special Adviser's office in Nicosia.



The SG with Alvaro de Soto and the Good Offices team





The SG was greeted on arrival at Larnaca Airport by the CM and FC



The SG provided copies of the revised plan to each of the leaders



"We Have Reached The End Of The Road" -- Secretary-General Kofi Annan

The curtain dropped on the latest final act in the search for a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem when, just before dawn on Tuesday 11 March, after a day-long, all-night series of meetings involving the Secretary-General, Special Adviser de Soto, and, at one time or another (singly or together), the Greek Cypriot leader H.E. Tassos Papadopoulos and the Turkish Cypriot leader, H.E. Rauf Denktash, plus the guarantor powers, Kofi Annan sadly announced that "we have reached the end of the road". He also announced the impending closure of Alvaro de Soto's Cyprus office.

The Secretary-General shared "a deep sense of sadness" with all peace-loving Greek and Turkish Cypriots and Greeks and Turks, but said he wanted the people of the island "to know that I have not given up on them". He regretted that they had been denied "the chance to decide their own future", but said "my plan remains on the table, ready for the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots to pick it up and carry it forward to a solution if they summon the will to do so". He said he remained "ready to assist".

The Secretary-General said a settlement would not be possible by the 16 April EU accession date "without a firm commitment to proceed energetically to a conclusion according to a strict work programme, culminating in separate simultaneous referenda". In his view, "that commitment is not in place at this time" and he had therefore asked Alvaro de Soto to proceed to NY to prepare a detailed report to the Security Council. At a press conference later that day in The Hague, he said, "we will always be prepared to help and they [the leaders] also know where to find us".

In late February, the Secretary-General visited Ankara, Athens and Nicosia as he continued his efforts

to bring an end to the longstanding dispute that has torn the island apart for decades. Arriving in Cyprus on 26 February – his second visit in the space of nine months – he presented the leaders with a newly revised version of the plan he had first presented the two sides on 11 November 2002, and, in revision, on 10 December, in the hope that at that time they could agree to it before the Copenhagen European Council. He told reporters on arrival at Larnaca that he hoped his latest visit would persuade the leaders to reach an agreement, so as to bring about a new state of affairs in Cyprus, resulting in signature of the EU Treaty of Accession on 16 April on behalf of a re-united Cyprus.

In the course of his visit, the Secretary-General met separately with Mr. Papadopoulos, the incoming Greek Cypriot leader, and with Mr. Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, and he called on Mr. Clerides, whose term in office was expiring. All were presented with copies of the revised plan. Next day, the Secretary-General and the three leaders gathered at the Nicosia Conference Centre, site of the year-long direct talks.

He later hosted a lunch for the island's political party leaders, both Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot, at the CM's residence. Before leaving the island, the Secretary-General said he had asked Mr. Denktash and Mr. Papadopoulos to meet with him in The Hague on 10 March "prepared to tell me, there and then, whether or not they would sign a commitment to submit the Foundation Agreement to approval at separate, simultaneous referenda on 30 March in order to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem". He noted that he had specifically asked them to arrive "having completed all necessary internal consultations and processes so that the response on 10 March is definitive".



The SG's arrival press statement



Media "stake-out" at the Nicosia Conference Centre



The SG hosted a lunch for the island's political party leaders at the CM's residence. The meal was prepared by Mrs. Elzbieta Wlosowicz



CM Zbigniew Wlosowicz plays a little Scott Joplin for the SG at his residence

Secretary-General's Statement -- The Hague, 11 March 2003



SG with Mr. Denktash, Mr. Clerides and Mr. Papadopoulos at the Nicosia Conference Centre



SG with UNFICYP transport drivers, UNCIVPOL members and airport ground crew, Larnaca

As agreed on 28 February, the two leaders came to The Hague yesterday for a very specific and agreed purpose. I asked each of them whether they were prepared to commit today to submit my 26 February 2003 plan to approval at separate simultaneous referenda on 30 March 2003 in order to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus Problem.

Mr. Papadopoulos answered that he was prepared to do so, as long as the people knew what they are being asked to vote on. To that end, he wished to be sure that the gaps regarding federal legislation, as well as constituent state constitutions, would be filled. He underlined the importance of Greece and Turkey agreeing and committing to the security provisions in the plan. Furthermore, considerably more time was needed than was available for a proper public campaign on the referendum to be carried out. These conditions need to be fulfilled before a referendum can take place. He said he was prepared not to re-open its substantive provisions if the other side was prepared to do likewise.

Mr. Denktash answered that he was not prepared to agree to put the plan to referendum. He said he had fundamental objections to the plan on basic points. He believed that further negotiations were only likely to be successful if they began from a new starting point and if the parties agreed on basic principles. He added that Turkey was in any case not in a position to sign the statement requested of the guarantors because this first required the authorisation of parliament.

Efforts have continued in the course of yesterday and during the night to salvage the process and keep open the prospect of a reunited Cyprus acceding to

the EU. I even suggested that negotiations could continue until 28 March with a view to holding the referenda one week later on 6 April. Regrettably, these efforts were not successful for the reasons stated above.

Accordingly, as I said when I left Cyprus on 28 February, we have reached the end of the road. The two leaders have expressed their willingness to continue talks. But without a firm commitment to proceed energetically to a conclusion according to a strict work programme, culminating in separate simultaneous referenda, it will clearly not be possible to achieve a comprehensive settlement before the accession of Cyprus to the European Union on 16 April. That commitment is not in place at this time. I have therefore asked Mr. de Soto to proceed to New York to prepare a detailed report to the Security Council. Mr. de Soto's office in Cyprus will be brought to a close in the coming weeks.

I share tonight with all peace-loving Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Greeks and Turks a deep sense of sadness. I am not sure another opportunity like this one will present itself again any time soon. Nevertheless, I want the people of Cyprus to know that I have not given up on them. I saw in their eyes their longing for peace and reunification. I regret that they have been denied the chance to decide their own future.

My plan remains on the table, ready for the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to pick it up and carry it forward to a solution if they summon the will to do so. If I see that there is a clear and realistic prospect of finalizing negotiations, with the full backing of the motherlands, I will be ready to assist. Let us hope that that day is much closer than it seems this moment.



SG and leaders in discussion at The Hague



Pictures at an Exhibition

Jane Parker, wife of the British High Commissioner, helped organise an exhibit by Greek and Turkish Cypriot artists at the Hilton Hotel, Nicosia.



Photo left: Jane Parker shows the SG one of the paintings.
Photo above: Alvaro de Soto views a Turkish Cypriot artist's rendition of Alvaro de Soto.



Military Skills Competition

Despite all the recent rain, we were blessed with a fine sunny day for the Military Skills Competition on Wednesday 12 March 2003.

The competition started as usual in the UNPA with eight teams taking part, two from each Sector and one each from MFR and UNCIVPOL. After an initial inspection, the teams ran a gruelling 10 km road race, which MFR just won, beating Sector 1 (Team 1) by only a few seconds.

Eight stands followed which tested team and individual skills in map reading, driving, operational information, weapon assembly, pistol shooting, medical skills, fire fighting drills and observation and reporting. The stands were followed by a very cold swim and the competition ended with the obstacle course.

The competition proved to be a very enjoyable and testing day in which many teams and individuals shone, particularly the MFR who administered the day, and the stand controllers who enabled the event to take place.

The results were as follows:

1 st	MFR
2 nd	Sector 1, Team 1
3 rd	Sector 1, Team 2



Exercising Military Skills

Air Crash Exercise

UNFICYP's air accident plans were put to the test in an air crash exercise held on 7 March. Planned and coordinated by UNFICYP Air Safety Officer, Lt. Col. Oswaldo Albanesi, Maj. Graeme Ratcliffe, SO2 Ops Current & Training, and Maj. Guillermo Pereda, SO2 Ops Policy & Planning, it took place within the UNPA to test the responses to UNFICYP's Air Accident Plans and also served as a demonstration for key Sector personnel.

The crash scenario was as follows: the Mobile Force Reserve QRF responded to the call from a UN helicopter reporting that it was having technical difficulties on its return to UN Flight from Sector Observation duties. Communications were lost with the helicopter but not before it managed to send an SOS message.

UN Flight informed the JOC which initiated the air crash plans. Various agencies were called to assist as fire and rescue teams and police sped to the crash site, which had been found by the MFR patrol. The UN Fire Chief Paul Nadeem and his team rapidly brought the fire under control, using its state-of-the-art Fire Fighting Apparatus (AFFF) monitor which sprays 3,000 litres of foam a minute using the Z foam-making branch pipe appliance to provide carpet foaming of the crash site. Simultaneously, the MFR patrol provided first aid assistance to the crash victims before handing over to the more experienced medical teams from the UNPA Medical Centre when they arrived with the ambulance.

Casualties were evacuated by a Bell 212 UN Flight helicopter and ambulance. The MFR ran an Incident Control Point (ICP) to ensure that the crash site was properly controlled and the site protected for forensic or post-crash investigative purposes. FMPU Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCO) were called to the scene, along with the UNFICYP Air Safety Officer for follow-up action.

The exercise, which demonstrated the problems encountered and methods of operating within a crash site, was a great success. Sectors are now better prepared to run their own air crash exercises before a Force-level test exercise.



Sector 4

The elements made Sector 4's medal parade on 24 February memorable in more ways than one for the Slovak and Hungarian soldiers. The scene was set with dark, heavy clouds, icy-cold rain and snowflakes for an even more dramatic effect.

The freak weather forced organisers to abandon the idea of hosting the event outdoors, and contingency plans were implemented and the



The Force Commander presenting the UN medal



The Force Commander inspecting the parade

medal presentation was held inside the "Staymani" restaurant in Athienou. With a backdrop of snow to remind them of home, 121 Slovak and 49 Hungarian soldiers received their medals from the Force Commander, the Chief of Staff and the Ambassadors of Hungary, Mr. Janos Kissfalvi, and Slovakia, Mr. Jan Varso.

Following the official presentation of the medals, where the Force Commander commended the two Contingents for their commitment to peacekeeping principles, a reception was held with plenty of local food and drink enjoyed by all.

Sector 1

The weather was also a factor with black clouds and a threat of rain on the afternoon of 19 March when members of Sector 1 lined up to receive their UN medals.

The ceremony began with the Force Commander's salute and inspection, followed by the Argentinian national anthem. Commanding Officer Sector 1, Lt. Col. José Luis Giro



The Force Commander addresses the parade

Martín, addressed his soldiers, emphasizing that that: "ten years of Argentinians serving in UNFICYP have provided us with an outstanding background that make us feel proud of our contribution to this mission".

After the blessing of the medals by Father Maidana, the presentation was made to all soldiers. Many people from UNFICYP, both military and civilian, accompanied by their families and friends attended.



Singing the Argentinian national anthem

The parade was followed by a reception in the Officers' Mess and the pool area where the Argentinian band played with its usual gusto and Cpl. Luis Miguel Campos sang exuberantly to an appreciative audience.

On 28 March, a similar ceremony was to take place in Gen. Roca Camp for those Sector 1 soldiers who were on duty on 19 March.



The Chief of Mission and Force Commander inspect the parade

St. Patrick's Day

From the morning decorum of a shamrock-blessing ecumenical service to the green-wigged revelry of late night carousing, St. Patrick made his presence felt at the UNPA as UNFICYP's uniformed Irishry joined forces to celebrate their national day on 17 March. In a season that has been more Irish than Cypriot, Ireland's patron saint used his meteorological connections to keep the rain and hail away from the eastern Mediterranean.

BRITCON Padre Lee Gandiya and Father Xavier, visiting Cyprus from Cincinnati, Ohio, presided over the blessing of Ireland's national emblem at St. Columba's Church in the UNPA. The Chief of Mission and the Force Commander were in attendance as was the Irish Ambassador to Cyprus, John Swift, and his wife Jean, as well as Ireland's Minister of State at the Department of Health, Tim O'Malley and his wife, Peg.

In the afternoon, the commanding officer of IRCON, Lt. Col Niall Daly, and UNCIVPOL Commander, Garda Siochana Chief Supt. Basil Walsh, welcomed guests on behalf of the Irish military and Irish police to a traditional repast including riverfuls of Irish smoked salmon and a flood of Gaelic (or Irish) coffee (a disarming blend of jolting caffeine laced with Irish whiskey and topped with a layer of thick cream).

The Irish Navy's Caleb Cooper skillfully charted the afternoon's entertainment, ably assisted by his landlubber colleagues Sgt. Liam Hogan, Garda Pat Gallagher and Ban Garda Olive Neville. His crew of performers ranged from balladeers and stepdancers to Sector One's honorary Argentinian-Irish band. Given that the Niall McClean Band, four Irish singers and instrumentalists, are seldom seen in daylight since they regularly entertain in the night-time watering holes of Limassol and Larnaca, getting them to perform before darkness was some accomplishment. They brought their own dancing girls, three high-steppers in traditional costumes, who put on a dazzling display of footwork! But it was Argentina's answer to the "Chieftains" who stole the show. Fronted by the crooner of swoon, Cpl. Luis Miguel Campos, the combo from St. Martin Camp, threw a tango in among the jigs and the reels and swept everyone away with them.

The music resumed that evening at the UNCIVPOL Club, where the addition of Australian Civpol bar service allowed all their Irish colleagues the freedom of the dance floor.

Viva Rio-dance!

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Wales about 385 AD. At 16, he was sold into slavery by a group of Irish marauders that raided his village. During his captivity he became closer to God.

He escaped from slavery after six years and went to Gaul where he studied in a monastery for 12 years. During his training, he became aware that his calling was to be one of Christianity's early missionaries and to return to Ireland to fulfil his mission.

Patrick was quite successful at winning converts, which upset the Celtic Druids. Patrick was arrested several times but escaped each time. He travelled throughout Ireland, establishing monasteries across the country. He also set up schools and churches which would aid him in his conversion of the Irish to Christianity. His mission in Ireland lasted 30 years. He died on 17 March in 461 AD, a day since commemorated as St. Patrick's Day.

One traditional icon of St. Patrick's Day is the shamrock. This stems from the legend that tells how Patrick used the three-leafed shamrock to explain the trinity. He used it in his sermons to represent how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit could all exist as separate elements of the same entity. His followers adopted the customs of wearing a shamrock on his feast day.



UNFICYP's Irish Contingents



Blessing the shamrock



Three ladies dancing



Two soldiers singing

Quick Thinking Saves Lives

The cool reaction and quick thinking of Sector 1 soldiers in an accident situation helped save the lives of two UN drivers involved in an accident close to OP 02 on 20 February.



Sgt. Sergio Miranda (left) and Cpl. Farina Decima

Andreas Demetriou and Ahmet Niyazi were returning from delivering water to the observation posts and patrol bases at Sector 1 when they lost control of their vehicle, which veered off the road and overturned landing on the edge of a hill in a very precarious position.

Sgt. Sergio Miranda spotted the accident, which occurred close to OP 02. He immediately reported it and requested a MEDEVAC, while Cpl. Farina Decima rushed to the scene of the accident and offered first aid to the injured men. Within a few minutes of the accident, civilians, National Guard soldiers, fire fighters and policemen were on the scene to offer assistance. Sgt. Miranda and Cpl. Decima helped coordinate the rescue efforts. The incident occurred while the Force Commander was on a visit to Sector 1.

Andreas was quickly freed from the vehicle, but Ahmet remained trapped inside and the Fire Department was called in to cut him out of the wreckage. After an hour, he was set free and taken to Paphos Hospital where his colleague had been taken earlier by ambulance.

Andreas suffered fractured ribs from the crash while Ahmet sustained a crush injury to his leg. Thankfully, both men are recovering well.

Sector 1 On The Air

By Sgt. Maj. Miguel Angel González

On 14 February 2003, Sector 1 launched its own radio broadcast in Spanish. It's on the air every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8.00 to 9.00 pm on frequencies 92.4 and 105.6 FM. The programme aims to provide Argentinian soldiers with the chance to enjoy music, news, commentaries and humour in their mother tongue.

Members of Sector 1 can also phone in and send messages to their loved ones on special occasions such as birthdays, the birth of a baby or even just to play the odd (polite) joke.

The programme has its own regular characters. One of them is "Frederico", a four-year-old boy, supposedly



The singing padre



Studio control panel

the son of an ex-Argentinian soldier who once served with UNFICYP. Then there's "Maria", a girl with a catchy voice who acts as the programme secretary, and finally there's a "newly arrived English teacher". Many listeners call in to chat to these characters which is sometimes quite amusing. But is everybody aware that all these roles are played by Sgt. Resquin Ponce, one of the programme hosts?

Assisting Sgt. Ponce are WOII Salas, Sgts. Grandoli and Ampuero and 1/Cpls. Ramos and Castillo.

The programme is a great success so far, and helps our soldiers to pass their time with UNFICYP more pleasantly.

In the February edition, page 3, we refer in the fifth paragraph to the "Sector 4 Engineers" who were busy repairing patrol tracks in crucial parts of the buffer zone. This should read the "HQ Engineers". We regret the error.

13,500 Give To Bicommunal Blood Drive

Thousands of Greek and Turkish Cypriots joined forces in early March in a bicommunal campaign to collect blood samples to find a compatible bone marrow donor for a five-year old leukaemia sufferer, Jale.

Doctors said Jale Sakaoglu from Morphou had only three weeks to live if a perfect bone marrow match was not found in time. The campaign, which ran for 11 days at the Ledra Palace, ended on 16 March with 13,450 samples collected. The samples have been sent to the Karaiskakion Foundation, which maintains the Cyprus Bone Marrow Registry, for the necessary compatibility tests. Among those who donated blood samples were the head of the European Commission delegation to Cyprus, Adrian van der Meer, Turkish Cypriot United Cyprus party General Secretary, Izzet Izcan, Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş's daughters, Ender and Deker, Health Minister Dina Akkelidou and the Bishop of Morphou Neophytos.

The Bicommunal Forum, Doctors of the World, the Kemal Saracoglu Association, the Karaiskakion Foundation and UNFICYP joined forces in the effort hailed as one of the longest running bicommunal campaigns ever run.



Campaign organiser Marinios Ioannides extended his thanks to the UN Civil Affairs Team for their help in organising the blood drive, as well as to all UN personnel – civilian and military – who donated blood samples.

"Even though the outcome of UN efforts for a Cyprus settlement were not fruitful, I believe we can confidently say that there is a will to help one another on the island and that the idea of coming together, at least from the citizen's point of view, is still alive – nationally as well as internationally. A message was sent out, and it is our hope that it was received," Ioannides said.

OP 18 – Traffic Control

By Sgt. Juan Villagra and 1/Cpl. Gustavo Trinidad



Soldiers at OP 18 in Sector 1 are responsible for controlling traffic from north to south along the Lefka road, which can only take one vehicle at a time. The soldiers refer to OP 18 as the "traffic light of the track", since they have to juggle vehicles coming from both directions along seven tracks that permit only one vehicle at a time.

In order to avoid accidents, UNFICYP members travelling in the area must communicate with the soldiers on duty at OP 18 and follow their instructions.

It is a mountainous area with a narrow road that passes through a number of minefields. Civilians travelling through the area along the track that is outside the BZ need to be particularly careful. They must observe the signals along the track, especially when it is signalled red as a result of the weather conditions.

Soldiers serving at OP 18 admit to struggling a little initially with the communications as they are in English, which is not their mother tongue. However, they do their job with enthusiasm and dedication for the safety of all UN and civilian personnel.

The Hungarian Contingent serving with UNFICYP celebrated their National Day on 15 March. The soldiers celebrated at Camp St Istvan and combined it with a medal presentation for those who couldn't take part in the Medal Parade earlier on 24 February.

The day marks the anniversary of Hungary's revolution and war of independence (1848/1849). The revolution initially broke out in Pest, but quickly spread over the entire country. The Hapsburg Emperor was dethroned after the Hungarian army won several significant battles and Lajos Kossuth was elected as Governor. One of the most crucial periods in Hungarian history, the uprising, has been referred to as the longest European revolution. It was eventually suppressed in the summer of 1849 when the Hapsburgs combed the forces of Austria and Russia.

Hungarians Celebrate



Cow 85 – Where Are You? Out On The Range With S2CAT Cowboys!

By WO1 Tex Longford

It was a cold crisp Friday morning at Ledra Palace, and an early start for the S2CAT. After delivering workers from the North Ledra Check Point (NLCP) to City Troop Area of Responsibility (AOR) for the shoring up of collapsing buildings and a meeting with the north Cypriot engineer responsible for the work in City's AOR, we moooved on to a displaced cow, No. 17985.

They say that nothing in this life comes easy and you get what you deserve, well nothing could be closer to the truth. On Wednesday 12 February 2003, Cow 85 was discovered by a Greek Cypriot farmer among his herd, after his cows had escaped into the buffer zone and he had retrieved them. After checking and rechecking, he discovered one extra in his herd. He contacted the Aglanzia municipality who in turn contacted the relevant ministry, only to find that Cow 85 did not belong to a Greek Cypriot.

Aglanzia municipality and the S2CAT have a good working relationship and because of this, we were contacted in an attempt to return Cow 85 to its rightful owner. After a number of telephone calls and a visit to the insurance man at NLCP, the information passed back to me was that Cow 85 does belong to a Turkish Cypriot but it had been recently sold.

Monday 17 February, and we have finally tracked down the owner of Cow 85. It is arranged for the said beast to be transported from the south to the north on Wednesday 19 February between 1500 and 1600 hours, as this is the only time that the Greek Cypriot farmer can get transport for Cow 85. The notice is too short for the NLCP and the plan is once more scuppered. The United Nations Civil Police (UNCIVPOL) is informed and they try to get the NLCP to allow us through, but to no avail.

However, the Turkish Cypriot farmer, waiting at the NLCP, is not informed by the NLCP of the developments. Later, a rather irate farmer had to be calmed by S2CAT.

UNCIVPOL then sort out an alternative plan.

The Turkish Cypriot farmer has transportation and it is arranged to transfer Cow 85 on Friday 21 February at 1000 hours. All interested parties are informed and it is

arranged for Cow 85 to go home. You think we've cracked it, don't you? It's 0930 hours on Friday 21 February and the South Ledra Check Point (SLCP) decide that it is not possible for the transportation to enter the south! UNCIVPOL follow the situation up through their chain of command and then back down again, CYPOL follow the situation up through their chain of command and then back down again and then HEY PRESTO, the green light is given. But there is a catch. CYPOL want to escort us to the farm in the south!

No worries. However, they have no idea where the farm is! But S2CAT do, except they will not allow S2CAT to lead. After some discussions, off we go, through Nicosia but unfortunately straight past the farm and into the BZ! Surprise, surprise! At this point they agree to let us lead. Two minutes later we're there and the two farmers meet and shake hands. Now surely, you think we've cracked it – wrong again! Cow 85 decides it's time to do a runner. Fifteen minutes of chasing, two minutes of cattle prodding and finally the cow is loaded. Thank God!

Quick trip back to the NLCP, shake of hands and away goes a happy farmer. All in a morning's work for the Sector 2 Civil Affairs Team.

The moral of the story is 10 days long and next time, we're having a beef barbeque!!!



After almost two decades with UNFICYP, Ali Radji Ahmet retired last month at the age of 62.

Ali first joined UNFICYP in 1985 as an electrician employed by the British Contingent's Royal Engineers in what was then known as Jubilee Camp, UNPA. In 1995, when the United Nations took over from the Civilian Establishment Pay Office, Ali transferred to the ISS Workshops where he has been ever since.

Ali – A Young 62-Year-Old

Ali graduated from the Lefka Technical Institute in 1961 as a fitter/turner. He also followed a course in practical electrics at the Institute. At first he worked locally in a furnishing factory, but in 1962, he joined the staff of the Nicosia General Hospital working as an occupational therapist, helping to keep psychiatric patients busy by teaching them simple handicraft (e.g. making small jewellery boxes), painting, dancing, escorting them to the cinema and on picnics, etc. He also did odd jobs around the hospital when simple electrical and mechanical problems arose.

When the job for an electrician at UNFICYP was published, Ali applied and has been a much valued employee ever since. In this international environment, Ali says: "I have enjoyed working alongside my Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot and international colleagues very much".

Ali lives in Nicosia and has two daughters, both married, and a son who is engaged. He also has two grandchildren. He is now planning on building a workshop for his

favourite hobby – electronics, "just to keep myself busy".

For a man who's worked hard all his life, Ali says that compulsory retirement is a sad step to take. He would have preferred to continue in his permanent post until the age of 65, which is when he will be entitled to a full Cypriot pension. Hakan Malstrom, the Building Management Unit's chief and Ali's supervisor, said: "I am very sorry to lose Ali, since I consider him a very young 62-year-old, a Jack-of-all-trades. He's a quiet man – not a lot said, but certainly a lot done".

The department gave a farewell party for Ali on 7 March – a full kebab in true BMU style, where he was presented with something he has always wanted – a mobile phone! The CM made an emotional speech, thanking Ali for his contribution to UNFICYP. The CAO and CSS were also present. Ali responded to this by saying that: "I feel very lucky and really proud to have worked with the United Nations organisation. I shall miss everybody very much".

Women Are Strong!

By Charlotte Mortensen

International Women's Day – hmmm, I must admit with guilt that I hadn't really thought about it when the day marked yearly by the United Nations came around on Saturday, 8 March. It is such an important day that 8 March every year has been dedicated to the empowerment and promotion of gender equality of women around the world. All the Member States of the UN have decided that women's issues should rank alongside human rights, children's wellbeing and the fight against AIDS/HIV. This year, the day "got caught up" in the middle of so many other events currently taking place in the world, that it took on a low-key status.

Despite the non-celebration of the internationally marked day, it was still there. But did any of us really walk around and think about it, even on the actual day? I don't think so, especially not in our small corner of the world where most of us women lead fairly good lives. We are not totally equal to the male population, yet, but we are getting there, at least where education,

working hours and maybe even salaries are concerned.

But as I said, I don't usually give the day much thought. However this year, one of my female friends called me up in the office to complain about the fact that now that it was International Women's Day she thought she deserved some sort of acknowledgement for all the SUPPORT she gives to MEN during the whole year...

That comment just did something to me, because to my mind, that's not what the day is all about. It is not about the SUPPORT we give to men. It's about us, women, what we can do ourselves, what our presence in the community means. It's about what WE are capable of doing, all by ourselves. That's what I want to teach my daughter. Not that she has some sort of support-role to the male population, but that she can do anything a man can do in this life, maybe even do more (OK, this thought may upset some of my male readers), but hey, let's face it, women are strong, smart, capable and able to give birth!!! You just go

ahead and try doing that, men!

But it's not all about what we are able and capable of doing, it's just as much about what can be done to help women and girls less fortunate around the world. It is still a fact that half a billion of women cannot read or write; they make up two thirds of the world's adult illiterates. The majority of children not attending school are girls, more than half of all those infected with HIV in Africa are women and I could go on like this with many more examples. (I will spare you, however.)

Let's all acknowledge this day, all of us, both men and women. Because you know as well as I do that it's not only up to the men to change the relationships between man and woman. As women, we have a responsibility too. In the Secretary-General's words, "we should SUPPORT WOMEN so that they will be able to take greater control of their lives – financially as well as physically. Because when women thrive, all of society benefits, and succeeding generations are given a better start in life".

Mobile Doesn't Mean Phone While You Drive

**You're four times
It's hard to
as likely to have
concentrate
a road accident
on two things at
when you're on
the same time
a mobile phone**

Safe driving means concentration. Talking on the phone distracts attention from the road and can lead to an accident. Even the most careful of drivers will be distracted by a call or text message.

You cannot be in full control of your vehicle if using a mobile phone whilst driving. Drivers must have proper control of their vehicle at all times.

Please be aware that if you use your phone whilst driving you are liable to prosecution. You may also be prosecuted for careless or reckless driving if using your phone causes you to drive in an irresponsible manner.

Master Driver's Top Tips

- *If you are driving keep the phone switched off, use your voicemail or message service.*
- *Stop in a safe place, not on a hard shoulder or a motorway.*
- *Do not use hands free. Your mind will not be fully on driving but on the conversation you are having.*
- *Avoid the call. If you must answer it, say you are driving and end the conversation quickly.*



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