

Malta considers joining UN peacekeeping force in Yugoslavia

by a Staff Reporter

THE GOVERNMENT is considering Maltese participation in a United Nations peacekeeping force in the war-torn, former Yugoslavia, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Guido de Marco said yesterday.

It was in Malta's interest that a UN peacekeeping force was sent to that country. But Malta should also make its own contribution through voluntary personnel, he said.

Professor de Marco was speaking at the Malta Export Trade Corporation's premises in San Gwann at the closing of the final session of the third annual ambassadors' meeting.

Malta's participation within the international scenario, its application for European Community membership and its activities within the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe were dwelt upon by the participating diplomats in an effort to establish what Professor de Marco termed as "Malta's political profile."

Malta, Professor de Marco explained at a press briefing, lived the contradictory role of a small-sized country of strategic importance. In such a situation, it fell upon his ministry to ensure security for the country by: upholding its belief in international legitimacy; through EC membership; its role within the CSCE; and through its role within developments in the Mediterranean region.

EC membership, which Professor de Marco reiterated was the best choice for the country, was a priority for the government. Also, it was best to join now so that Malta would be involved in the framework of the new Europe.

New EC members would make particular contributions arising from the region they hailed from. It did not make any country less European, Professor de Marco argued, because it brought along with it the influence of its region.

Referring to the Mediterranean — "one of the most complicated regions of the world" — the Foreign Minister opined that it would be a mistake, both geographically and politically, for Malta to ignore the realities of its Mediterranean context.

Talks at this ambassadors' conference also centred on Malta's external trade, now that the Foreign Ministry had assumed responsibility for it.

Diplomacy was today two-sided, like a coin, Professor de Marco con-

tinued. Maltese diplomats were not just political but also economic diplomats. No ambassador, he said, should consider it an infringement of his dignity or his calling to try to obtain markets for Maltese exports.

Malta's embassies must justify their existence. There was need for a management with objectives at embassies, he said.

Also being considered were new consuls general in areas of commercial importance such as Rotterdam to promote trade for Malta, Professor de Marco said.

Labour Deputy Leader's concern

THE Labour Party's deputy leader, Dr. George Vella, described Professor de Marco's address to the ambassadors on Thursday as one of concern.

The minister, he said, was seeking to justify the argument that Malta should subscribe to a common foreign and security policy with the aim of eventually joining a common defence with EC countries.

He said this was a humiliating way of showing the EC that Malta was prepared to cast away its dearest rights to become a Community member, he said.

Dr. Vella, who is the MLP's main spokesman on foreign policy, described the ambassadors' meeting as a propaganda exercise. Professor de Marco, he said, had called over to Malta its ambassadors from all four

corners of the world — at the taxpayers' expense. What was intended as a policy speech in fact turned out to be full of old boasts, he said.

Dr. Vella said that whereas the government had said all along that EC membership was its main objective, Professor de Marco had gone as far as to say that although EC membership was the best alternative, it was not the only one.

Maybe it was being realised that the alternative offered by the MLP was more realistic, practical and in the people's interest, Dr. Vella observed.

Dr. Vella said the minister was trying to reduce as much as possible the values of neutrality and non-alignment which were entrenched in Malta's Constitution.

While arguing that non-alignment was today senseless — due to the end of super-power confrontation — Professor de Marco had praised the Non-Aligned Movement and said it was a voice for the Third World.

The minister had also said that today there were a number of areas of conflict. But if the situation today, as the minister put it, was no longer bipolar but multi-polar, it had therefore become more dangerous, Dr. Vella argued.

Professor de Marco had also suggested that Malta should reopen its dockyards to warships of the two superpowers. As the USSR was no more, the minister's message was clear: should Malta again start accommodating the US Sixth Fleet, Dr. Vella asked.

Briton's shareholding in The Malta Independent

SOME one-sixth of *The Malta Independent* shares, a new Sunday newspaper launched only a few weeks ago, have been bought by a British shareholder.

But the process for the share acquisition is still to be finalised, Mr Martin Galea, the paper's managing editor, told *The Sunday Times* yesterday.

The UK *Press Gazette* reported in its July 13 issue that Mr Ralph Ingersoll, the former owner of the *Birmingham Post and Mail*, had bought shares in the new English-language weekly.

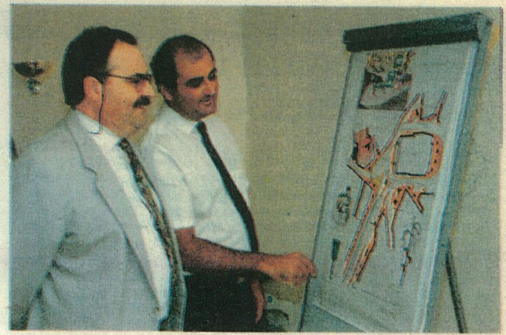
Mr Ingersoll, the magazine reports,

was the only foreigner with a stake in the newspaper. He bought around one-sixth of the paper which had cost about £520,000 to launch.

But his involvement was still to be approved by Malta's share registry, the *Press Gazette* said.



MR. R. INGERSOLL



MR. XUEREb showing Mr. Falzon a plan he prepared for discussion for the Naxxar Square.

Naxxar first area in Chamber of Commerce embellishment scheme

by a Staff Reporter

NAXXAR is to be the first locality in an embellishment scheme aimed at creating greater public awareness of the need for pleasant surroundings.

The initiative has been taken by the Malta Chamber of Commerce environment steering committee, the environment being an area in which the chamber feels it should be involved.

Committee chairman Mr Angelo Xuereb told representatives of seven societies in Naxxar that the aim was to create local committees composed of the representatives of the village's societies.

These would meet regularly during the year, with the aim of organising an annual competition between villages for the best kept square, for the first year extending it to the best kept road, the best kept lane and the best kept playing field, for example.

The government or the local councils, when they start operating, could give cash prizes and cups for the best three on condition that the money would again be spent on embellishment in the winning town or village.

As a starter, the chamber's environment committee is to take embellishment works in hand in Naxxar Square, to encourage other localities to do the same.

A square, Mr Xuereb said, would look much better with plants, flowers, and lights. The government, through Environment Minister Mr Michael Falzon, would see to such items as well-kept pavements.

A representative from the Environment Department was also to be represented on the committee as the approval of the department or the ministry would be needed regularly.

Naxxar sub-committee members will first agree to a general plan after taking into consideration the area's needs, such as feast decorations and parking. The cost of pro-

posed works would then be published for sponsors who wished to do their bit to back environmental improvement. The sponsors' name would be displayed in the sponsored area.

Addressing the newly formed committee, Mr Falzon praised the initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and promised his ministry's full cooperation.

He hoped that the work to be done would serve as an example for everyone to work hand in hand, eliminating certain rivalries which sometimes were the cause of vandalism.

Sliema front claims third victim

by a Staff Reporter

THE SEA along the Sliema front has claimed its third victim, again a tourist, in a span of two weeks.

Eighteen-year-old Simona Unterholzner, an Italian holidaying in Malta, drowned on Friday evening while swimming in the limits of Tigné. When she was brought out of the water at around 7 p.m., she was not found to have any external injuries.

Her tragic death follows fast on the trail of another drowning — that of a 19-year old French student — at the Chalet on July 30. On July 27, a 42-year old Italian died after he was hit by a passing speed-boat along the same seafloor.

A 23-YEAR OLD ITALIAN, Diego Casolano, on Friday was electrocuted at his holiday flat in Bugibba.

The unfortunate youth, in Malta on holiday with his family, was electrocuted by a fan. The incident happened at around 6 p.m.



MEMBERS of *Alternativa Demokratika* and bathers at the Exiles in Sliema yesterday formed a human chain stretching out to sea to symbolise the 200 metres of water which seacraft should keep out of. AD spokesman Dr Arnold Cassola said that besides endangering peoples' lives, seacraft also polluted the water. He said that the number of police patrolling popular areas should be increased and called for immediate and effective action against offenders.

