1. The Prime Minister said that the Security Council of the United Nations had now adopted, without dissent, a resolution in favour of the establishment of an international peace-keeping force in Cyprus and the appointment of a mediator who would seek to resolve the political issues which had provoked the current tension in the Island. Agreement on these measures had only been reached as the result of intensive diplomatic efforts, on which the Ministers immediately concerned deserved the Cabinet’s congratulations. It would now be necessary to consider the scale and nature of our own contribution to the international force.

The Minister of Defence said that it was important that decisions should be reached on these issues as rapidly as possible in view of the need to withdraw at least three major units from Cyprus in the near future.

The Cabinet—

Took note, with approval, of these statements.

2. The Cabinet had before them a memorandum by the Minister of Labour (C.P. (64) 62) about the desirability of instituting an inquiry into trade union law and practice.

The Minister of Labour said that it had become clear that, as a result of the Motion on the Order Paper of the House of Commons calling for the appointment of a Royal Commission on trade union law and practice and of recent comment on the subject in the Press, the trade unions would be unwilling to co-operate before the general election in any measures directed to establishing a Royal Commission, although, if the Government were returned to power at the election, moderate trade union opinion might be willing to co-operate in an inquiry thereafter. Since it would be unwise to appoint a Royal Commission without the co-operation of the trade unions, the courses now open to the Government appeared to be:

(i) to make no announcement before the election; or
(ii) to undertake in the Election Manifesto that, if a Conservative Government were returned to power, they would set up a Royal Commission soon thereafter; or
(iii) to make an announcement in the near future, on the lines of the draft statement annexed to C.P. (64) 62, to the effect that, if the Government were returned to power, they would set up a Royal Commission immediately after the election but that no action would be taken in the meantime and none of the interests concerned would be expected to commit themselves about the attitude which they would adopt in that situation.

It might be difficult to sustain the first course, particularly in the light of the measures which the Government intended to take in relation to monopolies and restrictive practices; and the third course entailed the risk that Left-wing opinion in the trade unions would be given an opportunity, in the interval before the election, to disseminate the view that, if the Government were returned to power, they would seek to weaken the industrial power of the unions. The wisest course, therefore, might be to defer an announcement of the Government’s intentions until the Election Manifesto was published, provided that their proposals could be made known privately to their supporters in the meanwhile.

In discussion it was suggested that, since successive Conservative Governments had resisted for a number of years the pressure of their supporters for the appointment of an inquiry into
trade union law and practice, a sudden departure from this policy

...