4. Mr. CHRISTOV (Bulgaria) said that the recognition by France of the right of Algeria to self-determination had been an historical necessity which, it was hoped, would pave the way to a peaceful settlement through negotiations. As a State dedicated to a policy of peace and to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, Bulgaria expected France's deeds to prove commensurate with its words; they should be such as to dispel the legitimate reservations and distrust of the Algerians.

5. Almost three full months had elapsed since President de Gaulle's declaration of 16 September, its acceptance by the Provisional Government and the appointment by that Government of a delegation to enter into talks with the French Government. Yet the war in Algeria continued—indeed, its casualties were still high; so long as hostilities did not cease, there was a constant threat of a deterioration in French-Algerian relations and of an increase in international tension. It would be tragic if the war were allowed to continue unabated because the gap between the declaration of the principle of self-determination and its practical application remained unbridged.

6. The United Nations could not remain indifferent to the continuation of the Algerian war, particularly in the vastly improved international climate which prevailed. It should assist the parties towards an early start of "pourparlers" designed to end hostilities and secure a peaceful settlement. The Committee's major concern should be to overcome the obstacles which impeded such a settlement.

7. Mr. VIDIC (Yugoslavia) said that at a time when serious efforts were being made to achieve complete disarmament and lasting peace and when the last remnants of colonialism were being rapidly eliminated, it was essential to put an end to the only war in the world at the present time—that in Algeria.

8. The President of Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito, had stated that, although Yugoslavia had long enjoyed friendly relations with France, it sympathized with the Algerian people's struggle for freedom and independence. The present session had afforded prospects of a satisfactory outcome of that struggle. The acceptance by both the French Government and the Algerian Provisional Government of the principle of the Algerian people's right to self-determination was an encouraging change in the situation, and showed a positive turn in French policy and a responsible attitude on the part of the Algerian Provisional Government. Since both sides were anxious to end the fighting as soon as possible and had expressed the desire to enter into negotiations, it should be possible to resolve the remaining difficulties: those relating to the conditions for the implementation of the Algerian people's right to self-determination, and for a cease-fire.

9. His Government had always felt that a mutually acceptable solution could be found that would take into
account both the Algerian people's right to freedom and independence and the various factors and interests arising out of the long relationship between France and Algeria. It was the task of the General Assembly to contribute to such a solution.

10. Sir Claude Corea (Ceylon) pointed out that during the early years of the Algerian war, when France appeared determined to put down the struggle for liberation by force of arms, the United Nations had been able merely to advise that the parties should reach a settlement; not until the thirteenth session had the Algerian plea for independence been supported by a large section of the Assembly, even though the relevant draft resolution had failed by one vote to obtain the necessary two-thirds majority (702nd plenary meeting). Although there was no certainty that the Assembly's action in 1958 had influenced French-Algerian relations (especially in view of the advent of a stable Government in France), the recent turn of events—in particular French recognition of Algeria's right to self-determination—marked a new phase in the Algerian situation, which the United Nations could not afford to disregard.

11. The parties appeared to be on the threshold of a final and complete settlement and any inconsiderate action by the United Nations might jeopardize it; caution was therefore imperative. However, the situation in Algeria was not merely the expression of the will of the Algerian people for independence, but the result of gross neglect on the part of France and the failure of the French authorities in Algeria to satisfy the basic needs of the Algerians and thus dispel the discontent which had led to the conflict. Rather than abdicate its responsibility and abandon any idea of making a suggestion regarding a peaceful settlement, the United Nations should now do everything possible to help France to seize the present opportunity to put an end to the war and the misery of the Algerian people.

12. The French Prime Minister had admitted that the conflict in Algeria was the outgrowth of past mistakes, and that it could have been halted at the very start if the French had immediately instituted the basic political, economic and social reforms which Algeria had been demanding for years, and had taken positive steps to remedy the defects of an over-centralized administration insufficiently aware of the problems of Algeria's future. In 1954, however, Algeria was still deprived of the democratic institutions which would have enabled it to set in motion a plan such as that proposed by President de Gaulle on 16 September 1959. If such institutions had existed and if France had had greater political strength and had made the changes which were imperative—not only in Algeria but in the Far East and in the States neighbouring Algeria—it could have prevented painful estrangements, created better terms for the association of those States with France, and strengthened their position. In view of that admission, it was the duty of France's friends and allies not to withhold the wise counsel which might prevent another mistake in Algeria.

13. Ceylon regretted the absence of the French delegation and expressed great admiration for the courage and firmness of President de Gaulle's offer of an honourable peace in Algeria. However, the Algerian problem should be approached not from the technical, but from the human, point of view. If the French Government gave full weight to the human factor, it would make no further mistakes in settling the nature of its association with Algeria. The Committee should not attempt to express opinions on the substantive problem involved, but should give its full support to an early meeting between the parties to discuss that problem.

14. Although President de Gaulle's declared intention to allow the Algerians freely to decide their future must be regarded as sincere, it was not unreasonable for the nationalists to seek to clarify certain basic issues before they abandoned the strength acquired during five years of fighting. They were entitled, for example, to have a clearer understanding of the nature of the proposed referendum; they should know to what extent French arrangements might nullify self-determination; they should be able to dispel their apprehensions concerning the prospect that the will of the Algerian people might be vetoed by the voters of metropolitan France. They should also be enabled to clarify the question of partition, and to ascertain whether part of Algeria was to be set aside for the resettlement of those elements of the population which might wish to remain French and what proportion of the total territory of Algeria might be allocated for that purpose. Such matters could best be discussed in direct preliminary talks between the parties. Moreover, as President de Gaulle had himself admitted, the Algerian question was more than one of restoring order and granting Algeria the right of self-determination; it was primarily a human problem and the human approach to it was through direct negotiations. France should therefore be the first to understand the desire of the Algerians for full clarification of the implications of President de Gaulle's offer.

15. In the circumstances, without embarrassing either party, the United Nations should recommend an early start to direct "pourparlers". By inviting the National Liberation Front (FLN) to discuss the terms of a cease-fire, the French Government had recognized it as the party of the opposition, the party fighting. The draft resolution before the Committee (A/C.1/L.246 and Add.1) did not refer to that party by name, nor to the Provisional Government of Algeria, whereas to do so could cause no offence to either side—and it would merely demonstrate good will and a desire to further a peaceful settlement. At a time when the parties had agreed on the basic principle of an Algerian solution, it would be a tragedy if they were not brought closer together.

16. Mr. Ortona (Italy) said that President de Gaulle's statement of 16 September had confirmed his Government's belief that the Algerian problem would be solved in a manner that was in keeping with France's great liberal traditions. It was gratifying that the French President's proposal had met with a favourable response from the Algerian nationalist leaders, since there was thus an agreement in principle on the means of achieving a peaceful, democratic solution of the problem, and such a solution might well initiate a new era of peace and co-operation in the entire Mediterranean area.

17. The remaining difficulties were not great when compared with the magnitude of the problem that had previously existed. They should be attacked realistically and without undue haste in order not to jeopardize the future development and internal stability of Algeria. Political considerations should not be permitted to divert attention from the primary aim of bringing the fighting to an end as soon as possible. Once that was done, a solution of the main issues could be sought;
President de Gaulle's statements of 16 September and 10 November, as well as his past actions, made it clear that he envisaged a solution in accordance with democratic principles.

18. At the present stage of the Algerian situation, when patience and mutual trust were so essential, the United Nations should avoid taking any action which might jeopardize the chances of achieving a cease-fire and an early solution of the problem. His delegation had always had reservations as to the legal propriety of discussing the Algerian problem, and he agreed with the United Kingdom representative that events had shown the wisdom of the General Assembly's action at the previous session in avoiding any specific recommendations on the Cyprus question. In dealing with Algeria at the present session, the Assembly should not go beyond resolutions 1012 (XI) of 15 February 1957 and 1184 (XII) of 10 December 1957. He was gratified by the moderation and restraint of the participants in the Committee's debate and, in particular, of the representatives of the North African countries.

19. Mr. Esin (Turkey) said that the more hopeful atmosphere in which the Algerian question was being discussed at the present session was due to the acceptance by both France and the Algerian nationalist leaders of the principle of recognition of the Algerian people's right to self-determination and also to the moderate and constructive approach taken during the Committee's debate. It was the United Nations task, not to suggest a specific solution, but rather to encourage the parties concerned to enter into direct contact with a view to reaching a solution. He recalled that at the thirteenth session, the General Assembly had contributed to the solution of the seemingly insoluble Cyprus problem by taking that attitude.

20. Inasmuch as there was agreement between the two parties on the principle of self-determination, it was deplorable that fighting was continuing because of an inability to agree on the question of who should represent the Algerian nationalists in the projected negotiations and on whether those negotiations should deal with the procedures for applying the principle of self-determination as well as with a cease-fire. The General Assembly could best contribute to the cause of peace in Algeria at the present time by earnestly appealing to the parties directly concerned to make a supreme effort of conciliation.

21. Dato' Kamil (Federation of Malaya) said that, although the war of independence in Algeria continued to drag on, there were encouraging prospects that, with sincerity and good will on both sides, it might soon come to an end. His delegation joined other delegations in welcoming President de Gaulle's solemn recognition of the Algerian people's right to self-determination; that would no doubt prove to be a step towards a just and amicable solution of the Algerian problem in accordance with the principles and spirit of the United Nations Charter.

22. The adoption by the First Committee at the previous session of a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.292) recognizing the right of the Algerian people to independence and urging negotiations between the two parties had been a sure indication of a general feeling of concern and desire to reach a speedy and just settlement of the problem. The delegation of the Federation of Malaya had been one of many delegations to support the principle of self-determination and inde-

27. While the French President's declaration was therefore to be welcomed, a number of points still called for clarification. As matters stood, the plebiscite for self-determination would be held sometime within a four-year period at the discretion of the French; moreover the result of the plebiscite could not be final without French endorsement. It was a paradox that Algeria's self-determination should be entirely dependent on the will of another nation. What was more, even if the French people approved the Algerian choice of independence, Algeria would still be subject to partition and the French sector would comprise the most fertile areas of the territory as well as the Sahara oil fields.

28. The considered reply of the Algerian Provisional Government indicated the latter's readiness to enter into conversations with the French Government concerning the military and political conditions for a cease-fire and the conditions and guarantees of the application of self-determination. Unfortunately, certain official French declarations indicated that the French authorities would spare no effort to ensure that the plebiscite resulted in integration or close association with France. The Algerian Provisional Government had on 20 November expressed the view that such declarations undermined the very sense of self-determination and made guarantees on the methods of application essential. However, in a spirit of good will it had accepted President de Gaulle's offer and had appointed certain Algerian representatives to undertake negotiations.

29. A deadlock had then ensued owing to France's objection to the Algerian representatives, and owing also to France's unwillingness to negotiate any question other than that of a cease-fire. It was hard to understand the French refusal to negotiate with the statesmen appointed by the Algerian Provisional Government as the trusted representatives of the Algerian people. Even the French recognized them as political prisoners and French representatives abroad had previously conducted unofficial negotiations with them. Moreover, there were precedents of French authorities negotiating with political prisoners in the cases of Morocco and Tunisia. It was sincerely to be hoped that the French Government would consider the serious consequences of its refusal to negotiate with the Algerian representatives. It might also give thought to the possibility of conducting negotiations in New York, where former members of the Algerian Provisional Government were attending the discussions in the United Nations.

30. It was clear from the statement of the Algerian Provisional Government that it would limit its negotiations to the conditions for self-determination and a cease-fire, and that, once the Algerian people had freely exercised their choice, their duly elected representatives would negotiate the implementation of that choice. If the French authorities were genuinely interested in solving the Algerian dispute, they should be willing to meet the Algerians and discuss three essential points: first, means of shortening the transitional period before the plebiscite; second, conditions and guarantees for the exercise of all freedoms during that period and the release of all political prisoners; and third, conditions to guarantee complete freedom of the plebiscite. Until both parties agreed on those points the principle of self-determination would be meaningless, but once agreement was reached, a cease-fire would logically follow. In view of the Algerian people's previous experience of elections conducted by the French authorities, they were scarcely to be blamed for insisting that the conditions and guarantees for free self-determination must be established beforehand—particularly in view of recent statements by French authorities, coupled with the fact that even some French newspapers had impugned the conduct of the 1955 elections in Algeria. It was hard to see how the choice of the Algerian people would be entirely free, as General de Gaulle had promised, when the French administration and army in Algeria were committed to a policy of integration. Negotiations were therefore essential to find means of obviating French interference both during the transitional period and during the plebiscite.

31. France could only stand to gain from an agreement with the Algerian people's representatives on those questions. If the Algerian people chose integration or association with France, they would do so of their own free will. If they chose independence, France would still be the winner because the ensuing atmosphere of accord and amity would safeguard its economic and cultural interests in Algeria and ensure the protection of the rights of the French minority there. The precedents of Tunisia and Morocco encouraged the hope that a just solution of the Algerian problem, by freely negotiated agreement, would initiate an era of friendship and co-operation not only between France and Algeria, but between France and the whole Arab world. If agreement was not reached, France would certainly be the loser, for the Algerian war would continue and France would lose the good will of the Arab countries. The choice therefore rested with France.

32. The prestige of the Organization would undoubtedly suffer if no effective action were taken on the Algerian question before the close of the session. It was therefore disappointing to hear certain delegations advocating passivity and inaction rather than an attempt to reach an amicable settlement of the dispute. He had hoped that mediation would have facilitated agreement on the conditions of a free plebiscite and cease-fire which, embodied in a mutually acceptable resolution, might have been unanimously approved by the Assembly. That would have enhanced the prestige of the United Nations and encouraged its more ambitious aims for world peace and security. The twenty-two-power draft resolution was the minimum that could be expected of the Assembly in the circumstances. It was couched in the most moderate terms and did not prejudice a solution of the Algerian problem. On the contrary it should pave the way for an amicable settlement.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.