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Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).

Tribute to the memory of Mr. Georgi Damianov, President of the Presidium of the National Assembly of the People's Republic of Bulgaria

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Mr. Georgi Damianov, President of the Presidium of the National Assembly of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

The representatives stood in silence.

2. Mr. TARBABANOV (Bulgaria) thanked the Committee for its expression of sympathy with his country.

AGENDA ITEM 68


GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

3. Mr. HSUEH (China) expressed disappointment that the efforts of the Governments concerned and the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to arrange a conference had not proved successful so far. However, those efforts had not been in vain, for the agreement reached on the procedural aspect and the substantive proposals worked out might contribute to the success of future negotiations.

4. China's position on the Cyprus question remained one of sympathy for the Cypriots of both Greek and Turkish origin, support of the principle of self-determination and confidence in the experience of the United Kingdom Government in applying that principle. His delegation continued to believe that a solution could be found through negotiations among the parties concerned on the basis of the principle of self-determination. But the bitterness between the two communities aroused by violence and terrorism during the past few years had instilled the fear among members of the minority group that they would suffer under the rule of the majority, and that fact should not be overlooked in the search for a solution of the question. The principle of self-determination could be implemented only in a peaceful and orderly manner, and in the case of Cyprus its implementation must be accompanied by adequate guarantees of the rights of the minority group.

5. In the present circumstances, it would be wise to introduce a provisional system which would satisfy the political aspirations of the Cypriots and inspire mutual confidence between the two groups. Every effort should be made to promote good relations between them, since that was the single most important factor for a final solution of the question. In the present-day world, where direct or indirect aggression continued to threaten the freedom-loving peoples, the situation in Cyprus could not be allowed to deteriorate any further without playing into the hands of the aggressors. There could be no provisional or final solution of the question of Cyprus without the consent of both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and the Governments of the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey.

6. His delegation appealed to all the parties concerned to continue and redouble their efforts to negotiate a solution. It was prepared to support any draft resolution which would facilitate such efforts.

7. Sir Claude COREA (Ceylon) expressed regret that a solution of the Cyprus question had not yet been achieved, but pointed out that much had been done to prepare the ground for such a solution during the past year. The negotiations contemplated by the General Assembly at its eleventh session (resolution 1013 (XI)) had actually begun and had resulted in a certain measure of agreement between some of the parties concerned. The hope that further negotiations would prove successful was strengthened also by a number of other factors: the fact that the three countries concerned were close allies and shared a responsibility, as members of the United Nations, for maintaining the good relations between them which were so important for the maintenance of world peace and security; the manifest good will of the United Kingdom and its unreserved readiness to support a settlement of the problem which would lead to independence or self-government for Cyprus; and the Greek Government's renunciation of the goal of union (union with Greece) for the island. Moreover, although the Turkish Government had a legitimate security interest in Cyprus, it would undoubtedly realize that an independent or self-governing Cyprus guaranteed by the United Nations or the Members of the United Nations would provide it with the security it considered necessary.

8. In the past, one of the obstacles to agreement on a solution of the question had been the importance attached to the interest of the Greek and the Turkish Governments in the question. Undoubtedly both Governments did have a legitimate interest in the problem; they should, however, look upon the people of Cyprus, not as Greek or Turkish citizens, but as independent peoples living in a separate country. His delegation considered that it would be far better to make an effort
to bring the two communities in Cyprus closer together than to solve the problem by territorial partition, which had so often brought disastrous consequences elsewhere. For that reason, it welcomed the statement by the United Kingdom representative at the 995th meeting making it clear that his Government rejected the idea of partition.

9. It was also necessary, however, to guard against a functional partition of the island, although it might be necessary at the outset to separate some administrative functions in order to minimize friction between the two communities. The great objective should be to provide a unitary Government in which all the people of Cyprus would participate—that is, to promote a partnership, not between three outside Powers, but between the two communities of Cyprus.

10. Future negotiations must also take into account the need to provide the minority with strong guarantees that its rights would be preserved.

11. A fundamental condition for peaceful negotiation was the restoration of calm on the island. His delegation condemned terrorism, but felt that it could be best attacked by removing its causes. In the case of Cyprus, one of its causes was the frustrated desire of the people for independence. The recognition by the three Governments concerned that independence or self-government must be the final objective in Cyprus would do much to bring it to an end.

12. Those were his delegation's views on the lines along which a settlement should be worked out. But it must be left to the people of Cyprus, together with its friends the Governments of the United Kingdom, Turkey and Greece, to decide the matter in any way it chose. In order to assist it to do so, his delegation supported the view that the United Nations should take no other action at present than to call for further negotiations.

13. Mr. ABDOH (Iran) introducing his delegation's draft resolution (A/C.1/L.226), noted that it was essentially conciliatory in nature and that it avoided reference to controversial issues relating to the future status of the populations of Cyprus. It called for a resumption of negotiations between the parties since, in the view of Iran, that was the most realistic approach to a constructive solution of the Cyprus question. The Iranian delegation further believed that it would be a mistake for the General Assembly to recommend any particular formula for a settlement lest it prove unacceptable to the parties and lead to increased tension in Cyprus. He was prepared to consider any suggestions or amendments designed to improve his proposal or any other proposals acceptable to the parties.

14. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) emphasized that the problem of Cyprus was primarily a political problem of great complexity that had to be viewed in its entirety. The legal aspects to be borne in mind in dealing with it were first, the applicability of Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations, and secondly, the fact that British authority in Cyprus was based on treaty obligations. The human aspect which merited consideration was the mixture of populations inhabiting the island and the absolute interdependence between them. The political implications of the problem were multiple: on the one hand, the question involved the legitimate interests of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom; on the other hand, it had an immediate impact on peace and security in the Eastern Mediterranean area which, in turn, directly affected world security that was necessarily based on systems of regional defence.

15. The greatest hope of a solution of the Cyprus question lay in the profound community of interests between Cyprus and the three Powers with legitimate interests in the island or responsibilities for it. A sound foundation would have to be laid for such a solution. There would have to be an immediate cessation of all violence on the island and the restoration, not only of an atmosphere of calm and order, but of free discussion and a free Press. Another prerequisite would be an effective plan for self-government, taking into account the interests and aspirations of the peoples of Cyprus. He was confident that the United Kingdom would carry out its commitment to enforce such a plan in accordance with the principles of the Charter. But no plan could succeed unless the peoples of Cyprus had the moral certitude that their problem would be solved in time by a strict application of the Charter principles of equality of rights and self-determination.

16. Bearing in mind Article 73 of the Charter, he would say that the paramount interests of the inhabitants made it imperative to preserve the unity of the island, for geographically, historically and politically, Cyprus was an entity. Moreover, it was united by an overriding factor which he would call its "unity of destiny", the need for all the inhabitants to work out their future status in the modern world. Both the Greek and Turkish communities on the island would be directly affected if Cyprus achieved independence, just as they would be directly affected if it became the source of world conflict. Religious differences need not jeopardize the unity of the island, for every religion subscribed to the principle of tolerance; only the will to power created disunity. It was the duty of the three parties directly concerned in Cyprus to create an atmosphere favourable to the integration of the various elements in Cyprus and to their mutual collaboration. Integration presupposed respect for the Turkish minority, not on the grounds of their minority status, but as full participants in the life of the country. Accordingly, the Turkish Cypriots should be consulted regarding the provisional status of the island as on all other matters; they should enjoy equal rights with all other inhabitants.

17. The General Assembly could not impose a solution of the Cyprus question; it could only recommend, advise, guide or create an atmosphere. In the circumstances, it should attempt to promote negotiations. Negotiation was the great instrument for the solution of international problems; it should be flexible and it should utilize all possible assistance if it was to succeed. Its success would depend on sincerity of intentions, the will to peace, and objectivity in the appraisal of the facts. He was confident that all three parties were sincere and that they wanted peace; they should be on guard against any tendency to be subjective regarding the facts, to attempt to make them conform to their own preconceived notions and purposes. Negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, in the course of which the parties would be free to utilize the good offices of other countries acceptable to them and to set up fact-finding groups or conciliation machinery, had every chance of success.

18. The debate had indicated some grounds for future negotiations. Greece and the United Kingdom appeared to agree on the need for a provisional settlement pend-
ing the working out of a final solution. Both Governments appeared to agree on the existence of a personality of Cyprus and on its unity. The United Kingdom had further pledged itself to fulfill the aspirations of the Cypriots and had expressed its willingness to sit at a round-table conference in which the various peoples of Cyprus would be represented. While it was true that Greece and Turkey had still not succeeded in reaching agreement, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs had emphasized that the Turkish minority in Cyprus would enjoy full rights and indeed would participate fully in the life of the country (966th meeting).

19. The General Assembly should therefore, in its resolution, reaffirm that the question of Cyprus should be resolved fairly and democratically and in accordance with the principles of the Charter; it should reiterate that the United Kingdom, in establishing self-government in Cyprus, should take due account of the interests of the Greek and Turkish communities; it should invite the parties to enter into the fullest possible measure of negotiation, including recourse to the good offices of outside parties, mediation, fact-finding committees and, if necessary, a conciliation commission. Finally, the resolution should request the parties to report on the progress made to the Assembly at its fourteenth session.

20. Mr. LOUTFI (United Arab Republic) pointed out that the Cyprus question had been before the United Nations since the ninth session, that General Assembly resolution 1013 (XI) of 26 February 1957 had expressed the desire that a peaceful, democratic and just solution would be found in accord with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and that a draft resolution urging self-determination for the people of Cyprus had been adopted by the First Committee (A/61/804) at the twelfth session, but had failed of adoption in the Assembly. If the question continued to be debated each year and no solution was found, the prestige of the United Nations would suffer.

21. His delegation favoured recognition of the Cypriot people's right of self-determination, just as it had at the twelfth session. Geographical proximity made Cyprus a matter of special concern to the United Arab Republic; had the people of Cyprus been consulted in 1956, they surely would have opposed the use of their territory as a base for the aggression launched against Egypt at that time.

22. Judging from the statements of the Greek delegation, the Macmillan plan,1/ which had been advanced by the United Kingdom with a view to solving the Cyprus problem, was not acceptable to the Greek Cypriot leaders; it should not be imposed over their objections. According to Article 73 of the United Nations Charter, the interests of the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories must be regarded as paramount by the States responsible for the administration of those Territories; the inhabitants of Cyprus must therefore be permitted to decide their own future. If that was done, adequate safeguards would unquestionably be set up to protect the interests of the Turkish Cypriot minority, as the Greek representative had made clear on 26 November (998th meeting) in his conciliatory statement. He was also pleased to note that the United Kingdom representative had stated on 25 November (996th meeting) that the United Kingdom Government did not favour the partition of Cyprus—a solution which, in the opinion of the delegation of the United Arab Republic, would prove detrimental to the interests of the Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike and of neighbouring countries as well.

23. While the draft resolutions of Greece (A/C.1/ L.222), Turkey (A/C.1/L.223) and the United Kingdom (A/C.1/L.221) were alike in accepting the principle of negotiation on the problem, their respective sponsors approached the prospect of negotiation in wholly different ways. It was not enough for the Committee to adopt, as in the past, a draft resolution merely urging negotiations; it must go further and make specific recommendations to the parties concerned.

24. Mr. O'BRIEN (Ireland) said that the major issue of principle in the Cyprus controversy was whether the Cypriot people as a whole should be permitted to decide its own future; the Greek delegation had answered that question affirmatively, and the Turkish and United Kingdom delegations had answered it negatively.

25. The case for an affirmative answer was that Cyprus was geographically and historically a unit. It had never been divided: the Cypriot personality required unity. The way to preserve that unity was to permit the Cypriot people to determine its own destiny by means of a popular vote in which the majority would decide. It was against the principle of preserving unity that the real arguments on the other side were directed.

26. Those who opposed recognition of the Cypriot people's right to self-determination argued that the wishes of the Turkish minority must be taken into account. In reality, however, they meant that no decision should be taken on the future of Cyprus which was not acceptable to the Turkish minority; in other words, the Cypriot majority should be governed in accordance with the wishes of the Turkish minority, or, if that proved impracticable, the island should be partitioned in the interest of the minority. The alternative of partition was already openly envisaged by Turkey.

27. By giving equal weight to the two ethnic groups in spite of their numerical disparity, present United Kingdom policy tended to make eventual partition more likely, even though the United Kingdom representative had said that that was not his Government's desire. The Macmillan plan, which proposed to institutionalize the two communities and grant Greece and Turkey a share in the internal administration of Cyprus, would further the same end. The United Kingdom representative had described the Macmillan plan as an experiment in "partnership" and had cited the example of the British Commonwealth of Nations as an association of free and independent nations (996th meeting). The analogy was not an apt one, however, since neither freedom nor independence was contemplated for Cyprus under the plan; moreover, since the Greek Government and the Greek Cypriot leaders had refused to participate, the proposed partnership experiment would actually involve only the United Kingdom, Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot minority. Such a partnership would deny the aspirations of the majority of the Cypriot people.

28. The Turkish representative had contended at the 997th meeting that Cyprus was neither a State nor a nation, but rather "a territory with a mixed population
affiliated with two independent nations*. He had then referred to "final solutions" which had been achieved in similar cases in the past by unifying the majority and minority groups with their respective motherlands. Just what precedents he had had in mind was not clear, but his meaning was obvious: "partnership" on Cyprus was to be only a temporary expedient; the "final solution" was to be partition. The case presented by the Turkish representative was unsound because, although Cyprus was a "territory with a mixed population", it also possessed a well-defined physical character and a long history, of which its inhabitants were proud. Cyprus was an ancient homeland, dear to countless generations of Cypriot people, and the pieties of place had an historic importance. Some might argue that, in the modern world, the principle of interdependence superseded that of independence. However, the majority of the Cypriot people clearly wanted independence for their island as a geographical unit; hence, partition could not possibly provide a solution of the problem, for a settlement that was rejected by the majority of the Cypriot people could not lead to improved relations between Greece and Turkey.

29. If Cyprus acquired independence, provision would, of course, have to be made for the Turkish minority; it should be noted that Greek leaders on the island and in Greece had offered repeated assurances along those lines. During the period of preparation which would necessarily precede independence, responsible leaders on all sides should take steps to ease inter-communal antagonism and prepare both communities for life under a common democratic Government. The United Nations, perhaps acting through its Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, could draw up a plan to safeguard the rights of the Turkish minority, and, if the leaders of that minority wished, implementation of the plan might be supervised by United Nations civilian observers. Furthermore, it should be possible to make arrangements whereby those members of the Turkish minority who chose to leave Cyprus would be compensated at a rate determined by assessors appointed by the Organization for any loss they might sustain.

30. He had confined himself to a discussion of the issue of principle involved in the Cyprus question because, once the principle had been clearly defined, the appropriate action would necessarily follow by reason of the Member States' common commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. If it was conceded that Cyprus was a case in which the principle of self-determination applied, considerations of a military nature, for example, could not be permitted to block the application of that principle. Self-determination was a right, not a privilege to be granted or withheld depending on the donor's current interpretation of his own interests.

31. His delegation would vote against the United Kingdom draft resolution (A/C.1/L.221), which was tantamount to a request for General Assembly support for current United Kingdom policy on Cyprus; the armed conflict on Cyprus was deplorable, but it was the result of a political situation and therefore could be ended only by wise and realistic political measures by those responsible for the island's future, not by abstract appeals from the United Nations.

32. For similar reasons, his delegation would vote against the Turkish draft resolution (A/C.1/L.223) and for the Greek draft resolution (A/C.1/L.222).

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.