

DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE

ON THE REAFFIRMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW APPLICABLE IN ARMED CONFLICTS

The Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law applicable in Armed Conflicts was resumed at Geneva on 21 April 1976 under the chairmanship of Mr. Pierre Graber, Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Political Department.

This, the third session, continues the work of the first and second sessions, which were held, also at Geneva, from 20 February to 29 March 1974 and from 3 February to 18 April 1975.

On opening the thirty-first plenary meeting, the President welcomed the representatives of the States taking part in the Conference. After recalling that half the articles of the Draft Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 had already been adopted in Committee, Mr. Graber said that difficult problems remained to be solved, he appealed for a spirit of co-operation like that which had been displayed at the second session.

The President then informed the Conference that it was the unanimous wish of himself and his fellow-officers that the third session should see the Additional Protocols established; and he submitted to the Conference the programme of work adopted with that end in view. In particular, the main Committee should quickly resume their work at the point where they had left it last year. The Conference endorsed the officers' decisions.

Referring to the growing interest and the great hope that the Conference had aroused in many quarters, the President said: "We must do all we can to ensure that people are not disappointed in that hope. Indeed, in such a difficult field as the codification of international law, we must

show that the community of nations is fully conscious, in establishing the necessary texts, of its responsibility towards the victims of the conflicts which it cannot yet completely prevent.”

The three main Committees resumed their work on Thursday, 22 April 1976, at the point where they had left off at the end of the second session.

Committee I, is dealing with provisions of general character and the application of international humanitarian law; *Committee II*: with the protection of wounded, sick and shipwrecked persons; *Committee III*: with the protection of the civilian population against the effects of hostilities; the *ad hoc Committee IV*, with weapons liable to cause unnecessary suffering or have indiscriminate effects.

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In a subsequent issue we shall summarize the work of the Conference, and give our readers the results obtained in this second session which will last until 11 June 1976.