

The ICRC and the Manila Conference

Evaluation and prospects

by Jacques Moreillon

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation and prospects

An International Red Cross Conference is an ideal moment to review the present situation and look to the future. Meeting every four years and assembling as it does the governments and the entire Red Cross family (ICRC, National Societies and the League), this “supreme deliberative body of the International Red Cross”¹ reflects the concerns of the entire movement at a certain point in time. Its resolutions are a gauge of progress achieved in the various fields of Red Cross activity and an indication of the direction that activity should take in future, or in any case until the next International Conference.²

The Twenty-fourth International Red Cross Conference in Manila in November 1981 was a particularly favourable opportunity for the ICRC to reassess the position and prospects of the Red Cross in several domains. Convened as it was four years after the close of the Diplomatic Conference and after examination by the Bucharest Conference of the *Tansley Report* proposals, it marked what we consider to be an important

¹ *Statutes of the International Red Cross*, Article 1, paragraph 2.

² See: Richard Perruchoud, *Les résolutions des Conférences internationales de la Croix-Rouge*, Henry Dunant Institute, Geneva 1979. An excellent work and highly recommended to all who wish to go into this subject in greater detail. (In French only).

stage in the application of international humanitarian law, and in the attitude of the Red Cross towards problems associated in particular with the emblem, peace, refugees and the development of Red Cross Societies.

In each of these domains—and in several others—we should like to analyse the results of the Manila Conference and reflect on possible future courses of action. A number of reference texts—relating to law and principles—which are of lasting value and will serve to illustrate our comments and inspire further reflection are given at the end of this analysis.

We shall obviously leave others—and in particular the League—to make their own appraisal in fields which fall within their competence; the *International Review of the Red Cross*—which is the review for our entire movement and not only for the ICRC alone—is wide open to them. In this connection we invite everyone—the League, the National Societies, and experts expressing their opinions in a private capacity—to let us know their own analyses of this important International Conference. We shall ourselves only comment here on matters within the competence of the ICRC, and of concern to the Red Cross itself or to governments or other authorities.

Basis and limits of this study

The ICRC can act and speak first and foremost within the framework of the functions attributed to it by

- the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977,
- the Statutes of the International Red Cross,
- the Resolutions of the International Red Cross Conferences,
- its own Statutes and its tradition of more than a hundred years.

Article 6 of the *Statutes of the International Red Cross* gives the essential characteristics of the ICRC; they can be summed up as follows:

- the ICRC is an independent institution, and this independence is triply guaranteed by the fact that it is mononational, Swiss and formed by the co-optation of its members,
- the ICRC is the guardian of the fundamental principles of the Red Cross,

- the ICRC is responsible for the recognition of National Societies which fulfil the conditions laid down by the International Conference,
- the Geneva Conventions entrust specific tasks to the ICRC regarding the application of their provisions and any breaches thereof,
- the ICRC must give protection and assistance to civilian and military victims of wars, civil wars, internal strife and their direct consequences,
- the ICRC is entitled to take any humanitarian initiative in its capacity as a specifically neutral and independent institution and intermediary,
- the ICRC has a leading responsibility in the development and dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law,
- the International Conference may entrust mandates to the ICRC,
- the ICRC has the duty of maintaining close relations—in fields within its competence—with National Societies, governments and other authorities.

The present study will be confined to the limits set by these statutory provisions.

I. THE COUNCIL OF DELEGATES

Of the many subjects discussed by the Council of Delegates, the two which in our opinion merit particular attention are those of peace and of the emblem.

The Red Cross and Peace

The decision¹ taken on this subject by the Council of Delegates in Manila (Decision 1) is a success, but a procedural success which must not conceal the fact that a number of fundamental questions still have to be settled.

¹ The text of all the resolutions and decisions will be found in the *International Review of the Red Cross*, November-December 1981.

Let us take a look first at the successful aspects. Decision 1 of the Council of Delegates contains three points:

- the Commission on the Red Cross and Peace will continue its work in any case until 1983,
- the Council of Delegates will then devote a full day to consideration, of the Junior Red Cross Contribution to Peace,
- the Commission itself must by consensus make all proposals relative to its own future, in particular, to the Council of Delegates in 1983.

The fact that firstly the Commission and then the Council of Delegates were able to reach a consensus on these three points should be noted with satisfaction, for it represents a compromise calling for substantial sacrifices. The positive spirit in which these sacrifices were accepted deserves to be stressed.

This brings us to the important questions which were, however, left open by the third point in the Council's decision:

- will the Commission be continued after 1983 or not?
- if it is continued, what will be:
 - its nature (permanent or not)?
 - its mandate?
 - its duration?
 - its composition?
 - its proceedings?
- must a second Conference on the Red Cross and Peace be organized?

Only one of all these questions was partly answered by the Commission, which unanimously considered that if a second conference is organized it should take place within the framework of the statutory meetings of the Red Cross, probably the Council of Delegates.

Beneath the procedural aspect of these questions, however, there are basic and occasionally considerable divergences of opinion on the role which the Red Cross can or should play in promoting peace,¹ and that is where the difficulty lies.

It is therefore indispensable for the Commission to tackle these essential questions in debate within the next two years, with the hope of reaching an agreement by consensus on precise proposals, which

¹ See Jacques Moreillon: *The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross, Peace and Human Rights*, in *International Review of the Red Cross*, July-August 1980.

must then be submitted to the Council of Delegates. Failing a consensus on all points, the Commission must be able to clearly define the areas in which agreement could not be reached, in order to prepare as well as possible for the Council debate.

The ICRC is determined to play an active and constructive part in this dialogue. It will do so with an awareness of the importance of preserving the universality of a movement which evolves with the world around it. At the same time it will steadfastly maintain respect for the principles from which this movement derives its cohesion and which are the guarantee for its existence. Within the Red Cross the promotion of peace must not serve as a vehicle for any political ideology—yet the defence of neutrality must not be a pretext for inflexible thinking. It will draw its strength in this instance, and in others, not only from its determination to accomplish a set purpose, but also from the principles of the movement and the limits which they impose.

The Red Cross emblem

It will be recalled that the Bucharest Conference (1977) set up a Working Group to examine all questions relating to the emblem.¹

This Group was unable to reach an agreement on either the form or the substance of a recommendation, and the Council of Delegates was called upon to decide whether the Working Group should continue its deliberations. The ICRC President addressed the Council, explaining why the Committee felt that the continuation of its activities should be approved.²

The majority of the Council of Delegates did not endorse the attitude of the ICRC, and it was decided (Decision 2) that the discussions of the Working Group be terminated. This was an important decision, all the more so since the work of this group represented the first in-depth discussion of the problem by the movement as a whole. The ICRC can only take note of this majority decision concluding our movement's debate on the emblem.

¹ See further on in this Review the speech delivered by Mr. Hay as chairman of the Working Group on the Emblem.

² See further on in this Review the speech on the emblem delivered by Mr. Hay as President of the ICRC.

II. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

In his opening address the ICRC President ¹ drew attention to three points:

- the increase of indiscriminate violence,
- the politicization of the humanitarian domain,
- the role, the availability and the limitations of the Red Cross in the field of disarmament.

One of the main sources of satisfaction for the ICRC is that the Manila Conference, in its various resolutions, endorsed the ICRC's views on these three points. By so doing the movement demonstrated its determination and cohesion in domains which jeopardize not only its own future, but the very future of mankind.

We shall return to these subjects in the following analysis of the resolutions adopted by the Conference.

1. Resolutions relating to ICRC operations in the field

For the first time in an International Red Cross Conference, the ICRC Report on its activities was followed by seven resolutions, instead of the usual one or two, related to ICRC operations in the field (operational resolutions). This is simultaneously gratifying and regrettable, for whilst it is evidence of the greater importance attributed by the Conference to the ICRC's work, it also reflects the growing difficulties it is encountering in an increasingly violent world less and less inclined to respect the rules of humanity.

Operational resolutions on specific problems

Four specific problems with which the ICRC is confronted in its activities were the subject of resolutions by the Conference:

- identity discs for members of the armed forces (Resolution I),
- forced or involuntary disappearances (Resolution II),
- piracy (Resolution V),
- torture (Resolution XIV).

¹ See in this review p. 12.

The ICRC hopes that these resolutions will better enable it to accomplish its humanitarian objectives. Since these resolutions were adopted by all the States represented at the Conference, it is relying upon the governments who bear the prime responsibility for their implementation.

With regard to the identification of military personnel who died on the battlefields, it is surprising that governments send their soldiers into combat without taking the elementary precaution of providing each one with an identity disc enabling them to be identified in case they are killed. In recent conflicts the ICRC has in fact been faced with families unable to obtain confirmation of the death of a relative who has probably died in combat, but whose body has not been identified; this is not only a cause of emotional distress for the families concerned, but can also give rise to material problems (the impossibility to claim an inheritance or obtain a pension, for example), and they may suffer from the consequences for years.

With regard to forced or involuntary disappearances—a phenomenon of exceptional humanitarian gravity against which the ICRC is sometimes powerless to act—who can do more than the governments involved to ensure that such a resolution does not remain a dead letter?

With regard to piracy, it has always been, and still is, first and foremost the responsibility of the States to repress it with a severity proportionate to the heinous nature of this crime.

Finally, with regard to torture, the ICRC hopes that besides its own visits to prisoners and detainees, the community of States will adopt a convention against torture, with provisions for the effective supervision and enforcement of its application.

Operational resolutions on specific situations

Two resolutions were concerned with specific situations in which all or part of the Geneva Conventions are applicable:

- one relating to the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the territories occupied by the State of Israel (Resolution III),
- the other relating to the refusal to allow the ICRC access to victims of the armed conflicts of Western Sahara, Ogaden and Afghanistan (Resolution IV).

The ICRC voted in favour of these two resolutions, whilst stating its regret that the first did not include certain favourable aspects given in its Report on activities, on which the resolution was based.

Since the ICRC did not comment upon the second, which was submitted by the Red Cross Societies of Sweden ¹ and the Netherlands, neither in Commission I nor in the plenary sessions, it would like to take this opportunity of making known its opinion on this subject.

The ICRC Reports on its activities—whether annual or addressed to the Conference—give an account of what the ICRC can or cannot do in some situations to see that the Geneva Conventions are applied. They give the essential details of ICRC intervention vis-à-vis the conflicting parties and note the results—or absence of results.

For a century the International Conference confined itself to reaffirming, *in general terms*, the specific concerns of the ICRC. At Istanbul in 1969 the Conference changed its approach and declared that it shared the ICRC's concern in a *particular* situation, namely the respect by Israel of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This new practice was confirmed in Teheran in 1973 and in Bucharest in 1977.

In Manila the Conference took the same approach and extended it to cover three situations in which the ICRC had declared itself powerless to act.²

It was consequently on the basis of the ICRC Reports that the Conference,

- noting *the persistence of international or non-international armed conflicts in which the ICRC is partially or totally unable to fulfil its humanitarian tasks in situations covered by the Geneva Conventions,*
- deploring *in particular the fact that the ICRC is refused access to the captured combatants and detained civilians in the armed conflicts of Western Sahara, Ogaden and later on Afghanistan,*
- urges *all parties concerned to enable the International Committee of the Red Cross to protect and assist persons captured, detained, wounded or sick and civilians affected by these conflicts.*³

This is quite obviously a purely humanitarian resolution, which is confined to an appeal for the provisions of international humanitarian law to be respected so that the victims may receive the protection and assistance of the ICRC.

¹ See further in this review the address of the representative of the Swedish Red Cross.

² See further in this review the extract of the ICRC President's address to Commission I.

³ Resolution IV.

If it had been a question of non-conflict situations, which do not fall within the scope of the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC would not have voted for a resolution referring to one or more specific situations. In this case, however, not only do the Geneva Conventions apply, either wholly or in part, but also the ICRC—according to its own reports—is refused any access whatsoever to the victims. If in the circumstances the Conference had ignored these situations and had given its attention solely to the occupied territories of the Middle East, it would have shown partiality by neglecting in some cases what it would have stressed in another.

Thus in Istanbul in 1969 the International Conference for the first time adopted a practice in this domain which it confirmed in Teheran in 1973 and in Bucharest in 1977; in Manila it once again confirmed this practice, demonstrating that it was capable of maintaining it regardless of current political considerations. The ICRC, guardian of the fundamental principles of the Red Cross, can but rejoice.

Operational resolution of a general nature

Resolution VI relating to “Respect for international humanitarian law and for humanitarian principles and support for the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross” is extremely important for the ICRC.

Like the preceding resolutions, this resolution is based on the *Report on the Activities of the ICRC* and shares the Committee’s concern about the failure to respect the provisions of the Geneva Conventions or humanitarian principles; it notes and regrets the limits imposed upon the activities of the ICRC not only in situations covered by international humanitarian law, but also in “internal disturbances and tensions” in which Article 6 of the *Statutes of the International Red Cross* authorizes it to offer its services; finally, and most important, it *makes a solemn appeal that the rules of international humanitarian law and the universally recognized humanitarian principles be safeguarded at all times and in all circumstances and that the International Committee of the Red Cross be granted all the facilities necessary to discharge the humanitarian mandate confided to it by the international community.*

In adopting this resolution the International Conference echoed the fears expressed by the President of the ICRC concerning the politicization of the humanitarian domain and the increase of indiscriminate violence.

May this appeal be heard by all those to whom it is addressed, and may they then act accordingly.

2. Other resolutions

Several other resolutions adopted in Manila are very important from the point of view of the ICRC, namely:

— *the encouragement to ratify the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions (Resolution VII).*

In this resolution the International Conference reaffirms its interest in the development and universal acceptance of international humanitarian law. It invites the States which have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the two Protocols. It invites the ICRC, in co-operation with the National Societies, to pursue its efforts to promote knowledge and universal acceptance of the two Protocols.

— *the identification of medical transport (Resolution VIII).*

This resolution is intended to improve the safety and rapidity of medical evacuations in armed conflicts. It requests the governments to approach the relevant international organizations to ensure that ships and aircraft of neutral States have adequate means of identification when assisting the wounded, the sick and the shipwrecked.

It invites governments to see in peacetime to the necessary co-ordination to improve the removal of the wounded, the sick and the shipwrecked in time of armed conflict.

— *conventional weapons (Resolution IX).*

In this resolution the Conference refers with satisfaction to the adoption in 1980 of a Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects and of its annexed Protocols, and invites States to become parties to these instruments and to apply them.

It appeals to governments to exercise the utmost care in the development of small-calibre weapons, so as to avoid an escalation in the injurious effects caused by such weapons.

It invites the ICRC to follow these questions and to keep the next International Conference informed.

— *the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law and of the Red Cross principles and ideals (Resolution X).*

This resolution reminds governments of their obligation to disseminate knowledge of the principles of international humanitarian law in the various circles concerned, encourages the establishment of

joint committees to disseminate this knowledge and consisting of representatives of the appropriate ministries and of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, invites National Societies, in co-operation with the ICRC, the League and the Henry Dunant Institute, to train national officials to be responsible for dissemination, and asks the ICRC and the League to help National Societies to draw up and implement dissemination programmes.

— *international courses on the law of war (Resolution XI).*

This resolution reaffirms the necessity to familiarize members of the armed forces with the Geneva Conventions and asks the ICRC to organize international courses on these Conventions each year, or as often as possible; it requests States to send lawyers and officers of their armed forces to attend these courses and recommends that governments organize within their countries courses on the Geneva Conventions which will be conducted by instructors having followed the international courses organized by the ICRC.

— *revision of the regulations on the use of the emblem (Resolution XII).*

In this resolution the ICRC is requested to prepare a draft revision of these regulations for the next International Conference, in co-operation with the League and the National Societies. Experience has in fact shown that since 1965 the regulations could be improved in a certain number of points, and that the adoption in 1977 of the Protocols requires an adaptation of these regulations for the National Societies of States which have become parties to the Protocols.

— *promoting Red Cross: joint efforts of the ICRC and the League (Resolution XVI).*

This resolution encourages the ICRC and the League to continue their joint efforts to make known to the public at large the international nature and scope of Red Cross activities.

— *the role of voluntary service in the Red Cross (Resolution XIX).*

In this resolution the International Conference addresses to the National Societies, the League, the governments and the Henry Dunant Institute, several recommendations which are designed to promote voluntary service in the Red Cross and increase its efficiency in responding to the present-day needs of society. The Henry Dunant Institute is invited to submit its study to the next International Conference.

— *development of National Societies in the context of national development plans (Resolution XXV).*

In this resolution the governments and other governmental and non-governmental organizations are invited to co-operate with the Red Cross movement, to support its efforts to develop independent and capable National Societies in all countries.

It is of course for the League to comment on this resolution.

3. Other subjects discussed

Other resolutions were also adopted in Manila. We shall consider them here in the light of the present evaluation and prospects of the movement.

Disarmament; weapons of mass destruction and respect for non-combatants

With regard to procedure, the Manila debate must serve as a lesson of what to avoid at any future conference: it was a simultaneous and, let us admit it, very summary discussion of such important subjects as peace, disarmament, weapons of mass destruction and respect for non-combatants.

Some would prefer it if none of these subjects were raised by the International Conference. Yet the majority evidently want to have them discussed to some extent or other. In these circumstances, and since the debate is inevitable, any attempt to prevent it would only result in majority votes which would weaken the entire movement—whatever the majorities may be—and have the opposite effect of what was intended. There must therefore be better preparation of these questions, in some way or another, before discussing them at the next International Conference.

In Manila some draft resolutions submitted to Commission I were discussed and rejected by a vote. Others could not even be discussed, mainly for lack of time.

These draft resolutions—one submitted by the National Societies of Finland, France, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, the German Federal Republic and Yugoslavia and another proposed by the Government and Red Cross of Yugoslavia¹—are included for reference in an appendix to this analysis, for we feel that they provide a basis for future discussion on the subject of Red Cross and Peace.

One favourable point merits particular attention. By adopting—with several abstentions—the text submitted by the ICRC on “disarma-

¹ See further in this review the text of the draft resolutions.

ment, weapons of mass destruction and respect for non-combatants” (Resolution XIII), the Manila Conference took a step in the right direction in response to the appeal addressed to it by the ICRC President in his opening speech. Let us hope that governments will take this into account in other fora as well, and in their negotiations and discussions on disarmament.

Red Cross aid to refugees

The resolution on International Red Cross aid to refugees (Resolution XXI) has historic importance for the movement. It is in fact the first time that the Red Cross not only defines its role for the care of refugees, but also gives directives on how these activities should be conducted both within the movement (National Societies, League and ICRC) and outside, particularly vis-à-vis the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In its preamble this resolution

- restates the fundamental mission of the Red Cross as summarized in its principle of humanity,
- stresses the magnitude of the refugee problem, the governments’ responsibility towards them, the primary role of the UNHCR, and the possibilities available to the Red Cross to provide emergency aid for them and for displaced persons,
- reaffirms the Red Cross intent to support and collaborate with the UNHCR, and lastly,
- adopts a statement of policy for International Red Cross aid to refugees.

This statement of policy is extremely detailed and covers ten points:

- on one hand the conflict situations in which refugees are to be protected under international humanitarian law, and on the other hand the situations in which displaced persons, returnees or refugees cannot, in fact, benefit from any protection or assistance other than that of the Red Cross;
- the principles which must govern National Society actions in this field, actions which are normally of an auxiliary character;
- the need to take due account, in assistance programmes, of the comparable needs of the local population and to try and limit the presence of the Red Cross to the actual emergency period;

- the information and consultation procedure which must obviously exist among the National Societies, the League, ICRC and UNHCR, particularly when agreements are envisaged;
- the efforts to be made with governments for the resettlement of refugees;
- the specific roles of the ICRC and its Central Tracing Agency.

Financing of the ICRC

The question of ICRC financing had been discussed at all previous International Conferences. In Manila, however, it was particularly prominent in view of the substantial increase in the ordinary account expenditure of the ICRC, which rose from 22.6 million Swiss francs in 1977 (Bucharest) to 38.7 million Swiss francs in 1981, owing to a corresponding increase in ICRC activities.

Two resolutions on finance of the ICRC were adopted by the Twenty-fourth Conference. One, Resolution XVII, asks all governments to provide the ICRC with sufficient financial resources and recommends that they create a specific budget appropriation for this purpose. It also renews the mandate of the Commission for the Financing of the ICRC, to which nine National Societies belong.

The other, Resolution XVIII, which concerns the financing of the ICRC by the National Societies, was approved after a long debate in Commission II. The reason for this prolonged and animated debate was the inclusion in the text, unlike previous resolutions, of a proposed basis for calculation of contributions by the National Societies, namely that they should together cover 10% of the ICRC's regular budget.

The resolution which was finally adopted is satisfactory for several reasons: firstly it reaffirms the solidarity binding the ICRC and the National Societies; it also encourages the latter to support the ICRC in its negotiations with their governments, and it establishes a link between the total contributions of the National Societies and the ICRC's regular budget. It now remains to hope that all Societies, including those which stressed the voluntary nature of their contributions, will do their utmost to reach the targets they have set themselves.

Joint Commission on National Society Statutes

The appearance of new States on the international stage is logically accompanied by an increase in the number of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. We are glad to see this steady extension of our

movement, for it is a gratifying reflection of its universality. At the same time the formation of new Societies in countries with different cultural traditions, different social, economic and political systems, inevitably entails greater responsibilities for the two international Red Cross institutions, whose duty it naturally is to see that the cohesion of the International Red Cross is maintained.

This cohesion is ensured by Resolution XI of the Seventeenth International Conference (Stockholm, 1948), which lays down the conditions for recognition of new National Societies, and by Article 6 of the Constitution of the League of Red Cross Societies, which determines the conditions of admission to the federation.

With the intention of ensuring consistent compliance with these conditions by all member Societies of the International Red Cross, the Twenty-second International Conference (Teheran, 1973) requested all Societies wishing to amend their statutes to submit the proposed amendments to the League and the ICRC, and to take their recommendations into account (Resolution VI). The Joint League-ICRC Commission on National Society Statutes was then formed. In the years that followed, the Commission did not confine its activities to examining proposed statute amendments. It also dealt with requests for recognition and admission by new Societies and advised the latter in drawing up their constitutional documents.

In Manila the Twenty-fourth Conference formally approved the Commission's work (Resolution XX), and invited it to collaborate in the League's Development Programme by helping, where required, Societies seeking recognition to organize themselves in accordance with the basic principles and the conditions for recognition. It finally asked the National Societies which plan to amend their statutes to continue their collaboration with the Joint Commission by communicating the proposed amendments to the League and the ICRC.

Role of medical personnel in the preparation and execution of Red Cross emergency medical action

This resolution (Resolution XXVI) concerns the ICRC and the League and National Societies, for its purpose is to improve the efficiency of Red Cross emergency medical action for victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters.

The experience acquired in emergency medical action should be used for the training of future volunteers; the ICRC and the League, on the strength of such experience, should assist National Societies

wishing to participate in international emergency actions by providing the basic elements for their training programmes.

Use on the decision-making level of members of the health professions familiar with work in the field will also be conducive to the planning of activities well adapted to the needs and directly useful to the victims we want to help.

International Year of Disabled Persons

In the International Year of Disabled Persons it is satisfying to note that the Red Cross movement, which has developed a genuine tradition in this field, has reaffirmed its commitment to this cause (Resolution XXVII). By its very principles the Red Cross is duty bound to continue its efforts for the rehabilitation of people mutilated in war and of other disabled persons.

By suggesting the creation of a special fund for the disabled, an implicit reminder is given that efforts to help them must continue even once the year is past, and that the financial resources needed for these efforts must be assured. Let us hope that this appeal also will be heard !

4. Protection of the civilian population against the effects of hostilities

There is one question which was not the subject of a resolution, and yet it is one of very special importance for the ICRC and was stressed by its President in his report to Commission I, namely the respect of the civilian population and their protection against the effects of hostilities.

As is generally known, provisions to this effect are contained in the 1977 Protocols. What the ICRC wanted to do in Manila was to stress once again that the parties to a conflict must at all times distinguish between civilian population and civilian property on one hand and military combatants and military objectives on the other. The civilian population as such, individual civilians and property of a civilian nature should not be attacked or used to shield combatants or military objectives from attack.

The parties must, moreover, take every possible precaution in all circumstances to avoid or minimise civilian losses or damage. They

must also refrain from any attacks which may be expected to cause losses or damage which would be excessive in relation to the immediate military advantage anticipated.

The ICRC intends to reaffirm these provisions whenever necessary, and reserves the right to take any steps liable to guarantee or improve respect for them.

5. The next International Red Cross Conference

The next International Red Cross Conference will be held in Geneva in 1986. It will be the task of the Standing Commission to draft the agenda, but a number of comments, based on our experience in Manila, can already be made for future reference.

It would be desirable for governments to be more closely associated in the preparation and smooth running of the conference, particularly in the subjects and commissions of most direct interest for them.

The next Council of Delegates, which will probably meet in 1983, should have more time for its work, quite apart from the day planned to be devoted to the Red Cross and Peace. In Manila the Council of Delegates' agenda was so full, as it was incidentally in Bucharest in 1977, that the Council could do little more than take note of the reports submitted to it. This should be taken into account for the Councils of Delegates held between two International Conferences.

One subject was mentioned once or twice, but never really fully discussed during the Conference, namely the part played by the Red Cross in promoting respect for human rights. This is a fairly new aspect, which merits thorough consideration and discussion by the entire movement. It would for example be useful to try and define before the next International Conference whether the various component parts of the Red Cross can help to promote respect for human rights, and if so, which rights and by what means. Initial consideration of this subject should take place between the ICRC and the League. Any such consideration must, however, like that of the Red Cross contribution to peace, make due allowance not only for the changing world in which our movement pursues its activities, but also for the limitations inherent in the objectives and means of the Red Cross in general and of its various component parts in particular, for these limitations are all too real.

6. Gratitude

The role of the host Society in making an International Conference a success can never be emphasized enough. It would be unthinkable to mention the Manila Conference without repeating our profound gratitude to the Philippine Red Cross, to which we all owe so much. It is largely due to the efforts of this National Society that the Twenty-fourth International Red Cross Conference will remain memorable for each and every one of us, for its organization, the conclusions reached and the spirit which prevailed.

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