



SUPPLEMENT

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ET

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DES SOCIÉTÉS
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT HO-CHI-MINH

The ICRC, under the signature of Vice-President J. Chenevière, broadcast the following message twice, on March 22 and 23, 1951, to President Ho-Chi-Minh :

“ The ICRC, in Geneva, refers to the urgent letters it addressed to President Ho-Chi-Minh on November 25, 1949, and November 30, 1950. These letters were handed to representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the first at Bangkok, the second at Bangkok and Rangoon.

“ The ICRC desires to inform President Ho-Chi-Minh that it has collected medical supplies for the use of victims of the present situation. These supplies are now due at Hanoi, where they will be in the charge of two of the Committee's Delegates, M. W. Aeschlimann and Dr. Alain Daulte. These Delegates are prepared, in the name of the ICRC, to assist prisoners, internees and civilians in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, and have been instructed to discuss with the authorities and Red Cross organization of Democratic Vietnam how best they can arrange to do so.

“ The Committee therefore earnestly requests President Ho-Chi-Minh to issue instructions which would allow contact to be made in the very near future and lead to practical results.

“ The Committee attaches the greatest importance to establishing with the authorities and Red Cross of Democratic Vietnam, the relations which are necessary for the relief of the victims of the present events ”.

* * *

On his way back to Geneva from Peking, M. Paul Ruegger, President of the International Committee, called at Hanoi and Rangoon. In both these cities he left a message to the address of President Ho-Chi-Minh, stating that a large consignment of medical supplies, a gift of the ICRC, was due to arrive at Hanoi. The supplies are for the use of civilians, prisoners of war, and the wounded and sick, and are to be forwarded wherever President Ho-Chi-Minh indicates. The operation will be supervised by Dr. Roland Marti, Medical Counsellor to the ICRC, who took part in the mission to Peking.

M. Ruegger, renewing the message broadcast by the Swiss Radio on March 22 and 23 and repeated by the French Radio on March 26, expressed the hope that all facilities would be accorded both by President Ho-Chi-Minh and the French Authorities to ensure the success of the operation, and added: "I rely on the humanitarian spirit of both parties, whom I address in the name of the International Committee of the Red Cross".

The message was again repeated by the Swiss short-wave service on April 1 and 2, 1951.

*MESSAGE OF THE ICRC TO
THE SIAMESE RED CROSS SOCIETY
(April 1, 1951)*

On the occasion of Thai Red Cross Day, I am happy to convey to the Siamese Red Cross the warmest greetings of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Our Committee, founded in Geneva in 1863, which had the privilege a year later of initiating the Red Cross and of seeing since then our common ideal spreading throughout the world, takes joy and pride in the efforts, achievements and development of the Siamese Red Cross. A few weeks ago, thanks to the kindness of H.R.H. Prince Chumbot and his able assistants, I had the privilege of visiting the headquarters and hospital of the Red Cross Society of Siam. The members of my mission and I myself were deeply impressed not only by the achievements and the program of your National Red Cross Society, but above all by the true spirit of charity and human solidarity which inspires its work. As was so eloquently recalled by H.M. Queen Rambhai Barni in her broadcast message a year ago, the contacts between the International Committee and its delegates, and the Siamese Red Cross have been close, in war and in peace. They will remain so in future, at a time when the Red Cross can achieve so much by its patient service of brotherhood, in promoting the cause of understanding between the nations.

In the hope that Siam will soon also adhere to the revised and new Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims, thereby renewing the pledge of the Siamese people to the Red Cross ideal, I express our heartfelt wishes for the ever greater progress of the Siamese Red Cross Society.

(Signed) Paul Ruegger.

PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF INTEREST IN MARCH

Mission to the Far East. — The ICRC mission composed of the President and M^{me} Paul Ruegger, M. Alfred Escher, Personal Adviser to the President, and Dr. Roland Marti, Medical Adviser, reached Peking on March 14, the fifth member, Dr. Charles Bessero, Medical Delegate, remaining at Hong Kong.

China. — During its stay at Peking, from March 14 to 22, the ICRC mission had full discussions with M^{me} Li-Teh-Chuan, Minister of Health and President of the Chinese Red Cross, and with the Committee of the Society.

The President of the ICRC also had a long exchange of views with M. Chou-en-Lai, Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs of the People's Republic.

Vietnam. — The mission broke its journey at Hanoi and Rangoon. In both, M. Ruegger left a new message to the address of President Ho-Chi-Minh, to inform him that a consignment of valuable medical supplies, a gift of the ICRC, was due to arrive at Hanoi for the benefit of civilians, prisoners of war, and the wounded and sick. Dr. Roland Marti, Medical Adviser, who was with the mission, joined the ICRC Delegation which is at present at Hanoi, in order to supervise disposal of the supplies.

M. Ruegger also met General de Lattre de Tassigny and M. Huard, Chairman of the Hanoi Committee of the French Red Cross.

Siam. — At Bangkok, a visit was paid to the Siamese Red Cross, whose President is H.M. Queen Sawang Wadhana, and Vice-President H.R.H. Prince Chumbothongs Paribatra. In the company of Prince Chumbothongs, the Secretary-General, Phya Srivisar, and the ICRC Delegate, M. Salzmann, M. Ruegger visited the headquarters and hospital of the Siamese Red Cross at Bangkok.

Burma. — At Rangoon, M. Ruegger met Sir Ba U, President of the Burmese Red Cross.

India. — At New Delhi, M. Ruegger met the Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, and Madame Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, President of the Indian Red Cross and Minister of Public Health.

Pakistan. — At Karachi, the President met the Secretary for External Affairs, M. Ikramullah, and made contact with the Pakistan Red Cross.

Greece. — In Athens, M. Ruegger met M. Georgacopoulo, President of the Greek Red Cross.

Italy. — In Rome, M. Ruegger met Professor Mario Longhena, President of the Italian Red Cross, and Dr. Minnucci; he was also received by the Swiss Minister, M. Enrico Celio.

The mission returned to Geneva on April 4. M. Ruegger held a Press conference at headquarters on April 9, during which he explained the purpose of the mission and outlined the results. A detailed account of the Press conference will be found below.

* * *

Mission to the United States. — M. R. Gallopin, Executive Director, and M. Max Wolf, Counsellor, were in the United States on mission, between January 30 and March 23, and made contact with the American Red Cross and Governmental representatives.

Korea. — Delegates in Korea visited the female prisoners' compound of Camp No. 1 at Pusan on February 24; on March 3, the Sub-Camp of Camp No. 1, and, the same day, the 14th Field Hospital at Pusan. Official permission having been received to visit the prisons and see the detainees, visits were made on March 10 and 14 to the Civilian Prisons of Taegu and Pusan.

Burma. — On February 21, the Delegate in Burma visited Japanese military personnel detained in Rangoon Central Prison.

Greece. — On February 28, 1951, the Yugoslav Red Cross informed the Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies that it was ready to repatriate a second group of Greek children who had been claimed by their parents in Greece. A joint Delegate of the Committee and the League left at once and was present at the Greek frontier on March 14, when fifty-four of the children entered Greece. He accompanied them to Salonika, where they were accommodated for the moment in a home, and then handed over in his presence to their parents.

The Committee's Delegate in Greece visited the Averov Prison at Athens on February 15 and 28.

"Volksdeutsche". — The re-grouping of families is continuing. By March 31, 43,587 "Volksdeutsche" and Eastern Germans from Poland had been registered at Friedland Transit Camp. On March 16, the 45th "Volksdeutsche" convoy passed through Furth im Wald Camp, bringing to 16,099 the number of those who had come through from Czechoslovakia to join relatives in Germany.

As previously, a certain quantity of relief was issued to whose most in need in the two camps.

Relief to "Volksdeutsche". — Further sums were transferred to the German Red Cross at Hamburg and Munich to continue relief to "Volksdeutsche" from Poland and Czechoslovakia.

The German Red Cross at Hamburg received 25,000 DM for making up parcels of toilet articles, as well as 372,800 razor blades and 6,120 tooth brushes, to a total value of 8,000 Swiss francs, for inclusion in parcels to be issued in Friedland camp.

At Munich, 15,000 DM were given for the purchase and issue of clothing in Furth im Wald Camp and 5,000 DM for issue in cash to German ex-prisoners arriving in the camp in a destitute condition.

Germany. — The Berlin Delegation was asked by the Children's Relief Section of the Swiss Red Cross to arrange a convoy of pre-tuberculous children in Berlin. Under the auspices of the Society, thirty children from the Western Sectors, chosen by the Society's doctor, will be given a four-months stay in Swiss Red Cross sanatoriums and preventoriums.

In March, the Delegation received three kilos of streptomycin, a gift of the Swiss Relief Fund for Europe ; it was used for children with tubercular meningitis in Eastern Germany.

The Delegation also handed the Public Health authorities in Eastern Germany, for issue in the hospitals, a series of new pharmaceutical products, including aureomycin and hydergin.

War Invalids. — Amongst relief given by the War Invalid Section during the month of March were ten mechanical chairs for disabled war invalids—six Italian and four Greek.

* * *

Visitors. — On March 13, M. César Charles Solamito, Counsellor of Legation, and Private Counsellor to H.R.H. Prince Rainier III of Monaco, visited the ICRC, and, on March 21, M. Tsatsos, Counsellor to the Greek Red Cross.

PRESS CONFERENCE, GENEVA, APRIL 9, 1951

*STATEMENT BY M. PAUL RUEGGER
PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC)*

(1) I should like to speak to you about my recent mission to the Far East, under the following headings :

- (a) My visit to the Chinese Red Cross, which was approved and encouraged by the Central People's Government in Peking, and its Prime Minister, Mr. Chou-en-Lai.
- (b) The efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross to assist victims of the war in Korea, particularly in North Korea.
- (c) The steps taken, as always on purely humanitarian lines, during my return journey for assistance to victims of the hostilities in Vietnam.
- (d) Finally, my visits to the Red Cross Societies and Governments of countries of Asia signatories to the revised and new Geneva Conventions, or in sympathy with the Red Cross movement.

(2) First of all, I should like to speak about questions regarding specifically China and the Chinese Red Cross.

On January 5, I cabled, in the name of the International Committee at Geneva, to the North Korean Minister, offering, as you know—and this was an unprecedented step—to go myself and meet the North Korean Government, in order to discuss with them, in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, ways and means of protecting the victims of war in Korea, prisoners of war, the sick and wounded of the armies in the field, and civilians. As a matter for discussion, I suggested again—as the International Committee had already done in July, 1950—the creation of safety zones for the protection of

civilian non-combatants (children, women and old people), and referred to the safety zones created in Palestine by the Geneva Committee, which undoubtedly saved thousands.

The Chinese Government and the Chinese Red Cross had been made aware of my offer. In a cable to Mr. Chou-en-Lai, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs in Peking, I had stressed that, *in any event*, whatever the decisions of the North Korean Government might be, the ICRC and I attached the greatest importance to personal contacts with the Chinese Red Cross and the Chinese Government. Naturally, the Presidency of the Chinese Red Cross was similarly informed.

(3) I must state that both the Chinese Government and, previously, the Government of the Soviet Union, to which I had appealed as the Governments of States neighbouring on North Korea, had declared their inability to exercise pressure on the North Korean Government, considered as a Government of a sovereign State, with a view to its acceptance of ICRC missions in North Korea, for the discharge of the Committee's traditional wartime activities.

(4) However, the Chinese Government and the Prime Minister personally had accepted my proposal of a visit to the Chinese capital. The importance of personal contacts between the ICRC, as founder organization of the Red Cross, and the Chinese Red Cross, is obvious, and was well worth the effort of a journey to Peking.

The object of the proposed mission was to discuss with the Chinese Red Cross and the Chinese Government questions of mutual concern to the ICRC, the Chinese Red Cross and the Chinese Government.

(5) I am happy to say that, along these lines, the talks between my mission and the Chinese Red Cross, presided over and led in a most active manner by Madame Li-Teh-Chuan, Health Minister in the Central People's Government in Peking, have been *most satisfactory*. We covered together, and in a constructive spirit, the whole ground of Red Cross work of

mutual and of general interest. We frankly explained our views; we registered the suggestions and proposals made by the Chinese Red Cross in Peking.

(6) I have already informed you about the very positive attitude of China as regards the revised and new Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949. Not only has there been not the slightest sign of unwillingness to accept the principles embodied in these Conventions—as has been most erroneously and regrettably stated in uncontrolled press reports—but the desire has been formally expressed, on behalf of those concerned, that the Geneva Conventions should receive, as soon as possible, universal approval and application. (As you know, these Conventions have been ratified, until now, by eight of the 61 signatories, France and India being the first and, so far, only large States to have announced their ratification.)

Under the personal impulse of Madame Li-Teh-Chuan, President of the Red Cross and Health Minister in Peking, the considerable work of translating the four revised and new Geneva Conventions into Chinese, has already been completed in draft—a most promising fact.

In general, I found in China very great interest regarding the preparatory legal work carried out, during recent years, by the International Committee in Geneva, and as regards recent and previous publications of our Committee. It will be our endeavour to assist the Chinese Red Cross in establishing in Peking one of the most complete and up-to-date Red Cross libraries in Asia, and to help, as far as possible, in the diffusion of Red Cross principles.

(7) During our talks in Peking, our mission was fully informed about the program, present activities and endeavours of the Chinese Red Cross. Following the events of the last years, this Society has passed through a period of reorganization. It felt it had to concentrate, at first, on interior problems of assistance and Red Cross work within the vast country of China. Local branches and chapters are being developed under the impulse of the President, Madame Li. We have been

informed that the Red Cross idea is spreading also in the groups of the Junior Red Cross.

A great task of the Red Cross is assistance following natural calamities, like floods and drought. Vast stand-by organizations are said to be developed. The principle that guides the Chinese Red Cross— this was explained by the Vice-Chairman— is that of self-help. Nevertheless, I could not but feel personally that in future years, there might be here a field of action for international solidarity, not in the form of outside assistance, but in that of a sort of “international insurance”, as contemplated already in the Statutes of the “International Relief Union”, created by an international Convention, signed in Geneva in 1927, at the suggestion of the Italian Senator Giovanni Ciraolo.

I felt myself—and still feel—that the continued existence of this Convention must be defended (as I have endeavoured to do), also against the efforts at simplification of the United Nations and the Economic and Social Council, who, so far, have made no constructive proposal for continuing the program of this institution, which might be beneficial indeed, and the underlying idea of which has been felt as a necessity, recently expressed again, though in a different form, in the program of the British Labour Party, published in 1950.

I may recall that, under the Statutes of the International Red Cross, mutual assistance, following natural calamities, is within the scope of the International Committee, as well as of the League of Red Cross Societies.

Having heard about the present endeavours of the Chinese Red Cross, in which, naturally, the ICRC takes the greatest interest, as in duty bound under its Statutes, our mission, for its part, informed the Chinese Red Cross about our recent and present activities in the field, particularly in the continent of Asia—our work, for instance, during the hostilities in Indonesia, in Vietnam, as well as in Palestine; also the relief activities carried out in the spirit of the Statutes of the International Red Cross, together with the League of Red Cross Societies and the Society of Friends—for the benefit of the homeless civilian refugee population in Palestine; finally, the recently

concluded work of four ICRC medical teams, sent out to Bengal at the formal request of the Governments of India and Pakistan.

We have given proofs—and I consider this as most essential—that the activities in the field of the International Committee, as founder organization of the Red Cross, have been, and are carried out in a spirit of absolute neutrality—which is guaranteed by the composition of our Committee—but also with complete impartiality; that we never cease to invoke the universality of the Red Cross; that we act in entire independence of every State, and every association of States, even the United Nations.

We of course amply discussed the problem of Korea; to this I shall refer presently.

Here and now, I will only state that the impartial, neutral independent position of the ICRC has been fully understood in Peking.

(8) Together with the Chinese Red Cross, my mission examined ways and means of rendering closer—as is our mutual, earnest desire—existing ties between the Red Cross Society of China and the International Committee in Geneva. We have agreed to make every endeavour to reach this end.

Our exchanges of views on Red Cross matters will become more extensive and more frequent.

My invitation, extended to the Board of the Chinese Red Cross, to send one of its members or senior officials to our headquarters in Geneva, has been accepted in principle. We shall welcome, when the time comes, this guest from China, as we have welcomed those representatives of Red Cross Societies (in the last place, a member of the Iraqi Red Crescent) who, working with us, will become more familiar with the intricacies of Red Cross work in the international field.

The Chinese Red Cross knows further that we shall always welcome—and most warmly—Red Cross missions they may wish to send to Geneva.

Finally, we examined the possibility of strengthening our delegation in China. Nothing is more erroneous and regrettable than the press information saying that China had refused admission to a delegation of our Committee. As a matter of

fact, the International Committee has relied, also during the last years, on the services of a honorary delegation in Shanghai, whose office is always open. We are considering now the possibility of appointing a full-time delegate to the Chinese Red Cross in Peking, and feel assured that this proposal will find a sympathetic response, although final arrangements have not yet been made on either side. In the meantime, the ICRC is prepared to send one of its members or leading officials to Peking on a temporary special mission.

(9) Questions of mutual interest to China and the ICRC are too numerous to allow of detailed specification. I should like to mention, however, the earnest request of the Japanese Red Cross for early repatriation of some 300 Japanese nurses, stated to be still in China. My request on behalf of the Japanese Red Cross has had a sympathetic hearing. The case of these nurses is under survey; I have been assured of earnest consideration of my application, though it is stated that some of these nurses are willing to continue their work in charitable institutions in China.

Similarly, I have put before the Chinese Red Cross, as before the Chinese Government, the question of the return to Japan of Japanese subjects (former military personnel), who are stated to be still in China. This request has been made in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions.

* * *

(10) I finally should like to aid, under this heading of my report on my Red Cross mission to China, that I feel more convinced than ever of the great importance for the International Red Cross to be able to count on the expression, within the framework of our organization, of the ideas of human solidarity which are part of the heritage of the ancient and always revived Chinese civilization. We all need the contributions of the thought and heart of Asia.

I repeat—formally denying all reports to the contrary—that my contacts and talks in Peking with the Presidency and

the Board of the Chinese Red Cross have been most encouraging. An atmosphere of mutual understanding and confidence has been indeed established.

II

(11) As regards the endeavours of the ICRC in Korea, which started on the day after the outbreak of hostilities, I refer to the long series of public communications already issued by the International Committee.

The ICRC has sent 24 cables to the North Korean Government, offering its services and recalling the essential principles of the Geneva Conventions. It has made, it is universally known, countless endeavours, as in duty bound, with a view to sending delegates to Korea, to visit prisoners of war, and carry relief to the victims of hostilities in general. These endeavours were not only in conformity with the almost ninety-year-old traditions of the Geneva Committee; they were all the more necessary, the more indispensable in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions, as neither the North Korean nor the South Korean Governments have felt able to appeal to the services of neutral States, to act as "Protecting Powers" under the terms of the Geneva Conventions. The International Committee has done its best, and will continue to do its best.

(12) First of all, a few plain figures and facts. The Central Prisoners of War Agency in Geneva, instituted by the ICRC, has received from United Command in South Korea and transmitted to the adverse party 91,000 names of prisoners of war and deceased who had enlisted in the North Korean forces. The ICRC delegates, admitted to visit the North Korean prisoners of war and the Chinese volunteers fighting under North Korean colours, are regularly sending reports to Geneva, according to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

On the other hand, the North Korean Government has, so far, forwarded to Geneva two lists, including the names of 110

prisoners of war. Until now, despite repeated and earnest efforts, a record of which will be published in due course, no ICRC delegate has been able to get into touch with the prisoners of war taken by the North Korean Authorities.

(13) The disproportion is obvious. It has determined the International Committee to authorise its President to offer to go himself to North Korea, in order to discuss the application of the Geneva Convention relative to prisoners of war, as also a problem of primary importance—the protection of civilian non-combatants through the establishment of safety zones.

This message remained without response from North Korea, though it was stated that a reply could reach the President's mission during its stay in China. It has been repeated twice: on January 24, and again on March 19 by the International Committee in Geneva, during the stay of my mission in Peking.

In spite of this most deplorable silence, *I declare that the International Committee at Geneva is ready at any time, to send an authoritative representative to examine impartially and to discuss with the North Korean authorities and the North Korean Red Cross all feasible measures for the protection of war-victims, in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions.*

We earnestly believe, today as yesterday, that this is in the interest of the suffering Korean people as a whole, as well as of the prisoners of war in North Korean hands, and of all war-victims in that country.

* * *

(14) The ICRC has been informed, as previously stated, that the Government of China did not feel able to interfere with the sovereign decisions of the North Korean Government in this respect.¹ Also, the mission of the ICRC to Peking was not primarily called upon to bring up matters outside the range of the most important direct relations between the

¹ Similar statements had been made also on behalf of the Government of the USSR.

Geneva Committee, on the one hand, and the Chinese Red Cross and the Chinese Government, on the other.

However, the precise wording of the revised and new Geneva Conventions—in which China takes the greatest interest—provides for the possibility of action by Red Cross Societies and other welfare organizations. We have therefore requested the Chinese Red Cross—this also is an unprecedented step—to act for us as far as circumstances allow, and, at all events, in the Red Cross spirit which surely animates the Red Cross Society of China.

(15) We have been officially informed that the Chinese Red Cross Society wishes our Committee to exercise, as soon as possible, its traditional duties. It is only in the meantime, and at our explicit request, that the Chinese Red Cross is willing to act for us, and—I am sure of this—in the same Red Cross spirit which is ours.

We have therefore requested the Chinese Red Cross :

- (a) To distribute, on our behalf, the medicaments brought on our plane and those subsequently sent to Hongkong, to the war-victims in North Korea, wounded and sick of the armies in the field, prisoners of war and civilians, in equal proportions. Upon receipt of the usual reports which will be doubtless forthcoming, further medicaments will be sent by us to the Chinese Red Cross for war-victims in Korea.¹

I wish to add, in this connexion, that the International Committee in Geneva—knowing that the Hungarian Red Cross was able to convey relief to North Korea—had already sent to the latter, from its own funds, medicaments to the value of 50,000 francs in Switzerland—a value which is multiplied in the Far East. We expect from the Hungarian Red Cross a detailed report on the distribution of these stores to the various categories of war-victims protected by the Geneva Conventions.

¹ When we left Peking, this question was under consideration ; after our return to Geneva we communicated again with the North Korean Redcross on this subject.

The new gift, to be issued through the agency of the Chinese Red Cross, represents essentially a donation from the Swiss Federal Government for the war-victims in Korea, completed by an important contribution of the ICRC itself.

- (b) I have also requested the assistance of the Chinese Red Cross for the transmission of the *correspondence of war-victims*. The right to correspond is an essential solace for all war-victims, prisoners of war, civilians and their families. The work which has been traditionally carried out in this respect by the ICRC and its Central Agency in Geneva has received further confirmation in the Geneva Conventions. Here again, Red Cross Societies can assist the International Committee—pending possibility for the latter to act itself in North Korea, according to its traditions—and I have requested the Chinese Red Cross to assist us.

Practical ways and means to this end are under consideration. On our behalf, I have stated verbally and in writing that the ICRC was willing and anxious to organize a temporary relay station in non-belligerent territory in the Far-East, for instance at Macao, where it might be possible to centralize and exchange the messages of prisoners of war and civilians, coming, on the one hand, from South Korea and Japan, and, on the other, through the intermediary of the Chinese Red Cross, from North Korea.

We have particularly drawn the attention of the Chinese Red Cross to the system of the 25-word civilian message. Sent by millions during the last World War, on the initiative of Geneva, these have reassured countless families as to the whereabouts of their dispersed members.

I most earnestly hope that it will be possible to work along these lines in a near future.

- (c) We have also, verbally and in writing, asked the Chinese Red Cross to be, in the present circumstances, our intermediary in the search for official and private persons who are missing in North Korea, some of them since the out-

break of hostilities (for instance, the British Minister in Seoul, the Anglican Bishop, the French Chargé d'Affaires and his assistant, as well as a number of religious and other persons whose names have been handed in).

- (d) We have put forward the proposal—always pending the expected possibility for us to act ourselves—that the Chinese Red Cross should assist us in the transmission of food parcels to prisoners of war in North Korea.

We have further suggested that these food parcels should be sent and perhaps stocked in the same way as the medicaments brought by us, and sent for the benefit of the war-victims in North Korea.

- (e) We have offered to make, if required, every endeavour to visit and bring relief to Chinese civilians, interned in East Asia, following the present hostilities in Korea.
- (f) We have, verbally and in writing, fully set out and discussed the advantages of creating in Korea *Safety Zones*, under the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949.

This Convention has, in fact, embodied the terms of a Draft Agreement for the protection of non-combatants—women, children, and old people—in *Safety Zones*.

From the outset of the hostilities in Korea, the ICRC has drawn the attention of belligerents to the importance and valuable possibilities offered by such *Zones*. The establishment of *Safety Zones* in the several areas of Palestine, during the hostilities in that region, saved thousands of lives and gave a real impulse to the proposals now set out in the Fourth Geneva Convention. We were convinced from the start, and are convinced, that the establishment of *Safety Zones* in Korea might preserve considerable portions of the civilians population from the ravages of war.

Our Committee's assistance will be always readily offered and given in connexion with the organization of such *Zones*, and we earnestly hope this repeated suggestion will be actively considered by all Powers concerned.

The sufferings of the civilian population in Korea are, indeed, by all accounts immense.

What we realize today was contemplated and feared previously already by the Geneva Committee, but also by the International Red Cross Conferences, particularly the XVIIth Conference held in Stockholm in 1948 under the presidency of Count Folke Bernadotte. Not only the use of non-directed missiles had then been deprecated, but also indiscriminate bombardment in general and its consequences.

The International Red Cross must make every endeavour and pursue its efforts for the protection of the suffering civilian populations. Only peace can end their suffering; but in the meantime, all available safeguards must be pressed, actively considered and realized by the Powers concerned.

Not all the points raised and discussed in Peking could, naturally, find definite solutions during our nine days talks. But it is most promising, indeed, that all these questions could be raised and discussed in a true Red Cross spirit. Good headway has been made.

I feel convinced of the great part the Chinese Red Cross can play on the Asiatic Continent in the fight against human suffering.

It was with deep satisfaction that I realized, during a long exchange of views with the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central People's Government in Peking, that H.E. Mr. Chou-en-Lai showed the fullest understanding of the neutral, impartial and entirely independent efforts of the International Committee in Geneva.

In some ways, it is no more than a hopeful beginning, which will be pursued. The road for further discussion has, however, been opened.

I also wish to express the Committee's and my own gratitude to all those who have given our mission invaluable assistance. Our thanks are due chiefly to the Swiss Federal Government for their substantial grants of medicaments for the war-victims in North and South Korea; they are due in particular to M. Max Petitpierre, Head of the Federal Political Department, and President of the Geneva Diplomatic Red Cross Conference of

1949, who has given us his full support ; also to the Swiss Minister in Peking, M. Rezzonico, who, though not connected with the talks themselves, gave invaluable assistance for the arrival of our mission and in preparing the atmosphere of our conversations.

I also feel most indebted, for all the advice and support given, to H.E. the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Nehru, and to the President of the Red Cross of India, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, on whose wise counsel I am always happy to count.

III

I now come to a few facts relating to a very short visit to *Vietnam*, upon the return of our mission from China.

During the hostilities in Vietnam, the ICRC, which has a delegation on the spot, is also anxious to fulfil entirely its traditional duties. We think, here also, that medical assistance to the war-victims is a great necessity, and a large consignment of medicaments given by our Committee has already arrived at Haiphong.

The Committee had, previous to my arrival, appealed by wireless to President Ho-Chi-Minh, requesting facilities for the passage of these medical stores and a medical officer into the area held by his troops. I confirmed this by a new and personal broadcast message sent from Hanoi, and also had talks on our humanitarian endeavours with the French Commander-in-Chief, General de Lattre de Tassigny. Had it been possible to make the necessary arrangements in time, I would have gladly flown over part of these stores in our plane. As things stand, I have, in reinforcement of our local delegation, left in Hanoi our chief medical officer, Dr. Roland Marti, a Red Cross veteran of the civil war in Spain, and who, during the last World War, was in charge of the protection of Allied prisoners of war in Berlin.

I am hopeful that in the field of this bitter struggle in Vietnam, the Geneva Committee and its delegation will be, to a yet greater extent than heretofore, enabled to discharge its traditional functions, with the support of all concerned.

IV

I should finally mention that our mission had the opportunity, during our journey, of renewing personal contacts with the Red Cross of the countries in Asia we passed through.

In Karachi, we had talks with the Red Cross and Government representatives of Pakistan, who have always largely supported the work and aims of our institution.

I have already alluded to India, where, during our stay in Delhi, my wife and I were the guests of the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and where I was happy to visit again the Indian Red Cross, so inspiringly presided by Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

In Bangkok, we visited the Siamese Red Cross, actively led by its Vice-President, H.R.H. Prince Chumbhot. I was requested to send a message from the Committee on the occasion of Thai Red Cross day.

Finally, upon our return journey, I was happy to establish personal contacts with the Burmese Red Cross Society and its President, Sir Ba U.

The importance of the Red Cross Societies of Asia, to many of which the ICRC has appointed delegates, need not be stressed. The part they are called upon to play in the present difficult circumstances is very considerable indeed, and they know they can always count upon the endeavours of the Geneva Committee.
