

convened a First Conference of Government Experts on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts in Geneva in May, 1971. The ICRC prepared extensive background documentation for the Conference. 39 governments provided delegations composed of some 200 diplomatic, legal, military and medical experts. The Canadian Delegation was composed of senior officers from the Legal Bureau and the Office of the Judge Advocate General of DND. Among other things the Delegation promoted vigorously the view that, building upon common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, there should be a basic minimum standard of humanitarian treatment applied in all armed conflict situations whether these are characterized as "international" or "non-international". The Canadian experts presented a draft protocol embodying this concept for which a number of other experts expressed support.

On the basis of the comments of government experts and further statements made by governments during consideration of this subject in the Third (Social and Human Rights) Committee at the 1971 session of the United Nations General Assembly, the ICRC formulated two draft protocols, and accompanying commentaries, to the Geneva Conventions - one, concerning international armed conflicts and the other, which was based on the draft proposed by Canada at the First Conference but which went far beyond the Canadian draft by introducing rules of combat as opposed to purely humanitarian rules, concerning armed conflicts not of an international character. After a preparatory meeting of National Red Cross experts in Vienna in March, 1972, the ICRC convened a Second Conference of Government Experts in Geneva from May 3 to June 3, 1972 to consider the two draft protocols. Over 460 experts attended from 76 states as well as observers from the United Nations and interested non-governmental organizations.

At the Second ICRC Conference Commission II, which as at the First Conference was chaired by a Canadian expert, reviewed the second