

rumours of resort to the atomic bomb had begun to agitate the capitals, the Canadian Government announced its decision to form a specially recruited brigade, the so-called Canadian Army Special Force, to serve in Korea if the possibility of useful service still existed. There was little opposition to this move in Parliament or in the country, the Conservative critics confining their criticism to the fact that it had been necessary to resort to special enlistment in order to raise the requisite number of troops. An advance party of 350 arrived in Korea after the Chinese intervention had created what the U.N. Commander rightly described as "an entirely new war".

By the time it ended in the truce signed in July 1953, 10,587 Canadians had enlisted in the special volunteer force; of these, 3,134 were from the province of Quebec, a proportion slightly higher than that of the population of Quebec to the population of the whole country, while the proportion of French-speaking Canadians in the special force was almost exactly that of French-speaking Canadians to the total population. If, therefore, Canada continued to share with Iceland the doubtful distinction of being the only member of the North Atlantic Alliance not to have introduced compulsory military service, it reflected not so much the unwillingness of any sector of the Canadian community to sacrifice for freedom as the unwillingness of their Government to risk opening the old wounds of the conscription issue.

A year after the truce in Korea, Canada was called upon to undertake another, though different kind of, "police action" in the Far East. This was in Indo-China, where in the aftermath of the collapse of French power before the communist-led forces of the Vietminh, Canada, together with India and Poland, was asked to accept membership on three International Commissions—one each for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia—created by the Geneva Conference to supervise the working of the armistice agreement. The Canadian Government had not sought these responsibilities; indeed, word of the invitation to participate seems to have come to it as a complete surprise. But, having been asked, the Canadian Government accepted, under no illusions, as its statement of acceptance made clear, "about the magnitude and complexity of the task". Providing personnel, military and diplomatic, for the Truce Commissions placed the Departments of National Defence and External Affairs under considerable strain. A group of army officers were flown in from Korea, and 70 more left immediately from defence headquarters at Ottawa. At any given time during the next few years, the number of Canadians serving with the Indo-China truce commissions was rarely less than 150.

The term "police action", indiscriminately applied to the very different kinds of operations in Korea and Indo-China, obscures more than it makes clear. Police action in Korea was war in the conventional sense: an army in the field sought to impose military defeat upon an armed adversary. Police action in Indo-China was the action of a corps of observers, confined by their mandate (and by their equipment) to investigation and report. The kind of police action in which Canada became involved following the Anglo-French invasion at Suez in November 1956 was something else again. It is easier, perhaps, to state what it was not than what it was. It was not a Korean-type military force. It was not intended to fight the Anglo-French invaders or any other. It was not equipped to fight. It was intended, rather, to exert a pacifying, tranquillizing influence upon the situation into which it was injected, and so help restore peace, order and good government. In this it was successful, but only because the other militarily superior forces in the area were prepared to allow it to be. In the similar operation mounted four years later in the Congo, the United Nations policemen found local authority divided, the situation chaotic, their own mandate confused and their safety imperilled.

Canada's experience in UNEF and UNOC, which brought the country considerable kudos at comparatively little cost, has encouraged strategists