

Another problem with Levant's treatment lies in its one-dimensionality. Granted that economics loom hugely in Canadian-American relations, *Quiet Complicity* ignores other sources of friction and leverage, most notably the importance of the nuclear weapons employment policy, especially during the Korean War. Levant includes nothing of this, despite evidence that the Kennedy administration moved to destabilize the administration of John Diefenbaker over the issue. Indeed, there is precious little of "Dief" in *Quiet Complicity*, perhaps because of Levant's inability – much lamented – to gain access to the military file "Vietnam-MAAG-US Military Assistance Group 50052-A-13-40 June 1958-1963." But this is not good enough. No one will question Diefenbaker's anti-communist credentials, but one still recalls bitter policy disagreements with Washington. And, as Jocelyn Ghent shows, evidence is available.

Hence one has difficulty with the notion that Canadian Prime Ministers and their Ministers of External Affairs were just so many interchangeable parts, all labouring mightily in the service of a formidable Canadian capitalism. Levant also uses his evidence selectively in other ways. He plays fast and loose with dates, providing evidence from 1954, then from 1965 – or from 1965, then 1973. One does not encounter a focused assessment of developing policy, over time, on either side of the forty-ninth parallel.

What we are left with is an angry book – which is understandable given Washington's cynical venture into the politics of Southeast Asia. Still, despite Levant's ill-mannered criticism of Douglas Ross's recent *In the Interests of Peace* ("an apologetic intellectual work excusing Canadian wrongdoing and dismissing any notion of international responsibility for the East-West conflict"), it is Ross's Vietnam volume – not Levant's – to which serious scholars should turn.

– Geoffrey S. Smith

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In the Interests of Peace: Canada and Vietnam, 1954-1973

Douglas A. Ross

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, 484 pgs., \$35.00 cloth

■ "Appropriately enough," Douglas Ross states, "the Vietnam war has come to symbolize American defeat, frustration and humiliation. For many Canadians it connotes shame as well because of perceived Canadian complicity in American war crimes." This certainly encapsulates the view of other scholars of the role of Canada in the Vietnam War, notably James Eayrs, Charles Taylor and Victor Levant. For them, Canadian involvement in Southeast Asia was not the story of an impartial and objective peacekeeper, the "Helpful Fixer" contributing what it could to the stability of the region; rather, it was the sordid tale of an American surrogate wilfully tending the imperialistic interests of successive American governments.

In tough and almost deliberately provocative language, Ross challenges the traditional interpretation of Canada's role in Vietnam, arguing that Canadian policy was generally prudent, realistic and very responsible, given the dangers implicit in the US commitment in Vietnam and the imperative for Ottawa of maintaining harmonious relations with Washington. Ross, a political scientist at the University of British Columbia, does not deny that Canada both co-operated in and sympathized with US containment objectives, but he insists that any apparent complicity must be viewed as part of a broader Canadian policy to work for peace. Terrified of a localized conflict escalating into a wider, super-power confrontation that might even involve nuclear weapons, Canadian policy-makers sought to constrain American hawkishness as best they could. Any acts of compliance are therefore interpreted by Ross as an important element in Canada's strategy of maintaining status as a credible and sympathetic ally. For Canada to have disowned America completely, adding its moral condemnation to that of other nations, would have only alienated it and

encouraged the less moderate elements on Capitol Hill. America allied, Ross asserts, is a far less dangerous animal than an America alone and persecuted.

In addition to exploring the nature, extent, and motivation for Canadian involvement in Southeast Asia, Ross is also concerned with explaining the dimensions of the policy-making process itself. He identifies three basic groups in government and in the Department of External Affairs who fought for control of the policy process between 1954 and 1973. The key group, the liberal-moderates, generally held the high ground in debate for the whole period. For Lester Pearson, John Holmes and other liberal-moderates, the crucial factor was preventing the various sub-conflicts in Indochina from escalating toward nuclear war. Concerned that the US might initiate a nuclear war to secure its interests, liberal-moderates encouraged a close relationship with it in order to maximize their constraining influence. Hence, their willingness to co-operate in serving on truce supervisory operations, and to act as an intermediary between Hanoi and Washington during the 1960s.

Conservatives, whose influence was greatest from 1956-66, generally gave support to a collective Western effort to establish non-Communist rule in South Vietnam. For Jules Leger and Marcel Cadieux, the basic tenets of American containment policy were valid and worth pursuing. A small group of left-liberals, led by Escott Reid and Chester Ronning, stressed moral over strategic concerns. For them, nationalism and communism could be fused legitimately and Vietnam converted into an independent, communist state, similar to Tito's Yugoslavia. But, as Ross emphasizes, left-liberals remained on the fringes of power, and conservative influence on Canadian policy tended to dominate only in periods of reduced threat to nuclear peace. In the author's opinion, it was the reasonableness of such liberal-moderates as Lester Pearson that dominated Canadian policy-making.

Because *In the Interests of Peace* is not as one-dimensional as other books on the subject, notably Victor Levant's *Quiet Complicity*, it should stand as the definitive interpretation of Canadian involvement in Vietnam until all the primary source material is available to scholars. The one disappointment of the book is the author's inability to breathe life into the major policy players. Except for Lester Pearson, we know no more about their personalities, characters and motivation than is conveyed in the official correspondence. The most serious omission of this type is the author's virtual neglect of John Diefenbaker.

In the Interests of Peace is nevertheless, an instructive and highly informative book and, one might say, readable, but the author's penchant for the opaque jargon of the political scientist, his generally turgid prose and curious punctuation hinder the flow and pace. – Brent Slobodin

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BRIEFLY NOTED

Peace-Keeping Satellites

Walter H. Dorn

Dundas, Ontario: Peace Research Institute – Dundas, 162 pgs., \$20.00 paper

The author sets out to explore ways that satellite technology can be used to verify international treaties, monitor conflicts, support peacekeeping operations and help manage natural disasters. These satellites would, in the view of the author, be best placed under the control of an international organization such as that proposed by France in 1978 at the first UN Special Session on Disarmament. The proposal for the establishment of an International Satellite Monitoring Agency (ISMA) continues to gather support from many non-governmental organizations and concerned individuals.

(This book was produced with the financial assistance of CIIPS.) □

Reviews of French language publications can be found in *Paix et Sécurité* 'Livres' section.