

Hangin' together

by Harald von Riekhoff

No Other Way: Canada and International Security Institutions by John W. Holmes et al. Toronto: Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, 1987, 162 pages, \$10.95.

This short volume offers judicious and realistic reflections on Canadian participation in international security institutions by John Holmes and other academic specialists and diplomatic practitioners. The authors generally have more confidence in the effective management of conflict by the United Nations and NATO than in the creation of new security institutions or the radical reform of existing ones. Theirs is not, however, an uncritical or automatic endorsement of the status quo.

The book notes a variety of deficiencies in the UN system, in particular the tendency of parties to a dispute to regard involvement by the Security Council as an undesirable interference, and the unwillingness of members of the Council to take sides, thereby making the UN increasingly irrelevant. The authors suggest some improvements in the conflict management role of the UN, e.g., more frequent resort to informal in camera meetings of the Security Council to consider disputes prior to their escalation to open hostilities; increased use of Article 36 of the Charter empowering the Council to recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment; and greater reliance on consensual decision making. The latter, it should be noted, is not without hazard, for it can promote ambiguity of decisions or immobility.

For NATO, any formal bifurcation of the alliance into an integrated European and an American pillar — a concept which has figured in a number of recent reform schemes — would threaten to intensify intra-alliance conflicts by removing the salutary effect of cross-cutting cleavages. Moreover, it would tend to isolate Canada and leave her without natural partners within NATO. In contrast, more effective defence cooperation by the European

alliance members — but short of a formal division of NATO, as Gerald Wright observes — might provide an incentive for an increased Canadian commitment to the conventional defence of Europe.

Contrary to current academic fashion, the authors are inclined to place greater value on effectiveness than on independence as a yardstick to assess the success of Canadian foreign policy. The principal task of Canadian security policy, as they see it, should be to facilitate consensus-building in NATO and in the UN. Increasingly, this task also entails what John Holmes refers to as damage limitation, in the face of mounting international criticism and hostility toward the United States. Overall, the book provides a persuasive argument which finds a middle course between illusion and despair.

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Generals at work

by John Gellner

Five War Zones: The Views of Local Military Leaders by Brigadier-General Ahmed M. Abdel-Halim et al. Elmsford N.Y.; Pergamon Press, 1987, 184 pages, US\$13.95.

Far removed as we fortunately are from areas of armed conflict, actually under way or threatening to break out at any moment, we rely on the reports of journalists and on the judgment of scholarly analysts when trying to picture for ourselves what is happening in those war zones, and why things are happening there as they do. It should thus be of some help to see the situation for a change from the perspective of those who would be right there, in positions of command, if existing conflicts should spread or if this or that simmering powder keg should blow up. This is done in this book by way of contributions from five senior officers, one Egyptian, one Israeli, one South

Korean, one Pakistani and one Saudi Arabian. This makes for interesting reading, but because the outlook of the writers is, with one exception, a narrow one — which is not surprising since they are all military professionals who are inclined to see things entirely in terms of facts and figures of troop strength, armaments, communications, terrain — the estimates of the situations, and even more so the forecasts, have to be taken with a healthy dose of skepticism.

To start off with the exception: the piece on "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and Its Impact on Pakistan", by Brigadier Zia Ullah Khan of the Pakistan Army, gives a clear picture of the very dangerous situation the country finds itself in as the result of the occupation — one really can not call it anything else — of its western neighbor by Soviet Forces and of having become, whether it wanted or not, the base from which the Afghan *mujaheddin* conduct their operations against the occupiers. Even before that, Pakistan had been faced with grave difficulties — the continuing and so far futile search for a viable political system, the want of national cohesion, economic woes. These have been aggravated by the guerrilla war in Afghanistan and the resulting influx of some three million Afghan refugees. There is also the lingering threat from the East, from India, with which Pakistan has been engaged in three wars in the forty years of its existence. The author is undoubtedly right when he says that, under the circumstances, a "stable and strong Pakistan is an absolute necessity to check the Soviets' ambitions" and that to keep it strong is clearly in the best interest of the free West in general, and of India, as well. All in all, a piece well worth reading and pondering.

As for the rest of the book, two of the contributions deal with the ongoing Iraq-Iran war, and how it affects the rest of the world because it has made the Gulf a battlefield. The one by Colonel Abdulaziz bin Khalid Alsu-dairy of the Saudi Air Force is of little significance, because its conclusion is so utterly unconvincing: that the six countries of the Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council should, and most likely could, look after their own defence and thus after their economic interests, with