

vironment imposes tight constraints and imperatives on those who chart Canada's course in world politics.

Although the book is presumably intended to fill a useful role as a university text, it has the virtue of avoiding academic stuffiness, and merits the attention of all those who are, or should be, interested in the subject, especially politicians and senior bureaucrats. There are useful annotations at the end of each chapter, and the only minor fault, in the opinion of this reviewer, is the penchant of the author to use words that require a handy dictionary. How many readers will know, off-hand, the meaning of "diuturnity" or "semasiological."

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The peacekeeper's lot

by Bruce M. Williams

In the Interests of Peace: Canada and Vietnam 1954-1973 by Douglas A. Ross. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, 484 pages, \$35.00.

Douglas Ross has produced an exceptional and needed study of Canada's role in Vietnam during the period 1954-73. This is a monumental survey of Canadian foreign policy, both its formulation and implementation with respect not only to Vietnam but also in particular to the United States and the other great powers with interests in that part of the world.

Vietnam prior to 1954 was perhaps little known to Canadians and certainly was not an area of acute concern to Canadian foreign policy-makers. The fact that Vietnam and indeed Cambodia and Laos did become focal points of Canadian foreign policy concern is vividly described and analyzed by Professor Ross. The author reviews and assesses the impact which participation by Canada in the International Commission for Supervision and Control had on the development of Canadian policy for Vietnam and indeed on its formulators. The problems of Vietnam became an issue for successive Canadian governments and produced strains elsewhere for Canada's foreign relations. This is most clearly illustrated in Canadian-US relations when the latter became inexorably drawn more deeply into Vietnam, and Canadian political leaders — Prime Minister Lester Pearson and the Secretary of State for External Affairs Paul Martin in particular — attempted to defuse the situation. Professor Ross details with great skill Canadian concern about US policy in Indo-China and quite correctly,

in this reviewer's opinion, rejects those who would claim that Canadian policy was supine. His balanced judgment of Canadian policy is ably presented and his research is impeccable.

One does not have to agree at every stage with Professor Ross's interpretation of the elements which went into the making of Canadian policy on Vietnam. Even so, his detailed review of the problems facing the Canadian component of the Supervisory Commission from the early days of 1954, when the issue of freedom of movement from North to South dominated the work of the Commission, is flawless.

Canada was in many respects a reluctant candidate for the Commission but once embarked on the project, Canadians determined to ensure that Canadian peacekeeping efforts, even if not always appreciated, were directed to maintaining an armistice settlement, uneasy and imprecise though it might be.

Canadian policy in Vietnam could not be divorced from the broader aspects of Canadian relations with the United States, and at times this consideration became overriding. Professor Ross deftly records the ramifications of this factor — from the very outset of the Commission — through the Seaborn and Ronning initiatives — and finally to the newly reconstituted Commission from which Canada subsequently withdrew. Canadian policy on Vietnam was clearly not always precise but efforts to find solutions were not lacking.

It can perhaps be argued that the formulation of Canadian foreign policy has always been shrouded in ambiguities. Some might even go so far as to argue that it has been Byzantine both in formulation and implementation. This would be too harsh a judgment. By the same token Professor Ross's thesis that Canadian policy on Vietnam has been the product of groups of officials in the Department of External Affairs with varying philosophical tendencies is intriguing. Professor Ross argues that Canadian Vietnam policy was over the years primarily the product of liberal-moderates with occasional oscillations to left-liberals and conservatives. This is an interesting argument and one which merits carefully concern and thought. There can be no argument that Canadian policy on Vietnam was susceptible to Canadian political leaders and officials finding a middle ground which would permit accommodation with United States policy as well as participating effectively in a Commission which was hobbled from the outset.

This is a fine volume and should be read carefully by anyone interested in the Canadian experience in Vietnam and how membership in a Commission in a distant and unknown land, now so beset by sadness, influenced so many Canadians and forced them to ponder on the wider issue of what role there is for a country such as Canada in trying to be a peacekeeper.

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