

Canada and weapons

by Leonard V. Johnson

Men, Machines, and War edited by Ronald Haycock and Keith Neilson. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988, 219 pages, \$29.95.

Three from the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament, Ottawa, 1988:

The Air Defence Initiative (Issue Brief No. 9) by Daniel Hayward. 32 pages, \$4.00.

Canada as a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone: A Critical Analysis (Issue Brief No. 10) by Shannon Selin. 42 pages, \$4.00.

Opening Pandora's Box? Nuclear-Powered Submarines and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons (Aurora Papers 8) by Marie-France Desjardins and Tariq Rauf. 60 pages, \$12.00.

Men, Machines, and War contains the proceedings of the 11th Military History Symposium, held at Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, in 1984. In seven case studies and an excellent essay by George Lindsey, the symposium examined the effects of military technology on strategy and politics from the Roman chariot to the cruise missile. During most of the 2,500 years or so of this technological evolution, weapons and warfare were instruments of politics, and the military arts became military science. In the last couple of centuries, since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, warfare has progressively become too destructive and indiscriminate to serve any conceivable political purpose. The tools have turned on their master, and politics has become the instrument of the weapons.

Although not among the case studies in the book, the Cuban missile crisis vividly demonstrated this when Kennedy and Khrushchev and their advisers fought desperately (and fortunately successfully) to prevent their armed forces from precipitating them into a war that neither side wanted. Far from conferring usable military options in the crisis, the armed forces became a part of it.

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Since John Lamb founded it in 1983, the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament has become a respected source

of critical analysis of defence issues. The publications by Shannon Selin, Daniel Hayward, and Marie-France Desjardins and Tariq Rauf are fine examples of the Centre's work and essential reading to anyone concerned with defence in Canada.

Selin concludes that making Canada a nuclear weapon-free zone would not be feasible or desirable, and that its proponents would better devote their energies to opposing provocative and destabilizing developments, while seeking an alternative to nuclear deterrence. At the same time, she recognizes that public concerns are justified and that government has not exerted itself to that government.

Hayward concludes that some participation in the Air Defence Initiative is unavoidable and necessary, but that an effective defence against cruise missiles is unfeasible, its cost would be unacceptable and its consequences destabilizing and dangerous. He argues strongly for arms control negotiations to limit cruise missiles. Canada must therefore limit its participation to measures that will improve surveillance while avoiding those which will increase the danger in the long run.

Desjardins and Rauf determine that acquisition of nuclear-propelled submarines would not violate the letter of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, but that it would violate its spirit, setting a bad precedent for other non-nuclear weapons states to exploit. In this, as in all other gray areas between free will and legal compulsion, obedience to the unenforceable rules of morality and the common good is the hallmark of responsible behavior, in government as in ordinary citizens.

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Dangerous toy

by Simon Rosenblum

Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years by McGeorge Bundy. New York: Random House, 1988, 735 pages, US\$24.95.

McGeorge Bundy, a national security adviser to US Presidents Kennedy and

Johnson, has written a comprehensive and authoritative political history of the nuclear era. Combining personal experience and historical analysis, Bundy presents a penetrating overview beginning with Roosevelt's decision in 1941 to develop the atomic bomb and continuing to the present period. The focus of the book is on the political choices made by American presidents during critical moments in nuclear weapons history, with special attention to the Berlin and Cuban missile crises. While Bundy's view is that, by and large, nuclear crises have been well handled, he is not unaware that crises must be avoided, not just well managed: "The real lesson of the crises over Berlin and Cuba is that neither side should take such risks again."

The most powerful message in the book is the weakness of atomic intimidation and the secondary role of nuclear weapons in superpower interventionism and diplomacy. While the United States, in particular, has resorted many times to various forms of nuclear blackmail in efforts to manage geopolitical conflict, Bundy convincingly demonstrates that US nuclear threats were not the decisive factor in containing the Soviet Union and intimidating Third World nations. Numerical nuclear "advantage" did not in the end usually count for much. Furthermore, American and Soviet leaders have actually shown considerable caution, not only with respect to the use of nuclear weapons, but also in relation to actions that might lead to their use. There has always been a powerful restraint based upon the knowledge that nuclear war would be a shared catastrophe. Bundy may somewhat understate the difficulty of controlling nuclear crises but he appreciates the danger of playing nuclear roulette.

American presidents and policymakers have however — as Bundy acknowledges — generally believed that nuclear superiority is consequential in controlling global events. What policymakers believe to be true is often more important than what is true. Bundy's book is not about nuclear doctrines and strategy and I hesitate to suggest that he should have dealt more with these issues in a work that already covers so much ground. Yet the perceived utility of nuclear weapons has been central to the American quest for nuclear superiority and in the doctrines of extended nuclear deterrence and escalation dominance. This drive to acquire "first-strike" nuclear weapons and the threat to use them is not, of course, so much an intention to actually resort to