

its wish to contribute to the defence and political stability of the region. As far as security is concerned, Canada does not seem to have moved from its traditional position. In a recent, quite extensive analysis of Canadian policy in the Pacific, the Assistant Deputy Minister for External Affairs, Jean McCloskey, devoted only a few lines to this subject, saying that: "The White Paper on Defence, recognizing the extent of Canadian economic interests in Asia, suggested that the strategic significance of the Northeast Pacific underlines the need for a more effective Canadian naval force on the West coast."¹⁴⁵

On the other hand, the present government, like its predecessors, cannot remain indifferent to a permanent lack of balance in the area which makes it difficult for Canada to maintain straightforward and open relations with the countries of the region as it would like to do. Canada has traditionally supported an international order based on coexistence and harmony between conflicting interests. As a middle power, Canada has always been suspicious of regional conflicts which the great — or almost great — powers appear to be manipulating to serve their own purposes. The current stability in Indochina, therefore, ought not to exclude, a priori, positive intervention by Canada in an effort to end a conflict in which small and middle-ranking powers are serving as surrogates.

Finally, even if Canadian policy in Southeast Asia is more concerned with consolidating its economic gains and acquiring new markets, it would be unwise to underestimate the long-term development potential of the Indochinese peninsula. Canada's advantages, its experience and its good will would all justify it showing greater awareness of the situation in Indochina and playing a more active role there.

While Canada has not really re-evaluated the policy which it adopted in 1979, it seems to have been excessively zealous in acting with the same sort of intransigence which was shown by China in the fifties and sixties.

¹⁴⁵ Mme Jean C. McCloskey, "New Realities in the Pacific: The Political Perspective." Conference organised by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Ottawa, 26 March 1988.