

REVIEWS



Canada's Defence Industrial Base: The Political Economy of Preparedness and Procurement

David G. Haglund (ed.)

Kingston, Ontario: Ronald Frye, 261 pgs., \$24.95 paper

A healthy defence industrial base should adequately furnish a country's defence needs in a cost efficient manner. It must possess the technological capability necessary to meet the perceived security threat in times of peace and the flexibility to increase production rates quickly in times of crisis.

This view of modern war fighting and industrial capacity is based on several factors. The complexity and cost of modern weapon systems have risen at exponential rates. Coinciding with the evolution in technology is a change in strategic thinking. Scenarios of short-lived military confrontations in Central Europe quickly passing the nuclear threshold, have given way to expectations that a conventional war in Europe will be protracted. NATO, for its part, wants to lessen its dependence on the early use of nuclear weapons as the pillar of its deterrence posture – hence the need to strengthen its conventional forces and increase the potential of member nations to mobilize resources rapidly in the event of war.

In light of these changes, this collection of essays edited by David Haglund is particularly timely. Canada's spending on military hardware has skyrocketed from the lean years of the mid-1970s. Eleven social scientists and experienced defence bureaucrats have collaborated on the first book in Canada to accord a thorough treatment of the defence industry, government procurement practices and the integration

of Canada into the North American defence market.

Canada's most prolific defence economist Jack Treddenick gives a clear introduction to the basic theoretical issues in defence economics. He goes on to survey data broken down by industry, region, exports and imports, and concludes that Canada's defence sector occupies a relatively insignificant part of the economy (less than one percent of gross domestic product). He implies that problems that may afflict countries with proportionately larger defence industries do not affect Canada.

But problems do occur, as is amply illustrated in the chapters on three individual case histories of weapons procurement. The picture presented is a complicated one of interservice rivalry; competing objectives of separate government departments; pressure from industry; as well as the political influence of the provinces. "Defence as economics" seems to take such precedence in peacetime, it is a wonder that real military security needs are actually met at all.

However, William Fox indicates in another chapter that the procurement procedure employed in the recent selection of the Oerlikon-Bührle company of Switzerland for the low-level air defence project turned out to be very successful in terms of management and cost effectiveness, and has been studied by several different countries.

As with any ambitious book on contemporary policy issues, this one sometimes ventures too far and sometimes not far enough. On occasion conclusions are drawn that are not supported by the data presented, such as the view offered by L. John Leggat that military high technology has a beneficial effect on economic growth and employment. Most of the contributing authors believe that the present defence production and sharing arrangements with the US are beneficial and

should be further developed. Yet questions about the challenges to Canada's autonomy and sovereignty resulting from these arrangements are raised but never treated at length. Given that these issues may eventually bear on Canada's security, this is unfortunate. Otherwise this collection of papers is an excellent introduction to the subject. – Erik Poole

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Philosophical Perspectives on Peace

Howard P. Kainz (ed.)

Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1987, 315 pgs., US \$39.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper

Those of us who, at one time or another, have concocted our own prescription for eliminating the "scourge of war" should make this book required reading. The search for the right recipe is millennia-old. Recurring themes are discernible; it is revealing to see which formulae have been proposed repeatedly and yet have failed to elicit support over the centuries. In spite of an air of unreality these writings are both instructive and amusing.

The subtitle of this volume is "An Anthology of Classical and Modern Sources." It is a range of philosophical analyses of the problem of war and proposed solutions. Some are essays, some extracts from longer works.

The first two chapters feature writers who have recommended world government as a method of ensuring peace, from Aristotle, laying out his argument in a letter to Alexander the Great, to Bertrand Russell, responding to the modern fear of global nuclear war.

Writing at the end of the eighteenth century, Kant observed that: "The state of peace must be founded." What was needed was a federation of nations operating under a well-crafted constitution. And, of course, once the supranational government was established, the leaders should employ philosophers as advisers.

Chapter 4 pulls together the works of four writers who put their faith in the triumph of spiritual values. Erasmus, writing in the late fifteenth century, calls on European citizens to remember the precepts of their Christian heritage, although he is at some pains to reconcile the vengeful, war-like Jehovah of the Old Testament with the forgiving Father-God of the New.

The authors presented in Chapter 5 judge that the heart of the problem is mankind's aggressive tendencies, and that this aggression must somehow be sublimated. Konrad Lorenz, a specialist in animal behaviour, believes that sport "educates man to a conscious and responsible control of his own fighting-behaviour." Obviously Lorenz had never been exposed to British soccer fans.

In T.H. White's satirical piece, "The Passing of Camelot," Merlyn suggests a substitute for war in a testimony before Arthur's Privy Council. The canny old magician is convinced that humans are suffering from some form of glandular deficiency: they require, from time to time, a massive injection of adrenalin; they need fear and the chance of death. He suggests setting up a fair with tilt-o-whirls and roller-coasters, and a death rate of about one in a hundred. Participation would, of course, be voluntary; conscription was insupportable. After one hundred visits, a fair-goer would receive the Victoria Cross. The Privy Council did not find this to be a practical suggestion.

Some philosophers, like Kant, might want to be political advisers, hoping to guide their countrymen away from war. But others might shrug their shoulders and say, with Rousseau, "to be sane in the midst of madmen is a sort of folly." – Dianne DeMille

Ms. DeMille is an editor at the Institute. □

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