

While little publicity was given at the time to US aid to Britain, this, in contrast, was militarily significant in several respects, not least in the air war.

A detailed examination of the relationship between arms transfers and diplomatic bargaining in the Yom Kippur/Ramadan War of 1973 is not fully conclusive, but it illuminates the complexities of the four-way relationship involving the US, Soviet Union, Egypt and Israel. Here, certainly, both Henry Kissinger and the Soviets saw the crucial value of manipulating arms transfers in pursuit of diplomatic objectives.

As to the Iran-Iraq War, here too, the complexities almost defy analysis, with the major players such as the Soviet Union, France and the United States all altering their objectives, and thus their arms transfers policies during the long years of destruction. The book pays too little attention to the hidden role of Western states in supporting Iraq during the mid-1980s, but this is hardly the fault of the authors as much of the evidence has begun to come to light since the book went to press.

In one sense, there is a lesson here, in that the authors have made an important but, to an extent, preliminary analysis of a topic which requires far more work. Their main conclusion, too, is preliminary. Arms transfers within conflicts may in some circumstances intensify a conflict, and in others ease it, but their main importance lies in their political significance, namely in indicating the extent and nature of the support available to belligerents from external actors.

Arms and Warfare is a thorough, detailed and impressive piece of analysis, combining the systematic use of case studies with an ability to draw out careful and often modest conclusions. Its results may be tentative, and much more work may be required, but it is an important contribution to an under-researched subject.

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Haydon, Peter T. *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered*. Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993.

Until now there had never been a definitive study of Canada's role in the Cuban missile crisis. There is at last. Peter Haydon's *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* is an exhaustive and detailed analysis of cabinet politics, US-Canadian relations, the activities of the Canadian armed forces, and Canadian civil-military relations in the most dangerous episode of the Cold War. Making extensive use of both open and previously classified materials (as well as his own recollections and contacts from his service in the Royal Canadian Navy), Haydon has produced the first truly comprehensive study of the event. As an historical narrative, it supersedes all previous works on the subject.

Haydon begins the book by sketching the main events of the crisis and surveying the existing literature on Canada's role, with the aim of teasing out the conventional wisdom — such as it is — and identifying the main lines of debate on the subject. Of crucial concern are Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's refusal to comply promptly with American requests to heighten the readiness of Canadian forces, and his reluctance publicly to support President Kennedy's strategy of crisis management. Haydon then provides detailed background information on Canadian defence policy, Canada-US relations, continental defence arrangements, and the organization of the Canadian military, before turning to the intricacies of Canada's role in the crisis itself. In the final two chapters of the book Haydon provides a critical analysis of Canada's political and military performance in the crisis, with a view to eliciting practical lessons from the episode.

Of great value is the clarity Haydon brings to the complex political, strategic, and bureaucratic context in which Canadian policy makers and soldiers operated in 1962, and which, in certain respects, persists to this day. Canada was, of course, heavily dependent upon the United States for its security, and the frightening speed with which the superpowers could destroy each other in the missile age meant that the American and Canadian military establishments had to coordinate their activities to a high degree. This acknowledged necessity was a cause of great concern to Canadian nationalists on both ends of the political spectrum — and not least to John Diefenbaker — because of the threat it seemed to pose to Canadian sovereignty and freedom of action. The two countries' military establishments, in contrast, set about the task of integrating and coordinating their activities in a generally congenial and operationally effective — if somewhat haphazard — way.

Meanwhile, the administrative and operational structures of the Canadian armed forces were complicated by the tangled relationships between soldiers and civilians in the Canadian defence bureaucracy, transnational ties between different branches and commands of the US and Canadian armed forces, and membership in NATO. Ironically, in October 1962, the American and Canadian armed forces were on better terms with each other than Diefenbaker was with Kennedy, with his own military, or even with his cabinet. The result was that the Canadian forces played an active role in the crisis *notwithstanding* serious strains in these other relationships, but only because Douglas Harkness, Diefenbaker's Minister of National Defence, and various other senior officers in the Canadian military were willing to exceed their nominal authority in raising the readiness and authorizing various activities of the Canadian armed forces beyond what Diefenbaker was willing to contemplate.

Haydon carefully and cogently argues that Diefenbaker's reluctance to authorize a heightened alert status for Canadian forces was not a function of *indecisiveness*, as many commentators have surmised; rather it was a deliberate policy reflecting a variety of political considerations. Several of those considerations — including the complaint that the United States had failed to fulfill its obligation to consult Canada before invoking joint air defence mechanisms — Haydon rejects as ill-founded.

Haydon also carefully examines the question of whether the actions of Harkness and the Canadian military constituted a collapse of civilian control of the Canadian forces. He musters persuasive evidence to suggest that, at the time of the crisis, channels of authority were unclear and normal decision making procedures were in disarray. In view of the grave threat to peace, Harkness and senior commanders felt obliged to improvise. While these actions *did* constitute a collapse of civilian control to some extent, Haydon argues that ultimate responsibility lies not with a renegade minister or insubordinate senior officers, but with a confused organizational chart, and with a prime minister who did not understand military matters and who failed to seek out military advice. "The deficiencies in Canadian concepts for exercising [civilian] control were well known before the crisis broke," Haydon concludes. "Douglas Harkness' decision to put the Canadian military on an alert state and to allow operational commanders to honour the joint continental defence commitments without reference to cabinet prevented an even greater national embarrassment." By "protecting the Canadian military from the suspicious and uncertain political system, Harkness technically broke the rules," Haydon admits: "But he did so for the best of reasons." (p. 210)

It is here that Haydon's otherwise impressive study runs into heavy weather. Throughout the book, Haydon uncritically adopts the view that military necessity required full compliance by Canada with American requests for political and military support. He maintains that Diefenbaker's objections that he had not been consulted on Kennedy's course of action revealed an appalling ignorance of the technicalities of the NORAD agreement and the requirements of effective air defence. He insists that if Canada had had a more "mature" military culture, and if Diefenbaker had sought and taken into consideration the advice of Canadian military leaders as he should have done, Canada would not have dragged its feet and jeopardized North American security. Haydon heartily disapproves of Diefenbaker's demurring, and strongly applauds Harkness' sober-minded realism. He is therefore quite willing to forgive Harkness' sin of acting against the wishes of Diefenbaker and the cabinet, and authorizing on his own initiative a heightened alert of the Canadian armed forces.

This is all terribly disturbing. It is the responsibility of the Prime Minister — not the Minister of National Defence, or military commanders — to determine the degree and nature of the political danger the country faces, and to respond accordingly with the tools — including if the Prime Minister so desires to use them, the *military* tools — at his or her disposal. Diefenbaker's view, rightly or wrongly, was that President Kennedy's response to the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba itself threatened the peace. He doubted Kennedy's judgment and ability to manage the crisis successfully. He was eager not to exacerbate the situation by taking military measures that might provoke the Soviet Union. Nothing in the NORAD agreement, or anything else, required that Diefenbaker defer to Kennedy's policy. If the United States wished to alert its air defence forces, that was its own concern: as a sovereign country Canada was under no obligation to alert its forces just

because the Americans alerted theirs. The Canadian military might disagree heartily with Diefenbaker's analysis of the situation, and with his preferred course of action. But in Canada, as in any democratic country, it is the head of government, and no one else, who is authorized to dispose of military forces for political ends.

With the benefit of historical distance, we can now see that there is great irony in Haydon's complaints. Recent studies have suggested that the Soviet deployment of missiles to Cuba was largely motivated by a sense of fear and insecurity brought on precisely by the kind of military muscle-flexing that Diefenbaker regarded as provocative.¹ They also suggest that the chief dangers to successful crisis management in 1962 lay not with cracks in Western solidarity, but with military operations associated with the heightened state of alert in the United States, the Soviet Union, and Cuba.² It must certainly give us pause to think that if military leaders in the Soviet Union and in the United States had had their way (as Haydon wishes they had done in Canada), the crisis almost certainly would have escalated to war.³ In short, the uncritical application of such concepts as "military necessity" represented a far greater threat to peace in 1962 than did Diefenbaker's foot-dragging.

The greatest irony of all is that Kennedy and Khrushchev knew it. They were aware of the dangers of misperception, misjudgment, and accidental or unintended provocation. They became increasingly sensitive as the crisis wore on to the dangers of command-and-control breakdowns, starkly illustrated by the unauthorized shooting down of an American U-2 reconnaissance plane over Cuba on 27 October. Their awareness of these dangers played a crucial role in helping them reach a non-military solution to the crisis. Diefenbaker therefore badly underestimated Kennedy, and no doubt also grossly overestimated the fear that a Canadian alert would provoke in the Soviet Union. (I am unaware of any evidence that the Kremlin paid any attention whatsoever to the activities of the Canadian military during the crisis.)

Thus Diefenbaker clearly made mistakes. But it was his prerogative, and no one else's, to make them. Clearly there is a trade-off between operational military efficiency in a complex bilateral relationship and autonomous civilian control. This raises complicated theoretical constitutional and practical issues.⁴ Haydon approaches them uncritically and atheoretically. But this does not undermine the value of his otherwise prodigious accomplishments in telling the first comprehensive tale of Canada's involvement in the Cuban missile crisis.

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Endnotes

1. See, for example, Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 19-50.
2. Scott D. Sagan, *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 53-155; Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David A.

Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).

3. For a detailed justification of this rather bold claim, see James G. Blight and David A. Welch, "Risking 'The Destruction of Nations': Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis for New and Aspiring Nuclear States," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northeast International Studies Association/Northeast Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Providence, RI, 10 November, 1994, pp. 12-16.
4. See generally Peter D. Feaver, *Guarding the Guardians: Civilian Control of Nuclear Weapons in the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).