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Learning to Love the Bomb: Canada's Nuclear Weapons During the Cold War (review) Find using OpenURL

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Professor Maloney's thesis is that, after the Second World War, "Canadian national security policy and the place of nuclear weapons in it was designed not only to influence Canada's enemies and thus deter them from attacking and destroying her, it was also designed to influence Canada's allies and further other Canadian interests" (p. xix). Maloney also argues that Canadian nuclear weapons policy was an extension of the country's strategic tradition of alliance warfare, forward security, and relative military autonomy. Canada joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and North American Air Defense Command, linked the protection of Western Europe to the United States Strategic Air Command (SAC)'s retaliatory capability, and committed to equipping its armed forces with nuclear weapons while maintaining national control over these weapons' storage and deployment.

Maloney challenges the myth that Cold War Canada was an "inoffensive, irrelevant, and neutral peacemaker" (p. xviii) by showing how Canada pursued a nuclear strategy and the means to implement it. Canadian officials sought defensive tactical and offensive theatre nuclear weapons to defend North America, SAC, the Atlantic sea-lanes, and Western Europe against potential Soviet attack. An outgrowth of the author's doctoral dissertation, Learning to Love the Bomb is a comprehensive study of the dynamic relationship between Canadian national interests and a Canadian nuclear weapons policy during the Cold War.

Maloney evaluates how Canada's governments and military leadership dealt with the nuclear weapons issue from 1945 to 1972 (the year Canada's nuclear weapons were formally withdrawn from service). Under Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent (1948-57), Canadian officials committed to the acquisition of nuclear weapons for both NATO and North American defense and significantly influenced NATO strategic planning and continental air defense integration. This influence was squandered during the John Diefenbaker years (1957-63) when a cabal within Canada's diplomatic corps obstructed the country's alliance commitments and inhibited its military from creating a nuclear force structure. Canadian commitments to nuclear weapons were re-established under Lester B. Pearson (1963-68), only to be negated by the first Pierre Trudeau administration (1968-72).

This book is extensively researched, highlighted by previously classified documents as sources. Maloney's best chapters are his first, where he introduces General Charles Foulkes and Pearson as the most important personae in Canada's nuclear weapons policy process, and his fourth, an excellent look at the formal and informal channels whereby Canadian military, political, and scientific officials gained atomic information and applied it to policymaking. The author's analysis is assisted by maps, charts, and diagrams.

There are a few difficulties with this book. At times the reader is virtually immersed, line-by-line, in the dialogue at numerous high-level meetings. Much of this exhausting detail could have been better summarized as many of these meetings ultimately had little effect on events. There is also an imbalanced coverage of the book's time period. For Maloney, the years 1951-68 encompassed the "peak of Canadian global influence" (p. 375). Consequently, Maloney's coverage of the first Trudeau period is limited to snippets of information in the last few chapters, while seven chapters (half the book) are devoted to the nuclear weapons policy crisis under Diefenbaker. Although these chapters detail this significant period in Canada-U.S. relations, the author's recounting of high-level meetings makes this section challenging to read. Additionally, though the sources listed in the extensive bibliography and endnotes include key studies on Canadian Cold War defense policy, there is one notable omission. Maloney does not mention Andrew Richter's Avoiding Armageddon: Canadian Military Strategy and Nuclear Weapons 1950-63 (2002). Though more limited in its temporal scope, Richter's book is an important work in the historiography.

These issues do not obscure Maloney's significant contribution to understanding Canada's Cold War defense policies. Maloney demonstrates how Canada formulated and obtained its national security objectives while in alliance with greater powers by linking its strategic tradition with the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

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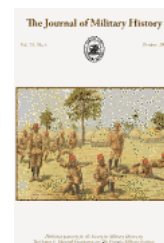
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Book Reviews

Through this mechanism, he envisions a pragmatic transparency which provides both strong security and fluid collaboration between the civilian and military scientific communities. Given the rapid convergence of emerging technologies in a neuroscience context, such a proposal merits serious consideration.

In sum, Moreno's well-written book provides much food for thought for the general reader, science and medical historians, bioethicists, philosophers, and policy makers. His concluding thought merits much attention as well and hopefully will result in a future study – perhaps at some point the exploration of the human mind for military purposes can be used alternatively to foster conflict resolution and promote peaceful coexistence.

Mark F. Leep

Richmond, Virginia

Learning to Love the Bomb: Canada's Nuclear Weapons During the Cold War. By Sean M. Maloney. Washington: Potomac Books, 2007. ISBN 978-1-57488-616-0. Photographs. Figures. Notes. Selected bibliography. Index. Pp. xxv, 470. \$29.95.

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