



A Stubble-Jumper in Striped Pants: Memoirs of a Prairie Diplomat

Earl Drake

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In the spring of 1989, Earl Drake, Canadian ambassador to China, found himself in the midst of the Tiananmen Square crisis. Asked to evacuate Beijing's Canadian residents in a hurry, to maintain control of the embassy, and to provide a voice of reason to the media, he resolved to write his memoirs if he made it out unharmed. His recollections paint a fascinating picture of the life of a diplomat initially drawn to the foreign service from his study of history, and provide a first-hand account of the growing depth and complexity of Canada's relations with Asia.

Drake knew many of the leaders of the postwar world, and his in-depth character sketches of such powerful and controversial figures as Robert McNamara, President Suharto, and China's Li Peng are written with a sense of humanity and fairness. What particularly sets this memoir apart is Drake's humour and humility. He is frank about himself and his attitudes and avoids the self-importance that is a feature of many diplomatic memoirs. In his own words, he 'looks at the old Central Canadian attitudes of the Department of External Affairs through fresh prairie eyes.'

Anyone who wants to know more about Canada's diplomatic activities in Asia will find this memoir engaging, because of both its forthright manner and the events and people recounted.

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