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NEWS RELEASE

IRPP Study Calls on Canada to Reinforce 3-D Approach to Help Build Lasting Peace in Kosovo

*Without an international push to resolve the question of Kosovo's
status, the UN protectorate will be "Lost in Transition," says Julian
Wright*

Montreal – In a study released today by the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP.org), Julian Wright calls for a sustained reinvestment of Canadian and international political will and attention into the future of Kosovo.

Canada should pursue the "status question" in Kosovo, says the author, not only to improve the well-being of residents of the region, but also as a means to expand on our current 3-D interventions in failed or failing states, which make coordinated use of defence, diplomacy and development.

There is a lot at stake in the future of this small Balkan province. More than five years after the 1999 NATO bombing campaign, it remains under the administration of a UN-led peace and reconstruction force (UNMIK). The economic and political stability of Kosovo is uncertain, due to its unclear legal status.

According to the author, there are several hurdles separating Kosovo and the achievement of greater self-determination. First, Serbia is intent on isolating the local Serbian minority through parallel political structures. As well, the passion with which ethnic Albanians pursue independence has sometimes led to violence and exclusion. Furthermore, until recently, the international community has not made resolving Kosovo's plight a priority. And complicating the situation is a local population bitterly divided along ethnic lines, with potential flashpoints across the countryside and in towns like Mitrovica.

But Wright warns that, despite these significant challenges, the status quo is actually more of a threat to the prospects of lasting peace in the region than is self-determination. Arguing that the current UNMIK administration has become untenable, the author notes that the lack of real political progress has engendered a "destructive pessimism" amongst Kosovars. This raises the stakes for the recent re-opening of talks on Kosovo's future, which aim at a mid-2006 resolution.

Wright recommends several ways for Canada to support efforts in Kosovo:

- It should stand ready to lend military support to KFOR and its successors.
- In light of the RCMP's strong peacekeeping record, it should be more actively used to help develop home-grown police capabilities in Kosovo.
- Canada should support Kosovo's integration into the international community by tying the resolution of its sovereignty question to eventual membership in international bodies such as NATO and the EU.
- To deal with the present situation in Kosovo, as well as with other such commitments in the future, Ottawa must pursue a consistent foreign policy and structure the Canadian military in such a way that a reconstruction force can be deployed for considerable periods of time.

The author cautions that, because many agencies and organizations are involved in Kosovo's political and economic reconstruction, "it will be impossible to complete the region's transition without a broad, multilateral effort." Ottawa's challenge is to convince its allies to engage in Kosovo and situations like it with an integrated, open-minded, 3-D approach.

Canada and other nations have put tremendous effort into Kosovo's reconstruction, which must continue even after its likely accession to independence. "To devote anything less would be to leave Kosovo in an uneasy balance between a troubled past and a stable future," Wright concludes.

"Lost in Transition: Canada and the Search for a 3-D Solution in Kosovo" is the latest *IRPP Policy Matters* study to be released as part of IRPP's Canada and the World research program. It is now available on-line in Adobe (.pdf) format on the Institute's Web site (www.irpp.org).

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