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NEWS RELEASE

"Sailing in Concert": Canada-US Naval Interoperability After September 11

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The new emphasis on homeland security increases the importance of US-Canada cooperation at sea

Montreal – "Ottawa cannot choose to ignore American efforts to secure the maritime approaches to the continent," especially since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, argues Joel J. Sokolsky in "Sailing in Concert: The Politics and Strategies of Canada-US Naval Interoperability," released today by the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP).

The Dean of Arts, and Professor of Political Science at the Royal Military College of Canada argues that "interoperability is an inescapable and highly beneficial fact of life for the Canadian Navy if Ottawa wishes to maintain a 'global' defence policy":

- Interoperability with the United States Navy (USN) becomes even more important as the two countries confront the threat of terrorism in distant seas and its home waters, recognizing the dominant position that the United States holds, and seeks to maintain in international relations.
- But, Ottawa has navigated these waters before in its history, while still protecting and furthering the Canadian interest. The world-class capabilities of today's Canadian Navy can make interoperability with the USN a mainstay of Canada's national security policy, if combined with careful and continual political oversight.
- And these welcome Canadian maritime contributions, however useful in a particular venture, will likely not give Ottawa a greater voice in larger political or strategic decisions. The choice to sail in concert with the USN will remain a Canadian one, as will the selection of particular roles and missions within the combined forces. But once Canadian naval forces are at sea, Ottawa does yield a measure of independence and its policy options are narrowed. This, and not fears about foreclosing an independent Canadian decision to participate, is the true sovereignty concern about interoperability.

Sokolsky concludes that as long as Canada wishes to play a role in world affairs and as long as the Navy can be a useful tool in supporting such a role, there will always be a certain tension between the strategy and politics of interoperability with the USN. This is

not a new situation, and it is one that can be properly managed with close political oversight.

"Sailing in Concert: The Politics and Strategies of Canada-US Naval Interoperability" is the latest *Choices* paper to be published in the IRPP's *National Security and Interoperability* series. It is now available in Adobe (.pdf) format on the IRPP website at <http://www.irpp.org> – to access the document, simply click on the "What's New" icon on the homepage.

For more information, or to schedule an interview with the author, please contact the IRPP. To receive IRPP media advisories and news releases via e-mail, please subscribe to the IRPP e-distribution service by visiting the newsroom on the IRPP website.

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