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Tuesday, June 8, 2004

NEWS RELEASE

IRPP Study Calls For a “Homeland First” Approach to Defence Policy

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Increasing defence spending to boost “international standing” should not be the primary focus of defence policy, but defending the Canadian homeland should.

Montreal – The Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP.org) released today a study by Joel Sokolsky entitled, “Realism Canadian Style: The Chrétien Legacy in National Security Policy.”

The study looks at the Chrétien foreign and defence policy legacy in the context of Canada’s security relations with the United States and demonstrates that far from being asleep in the last fifteen years, Canada was overcommitted once its real interests are factored in.

Sokolsky, Dean of Arts and Science at the Royal Military College of Canada and a Fulbright scholar at Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts this year, applauds the recent National Security Policy for indicating that Canada needs to be more “selective in deploying forces overseas” and urges the government to implement it forthwith.

The author sees no problem in reconciling foreign and domestic security-related interventions. “While retaining an overseas capability, the Ottawa administration should, as part of the new plans to enhance security measures, impress upon Washington (and the American public) the more important contribution being made by Canada to the security of the United States through its military and non-military efforts to secure the American homeland,” concludes Sokolsky.

It is in our interest, argues the author, to defend the Canadian homeland. On the one hand, it will convince Washington that Canada is not an American defence problem. On the other, it is necessary as he states “for the maintenance of the free flow of goods, services and people at home.”

“Realism Canadian Style: The Chrétien Legacy in National Security Policy” is the latest *Policy Matters* study to be released as part of the IRPP’s Canada and the World series. It is now available on-line in Adobe (.pdf) format on the Institute’s Web site (www.irpp.org). Please find the summary attached.

For more information or to request an interview, please contact the IRPP.

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- 30 -

Contact:

Jasmine Sharma (jsharma@irpp.org)
Director of Communications and Public Relations
IRPP.org
(514) 985-2461, ext. 324