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NEWS RELEASE

## ***Under Present Funding Scenario Military Interoperability with the US Could Imperil Canada's Capacity to Deploy Canadian Forces***

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**Montreal** – Canadian policy-makers need to explore the implications of a continuing trend of closer integration of Canada's armed forces with those of the United States, says a new study written by two of the country's experts on defence issues and released today by the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP).

"In order to play a significant role on the world stage, Canada has to get into bed with the United States," says a new *Policy Matters* paper by Danford W. Middlemiss and Denis Stairs, Professors in the Department of Political Science at Dalhousie University. The study is entitled "The Canadian Forces and the Doctrine of Interoperability: The Issues."

In fact, say the authors, Canadian defence planners are well-along in the process. "...Canadian defence planners have been moving towards greater interoperability with the United States in a manner that is far more comprehensive and rapidly paced than most Canadians realize."

For some, this may be a sobering thought. Others may not mind at all, say the authors. But whatever the reaction, surely no one would think that this process should unfold in shadow, or be realized through osmosis. For Stairs and Middlemiss, it warrants a closer public look.

In geopolitical and sovereignty terms, there are some serious risks:

- There is now increasing anecdotal and other evidence that in recent years the Europeans have come to assume that Canada has so fully integrated with the United States that it can no longer be regarded as a useful interlocutor, much less as an independent player;
- From the American point of view, such co-operation with Canada is not essential, and if the problems involved in promoting it become too troublesome for the results, US forces will not allow such complications to retard their own military exploitation of cutting-edge technologies;
- A fully funded interoperability arrangement might still leave Canadian decision-makers with at least some military options of their own. By contrast, a lightly funded arrangement could force them to act in lockstep with American initiatives whether they like them or not;
- Any serious alternative to interoperability would demand a far greater expenditure of public funds than the workings of Canadian politics are likely to make possible.

The authors also point out that, from the purely military point of view, the rationale for pursuing the goal of interoperability seems quite logical:

- It maximizes military returns and minimizes combat risk;
- It holds out the prospect of operating with cutting-edge military technologies and in tandem with the most sophisticated military machine ever constructed in the history of humankind;
- It seems to be consistent with the pattern of Canada's past experiences with combat operations abroad, where operations have always been conducted in the context of coalitions with allies;
- It offers what Canadian diplomacy wants most from the military game, which is the enhancement of its political credit where it really counts: in the capitals of the foreign powers that matter most to Canada;
- And at the most mundane level, it makes the best of a bad budget.

"The Canadian Forces and the Doctrine of Interoperability: The Issues," is the latest *Policy Matters* paper to be published by the IRPP. 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 authors, 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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