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## NEWS RELEASE

### ***Strategic Vision will improve Canada's Naval Capacity to Serve Flexible Foreign Policy: Phased Modernization Programme Proposed***

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***Without commitment to modernization and replacement, the existing fleet will soon be "verging on obsolescence," says Peter Haydon.***

**Montreal** – Despite clear evidence that Canada continues to be well served by its Navy, some planning decisions have been put off so long that the current fleet could soon be "verging on obsolescence," says Peter Haydon in a new Working Paper released today by the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP.org).

"Present fleet capabilities are inadequate for the full range of tasks that need to be carried out under the prevailing defence policy," writes Haydon, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies at Dalhousie University. The paper, entitled "Canadian Naval Future: A Necessary Long-Term Planning Framework," outlines steps that the Federal government must take to ensure that Canada's naval capabilities can be sustained over the long term.

The author writes that Canada needs "a core definition of the military's precise role in the broad context of national and global security that transcends partisan politics," an exercise that has not been done since 1994. Without such a long-term policy vision, Haydon warns that the turf-based political tail will continue to wag the strategic dog, which makes sound long-term procurement decisions virtually impossible.

Haydon points out that naval forces are inherently more flexible than other branches of the armed services, since they can be dispatched quickly, are essentially self-sufficient and can adapt to rapidly changing mission requirements, whether they be military, humanitarian, observer or surveillance capacity. This flexibility is an asset in a world that has become more unpredictable in terms of security needs. Canada has been well served in the past by its Navy, but, as Operation *Apollo* (in support of the War on Terrorism) has shown, current force levels and management ability while able to acquit themselves well as they did in *Apollo*, are operating under severe limitations which a rational defence review should address.

The author thus calls for "imaginative and innovative" approaches to naval planning that take into account the new emphasis on homeland security while maintaining the capacity to respond internationally.

To assure long-term ability to meet domestic and international maritime security needs, Haydon argues that the recent contract to replace the *Sea King* helicopters must be complemented by long-overdue orders for next-generation destroyers and fleet support ships. But this is only a starting point, since these new platforms will not come into service for a decade or more. Further complicating the matter is what Haydon describes as the "politically directed demise" of Canada's shipbuilding industry, which raises the question of who is going to build the new vessels.

To bridge the resulting capability gap over the next 10 to 15 years, Haydon proposes a phased modernization program that includes conversion of 3 or 4 *City*-class frigates to provide command-and-control and air defence capabilities, long-term lease or purchase of commercial tankers to provide fleet support, and modernization of submarines and patrol vessels.

"Versatile naval forces will continue to be a sound investment in national security, no matter what happens," concludes Haydon, "but Canadian politicians do not seem to be convinced of this, and therein lies the problem."

"Canadian Naval Future: A Necessary Long-Term Planning Framework" is the latest *Working Paper* to be released as part of the 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](http://www.irpp.org)).

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