

## PREFACE

*Ann Griffiths*  
*Dalhousie University*

This book arose out of the reaction to the publication of an article by Dan Middlemiss and Denis Stairs in the June 2002 edition of *Policy Matters* published by the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP). The article (included herein) is entitled “The Canadian Forces and the Doctrine of Interoperability: The Issues”. After a number of spirited conversations, in particular one with Dr. Frank Harvey, Director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, in the hallways at Dalhousie University, several things had become clear. First, it was obvious that there was much interest in the subject of Canada-US military interoperability. And, second, it was clear that intelligent and thoughtful people differed substantially in their views of this subject, and of the future of the Canadian Forces in general. It seemed that the time was ripe for a more systematic discussion.

I talked to people involved with the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies and asked for suggestions as to people who might have an interest in, or opinion about, the issue of pursuing interoperability with the United States. In short order, I sent emails to a broad array of people soliciting their opinions on the subject. This book is the result of those solicitations. It was our hope to attract as many different perspectives as possible, and thus the emails were sent to Canadian and American military personnel, academics in Canada, the United States and Britain (from Departments of Political Science, Sociology and History), Canadian non-governmental organizations with an interest in the subject, and media personnel.<sup>1</sup> All were asked to contribute a paper discussing whatever aspect of Canada-US military interoperability was closest to their heart. They were given only a brief time to write their contributions and very tight length restrictions. That so many were able (and willing) to meet the deadline, and that so many of the contributors took great liberties with the length restrictions, speaks volumes about the passion that this subject evokes.

I think readers will enjoy the results. The book begins with the article by Middlemiss and Stairs. This article—as its name suggests—gives a comprehensive and panoramic view of the issues surrounding Canada-US

interoperability. The papers included in Part Two, “The Debate”, are uniformly interesting and entertaining. They range from discussions of specific military interactions, to historical consideration of the Canada-US military relationship, to broader discussions of security and military policy.

The contributions relating to specific military subjects discuss issues as diverse as interactions between the Canadian and American Navies, Canada-US interaction in NORAD, and the NATO experience of interoperability. In general, these contributions indicate that the cooperation between Canadian and American armed forces has been extremely beneficial and useful in terms of serving both military and political objectives and, thus, far relatively painless in terms of dragging Canada into military skirmishes from which it wishes to remain clear.

Other selections in Part Two examine the doctrine of interoperability itself, the challenges of living next door to a “hyperpower”, the difficulties of dealing with the United States in matters of security in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the resistance of the Canadian military to being relegated to “niche” status, the unwillingness (or inability) of Canadian politicians to make hard decisions about the Canadian military, and the Canadian tradition of military free-riding while expecting a seat at every table.

A number of important points become clear from reading this book. First, there is a sense of inevitability—Middlemiss and Stairs paint a picture of a train rolling downhill without brakes. Unless Canadians are willing to pump huge resources into the military and are willing to take a stand alone on some international issues, we either have to work with the United States or we have to abandon the Canadian tradition of internationalism. Second, it also seems clear from many of the articles—although this point is perhaps made more implicitly—that there is an unhappiness with Canadian politicians who have abrogated their policy-making role in terms of the military and defence/security policy, and who have continually expected the Canadian Forces to do more and more while giving them less and less. And third, the Middlemiss/Stairs article and many other articles in this book indicate that while adopting interoperability with the United States *may* be a good idea and *may* be Canada’s only option, it is too important a position for Canada to drift into without serious consideration in Parliament and without public discussion. To further Middlemiss and Stairs’ analogy, it would be better to make a conscious decision to get into bed with the United States, rather than just waking up there one morning with a terrible headache and no recollection as to how or when we got there.

This book owes a great debt to Hugh Segal, President of the IRPP, and Suzanne Ostiguy McIntyre, Vice-President, Operations, for giving the

Centre for Foreign Policy Studies permission to reprint the Middlemiss/Stairs article. The speed and enthusiasm with which they granted permission says much about the IRPP's commitment to furthering debate in Canada on this and other subjects. We are grateful for their assistance.

Let me make a final note about the organization of this volume. As mentioned above, it is divided into two sections—the issues and the debate. Part One consists of the article by Dan Middlemiss and Denis Stairs that started the ball rolling. Part Two of the book—the debate—presents the smorgasbord of opinions on the issue. It should be noted that because of the difficulty in grouping them thematically, the papers in Part Two are presented alphabetically.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Dan Middlemiss and Denis Stairs for allowing their work to serve as the catalyst—or perhaps the piñata—for this discussion. They call for public debate on the subject of Canada-US military interoperability, and their paper has been the instrument for beginning this debate.

## **Notes**

1. It should be noted that many military personnel on both sides of the Canada-US border were extremely interested in the subject, but the response by serving military personnel was restricted in some cases by the fact they are not permitted to comment on military policy.

