

# PREFACE

*Mr. Graham F. Walker*  
*Publications Coordinator/Editor*  
*Centre for Foreign Policy Studies*

**T**he Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, an integral component of Dalhousie University's Political Science Department, is now approaching thirty-five years of scholarship and non-partisan policy analysis in the fields of: Canadian and American Foreign, Defence and Security Policy; Global and Human Security; and in particular its long-standing research agenda into studying and developing Maritime Security and Oceans Policy. When the Department of National Defence founded one of its much sought after national chairs in Military and Strategic Studies at Dalhousie in 1971, the first academic chosen to hold that honoured position was analyst Michael McGwire; a specialist in Soviet naval studies who consequently pioneered the strong maritime foundation at the CFPS which is now renowned both nationally and internationally as a "Centre of Excellence" for maritime security and oceans governance issues.

Today, the maritime pillar of the CFPS' research agenda draws on a diverse range of academics, serving and retired practitioners, and many 'up and coming' scholars to maintain both the energy and progress of its important mandate. This cadre of research fellows actively contributes to several dynamic components of the pillar, comprising a number of highly successful ventures into initiatives such as maritime 'Track II diplomacy,' policy prescription to both national authorities and organisations like the United Nations, and of course the academic's staple of research and analysis.

In this vein, the CFPS produces two distinct publication series: the *Maritime Security Working Papers*, which are compilation monographs addressing contemporary tactical issues of water-borne security broadly defined, thus providing a forum for well-reasoned essays on the complete range of maritime security issues; and the *Maritime Security Occasional Papers*, which are book-length treatise by individual scholars addressing strategic issues from the unique maritime perspective, ones that lend insight into the larger issues of national politics, interest and policy which a maritime nation such as Canada must manage. It is this latter series, and the complex yet fundamentally important issues it seeks to illuminate, that one of Dalhousie University's most promising graduates has aspired to with this MSOP edition; *Weighing the Options: Case Studies in Naval Interoperability and Canadian Sovereignty*.

Tackling not only the touchstone issue of national sovereignty so familiar to all Canadians, but also the daunting task of producing Maritime Security Occasional Paper 'lucky number 13,' Richard Williams has produced an empirical political analysis which sheds reason and tested fact on an all too often emotionally charged issue that all concerned Canadians have an opinion about: military interoperability. In an era dominated by the ongoing War against Terrorism and an aggressively active 'hyperpower' that is made ubiquitous in every international crisis, predominately by the power projected through its own navy, Richard Williams has built on his very successful graduate thesis to investigate the political implications of Canada's Navy

working ‘seamlessly’ alongside the American fleet. His work specifically examines the intimate and tactically successful relationship between the Canadian and American navies, and seeks to conclusively determine the implications of that relationship, known simply as ‘interoperability,’ upon the strength of Canadian autonomy and independence as our country seeks to ‘chart its own course’ into the future.

Richard undertakes his inductive argument by operationalising the most pointed critiques put forth by detractors of the policy of interoperability, and stating them as scientific hypotheses, evaluates them against two well-documented and contemporary case studies of Canadian and American naval collaboration. The results are as striking as they are informative. Through focusing on naval coalitions, he addresses head-on the many misconceptions about military interoperability in general, the variety of which fall under two broad rubrics; the first of which is functionalist and the second instrumentalist.

The former stems from fears that interoperability represents a ‘slippery-slope’ towards complete military integration, which in turn will slowly bring about the absorption of Canadian sovereignty in the determination of organic foreign policy. The latter emerges from the common fear many people face in simply programming their VCR, which is that technical standardisation and compatibility somehow equates with interoperability, which in turn leads to the degradation of Canadian sovereignty.

Richard’s study effectively demonstrates that neither contention has validity, and as they stem from fear rather than reason, have little place in the serious debates concerning the proper role for Canada and its armed forces in today’s world. Through its empirical methodology and exacting analysis of both Operations *Friction* and *Apollo*, the author shows that the critical assertions made against the Canadian practice of interoperability with its larger American partner are largely ideological and more likely the result of the thinly-veiled anti-Americanism which is so popular and politically fashionable in Canada today in addition to a false sense of ‘defeatist nationalism,’ than the product of actual analysis regarding the institutional structures and political policies which interoperability effects.

Although a small-*N* study conducted within a very specific framework, *Weighing the Options: Case Studies in Naval Interoperability and Canadian Sovereignty* and its carefully and clearly drawn conclusions has important implications and policy insights for the larger issues of Canadian sovereignty, Canada-U.S. relations and the role Canada wishes to play in the post-9/11 world.