

## VII CONCLUSION: PUTTING A SPOTLIGHT ON TWO SOCIETIES, THEIR MILITARY ROLES AND MEDIA ATTITUDES

The CIIPS seminar highlighted the very dissimilar roles that Canada and the United States play in the world, the striking differences in the two societies created by separate historical experiences, the vast imbalance in their military strength and how their media reflect these contrasts.

On the first morning, Colin MacKenzie of *The Globe and Mail* remarked on how much more militarized a society the United States is. Compared with them, we don't have much of an army, he said, hastening to add: "I think that's a good thing, but it doesn't make much of a story." Rear-Admiral Larry Murray heartily disagreed, on the basis that Canada's peacekeeping operations around the world make a great story. Yet in a way, his argument strengthened the point. Canada has a small army performing good, useful work in defusing dangerous situations. Our soldiers are helping to prevent simmering sources of conflict from boiling over into front-page headlines -- the kind that send anchormen in shirts with epaulettes scurrying to distant corners of the globe.

The US Army fights in more wars than Canada does, with many more men -- and now women -- per capita in uniform. Every small town has boys in the service, which means news of some sort for every medium from *The New York Times* and CNN to small-town weeklies and local radio. The British and French also keep many more people in service than Canada does, probably because, like the United States, they still behave at times like the full-blown imperial powers they once were. They are willing to spend the money on the troops and equipment required to make this kind of role possible when they think it is required.

These differences are reflected in our debates on international conflict, and our definitions of the public interest. Well qualified to talk about this was Rajhida Dergham, a Lebanese-born American citizen who lives in New York as correspondent for the London-based Arab newspaper *Al-Hayat*, and a regular commentator on Middle Eastern subjects for both CBC and PBS, the American public network.