

**George Washington University
Homeland Security Policy Institute
Roundtable on Homeland Security**

November 1, 2007

**Remarks by Ambassador Wilson
Embassy of Canada, Washington, D.C.**

Transnational Strategies for Transnational Threats

I want to begin by thanking the organizers at the Homeland Security Policy Institute for organizing this event, and to congratulate them on this very worthwhile effort to reach out and engage the international community on issues of terrorism.

The underlying theme of these roundtable events is that “transnational threats require transnational strategies if they are to be countered successfully.” In short, to succeed you best not go at it alone. I would go even further; we have too much to lose if we don’t work together.

I want to begin by telling you about a recent event that I think is illustrative of how quickly we can lose this perspective.

On September 27, the Senate Finance Committee held hearings on a report of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) entitled “Border Security - Security Vulnerabilities at Unmanned and Unmonitored US Border Visions.”

And what’s more, it came with home videos. We saw investigators seeking to cross the US border, principally at unmanned and unmonitored locations, four along the US border with Canada and three along the US border with Mexico. In a number of instances, investigators carried duffle bags simulating the carriage of unspecified radiological material.

One of the witnesses testified how easy it was to cross into the US from Canada. Another witness talked about the relative ease with which individuals could obtain radioactive materials around the world. Now, he did not say they could be obtained in Canada. Nor did he say that that this stuff can be more easily obtained in the US.

Now, what was the impact of “this scientific study”. A number of Senators focussed on the asymmetry of resources deployed along the US southern and northern border—roughly 12,000 to one thousand, and suggested that the

northern border was a source of vulnerability. Some Senators made reference to Canada as a source of terrorists.

Now, while much of this political theatre was aimed at the Administration, it could only reinforce a perception that Canada posed particular threat to the United States.

What is disappointing about this kind of debate is that it hides the reality of what really happens between Canada and the US on security, how Canada and the US work together in front of, behind and at the border to protect against terrorism and to ensure our common security.

I would argue that the Canada-US relationship on security and counter-terrorism exemplifies the philosophy that underpins these roundtable sessions – the need for transnational strategies to fight transnational threats. While we once proudly said that the Canada-US border was “the longest undefended border in the world”, we really should be saying “we share the longest secure border in the world”.

A second consequence of these misperceptions of risks is that they have the potential to lead to making the wrong investments and to bad policy, and compromise the success we’ve shared in building one of the most successful social and economic partnerships in the world.

The Consequences of Getting it Wrong

Let’s remind you of what’s at risk here. NAFTA has been an astonishing success. It has created an integrated, competitive economic platform which has created jobs and increased productivity. From 1993 to 2005, trade among NAFTA partners grew an astonishing 173%. And at the end of 2006, foreign direct investment by NAFTA countries in other NAFTA partners totalled close to \$500 billion

Canada and the US now have a highly integrated economic partnership. Canada and the US "make stuff together" more often than we compete. Our trade is also unique in terms of volume and immediacy of our cross-border shipments. So our shared economic prosperity and North American competitiveness relies on an efficient cargo supply chain and making the border work.

We need to get the security and facilitation balance at the border right. There are clear signs that we are getting off track – that we are straying from the principles of risk management that showed such promise in the early years following 9/11. The GAO report is but only one illustrative example.

Canadian-US Security Partnership

But I don’t want to focus on what’s not working, rather I would rather look at what is working and why Americans and Canadians should have confidence that the

Canada-US security partnership provides the best investment for protecting this continent and protecting against terrorism.

Canada has a long history of working together with the US on security of the continent, a security relationship that extends long before 9/11. Our two countries are founding members of NATO. Our defence industries are highly integrated and our armed forces function with an unparalleled degree of interoperability. In NORAD, Canadians and Americans work together in a mountain in Colorado, not as separate armies, but as one bi-national command to protect the airspace of North America.

And there has been ongoing cooperation between our border agencies, our intelligence agencies, immigration agencies, local and municipal police forces that also extends well-before 9/11.

This partnership embraces a continuum approach to security; it puts emphasis on what happens behind and beyond the border, not just at the border; it focuses on better intelligence to identify and manage the risks to our society. This ongoing partnership makes more sense than those who argue that we need more border guards posted every 100 yards along the border. Not such a practical or well-conceived idea.

The Canadian Security Story

You know well the investments that the US government has made in counter-terrorism and homeland security since 9/11. I would imagine that it is safe to say that you are not likely equally well-versed in how Canada has responded. So let me spend a few minutes outlining what we've achieved.

I believe Canada has as good a security story to tell as the United States since 9/11. There is no doubt in my mind that Canada, more so than any other country on the globe, seized how the world, and how America, changed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

9/11 was indeed a wake-up call, not only to all of us on how unprepared we were in North America in the face of the threat of global terrorism, but also how fragile our economic prosperity was.

So just as the U.S. took fundamental steps to confront the threats, to realign its institutions, to make real investments in security and to develop new strategies to fight the threat, Canada did so too.

First of all, we realized that it is important to confront terrorists abroad before they can attack us. Canada is playing a significant role in the international campaign against terrorism in Afghanistan. We have over 2500 fighting men and women as part of the NATO campaign to secure the country so that development and

reconstruction can take place. We have pledged over \$1 billion in development assistance in support of the Afghan people as part of the Bonn Process.

At home, we created a new Department of Public Safety to bring our policing, security and intelligence forces together and combine them under one umbrella. All this was meant to break down silos, facilitate cooperation and track threats better. It mirrors in many ways your creation of the Department of Homeland Security

In 2004 Canada produced its first comprehensive statement of National Security Policy, entitled "Securing an Open Society". Some of the initiatives included the establishment of an Integrated Threat Assessment Centre, much like the US Joint Terrorism Centre. But interestingly enough, our strategy also established an advisory Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security.

Canada has spent more than \$10 billion in new security spending. In U.S. terms, this would be the equivalent of \$100 billion, given the relative size of the two economies.

We reformed our immigration policies so that, contrary to what some may claim, our immigration procedures are among the most secure and robust in the world. The new Immigration Act of June, 2002 redefined the selection criteria for immigrants and established severe penalties for people smuggling and trafficking, among many other changes. We accept about a quarter of a million legal immigrants per year. All are fully screened for security, criminal, and medical grounds before they are given a Canadian visa.

No country is immune from terrorism, but Canadian law enforcement and intelligence agencies have as good a grasp on potential threats within our country, compared with other agencies in other Western countries, including the US.

We have introduced tough security and anti-terrorism legislation. The Anti Terrorism Act provides a measured approach that enhances Canada's ability to prosecute terrorists and to prevent them from carrying out their acts. Although two provisions sunset last March, primarily on investigative hearing, the government is reviewing its options to reintroduce these provisions. Similarly, in response to a Supreme Court ruling, Canada is looking at amend the security certificates.

In Canada, there has also been considerable improvement in recent years in the extent to which our security agencies collaborate and share information. While we are smaller than American agencies, we are also more nimble.

The development of Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams has increased the capacity for the collection, sharing and analysis of intelligence

among partners with respect to individuals who are a threat to national security. This enhanced enforcement capacity and shared federal, provincial and municipal resources enable us to bring such targets to justice and to work effectively with partners nationally and internationally. This was shown particularly effective in the arrest of the Toronto 17 last June.

Working with the US

Now layer that national effort with what we do in collaboration and partnership with the United States, and internationally.

The Bilateral Consultative Group on Counter-Terrorism Cooperation (BCG) is a key forum for coordinating our work in this area.

But beyond that, we have unparalleled cooperation between our intelligence and law enforcement agencies 24/7, 365 days a year. We have daily contact, on the ground between our border agencies, our intelligence agencies, immigration agencies, and local police forces. An example of this was the arrest of the alleged Toronto terrorists. Two American extremists, under surveillance by US FBI met with members of the Toronto cell already under surveillance by Canadian investigators. The close cooperation between the FBI and Canadian agencies allowed one to pick up where the other left off.

Integrated Border Enforcement Teams also exemplify the close ties between US and Canadian law enforcement. Set up at 23 strategic locations along the border between the two countries, IBETs are integrated binational enforcement teams that combine resources and personnel from the RCMP, CBSA, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, US Customs and Border Protection, the Border Patrol and US Coast Guard.

Canada also shares the US interest in more effective public diplomacy to counter terrorist "ideology". We see opportunity to do more in the area "prevention of terrorism", including radicalization.

In addition to bilateral efforts, Canada and the US cooperate extensively on counter-terrorism in multilateral fora, particularly the UN, G8, OSCE and OAS. Canada, like the US, is a major donor in helping our countries fight terrorism. Our \$15 million Counter-Terrorism Capacity Build program provides training, funding, equipment and technical and legal assistance to other states to enable them to prevent and respond to terrorist activity.

In conclusion, I would argue that Canada and the United States have developed extensive joint strategies and networks of collaboration in the areas of security, intelligence, and law enforcement and emergency preparedness to combat threats to our citizens. These offer the best investments for ensuring the safety of North America

Resilience in the wake of terrorist attacks and natural disasters must be a key element of any country's homeland security strategy or counter-terrorism strategies.

And with that I would like to introduce my colleague, Dr James Young, whom many of you might know, one of the world's foremost experts in emergency preparedness. He provides advice to the Canadian government on promoting seamless emergency preparedness system. He is seeking to shape a culture of emergency preparedness in Canada that cuts across all levels of government and which involves the private sector. He will give you an overview of where Canada is heading in emergency preparedness. Thank you.