

Brooke Miller, University of Calgary

Brooke Miller is currently studying at the University of Calgary, pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. She will complete her fourth year of study in April of 2004 and is applying to law school for the following semester. Her academic interests include Canadian foreign policy and security, and domestic and international law. Besides her current focus on Canada's risk in relation to terrorist activities, she is also engaging in research related to Canada's experience in Kosovo and Canadian involvement in military and peacekeeping activities.

Originally from rural Saskatchewan, Brooke moved to Calgary in the year 2000 and has enjoyed her time there since. The fast paced, culturally diverse and friendly atmosphere of the city and people have made her experience in Calgary a rich one.

Brooke has previously traveled to various locations in Western Canada, Ontario and Quebec. She especially enjoyed a trip which consisted of visits to Ottawa, Hull and Quebec City. She hopes to be granted acceptance to McGill University and subsequently looks forward to learning a second language.

Brooke's interests beyond school include sports, oil painting, and interior design. In terms of employment, Brooke has worked in a variety of atmospheres which have allowed her to interact with fascinating people and accumulate a diverse range of skills, including marketing, customer service and employee training.

Abstract

Following the events of September 11th, Canada has begun to analyze the probability of risk associated with facing a similar terrorist attack. The argument that Canada may face a terrorist threat can be analyzed considering three elements of risk: firstly the possibility of a

direct attack on Canadian soil, secondly the threat of terrorists harboring within our borders, and thirdly the threat additional attacks on the United States may pose to Canada.

The terrorist threat to Canada can be examined from a multiplicity of factors including, Canada's domestic security mandate, its relationship and proximity to the United States, Canada's commitment to a market economy and its liberal democratic tradition, Canada's foreign policy initiative and its relationship with the international community. After exploring these variables it is possible to gauge the level of risk Canada faces, subsequently leading to policy-making alternatives Canada can adopt to minimize one or all of the three forms of terrorist threat.

In particular, this paper will draw examples from two main areas, the first being Canada-United States relations. With regard to interstate relations this paper will analyze *Operation Apollo* and the *Smart Border Initiative* in order to evaluate Canada's strategic military and economic positions. In addition to external factors this paper will evaluate Canada's internal strategy, including the country's *Intelligence Initiative* and the current position of the Canadian Armed Forces.

The question of whether these three potential risk factors pose an ultimate threat to the Canadian state must be addressed. The need for anticipatory measures and preventative action are key to protecting Canada's territorial, economic and societal well-being. Without examining the potential risk factors and security linkages associated with terrorism, Canada will be hard-pressed to withstand a direct or indirect attack.

Canada- Trivial or Target?: Canada's Response to the Threat of International Terrorism

Brooke Miller

Following the events of September 11th, concern has surfaced regarding the risk Canada faces of experiencing a similar terrorist attack. There is an abundance of literature addressing the threat of international terrorism and the subsequent effects of recent acts in the United States. The atrocities of September 11th can be focused within a Canadian context, in order to analyze Canada's probability of risk via terrorism.

The true objective of this analysis will be to answer three key questions. Is Canada at risk of facing a terrorist attack in the future? If that attack were likely to occur, in what form

could it present itself and what measures should be taken to mitigate this threat?

This paper will argue, although it is unlikely Canada will face a *direct* international terrorist attack, because of our economic and geographic position in the world, the threat of international terrorism directed at Canada will never be completely eliminated. It will be subsequently argued that, the most probable form of terrorist risk Canada may face includes, an attack originating from within Canadian borders by individuals already residing in Canada; a risk to Canada's infrastructure and economy as a result of subsequent attacks on the United States, or a cyber-based or information systems attack as a result of web-based violence. To conclude, emphasis will be placed on the level of uncertainty and dynamic nature of terrorism, which impedes the development of specific threat assumptions, as displayed by the lack of forecasting and calculation within the literature available. Based on the assumptions above, the terrorist threat must be recognized as a plausible reality, and situational analysis to understand and mitigate these risk forms must be performed.

Outlining the Argument

In order to form a concrete understanding of the concept of terrorism, this paper will examine the notions of risk and terrorism, and the general forms they can take. The nature of the threat and current motivation behind the attacks on September 11th, will also be addressed through a brief examination of Islamic Fundamentalism. In order to gauge the level and type of terrorist risk Canada faces, this paper will analyze attributes of Canadian domestic and international policy that may influence or deter terrorist activity directed at Canada. These attributes include Canada's proximity to and relationship with the United States, Canada's global nature and finally, the country's level of infrastructural connectivity through information systems.

Canadian responses to the September 11th terrorist attack will be explored including the preventative and protective measures currently being employed. Emphasis will be placed on Canada's individual initiatives and bi-lateral agreements with the United States, including policies such as increased border, airport and marine security, Canada's introduction of terrorist legislation and the country's military involvement with emphasis placed on Canada's position in Afghanistan. Analogous to these initiatives, this paper will differentiate between some of the various types of weaponry and delivery mechanisms terrorists may adopt. This paper will stress the level of uncertainty that accompanies the subject of international terrorism and the need for Canada to maintain realistic expectations with regard to the level of security the country can provide while balancing a sufficient level of societal comfort for Canadians.

What Is Risk?

It must be recognized that risk is a relative concept. The word means various things to various people because it can be interpreted in a variety of ways within a variety of

circumstances. It is critical to recognize that broad concepts of risk and risk management can be interpreted within many contexts. Circumstances which seemingly pose a threat to one individual or group, can simultaneously be seen by others as completely irrelevant. In addressing the concept of risk, there is often a relationship between perceived risk and real risk. In determining whether an activity or circumstance is actually a threat relies on the understanding of whether that threat actually exists or if it is only thought to exist, when in fact it does not. Using the events of September 11th as an example of this, tells us that there is indeed a difference between these two elements of risk. Prior to the events of September 11th, very few people *perceived* that the risk of a terrorist attack on the United States existed, but as we have observed, a *real* risk did in fact exist. With regard to this paper the assumption can now be made that the terrorist threat does pose a risk to North America. The question is whether or not these risks pose a real threat to Canada?

Defining Terrorism and its Forms

There is by no means one universally accepted definition of terrorism. Different countries and varied legislation within those countries have supplied their own version at various points in time. For example, United States legislation defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.”^[1]

Similarly important to defining terrorism, is differentiating between the general forms of attack which exist. This study will focus on two key forms of attack; direct terrorist attacks and indirect terrorist attacks.

Direct Attack

Canadians may be targeted by a direct attack, which can be constituted as terrorist activity, as defined above, directly aimed at Canadian territory, Canadian citizens living domestically or abroad, or those who reside within the country as refugees, visitors or people of other national status. A direct attack would include any form of terrorist act –suicide bombing, hijacking, chemical, biological and nuclear (CBN) weapons, cyber attack, etc.- which directly targets Canadian citizens, soil or infrastructure.

Indirect Attack

Just as significant as a direct attack, an indirect terrorist attack may include, a subsequent terrorist attack, for example on the United States or abroad, where a Canadian citizen or group of citizens suffered harm or died as a result of terrorist acts directed at another party. A second example would be damage suffered by Canada as a result of an attack carried out for example, on American soil, but because of Canada’s geographical proximity

to the United States, the effects of that attack were felt in Canada and as a result caused harm to human life, infrastructure or the environment. In effect, an indirect attack will be defined as an attack not specifically aimed at Canada, but the results of that attack may seriously compromise Canada's domestic or international well-being.

Canada's Response to September 11th

Many critics argue that the Canadian government did not respond timely or effectively to the events of September 11th. Others believe the position taken by the government was relatively adequate. Whether these convictions are true or not, it is the scope of this paper to focus on Canada's action taken after September 11th and what position Canada is in to respond to subsequent attacks on the United States or Canada. A few of the key responses are addressed below and the benefits and consequences of these initiatives briefly outlined.

Terrorist Legislation

Canada is not new to the concept of terrorism. As a result of both the 1985 Air India bombing and Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) Crisis, Canadians have seen the definition of terrorism change and stringent tactics such as the War Measures Act employed.^[2] As proposed earlier, a key response to the events of September 11th was the introduction of Canada's new *Anti-Terrorism Act* (Bill C-36). Prior to the attack on America, Canada had employed various definitions of terrorism, including the one used at the International Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism in 1999. Canada defined terrorism as

...any act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian...when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or to compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.^[3]

With respect to the *Anti-terrorism Act*, Parliament has broadened the definition of terrorism, as referred to above, and includes "attempts to intimidate a population with regard to its economic security; to compel persons to act in a certain way; and to cause serious disruption to essential public or private services."^[4] Terrorism is now defined in the *Criminal Code* as covering acts of domestic and international terrorism committed inside and outside of Canada, and goes further to encompass those individuals and groups who provide assistance -financial or others- to enable terrorist movements.^[5]

Many other countries, including the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany also introduced anti-terrorist laws in order to safeguard against similar terrorist acts occurring from within their countries.^[6] As a result of this legislation, countries including Canada will hopefully have a clearer picture of what constitutes terrorist activity, including, committing, funding and supporting acts of terrorism. Canada's response to the atrocities of September 11th, including revamping criminal legislation, Canada gave its citizens, and the United States the impression that it was taking the terrorist threat seriously. Although it is not the focus

of this paper, it should be mentioned that heated debate regarding the broadness of this definition and the speed at which this legislation was passed, is currently being articulated among various groups including lawyers, academics, civil libertarians and parliamentarians.^[7] The implications of this new definition will likely remain a topic of discussion for some time. Despite the hopes of parliamentarians to create a higher level of deterrence and suppress those individuals who are currently participating in or funding terrorist organizations, the nature and motivation of these particular terrorist groups is of a manner which is not easily deterred.

Security

After the terrorist attacks on America, Canada employed security initiatives which stretched across three key areas of transportation; air, marine and land travel. The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, various government agencies and the Federal Government coordinated their efforts and devised a variety of reports, recommendations and declarations in order to improve security measures within the country.^[8] The federal Budget 2001, allocated \$7.7 billion over a five year period, in order to fund initiatives such as security (\$6.5 billion), improving air travel safety (\$2.2 billion), intelligence and policing (\$1.6 billion), an additional \$1.6 billion for emergency preparedness and support to Canada's military, \$1 billion to departments concerned with efficient immigration, refugee and visitor screening, more than \$1.2 billion for strengthening border security and finally \$60 million to enhance marine security.^[9]

The following section will give a broad overview of three of the above security initiatives, including the Canada-United States "Smart Border Declaration," Marine Security initiatives and the Canadian Forces military activities with focus placed on "Operation Apollo."

Smart Border Declaration

It is well known that trade is absolutely essential to the Canadian economy. Canada's largest bi-lateral trade relationship exists with the United States at an estimated export level, being 40% of Canada's GDP.^[10] Following the events of September 11th, the United States closed its airports, seaports and land crossings, resulting in intense inspections and twelve to eighteen hour delays for trucks when south and northern borders finally opened.^[11] The United States and Canada especially, are extremely vulnerable to future disruptions of trade and for that reason, on December 12, 2001, Canada and the U.S. signed a declaration for the creation of a *Smart Border for the 21st Century*, which is based on the mutual understanding that economic security is essential in the maintenance of public security.^[12]

The *Smart Border Declaration* has evolved in the past two years but essentially aims for better detection of dangerous substances and materials, while protecting the Canadian-American trade relationship by providing the speedy flow of low-risk travelers and goods.^[13] The benefits of this system clearly include a stronger stance against high-risk elements being

transported for the purpose of terrorism or other criminal activity. On balance, these measures do little to mitigate the effects of people or goods who have already been smuggled over the border in the past. Despite the cost and delays now experienced when crossing into the United States or vice versa, this was a problem which needed to be addressed in order to not only protect ourselves against incoming threats, but also to convince the United States of our due diligence in maintaining an open but secure border, for their safety and ours.

Marine Security

The Marine Security initiatives after 9-11 included a rapid reconnection between the Canadian government departments and marine concerns. To put into perspective the scale of Canada's maritime security challenge it is important to look at some of the specifics of marine security. Canada has a coastline of 243,772 km, an area of responsibility of over 11 million square kilometres and 250 ports which received approximately 310 million tonnes in 2001, by some 1700 ships arriving and departing daily within our area of responsibility.^[14] John Manley, the ad hoc Committee of Ministers on Public Security and Anti-Terrorism (PSAT), consisting of various ministers and representatives of government departments, outlined a number of priorities after September 11th. These included preventing terrorists from entering state borders, deterring, detecting, prosecuting and removing terrorists from the country, facilitating Canada-US relations and international initiatives, while protecting Canadian infrastructure.^[15] In order to realize these five priorities, specific government departments were assigned individual areas of attention.

Transport Canada was tasked as lead department to undertake a comprehensive threat assessment and a vulnerability gap analysis. The Coast Guard and Fisheries and Oceans Canada were tasked with increased surveillance of our ocean approaches, and the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency was given responsibility to increase security at ports, most particularly in the handling of containers. Funding followed these taskings.^[16]

Besides recently improved surveillance capabilities, Canada is looking at implementing new initiatives for marine security in the future, including the Automated Identification System (AIS), which is a world-wide program, supported by both the United States and Canadian governments, which may be functioning in four years time.^[17]

Operation Apollo

On October 7, 2001, Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced that Canada would contribute air, land and sea forces under NATO to conduct a campaign against terrorism.^[18] This campaign has been a massive undertaking by the Canadian Forces, as more than 7,000 Canadian Forces personnel have partaken in operations in Afghanistan and Southwest Asia.^[19] Since their deployment, Canadian troops have engaged in a variety of operations

including patrolling, combat and other important missions.

When looking at Canadian response with regard to security measures and initiatives, it is important to remember that Canada from day one, has taken the terrorist threat seriously both domestically and abroad. Canada's safety is fortified by measures taken from within the country and external initiatives abroad. After examining some of the key responses Canada has made, from the passage of Bill C-36, to the various protective and aggressive mechanisms that have been employed, the hopes of diminishing the threat of terror both domestically and internationally has remained a key focus for many Canadians.

Canada: A Potential Target?

The preceding section focused on the preventative measures Canada has developed in response to the terrorist threat. The subsequent discussion will outline four key arguments, which will support the position of why Canada may be recognized as a potential target for international terrorist groups, despite the security measures recently employed. These arguments include, the way in which the terrorist groups themselves determine their enemies and the motivation behind their attacks; secondly Canadian relations with and proximity to the United States and the rest of the western world, both geographically and through our foreign policy decisions; and finally our vulnerability will be assessed on the basis of Canada's high level of global connectivity via the Internet and other information systems.

Islamic Fundamentalism

The simultaneously orchestrated attacks on America have been linked to the well-known terrorist Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network. An exile of Saudi Arabia, and later of Sudan, bin Laden returned to Afghanistan where he was welcomed by the Taliban government who were sympathetic to bin Laden because of their own, deeply rigid and fundamentalist view of Islam; often referred to as Wahhabism.^[20] Osama bin Laden is one of a select group of Muslims who subscribe to the most militant interpretation of Islamic Law, which is widely accepted by both Sunni and Shi-ite extremists.^[21] Their position not only opposes modernity but has exploited Muslim theology by ways in which to justify for example, suicide missions, which are strictly forbidden by Islamic law.^[22] It must be stressed that there are fundamentalist groups within every religion which may or may not participate in terrorist activity. This case in point specifies Muslim extremism because of the evidence linked to specific groups in association with the attacks on America. It is also critical to recognize that these groups are by no means the mainstream of Muslim society. When determining which organizations could be threatening to other societies and states, cultural profiling will never be the answer. There are extremists who exist in every religion culture and country and therefore terrorist organizations need to be differentiated from the broader societal background, not viewed in a way that taints the peaceful majority.

Following September 11th, western states implemented various anti-terrorist laws, intended to deter terrorists from promoting future attacks. Unfortunately it can be argued that terrorist networks such as al Qaeda pay little mind to the deterrence games of political actors. Firstly, deterrence is most effective when a terrorist group has something to lose, such as state territory or populations. For example groups such as the IRA are after the attention gained by terrorism and make a point of not killing “too many” people, because the backlash from the home state.[23] Additionally the aim of these groups is not to cause mass casualties but to make their presence heard. Al Qaeda and other Islamic fundamentalist terrorists groups essentially answer to nobody but their supporters, who often idolize these attackers and see these sacrifices as martyrdom.[24] This belief leads into the second argument of why deterrence has little effect on these terrorist groups. Whereas Western culture would describe a suicide operation in just those terms, fundamental Islamists refer to suicide bombing as *Istishad* or martyrdom and self-sacrifice in the name of Allah.[25] The act is seen as not only excusable but often as desirable, as a system of rewards has been developed to encourage martyrs, promising them eternal life in paradise.[26]

Now that the role of religion has been established within the thought process of these terrorist groups, it is key to this argument to define some of the motivating factors behind such attacks. By comparing these attributes to those that exist within Canada, it is possible to draw conclusions regarding Canada’s vulnerability as a modern, western state.

The Motivation Behind September 11th

After the attacks on the United States, documents were retrieved in Afghanistan which revealed grievances Osama bin Laden had towards the United States. These included:

the presence of U.S. forces on the Arabian peninsula- and especially in Saudi Arabia; U.S. sanctions and aggression against Iraq and the alleged plan of the “Crusader-Zionist alliance” to “annihilate what is left of this [the Iraqi] people;” American support of “the Jews petty state” and for the “spilling of blood in Palestine...[27]

If the American presence in Saudi Arabia and their position on the Israeli-Palestinian situation carries any responsibility with respect to why the terrorists attack was carried out in the United States, this is hardly a supportive argument to propose an attack on Canada is likely to occur. It is necessary to return to the beliefs of the Islamic militants and to the warnings made towards supporters and allies of the United States, which were allegedly voiced by Osama bin Laden following 9-11. To begin, there is the position taken by Muslim extremists that modernity is consistently being impressed upon their culture by western, industrialized nations, namely the United States, in an effort to either change their society or to benefit the Western World.[28] (The risk of terrorism with respect to globalization will be discussed in relation to Canada and its place in the global

sphere following the current discussion). Secondly, there have been fairly consistent warnings, made through the channels of the media, allegedly made by Osama bin Laden, which have threatened attacks against friends and allies of the United States, who either participate in or support their campaigns in any way. With regard to our position in Afghanistan, our place may easily be recognized as supportive to the American cause and therefore our vulnerability again increases both with respect to our soldiers in Afghanistan and other Canadian citizens.

Funding Terrorism

Equally important to the beliefs and motivation behind terrorism, is also critical to address the means by which these attacks can be made reality. Funding terrorism was referred to earlier with respect to the prosecution of individuals or groups by a series of new anti-terrorist legislation, introduced in many western democracies. It is imperative to draw the connection between motive and means because often, an act of terrorism cannot be produced without these elements existing simultaneously. It is argued that funding for terrorist organizations comes in many forms. In his presentation entitled "Cross-Border Law Enforcement," Chris Mathers draws a very direct connection between terrorism and organized crime. He argues that organized crime, such as the opium producers under the Taliban in Afghanistan, are very closely linked to terrorism and therefore, when authorities are able to crack down on activities like drug trafficking and human smuggling, the destruction of these elements will soon lead to the inability to follow through with massive terrorist acts.[\[29\]](#)

Unfortunately, the elimination of organized crime and drug trafficking does not completely eliminate the funding dilemma. Wealthy individuals, such as Osama bin Laden, are frequently linked to terrorist organizations. Any wealthy individual, who is willing to pay enough to promote his or her cause, is often able to make their desires a reality. Similarly, support groups who are able to collect money through legitimate or illegitimate means are relatively free to filter that money to these groups in order to keep them operational. There is often a remote chance of these individuals being caught unless there is already suspicion surrounding them.

Globalization

There are widespread arguments within many areas of the Developing World that the unequal distribution of goods, the division between the rich and poor and the exploitation of these country's resources by Western industrial countries have led to the propagation of Western societies at the expense of the underdeveloped world.[\[30\]](#) If indeed the calculation behind the September 11th attacks were an anti-capitalist movement by these terrorist groups, Canada would in fact be at an equal risk to most Western nations.

Western infatuation with wealth, material goods and international power can simply be

seen as an intimidating threat to other cultures and states that have modest access to these commodities. If these areas of the world have built up hostility toward the West, as a result of Western foreign and domestic policy, it is indeed possible that we may face a vicious retaliation sooner or later. Osama bin Laden for example is concerned with the United States' position within Saudi Arabia, possibly because of the Western influence being circulated within the country or U.S. connection to the Arabian oil fields. Canadian behavior and influence abroad can similarly result in tensions and possible backlashes for Canada, for example as a result of our current position in Afghanistan. Even if it is not clear to many Canadians that our position in Afghanistan is not a peacekeeping one, it is vividly clear to the rebel forces that operate there.

Global Connectivity

Analogous to Canada's global nature is the country's level of interconnectedness within various international and domestic networks, which poses a silent yet serious risk. It has been noted by many scholars that terrorists may increase their level of connectivity through the use of information technology, in order to facilitate and coordinate terrorist activities by connecting various terrorist cells or clusters.^[31] As the Canadian Security Intelligence Service articulates:

Terrorist methods continue to become more sophisticated, both in the use of technology and in exploiting public opinion and media channels...The use of technology, more than ever a part of the terrorist arsenal, has been enhanced by encryption and the Internet to facilitate communications and reach a wider audience...In early March, 2002, the New York Times, citing unidentified government officials in the United States, reported that hints of Al Qaida's regrouping in Pakistan came from intercepted e-mails and other Internet traffic.^[32]

The likelihood of a terrorist organization similarly utilizing the same technology to wage a terrorist attack, by devastating state or international networks and infrastructures, is not as unrealistic as some may think. One estimate by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CISIS) conducted in 1998, suggests that thirty computer experts with a budget of \$10 million U.S. dollars, could easily cripple the United States.^[33]

Information systems are becoming increasingly vulnerable as a result of the growth of information technology and universal access to computers. These factors have essentially eliminated international boundaries and have left infrastructures such as telecommunications, electrical power systems, gas and oil storage, banking, transportation, water supply systems, emergency services and government resources, virtually exposed to threat.^[34] This is very

unsettling for a country like Canada whose citizens utilize these networks on a daily basis for everything from money transactions to carrying out their work-place responsibilities. Recent evidence of the calamity that can arise was seen during the recent blackout in Eastern Canada, which articulates so clearly our level of connectivity and dependence on the infrastructure of the United States and the rest of the world.

Mobility, Geographic Proximity and Subsequent Attacks on the United States

The simple fact that Canadians are highly mobile individuals presents another element of risk into the equation. The fact that the twenty-four [35] Canadians who died in the attacks on September 11th were in the vicinity of these attacks, was likely unknown to the individuals who orchestrated these attacks. The fact that Canadian citizens were on the jets that crashed, or inside the World Trade Center at the time of the crash, is something that Canada needs to consider when assessing its vulnerability by way of an indirect attack.

Whether or not an attack occurs directly on Canadian soil or whether the ultimate target of terrorists are citizens of other countries, this small consolation does not minimize the tragedy. As long as international terrorism exists and Canadians continue to travel and conduct business abroad, terrorism will remain a risk for Canada.

Not only does Canada need to consider that its citizens may fall victim to an attack directed at another state, Canada's geographical location also needs to be kept in mind. The United States being Canada's neighbor to the south, also holds implications for Canadian security. The threat which persists by way of border security has already been explored, but this analysis must also address the threat posed by Canada's heavily populated areas located within the southern portion of the country. In the event of a massive biological or nuclear strike, Canada's population could be as equally devastated as that of the United States. Nuclear explosions do not stop at borders and the spillover from a nuclear strike on any of the United States' more northern, urban centers, such as Seattle or New York, could be detrimental to Canadians.

Subsequent U.S. Attacks

It has been established that a subsequent attack on the United States is not an impossible feat. Despite the increases in security, the introduction of terrorist legislation and the continuing campaign against terrorism abroad, there is always a chance that security measures will fail. The United States' recent campaign in Iraq has likely created more animosity within the Middle East towards Americans, which could essentially lead to a rebirth of terrorism targeted at the United States. Responses by America after the attacks of September 11th, such as closing borders and airports, have left Canada in a compromising position. Not only was Canada forced to evaluate its security capabilities, but Canada has further opened itself to attack by becoming a participatory member in the "War On Terror."

"Sleeper Cells"

With respect to territorial security, there is a critical point which needs to be made. Prior to the adoption of various declarations and security measures, it is possible that dangerous individuals or materials have managed to slip into Canadian territory, by way of air, sea or land. Even if these individuals were screened, upon entering the country, it is possible they were able to claim refugee status and subsequently be granted legal status within Canada.[36] CISIS issued a report noting that since 1985, Canada has witnessed disturbing trends from individuals initially playing a supporting role, such as fundraising and procurement for terrorist acts, to actually planning and preparing for these acts.[37] This fact is extremely alarming in that terrorist arms or groups known as “sleeper cells,” could be harboring within Canadian borders and planning attacks to be delivered within Canada or abroad. Members of these organizations may simply be waiting for a command from outside, before conducting future devastations.

To summarize the above arguments in reference to why specific types of terrorist groups such as al Qaeda pose a threat to Canada or Canadians at home and abroad, this section will conclude with the following arguments. Firstly there are strong motivational factors behind these terrorist groups. Money and politics are often enough to give individuals or groups an incentive to support an opposition movement. These factors are then amplified by a deeply inherent religious base, which seemingly justifies extremism in order to realize the desires of these individuals. With respect to the threat to Canada in particular, factors such as high levels of mobility, a high reliance on technology and Canada’s proximity and relationship with the United States, leads us to conclude that Canada, if not at risk of being directly targeted by these terrorist groups, can certainly claim a potentially serious conflict of interest, if subsequent acts of international terrorism arose. When addressing the threats related to the famous “sleeper cells,” Canada certainly has justification to be concerned by the threat of international terrorism from within.

Types of Threat and Delivery Mechanisms

With the threat of international terrorism more clearly defined, it is equally important to briefly explore a few of the basic terrorist delivery mechanisms, which can be utilized by terrorists in executing an attack. This paper cannot possibly address all types of terrorist delivery systems that exist, for they are too numerous and quite likely, some of them unknown to us. An examination of the few commonly known methods of attack is critical to a clear understanding of international terrorism, for the purpose of forming an argument about the likelihood of these threats being used against Canada.

Unconventional Weaponry

The use of chemical, biological or nuclear (CBN) agents, or unconventional weapons, are often considered the most deadly forms of terrorism. This is both true and false, depending on the situation in which these methods are being employed and the success of the attack. It has been the aim of recent terrorist attacks, as exemplified by September 11th, to destroy as many people as possible.[38] A study by Sandler (2002), shows that the number of

transnational terrorist acts decreased between the 1980s and the 1990s, by almost 60%, while during the same time period, the number of fatalities and injuries caused by such acts actually increased by 20%.^[39] In the attempt to harm or eliminate a large portion of the population, terrorist organizations are exploring unconventional means of attack. The benefits of CBN agents are numerous, including the capability of wiping out large groups of people. Chemical weapons for example affect skin, blood, or the nervous system and as seen in the Tokyo sarin gas attack in 1995, these strikes could potentially be lethal.^[40] Similar results are achievable with the use of biological agents. Biological weapons are extremely deadly and relatively easy to produce and conceal.^[41] As seen in the anthrax scare in 2001 within the United States, the delivery mechanism for biological agents does not need to be complicated. The United States postal system was enough to result in a handful of deaths and the potential for many contacts. The chances of contact are very high, especially with bio-terrorism because the spores are often difficult to detect and therefore numerous individuals, including doctors and nurses, can come into contact with the agent and pass it on at an alarming rate.^[42] The amount and strength of biological agent necessary to make it through the purification system and successfully infiltrate a water system, is a possible but unlikely phenomenon.^[43] On the contrary, anyone could imagine the result of a dissemination of airborne biological agents within a hospital or school.

Unfortunately for these terrorist groups, despite their ability to access chemical and biological agents and their wealth and expertise, it is difficult for even the most knowledgeable to carry out a successful biological attack.^[44] Therefore the inability of the highly specialized, highly funded members of Aum Shinrikyo in the Tokyo subway incident, to successfully carry out a mass casualty attack, can lead to many assumptions about the unlikely reality of a less informed and less scientifically operational terrorist group's ability to succeed with a similar act.^[45] The threat of nuclear weapons or nuclear material being available to terrorist groups has been a serious concern ever since the break up of the former Soviet Union. The idea of "loose nukes" or unaccounted for nuclear weapons and material has haunted analysts for some time and even recently, little reassurance has been given with respect to the location of these nuclear devices.^[46] It is argued that if terrorist groups were to have access to such capabilities, because of the nature of these "new" terrorists, they would have few qualms about using the technology if it were in fact available to them.

Although it is always possible that some terrorist organization may have access to nuclear capabilities, there are various arguments against this notion. For a terrorist group to have the money, facilities and personnel, to purchase, steal or maintain this nuclear capability and its delivery system, the likelihood of all of these factors occurring simultaneously is relatively slim. This is not to say that these methods of delivery should be ignored by any means. Terrorists are constantly improving their delivery capabilities and seem to be on the constant look out for ways to kill more people with less effort risk or backlashes. It is

important to assess the risk of both unconventional and conventional forms of attack, as the following section illustrate.

Conventional Terrorism

Unlike CBN weapons, conventional weaponry such as firearms and explosives are relatively easy to attain because of their wide availability and minimal cost. Conventional terrorism has been much more commonplace in the past because of the “ease” of which these attacks can be carried out.

For example, suicide bombings are extremely inexpensive and take very little preparation on behalf of those who plan them and those who carry them out.

...a recent invoice from Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigade found by Israeli troops at the Palestinian Authority’s headquarters during Operation Defensive Shield, the electrical components and chemical supplies needed to produce a suicide bomb were estimated at about \$150.

The relatively low expenditures involved in the acquisition of explosives make the costs-per-casualty ratio of a suicide operation

a rather favorable one.[\[47\]](#)

It is difficult to fathom that such a horrific act, which often causes numerous casualties, can be achieved through such an inexpensive operation. There are tactical advantages to using suicide bombers, as terrorists are able to select the time and place of the attack and do not have to plan an escape route for the individual delivering the attack.[\[48\]](#) Suicide bombers are almost impossible to protect against and therefore almost always result in a “successful” attack.

Although not as easily coordinated as a suicide operation, plane hijackings have been a common conventional mode of attack in the past. The Air India attack, which resulted in over three hundred fatalities and the most recent attacks on the United States, can be qualified as very successful acts of terrorism.[\[49\]](#) Despite the security measures that have currently been employed to prevent against the threat of a hijacking, there will likely always be people or items that go unnoticed through security checks. Unfortunately, this mode of terrorist attack will likely remain a threat for some time, until a fool proof method of screening is developed.

Cyber Terrorism

The threat of a cyber attack remains a serious element of risk for both states and

individuals. The possibility of destroying vast amounts of infrastructure in a very short amount of time places this threat at an equal level to those examined above. Intelligence and security agencies have warned the public that it is simply a matter of time before a serious risk arises through an informationally based assault on our critical infrastructure.^[50] Without proper security measures taken, many domestic and international networks could be taken by surprise and either utterly devastated or completely destroyed. The threat itself can be as effective as terrorists want it to be, since computer hackers have the ability to determine how devastating the attack will be. As mentioned earlier, the amount of money required to hire the necessary personnel, is not out of reach for those who wish to employ these measures.

In summarizing these three forms of terrorist delivery systems, it is critical to recognize that all forms can be equally devastating and ultimately deadly. Each mode of threat should be addressed with equal care and attention. Whether a terrorist chooses to utilize an expensive but deadly biological agent or a car bomb backed into a building full of people, the effects can essentially have the same result. It is important for authorities and states to continue pursuing a resolution to deal with the numerous threats so easily accessible to the wrong groups of people.

Risk Summary

After analyzing the various elements of risk, the motivations behind these threats and the types of weaponry available, conclusions can be drawn about which of these modes and methods pose the greatest threat to Canada. Because Canada is geographically large, with many points of entry, it would be natural to assume that the most likely terrorist threat would first present itself at the time of attack. For this reason, Canada has increased its air, marine and border security and although the threats posed by these areas will never be completely eliminated, they have diminished to some degree.

A plausible element of risk that exists for Canada could involve an attack originating from within Canadian borders. It is very possible that prior to the events of September 11th, there have been a number of individuals, either supporting or participating in terrorist activities, who have managed to organize from within Canadian borders. Canada could therefore face a deadly attack of almost any form, but the most likely would be one of conventional or electronic means. Because of the recent tightening of security, both within Canada and abroad, it is possible that an attack which was initially intended for the United States or another state, could be delivered within Canada by way of a substitute attack. The second form of attack, which Canada could face, would be an indirect form of risk associated with a subsequent attack on the United States. As seen in September 11th, Canadians have suffered as a result of their need and desire to travel abroad. The likelihood of a Canadian citizen or group of citizens being victimized by consequent attacks abroad is quite high. Additionally, future acts of terrorism in the United States could have severe ramifications for the Canadian economy, similar to the consequences following 9-11. Finally, a cyber-based or information system attack resulting from terrorists waging network violence on a global

audience, is probably one of the most likely forms of attack to affect Canada. The potential for such an attack to enact a mass level of distress would expectedly have a detrimental effect on Canada because of our level of connectivity throughout North America and the World.

The threat of terrorism to Canada has been explored by addressing the potential security risks which may face Canadians in the future. After examining the threat of conventional and unconventional modes of terrorism, a few conclusions can be made with regard to Canadian security. International terrorism is indeed a threat the Canada, as it is to all western nations. As articulated above, there are certain forms of terrorism which are more likely to occur within Canada because of the unique qualities we possess and our relations abroad. In order to mitigate the threat of terrorism the following recommendations bring the above argument into context. Security within Canada needs to be approached both openly and realistically. Openness needs to be exercised through threat assessment procedures and the interpretation of these possible threats. Because these threats are ever changing, creativity and diligence with reference to threat analysis need to reflect terrorism's dynamic nature. Terrorists are continuously planning bigger and better attacks and it is increasingly necessary to try to anticipate these new threats while maintaining a strong position to deal with traditional risks. Canada similarly has to incorporate realistic expectations when dealing with the threat of terrorism. It is virtually impossible to protect Canada's vast territory and highly mobile population from all forms of terrorism. There will always be breaches in security because no system is completely foolproof. Despite recent attempts to curb the terrorist threat, it has been argued that certain forms of terrorism are not preventable and additionally cannot be deterred.

It is key to a functional democratic state for citizens to feel secure within their country and abroad. Measures have been taken by government to ensure that a level of security is being maintained, in order to protect Canadians and their interests. These security measures must be balanced with the realities that exist in Canada, including a limited budget, civil liberties and other key elements of a well rounded democracy. Therefore, it is in Canada's best interest to prepare for the threat of terrorism, for it is a real threat within the current international system. At the same time, Canada must maintain a level of flexibility in order to preserve its reputation as a free and diverse national entity.

Notes

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