

AIR WAR COLLEGE

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# The Forgotten Tundra: America's Greatest Terrorist Threat

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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15 Feb 2013

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## **Biography**

Mr. William Mortenson currently serves as a requirements and integration analyst with the Airborne Coordination Element (ACE), National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). In this capacity, Mr. Mortenson analyzes user requirements associated with integrating new airborne imaging platforms into the National Systems for Geospatial Intelligence (NSG). While assigned to NGA Mr. Mortenson has also deployed twice in support of counter-insurgency operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prior to joining NGA Mr. Mortenson served as an imagery analyst in the United States Army from 1998-2004. During this time he deployed in support of a number of unique military assignments to include combat operations in the Middle East, counter-narcotics operations in South America, and border security missions along the US/Mexico border.

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## **Abstract**

Over the past few years border security has been debated extensively by politicians and pundits alike, but the majority of this debate has centered on security challenges along the Southern border with Mexico. Some of these concerns are warranted when considering the level of violence that is being seen in Mexico, but much of that violence is in relation to criminal elements, and not terrorist organizations who seek to destroy America.

In the post 9/11 world America's greatest domestic threat to national security does not lay in the US border with Mexico, but instead its Northern border with Canada. This threat does not come from every day Canadians, but from terrorist organizations who have used Canada's progressive immigration policies to infiltrate North American soil. Their presence in Canada constitutes a serious threat US national security that must be dealt with appropriately. Both the United States and Canada have sought to improve security along the border in recent years through increases in resources and cooperation, but these efforts have done very little to mitigate the threat.

Terrorist organizations, like Al Qaeda, have already expressed their desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and if they are successful they will likely be used against the West at some point in the future. For this very reason the United States must begin to take a more proactive stance to limit those security shortfalls that currently threaten national security. America's failure to act today could result in unimaginable consequences for tomorrow.

## Introduction

*“In terms of the terrorist threat, it’s commonly accepted that the more significant threat comes from the U.S. – Canada Border” ~ Alan Bersin, Former Chief of the United States Border Patrol*

The United States border with Canada constitutes the single largest border in the world between any two nations. It encompasses more than 4000 miles of territory, and is traversed each day by over 300,000 people,<sup>1</sup> many of whom share the same values and beliefs as your average American. Perhaps this is why most Americans do not consider Canada a threat to national security, but that assumption would be incorrect. In the post 9/11 world, America’s greatest domestic threat to national security lays not in the US border with Mexico, but instead its Northern border with Canada.

Historically American politicians have discussed the importance of securing the US borders, but in reality they have focused their efforts on the Southern border where illegal immigration and narcotics have remained a major concern. To combat these problems the United States (US) has allocated an overwhelming majority of its border resources toward improving security along the Southern border, but in doing so they have neglected to adequately protect the United States from a greater terrorist threat that resides in Canada.

This paper will highlight these threats by examining the Northern border, and its security challenges. Next it will assess the current threat environment by analyzing why Canada serves as a more attractive base of operation than Mexico. It will then look at how resources have been allocated to address these threats, while highlighting existing shortfalls that leave the United States vulnerable to an attack. Finally, it will discuss the future threat environment based upon known terrorist desires, and propose several recommendations on how the United States could help improve security along the Northern border in the future.

## Background

The US border with Canada is a massive stretch of territory that extends roughly 4000 miles from Washington to Maine (excluding Alaska), and consists of various mountain ranges, plains, and bodies of water that make security a formidable challenge. Couple this with the fact that nearly 90 percent of Canada's 35 million residents live within 160 km of the US border and it becomes a security nightmare.<sup>2</sup>

In order to legally cross the border, a person must traverse one of 119 official checkpoints that separate the two nations.<sup>3</sup> These checkpoints represent a first line of defense against illegal immigration, but their effectiveness remains questionable at best. One US Government Accountability Office report from 2008 was able to highlight several security concerns in relation to US border checkpoints. First, officers were unable to identify the false documents that were used by undercover investigators to cross the border. This in itself is a serious breach of security, but even more discerning was the fact that some officers failed to even ask for identification in the first place.<sup>4</sup>

One possible explanation for these lapses in security could be due to the fact that the US border with Canada also serves as a huge trade corridor. In fact, this trade partnership is the largest in the world, and it relies heavily on the rapid transportation of goods between Canada and the United States.<sup>5</sup> Border checkpoints, while critical for national security, ultimately serve as a chokepoint that delays the delivery of goods, which in turn negatively impacts the economies of both nations. This places a significant amount of pressure on border agents who say "they are routinely told by supervisors to wave vehicles through checkpoints without scrutiny to satisfy commercial interests".<sup>6</sup>

Each day roughly 300,000 people legally cross the US border with Canada, but this statistic fails to accurately reflect the unknown number of illegal immigrants who are able to cross at random locations where there is very little security. The figure below highlights one example of how easily undercover investigators were able to cross into the United States via one of these random locations.



Source: GAO.

Figure 1. GAO investigator crossing from Canada to the United States (Photograph by GAO. In *Summary of Covert Tests and Security Assessments for the Senate Committee on Finance, 2003-2007*. 2008, 13.)

This does not mean to insinuate that every illegal immigrant has a terrorist connection, but in the post 9/11 environment, the United States cannot afford to become complacent. Today, many terrorist organizations around the world seek refuge in Canada, and their proximity to the United States constitutes a serious threat to national security.

### **Current Threat Environment**

Canada has always been considered a close friend and ally of the United States, but this friendship has resulted in a complacency that threatens national security. This threat does not

come from average Canadians, many of whom share the same beliefs as every day Americans, but from external threats that use Canada's progressive immigration laws as a means of furthering their cause. Each year Canada accepts over 260,000 new immigrants to its shores; giving it the distinction of having the highest per capita immigration in the world.<sup>7</sup> Canadians believe that immigration is the key to building a stronger nation, and they embrace their multiculturalism as a source of national identity.<sup>8</sup> In fact, one study concluded that Canadians felt multiculturalism was their most defining quality; even more so than ice hockey.<sup>9</sup>

One U.S. Library of Congress study concluded "Canada's welfare system, immigration laws, infrequent prosecutions and light sentences had turned the country into "a favored destination for terrorists".<sup>10</sup> In a 2003 report the Canadian Intelligence Service acknowledge the fact that at least 50 known terrorist organizations were operating in Canada.<sup>11</sup> This included Al-Qaeda operatives who had sought to exploit Canada's immigration policies for the purpose of directing attacks against U.S. interests around the globe.<sup>12</sup>

Most Americans can certainly appreciate Canada's position on immigration, but mass immigration in today's society is a serious risk because it overwhelms the ability of immigration officers to screen out security threats.<sup>13</sup> In 2006, the deputy director of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) told a Canadian Senate National Security Committee that 20,000 people had come to Canada from the Pakistan-Afghanistan region since 2001 and no security checks had been done on 90% of them.<sup>14</sup> This statement does not mean to suggest that people from these two particular nations are all terrorists, but rather highlights the fact that people from high risk nations are getting into Canada without much scrutiny.

One shining example of this exploitation came from a man named Ahmed Ressam. Mr. Ressam was an Algerian national who travelled to Canada in 1994 using a falsified French

passport. Immigration officials realized that Mr. Ressam's passport was a fake upon arriving in Montreal, but he was allowed to stay in the country by claiming political asylum.<sup>15</sup> This is a standard practice in Canada, but a glaring weakness of security that is regularly exploited by illegal immigrants. A year later Mr. Ressam's request for asylum was denied, so he changed his identity by using a forged baptismal certificate, which allowed him to acquire a new Canadian passport.<sup>16</sup>

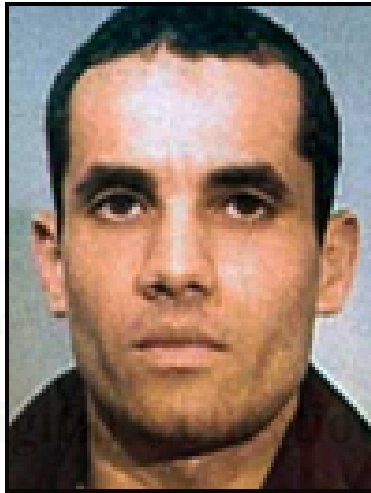


Figure 2. Ahmed Ressam (Photograph by Federal Bureau of Investigation. In *Millennium Plot/Ahmed Ressam*. <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/famous-cases/millennium-plot-ahmed-ressam>)

Later, Mr. Ressam used his new identity to travel to Afghanistan for training in one of the many Al Qaeda funded terrorist camps. Upon completion of his training, he returned to Canada with guidance to send more Canadian passports back to Afghanistan for other members of the camp.<sup>17</sup> Once back in Canada he began plotting his attack, which would later come to be known as the “Millennium Plot”. For this attack Mr. Ressam intended to smuggle explosives across the US/Canadian border and detonate a bomb at Los Angeles International Airport, but in 1999 his plan was foiled when he was apprehended at the border with explosives in the trunk of his car.<sup>18</sup> Upon further interrogation he later revealed the names of other “sleepers” already in the United States, which led to further arrests and discoveries.<sup>19</sup>

This case highlights just one example of how close a terrorist came to accomplishing his objective, but there are multiple other cases as well. Canada has sought to combat terrorism through the passage of bills like the 2001 Anti-Terrorism Act, which officially banned 16 terrorist organizations from conducting any type of activity within the Canadian territory, but it included less than half of the known terrorist organizations currently recognized by the US State Department.<sup>20</sup> Canada is in a tough position because it must carefully balance immigration enforcement, while at the same time trying not to alienate the very immigrants they have come to embrace as a source of national pride. The United States on the other hand must recognize Canada's position on immigration, while appropriately increasing resources to minimize potential risks. Since 9/11 US politicians have continually talked about the need to secure the US border, but in reality they have focused their efforts on the Southern border with Mexico.

### **Why the focus on Mexico?**

The violence in Mexico has increased in recent years, which has led some to believe the Southern border constitutes a greater security risk to the United States, but the majority of the violence in Mexico seems in relation to the government's crackdown on violent drug cartels. In response, Mexican drug lords have begun to employ tactics more commonly seen by terrorist organizations in the Middle East. These tactics have led some to believe that cartels should be labeled terrorist organizations, but a terrorist is defined as someone who uses violence to bring about political change. Drug cartels are not trying to bring about political change through their actions, but rather continue making money through the drug trade. By definition, the cartels are acting in a terroristic fashion, but that does not make them terrorists. The violence in Mexico is certainly troubling, but it is remarkably similar to the violence once carried out in the United States during the prohibition period of the 1920s. During this period, the mafia conducted


numerous types of attacks, to include targeted assassinations and bombings, yet they were not considered terrorists.

Today, the drug cartels in Mexico carry out many similar attacks, but to label them anything more than criminals would be inaccurate. One US House Committee report on homeland security from 2012 suggested that terrorists are working with drug cartels because they frequent many of the same bars, hotels, and brothels around the world, which in turn provide them a forum for interaction.<sup>21</sup> This might be true, but it is highly speculative to assume that mere proximity could lead to any type of close partnership between the cartels and the terrorists. Both of these organizations have different motives and distinct ideologies, which makes the likelihood of a close partnership slim. Drug cartels will most certainly engage in criminal activity for money, which they have proven in the past, but any support of terrorism inside the United States could lead to a greater military response by the American government, and that is something the cartels cannot afford.

There is no question that some terrorist organizations are using Mexico as a base of operation, but research seems to indicate the number is far less than Canada. Some Mexican officials have acknowledged the fact that terrorist organizations like Hezbollah have sought to establish a presence in Mexico over the years. This seems plausible, considering the large number of Lebanese and Palestinian communities in Northern Mexico,<sup>22</sup> but no one can say with great certainty that a drug cartel would support a major terrorist activity within the United States. Others have speculated that terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda may use Mexico as a potential location to launch attacks against the United States, however the director of Mexico's Center for Intelligence and National Security, Eduardo Medina Mora, has stated that his organization had no reason to believe there was an Al Qaeda presence in Mexico.<sup>23</sup>

This does not mean that terrorists will not choose to enter through Mexico. Recent statistics have shown that high risk immigrants are crossing the Southern border with Mexico, but those numbers do not constitute a larger threat than those crossing from Canada. The table below shows that in 2011, the US border patrol apprehended over 320 thousand illegal immigrants crossing the US/Mexico border, but only 255 of these individuals were from high risk countries.<sup>24</sup> That same year, the border patrol apprehended over 6000 illegal immigrants along the Northern border with Canada, with 164 of them coming from high risk nations.<sup>25</sup>

Table 1. Number of Apprehensions for 2011

 <b>United States Border Patrol</b> Apprehensions / Seizure Statistics - Fiscal Year 2011 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)				
Apprehension/Seizure Type	Coastal Border Sectors	Northern Border Sectors	Southwest Border Sectors	Nationwide Total
Apprehensions	6,552	6,123	327,577	340,252
Other Than Mexican Apprehensions	4,123	2,978	46,997	54,098
Aliens From Special Interest Countries	60	164	255	479
Marijuana (pounds)	2,001	9,472	2,518,211	2,529,685
Cocaine (pounds)	989	212	8,763	9,963
Heroin (ounces)	158	45	6,191	6,394
Methamphetamine (pounds)	5	2	1,838	1,846
Ecstasy (pounds)	0	779	2	781
Other Drugs* (pounds)	9	32	255	295
Marijuana Seizures	133	504	15,252	15,889
Cocaine Seizures	19	50	500	569
Heroin Seizures	2	21	85	108
Methamphetamine Seizures	5	21	437	463
Ecstasy Seizures	0	16	81	97
Other Drugs* Seizures	21	125	801	947
Conveyances	71	158	10,297	10,526
Firearms	3	93	523	619
Ammunition (rounds)	122	4,182	41,156	45,460
Currency (value)	\$41,742	\$4,900,525	\$9,849,274	\$14,791,541

\*Other Drugs include: All USBP drug seizures excluding marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and ecstasy (MDMA).  
Coastal Border Sectors include: Miami, New Orleans, and Ramey, Puerto Rico.  
Northern Border Sectors include: Blaine, Buffalo, Detroit, Grand Forks, Havre, Houlton, Spokane and Swanton.  
Southwest Border Sectors include: Big Bend, Del Rio, El Centro, El Paso, Laredo, Rio Grande Valley, San Diego, Tucson, and Yuma.

Source: United States Border Patrol, *U.S. Border Patrol Fiscal Year 2011 Profile*

Some might look at this as proof that the Mexican border constitutes a greater risk, but they disregard the fact that the United States only employs about 1/5 as many agents along the Northern border with Canada, a border that is twice as long, and yet it still managed to apprehend a higher percentage of hi risk aliens in the North.

Clearly some threats to the South could be associated with terrorist organizations, but when you compare Canada and Mexico it seems high unlikely that a terrorist would prefer to enter through the South. First and foremost, Mexico is much less tolerant of illegal immigrants. Numerous reports show that “immigrants are often subject to human rights violations by the Mexican police and immigration officials, as well as fall victim to violent criminals”.<sup>26</sup> One example of this violence was demonstrated by drug cartels that murdered 72 Central American migrants in August 2010.<sup>27</sup> These same drug cartels would be much less forgiving of suspected terrorists who could potentially impact their drug enterprise by attacking American citizens.

Finally, it is important to remember that the Southern border is inundated with far more security than the Northern border with Canada. Even if a terrorist chose to risk traveling through Mexico with the widespread corruption and crime they would still have to negotiate a border that has been heavily patrolled and fortified in recent years. This does not mean to suggest that a terrorist will not attempt to cross in the South, but rather point out that it entails more risk.

### **Resource Allocation**

Since 1924 the mission of the United States Border Patrol has been to detect and prevent illegal immigration and smuggling activity along US borders.<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, during its inception the United States dedicated a majority of its resources towards the Northern border with Canada, which was due to the fact that prohibition was in place, and the United States was attempting to prevent Canadian whiskey from making its way south into the US.<sup>29</sup> In 1952, this changed when the United States began shifting a significant number of its Canadian units to the Southern border in an effort to address an influx of illegal immigrants crossing the border with Mexico.<sup>30</sup> Over the years, the United States has continued to focus on this influx by allocating

more resources toward the problem, but in recent years a new mission has emerged; to detect and prevent the entry of terrorists and their weapons into the United States.<sup>31</sup>

This new mission came as a direct result of the 9/11 attacks, which forced the US to reinvest in border security initiatives. These new initiatives called for increases in funding and manpower, but unfortunately a majority of these new resources were deployed along the Southern border with Mexico. Currently the United States employs roughly 21,000 border patrol agents, but only 2200 of these agents are assigned to the US border with Canada.<sup>32</sup> These 2200 agents form a first line of defense against would-be intruders, but it is highly unlikely that 2200 agents could secure a 4000 mile border when over 18 thousand agents have yet to secure the Southern border which is half as long.

Table 2. US Border Patrol Staffing

<b>United States Border Patrol</b> <b>Border Patrol Agent Staffing By Fiscal Year (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)</b>				
Fiscal Year	Coastal Border Sectors	Northern Border Sectors	Southwest Border Sectors	Nationwide Total
FY 1992	187	299	3,555	4,139
FY 1993	183	310	3,444	4,028
FY 1994	170	306	3,747	4,287
FY 1995	153	296	4,388	4,945
FY 1996	155	292	5,333	5,942
FY 1997	146	267	6,315	6,895
FY 1998	161	289	7,357	7,982
FY 1999	152	311	7,706	8,351
FY 2000	150	306	8,580	9,212
FY 2001	148	340	9,147	9,821
FY 2002	143	492	9,239	10,045
FY 2003	152	569	9,840	10,717
FY 2004	160	979	9,506	10,819
FY 2005	160	988	9,891	11,264
FY 2006	153	919	11,032	12,349
FY 2007	172	1,098	13,297	14,923
FY 2008	209	1,363	15,442	17,499
FY 2009	223	1,887	17,408	20,119
FY 2010	246	2,263	17,535	20,558
FY 2011	232	2,237	18,506	21,444

Coastal Border Sectors include : Livermore (closed after FY 2004), Miami, New Orleans, and Ramey, Puerto Rico.  
Northern Border Sectors include : Blaine, Buffalo, Detroit, Grand Forks, Havre, Houlton, Spokane and Swanton.  
Southwest Border Sectors include : Big Bend (Marfa), Del Rio, El Centro, El Paso, Laredo, Rio Grande Valley (McAllen), San Diego, Tucson, Yuma, and as of FY 2010 the Special Operations Group.  
Nationwide Total includes : All Sectors, U.S. Border Patrol Headquarters, and from FY 2004 through FY 2009 the Special Operations Group.

Source: United States Border Patrol, *U.S. Border Patrol Fiscal Year Staffing Statistics*

To address these manpower shortages officials rely on other federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement entities along the northern border. These law enforcement officers form a layered defense against illegal immigration, but in previous years this partnership has been plagued by poor interagency cooperation, which has included critical gaps in information sharing and threat assessments.<sup>33</sup> One Government Accountability Report from 2011 also highlighted the fact that no one had a clear understanding as to the extent of external law enforcement resources, and how they could be leveraged to fill Border Patrol resource gaps.<sup>34</sup>

To its credit, the Border Patrol has invested in new technologies while expanding other existing initiatives in the North, but they simply do not have enough resources to make a significant impact. One example can be seen in the deployment of Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBET) along the US border. These teams have received a great deal of praise for improving cooperation between US and Canadian officials, but others have argued that these teams have done little for security since they have not been properly resourced to accomplish their long term mission.<sup>35</sup>

The Border Patrol has also attempted to incorporate new technologies as a force multiplier for agents working in the North, but there are distinct challenges with technology as well. Technologies, such as close circuit cameras and unmanned ground sensors have long been used to track illegal activity along the border, but many of these systems have been known to fail.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, even when these systems are able to successfully detect intrusions the individuals are usually gone before an agent can respond.<sup>37</sup> New unmanned aerial systems like the Predator may be able to mitigate this type of challenge by flying along the border in search of illegal activity, but even a Predator has limitations. For example, the Predator only gives an officer a soda straw view of the border, which is based upon where the asset is flying.

Theoretically ground sensors could direct the Predator to a specific location, but the asset still has to be in range of the intrusion. Assuming a Predator is within range of the intrusion, the border patrol must then apprehend the intruder, which would be difficult with the limited number of officers on duty during any particular day.

Some have argued that fences are the only real solution to border security, but no one is advocating a 4000 mile fence be placed along the Northern border with Canada. This apprehension is understandable when considering the long history of openness between nations, but something must be done to address the porousness of the northern border. The government can certainly improve its chances of detecting intruders through improved cooperation and new technology, but it must also remember there is no panacea for border security. The best solution is one that adopts improved cooperation, new technology, and increased manpower to apprehend intruders in a coordinated fashion; unfortunately the US has yet to perfect this mixture. According to a 2011 report only 69 of the 4000 miles of US/Canadian border have met a satisfactory security rating.<sup>38</sup>

### **Future Threat Environment**

When considering future threats to national security the United States must consider the fact that a terrorist would gladly employ a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) against the United States if it were available. In fact, Al Qaeda's top leadership has repeatedly stated their desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction. In 1998 Osama bin Laden called it a religious duty to acquire WMDs for the defense of Muslims.<sup>39</sup> Several years later his deputy Ayman Zawahiri stated said, "If you have \$30 million, go to the black market in the central Asia, contact any disgruntled Soviet scientist and a lot of dozens of smart briefcase bombs are available".<sup>40</sup> This type of talk may be nothing more than threatening rhetoric, but based on captured training

manuals from Afghanistan it is clear that terrorists are being trained in small scale chemical and biological attacks as part of their training regimen.<sup>41</sup> Terrorists have also used WMD weapons in the past to attack civilian populations, while at the same time planning future operations, so it's not unrealistic to expect this same type of attack in the future. For example, one Bahraini terrorist cell plotted to use cyanide gas to attack the New York City subway in the 2002-2003 timeframe.<sup>42</sup> In another more recent plot, terrorists posted a plan online that called for the use of cyanide laced hand cream as a means of killing innocent civilians during the Olympics of 2012.<sup>43</sup> These may seem like wild ideas to most people, but in reality they were serious threats that could have resulted in a significant loss of life.

The government has recognized the threat these weapons pose in the hands of terrorist adversaries. In fact, President Obama recently said, "If an organization like al Qaeda got a weapon of mass destruction—a nuclear or a chemical or a biological weapon—and they used it in a city, whether it's in Shanghai or New York, just a few individuals could potentially kill tens of thousands of people, maybe hundreds of thousands".<sup>44</sup> The United States has not experienced a major WMD attack, but evidence suggests that the perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing actually considered using cyanide gas as a means of inflicting additional casualties. Fortunately for the United States they could not afford the required amount of sodium cyanide, so they simply employed a more conventional weapon.<sup>45</sup> In this particular situation the United States benefited from the fact that the terrorists could not afford the necessary chemicals, but it does not negate the fact that they possessed the technical capability to actually carrying out this type of attack.

Thankfully, in the post 9/11 environment it has become more difficult to acquire many of the precursors necessary to create these types of weapons, but that does not make it impossible

for terrorists to acquire them. Therefore the United States must ensure it properly secures the US border to prevent any potential weapons or precursors from illegally crossing. If America continues to disperse its manpower in the same fashion a terrorist group will simply bypass increased security in the South by infiltrating through Canada where there is a much greater chance of success.

## **Recommendations**

In order to increase security along the border the United States must implement a number of changes to its current border strategy. First, the US must continue to expand on US/Canadian partnerships that enable cross border security. The United States has seen some success in joint operations with Integrated Border Enforcement Teams, but these teams have been woefully under resourced. In the coming years revenue is likely to become even more restricted, which means the United States will need to consider other sources of revenue. One possible way to secure additional revenue would be to assess a fee to every person coming across the border. Even a dollar a person could raise as much as 100 billion dollars a year for border security programs. If that idea is too progressive the government could simply assess a fee for all goods crossing the border. The smallest fee could equate to a lot of money when you consider the fact that almost 500 billion dollars in goods cross the border each year.<sup>46</sup>

Along with revenue, the United States must also expand its intelligence partnership with Canada, while respecting Canada's position on immigration. This partnership has always been strong, but it must continue to expand in the future in order to increase security. Canada has a great appreciation for immigrants, and the United States must respect that position, while highlighting the fact that it is in both nations interests to understand who is showing up on Canadian shores.

Next, the United States must learn to embrace new technologies that may actually improve security at a fraction of the cost. Some recent estimates have shown that it could cost as much as 22 million dollars per mile to place a fence along the US borders,<sup>47</sup> but simply placing a fence along the entire border will do nothing to stop illegal immigrants from crossing. That is why it is critical that border officials identify all resources currently being used to secure the border, and develop a better strategy for employing them. This includes a thorough pattern analysis that allows agents to properly resource those sectors of the border at greater risk.

The US must also continue to develop advanced technologies that are capable of closing loopholes, while seeking additional manpower to help apprehend those who exploit its shortfalls. Currently the government does a good job of layering security along the northern border, but a 4000 mile border demands more manpower and technology. The addition of unmanned aerial systems, like the Predator are a good start, but they should also look into other non-conventional technologies like the Active Denial System being fielded by the military as well. This system uses microwave energy to create a burning sensation when aimed at a particular victim.<sup>48</sup> This burning sensation is completely harmless, but impossible to sustain for more than several seconds.<sup>49</sup> If properly employed this system could help secure the border by providing a virtual fence along sections that remain largely unguarded today.

Finally, the United States must come to realize that no security initiative is 100 percent effective. The recommendations proposed above may help close some gaps and improve security along the border, but a determined adversary may ultimately breach US security, which will require federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to remain vigilant and work together more closely in the future. To help facilitate improved cooperation the Department of Homeland Security may want to consider establishing a joint task force between themselves, the

Department of Justice, and the Department of Interior. This task force could focus on breaking down barriers between the various agencies, while leading to improved cooperation in the future. This type of task force will not stand up by itself, so the Department of Homeland Security should execute more leadership, while learning to appreciate the fact that state, local and tribal agencies share a significant burden in this fight. In recent years DHS has tried to improve cooperation between US agencies, but so far their various interagency agreements have led to minimal action; this must change in the future.

## **Conclusion**

In the post 9/11 world America's greatest domestic threat to national security does not lay in the US border with Mexico, but instead its Northern border with Canada. Americans have nothing to fear from Canada itself, but from terrorists who have chosen to use Canada as a base of operation. This location has allowed them to plan and conduct operations around the world, and their close proximity to the United States should concern every American. Unfortunately, US officials have continued to neglect security along the Northern border in favor of additional resources to the South. Clearly the violence in Mexico is something that US officials must consider when talking about border security, but those threats are largely associated with the Mexican government's crackdown on drug cartels, and not from terrorist organizations seeking to destroy America. The US should continue to work with Mexico to address these security challenges, but in doing so they cannot neglect the Northern border.

One of the greatest military strategists of all time, Carl Von Clausewitz, once compared military strategy to gambling, and in this respect a terrorist is no different. Terrorists exploit US weaknesses in an effort to increase their odds of success. Since 9/11 the United States has implemented numerous changes to its own border security strategy in an effort to keep future

attacks from occurring on US soil. Undoubtedly these changes have resulted in improved US security, but the United States cannot become complacent. It must continue to find new ways of improving coordination between US and Canadian counterparts who share common interests in the world. It must build upon cooperative initiatives that leverage all existing resources from both nations. Initiatives like IBET are a great start, but they must be properly resourced and expanded in order to increase security in the future.

Finally it must also evolve if it hopes to address future terrorist threats. Terrorist organizations, like Al Qaeda, have already expressed their desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and if they are successful they will likely be used against the West at some point in the future. For this very reason the United States must begin to take a more proactive stance to limit those security shortfalls that currently threaten national security. America's failure to act today could result in unimaginable consequences for tomorrow.

## Notes

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

- <sup>1</sup> CBC, *The Canada-U.S. border: by the numbers*
- <sup>2</sup> Internations, *Living in Canada*
- <sup>3</sup> Transportation Border Working Group, *Border Quick Facts*
- <sup>4</sup> US GAO, *Summary of Covert Tests and Security Assessments*, pp. 6
- <sup>5</sup> Bourette, *Obama off to Canada*
- <sup>6</sup> Krikorian, *Mass Immigration Defeats Homeland Security*, pp. 42
- <sup>7</sup> Stoffman, *Truths and Myths about Immigration*, pp. 4
- <sup>8</sup> Bloemraad, *Understanding Canadian Exceptionalism*, pp. 8
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid
- <sup>10</sup> Berry, *Nations Hospitable to Organized Crime*, pp. 146
- <sup>11</sup> Bissett, *Security Threats in Immigration*, pp. 79
- <sup>12</sup> Helfand, *Asian Organized Crime*, pp. 29
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