

*Terrorism in Canada:
Victims and Perpetrators*

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“Our imagined terrorist cell was initiated by an overseas source,” explains Major-General Edward S. Fitch, recently retired from the Canadian Forces (CF), in discussing preparations for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games (V2010).² “They sent one man to Vancouver circa 2004,” he continues, “about one year after it was announced the city would host the 2010 Games.” After settling in, the foreign operative found “an apartment and a simple, low profile job” in the city and began to “plan, recruit, train, conduct reconnaissance, surveillance, and build improvised explosive devices (IED).” Over time, the operative assembled a terrorist cell of local Canadians, each recruit bringing “useful skills” to the operation, familiarity with Vancouver, Whistler, and surrounding areas, and an ability to blend into Canadian society. Over the subsequent months and years, the cell began acquiring weapons and other materials “through legal means” to use in their attacks. They remained discreet, followed the law, and avoided detection. The group’s strategy, Major-General Fitch suggests, was to “force the cessation of the Games by breaking the Canadian public’s will by causing

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² All references to Major-General Fitch and the Games Red Team (GRT) were derived from personal correspondence with him and other GRT members (Major Bruce Sand and Major Wes Von Papineau). Email Correspondence (August 24-September 2, 2009); Teleconference (September 1, 2009).

casualties and demonstrating the impotence of the security forces.” Tactically, the imagined cell avoids targeting Olympic venues directly, which are deemed too heavily guarded, in favour of attacking “soft targets in public areas.” They do so using explosives in order to “leverage the strengths of the small cell” against Canada’s much larger and better equipped security apparatus. Operationally, the fictional adversary is equipped, capable, and motivated to conduct any number of attacks, including mass-casualty bombings against Canadians and visiting foreigners.

Leading up to the 2010 Olympics, it was Major-General Fitch’s herculean task to identify potential terrorist threats and scenarios, like this one, to help prepare the Canadian Forces to deal effectively with terrorism at the Vancouver Games. As assistant to Commander Joint Task Force Pacific for the 2010 Olympic Games, Major-General Fitch led the Games Red Team (GRT), a small outfit tasked with “challenging” the CF’s Olympic security plan. “To help us understand the high-end threat to the Games,” Major-General Fitch explains, the GRT “developed an *Adversary Campaign Plan* based on an imaginary terrorist cell with traits we found in our open source readings on terrorist groups worldwide.” With assistance from various defence scientists, notably Matthew Lauder from Defence Research & Development Canada (DRDC) Toronto, the GRT established a survey of potential terrorist groups that might have targeted the Vancouver Games.³ The Team focused on the upper levels of the threat spectrum, the major terrorist events that would require military support of RCMP and Public Safety efforts. Mass-casualty terrorism was the CF’s primary concern.⁴ With its *Adversary Campaign Plan* in mind, the GRT reviewed the military’s V2010 security plan to identify potential “weaknesses, omissions, and redundancies” susceptible to terrorism. The red team then crafted imagined though highly credible scenarios tailored specifically to address and expose potential flaws. Scenarios were then “played” in Table Top Exercises (TTX) with CF personnel (acting as the *blue team*) in order to help defence planners identify, tackle, and fix potential deficiencies for themselves. By literally

³ Matthew A. Lauder, “Red Dawn: The Emergence of a Red Teaming Capability in the Canadian Forces”, Defence Research & Development Canada, (April 2009).

⁴ Michael Zekulin, “Olympic Security: Assessing the Risk of Terrorism at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Games”, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 12:1 (2009), pp. 2-25; Jeff Lee, “Olympic Security Forces Assess ‘Threats’ to 2010 Games”, *Vancouver Sun*, October 9, 2008; David Pugliese, “JTF2 Top Priority is Olympic Says CANSOFCOM Commander”, *Ottawa Citizen*, September 30, 2008; Stewart Bell, “Lone-wolf Threat Feared at Vancouver Olympics”, *National Post*, November 27, 2008.

“thinking like terrorists” the Games Red Team was able to push the CF’s conceptual boundaries and assist defence planners to develop a more robust Olympic security plan that accurately reflected the complexity of contemporary terrorism. The exercise was a “first” for bringing the “emerging discipline of ‘red teaming’” to a specific CF domestic operation and was an innovation in security planning. “The reward” of red teaming the CF, Major-General Fitch concludes, is in training defence staff to deal effectively with terrorism in a manner that allows them to “forestall, frustrate, and/or defeat an adversary.”

Canada’s Olympic security preparations are a reminder that terrorism is a persistent threat.⁵ In the years since 9/11, international terrorism has emerged as a preeminent global concern. It is a multifaceted challenge that threatens Canadians and their friends and allies around the globe. It is, however, not a new development. Irredentist organizations, like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ), and Babbar Khalsa, along with Marxist extremists, like the Weather Underground, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and the Red Army Faction, and a bevy of right-wing fundamentalists and supremacists have relied on terrorism for decades. And yet, terrorism associated with al Qaeda and Islamism represents a far bloodier and more complex phenomenon.⁶As a result, Canadian counterterrorism has

⁵ Terrorism is the use of indiscriminate violence against non-combatants by non-state actors with the purpose of generating fear in order to “signal”, communicate, and/or advance particular socio-political objectives. The CF’s field manual, *Counter-Insurgency Operations*, notes that terrorism is used “as part of a larger operational objective and strategy to intimidate and coerce governments [and] societies.” Terrorism is used to compel adversaries to accept socio-political demands by threatening further violence, to communicate strength and resolve, and to undermine the legitimacy of a government by demonstrating its inability to contend with and prevent further attacks. Department of National Defence, Canada, *Counter-Insurgency Operations*, (Kingston: Army Publishing, December 2008); pp. 2-16 – 2-17; Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia, 2006), p. 40.

⁶ Islamist terrorism retains both religious and political characteristics. While its adherents formulate their actions along religious principals, Islamist violence is nonetheless rooted to political aspirations (notably the establishment of Islamic governance based on Sharia Law). “Religion”, writes Fawaz Gerges, is a jihadist’s “tool for political mobilization.” Islamist, rather than Islamic, terrorism properly connotes the political nature of this form of violence and avoids inadvertently bestowing religious legitimacy on its participants. Fawaz Gerges, *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*, (Toronto: Harcourt, 2007), pp. 11-14, 39-45; Stewart Bell, “CSIS Alters Description of Terrorists”, *National Post*, March 25, 2007; Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *Radicalization and Jihad in the West*, (Intelligence Brief for the Prime Minister) (June 7, 2006).

acquired unprecedented importance and influence in the making of Canada's foreign, defence, and security policy.

This article investigates Canada's evolving counterterrorism policy in light of emerging trends, provides a retrospective overview of recent developments in terrorism and counterterrorism, and forecasts the nature and scope of future threats. Primarily focused on Islamist terrorism, the article first unpacks terrorism into its international, regional, and homegrown dimensions. Doing so allows for greater precision in delineating threats and assessing the efficacy of countermeasures. The article then traces the nexus between terrorism and Canada more specifically, illustrating the manner in which Canadians have been both victims and perpetrators of terrorism. Recent events from the past year and a half figure prominently. The article concludes by illustrating several prominent emerging trends and by approximating the manner in which Canadian counterterrorism will continue to evolve over the coming years.

International, Regional, and Homegrown Terrorism

Terrorism is a tactic. It is violence employed by individuals, small groups, and larger organizations to achieve socio-political goals. Groups that employ terrorism usually do so to address real or perceived grievances and to highlight, promote and achieve local, regional, and international agendas. The threat is complex. At the international level, trans-national networks like al Qaeda organize terrorism against Westerners and non-Western adversaries in hopes of acquiring both local and global change. At the regional level, a variety of sub-state groups with irredentist/nationalist, Marxist, or Islamist aspirations, use violence against local populations and governments to address and pursue more limited agendas. And within Western states themselves, groups of radicalized citizens – homegrown terrorists – attack fellow nationals to address a wide range of perceived grievances. While these threats are often related, a tripartite compartmentalization of terrorism offers a more robust way to analyze contemporary threats.

First, unpacking terrorism helps locate the contours of a particular threat and assists in identifying the tailored responses and counter-strategies best suited to a given scenario. Fighting al Qaeda, for instance, will require a different set of international and multilateral policies and counterstrategies than combating Euskadi Ta Askatasuna

(ETA) in Spain and France. While these two organizations may share a common willingness to rely on indiscriminate violence to achieve political ends, the similarities end there. The groups diverge on nearly everything else, from ideology and popular support, to tactics and target selection. Unpacking terrorism delineates one organization from the next, helps identify the relationships that may connect distinct groups (i.e. between al Qaeda and its regional franchises in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Algeria, and elsewhere), and most importantly, focuses Canada's own assessment of threats. While Canadians are right to condemn terrorism always and everywhere and our government should vigorously reiterate that terrorism is never justified under any circumstance, the simple truth is that Canadian security interests are not threatened evenly by all terrorist organizations. Some groups, for instance, target Canadians and their allies specifically, while others may be active in a region in which Canadians are present in high numbers. Still other groups may threaten regional political balances with worrisome global implications. Yet for the most part, a preponderance of international terrorist activity only superficially challenges Canadian security. The point is that Canadian counterterrorism is about prioritizing international, regional, and homegrown threats and ensuring decision-makers have a range of responses that address a variety of potential adversaries and scenarios.

Second, a tripartite distinction of terrorism highlights the array of activities associated with contemporary terrorism. Terrorism is not simply the moment a suicide bomber destroys a public market. In all cases, terrorists require community support to help facilitate violence. In fact, very few organizations could survive without some form of sponsorship. Diaspora communities living in the West represent an important source of that support; they can accept, condone, sponsor, finance, and/or facilitate violence abroad or at home. Though an individual engaged in one of these activities falls short of actually carrying out a terrorist attack, as facilitators, they nonetheless play a critical role. In this regard, Canada has been an incubator of terrorism. Popularized by journalist Stewart Bell in *Cold Terror* (2004) and David Harris in various interviews,⁷ Canadians have begun to realize the full extent of their compatriots' involvement in supporting, sponsoring, and facilitating terrorism. Combating this form of terrorist

⁷ *PBS-Frontline*, "Trail of a Terrorist", (October 2001); Linda Frum, "Q&A with Terrorism Expert David Harris", *MacLean's* (June 13, 2006); and Howard Schneider, "Canada Imports Troubles with Refugees", *Washington Post*, August 9, 1997.

activity will require a refined appreciation for the demands of contemporary counterterrorism.

In its most basic form, counterterrorism requires two things: diminishing a group's capability to organize acts of violence and undermining a group's motivation to employ violence altogether.⁸ The first half of the strategy is tactical and coercive in nature. It is based on eliminating the sources of power that allow individuals and groups to organize acts of terrorism: terrorist training facilities and safe havens can be attacked; state sponsors of terrorism can be deterred; the global flow of weapons and terrorism financing can be restricted; terrorist leaders can be captured or killed; and terrorist plots can be disrupted. Each tactic diminishes a terrorist group's ability to act in the way it most prefers and impedes violence as a consequence. The second half of the strategy is ideological in nature. It is based on challenging the rationales and perspectives that inform the use of violence and involves diminishing the motivation for facilitating terrorism. Counter-motivation tactics involve challenging the logic and legitimacy informing a group's behaviour, addressing the socio-political and economic factors that help foster support for terrorists, impeding the achievement of a group's socio-political objectives, and championing, diffusing, and rewarding non-violent behavioural alternatives. These tactics focus on challenging the ideological and practical rationales terrorists rely upon to garner support and diminishing the efficacy of using violence to achieve socio-political objectives.

At all three levels of abstraction, long-term success in countering terrorism will require calibrating counter-capability with counter-motivation efforts in a way that properly contends with specific threat scenarios. Accordingly, effective counterterrorism is derived by using both military and police force, when and where appropriate, and simultaneously developing and applying diplomatic, defensive, and developmental strategies. By conceiving of terrorism as a phenomenon with global, regional, and local characteristics and by presenting counterterrorism as two primary processes, decision-makers gain greater capacity to identify which terrorist threat and

⁸ These distinctions were originally explored by the author in Alex Wilner "The Campaign against Terrorism: Successes and Failure", *CSS Analyses in Security Policy*, No. 48, (February 2009) and Alex Wilner, "Canada's Role in Combating al Qaeda: International, Regional and Homegrown Dimensions", *Strategic Datalink*, No. 11, (July 2009) and elaborated upon in Alex Wilner, "Counter-capability and Counter-motivation: Combating Terrorism in Canada", in David McDonough (ed.), *A National Security Strategy for Canada*, (Toronto: University Press, forthcoming 2010/11).

activity is most pressing and decide how best to respond to particular circumstances. Canadian counterterrorism is no exception – the contours of our strategy must reflect specific threats and activities. What follows is a discussion of Canada’s evolving relationship with terrorism.

From Terrorism in Canada to Canadian Terrorists

There are two ways in which terrorism affects Canadians. First, terrorism threatens Canadian citizens with death and injury and Canadian assets with destruction, and second, Canadian citizens can help orchestrate terrorism around the globe. Canadians, in this regard, are both victims of terrorism and perpetrators of terrorism. In both cases, the tripartite distinction of contemporary terrorism helps refine these relationships, identifying how Canadians are threatened by terrorism and illustrating the manner in which they are involved in sponsoring its activity.

As victims, terrorism threatens Canadians in four ways. First, foreign terrorist organizations – those that are primarily based overseas – can kill and injure Canadians within Canada’s borders. To date, no such attack has occurred. This does not mean al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other groups are not trying to attack Canadians at home. Open sourced documentation suggests they are.⁹ In 2004, former CSIS director, Ward Elcock noted that it was “no longer a question of if, but rather of when or where, [Canada] will be specifically targeted.” Elcock’s assertion was repeated by his successor, Jim Judd, in 2006, who suggested that an attack on Canadian soil was “probable”, by Federal Minister of Public Safety, Stockwell Day in 2008, who reiterated that “Canada is a target”, and by Judd’s successor at CSIS, Richard Fadden in May 2010, who noted that CSIS was currently “investigating over 200 individuals in this country whose activities

⁹ Al Qaeda has threatened Canada specifically on five occasions. In 2002 and 2004, it listed Canada as a priority target; in 2006, Ayman al-Zawahiri referred to Canada as a “second-rate crusader”; a 2006 al Qaeda document threatened Canada with an “operation similar to New York, Madrid, London”; and in February 2007, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula called for attacks on Canada’s “petroleum interests”. The Taliban likewise threatened Canadians directly in a 2007 “graduation ceremony” for suicide bombers in which a group of men are identified as having been trained to carry out suicide attacks in Canada. Stewart Bell, “Al-Qaeda Warns Canada”, *National Post*, October 28, 2006; *CBC News*, “Al-Qaeda Calls for Attacks on Canadian Oil Facilities”, February 14, 2007; Brian Ross, “Taliban Graduates Heading West?”, *ABC News*, June 18, 2007.

meet the definition of terrorism.”¹⁰ A related threat involves foreign terrorists planning attacks in Canada in order to target third parties. In 2008 and 2009, for instance, CSIS probed the prospects that Hezbollah might attack Israel’s diplomatic assets and/or Canada’s Jewish community in response to the anonymous slaying of Hezbollah mastermind Imad Mughniyeh in Syria.¹¹ Likewise, al Qaeda’s 2007 call for attacks on Canada’s oil industry might be understood as targeting the United States, given the disruption such an attack would have on the American economy, continental border security, and U.S. trade and diplomatic relations. In both cases, Canadian citizens would likely have suffered the brunt of the attacks but the intended recipient would nonetheless have been a third party.

Second, terrorism conducted overseas by foreign organizations can kill and injure Canadians. This happens more often than is usually appreciated. For instance, al Qaeda killed 24 Canadians on 9/11; al Qaeda in Iraq killed two Canadians when it bombed the UN headquarters in Baghdad in 2003; Jemaah Islamiyah, an al Qaeda ally based in Indonesia, killed two Canadians in its 2002 Bali attack, injured three more in its 2005 Bali bombing, and another two in its 2009 Jakarta attack; and four Canadians were killed and injured in the Mumbai attacks of 2008. In all of these cases, Canadians were the unintended victims of international terrorism. Yet Canadians working and living abroad have also been the specific targets of foreign terrorist organizations. For example, in 2008, two Canadian diplomats travelling in Niger were captured by tribal militants and delivered to al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.¹² In Iraq, two Canadian humanitarian workers were abducted in 2005 and the Taliban specifically ambushed and killed two other Canadian aid workers in August 2008. In all these cases, Canadians became the victims of terrorism while working and travelling abroad.

Third, Canadian diplomatic facilities and other Canadian assets can be targeted in terrorist attacks overseas. Though no Canadian embassy or consulate has yet to suffer an attack, terrorists have struck American, Danish, British, Dutch, Australian, Indian,

¹⁰ *Canadian Press*, “CSIS Chief Warns of Al Qaeda Attack”, May 6, 2004; Jim Bronskill, “Al Qaida Assault on Canada ‘probable’, Warns CSIS”, *Canadian Press*, May 9, 2006; Paul Mayne, “Cabinet Minister says Canada Terrorist Target”, *National Post*, March 27, 2008; CSIS “Remarks by Director Richard B. Fadden to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security” (May 11, 2010), http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/cmmn/rmrks_hc_stndng_cmmtt_11052010-eng.asp.

¹¹ Stewart Bell, “Canada May be Terror Target”, *National Post*, July 23, 2009.

¹² Colin Freeze, “Operation Diplomat”, *Globe and Mail*, June 3, 2009.

Israeli, and French consular offices worldwide in the past five years alone. Although heavily fortified, diplomatic offices are a favoured target because of their symbolic value and because of the high probability that foreign nationals will be killed or injured. Other Canadian assets, however, have been specifically targeted. Most notably, two Air Canada planes with flights from London, England, to Montreal and Toronto were to be destroyed as part of al Qaeda's 2006 plot to detonate liquid-based explosives aboard nearly a dozen transatlantic aircraft. Had the attack not been foiled, hundreds of Canadians would have perished.

Fourth and finally, Canadians are threatened by terrorism organized and perpetrated by other Canadians and residents living in the country. With recent attacks in Madrid, Amsterdam, and London and foiled attempts in Chicago, Toronto, Paris, Milan, Sydney, New York and elsewhere, the focus today rests understandably on homegrown Islamist terrorism. Yet Canadian terrorists have targeted and killed other Canadians long before 9/11.¹³ Quebec separatists associated with the FLQ conducted dozens of attacks against Canadians between 1963 and 1970. The most notorious included the 1969 bombing of the Montreal Stock Exchange, which injured 27 individuals, a series of mail bombings against private citizens, and the October 1970 abduction of British Trade Commissioner James Cross and murder of Pierre Laporte, Quebec's Minister of Labour. Between 1982 and 1985, Armenian terrorists attacked Turkish diplomats in Canada on at least three occasions, culminating in the 1985 storming of Turkey's embassy by three Canadian citizens, which resulted in the shooting death of embassy guard Claude Brunelle. Canadian Sikh extremists associated with Babbar Khalsa were responsible for planting suitcase bombs on two aircraft departing from Vancouver International Airport in 1985. One detonated midflight,

¹³ Canadian terrorist groups include Direct Action (the Squamish Five), a leftist organization that vandalized and bombed corporate headquarters, businesses, and government offices across Canada in the 1980s. Canadian First Nation "warrior societies" have at times also relied on sabotage, blockades, and violence to address their grievances. In 1990, the Mohawk Warrior Society, for instance, led a confrontation with the Sûreté du Québec, the RCMP, and the CF at Oka, Quebec. One police officer died in what became known as the Oka Crisis. Environmental and Eco-terrorism is also an occurrence. Some groups, like Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Army, employ sabotage and arson to destroy logging infrastructure, hunting and fishing outfits, ski lift equipment, and power lines. Eco-terrorists are also thought responsible for a series of bombs targeting EnCana oil and gas pipelines in British Columbia in 2008/9. B. Dadidson Smith, "Single Issue Terrorism", *CSIS Commentary*, No. 74 (1998); Tom Flanagan, "Resource Industries and Security Issues in Northern Alberta", Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, June 2009.

destroying Air India Flight 182 over Ireland; the other exploded while being transferred by luggage handlers at Narita International Airport in Japan. Of the hundreds killed, 280 were Canadians. That figure is worth repeating: 280 Canadians killed in a single act of terrorism. Until 9/11, the Air India Bombing was the single deadliest mass-casualty terrorist attack. Despite the fact that Canadians were involved in planning the attack and Canadians made up 90 percent of those killed, Canada has, until recently, failed to recognize the event as one directed against Canadians. Unfathomably, it took 20 years before a Canadian prime minister publicly addressed the bombings' annual memorial service in Ireland and a further two years before a Canadian memorial was unveiled.¹⁴

As perpetrators, Canadians facilitate terrorist activity in four ways. First, individuals can use Canada as a base of operation to plan and organize attacks against the United States and other countries. Ahmed Ressam is perhaps the most infamous. His 1999 plan to bomb Los Angeles International Airport on New Year's Eve was organized almost exclusively from Canada. He only failed when alert U.S. custom officials stopped a visibly nervous Ressam as he attempted to drive his explosive-laden vehicle across the Canada-U.S. border.¹⁵ More recent accounts accent this trend. First, Ottawa-native Mohammad Momin Khawaja was arrested in 2004 after RCMP officers raided his home as part of a joint operation conducted with British security officials. In 2008, Khawaja became the first Canadian imprisoned under the country's *Anti-Terrorism Act*, guilty of financing terrorism in the UK and of having designed and constructed a remote-controlled transmitting device capable of setting off home-made explosives.¹⁶ Second, Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a Pakistani-Canadian immigration consultant, was charged in January 2010 in the US for his role in facilitating the 2008 Mumbai attacks in India. While Rana's trial is ongoing, his American counterpart and close friend, David Headley, plead guilty in March 2010 to laying the groundwork for the Mumbai attack and of plotting further attacks in Denmark.¹⁷ Third, Quebecer Said Namouh was arrested in 2007 for aiding an al Qaeda affiliated group plot attacks in Germany and

¹⁴ Commission of Inquiry into the Investigation of the Bombing of Air India Flight 182, *The Families Remember*, (Ottawa: 2008), pp. 2-5.

¹⁵ Hal Bernton, *et al.*, "The Terrorist Within" *Seattle Times*, July 7 2002.

¹⁶ For a detailed online account of the Khawaja case, see *Ottawa Citizen*, "Khawaja on Trial", <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/features/khawajatrial/index.html>.

¹⁷ Colin Freeze, "Convicted Terrorist who Helped plot Mumbai Attacks Faces Life in Prison", *Globe and Mail*, March 18, 2010.

Austria. Canada elected not to extradite him and charged him under the country's anti-terrorism legislation. In October 2009 he was found guilty of conspiracy to detonate an explosive device, participating in the activities of a terrorist group, and extortion and was given a life sentence in February 2010.¹⁸ Finally, following a deadly October 2009 FBI raid against Luqman Ameen Abdullah, described as the "leader of a violent Sunni Muslim separatist group in Detroit", several arrests were made in Windsor, Ontario. Abdullah's son, Mujahid, was arrested and immediately expelled to the United States, and two Canadians, Mohammad Al-Sahli and Yassir Ali Khan, were arrested and charged by American officials with conspiracy to commit federal crimes.¹⁹

Second, Canadians facilitate terrorism by travelling overseas to join foreign organizations. Canadians have a history of this sort of activity. Ahmed Khadr, a Canadian of Egyptian descent, travelled to Afghanistan following the Soviet invasion and became a prominent supporter, friend, and ally of Osama bin Laden. A few of his sons followed suit joining mujahedeen ranks in the years preceding 9/11.²⁰ More recent trends reveal a proliferation of Canadians joining, fighting, and dying alongside foreign terrorists. In 2007, for instance, a Canadian man purportedly intent on "perform[ing] jihad in Afghanistan" was arrested in Kabul.²¹ In January 2008, Canadian Mohammed Jabarah was sentenced to life in prison in the U.S. for his role in a 2001 plot against American embassies in Singapore and the Philippines.²² His brother Abdel, died in a 2003 firefight with Saudi Arabian security officers just as al Qaeda launched a campaign of suicide attacks in the country.²³ In 2008, Pakistani officials reported that a U.S. missile strike in the remote tribal region of South Waziristan killed five Taliban fighters,

¹⁸ Irwin Block, "Said Namouh Sentenced to Life in Prison in Terrorism Case", *Montreal Gazette*, February 17, 2010.

¹⁹ U.S. officials later down-graded the charges and eventually dropped their extradition request with Canada. Paul Koring "Son of Suspected Muslim Extremist Expelled from Canada", *Globe and Mail*, October 30, 2009; Sarah Sachelin, "Ont. Men no Longer face Extradition to U.S.", *Windsor Star*, May 27, 2010.

²⁰ Stewart Bell, *Cold Terror: How Canada Nurtures and Exports Terrorism around the World*, (Toronto: Wiley, 2004), chap., 6; Canadian Security Intelligence Service, *Sons of the Father: The Next Generation of Islamic Extremists in Canada*, (May 7, 2004),

http://nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/CSIS_SonsOfTheFather.pdf

²¹ CBC, "Calgary Man Arrested in Kabul", May 11, 2007.

²² Alan Feuer, "Canadian Gets Life in Qaeda Bomb Plot", *New York Times*, January 19, 2008.

²³ Bruce Riedel and Bilal Saab, "Al Qaeda's Third Front: Saudi Arabia", *Washington Quarterly*, 31:2 (2008), pp. 33-46.

including “two Canadians of Arab origin.”²⁴ In Somalia, “Islamist extremists with Canadian identity documents,” including passports, driver’s licenses, and other Canadian documentation, “were among those killed and captured.”²⁵ Somalia’s al Shabaab, an al Qaeda ally recently proscribed in Canada, now actively recruits Canadians.²⁶ And other Canadians and landed immigrants, like Fateh Kamel, Kassem Daher, Rudwan Abubaker, Mohammed Warsame, Hassan Farhat, and Hassan Al-Merei are suspected of having trained with and/or joined groups fighting in Algeria, Lebanon, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Iraq.²⁷ The concomitant threat of Canadians travelling abroad to train and fight with terrorists, is in their eventual return home.

Third, Canadians have supported foreign terrorist organizations with financial, structural, and political/diplomatic assistance. Bell writes that Canadians have forged documents, fundraised within Diaspora communities, lobbied Canadian governments, mounted public campaigns, identified recruits, and cowed adversaries on the behalf of foreign terrorists.²⁸ For example, the LTTE, until recently, coordinated an expansive fundraising system in Canada, soliciting donations from Tamil-owned businesses and coercing community members to support the group.²⁹ In May 2010, Canadian Prapaharan Thambithurai plead guilty to knowingly providing financial services to the benefit of the LTTE, becoming the first Canadian convicted of financing the group since it was outlawed in Canada in 2006.³⁰ Hezbollah is also suspected of having used

²⁴ Colin Freeze, “Pakistan Probes Deaths of Alleged Canadian Militants”, *Globe and Mail*, September 3, 2008.

²⁵ Stewart Bell, “Somali-Canadians Joined Fight in Horn of Africa: Report”, *National Post*, July 25, 2007.

²⁶ Stewart Bell, “Exclusive: Former Somali Fighter Warns of Growing Radicalism in Canada”, *National Post*, March 18, 2010.

²⁷ Ian MacLeod, “The Warning Lights are All Blinking Red”, *Ottawa Citizen*, February 23, 2008; Integrated Threat Assessment Center (ITAC), *Is Canada Next?* (Unclassified Intelligence Assessment), April 13, 2006.

²⁸ Stewart Bell, Presentation given to “Terrorism, Law, & Democracy: How is Canada Changing Following September 11?”, Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice, (Montreal, March 25-26, 2002).

²⁹ *Asian Tribune*, “Tiger’s Collecting Funds in Canada: Sri Lanka Tamil Tigers use Pressure to Raise Funds, Canadian Police Say”, May 11, 2007; Stewart Bell, “Tamil Tigers Controlled Non-Profit Group: RCMP” *National Post*, April 15, 2009; and Colin Freeze, “As Far as Shopping for Terror, Canada Seems to be the Place”, *Globe and Mail*, August 28, 2006.

³⁰ Stewart Bell, “Toronto-area Man Pleads Guilty to Funding Tamil Tigers”, *National Post*, May 11, 2001.

Canadians to secure financial assets and to purchase materials.³¹ As discussed, this sort of facilitation is a critical component of global terrorist activity.

Fourth, Canadians can plan and carry out attacks against other Canadians. The FLQ and *Babbar Khalsa* are but two historical examples. More recently, Canadians have been involved in organizing Islamist attacks. The June 2006 arrest of the “Toronto 18” is the most prominent case. The group is alleged to have planned various bombing attacks in Ontario. In preparation, the suspects ordered, received, and stored three metric tonnes of ammonium nitrate – a fertilizer that doubles as a bomb ingredient.³² In an investigation targeting over 50 individuals, 18 men were eventually arrested (of which three youths had their charges stayed in 2007 and four others were released in 2008).³³ Of the remaining eleven, six individuals have been found or have pled guilty to terrorism offenses. “I am satisfied,” Ontario Superior Court Justice John Sproat argued at the conclusion of the first trial, “beyond a reasonable doubt that a terrorist group existed. Working toward ultimate goals that appear unattainable or even unrealistic does not militate against a finding that this was a terrorist group.”³⁴ Paralleling trends in many other Western countries, the phenomenon of homegrown terrorism in Canada is marked by the fact that perpetrators are usually citizens and/or landed immigrants, have been born, raised, or educated in Canada, finance and plan violence with little support from international groups, and are autonomous and independently trained.³⁵ Perhaps most frightening, homegrown Canadian terrorists are nearly indistinguishable from other Canadians: they speak English and French, dress and behave the way other Canadians do, share their cultural characteristics and mores, and have an intimate appreciation for Canada’s particular social cues.

³¹ Stewart Bell, “Hezbollah Uses Canada as Base”, *National Post*, October 31, 2002.

³² RCMP officers intercepted and substituted the shipment with a “harmless powder” before delivery. *CBC News*, “Indepth: Toronto bomb plot: Ammonium nitrate,” June 5, 2006; Colin Freeze, “How a Police Agent Cracked a Terror Cell”, *Globe and Mail*, September 2, 2009.

³³ Stewart Bell, “17 Arrests Part of Bigger Plot: Investigators”, *National Post*, June 2, 2007.

³⁴ Ian Austen, “Man Guilty in Canada Terror Plot”, *New York Times*, September 25, 2008.

³⁵ Alex Wilner and Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz, “Homegrown Terrorism and Transformative Learning: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Understanding Radicalization” *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 22:1, (February 2010); Frazer Egerton and Alex Wilner, “Combating Militant Jihadism in Canada: A War of Ideas”, *Justice, Policing, & Security*, Metropolis – Citizenship and Immigration Canada (May 2009), pp. 7-12.

Having outlined the contours of modern terrorism and summarized the specific manners in which Canadians have been threatened by and have participated in terrorism, what follows is a discussion of several terrorism trends that will influence Canadian defence planning over the coming years.

The (Counter) Terrorism to Come

Accurately projecting future terrorist threats is risky; too little open-sourced information is available on too many crucially important variables. Indeed, few experts and even fewer government officials openly discuss the specifics of terrorism projections. Instead, terrorism trends are used to illustrate the general contours of future threats rather than speculate on precise events.³⁶ What follows, then, is a discussion of six terrorism and counterterrorism trends that are likely to influence the nature of Canada's threat environment and its response to it.

Al Qaeda's Diffusion

First, al Qaeda continues to evolve. While the organization that conducted 9/11, for the most part, no longer exists, al Qaeda remains the world's most dangerous terrorist threat. The 2001 removal of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, whose protection al Qaeda required and received in the years prior to 9/11, was the organization's greatest setback. Coalition successes were many: the Taliban crumbled; high-ranking terrorist leaders were eliminated; al Qaeda's base of operation, training facilities, and institutional sanctuary were destroyed; and the global flow of terrorism financing was restricted. These successes devastated al Qaeda's command and control mechanisms and forced it to abandon the protection of its principal safe haven. The cumulative result was a diminishment of al Qaeda's ability to organize acts of terrorism in Europe and North America.

Despite this setback, al Qaeda has reorganized itself into a potent ideological movement that colludes with and motivates others to carry out acts of terrorism. The

³⁶ Elinor Sloan, "Terrorism in 2025: Likely Dimensions and Attributes", *Trends in Terrorism Series*, 2007-3, Integrated Threat Assessment Center, (2007).

paradox is that while a flatter, leaner al Qaeda is a less capable organization, its ideological diffusion since 9/11 has inspired violence worldwide. As CSIS director Fadden noted recently, al Qaeda has “shape-shifted” into both an organization and an ideology, and while the organization’s “head office is clearly under some pressure, the brand lives on, so while Al Qaeda is weakened ... its fragmentation has ... extended and dispersed its influence.”³⁷ This is evident in al Qaeda’s increasing affinity with various regional Islamist groups, like Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Sayyef, al Shabaab, the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment, and others. The 2003 invasion of Iraq further resuscitated al Qaeda by compelling disparate groups and individuals angered by Western intervention in the Middle East to unite and hoist the al Qaeda banner. Algeria’s Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat officially became al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb in 2006. Al Qaeda in Iraq followed a similar trajectory, as have franchises in Pakistan, Lebanon, Yemen, Libya, the Sinai Peninsula, and Saudi Arabia. Hamas’ 2009 routing of an al Qaeda offshoot in Gaza, suggests the organization has made inroads with Palestinians as well.³⁸

The significance of al Qaeda’s ability to attract aspirants should not be underestimated. It is the organization’s best chance of survival, continued relevance, and eventual renewal. Furthermore, al Qaeda acts as a “force multiplier” for regional Islamists, structurally, financially, and ideologically assisting local efforts.³⁹ As a unifying umbrella movement, al Qaeda also fosters cross-regional cooperation, allowing tactical successes from one battlefield to be more easily transferred and applied to another. Likewise, as al Qaeda suffers losses in one area of operation, in Iraq or in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) for instance, it has repeatedly illustrated its resilience by establishing operational footholds in other areas. Most recently, al Qaeda has gained ground in Somalia, West Africa (Mauritania, Mali, Chad and Niger), Uzbekistan, and Yemen, (re)establishing safe havens either lost or under fire in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iraq.⁴⁰ Al Qaeda has also begun actively

³⁷ CSIS, “Remarks by Richard B. Fadden, Director, CSIS, to the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies (CASIS) Annual International Conference,” (October 29, 2009), <http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/nwsrm/spchs/spch29102009-eng.asp>.

³⁸ Avi Issacharoff, “Hamas: Head of Al-Qaida Affiliate Killed in Gaza”, *Haaretz*, August 15, 2009.

³⁹ Bruce Hoffman and Seth Jones, “Cellphones in the Hindu Kush”, *National Interest*, 96 (2008), pp. 47-48.

⁴⁰ Leon Panetta, Speech delivered to the Pacific Council on International Policy, (Los Angeles, California, May 18, 2009); U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, “Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb”, (January 2010).

inspiring radicalized Western Islamists directly to carry out attacks in Europe and North America. According to one assessment, a “growing portion” of al Qaeda’s internet-based propaganda is now in English, tailored specifically to resonate with Anglo-Saxon audiences.⁴¹ Al Qaeda’s deepening association with regional Islamists, renewed focus on consolidating safe havens, and attempts to direct homegrown terrorists pose novel challenges to global counterterrorism efforts.

Canada’s role in dismantling al Qaeda rests on the country’s ongoing campaign in Afghanistan. Canada’s military, diplomatic, and developmental efforts are its most important international contribution to reversing al Qaeda’s global resurgence. While critics of the Afghan mission posit that fighting the Taliban and countering al Qaeda are two separate endeavours, these groups think otherwise. Before his targeted elimination in 2007, Mullah Dadullah, the Taliban’s most senior Afghan leader, had this to say: “We and Al-Qaida are as one. If we are preparing attacks, then it is likewise the work of Al-Qaida, and if Al-Qaida is doing so, then this is also our project, too.”⁴² The Taliban’s Pakistani branch concurs.⁴³ Other groups active in Southeast Asia, like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the Tora Bora Military Front, and Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin, also fight alongside and at the behest of al Qaeda. As a result, Canada’s running battle with insurgents might be properly considered an intrinsic part of global efforts to counter al Qaeda’s resurgence. By bolstering Kabul’s government and assisting Afghans to fight insurgent forces, Canada impedes the Taliban from reconstituting its territorial control and diminishes its capacity to once again offer sanctuary to al Qaeda. As Bruce Hoffman and Seth Jones explain, failing in Afghanistan will give al Qaeda “new momentum and greater freedom of action.”⁴⁴ If so, the opposite is also true. Helping Afghanistan exert control over its territory, ensuring the Taliban cannot easily and effectively operate in the country, and assisting international and indigenous counterinsurgency efforts in Pakistan, forces al Qaeda to expend time, energy, and personnel reinforcing its existing allies in Southeast Asia rather than consolidating its bases of operation elsewhere. Canadians should not underestimate the importance of

⁴¹ Ted Gistaro, Speech delivered to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (Washington, D.C., 2008); Integrated Threat Assessment Center, “‘Lone-Wolf’ Attacks: A Developing Islamist Extremist Strategy?”, (Unclassified Intelligence Assessment), June 29, 2007.

⁴² Interview with Mullah Dadullah, *NEFA Foundation*, (May 10, 2007).

⁴³ Interview with Maulvi Omar, *NEFA Foundation*, (August 29, 2008).

⁴⁴ Hoffman and Jones, “Cellphones”, p. 50.

this cycle. Al Qaeda has finite resources. Stretching it thin in Afghanistan and Pakistan obliges it to recalculate its expectations and projections in North and West Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and elsewhere.

Small Arms Terrorism

Second, terrorists are increasingly relying on small arms and swarming tactics in their attacks. A surprising number of the most daring terrorist attacks to have taken place over the past two years were carried out with the use of light weaponry (semi-automatic/automatic weapons, hand grenades, shoulder-launched rockets) rather than vehicle- and body-borne suicide bombs. The 2008 Mumbai attacks, for instance, were carried out almost entirely by men wielding hand-held weapons. Despite the low level of sophistication, the ten gunmen were able to kill over 170 individuals and injure several hundred more in a shooting spree that spanned 60 hours. A similar attack was launched against Sri Lanka's cricket team in March 2009, as athletes travelled to Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, Pakistan. The attackers, roughly a dozen gunmen, relied almost solely on hand-held weapons and managed to kill and injure 20 individuals before escaping on foot. The July 2008 attack on the U.S. Consulate in Turkey, the June 2009 attack against a U.S. military recruitment office in Arkansas, the foiled August 2009 plot to strike an Australian military base in Sydney, and Major Nidal Malik Hasan's shooting rampage at U.S. military base Fort Hood in November 2009, all exclusively relied on small arms.

The emerging trend suggests that while concealed explosives, especially suicide bombs, remain a preferred tactic of contemporary terrorism, less sophisticated weapons offer terrorists a low-budget yet deadly alternative.⁴⁵ The effective use of small arms in coordinated assaults on hardened military targets in Iraq and Afghanistan (and, in the case of Fort Hood, in the U.S., too) suggests further that their use in terrorist attacks

⁴⁵ Parallels might be drawn between small arms terrorism and other acts of mass-casualty gun violence, like school and workplace shootings and sniper attacks, though these are not considered terrorism given their apolitical motivation. Both sorts of attack, however, pose common security challenges. The 2002 Beltway Snipers, a two-person team that shot, injured and killed nearly 15 people over a period of three weeks in Washington D.C., befuddled police by changing locations and randomly selecting targets. Likewise, the 2007 Virginia Tech Massacre, in which one individual suffering from severe anxiety disorder killed and injured over 50 individuals, took place in two locations and spanned a three-hour period.

against civilian targets will provide the tactical results terrorists desire (fear, despair, and death). Firearms are also cheap, concealable, and easy to use, requiring no significant training. Small arms have proven most effective in terrorism when individuals swarm a target from various directions while conducting hit and run operations. As events in Mumbai illustrate, surviving gunmen can then easily travel from one target to another in order to continue coordinating further attacks. Unlike suicide bombings which are often singular events, hand-held weapons allow gunmen to dictate the flow of an assault. Carnage can be spread around, over time and space. Importantly, hand-held weapons can be purchased legally or otherwise acquired by terrorists living within Western states, making pre-attack detection and intervention difficult. And finally, if perpetrators have suicidal inclinations, a small arms terrorist attack will only end when gunmen either run out of ammunition or are confronted and killed. As the Mumbai attacks demonstrate, doing the latter can take days. Given their effectiveness, terrorists are likely to continue relying on small arms in future attacks.

Maritime Terrorism

Third, there is an emerging confluence between international piracy and terrorism. Pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, and the western Indian Ocean have risen sharply in recent years. Somalia's coastal water is the epicentre of attacks. The figures are stark: in the first three months of 2009, nearly 40 vessels were boarded, 29 were fired upon, and another nine were hijacked off Somalia's coast. This represents a 244 percent increase in ocean vessel hijackings since 2004.⁴⁶ While most pirate attacks have been economically motivated – hijackers usually release vessels once a ransom is paid – the lesson for al Qaeda and others is clear. Cumbersome vessels, cargo ships, and oil tankers are easy prey. They can be boarded, rather painlessly, using swifter, smaller crafts, and commandeered by lightly armed gangs. That al Qaeda has a history of attacking large vessels using explosive-laden bomb-boats is worrisome. Though the organization failed in its January 2000 attack on the *USS The Sullivans* docked in Yemen (the bomb-boat sunk under the weight of its own explosive load), al Qaeda succeeded on its second attempt against the *USS Cole* later in October and again in 2002 against the

⁴⁶ Matthew Hulbert, "Making Waves: Piracy Floods the Horn of Africa", *CSS Analyses in Security Policy*, No. 55, (June 2009).

Limburg, a French oil tanker. And in 2002, Moroccan officials arrested a number of al Qaeda operatives thought to be preparing similar attacks against British and American tankers in the Strait of Gibraltar.⁴⁷ While it is clear that pirates take hostages, demand payments, and leave with their loot once demands are met, it is not implausible that terrorists will mimic piracy's tactics only to sink vessels, kill crews, destroy shipments, and constrict shipping lanes. Indeed, there is little new in these sorts of projections. Following Abu Sayyaf's 2004 ferry bombing in the Philippines, maritime terrorism has been on the radar.⁴⁸

Piracy's newfound success, however, only serves to illustrate the ease with which al Qaeda and others might conduct a campaign of maritime terrorism. In January 2009, *Asia Times'* Pakistani bureau chief, Syed Saleem Shahzad, reported that an emerging priority for al Qaeda was precisely the disruption and destabilization of sea routes between Somalia and Yemen.⁴⁹ In May 2009, al Qaeda went on to issue an international communiqué exhorting followers to attack "strategic maritime chokepoints" as a way to destabilize the global economy.⁵⁰ By July 2009, Egyptian authorities arrested two dozen men, whom officials suggested were members of an al Qaeda cell, and confiscated explosives, electronic devices, and diving equipment. Though details are vague and some scepticism remains, the men are alleged to have planned attacks on ships traveling the Suez Canal.⁵¹ Over 20,000 large vessels travel in and around Somalia's coast annually. Thousands more travel the Suez Canal, the Straits of Malacca, Hormuz, and Gibraltar, and other passageways. How many would al Qaeda need to destroy to choke international trade routes?

Maritime terrorism is a strategic threat to Canada. As a maritime nation with significant interests in international trade and a naval power with vessels participating in Combined Task Force 150 and Operation Active Endeavour – multinational coalitions tasked with monitoring, inspecting, and interjecting vessels in counterterrorism and counter-piracy operations – an increase in maritime terrorism will

⁴⁷ Gal Luft and Anne Korin, "Terrorism Goes to Sea", *Foreign Affairs*, (November/December 2004).

⁴⁸ Simon Elegant and Kuala Sepetang, "Dire Straits", *TIME*, November 29, 2004.

⁴⁹ Syed Saleem Shahzad, "Al-Qaeda Sniffs Opportunity in Gaza", *Asia Times*, January 7, 2009

⁵⁰ Peter Chalk, "Assessing the Recent Terrorist Threat to the Malacca Strait", *CTC Sentinel*, 3:4 (2010), pp. 8-10.

⁵¹ *BBC*, "Egypt Arrests 25 in 'Suez Plot'", July 9, 2009.

necessarily affect Canadian policies.⁵² Whether that includes developing and implementing more robust standard operating procedures for Canadian sailors involved in hostage and hijack situations, bolstering the Canadian Navy's involvement in international anti-terrorism and anti-piracy efforts, assisting international institutions to reinterpret interdiction procedures in sovereign waters that act as pirate safe havens, or enabling the navies of less-traditional allies, like Yemen, Egypt, and Indonesia, to effectively control their maritime territory, will have to be debated and decided.

Coercive Counterterrorism

Fourth, counter-capability operations and other military-based counterterrorism efforts have scored several important recent successes. A number of foreign terrorist organizations have effectively been crushed by the use of overwhelming military might, suggesting that coercive counterterrorism, despite its shortfalls, can at times produce results. In Sri Lanka, for instance, military force put an end to the LTTE's thirty year conflict. In May 2009, the remnants of a mighty terrorist organization – one that led the world in suicide bombings – were corralled into a tiny patch of jungle. On May 18, Sri Lankan soldiers killed Velupillai Prabhakaran, the elusive LTTE leader. "This battle," Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the Tiger's chief of international relations affirmed, "has reached its bitter end. We have decided to silence our guns."⁵³ Since then, LTTE terrorism has been virtually nonexistent. In Iraq, a 2007 American troop surge of roughly 20,000 soldiers was credited – alongside the 2006 targeted killing of AQI's brutal leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the capture and elimination of other AQI leaders (like Abu Ayyub al-Masri and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi), and the establishment of various anti-al Qaeda Awakening Councils between 2006 and 2008⁵⁴ – with having greatly diminished AQI's capability. By 2008, violence in Iraq dipped to below 2004 levels and Afghanistan was touted as a "more dangerous" environment. By 2009, U.S. Marines based in Iraq even griped at the lack of action they were facing and pined for a

⁵² Patrick Lennox, "Contemporary Piracy off the Horn of Africa", Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, (2008).

⁵³ Emily Wax, "Sri Lankan Rebels Admit Defeat, Vow to Drop Guns", *Washington Post*, May 18, 2009.

⁵⁴ Farook Ahmed, "Sons of Iraq and Awakening Forces", *Backgrounder* 23, Institute for the Study of War (2008).

tour of Afghanistan.⁵⁵ Beside losses in Iraq, al Qaeda's international leadership was also heavily attrited in recent months. Al Qaeda leaders, like Abu Laith al-Libi, Abu Sulaiman al-Jasiri, Abu Jihad al-Masri, Midhat Mursi al-Sayid, Abu Wafa al-Saudi, Rashid Rauf, Usama al-Kini, Ahmed Salim Swedan, Mustafa Abu al-Yazid and dozens of others were specifically targeted and killed in U.S. drone and precision attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan.⁵⁶ American strikes also killed Aden Hashi Ayro in Somalia, Abu Ghadiya in Syria, and the Taliban's Baitullah Mehsud in Pakistan.⁵⁷ In these and other cases, the selective targeting of individual terrorist leaders has, at times, diminished terrorist capabilities.⁵⁸

None of this is to argue that military force alone will defeat terrorism. But recent successes in counter-capability operations do suggest that force can help curb terrorist capabilities while making way for other counter-motivational strategies (like Iraq's Awakenings Councils or Afghanistan's Allegiance Program and Program Takhim e-Solh) to flourish.⁵⁹ If so, military successes in 2008 and 2009 might provide the impetus for further reliance on force and coercion in counterterrorism operations in 2010 and beyond. Already, an Iraq-styled U.S. (and NATO) troop surge is underway in Afghanistan. U.S. President Barack Obama began deploying an additional 30,000 troops in 2009, a trend that is expected to peak in August 2010 by which time over 100,000 U.S. personnel will be stationed in the country. In terms of targeted killings, President Obama, upon taking office in January 2009, not only continued his predecessor's use of unmanned aerial vehicles to stalk, target, and kill Taliban and al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but augmented the program significantly.⁶⁰ Though

⁵⁵ Rod Nordland, "Tracking Faraway Action from an Iraqi Base", *New York Times*, July 7, 2009; Jonathan Karl and Luis Martinez, "Afghanistan Now Most Dangerous for U.S. Troops", *ABC*, November 30, 2007.

⁵⁶ Ronald Sandee, "Core Al-Qaida in 2008: A Review", *NEFA Foundation* (2009), pp. 6-11.

⁵⁷ Eric Schmitt and Jeffrey Gettleman, "Qaeda Leader Reported Killed in Somalia", *New York Times*, May 2, 2008; Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, "Officials Say U.S. Killed an Iraq in Raid in Syria", *New York Times*, October 27, 2008; Pir Zubair Shah, Sabrina Tavernise, and Mark Mazzetti, "Taliban Leader in Pakistan is Reportedly Killed", *New York Times*, August 7, 2009.

⁵⁸ Alex Wilner, "Targeted Killings in Afghanistan: Measuring Coercion and Deterrence in Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 33:4 (April 2010).

⁵⁹ Joanna Nathan, "A Review of Reconciliation Efforts in Afghanistan", *CTC Sentinel* 2:8 (2009), pp. 11-14.

⁶⁰ *Wall Street Journal*, "Predators and Civilians", July 14, 2009; Mark Mazzetti and David Sanger, "Obama Expands Missile Strikes Inside Pakistan", *New York Times*, February 20, 2009; Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann, "Revenge of the Drones", *New America Foundation* (October 2009).

normatively and legally controversial, even the Taliban considers the tactic effective.⁶¹ More of the same should be expected for Afghanistan and Pakistan in the coming year and potentially, in Yemen, Somalia, Sudan and other emerging theatres of operation.

Red Teaming Canadian Counterterrorism

Fifth, Canada's aforementioned preparations for the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver offer important insight as to how red teaming can be used by Canadian defence and security agencies to effectively plan future counterterrorism operations. According to Lauder, red teaming is an "organizational process ... undertaken by a flexible, independent, and expert team that aims to create a collaborative learning relationship by challenging assumptions, concepts, plans, operations, organizations, and capability through the eyes of adversaries in the context of a complex security environment."⁶² While related to "war gaming" (in which a red team serves as an adversary and creates a particular security environment in order to test a blue team's tactical readiness) and "penetration tests" (in which red teams clandestinely infiltrate secure areas to test defences), the red teaming of the CF's V2010 preparation is more akin to a "discovery learning" exercise. The GRT, in its 2010 Final Report, suggests that at the "strategic level", red teaming is "more of an intellectual approach" used to analyse the Blue team's "planning cycle and assumptions."⁶³ Major-General Fitch's team primarily sought to challenge CF "conformity, convention, and orthodoxy" in counterterrorism while encouraging "self-discovery and learning" within blue team ranks. By devising scalable threat scenarios from the perspective of a potential adversary that spoke to specifically identified deficiencies in the CF's Olympic plan, the Games Red Team provided "independent peer review" of defence planning.

However, unlike some external auditors that simply assess a plan and point to potential problems, the GRT guided the CF to identify and fix potential gaps for itself. By relying on Table Top Exercises lasting between two hours and two days, the GRT

⁶¹ Jane Perlez and Pir Zubair Shah, "Porous Pakistani Border Could Hinder U.S.", *New York Times*, May 4, 2009; Jamestown Foundation, "Pakistani Taliban Commander Describes Counter-Measures against UAV Attacks", *Terrorism Monitor* 7:31 (2009), pp. 1-2.

⁶² Lauder, "Red Dawn", p. 13.

⁶³ Joint Task Force Games (Games Red Team), "Final Report: Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games" (June 2010), p. 8.

placed CF planners into realistic scenarios that forced blue teams to think about novel security dilemmas, refine their plans, and react in ways they had yet considered. For example, in reviewing CF preparations, the GRT identified a particular weakness concerning CF succession plans in the event terrorists managed to incapacitate CF commanders during the Olympic Games. Major-General Fitch explains that CF planners had not sufficiently considered that circumstance. By devising a corresponding TTX that reflected this particular security gap, the GRT gave CF planners an opportunity to tackle a novel security environment not entirely appreciated, learn from the exercise, and incorporate lessons into future plans. Other potential CF deficiencies relating to force protection, rapid planning processes and the deployment/employment of CF reserves, were similarly identified by the GRT and constructively challenged. The cumulative result was a more robust and well-rounded counterterrorism plan that effectively incorporated a myriad of potential scenarios.

In an era of complex terrorism epitomized by highly adaptive, asymmetric adversaries that neither accept nor adhere to pre-existing normative and legal conventions concerning the use of force and retain tactical advantages despite the overwhelming superiority of conventional military actors, red teaming provides a critical stimulant to defence planning. While “Red Teaming cannot prevent surprise,” the GRT’s Final Report reads, it can help “avoid catastrophic surprises.” This is particularly critical “when the adversary is agile or hard to specify” – as is the case in counterterrorism – “because it helps to articulate the unknown unknowns.”⁶⁴

Applying “alternative analysis” techniques to security planning helps identify atypical threats, exemplified by 9/11, and allows analysts and decision-makers to stretch their understanding of emerging threat environments.⁶⁵ By taking on the characteristics of a potential adversary, red teams question the assumptions that underline defence preparation. In so doing, suggests Brad Gladman, red teams help establish “a wider and deeper understanding of potential adversary options and behaviours.”⁶⁶ As the GRT notes, “incorrect or weak assumptions can badly affect the fine balance between accurate risk assessment and risk management.” Red teaming, then, offers an “essential

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 7

⁶⁵ Warren Fishbein and Gregory Treverton, “Rethinking ‘Alternative Analysis’ to Address Transnational Threats”, *Occasional Papers* 3:2, The Sherman Kent Center for Intelligence Analysis (2004), pp. 2-3.

⁶⁶ Brad Gladman, “The ‘Best Practices’ of Red Teaming”, Defence Research & Development Canada, (2007), p. 5.

review mechanism” of defence and security assumptions.⁶⁷ It also allows organizations to expunge operational biases, avoid groupthink, and prevent “mirror-imaging” – the natural phenomenon of filling knowledge gaps of an adversary’s intent, behaviour, and/or motivation with information from one’s own expectations of how the adversary ought to act. In this latter case, “assuming an enemy will behave in a way similar to oneself,” warns Gladman, “opens the door to self-deception.”⁶⁸ In sum, red teaming provides the basis for an adaptive and collaborative process in defence planning that instils ongoing situational awareness in threat analysis. This is exactly the sort of thinking contemporary counterterrorism demands.

Notwithstanding GRT efforts, red teaming in Canada remains an ad hoc and haphazard experiment. As a counterterrorism tool, red teaming’s future is bright, but uncertain. Unlike our American and British allies, Canada neither has a program dedicated to training red team members in the proper use of the concept, nor a formalized doctrine for its use in military or police planning.⁶⁹ The GRT was tasked to complete a particular strategic assignment involving a singular event, bounded in both time and space. Furthermore, counterterrorism in Canada is as much a police matter as it is a military one. That other security agencies, namely the RCMP (the lead agency for V2010 security) and city police forces were reluctant to partake in the GRT exercises, despite calls and assurances from the Department of National Defence, is problematic; counterterrorism is necessarily a multi-agency affair. The GRT’s dismissal among some security partners is as much a result of unresolved suspicion over red team concepts as it is a product of cultural and ideational misgivings inherent to some members of Canada’s broader security community. Red teaming is all about accepting and building on criticism and requires unfettered and open access to security plans. “Red team success,” explains Gladman, “depends upon the environment in which it operates, and the willingness of the organization to accept criticism.”⁷⁰ Not only do blue Commanders have to encourage red teams to scrutinize their plans, but they also have to be willing to accept critical findings and actively participate in learning exercises. At issue is the fact that military organizations have cultures that welcome the challenging of assumptions more easily than do policing organizations. As Major Bruce Sand notes, police “react

⁶⁷ JTFC (GRT), Final Report, p. 16.

⁶⁸ Gladman, “The ‘Best Practices’”, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Lauder, “Red Dawn”, p. 4.

⁷⁰ Gladman, “The ‘Best Practices’”, p. 10.

and respond” to emergency situations while the military prefers to “seize the initiative” rather than wait and react. The difference is subtle but profound. Major Wes von Papineau explains further that military organizations are naturally inclined to develop and expand their appreciation of a given threat environment in order to “predict and forestall an adversary,” leaving them open to red team concepts. So long as other members of Canada’s security community are less than willing to accept red teaming into their own preparations, its value in combating terrorism will remain limited.

Nonetheless, things are changing. Not only has the GRT’s Olympic preparation garnered praise from defence and policy planners, but other security teams, notably those involved in preparing for Ontario’s G8/20 Summit in June 2010, have showed interest in applying the concept.⁷¹ In fact, G8 security planners joined the GRT’s Adversary Intent Workshop, held at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt in June 2009, to better familiarize themselves with red teaming and discover how the concept might help their efforts. Furthermore, the concept received a welcome boost from the DRDC, which has unveiled a major initiative, through its Technology Demonstration Program (TDP), to improve scientific knowledge, application, and institutionalization of red teaming. Shifts like these suggest that red team concepts will play a larger role in Canadian counterterrorism and defence planning in the coming years.

The Homegrown-International Terrorism Convergence

Sixth and finally, worldwide successes in combating homegrown terrorism, to date, far outnumber the failures. Most terrorism plots hatched in the West have been uncovered and disrupted, their perpetrators captured, tried, and jailed. Besides the devastating attacks in Madrid and London, only a handful of attacks have been successfully carried out (i.e. the 2004 Theo van Gogh murder in Amsterdam, the second July 2005 London transit bombing, the 2007 Glasgow attack, the 2008 Exeter bombing, the 2009 Fort Hood attack). But even these were usually blundered and most had a very limited effect. The trend suggests that while Western Islamist radicalization and homegrown terrorism are certainly worrying developments, national security apparatuses are up to the challenge. Effective intelligence gathering, solid police work, international collaboration, and robust homeland defences have managed to blunt the

⁷¹ *Vancouver Sun*, “Military Seeks Low Profile for Games”, May 21, 2008.

threat. It certainly helps, too, that many homegrown terrorist plots are organized by weekend warriors with little or no military training.

However, the phenomenon of homegrown terrorism is evolving. “The presence of young, committed jihadists in Canada,” a CSIS reports reads, “is of grave concern. They represent a clear and present danger to Canada ... and are a particularly valuable resource for the international Islamic terrorist community.”⁷² Not only has al Qaeda shifted its resources towards facilitating homegrown attacks, but Westerners who travelled overseas to join terrorist organizations have been purposefully dispatched by these groups to return home to act as sleeper agents and coordinate homegrown attacks. Consider that British-educated Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (the *knicker* bomber who failed to detonate explosives over the skies of Detroit on Christmas Day 2009), American Najibullah Zazi (who plead guilty in February 2010 to planning attacks on New York City subways), Major Hassan (who attacked fellow soldiers at Fort Hood), and American Faisal Shahzad (who nearly succeeded in detonating a car bomb in Time Square in May 2010) all received a degree of ideological and/or practical guidance from terrorists living overseas. Attracting, recruiting, and training Westerners to conduct acts of terrorism in the countries in which they retain citizenship would be a coup for al Qaeda. Not only do Western recruits have “clean passports” – bona fide travel documents that are easily overlooked by officials – but they know precisely how to blend into the society and avoid detection. “You can’t take someone from the slums of Mogadishu,” explains Hoffman, “and take them on some suicide mission to Rome, Paris, New York.”⁷³ It is far more prudent and effective to train radicalized Italians, Frenchmen, and Americans in terrorism and send them on their way.

Two recent cases further highlight the emerging convergence of homegrown and international terrorism. In August 2009, a number of Australians of Somali and Lebanese descent were arrested in Melbourne for plotting to storm a Sydney-area military base while firing automatic weapons.⁷⁴ The idea, reflective of trends discussed above, was to shoot and kill as many soldiers as possible before being killed or

⁷² CSIS, *Sons of the Father*, 2004.

⁷³ Amy Forliti, “Somali Militants Use Many Tactics to Woo Americans”, *Associated Press*, August 25, 2009.

⁷⁴ Cameron Stewart and Laura Wilson, “Police Swoop on Melbourne Homes after Somali Islamists’ Terror Plot Exposed”, *The Australian*, August 4, 2009; *The Australian*, “Kenyan Escapee ‘suspected of alleged Hoslworthy army base terror plot’”, March 25, 2010.

apprehended. Though investigations continue and trials are expected for 2010, at least two of the men are alleged to have travelled to Somalia to train with al Shabaab.⁷⁵ In the second case, it was revealed in 2009 that as many as two dozen Somali-Americans living in and around Minneapolis, Minnesota, had left the United States to join al Shabaab.⁷⁶ At least four of these American recruits have since died fighting, including Shirwa Ahmed, who in November 2008 became the first American to carry out a suicide attack in Somalia.⁷⁷ Two other Somali-Americans were indicted in July 2009 for providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization.⁷⁸ And in April 2009, a slick, rap-infused al Qaeda propaganda video was released from Somalia, in which a young, Caucasian, English-speaking jihadi calling himself Abu Mansour al-Amriki (“the American”) extols the virtues of waging jihad in Somalia.⁷⁹ For now, al-Amriki and his ragtag team are content on fighting regionally, but developments like these represent an important crossroad, where support for and participation in international terrorism facilitates homegrown terrorism later on. This is not an Australian or American problem. Canada, too, has citizens fighting overseas alongside jihadi groups. Their eventual return home and potential participation in homegrown attacks poses a novel security challenge.

Islamist terrorism is a global concern. While Canada and its friends and allies have managed to score various successes in combating al Qaeda in the past decade, a disparate movement of individuals and groups has coalesced to carry al Qaeda’s violent agenda forward. A complex security environment has emerged as a result that blends the boundaries of homegrown, regional, and international terrorism and complicates the manner in which states can effectively respond. Canadians are in the middle of the emerging threat environment, both as facilitators of terrorism and as victims of terrorism. The immediate purpose of this paper is to highlight particular trends in

⁷⁵ The plot prompted Australia to ban al Shabaab and publish a counterterrorism White Paper. See Rory Callinan, “The Somali Connection: A Terrorism Crackdown in Australia”, *TIME*, August 5, 2009; Australian Government, *Count-terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia, Protecting our Community*, (Canberra, 2010).

⁷⁶ Dina Temple-Raston, “FBI Sheds Light on Missing Somali-Americans”, *National Public Radio*, March 11, 2009.

⁷⁷ *National Public Radio*, “Somalis Missing from Minn. May Have Returned”, March 27, 2009.

⁷⁸ Dina Temple-Raston, “Indictments Stir Fear, Relief for Somali-Americans”, *National Public Radio*, July 15, 2009.

⁷⁹ Maureen Callahan, “Who is al-Amriki?”, *New York Post*, April 4, 2009; Dina Temple-Raston, “Al-Qaida Media Blitz Has Some on Alert”, *National Public Radio*, April 8, 2009

terrorism and counterterrorism and to relate them to Canadian security policy. In doing so, it illustrates the kinds of threats Canadians should expect to encounter in the coming years and suggests avenues for better protecting their interests. But the paper has a broader purpose as well: to invigorate debate within Canada on issues of national security and counterterrorism. As CSIS director Fadden noted, rather candidly, “for a G-8 member and important middle power ... debate about national security in Canada is ... fairly sparse. When we do engage in debate on the subject, it is often stuck in concepts that simply don’t reflect contemporary realities.”⁸⁰ Today, these realities are in constant flux. If Canadians are to properly grasp the security challenges that lay ahead, rigor is needed in the manner in which they think about and approach terrorism and counterterrorism.

⁸⁰ CSIS, “Remarks by Richard B. Fadden,” (October 2009).