



The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Le Comité sénatorial permanent de la sécurité nationale et de la défense

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Canadian Security Guide 2007 Airports

*A Report of the Senate Committee on
National Security and Defence*

CONTAINS 16 NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

More than four years ago the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence tabled a report titled *The Myth of Security at Canada's Airports*. That report documented several serious gaps in the provision of security for Canadian air passengers.

Those gaps are far too numerous to mention in this brief advisory, but some of the most worrisome included the presence of organized crime at Canadian airports, inadequate background checks and access control for persons with access to aircraft, lack of screening of mail and other cargo carried on passenger jets, reduced levels of policing at many airports since the privatization of local airport authorities . . . the list goes on.

That report was written 16 months after the events of September 11, 2001.

This report – *2007 Security Guide Update: Airports* – appears more than 5 ½ years after the events of September 11, 2001 and 22 years after Air India Flight 182 exploded over the Atlantic Ocean.

If you read this condensed report, you will discover that some improvements to Canadian air security have been introduced over the last four years. But they are few and far between.

The Committee would like to assure the public that the numerous gaps that remain are being treated with some degree of urgency by government and the departments that have jurisdiction over them. But we cannot.

Those departments sent us responses to our earlier recommendation for correcting these serious problems. We have been told that these responses were approved by the Privy Council Office before being forwarded to the Committee.

Some of the recurring themes in these responses were vagueness, obfuscation, non-response and seemingly endless procrastination.

Not always, of course – some responses did suggest there had been at least some degree of progress. But all too often these responses contained phrases like:

“Organized crime is not within [our] mandate . . .”

“We are currently working on . . .”

“We are directing new attention . . .”

“We are consulting with . . .”

“We are developing guidelines . . .”

“We are taking a comprehensive review of . . .”

“We are talking to stakeholders . . .”

“We are always assessing . . .”

More talking. More consulting. More thinking. But, if anything, even less urgency about fixing serious problems.

This report contains 16 new recommendations from the Committee that we believe would help the Government address the security gaps in the Canadian air passenger system that threaten the safety of Canadians.

Why does the Committee keep writing these reports? Because if former reports are gathering dust, the public should at least know they are gathering dust.

Without public pressure, nothing gets done.

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The report is available online in the “Reports” section of the Committee’s Web site, www.sen-sec.ca.

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