



The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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Canadian Security Guide Book 2007 Seaports

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

CONTAINS 11 NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

In October, 2003 this Committee tabled the report *Canada's Coastlines: The Longest Under-Defended Borders in the World*. In preparing that report, the Committee found that Canada's marine ports were, among other things:

- Inundated with organized crime
- Under-policed
- Insufficiently equipped with scanning/searching capacity to minimize the likelihood of the entrance of materials or devices that could contribute to a terrorist attack
- Not protected by agreements with other countries that would allow for occasional requests that vessels destined for Canada be searched in foreign ports before departing for Canada

One of the Committee's recommendations in 2003 was that the government of the day initiate a public inquiry under the *Inquiries Act* into significant ports be established as soon as possible, with a mandate that would include:

- a) a major review of overall security at the ports and the development of a national approach to recruiting, training, and the retention of security personnel;
- b) examination of the degree of control that organized crime has over Canadian sea port operations, as well as the relationship between such control and threats to national security;
- c) an assessment of the potential for the use of Canadian ports to further terrorism;
- d) a comprehensive review of the customs, policing and security resources, including the role of private security agencies, which are required at ports;
- e) a review of the effectiveness of customs inspections of vessels and cargo arriving at Canadian ports; and
- f) a review of hiring practices at Canadian ports.¹

No such inquiry was ever initiated.

In following up on the Committee's 2003 report, we have determined in this report - *2007 Security Guide: Update* - that most of these significant problems endure at Canada's marine ports.

The following report is brief. It deals with eight problems that the Committee believes still pose a security risk to Canadians as well as to Americans – since 30 per cent of containers arriving at Canada's ports are trans-shipped to the United States.

This report contains written government responses to our earlier recommendations. In many cases these responses attempt to make the case that security improvements have been made at Canada's marine ports. It also contains our own comments reflecting our skepticism about those responses.

¹ Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, *Canadian Security and Military Preparedness*. (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, February 2002), p.152, Recommendation #4.2

It is the Committee's belief that would-be terrorists most often succeed through the use of the element of surprise, as they did on September 11, 2001. That means that alternatives will be sought to wreaking havoc in the air.

Shipping containers offer an obvious alternative to bringing terror to the North American target. The Committee outlines in this report how advances are being made in some foreign ports in developing comprehensive systems for scanning containers. No such comprehensive system appears to be in the works for Canada. It should be.

This report contains the Committee's past recommendations on improving security at Canada's marine ports and 11 new recommendations that reflect what the Committee has learned from witnesses that have testified before us in Canada, as well through our own limited examinations of port operations abroad.

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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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