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**United States - Canada**

**Joint Border Threat and Risk Assessment**

*July 2010*

# **United States - Canada Joint Border Threat and Risk Assessment**

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### *United States*

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- Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
- Center for Disease Control
- Customs and Border Protection
- Department of Homeland Security
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- United States Department of Agriculture

### *Canada*

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- Canada Border Services Agency
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canadian Security Intelligence Service
- Public Health Agency Canada
- Public Safety Canada
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Transport Canada

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### Scope

This assessment will provide U.S. and Canadian policymakers, resource planners, and other law enforcement officials with a strategic overview of significant threats along the 5,525-mile/8,891-km international boundary between the United States and Canada. These threats are categorized as follows:

- national security;
- criminal enterprises;
- migration;
- agriculture; and
- health.

### Background

This joint assessment was prepared by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in support of the mandates of each respective agency. Other contributing agencies are listed under the Acknowledgments section on page 1.

The United States and Canada share a 5,525-mile/8,891-km international boundary separating Alaska from British Columbia and the Yukon, and running from Washington/British Columbia through Maine/New Brunswick.

It separates two friendly nations with a long history of social, cultural, and economic ties that have contributed to a high volume of cross-border trade and travel. On average, the United States and Canada each process over 70 million international travellers and 35 million vehicles each year along the U.S.-Canada border. The international boundary between the United States and Canada is often described as the largest open border in the world.

## Findings

### *National Security*

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#### **Terrorism**

Terrorism is acknowledged as a threat to both the United States and Canada and is a high priority for both governments. To effectively combat terrorist activities, enhanced participation in joint initiatives and the sharing of information have become critical. Also crucial is the growing collaboration between agencies that seek to prevent attacks and those seeking evidence to support prosecution. Terrorists have targeted both the United States and Canada. Therefore, terrorism in one country is a national security threat to the other.

Transnational terrorist entities are present in both the United States and Canada. The political and personal freedoms enjoyed by Canadians and Americans, as well as their advanced economies, make their countries attractive venues for terrorists and their sympathizers. Both countries are at risk if they do not effectively identify and interdict (pre-empt) terrorists and counter their fundraising activities. Prior to the 9/11 attacks on the United States by al-Qa'ida, the terrorist presence in both countries chiefly involved the furnishing of logistical and financial support for terrorism abroad while recruiting resident sympathizers. Since then, al-Qa'ida has transformed itself into a global ideology, often inspiring attacks, in addition to its traditional involvement in the actual planning and execution of such attacks.

Al-Qa'ida and its affiliates pose a significant threat to the United States and Canada. While the United States has been an al-Qa'ida target since the 1990s, Canada's solidarity in combating terrorism has since prompted al-Qa'ida to identify Canada as one of its targets. Al-Qa'ida and those who adhere to its extremist ideology, despite suffering setbacks, remain intent on and capable of attacking both nations and circumventing mitigation measures. In 2006, United Kingdom (U.K.) authorities thwarted a group plotting to destroy aircraft on transatlantic flights bound for the United States and Canada by using liquid explosives disguised as soft drinks. Information revealed the conspiracy was linked to al-Qa'ida and other senior militants. The attempt by Umar Abdulmutallab to ignite explosives on a plane landing in Detroit in December 2009 was also linked to al-Qa'ida affiliates.

A new dimension in the threat from al-Qa'ida and its followers has emerged: the advent of "homegrown" terrorists inspired by al-Qa'ida ideology. Communications technology, including social networking sites, facilitates the spread of terrorist doctrine and reduces the need for face-to-face encounters. This means that terrorist planning/plots/activities are more difficult to detect, take place within a shorter time frame, and are less dependent upon cross-border travel than was previously the case. Instances of American residents arrested for planning attacks at home and abroad highlight this domestic threat. Recent convictions of a group in Toronto planning attacks

on multiple Canadian targets accentuate a comparable threat of domestic terrorism in Canada. While several domestic extremists have acquired capabilities, very few plots have succeeded. However, the terrorist threat continues to evolve in response to American and Canadian mitigation efforts.

### **Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Materials**

There is a continuing terrorist interest in CBRN agents, most notably by al-Qa'ida and networks inspired by it, using relatively basic CBR materials. Many terrorist groups lack localized scientific expertise in producing or effectively delivering CBRN materials. Al-Qa'ida will likely continue its efforts to pursue mass-casualty capabilities, which have been disrupted by allied military and enforcement actions. Some chemical, biological or radiological attack scenarios affecting the U.S.-Canada border could disrupt commerce and result in localized restrictions on the domestic and transborder movement of people and goods.

Chemicals are generally the least difficult of CBRN materials to acquire; however, it is considered technically challenging for a sub-state group to develop stable, high-quality chemical agents in sufficient quantity to implement a mass-casualty attack. Effective dissemination of a toxic chemical is contingent on many factors including quantity, toxicity, dispersal mechanism and environmental conditions.

A biological weapon refers to the dispersal of a living pathogen, or a toxin derived from a living organism, with the intent to kill or injure. Examples include anthrax, botulinum toxin, and ricin. Pathogens such as bacteria and viruses self-replicate and do not normally require a large initial dose. One of the greatest challenges in creating an effective biological weapon is keeping the agent viable during dissemination.

A variety of radioactive materials could be used to disperse radiological contamination. High-level doses from radioactive sources can cause tissue damage, radiation sickness, and death. Chronic low-level doses, while producing no immediate symptoms, may increase the long-term risk of cancer or other health problems. A radiation-emitting device involves only the source material. A radiological dispersal device (RDD) utilizes a conventional explosive or other means to disperse the material over a wider area, and is commonly described as a "dirty bomb". Although an RDD is unlikely to cause many fatalities due to acute radiation, an RDD attack could contaminate a large area, rendering it inaccessible until significant decontamination has occurred.

More than 40 countries possess nuclear material that could be used in a nuclear weapon, although 95 percent is held by the United States and Russia. Nuclear proliferation is an increasing security concern, especially as countries improve their own capabilities. This both limits the capacity for disruption and increases the number of countries with the potential to assist or trigger nuclear development programs by others. The combination of nuclear industry development, diffusion of old technology, and strategic aspirations over time will result in an increase in the number of countries with advanced nuclear capabilities and weapons potential.

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The critical challenge for a terrorist group remains acquisition of a sufficient quantity of fissile material, or acquiring a useable weapon from state inventories.

### **Strategic Exports**

The United States and Canada are world leaders in the research, development and manufacture of military products and sensitive dual-use goods and technology, and are therefore a target for illicit procurement activity. The illegal export, from the United States or Canada, of strategic items threatens the national security of both countries. A particular challenge is posed by the trade in goods and technologies that are dual-use: items that have both civilian and military applications, including those items that can contribute to the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weaponry.

Presently, almost all export shipments between Canada and the United States do not require export permits with the exception of specific goods/materials, including firearms, softwood lumber, controlled/restricted drugs and nuclear materials. Canada referred several cases involving export of controlled goods to U.S. authorities for further investigation. The majority of these were goods originating in the United States, routed through Canada. They involved a variety of goods including laser equipment, electronic components and satellite receivers. For example, in July 2010, after an investigation by Canadian authorities an individual was convicted for illegally procuring 10 pressure transducers from the United States for export to Iran. The violators concealed the identification specifications of the transducers in order to export the items from Canada without the required export permits. The transducers have legitimate commercial uses, but can also be used in centrifuges to produce enriched uranium for military purposes. Similarly, U.S. authorities have investigated several strategic export cases involving goods originating in Canada.

In the U.S and Canada, export controls are placed on strategic, military and atomic energy goods, materials and technology, as well as items controlled for non-proliferation purposes. These counter proliferation efforts aid in preventing the illicit diversion of controlled goods and technology by sanctioned countries or organizations attempting to acquire strategic technology.

### *Criminal Enterprises*

#### **Cocaine**

The demand for cocaine persists in both the United States and Canada. Although North America, notably the United States, reported a decline in cocaine use, the National Institute on Drug Abuse reported that in 2008, 5.3 million Americans age 12 and older abused cocaine. In Canada, the 2008 Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey reported that approximately 415,000 Canadians

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used cocaine within the previous 12 months. Like Canada, the United States consumer market is spread across the country and experiences sporadic regional supply shortages. Cocaine destined for Canada originates in South America and transits a variety of countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean. Shipments can transit one or more countries prior to entering Canada. However, the United States is the predominant transit point for cocaine smuggled into Canada.

The vast majority of cocaine that crosses the U.S.-Canada border is northbound into Canada. Since 2005, the annual amount seized entering Canada from the United States has more than doubled. Cocaine is seized entering Canada from the United States primarily at the ports of entry. Commercial vehicles are predominantly used to smuggle large quantities of cocaine into Canada through the ports; to a lesser extent, personal vehicles are also used. Cocaine is often concealed both in the cabs of tractor-trailers and in false compartments, and is also commingled among legitimate shipments, most notably perishable commodities from California. Movement of cocaine occurs by a variety of other means, including fixed-wing and small aircraft, marine vessels, pedestrians, and vehicles.

In Canada, a wide variety of organized crime groups continue to be involved in cocaine smuggling activities, including Outlaw motorcycle gangs (predominantly Hells Angels), traditional organized crime elements (Italian-based), independent groups and, more recently, Canada-based South Asian organized crime groups. In the United States, Mexican, Colombian and Dominican drug trafficking organizations control the cocaine market.

### **Marijuana**

Marijuana is the most widely-consumed illicit drug in the United States and Canada. It is also the most commonly-consumed illicit drug in the world. The 2007 estimates on global marijuana production ranged from 13,300 to 66,100 metric tons, with between 143 million and 190 million people world-wide using marijuana at least once in 2007. The U.S National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2007 reported nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population above the age of 12 used marijuana at some point. According to the Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey by Health Canada, approximately three million people aged 15 years and older used marijuana at least once in 2007. In Canada, marijuana use continues to be most prevalent among those aged 12 to 25 years.

While the United States and Canada are recipients of foreign-produced marijuana, both countries have significant domestic cultivation. Most of the foreign-produced marijuana available in the United States is smuggled into the country from Mexico. Conversely, most of Canada's foreign-produced marijuana is smuggled from Jamaica—typically by air. In Canada, marijuana cultivation occurs primarily in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. In the United States, marijuana cultivation is particularly widespread in California, Kentucky, Tennessee, Hawaii and Washington.

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The majority of marijuana that transits the U.S.-Canada border is en route to the United States. The primary international market for Canadian-produced marijuana remains the United States, although this represents a small portion of the overall U.S. market. Seizures of marijuana originating/transiting the United States en route to Canada have been very small in terms of both frequency and quantity.

A variety of conveyances are utilized to smuggle marijuana both through and between the ports of entry. Private and commercial vehicles are the primary mode of conveyance for cross-border movement of marijuana through the ports of entry. Between the ports, pedestrians, watercraft, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, helicopters and small aircraft, such as float planes, are used to smuggle marijuana.

Canada-based Asian organized crime groups are primarily responsible for the cross-border movement of marijuana. A variety of organized crime groups are involved in every aspect of this illicit enterprise, but Vietnamese organized crime groups continue to dominate domestic cultivation. These groups are now providing instructions and materials to help U.S.-based Asian crime groups establish marijuana grow operations in the United States. Outlaw motorcycle gangs, Asian, and independent criminals are involved in wholesale domestic distribution and exportation of marijuana, while Indo-Canadian and Eastern European organized crime groups are primarily involved in the cross-border transportation.

### **Ecstasy**

Ecstasy is used by a relatively small segment of the U.S. and Canadian population. In 2007, an estimated 503,000 people (0.2 percent of the population) in the United States aged 12 or older used 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) in the month prior to being surveyed. In Canada, the prevalence of ecstasy use in the past 12 months was 1.4 percent in 2008—comparable to the rates of use reported in 2004.

Canada's production of ecstasy supplies its domestic market and is also the principle source of ecstasy for the United States and, to a lesser extent, the Asia-Pacific Region. Ecstasy in Canada is produced in sophisticated laboratories, primarily located in British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.

To date, smuggling has predominantly occurred between the ports in British Columbia, via helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, and in Quebec by snowmobiles and vehicles.

**Tablets marketed as ecstasy frequently contain methamphetamine; in some cases, it is the predominant or sole ingredient. Other types of chemical fillers encountered include ketamine, ephedrine and caffeine.**

Canada-based Asian organized crime groups dominate most U.S.-bound ecstasy smuggling. Organized crime groups with ties to China dominate the production and distribution of ecstasy,

often selling the tablets in the United States for two or three times the domestic price in Canada. They receive significant precursor shipments from Asia, which are then used in the manufacturing of ecstasy. Canada-based South Asian organized crime groups and networks of individuals with ancestral links to Vietnam are also actively involved in cross-border smuggling of ecstasy to the United States. In the United States, ecstasy distribution is controlled by a large number of diverse criminal groups. According to a large body of law enforcement reporting, Asian, African American, Albanian, and Hispanic criminal organizations, as well as Outlaw motorcycle gangs, are all involved in the distribution of ecstasy in the United States.

### **Methamphetamine**

According to the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, approximately 12.6 million Americans aged 12 or older reported using methamphetamine at least once during their lifetime, representing 5 percent of this age group. This survey also indicates a decline since 2007 in methamphetamine usage in the United States. In Canada, methamphetamine use has stabilized to an estimated 52,000 Canadians (0.2 percent) aged 15 or older.

There is minimal movement of methamphetamine across the U.S.-Canada border. Similar to the cross-border movement of methamphetamine, there is also limited smuggling of precursors between the United States and Canada. There is no ephedrine production, a precursor to methamphetamine, in the United States or Canada. These precursor chemicals are legally imported or smuggled from countries such as China and India.

The methamphetamine trade in Canada is dominated by organized crime groups primarily operating domestically, while in the United States it is dominated by Mexican drug trafficking organizations. More than 80 percent of the illicit methamphetamine consumed in the United States is produced in “superlabs” in Mexico and California operated by Mexican drug trafficking organizations. Mexican drug trafficking organizations have expanded their control over methamphetamine distribution in the United States, as increased controls on precursor chemicals have limited the number of amateur producers. In Canada, organized crime groups with links to China dominate the national methamphetamine trade, particularly in British Columbia and Ontario. Various other groups are involved to a lesser extent. Canada-based South Asian organized crime groups and independent crime groups continue to smuggle precursor chemicals related to methamphetamine production.

### **Heroin**

Compared to other illicit drugs, heroin usage is less prevalent in both the United States and Canada. According to the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 453,000 Americans 12 years and older had reported using heroin within the past year, fewer than for any other drug except PCP. According to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, heroin addiction afflicts an estimated 60,000 to 90,000 Canadians.

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Ninety-six percent of all opiates arriving in the United States (including heroin) originate in Mexico or Colombia, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Heroin from other sources, including Southwest and Southeast Asia, accounts for a very small percentage of heroin consumed across the United States. Conversely, the majority of heroin smuggled into Canada originates in Afghanistan and is transshipped through India or Pakistan to British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.

In the United States, Colombian, Dominican Republic, and Mexican drug trafficking organizations dominate heroin smuggling. Corresponding with shifts in supply, Mexican organizations have gained an increasingly larger foothold in the lucrative mid-Atlantic and northeastern U.S. heroin markets. The limited supply of heroin arriving from Southwest Asia is primarily trafficked by Pakistani, Indian, Afghan, and West African groups. South and Southwest Asian organized crime groups operating in Canada have largely taken over the Canadian heroin market, displacing Southeast Asian organized crime groups, which have redirected their efforts to other contraband commodities. To a lesser extent, Latin American and West African groups also supply the Canadian market. Organized crime groups operating in Canada are involved in the importation of heroin from India to British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.

### **Firearms**

There are an estimated 90 guns per 100 people living in the United States and 31.5 guns per 100 people living in Canada. Approximately 42 percent of all U.S. households own a gun, whereas 22 percent of Canadian households report owning at least one firearm. In Canada, national registration of all firearms is mandatory and there is significant governmental regulation over firearm possession. As of June 2009, 7.4 million firearms were registered in Canada; approximately 1.2 million are identified as being restricted (mostly handguns).

There were 671 firearms seized at Canadian ports of entry; 96 percent of these originated in the United States and were seized at the land border, concealed predominantly in private vehicles. Many of the firearms seized were from United States travellers who neglected, intentionally or unintentionally, to declare them. Numerous past joint U.S. and Canadian law enforcement investigations indicated that criminals have allegedly moved hundreds of guns intended for the criminal market from the United States into Canada.

U.S. and Canadian criminal organizations acquire firearms through various means. Criminals exploit differences between Canadian and American laws governing firearms acquisition and transportation. In addition to cross-border smuggling, the Canadian illicit firearms market is supplied domestically through residential and commercial thefts. Conversely, the U.S. criminal market is supplied domestically with minimal cross-border movement from Canada. There are five primary methods to criminally acquire firearms in the United States: secondary markets (e.g., gun shows, flea markets, and private sales), thefts, straw purchasers, U.S. federally-

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licensed firearms dealers selling firearms illegally, and persons who purchase firearms using false identification. In addition, crime groups are also known to exchange drugs for firearms.

### Tobacco

In the United States, smoking is responsible for US\$196 billion a year in health-related costs, including the cost of lost productivity. In Canada, this cost is approximately CAN\$17 billion a year. In 2008, there were approximately 46 million smokers in the U.S. and five million in Canada who provided a potential market for contraband tobacco. Illicit tobacco-related activities impact both countries through the loss of millions of dollars in tax revenue and contribute to the monetary gain of criminal organizations.

Tobacco taxes in Canada have increased since 2001, stimulating the demand for less expensive tobacco products. The primary sources of contraband tobacco in Canada are illegally-produced cigarettes manufactured in the United States on the Akwesasne Territory, and illegally-manufactured tobacco products from Native reserves in Ontario and Quebec. To a lesser extent, counterfeit Canadian and American brand cigarettes entering Canada from China, as well as Chinese and other international brands, also supply the illicit tobacco market. In the United States, interstate smuggling of tobacco products is prevalent; however, smuggling across the U. S.-Canada border into the United States is minimal.

**Not all manufacturing operations located on First Nations reserves are illegal, and not all community members who live on reserves support the illegal operations which may be occurring within their communities.**

The majority of illegal cigarettes that transit the St. Lawrence Seaway region are produced on the New York side in approximately a dozen unlicensed manufacturing plants, which range in size from small operations to fully-equipped manufacturing plants. Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina are sources of tobacco for the illicit manufacturers.

The illicit tobacco market is dominated by various criminal organizations. These groups often co-operate with other organized crime groups and use smuggling routes and associations to facilitate the illegal cross-border movement of people and contraband.

### Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property (IP) infringements defraud consumers, can threaten their health and safety, and cost billions of dollars in terms of lost revenue, employment, and business profits. Recent estimates by IP experts have placed global counterfeiting losses at hundreds of billions of dollars. Additionally, many counterfeit commodities present potential safety hazards to consumers due to inferior construction, components and ingredients. Counterfeit pharmaceuticals, in particular, pose grave safety risks to consumers.

The United States and Canada are both transit and destination points for goods that violate intellectual property rights laws—primarily from China. Footwear, clothing, and audiovisual works are the most commonly-seized IP-infringing goods in the United States and Canada.

In Canada, the RCMP is responsible for the investigation of alleged IP crime. IP crime enforcement is primarily inland rather than at the border due to the fact that the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is not currently mandated to actively search for IP-infringing goods. As the CBSA does not have the legislative authority to target, seize, and destroy counterfeit goods, it must rely on the RCMP, or other government departments such as Health Canada, when counterfeit or pirated products are identified through the course of regular duties at the border in order for appropriate enforcement action to be undertaken. The Canadian government has committed to implementing reform strategies in the fight against IP infringements. These strategies include possible legislative measures to supplement copyright and trademark laws.

Transnational organized crime groups are actively involved in IP infringements. Increasingly, criminal organizations are recognizing that the profit margins for counterfeit items can be higher than narcotics, while the penalties are less severe. Chinese criminal organizations lead the production and distribution of counterfeit goods, although many other groups and operators worldwide are also involved.

### **Currency**

Currency smuggling facilitates money laundering which can enable criminals to further expand their criminal activity. While various opportunities exist to generate proceeds, the illicit drug trade is considered to be the most dominant criminal activity. Given the magnitude of the two-way cross-border drug trade between the United States and Canada, the physical movement of currency occurs in both directions. Currency generated from the sale of marijuana and ecstasy in the United States and cocaine in Canada is often smuggled across the U.S.–Canada border, at times destined for Mexico or overseas markets in Asia. While there are various means to move funds, large-scale bulk currency smuggling remains popular.

Alternative methods are used to transfer proceeds across the U.S.-Canada border. Many of the proceeds of crime are laundered through electronic wire transfers, or in the case of some funds intended for Asia, through purchases of Asian goods. These goods are then imported and sold in the United States or Canada. Mexican drug trafficking organizations and Canadian organized crime groups can also receive profits from illicit drug smuggling without moving large amounts of cash across the U.S.–Canada border. For example, these organizations participate in the “double exchange,” whereby proceeds from the distribution of cocaine in Canada are used to pay marijuana producers in Canada. The marijuana is subsequently smuggled into the United States, and the proceeds collected are used to pay for cocaine destined for Canada.

Criminal groups involved in bulk currency smuggling are often the same as those involved in the illicit drug trade. In Canada, these groups include Asian organized crime groups, Outlaw motorcycle gangs and various other criminal groups. U.S. law enforcement reporting indicates that some of these groups have cells in the United States and Canada to facilitate bulk currency and drug smuggling. These services are frequently provided by specialized groups or individual facilitators who charge a small percentage to move currency from the United States or Canada.

### *Migration*

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#### **Refugee Claimants/Asylum Seekers**

The United States and Canada are attractive destinations for refugee claimants and asylum seekers. The United States and Canada ranked first and second respectively as destinations of choice for refugee claimants among the 44 receiving countries reporting to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Globally, the June 2009 UNHCR's annual report states that the number of refugees has declined from 16 million to 10.5 million over the past 20 years.

The Safe Third Country Agreement initially limited the number of land border claimants in 2004; however, in 2008 claims in Canada increased to pre-2004 levels. In the first six months of 2009, Canada received only 3,454 land border refugee claims, a decline of 33 percent compared to the first half of 2008. The decline was attributable to the lower numbers of claims entered by nationals of Haiti, Colombia and other nationals transiting the United States, the three primary sources of land border refugee claims in 2008. These three countries provided only 49 percent of the land border refugee claims in 2009, as compared to 76 percent in 2008.

**U.S. Refugee and Asylum Status:**  
A refugee is a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. An applicant for refugee status is outside the United States, while an applicant seeking asylum status is in the United States or at a U.S. port or entry. In Canada, an individual may make a refugee claim either inside or outside Canada.

The implementation of the Safe Third Country Agreement in December 2004 addressed a number of concerns for both Canada and the United States. Under the agreement, persons seeking refugee protection must make a claim in the first country they arrive in (United States or Canada), unless they qualify for an exception to the agreement. While the primary focus for the United States was security, Canada sought to limit the significant irregular northbound movement of people from the United States who wished to access the Canadian refugee determination system.

### Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is recognized as a global problem although, precise estimates are difficult to determine. The United Nations estimates that approximately 700,000 individuals are trafficked worldwide annually, however other estimates are as high as 2.4 million. The clandestine nature of the trade and the general misunderstanding of the term ‘human trafficking’ contribute to the lack of accurate statistical information. Social, political and/or economic strife are all factors that lead to human trafficking. The impact of human trafficking includes physical and psychological harm. The devastation also extends beyond individual victims; human trafficking undermines the health, safety, and security of all nations it touches.

The United States and Canada are destination and transit countries for persons trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. The U.S. Department of State estimates that 14,500 to 17,500 individuals are trafficked into the United States yearly, many of whom are women and girls; Canadian estimates are unavailable. However, it is generally understood that estimates often do not capture the full extent of trafficking in persons, and that victims reporting trafficking-related crimes significantly under-represent the actual incidence.

**The United Nations defines human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.**

Victims of human trafficking in the United States and Canada come from nations worldwide, often from the poorest countries and the poorest strata of the national populations. Investigations in Canada and the United States have revealed that victims of human trafficking were mostly found in marginalized populations, including migrant women, new immigrants, at-risk youth, and socially- or economically-challenged persons. The United States is a destination country for thousands of men, women, and children trafficked largely from Mexico and East Asia, as well as countries in South Asia, Central America, Africa, and Europe for the purposes of sexual and labor exploitation. In Canada, investigations have found that persons who may have been trafficked through or into Canada for sexual exploitation originated in Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, South Korea, China, and Hong Kong.

Organized crime groups involved in the trafficking of persons across the U.S.–Canada border range from large, internationally-connected organizations to small networks and opportunistic individuals. In both countries, trafficking organizations often share the same ethnicity and/or language with their victims. Chinese, Mexican, Russian, and Eurasian gangs are among the

primary groups involved in trafficking persons into the United States. In Canada, Asian and Eastern European organized crime groups are involved. The groups suspected of this activity in Canada are primarily based in major urban centers such as Vancouver, Montréal and the Greater Toronto Area.

### **Human Smuggling**

Both the United States and Canada are prime destinations for the movement of people by human smuggling groups. Each year, international smuggling organizations around the globe move hundreds of thousands of persons from less-developed countries to industrialized countries, including the United States and Canada. People are smuggled from Asia, Africa, Central and South America and Eastern Europe to Western Europe, Australia, and North America either directly or via circuitous routes.

According to the United Nations, human smuggling is defined as the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other benefit of the illegal entry of a person into a state of which the person is not a national or permanent resident.

Human smuggling contributes to an increasing number of foreign nationals illegally residing in the United States and Canada. Human smuggling is a blatant form of “queue jumping” that erodes the integrity of both countries’ immigration systems. Smuggled persons residing in the United States and Canada strain social and economic resources. Smuggled persons may be required to work off large debts to their smugglers and, in some cases, can become trafficked persons.

### Agriculture

#### Food-Borne Illnesses

Food-borne illnesses affect a large portion of the population in the United States and Canada annually, causing significant economic and social harm. The Public Health Agency of Canada estimates that there are between 11 and 13 million cases of food-borne illnesses in Canada every year. According to the Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education, the cost is CAN\$12 to \$14 billion. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that there are 76 million cases of food-borne illnesses in the United States annually, costing an estimated US\$152. An outbreak of salmonellosis resulting from contaminated ice cream occurred in the United States in 1994, affecting an estimated 224,000 persons. A listeriosis outbreak in 2008 was the largest food safety-related outbreak in the last five years in Canada, contributing to 22 deaths and a large, high-visibility recall.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines food-borne illnesses as diseases, usually either infectious or toxic in nature, caused by agents that enter the body through the ingestion of food. The WHO identifies food-borne disease outbreaks, including those arising from natural, accidental and deliberate contamination of food, as major global public health threats in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The value of agri-food imports to Canada in 2008 was approximately CAN\$28 billion; 60 percent came from the United States. Food exports from Canada were valued at approximately CAN\$39 billion in 2008, half of which were exported to the United States. Despite significant food trade occurring between the two countries, there have been few incidents involving contaminated food. Salmonella bacteria on bean sprouts, lettuce and cantaloupe from the United States have been detected in Canada. In October 2007, U.S. import restrictions were placed on Canadian poultry products from Saskatchewan due to an H7N3 outbreak. Food imported from less developed countries poses a higher potential risk to both countries.

Both countries are vulnerable to deliberate contamination of the food or water supply; however, this is more likely to involve domestic action. Large food production facilities with increasingly widespread distribution networks provide terrorists with the avenue to insert agents that can render foods unfit for human consumption, cause harm to the population, and severely burden the economy. Canada has no recorded incidents of food terrorism. The only case of large-scale food terrorism in North America occurred in 1984, when 751 people became sick after members of a religious sect infected Oregon salad bars with salmonella. Terrorist attacks involving the food supply could be difficult to discern from natural events, considering the large variety of food-borne illnesses that occur every day, coupled with crop and livestock diseases.

### Plant Pests

Plant pests have severe and often irreversible impacts on agricultural industries, as well as native ecosystems, and are considered the second most significant threat to biodiversity after habitat loss. Plant pests have a considerable economic and ecological impact on both Canada and the United States. For example, the emerald ash borer, an exotic beetle of Asian origin, is responsible for killing tens of millions of trees across the United States and Canada. The damage resulting from past introductions of harmful invasive plant pests on agricultural crops and forestry in Canada is estimated at CAN\$7.5 billion annually. According to the United States Geological Survey, the current annual environmental, economic, and health-related cost of invasive species exceeds those of all other natural disasters combined.

**Plant pests include any organism that is injurious or potentially injurious, whether directly or indirectly, to plants or to products or by-products of plants, and include any plant prescribed as a pest. This includes any species, strain or biotype of plant, animal or pathogenic agent injurious to plants or plant products including, but not limited to, arthropods, molluscs, bacteria, nematodes, fungi, phytoplasmas, viruses and viroids.**

The North American Perimeter Approach is increasing consistency between U.S. and Canadian import requirements related to plant health risks. This will ideally lead to the development of a shared plant quarantine system. An increase in global trade, coupled with expeditious shipping, has contributed to the threat of plant pest introductions. Live plants, plant parts, viable seed and wood and forest products are the primary pathways for the introduction and dissemination of plant pests. Soil-borne pests can also be introduced through goods contaminated with soil such as equipment, vehicles, granite blocks, containers, boxes and crates. Plant pests can have a detrimental effect on many crucial industries that rely on healthy ecosystems. Common plant pests are found in numerous goods conveyed across the U.S.–Canada border, many of which are not regulated. In particular, the United States and Canada remain vulnerable to infested wood packaging material from third countries—primarily China.

Goods often transit one country or the other before being introduced into U.S. or Canadian markets—a process known as re-exportation. Products that are prohibited entry into either the U.S. or Canada directly from a third country are not eligible for re-export from either country. In 2009, re-exports of plant commodities from Canada to the U.S. increased to almost CAN\$144 million, while re-exports from the U.S. to Canada jumped to almost CAN\$1.7 billion. Because of differing geographical and environmental factors, the pest risk to the country of destination may be different than the pest risk to the country of transit. It is therefore important that each country takes the plant health risk to both countries into consideration.

Alien plants currently exist in the United States and Canada and pose a potential risk of being introduced into each country's ecosystem. It is estimated that 58 new invasive alien plant species have become established in Canada over the past century. Some 2,039 alien plant species not

found in Canada exist in the continental United States, many of which are in the states bordering Canada or the Great Lakes.

### **Animal Diseases**

Animal disease outbreaks have the potential to cause significant social and economic harm. Early disease detection and control are critical to limiting the effects of animal disease outbreaks, as animals and their products travel around the world faster than the incubation period for most known pathogens. In addition, zoonoses, which are animal diseases transmissible to and potentially between humans, pose a threat since more than half of human infectious diseases originate in animals. A 2002 National Defense University study estimated that an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) on just 10 farms in the U.S. could have a US\$2 billion financial impact. Likewise, an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Canada could cost billions of dollars in damages. Usually, an outbreak of FMD is the basis for all foreign animal disease planning, as this is assessed as being the worst type of animal disease to have. The discovery of a single case of mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) in Canada resulted in the immediate closure of valuable export markets, with subsequent reductions in related domestic industries—estimates were at CAN\$1 billion in lost markets. An outbreak of avian influenza in 2004 in Canada resulted in the destruction of over 17 million birds and economic losses estimated at more than CAN\$300 million.

All live animal imports require health certificates, but it is often difficult to detect a disease in an animal before it exhibits symptoms. Domestic livestock on both sides of the border are currently considered to carry a low risk of contagion, though a risk still remains. The United States Department of Agriculture has identified 53 animal diseases that are not indigenous to the United States that, if introduced, could adversely impact the country's livestock industry. Pathogens carried by migratory birds and other wildlife also pose a risk for the spread of disease, as their cross-border movement cannot be controlled.

### *Health*

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#### **Communicable Diseases**

The social and economic damage caused by communicable disease outbreaks could be significant to both Canada and the United States. The outbreak of a contagious disease in either country could spread rapidly across the border, potentially causing great loss of life and costing millions of dollars in health care-related expenses and lost productivity. The World Bank estimates that a global influenza pandemic today could claim up to 360 million lives and cost the world economy US\$800 billion. The Public Health Agency of Canada estimates that, without vaccinations or anti-virals, between 4.5 and 10.5 million Canadians could become ill during a pandemic influenza outbreak. Millions of these would need medical care, and thousands would be hospitalized or die.

# United States - Canada

## Joint Border Threat and Risk Assessment

July 2010

Developing countries pose the highest risk for communicable disease outbreaks. Over 90 percent of the world's disease outbreaks occur in developing countries and most are due to communicable diseases. Communicable diseases could arise in any country following natural disasters and sudden conflict or civil strife; however, less developed countries do not have sufficient resources to keep such outbreaks contained. Prior to commercial air travel, these local epidemics lacked the ability to rapidly transform into global ones. Today, due to global travel realities, large numbers of people move around the world, increasing potential exposure to communicable diseases.

In 2009, approximately 75 percent of the 93 million individuals traveling to Canada entered from the United States, 45 million of whom crossed the land border. Similarly, of the 547 million travellers to the United States from 2008 to mid 2009, 97 million crossed the U.S.-Canada land border. With these high traveller volumes between the two countries, there is an inherent risk that communicable diseases may also be introduced into Canada from the United States or vice-versa.

Communicable diseases are difficult to assess as carriers often present no overt signs or symptoms of disease or infection during inspection at ports of entry.

Although improved hygiene, vaccines and antibodies help protect against some infectious disease, the threats of infectious disease are ever-changing and unpredictable. Health warnings about pandemic influenza are based on historical knowledge of past pandemics, and current concerns about the possibility of a new strain of human influenza that there is no natural immunity against. Though health experts do not know when this may happen, they are increasingly concerned that it will happen.

An outbreak of Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was detected in China in November 2002. After first reaching Hong Kong, it rapidly spread to 30 countries on five continents. By July 2003, there were about 8,500 probable SARS cases and more than 800 deaths worldwide. The global economic toll of the SARS outbreak ranged from US\$10 billion to US\$30 billion, with significant social disruption. Outside of Asia, Canada was the country hardest hit by SARS, reporting 438 probable and suspected SARS cases in 2003, including 44 deaths, primarily in the Greater Toronto Area.