

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation to the Visit to New York and New
Orleans of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

**New York and New Orleans, United States of America
October 1–4, 2009**

Report

Fourteen members of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security visited New York, as well as Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana, on 1-4 October. The delegation, led by Jo Ann Emerson (United States), Chairperson of the Committee, met with local and federal officials, academics and private sector representatives to discuss homeland security, and disaster preparedness and response in the United States.

I. NEW YORK

A. AFGHANISTAN

1. The delegation met with scholars at New York University's Center on

International Cooperation to discuss international stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and, more generally, the security situation in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. There is currently a widespread sense of pessimism concerning the developments in this region, particularly following the presidential and provincial council elections of 20 August 2009. Jake Sherman, Associate Director for Peacekeeping and Security Sector Reform, put forward six priorities for moving beyond current difficulties; he argued that:

- A second round of elections is necessary to restore the credibility of the election process, both in the eyes of the Afghan population and of the citizens of those nations contributing to stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.
- Training Afghan security forces should receive greater priority. The new, district-based approach to police training seems to be working, but will require a lot more time and resources. Recent initiatives to set up community militias could also help curb ordinary crime, but so far these militias have had limited appetite for counterinsurgency actions.
- Afghan authorities and the international community need to engage more determined efforts to disarm irregular, armed groups.
- ISAF and other international troops' reliance on private security providers and militias are problematic. Oversight of these groups remains very weak.
- Negotiating with the insurgency is necessary in order to achieve national reconciliation.
- More international assistance needs to be channeled through Afghan institutions in order to allow them to build capacity and take credit for reconstruction projects.

2. Mr. Sherman stressed that the Taliban should not be considered as a monolithic group. Public support for the Taliban is mixed, but some of the movement's strengths include its capacity to create fear, to coerce, as well as to provide a relatively predictable justice. While the drugs problem remains a serious concern, Mr. Sherman argued that there is no clear evidence that the drugs industry is the main source of revenue for the Taliban. The movement seems to rely comparatively more on financial flows from the Gulf.

3. Arif Jamal, Associate Researcher at the Center, was very critical of the Pakistani army's ambiguous attitude towards jihadi groups in the region. He argued that while Pakistan's new civilian government was determined to take on jihadis, Pakistan's military continued to tolerate those groups, particularly in the Kashmir region, which they consider useful instruments for achieving certain foreign policy goals. In Mr. Jamal's view, resolving the dispute over Kashmir is therefore crucial in order to achieve regional stability. In addition, he argued that western governments need to give Pakistan's civilian government greater support than has been the case so far, and pursue a clear and consistent policy towards the country.

4. Both Mr. Sherman and Mr. Jamal insisted that continued commitment to stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan is essential. However, they acknowledged that participating nations are facing increasing difficulty in mustering public support for the Afghan campaign. Even in the United States, a recent poll indicated that 58% of Americans now oppose the mission in Afghanistan. It has also become increasingly difficult to link this mission to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. In this context, the challenge for many countries will be one of "managed withdrawal". Mr. Sherman stressed, however, that even if military commitments waver, reconstruction and development efforts need to continue, noting that, besides their strategic interests, Western governments also have a moral obligation to assist with rebuilding the country.

B. COUNTERTERRORISM AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT IN NEW YORK CITY

1. The delegation met with Joseph Bruno, Commissioner of the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The OEM is the main co-ordinating agency for all types of emergencies. Its missions include: planning and preparing for emergencies; co-ordinating emergency response and recovery efforts; educating the public about preparedness; collecting and disseminating critical information; and seeking funding to support preparedness. The OEM receives from the US government a general assessment of threats; based on this, it assesses which threats are relevant for New York City and which capabilities each of these require.

2. The OEM's plans include both the provision of general, all-hazards functions – such as evacuation, sheltering, mass care and feeding, management of donations and volunteers, etc. – and preparedness and response for specific hazards – coastal storms and flooding, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incidents, transit strikes, etc. The Citywide Incident Management System identifies the lead agency for each type of emergency, and lists the tasks to be performed by each agency under the overall co-ordination of the OEM.

3. Mr. Bruno detailed some of the city's plans in response to the H1N1 influenza. These include, for instance, measures to increase the health care system's capacity at short notice, vaccination policies, and alternative solutions to ensure the continuity of education should schools have to be shut down. Mr. Bruno explained in particular that the city is planning to conduct a voluntary campaign of vaccination for all the 1.4 million schoolchildren in New York City.

4. The OEM maintains a watch command, operational 24/7, which allows it to identify emergencies as soon as they happen and notify relevant agencies. The OEM's Emergency Operations Center acts as a control room in the event of an emergency; it

can host up to 130 different entities, including federal, state and city agencies, private sector representatives, nongovernmental organizations, etc. The military can also be called upon to assist with emergencies, but a request to this effect has to be addressed to the state. Part of the National Guard is dedicated to the protection of New York City.

5. The OEM has developed co-operation mechanisms with its counterparts in neighbouring states (New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut), as well as with other major cities in the United States.

6. Raymond Kelly, Commissioner of the New York Police Department (NYPD), emphasized how the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 had transformed the NYPD's mission and structure. The NYPD has been the first police department in the United States to create its own counterterrorism bureau. It maintains a joint terrorism task force with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Department has hired first class analysts and has refined its language capabilities to enhance its capacity to deal with the terrorist threat. It has deployed NYPD officers in 11 cities around the world, who act as a first line of defence, gathering information with a view to better protecting New York City. According to Mr. Kelly, since 9/11, there is also a much higher degree of co-operation between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

7. While the terrorist threat remains very serious – with eight plots against New York City uncovered since 9/11 – conventional crime has dropped by 40% since 2001, despite a restructuring of the force, which cut the number of police officers by 5,000 in the same period (the force is currently 35,400-strong). Two programmes have played a key role in this regard: one programme which aimed to concentrate the presence of police academy trainees in specific areas of concern; and the creation of a real time crime center, which gathers into one data warehouse information from a wide range of sources. Whenever a crime is committed, relevant information stored in this warehouse can be communicated to the field in order to allow for a quicker identification of the perpetrators.

C. AIRPORT SECURITY

1. The delegation visited JFK airport and met with officials from the federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA), from the airport's administration and from the Port Authority New York New Jersey (PANYNJ), to discuss airport security.

2. In 2008, JFK airport received an average of 1,300 flights a day and 48 million passengers in. Besides the eight terminals and other airport facilities, the area also includes an Airtrain system and a Light Rail system, which transport some 35,000 to 40,000 passengers a day.

3. Within six months of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, security at all airports in the United States was federalized and the TSA was created as the main supervisory body. The TSA defines regulatory security requirements for all airports, dealing with such issues as access control, training, emergency plans, etc. Besides TSA requirements, the PANYNJ also implements additional security measures.

4. The TSA's mandate has been progressively extended since 2001. Aviation security relies on so-called "layers of security". The TSA has sought to push these layers back further and further in order to identify threats as early as possible. Thus, it has recently

encouraged the use of suspicious behaviour detection as a pre-screening method. The Secure Flight Program, which requires airlines to send flight manifests 72 hours in advance, also allows the TSA to check passenger names against federal watch lists and identify possible threats.

5. A second main pillar of the TSA's action has focused on perfecting screening technologies. Whole-body scanners have not yet been certified by the TSA, as technological issues, as well as civil liberties concerns, remain. TSA and PANYNJ officials stressed, however, that technology is not sufficient in itself, and that enhanced security also requires trained personnel and vigilant travellers.

6. In defining adequate aviation security standards, several challenges need to be taken into account:

- the need to preserve the freedom of movement and of travel, which characterizes our societies;
- considerations relating to the protection of civil liberties;
- the danger of public complacency as awareness of the threat diminishes;
- specific security issues relating to those parts of the airport that are accessible to the general public;
- divisions of responsibility in the field of security (between federal Authorities, airport management, airport operators, airlines, etc.);
- the difficulty to protect a large perimeter implanted in an urban setting;
- financial constraints.

7. The main threats to aviation security currently include attacks using small conventional explosives, large conventional explosives and CBRN weapons, and are directed mainly at aircraft, terminals and passengers, as well as, secondarily, at other assets. In response to these potential threats, New York airports have set the following priorities:

- the introduction of biometric identification for employees with ID cards;
- enhanced perimeter security both on the landside and waterside;
- enhanced terminal security, with a particular focus on the exterior frontage and the interior lobby;
- improved passenger and cargo screening;
- better training of employees;
- continual auditing, testing and inspection;
- improved intelligence.

274 million USD have been spent in capital improvements at New York airports since 2001.

D. SAFETY AND SECURITY AT NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

1. The delegation visited the Indian Point Energy Center and met with plant officials to discuss safety and security at US nuclear power plants.
2. Indian Point was the first nuclear power plant to receive a license to produce electricity in 1962. The first unit was retired in 1974; two other units opened in 1974 and 1976 and they continue to operate today, providing some 20-25% of New York City's power needs. Both units use pressurized water reactors.
3. The delegation discussed several safety and security concerns:
 - contamination risks: plant officials explained that the three water systems on which pressurized water reactors rely are completely separate, and there is therefore no risk that contaminated water could leak into the tertiary loop, which uses water from the Hudson River;
 - environmental issues: plant officials cited studies which show that the plant's operations contribute to an increase in temperature in the Hudson River of only 1.4°F;
 - waste: plant officials pointed out that one pellet of nuclear material – the size of a pencil eraser – generates as much power as one ton of coal; each reactor uses 193 fuel assemblies each made up of 204 rods with 240 pellets each, or a total 9,449,280 pellets per reactor; each fuel assembly is replaced on average every six years; spent fuel is kept in a pool onsite;
 - capacity to sustain attack: plant officials explained that the containment building around the reactor is designed to sustain collision by an aircraft; it is made of one single pour of concrete;
 - access: plant officials informed the delegation that three concentric circles of security – the owner-controlled area, the protected area and the vital area -, with gradually increasing levels of security, help control access to the plant's site.

II. LOUISIANA: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOUR YEARS AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

1. The delegation met with officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Governor's Office for Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to discuss disaster preparedness and the lessons learned from the response to hurricane Katrina in August 2005.
2. Emergency management procedures in the United States give precedence to local response. Only if local capacities are insufficient does the state intervene. State authorities in the stricken state can also request assistance from neighbouring states if necessary. In accordance with the 1988 Stafford Act, federal assistance – including from FEMA and USACE – is provided upon request by the state governor and following a presidential declaration of emergency or of a major disaster.
3. Local officials are also generally entitled to order evacuations. This responsibility is passed onto state officials upon declaration of an emergency or disaster by the state.

States rely heavily on federal assistance for funding of recovery efforts; the usual ratio is 75% of federal funds and 25% of state funds.

4. The scale of the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina was unprecedented in the United States. The largest share of the damage was caused after the levees gave way. The area affected by Katrina extended over some 90,000 square miles in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, an area the size of Great Britain. Winds reached 127 miles per hour at the hurricane's landfall in Louisiana. The hurricane left over 1,300 dead, over 300,000 homes destroyed and an economic loss estimated at over 125 billion USD. Over one million people evacuated the area; temporary housing was provided for 92,000 households. Water surged by 28 to 30 feet along the Mississippi coast. Eighty percent of the city of New Orleans was submerged and it took over 40 days to pump out some 224 billion gallons of flood water. 217 square miles of land was lost from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. 169 miles of levees and floodwalls were damaged and 62.2 billion litres of debris were left by the hurricane.

5. Federal and state officials pointed to some of the main lessons from the Katrina response:

- prevention and preparedness are key: the primary responsibility for disaster response is with individuals; awareness campaigns are therefore essential;
- hazard mitigation – building back “smarter, stronger and safer” – is also crucial; every dollar spent on mitigation saves four dollars in future disaster-related costs;
- New Orleans' hurricane protection system has been rethought: it includes 350 miles of levees and flood walls, 73 pumping stations and 4 gated outlets; according to current plans, construction of category 3 hurricane-resistant levees should be completed by June 2011; these should eventually be replaced by category 5 hurricane-resistant levees; the delegation also learned about the role that the Bonnet Carré Spillway plays in protecting New Orleans from floods. The spillway, located 30 miles north of the city, can divert up to 20% of the Mississippi river flow to Lake Pontchartrain;
- co-ordination of response efforts is essential; GOHSEP hosts a unified command group, which brings together state agencies involved in an emergency;
- evacuation plans have been improved and consultation procedures between local, state and federal authorities have been put in place in order to facilitate decision-making regarding evacuation. Hurricane Gustav in September 2008 provided a major test in terms of evacuation. For the first time in its history, the state called for a mandatory evacuation of the entire coastal area of Louisiana. Some two million people were subsequently evacuated. It was also the first time Louisiana had conducted dual contra-flow traffic for the evacuation of both south-eastern and south-western areas;
- ideally, shelters should be located in safe areas as close to home as possible in order to facilitate returns and recovery; most shelters in Louisiana are currently located in the northern part of the state; Louisiana also relies on a number of shelters in neighbouring states;

- interoperability and communications capacity have been improved; 95% of Louisiana's territory is now covered by radio communications;
- partnerships are being established with the business community; GOHSEP is currently working together with the Louisiana State University on the creation of a business Emergency Operations Center, which would coordinate the contribution of the business and volunteer communities to disaster preparedness, response and recovery;
- a new system has been put in place to co-ordinate international assistance in the event of a disaster.

6. Post-Katrina recovery efforts nevertheless continue to face a number of challenges:

- a significant share of the local population has not returned (including 41% of the population of St Bernard parish, 29% of Orleans parish and 23% of Plaquemines parish). Additionally, 1,500 households still live in temporary housing;
- many of the areas that are currently being rebuilt remain high-risk. Overall, 2 of the 4.2 million inhabitants of Louisiana live in risk-prone coastal areas;
- only slightly over half the public assistance funds obligated in the aftermath of Katrina (4.8 out of 8.1 billion USD) have actually been disbursed; this is due primarily to delayed planning of reconstruction projects by affected cities and communities.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honorable Senator Jane Cordy
Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
ACTIVITY	Visit to New York and New Orleans of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security
DESTINATION	New York and New Orleans, United States of America
DATES	October 1–4, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Senator Jane Cordy
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$3,082.17
ACCOMMODATION	\$1,448.48
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$406.67
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$4,937.32