

The Homeland Security Dilemma:
The Imagination of Failure and the Escalating Cost of Perfecting Security

By

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Foreword

In this study, Dr. Frank Harvey tackles a newly discovered phenomenon in public reaction to the new high-security regimes that have developed in the west since 9/11 and the implications for Canada.

Harvey shows that 9/11 sparked off a massive increase in public spending on national or homeland security in Canada and the United States (not to mention western Europe, Australia, etc.), but that the greater the spending increases, the greater the public sense of insecurity. In other words, as public spending on security has increased over the past five years, the public has grown more apprehensive about its safety. At the same time – and adding to the mystery – there have been no terrorist incidents at all in the United State since 9/11 – while terrorist attacks elsewhere in western Europe and southeast Asia have amounted to mere pinpricks.

Harvey has a number of inter-related explanations for the growing public uncertainty. First and foremost is the fact that when it comes to terrorist incidents, the public tolerance in the US (and Canada) is zero. The standard demanded by the public from the government is perfection even though everyone knows that such a standard is virtually unachievable. We want to be perfectly safe, in fact we demand it, but we realize that terrorists are quite capable of seeking out the imperfections in our security shield (and there will inevitably be many) and exploiting them. That make people fearful.

Another factor Harvey examines is the impact of the old newspaper maxim “if it bleeds, it leads”. In the US, Canada, western Europe, etc., the successes in the struggle to defeat terrorist attacks are mostly invisible while the very few failures and “breaking news” events. It’s not hard to understand why. If a terrorist attack is foiled through, say, good intelligence work, the public will rarely find out how close to disaster they may have come primarily because intelligence coups, by their very nature, must remain secret. The failures are dramatic enough.

Another issue that has taken hold in the public mind since 9/11 is that the struggle to defeat al-Qaeda has become both global and universal primarily through both the actions and the rhetoric of western political leaders. In the public mind, a suicide bombing in a Sinai resort is linked to the destruction of a mosque in Baghdad or an ambush of Canadian troops in Afghanistan. And since these events seem to many to be somehow linked, they provide “proof” that there are still many weak spots in the security/protection structure. So every time a hostage is beheaded in Iraq, fear grows in the United States or Canada that whatever is being done is “not working.”

The net sum of all this is a paradox: the more security the public is given, the more security it demands.

The most immediate implication for Canada is this: since fears in the US of imminent attack seem to be growing, not abating, any attack will spark a massive public outpouring even greater than that which followed the obvious disaster caused by Hurricane Katrina.

If that attack comes from Canada, a single event, no matter how small, will create a disaster in the cross border relationship.

David J. Bercuson, PhD
Director of Programs
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Avant-propos

Dans la présente étude, Frank Harvey se penche sur un phénomène nouvellement découvert de réaction publique face aux nouveaux régimes de haute sécurité qui sont apparus dans le monde occidental depuis les événements du 11 septembre 2001 et ses répercussions sur le Canada.

L'auteur montre que les événements du 11 septembre ont provoqué une énorme hausse des dépenses publiques consacrées à la sécurité du territoire au Canada et aux États-Unis (sans oublier l'Europe de l'Ouest, l'Australie et bien d'autres); or, plus les dépenses augmentent, plus le sentiment d'insécurité que ressent le public s'accroît. Autrement dit, tandis que les dépenses publiques consacrées à la sécurité n'ont fait qu'augmenter au cours des cinq dernières années, le public s'est inquiété de plus en plus de sa sécurité. Dans un même temps, et ce qui est encore plus mystérieux, c'est qu'il n'y a eu aucune incident de terrorisme aux États-Unis depuis le 11 septembre 2001, tandis que les attentats terroristes, ailleurs en Europe de l'Ouest et dans le Sud-Est asiatique, n'ont été que des coups d'épingle.

M. Harvey donne plusieurs explications interdépendantes de ce malaise croissant du public. D'abord et avant tout, lorsqu'il s'agit d'attentats terroristes, la tolérance du public face à ceux-ci, tant aux États-Unis qu'au Canada, est nulle. Le public exige du gouvernement la perfection, bien que tous le monde sache qu'il est pratiquement impossible de parvenir à une telle norme. Nous voulons une sécurité parfaite, en fait nous l'exigeons; mais nous réalisons que les terroristes sont tout à fait capables de trouver les défauts dans notre armure de sécurité (et elle en comportera inévitablement beaucoup) et de les exploiter. Cela rend la population craintive.

Un autre facteur que mentionne l'auteur est l'effet de la vieille maxime des journaux, selon laquelle les actes sanglants attirent toujours l'attention. Aux États-Unis, au Canada, en Europe de l'Ouest et ailleurs, toute victoire dans la lutte contre les attaques terroristes passe souvent inaperçue, tandis que les rares échecs constituent des nouvelles-chocs. Cela se comprend aisément. Lorsqu'un attentat terroriste est déjoué grâce à, disons, un bon travail de renseignement, le public découvrira rarement qu'il a frisé le désastre, puisque les exploits des services de renseignements doivent, de par leur nature, rester secrets. Par contre, les échecs sont spectaculaires.

Une autre raison qui a eu prise sur l'esprit du public depuis les attentats du 11 septembre 2001, c'est que la lutte pour vaincre al-Qaeda est devenue mondiale et universelle, principalement en raison des actions et des paroles des dirigeants politiques occidentaux. Dans l'esprit du public, un attentat suicide à la bombe dans une station balnéaire du Sinaï est lié à la destruction d'une mosquée à Bagdad ou à une embuscade de soldats canadiens en Afghanistan. Et puisque ces événements semblent liés pour une raison ou pour une autre, ils « prouvent » qu'il existe encore bien des faiblesses dans la structure de sécurité et de protection. Alors chaque fois qu'un otage est décapité en Iraq, le public, aux États-Unis comme au Canada, craint sans cesse davantage que les mesures prises « ne marchent pas ».

Tout cela produit un paradoxe : plus on donne de sécurité au public, plus il en veut.

La répercussion la plus immédiate au Canada est la suivante : étant donné que les craintes d'une attaque imminente aux États-Unis semblent croître au lieu de diminuer, toute attaque provoquerait une vague de réaction publique encore plus massive que celle qui a suivi le désastre flagrant causé par l'ouragan Katrina.

Si l'attaque provient du Canada, une seule occurrence, aussi minime qu'elle soit, entraînera une situation désastreuse pour la relation transfrontalière.

David J. Bercuson, Ph.D.
Directeur des programmes
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Executive Summary

Besieged by insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq and gripped by mounting pressure to enhance security and public safety at home, officials in Washington and Ottawa are now confronted with a serious homeland security dilemma:

The greater the financial costs, public sacrifice and political capital invested in security, the higher the public's expectations and corresponding standards for measuring performance, the more significant the public's sense of in-security after each failure, and, paradoxically, the higher the pressure on governments and citizens to sacrifice even more to achieve perfect security.

Some of the best work on security dilemmas appears in the field of international relations and explains why perfectly rational decisions to enhance power actually diminish security by promoting unstable spirals in competitive defence spending – a common account of escalating military budgets throughout much of the Cold War.

The homeland security dilemma represents the post-9/11 equivalent for domestic politics in the war on terrorism. The paper's central argument can be summed up by the following counterintuitive thesis: *the more security you have, the more security you will need*. Not because enhancing security makes terrorism more likely (although the incentive for terrorists to attack may increase as extremists feel duty-bound to demonstrate their ongoing relevance), but because enormous investments in security inevitably raise public expectations and amplify public outrage after subsequent failures.

The dilemma will continue to shape American and Canadian domestic and international security priorities for decades, with combined effects that are no less historically significant than those associated with security dilemmas preceding the Cold War. The key policy implications derived from the arguments and evidence presented in this report are not encouraging -- there are no solutions, because the most rational and logical policy options are part of the problem.

Résumé

Harcelés par les insurrections en Afghanistan et en Iraq, et aux prises avec les pressions croissantes pour améliorer la sécurité publique chez eux, les représentants de Washington et d'Ottawa sont maintenant confrontés à un grave dilemme concernant la sécurité du territoire :

Plus les frais financiers, les sacrifices exigés du public et le capital investi dans la sécurité sont grands, plus les attentes du public et les normes correspondantes de mesures du rendement sont élevées, plus significatif est le sens d'insécurité du public après chaque échec et, paradoxalement, plus les pressions exercées sur les gouvernements et les citoyens pour sacrifier encore davantage afin de réaliser une sécurité parfaite sont fortes.

Quelques-unes des meilleures études sur les dilemmes en matière de sécurité touchent au domaine des relations internationales; on y explique pourquoi des décisions parfaitement rationnelles en matière d'amélioration des pouvoirs ne font en fait qu'affaiblir la sécurité en favorisant des montées en flèche déstabilisantes et compétitives des dépenses consacrées à la défense — un fait commun de l'escalade des budgets militaires qui s'est produite pendant la plus grande partie de la guerre froide.

Le dilemme de la sécurité du territoire représente l'équivalent des politiques intérieures de la guerre contre le terrorisme au lendemain du 11 septembre 2001. La thèse contre-intuitive suivante résume l'argument principal du mémoire : *plus on renforce la sécurité, plus il en faut*. Non parce que le resserrement de la sécurité augmente les possibilités de terrorisme (bien que la motivation des terroristes à passer à l'attaque pourrait s'accroître car les extrémistes se sentent obligés de montrer leur importance), mais parce que les énormes investissements dans les mesures de sécurité augmentent inévitablement les attentes du public et intensifient sa fureur lorsque se produit un échec.

Ce dilemme continuera à façonner les priorités nationales et internationales des Canadiens et des Américains pendant des décennies, produisant des effets combinés qui ne sont pas moins significatifs au plan historique que ceux qui ont été associés aux dilemmes de sécurité à l'aube de la guerre froide. Les principales répercussions politiques tirées de ces arguments et présentées dans le présent rapport ne sont pas encourageantes; il n'existe pas de solutions, parce que les choix de politique les plus rationnels et les plus logiques font partie intégrante du problème.

Introduction

Besieged by insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq and gripped by mounting pressure to enhance security and public safety at home, officials in Washington and Ottawa are now confronted with a serious homeland security dilemma:

The greater the financial costs, public sacrifice and political capital invested in security, the higher the public's expectations and corresponding standards for measuring performance, the more significant the public's sense of in-security after each failure, and, paradoxically, the higher the pressure on governments and citizens to sacrifice even more to achieve perfect security.

Some of the best work on security dilemmas appears in the field of international relations and typically builds on excellent research by Herz (1950, 1951), Jervis (1976, 1978), Snyder (1984), Posen (1993), Glazer (1997), and Collins (1997).¹ "When states seek the ability to defend themselves", Jervis (1976: 64) explains, "they get too much and too little -- too much because they gain the ability to carry out aggression; too little because others, being menaced, will increase their own arms and so reduce the first state's security." It is the uncertainty of an opponent's intentions, Collins (2004: 31) adds, that compels states to "pursue the prudent option of procuring arms, yet since others can witness this acquisition and feel menaced by it, they too respond in order to safeguard their security." The paradox at the international level explains why perfectly rational decisions to enhance power actually diminish security by promoting unstable spirals in competitive defence spending – a common account of escalating military budgets throughout much of the Cold War.

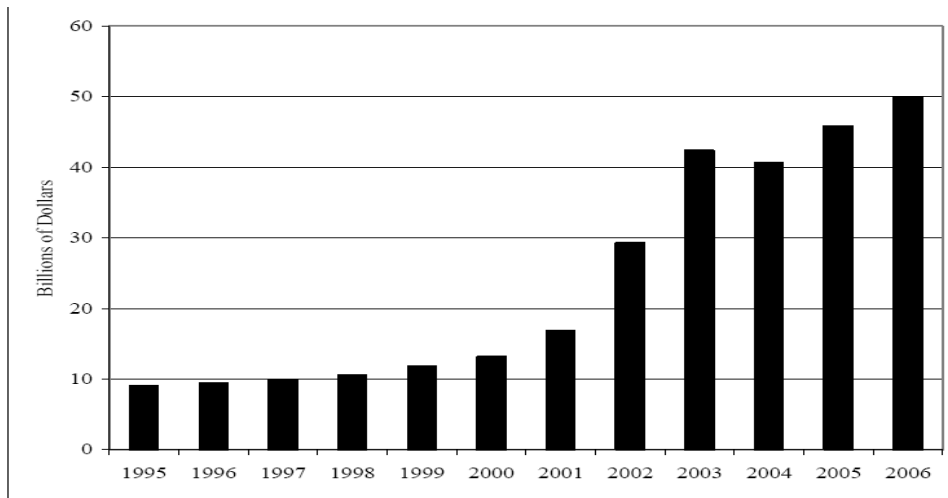
The homeland security dilemma represents the post-9/11 equivalent for domestic politics in the war on terrorism. The paper's central argument can be summed up by the following counterintuitive thesis: *the more security you have, the more security you will need*. Not because enhancing security makes terrorism more likely (although the incentive for terrorists to attack may increase as extremists feel duty-bound to demonstrate their ongoing relevance), but because enormous investments in security inevitably raise public expectations and amplify public outrage after subsequent failures.

The dilemma will continue to shape American and Canadian domestic and international security priorities for decades, with combined effects that are no less historically significant than those associated with security dilemmas preceding the Cold War. The key policy implications derived from the arguments and evidence presented in this report are not encouraging -- there are no solutions, because the most rational and logical policy options are part of the problem.

1. Confidence, Trust and Approval: Public Evaluations of the War on Terrorism

If public assessments of Washington's performance in the war on terrorism were based, at least in part, on the government's multibillion dollar commitment to homeland security (Table 1) we would logically expect confidence, trust and approval ratings to be quite high.

Table 1
Growth in U.S. Homeland Security Spending



Sources: Budget of the United States, Fiscal Year 2006, Table S-5 and Office of Management and Budget, "Securing the homeland, Strengthening the Nation."

Note: Levels for FY 1995 through 1997 are estimated, as OMB did not collect data on these activities prior to FY 1998

We should also expect positive evaluations in light of the perfect homeland security record since 2001. The absence over the last six years of a single terrorist attack on U.S. soil is remarkable for at least four reasons.

First, there is no question that terrorists are highly motivated to attack western targets, as demonstrated in Bali (2002), Madrid (2004) and London (2005), and there is no compelling reason why American cities would be excluded from this list. In fact we have every reason to believe U.S. targets represent the gold standard for a successful, high value terrorist attack. The fact that none has occurred is particularly noteworthy given the powerful incentives for terrorist groups to demonstrate ongoing relevance in response to regime changes in Afghanistan and Iraq, impressive turnout rates in democratic elections in both countries (surpassing turnouts in recent elections in the U.S., Canada and many European states), arrests of senior Al-Qaeda, Taliban and Iraqi leaders, important counter-terrorist alliances with Pakistan, the unprecedented decision by Libya's Muammar Al-Qadhafi to renounce the country's WMD program and comply with robust International Atomic Energy Agency inspections, and so on. With these successes in mind (and many others listed in endnote 3), the lack of a U.S.-based attack is arguably quite impressive.

Second, there have been several very explicit threats issued by Osama Bin Laden, Aymen al-Zawahiri and Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi declaring their intentions to launch attacks in the U.S. like those in London and Madrid. Since these threats are costly signals that ultimately speak to their credibility (and status) as terrorist leaders, they must be taken seriously.

Third, there is a prevailing belief among senior terrorist operatives (as stipulated in their own strategic documents) that attacking American, Canadian and European targets is essential to their primary goal of extracting U.S. and NATO troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.² Despite the motivations, explicit threats and strategic rationale for killing Americans in their own cities we have gone 1825 days (as of September, 2006) without a single failure. It is useful to recall here

that in the aftermath of 9/11 no one with any measure of responsibility for defence, security or public safety, and certainly no well informed terrorist expert, came anywhere close to predicting this level of success (or luck). If such a prediction was issued in 2001 there would have been many reasons to dismiss it as wishful thinking, and there are as many reasons in 2006 to be impressed with the record. While it is certainly difficult to establish a direct causal linkage between the billions invested in homeland security and the absence of a U.S.-based attack it is not un-reasonable to expect a majority of the public would draw this connection.

Fourth, there are literally hundreds (perhaps thousands) of other reasons why a moderately informed public would assign higher rather than lower confidence and approval ratings for Washington’s security performance – namely, the mounting evidence that law enforcement and intelligence organizations in Washington, Ottawa and allied governments around the world have succeeded in launching hundreds of successful counter-terrorist operations that have thwarted planned attacks in the U.S., Asia, Europe and Australia.³ Even if only a portion of the facts emerging from these many reports is accurate these successes have arguably saved thousands of lives.

Yet, notwithstanding Washington’s very robust commitment to protecting American citizens by spending billions every year on homeland security, a perfect record of success with respect to preventing other attacks on U.S. soil, and several other significant achievements since 2001, public confidence, trust and satisfaction have steadily declined over the past five years (Tables 2⁴ and 3⁵).

Table 2
Confidence and Trust in U.S. Government’s Ability to Prevent Another Terrorist Attack
 (‘great deal’ / ‘moderate amount’)

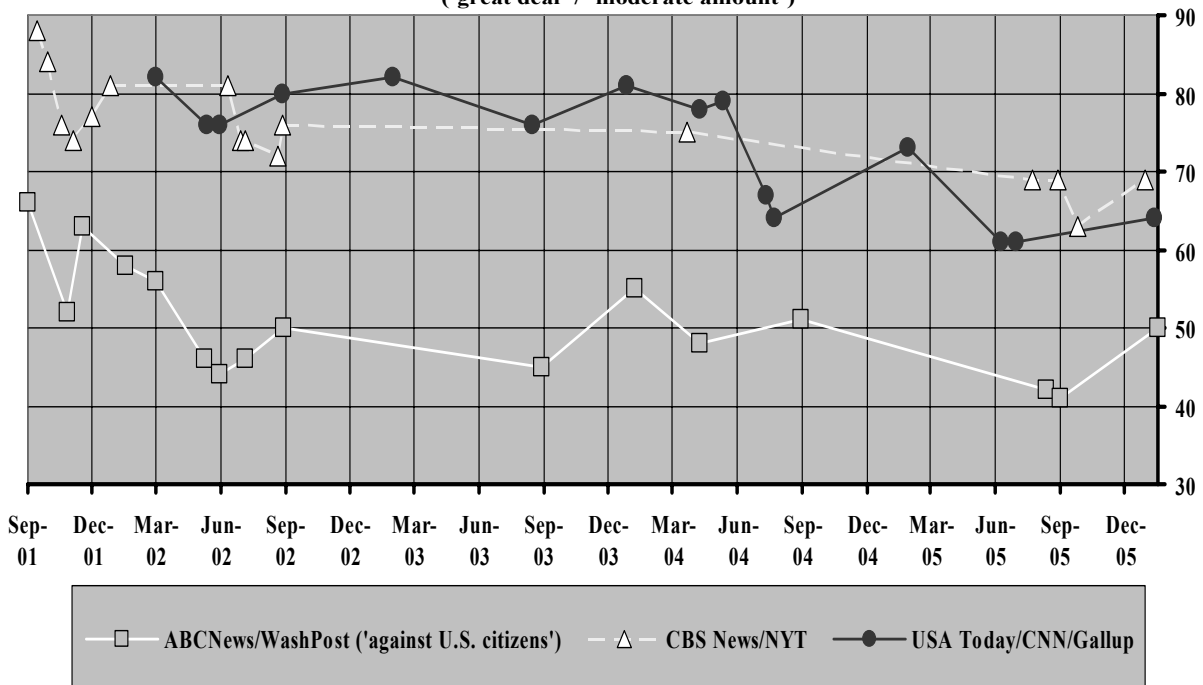
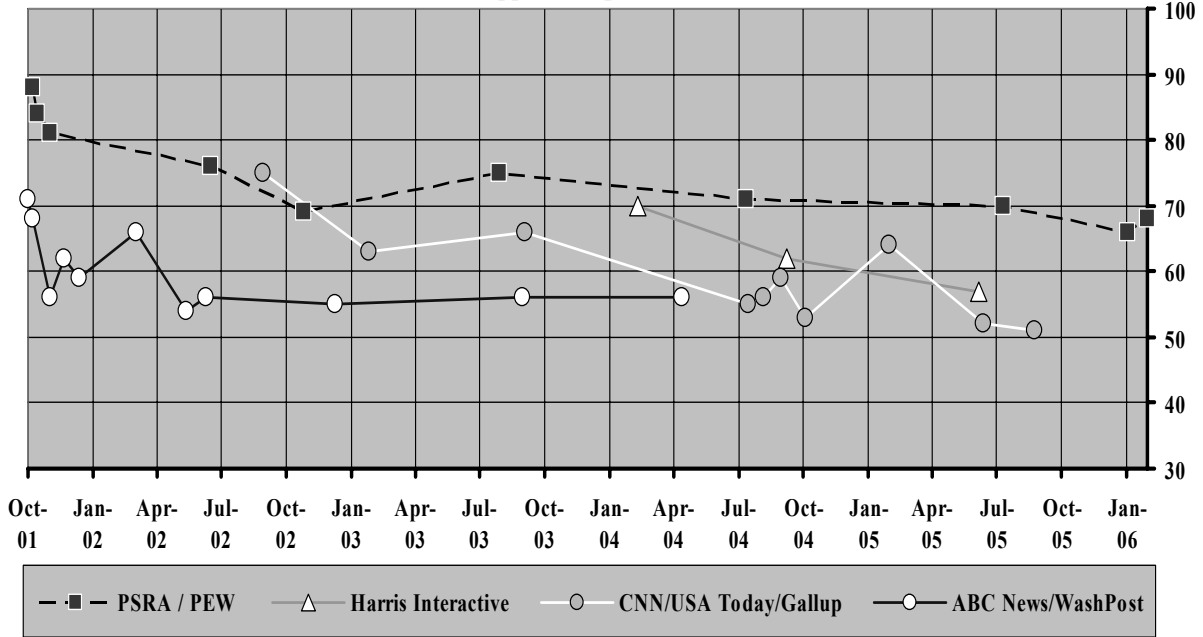
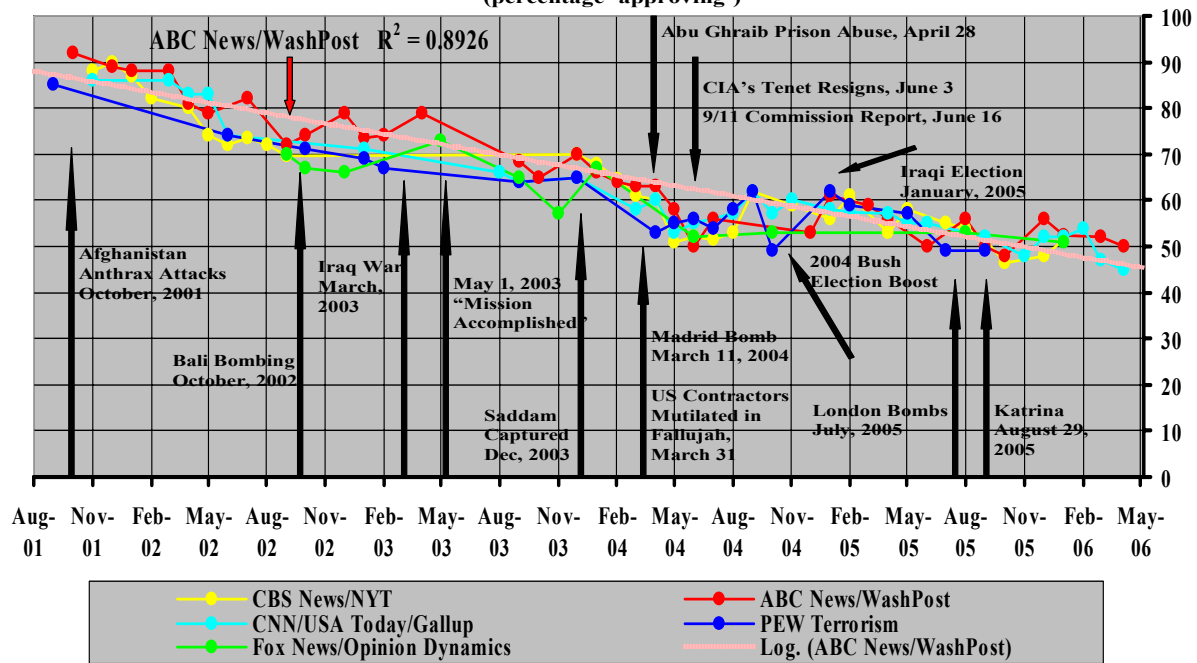


Table 3
Satisfaction with U.S. Government Performance in The War on Terror
 (supportive / positive views)



These downward trends are confirmed by dozens of other polls between 2001-2006 measuring overall public 'approval' of the global war on terrorism (Table 4⁶).

Table 4
Public Approval of U.S. Approach to Global War on Terror (GWOT)
 (percentage 'approving')



The polling information compiled here goes well beyond the typical snapshot of opinions offered by the press and other media. The data and trends are derived from tens of thousands of

responses to hundreds of terrorism related opinion polls administered over the last six years by dozens of polling organizations, think tanks and news outlets.⁷ When these trends are juxtaposed against the rising costs of homeland security (from Table 1) the evidence clearly shows an expanding gap between, on the one hand, Washington's obviously very strong commitment to protecting American citizens and, on the other, a steady decline in public appreciation for the results generated by that commitment.⁸ How do we reconcile the absence of U.S. based terrorist attacks since 9/11 (and other major successes) with diminishing approval?

Among the more popular explanations is that Americans are becoming very distrustful of President Bush and his administration. At this point anything the President does runs into heavy water, and the polls on homeland security reflect this general malaise. While this explanation is partially correct it is incomplete. The homeland security dilemma, described in detail below, provides a more thorough accounting of the complex mechanisms through which declining approval ratings are not only inevitable but largely irreversible, paradoxically, because of the very policies and programs designed to elevate those same ratings.

2. Explaining The Homeland Security Dilemma

Five factors explain why increasing investments (spending), political commitments (policy) and public sacrifice in the name of homeland security produce diminishing returns over time, each of which encompasses an important component of the current dilemma: (a) rising public expectations and standards for measuring government performance, (b) the power of failure (failures trump successes), (c) public imagination and exaggerated perceptions of terrorist threats, (d) political-military imagination and official overestimations of terrorist risks, and (e) declining public support for sacrificing civil liberties.

(2.a) Rising Public Expectations and Standards for Measuring Performance

The dilemma is, in part, a logical outgrowth of the very substantial though perfectly rational security expenditures in the United States following the 9/11 attacks (see Tables 5 and 6).

**Table 5
Homeland Security Spending by Mission Area
(in Millions)**

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06161.pdf>

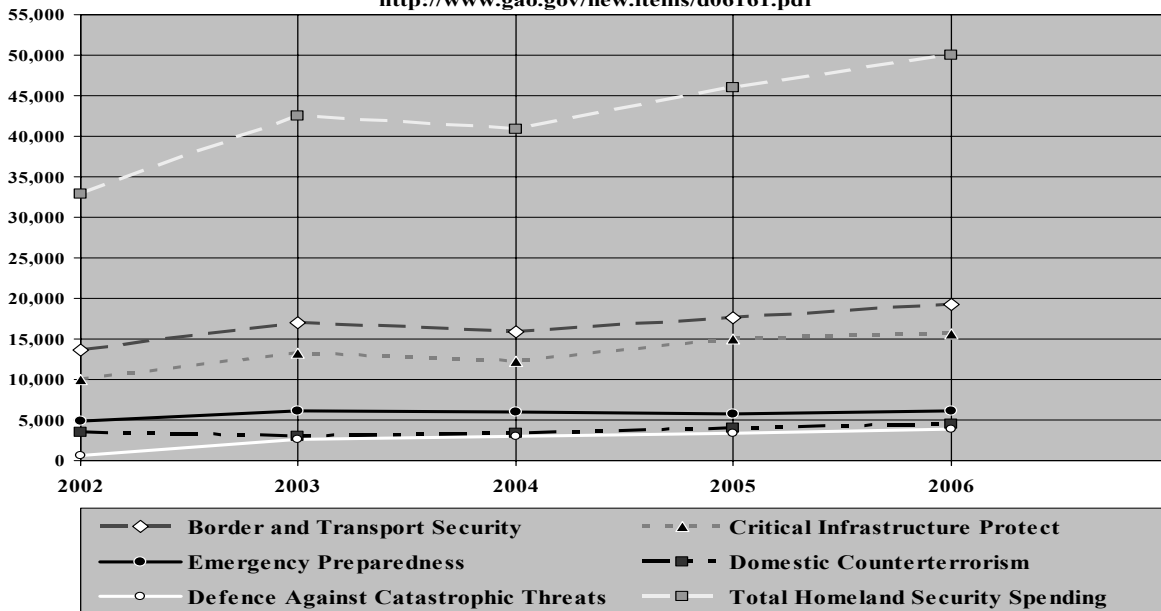
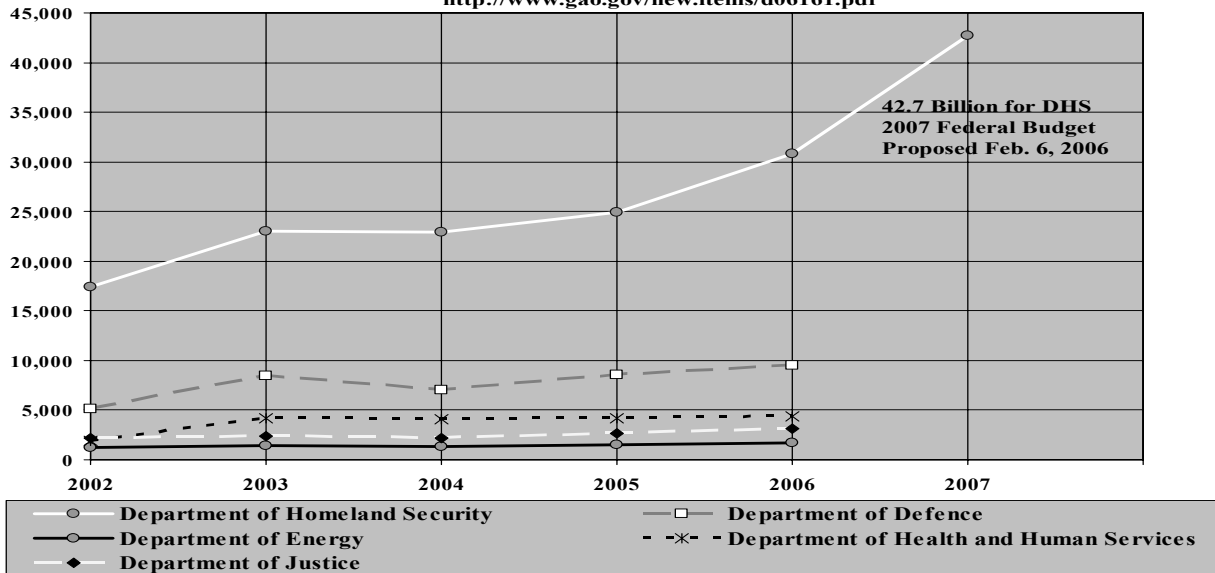


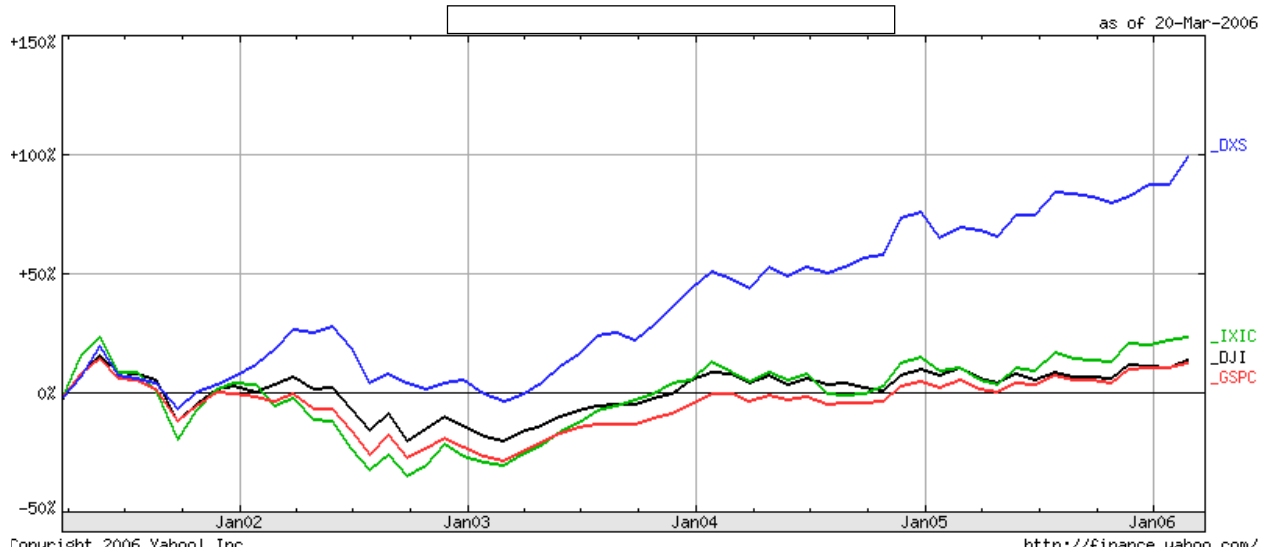
Table 6
Spending by Select Key Departments
(in Millions)

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06161.pdf>



The proportion of annual spending to secure airports, seaports, borders, government buildings and critical infrastructure has increased substantially since the 2001 attacks. Without exception, every agency associated with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and any department with links to security and public safety received annual funding increases.⁹ The 2007 \$42.7 billion DHS budget, for example, represents an impressive 110% increase over the \$20.3 billion allocated in October, 2001 when the DHS was established by Presidential Executive Order.¹⁰ The scope of these very sizeable investments can best be illustrated by comparing the performance of homeland security/defence stocks (Spade Defence Index, DXS) with those listed on the Dow (DJI), NASDAQ (IXIC) and the S&P 500 (GSPC) indices over the last five years (Table 7).

Table 7
Security Stocks (DXS) versus
Dow (DJI), NASDAQ (IXIC) and S&P 500 (GSPC)



In addition to the tens of billions of dollars spent each year to improve homeland security and continental defence, Washington has now invested approximately \$320 billion (and counting) to fund two wars, two insurgencies and two massive post-war reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, all to improve international security in the midst of a global war on terrorism.

Moreover, the public is being asked to make several other significant personal and social sacrifices, including: lost lives in Iraq and Afghanistan, diminishing civil liberties as a consequence of anti-terrorism legislation, expanding National Security Agency surveillance of domestic telephone, email and internet communications, rising levels of anti-Americanism throughout Europe, Asia and the Middle East, inflation and other cost of living increases tied to rapidly escalating oil prices, etc. And, finally, many businesses have been forced to enhance their own critical infrastructure while covering the costs of new trade regulations and security standards to maintain a relatively free flow of goods and services across the Canada-U.S. border.

Consistent with the first key tenet of the homeland security dilemma, standards for assessing government performance will shift to accommodate rising expectations, and those expectations shift upwards in accordance with the sacrifices already made. Any discrepancy between, on the one hand, the security the public or business community expects in return for its investments (or feels it deserves in return for its sacrifices) and, on the other, the actual level of security the government appears to be delivering will increase public threat perceptions and, by extension, the political pressures to spend even more to fix the problem (Harvey 2004: 37).¹¹ In essence, as expectations rise, failures become increasingly more painful and unacceptable.

By way of illustration -- if a repeat of the 9/11 attacks occurred today the corresponding loss in public perceptions of security would be even more pronounced (and potentially disruptive) than was the case after the original attack, precisely **because** billions of dollars have been spent to prevent that from happening, and **because** expectations are so much higher today in view of the unprecedented number of institutional reforms and improvements in critical infrastructure that, ostensibly, were designed to resolve the problem.

Similarly, the ripple effects of hurricane Katrina were greater in 2005 **because** the American public and media expected emergency preparedness, evacuation plans and public safety to be considerably stronger after spending billions of dollars on these very programs from 2001-2005. The scope of Katrina's post-hurricane failure was so unexpected (and the standards for assessing government performance so much higher) that criticism was understandably relentless. Now, had Katrina occurred on September 10, 2001, the backlash, political fallout, financial costs and political motivation to respond would likely have been far lower.¹²

In his address to the nation immediately following hurricane Katrina George W. Bush provided the clearest illustration of the dilemma at work:

"Four years after the frightening experience of September the 11th, Americans have every right to expect a more effective response in a time of emergency. When the federal government fails to meet such an obligation, I, as President, am responsible for the problem, and for the solution..... This government will learn the lessons of Hurricane Katrina (by mounting) one of the largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen.... We're going to review every action and make necessary changes, so that we are better prepared for any challenge of nature, or act of evil men, that could threaten our people.... In a time of terror threats and weapons of mass destruction, the danger to

our citizens reaches much wider than a fault line or a flood plain. I consider detailed emergency planning to be a national security priority, and therefore, I've ordered the Department of Homeland Security to undertake an immediate review, in cooperation with local counterparts, of emergency plans in every major city in America" (President George W. Bush, September 16, 2005).

Of course, every one of the president's entirely laudable policy recommendations begs the obvious questions – what were the federal government, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security doing over the past five years if not developing programs to deal with public safety and emergency preparedness? Isn't this precisely what the spending, sacrifices and government transformations were designed to accomplish? More alarmingly, if Katrina represents the best we can do *with* clear warnings, what are we likely to experience after a terrorist attack no one expected? Why wouldn't public confidence continue to drop under these circumstances, regardless of whatever successes the government has managed to achieve to date? In fact approval levels are likely to drop even further as various Senate and House committees detail every minute of decision-making prior to Katrina, highlight every failure and scrutinize every missed opportunity in a report that will inevitably pose thousands of questions the White House, Governor and Mayor will not be able to satisfactorily answer. The committees' findings, much like the 9/11 report, will no doubt recommend spending more money to fix the problem.

The point here is not to establish a direct causal relationship between spending and confidence – spending does not automatically *cause* approval ratings to go down. If it was that simple then the dilemma could be easily resolved by spending nothing on security, an absurd policy recommendation that does not flow logically from the arguments outlined above. Obviously, the absence of security spending and related commitments would increase threat perceptions and decrease public confidence as the media and opposition groups slam the government for its failure to heed the lessons of 9/11. The main point, rather, is that increased spending (along with other sacrifices described earlier) create expectations the government can never meet, but spending any less is an option the government can never accept. Both reactions are perfectly rational, and that's the problem. As expectations for higher levels of security increase, and as corresponding thresholds for acceptable levels of pain decrease, both parties will compete to convince the American public that *their* party's programs are different, more comprehensive, and more likely to succeed.¹³ Washington is becoming "addicted to security" because spending will never be sufficient to achieve absolute success in the war on terror, yet perfection will remain the standard politicians will claim to be trying to reach.

The Dubai Ports World fiasco is the most recent manifestation of this emerging competition. For a brief period of time the crisis seriously threatened to loosen the Republicans' grip on security policy by providing Democrats with the opportunity to gain political traction on a key security file. Of course, the risks associated with the UAE's operational control of six American ports were exaggerated by both Democrats and Republicans to enhance their security credentials in preparation for mid-term elections. But the message that will no doubt be picked up by friends and exploited by enemies in the region is obvious -- the U.S. is not prepared to trust Arab/Muslim states or companies. The potential for these mixed signals to undermine, rather than enhance, American security over the long run was not lost to the U.S. Senators who quickly traveled to Dubai to apologize for their actions. The ports crisis provides a very clear illustration of the unintended, counterproductive and paradoxical consequences of the dilemma.

(2.b) *The Power of Failure (failures trump successes)*

The predisposition we all have to overvalue the negative effects of failures and undervalue (if not completely ignore) the positive effects of successes is a second important component of the homeland security dilemma. There are several reasons for our bias in this regard.

First, our sense of security after an attack or natural disaster is rarely (if ever) based on how many lives are saved but rather on how many are lost -- few of us can recall the number of people successfully evacuated from the World Trade Center and Pentagon on 9/11 but we can all recite the number of deaths. Similarly, we never see pictures of houses torn down or hurricanes miss.

Second, we typically perceive a greater loss in security from a minor failure than a corresponding gain in security from news that a major attack was prevented or that a significant counter-terrorist record was achieved. Consider the following -- a relatively minor terrorist attack in the United States today resulting in, say, five deaths from a suicide bomb would have a significantly more negative impact on American perceptions of their security than all of the terrorist attacks and casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. Yet the absence of a single post-9/11 attack on U.S. soil -- essentially a perfect record in preventing the worst kind of security failure -- is almost completely excluded from the public's success-failure balance sheet. If the U.S. government achieved the same measure of success in preventing terrorist attacks in Iraq as it has on American soil we would be hailing the 2003-2006 Iraq intervention as one of the most impressive and important military victories since the Second World War. But no such credit is being assigned to Washington's homeland security performance. As Joseph Nye (1995) observed, "security is like oxygen. You do not tend to notice it until you begin to lose it."¹⁴

Third, when successes occur nothing really happens, so we have no reference points, no facts or images to include in the balance sheet.¹⁵ Security failures, on the other hand, are all inclusive and encompass an ever expanding list of conceptually disparate images and facts that are readily identifiable and far easier to incorporate into our calculations. The blurring of homeland security and the global war on terrorism means that almost any type of foreign or domestic policy failure becomes relevant to perceptions of security. Everything from abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison, to the bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samara, to fears of a civil war in Iraq, to images of angry Muslims involved in violent protests around the world following the publication of caricatures of the prophet Mohammad, to images of kidnap victims (most of whom have been released in return for ransoms) and suicide bombings in Iraq and Afghanistan, to news about American ports being controlled by Dubai, etc. all combine to tip the balance in favour of failure. Even non-terrorist events, such as Katrina, SARS or warnings of an avian flu pandemic get inserted into our lists of real or potential security problems. It is perfectly reasonable to argue, for example, that the levees in New Orleans could just as easily have been damaged by a terrorist attack, so the collapse of disaster relief efforts following Katrina are legitimately interpreted as a breakdown in homeland security. Similarly, the many challenges we face with a SARS or potential bird flu crisis are not unlike those we would expect to encounter in the midst of a biological terrorist attack, so any evidence that the government is failing to prepare for, manage or control these viruses are easily incorporated into our sense of insecurity.

Fourth, we tend to believe failures more readily than we do successes and often ascribe onto the latter some measure of political motivation. When President Bush delivers a series of televised speeches revisiting a 'success' in 2001 involving the arrest of Zacharias Moussawi (the only person arrested and tried for his alleged involvement in the 9/11 attacks) the public and media are naturally suspicious. The consensus in this case was that Bush was simply

bolstering Whitehouse arguments defending warrantless National Security Agency surveillance practices in the midst of a national debate about whether the President can claim these as constitutional powers.

Fifth, the press and other media tend to focus heavily on our side's failures, often for perfectly rational reasons tied to ratings, circulation and profits. But the more difficult challenge for those trying to make a case for progress in the war on terrorism is the tendency for the press to overlook obvious (and significant) failures on the part of terrorists and their state sponsors. The global response to 9/11, for example, has led to hundreds of new multilateral and bilateral laws and agreements, enhanced coordination across intelligence organizations, and counter-terrorist victories that have significantly improved our capacity to monitor and control terrorist funding, recruitment and other illegal activities. The precise benefits emerging out of all of this may be difficult to measure, but the obvious costs to terrorists receive almost no sustained coverage in the press.

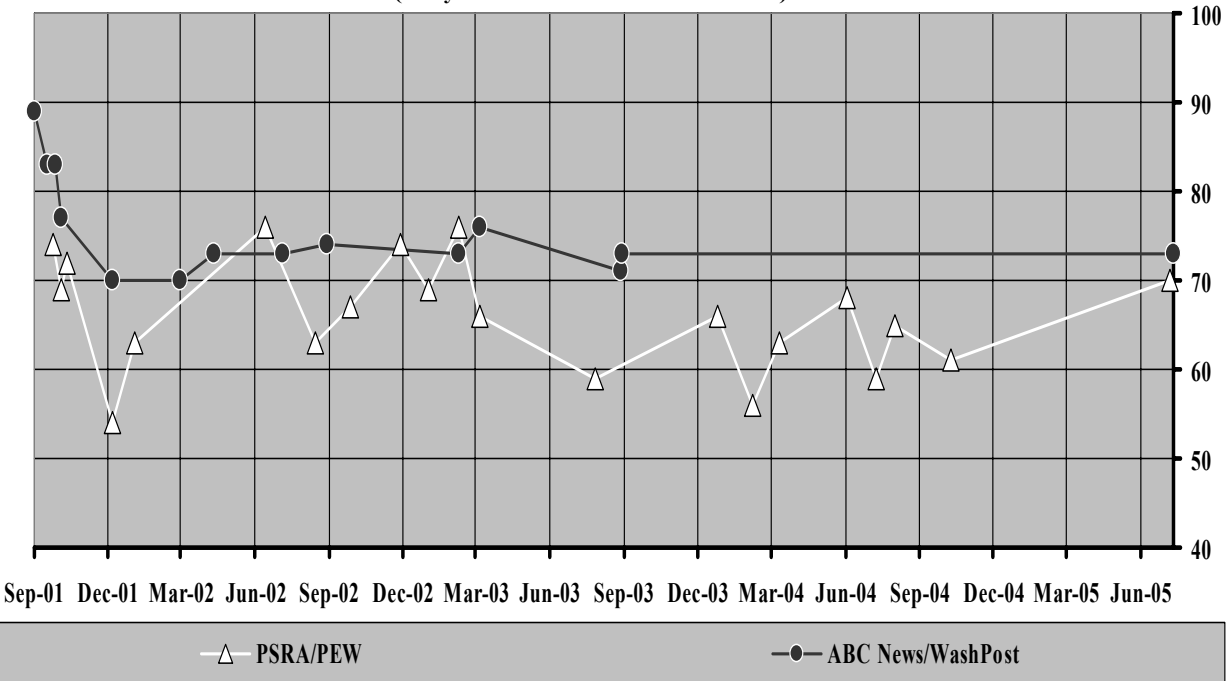
Finally, the tendency for failures to trump successes is strongly supported by empirical evidence from the polls described in Table 4. When relevant post-9/11 events are juxtaposed onto 'approval' ratings the results reveal much stronger negative effects from failures (downward trends) than any positive effects from successes (upward trends). Consider for example how quickly the trend line begins to decline after Bush's 'Mission Accomplished' declaration on the USS Abraham Lincoln (May 2003), the capture of Saddam Hussein (December 2003), the positive boost from Bush's 2004 re-election campaign (August-November 2004), and the Iraqi elections (January, 2005). When compared with the negative impact of the Madrid bombings (March 2004), the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal (April 2004), the London bombings (July 2005), or hurricane Katrina (August 2005) the decline in approval is more pronounced and permanent.

In terms of the overall trend, the steady decline in confidence and approval from 2001-2006 indicates that successes (no matter how many or how significant) are never strong enough to reverse the downward spiral. To use the analogy of a scale, when balanced against successes the combined weight of failures is always heavier and more resilient, a phenomenon that can be demonstrated using the ABC News-Washington Post polls from Table 4 (in red). A logarithmic linear regression line (dotted red) provides a graphic illustration of the best fit and slope through the data.¹⁶ If the ebb and flow in public approval ratings were event driven (i.e., characterized by peaks and valleys after successes and failures, respectively), then the data would naturally produce a relatively straight logarithmic regression line (with very little slope) and a correspondingly low regression coefficient (R^2) that would approach zero. On the other hand, if failures are more negative than successes are positive, as predicted by the homeland security dilemma, we should see a steady linear decline in approval over time and a correspondingly very high regression coefficient approaching one. As expected, the coefficient for the ABC News – Washington Post data over the last six years is very strong at 0.8914. Without exception the coefficients for data compiled by each of the other media outlets are also uniformly high.¹⁷

(2.c) Public Imagination: Exaggerated Perceptions of Terrorist Risks and Threats

A third catalyst driving the homeland security dilemma is the public's inability to accurately evaluate the probability of a terrorist attack. Consider the following evidence from Tables 8¹⁸ and 9.¹⁹

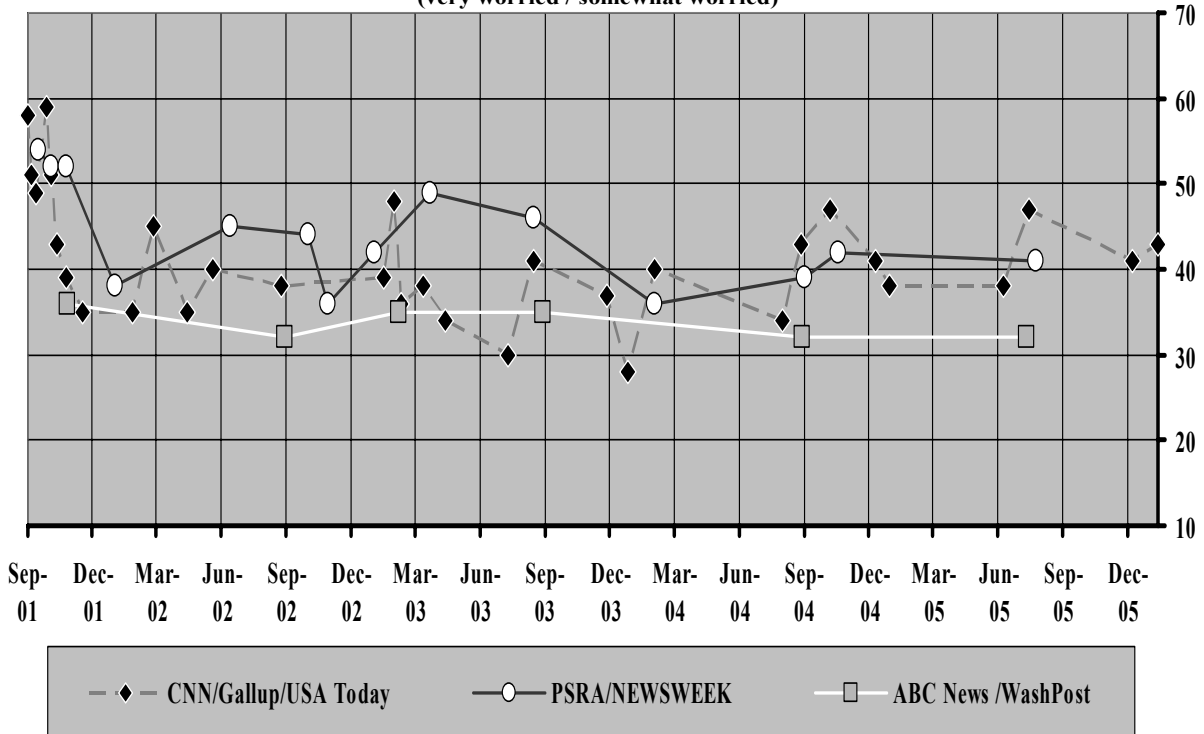
Table 8
How Worried/Concerned are You About 'Another Attack'
 ('very worried' / 'somewhat worried')



—△— PSRA/PEW

—●— ABC News/WashPost

Table 9
How Worried Are You or Someone in Family Will be a Victim of Terrorism
 (very worried / somewhat worried)



—◆— CNN/Gallup/USA Today

—○— PSRA/NEWSWEEK

—□— ABC News/WashPost

Clearly, a very large percentage of Americans remain overly concerned about another attack – the range has fluctuated between 55-75 percent over the last five years. The percentage of respondents who fear that they or a family member will personally be a target of an attack drops to between 30-50 percent, but even that number is considerably higher than any reasonable measure of the risks and probabilities would indicate. Even if we combine the effects of 9/11, the anthrax attacks, the Bali, Madrid and London bombings, and throw in every other terrorist attack in the world (Iraq and Afghanistan included) over the last two decades, the probability of being a target of a terrorist attack would be infinitesimally tiny. Yet the level of fear and anxiety in the U.S. today remains disproportionately very high.

It is true that Canadians are not as fearful of a terrorist attack on their territory, but this ‘fact’ is often misinterpreted as evidence that Canadians and Americans have distinct threat perceptions. For example, when asked “how likely do you think that Canada will suffer from a terrorist attack in the coming year”, a series of EKOS polls from 2003-2005 found the number of respondents selecting ‘very likely’ or ‘likely’ to be considerably lower than American percentages noted in Table 8:

Canadian Terrorist Threat Perceptions²⁰
(‘very likely’ and ‘likely’ combined)

Feb 2003	12%
May 2003	9%
May 2004	14%
September 2004	9%
April 2005	6%

The obvious problem with comparing these numbers is that the polls in both countries typically ask the wrong question to the right people. If Canadian and American respondents were asked the **same** question about potential threats in the **other** country, then the results would likely indicate identical views about the high and low probability of attacks in the U.S. and Canada, respectively. Many Canadians are convinced the U.S. is a target (despite the odds), and many Americans doubt that Canada is.²¹ In light of Canada’s ongoing commitment to fighting an Al-Qaeda/Taliban sponsored insurgency in Afghanistan, and the recently unclassified 2004 Canadian Security and Intelligence Service Annual Report to Public Safety minister Anne McLellan stipulating that an Al-Qaeda attack in Canada is now ‘probable’, we are very likely to see threat perceptions in Canada continue to rise.²²

In any case, understanding why these percentages remain so high is essential to appreciating the dilemma political officials are facing today. Research into the social and psychological origins of threat perceptions has consistently shown that the level of risk people assign to specific events or behaviours is a function of, among other things, *familiarity* and *controllability* – it is almost never a function of facts, statistics or probabilities.²³ “If a risk is an old, well-established one, familiar to the individual and easily detectable,” Croxford (2005: 3) explains, “it will tend to be underestimated compared to a risk of the same actual magnitude which is new, unfamiliar and difficult to detect.” Easily controllable risks associated with personal choices or habits are usually perceived as less serious than those over which we have no real control. We fear things that could happen suddenly and play down risks that have a high probability of developing over time. All of which explains why familiar and controllable risks related to smoking, drinking or driving a car are typically underestimated, despite the fact that each of these activities virtually guarantees thousands of deaths each year.

Research on the subject also clearly indicates that we tend to fear what is most readily available in memory, so the risks tied to events that receive extensive media and press coverage are likely to be overestimated by the public (Myers 2001)²⁴:

“Horrible images of a DC-10 catapulting across the Sioux City runway, or the Concorde exploding in Paris, or of United Flight 175 slicing into the World Trade Center, form indelible memories. And availability in memory provides our intuitive rule-of-thumb for judging risks....We can know that unprovoked great white shark attacks have claimed merely 67 lives worldwide since 1876. Yet after watching *Jaws* and reading vivid accounts of last summer's Atlantic coastal shark attacks, we may feel chills when an underwater object brushes our leg.... We comprehend the 266 passengers and crew on those four fated flights. We don't comprehend the vast numbers of accident-free flights-16 million consecutive fatality-free takeoffs and landings during one stretch of the 1990s. Dramatic outcomes capture our attention; probabilities we hardly grasp. The result: We overvalue lottery tickets, overestimate flight risk, and underestimate the dangers of driving.”

Terrorist threats are unfamiliar and uncontrollable, so most of the public consistently exaggerates and overestimates the real risks, as confirmed by very high threat perceptions noted in Tables 8 and 9. And declining trust and confidence in the government's homeland security performance (as explained in section 1, Tables 2-4) doesn't help. Confidence is directly related to perceptions of controllability – it's only natural for us to be more concerned about a threat if we have very little faith in the government's ability to keep us safe. Moreover, relentless negative media coverage of every dimension of an expanding list of security failures (as described in section 3b) also helps to sustain the very strong belief by large segments of the population that terrorism is among the most serious threats they face, notwithstanding all of the facts and statistics to the contrary.

The dilemma for policymakers is obvious -- security policies will inevitably prioritise the public's emotional, not statistical, reaction to terrorist threats. Officials are politically motivated, for better or worse, to spend billions of dollars to protect citizens from exaggerated risks and threats, and are much less inclined to invest similar amounts to reduce highly probable risks to public safety that are seriously underestimated (e.g., paying for stricter enforcement of speed limits, stronger regulatory regimes for the tobacco and fast food industries, public awareness campaigns to encourage healthier diets and eating habits, etc.). If close to 75 percent of the public believes terrorist will attack again, political leaders will be very reluctant to downplay the threat or openly question public perceptions, for two straightforward and perfectly rational reasons. First, it's so much easier to accept and then exploit the public's fears than it is to invest the time and resources to control those perceptions. Second, if any attack does occur (no matter how unlikely or how small) the political costs will be significant for those who downplayed the threat or called for a more balanced view of the facts and risks. Terrorists do not deserve either the status or the credit for being that powerful, but even weak and insignificant terrorists become relevant in light of the public's higher standards -- any attack is unacceptable.

(2.d) Political-Military Imagination: Official Overestimation of Terrorist Risks and Threats

A fourth component of the dilemma emerges from the enormous pressure political and military leaders face to find and fill gaps in security. Consider the following conclusions from the final report of the 9/11 commission:

“We believe the 9/11 attacks revealed four kinds of failures: in *imagination*, policy, capabilities, and management” (p. 339, emphasis added).²⁵

“The most important failure was one of imagination (emphasis added). We do not believe leaders understood the gravity of the threat.” (p. 14, Exec Summary, emphasis added).

“Imagination is not a gift usually associated with bureaucracies...**It is therefore crucial to find a way of routinizing, even bureaucratizing, the exercise of imagination....** Considering what was not done suggests possible ways to **institutionalize imagination**” (p. 344-346, passim, emphasis added).

When the most powerful nation on earth is tasked with a policy directive to routinize, bureaucratize and institutionalize the exercise of ‘imagination,’ and when this authoritative recommendation is assigned to multiple federal, state and municipal organizations by one of the most important bi-partisan committees in decades (a committee widely supported by an American public scarred by the trauma of 9/11), no one should be surprised by how overwhelming and expensive the task has become. But the application of ‘imagination’ as a key policy guideline has added yet another important dimension to the homeland security dilemma.²⁶

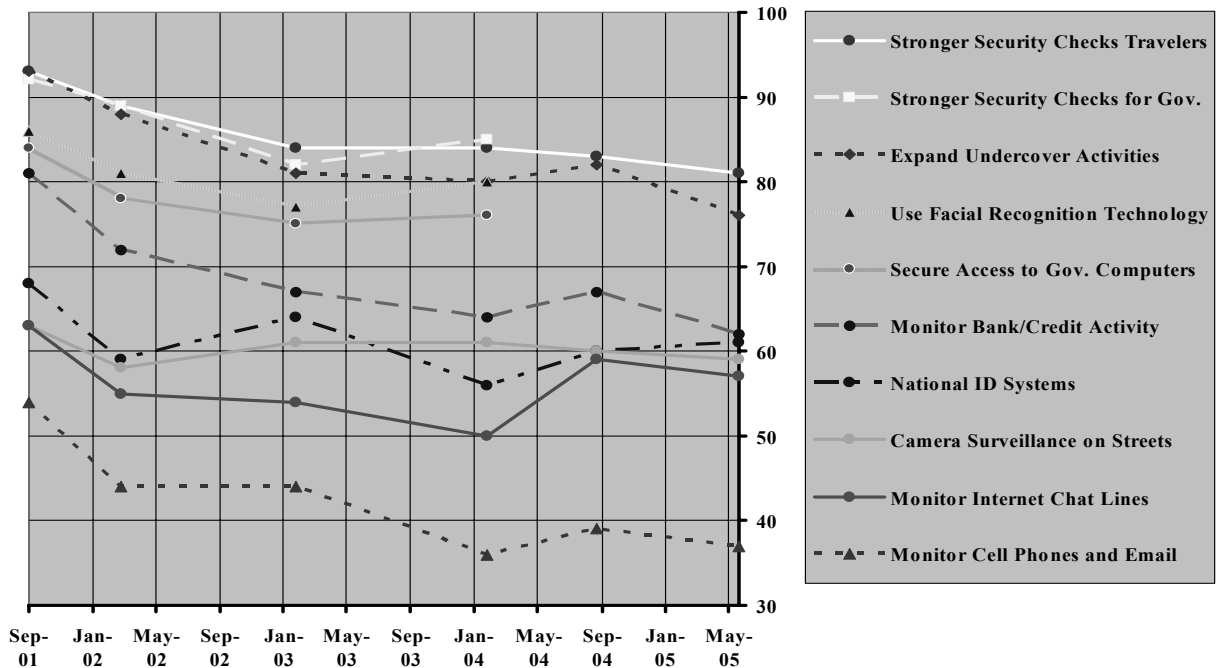
Officials have answered the call by imagining thousands of different threats, potential vulnerabilities, and existing or evolving gaps in security, and just as many ways to spend money to fill the holes. Resolving this incredibly complex security puzzle has become the government’s primary pre-occupation in a post 9/11 world. And the lists of threats and solutions are endless – ranging from airline passengers with paper clips and tweezers to the need to launch 43,000 air force sorties since 9/11 to stop hijacked airplanes from slamming into buildings. Yet five years after the 9/11 attacks senior homeland security officials testifying on various committees continue to express serious reservations about vulnerabilities at airports. Similarly, any military briefing focussing on maritime security today will inevitably outline the following facts about the world’s 46,222 shipping fleet – as of January 1st, 2005, the fleet includes 18,150 general cargo ships, 11,356 tankers, 6,136 bulk carriers, 5,679 passenger ships (carrying thousands of civilian tourists), 3,165 container ships, and 1,733 ships in the ‘other’ category.²⁷ More alarmingly, only 2% of the 10,000,000 containers shipped into the U.S. annually are physically inspected.²⁸ These figures are not meant to inform the public about the scope of maritime transportation, trade or tourism, they are offered as examples of thousands of potential threats. And politicians have become very adept at ‘imagining’ the political fallout if they fail to prevent an attack they were warned about – an important lesson from hurricane Katrina.

The real problem today, then, is not the ‘failure of imagination’, it is the ‘imagination of failure’ that continues to entrench into American domestic politics the main elements of the homeland security dilemma. Paradoxically, routinizing, bureaucratizing and institutionalising imagination undermines the public’s sense of security while simultaneously pushing the government to spend more.

(2.e) Declining Support for Sacrificing Civil Liberties

In light of the public’s exaggerated threat perceptions and the tendency for political officials to overestimate the risks, one would expect to see sustained public support for government surveillance activities. These, after all, are the tools the government claims it needs to improve intelligence gathering and counter-terrorist operations. But public support for surveillance has steadily declined since 2001, which accounts for the fifth and final component of the homeland security dilemma (see Table 10).

Table 10
Declining Support for Government Surveillance/Monitoring Powers
(Harris Interactive)



The paradox here is obvious -- the government is losing public support for operations it believes are essential for success in the war on terrorism at a time when public expectations for security are rising. In the absence of another attack (ironically, thanks to a perfect homeland security record) a creeping complacency kicks in whereby the public begins to reject policies that appear to diminish their rights and civil liberties. Unlike the other four aspects of the dilemma, however, this one can be partially corrected (if not reversed), but only after another attack. Now that's a dilemma.

3. There Are No Policy Recommendations, Only Policy Dilemmas

The most important policy implication flowing from the preceding analysis is that there are no straightforward policy recommendations to offer. In fact, the more compelling the logic, arguments and evidence offered to support the existence of a homeland security dilemma, the more obvious the challenges for identifying a coherent set of policy alternatives, because the most rational options are part of the problem. If solutions were obvious there would be no dilemma. The definition of a 'dilemma' speaks to the nature of the policy conundrum:

“A state of uncertainty or perplexity especially as requiring a choice between equally unfavorable options”; “a situation from which extrication is difficult especially an unpleasant or trying one”; “a problem that seems to defy a satisfactory solution”; “an argument that presents two alternatives, each of which has the same consequence, (or) a situation that requires a choice between options that are mutually exclusive.”²⁹

This is not to imply that policy makers are incompetent boobs who just don't get it. While this may be a standard (and convenient) assumption in much of the literature it is both simplistic and exceedingly insulting to the many very bright people tasked with the challenge of security and public safety. The point here is that there are no easy solutions for policy makers to get. Being trapped by the horns of a dilemma does not mean that we are subject to non-rational

decisions; it simply means that we are forced to select from several rational policy options that are equally costly, potentially counterproductive, or largely irrelevant to resolving the problem.

If we were to compare the homeland security dilemma with other familiar policy challenges it would be much closer to the intractable puzzle of Middle East peace than it would be to the softwood lumber dispute between the U.S. and Canada. To use another analogy, any request to end this report with a list policy recommendation is not unlike asking those who wrote about security dilemmas in the 50s and 60s to resolve the Cold War.³⁰ There are no silver bullets.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the nature of the policy paradox is to evaluate three common recommendations through the prism of the homeland security dilemma.

Example 1 -- In light of the public's tendency to overestimate if not completely exaggerate the risk of terrorism, several observers (and policy advisers) have recommended developing better programs to inform people about the facts and risks of terrorism. Clarifying the statistics and probabilities, they argue, should be sufficient to resolve at least part of the homeland security dilemma. An informed public with a better understanding of the risks would obviously have a more reasonable and balanced set of expectations. Myers' (2001) recommendations are typical in this regard:

“To be prudent is to be mindful of the realities of how humans die. By so doing, we can take away the terrorists' most omnipresent weapon: exaggerated fear. When terrorists strike again, remember the odds. If, God forbid, anthrax or truck bombs kill a thousand Americans, we will all recoil in horror. Small comfort, perhaps, but the odds are 284,000 to 1 that you won't be among them.”³¹

In keeping with this line of reasoning, Brian Flemming (2006), former chairman of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, warns that “only by surrendering to fear will we lose our civilization and our souls”, and goes on to offer the following quote from Alfred Hitchcock to highlight his point: “There is no terror in the bang, only in the anticipation of it.”³² Aside from forgetting that the terror produced by the ‘bang’ of 9/11 transformed the world, Flemming, like Myers, assumes that understanding our fears is the answer. And there are hundreds of other books, articles, editorials and ‘expert’ opinions, and now thousands of internet blogs, that arrive at the same obvious conclusions about the public's exaggerated fears, and repeat the same sage advice to look at the numbers, understand the facts and risks, relax (or, more poetically, don't surrender to fear) and get a life.³³

The problem with this conventional view is that it is largely irrelevant, because it misses the following fundamental point -- the fact that we overestimate the risks of terrorism is less relevant than the tendency to consistently do so *despite the facts and evidence to the contrary*. Repeating the extremely low statistical odds of dying in a plane crash will not change the fact that air travel will be *misperceived* by most people (most of the time) as posing a significantly greater risk than driving a car. Informing the public about the safety of nuclear energy will never be sufficient to dissipate fears (and images) associated with the Three Mile Island or Chernobyl disasters. And the very small odds that any given individual will experience a catastrophic accident in their lives will not alter the general consensus that life insurance is well worth the investment. If facts, statistics and rational probabilities alone were sufficient to guide perceptions and choices, then insurance companies, lotteries, and the tobacco, fast food and gambling industries would not be among the most profitable businesses in the world.

In sum, a clearer understanding of the origins of our fears is not the solution to the security dilemma, it is the best explanation for the problem.

Example 2 -- Another very common policy recommendation is for the government to design more effective critical risk management and communication skills to prepare the public for the next crisis. Some of the best work on the topic is by Peter Sandman who offers the following comprehensive list of best practices, guidelines and recommendation for effectively managing fear (Table 11):

Table 11
“Critical Risk Management and Communications: Guidelines for Action”
(Peter Sandman)³⁴

<u>Guidelines</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>
1. Candor versus secrecy	1. Don't over-reassure.
2. Speculation versus refusal to speculate	2. Err on the alarming side.
3. Tentativeness versus confidence	3. Acknowledge uncertainty.
4. Being alarming versus being reassuring	4. Share dilemmas.
5. Being human versus being professional	5. Acknowledge opinion diversity.
6. Being apologetic versus being defensive	6. Be willing to speculate.
7. Decentralization versus centralization	7. Don't over-diagnose or over-plan for panic.
8. Individual control versus expert decision-making	8. Don't aim for zero fear.
	9. Don't ridicule the public's emotions - legitimize people's fears.
	10. Tolerate early over-reactions.
	11. Establish your own humanity.
	12. Tell people what to expect.
	13. Offer people things to do, but let people choose their own actions.
	14. Acknowledge errors, deficiencies, and misbehaviors.
	16. Apologize often for errors, deficiencies, and misbehaviors.
	17. Be explicit about changes in official opinion, prediction, or policy.
	18. Don't lie, and don't tell half-truths.
	19. Aim for total candor and transparency.

While the list is impressive, consider how many of these guidelines and recommendations are likely to be applied in practice by politicians. How many are being applied today to address fears in the U.S. or Canada? As one works through the list it becomes quite apparent that political officials are more likely to do the exact opposite, for obvious political reasons – they are pre-programmed to highlight what they are doing right, not what they are doing wrong or why we should be concerned about the things they simply can't do.

Ironically, applying these best practices in Canada is even more challenging, because Canadian officials are often inclined to issue several other, mutually exclusive pre-programmed messages that many Canadians find very appealing -- we are not Americans and, therefore, *don't* share the same security risks, threats or priorities. This popular myth is not only counterproductive from the point of the guidelines, but it will be much harder to sustain in the future in view of Canada's ongoing commitment to Afghanistan.³⁵

Example 3 – Acquiring a much better understanding of how the public thinks about successes and failures in the war on terrorism is one of the most important but neglected dimensions of contemporary security policy. If we fail in this regard then the long war will be very difficult to manage, let alone win. In the absence of systematic research on how these stories, images and events interact to push perceptions in one or the other direction, leaders will continue to face a difficult uphill battle in their efforts to establish some balance in public perceptions of victory and defeat. And unless governments find innovative ways to clearly communicate credible signs of success, the only direction support will go is down, especially if the experts are busy ‘imagining’ larger numbers of threats that need containing. The problem, as demonstrated in Table 4, is that peaks in confidence and approval are short lived and valleys are virtually impossible to reverse. Even a major success in the war on terrorism, for example the arrest and trial of Osama Bin Laden, will move these trends in the opposite direction for very long, but it is easy to imagine hundreds of events that will continue to push the trend lower. Herein lies the dilemma for policy makers -- if successes are simply too difficult to identify (or prove) and failures so easy to exploit, the only real policy option governments have left is to spend more to feed the illusion that something important is being accomplished. Paradoxically, this is precisely the strategy that continues to raise expectations the government is increasingly incapable of meeting. The one thing that was made abundantly clear in congressional reports on 9/11, Iraq’s WMD program and hurricane Katrina is that ‘perfect’ security is emerging as the only acceptable standard. But no combination of policies or strategies will ever come close.

4. Summary and Policy Implications for Canada

In sum, investing more in security simultaneously increases public expectations and the political and economic fallout after each failure. Successes are ignored while an expanding list of failures pushes public approval lower. Despite the facts, the public continues to exaggerate terrorist threats while both political parties compete to defend their security credentials by ‘imagining’ longer lists of security gaps. Doing anything less is too risky, and doing more (or too much), while counterproductive, can become a badge of honour.³⁶

Now, if all of these pressures continue to unfold in a relatively benign security environment with a perfect homeland security record, imagine how much more pressure Washington will experience after the next terrorist attack on U.S. soil. This is the context in which a discussion of Canadian interests, policies and priorities becomes most relevant, because the homeland security dilemma establishes the parameters Washington, the U.S. media and the American public will use when evaluating Canada’s contribution to security after the next failure.

The official estimate of Canada’s post-9/11 security spending is about \$11 billion (including figures in Prime Minister Harper’s 2007 Federal Budget). Over the past few years periodic increases in Canada’s defence budget included \$ hundreds of millions pegged to security and public safety programs. And another \$2 billion (and counting) has been spent on Canada’s contribution to the war in Afghanistan. Most of the money has been used to create or enhance existing programs through the departments of Public Safety, National Defence, Immigration, Transport, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) and other key agencies tied to Canada’s security establishment.

With the preceding analysis in mind, the important question is not whether Canadian investments and related programs have enhanced North American security, but whether it really matters ***even if they have***. When the next attack occurs Washington will evaluate Canada’s commitment in much the same way (and through many of the same biases) that the U.S. public

and media evaluate Washington's performance. No matter what Ottawa has accomplished so far, the next failure will create the overwhelming impression (even if false) that more could and should have been done.

The policy implications for Canada are obvious and disturbing -- if standards continue to rise, and if failures (including real and imagined gaps in security) trump successes, then it really doesn't matter how many organizational, administrative or infrastructure changes Ottawa has institutionalized since 9/11 at cost of \$11 billion,³⁷ or how strong our anti-terrorism legislation has become, or how much of our rising defence budget we have allocated to continental security programs, or how rigid we think our immigration policy might be,³⁸ or how much we've enhanced border security while protecting the free flow of goods and services. None of the 'successes' listed in government briefings today – e.g., the Security and Prosperity Partnership, the Smart Border agreement, Integrated Border Enforcement Teams, the Integrated Threat Assessment Program, bi-lateral and tri-lateral intelligence sharing agreements, the expansion of NORAD's mandate to include maritime security, the creation of CANADACOM, the many programs and initiatives outlined in Canada's new National Security Policy or International Policy Statement, etc.³⁹ -- will carry much weight in Washington after the next failure, **whether or not these programs are essential, produced significant successes in the past, or ultimately contribute to saving lives after the next attack.**⁴⁰ That is Canada's homeland security dilemma.

¹ John Herz (1950) "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma." World Politics Vol. 2 (2). pp. 157–180; John Herz (1951) Political Realism and Political Idealism: A Study in Theories and Realities. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press; Robert Jervis (1976) Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976); Robert Jervis (1978) "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma." World Politics Vol. 40 (1), pp. 167–214; Glenn H. Snyder (1984) "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." World Politics Vol. 36 (4), July, pp. 461-495; Barry Posen (1993) "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict." Survival Vol. 35 (1), pp. 27–47; Charles L. Glaser (1997) "The Security Dilemma Revisited." World Politics Vol. 50 (1), pp. 171–201; Alan Collins (1997) The Security Dilemma and the End of the Cold War. Edinburgh: Keele University Press. Other works include: Charles Lipson (1984) "International Cooperation in Economic and Security Affairs." World Politics Vol. 37 (1), October, pp. 1-23; Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane (1985) "Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions." World Politics Vol. 38 (1), pp. 226-254; Randall L. Schweller (1996) "Neorealism's Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?" Security Studies Vol. 5 (3), pp. 90–121; Thomas J. Christensen (1999) "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia." International Security Vol. 23 (4), Spring, pp. 49-80; Alan Collins (2000) The Security Dilemmas of Southeast Asia. Basingstoke: Macmillan; Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (2000) "Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited." International Security Vol. 25 (3), Winter, pp. 128-161; Thomas J. Christensen (2002) "The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict." The Washington Quarterly Vol. 25 (4), pp. 7–21; Richard N Rosecrance (2004) "War and Peace". World Politics Vol. 55 (1), October, pp. 137-167.

² See Jarret M. Brachman and William F. McCants (2006) "Stealing Al-Qa'ida's Playbook" (forthcoming) Studies in Conflicts and Terrorism (p. 6). In their report the authors cite Abu Bakr Naji – "O people! The viciousness of the Russian soldier is twice that of the American soldier. If the Americans suffer one tenth of the casualties the Russians suffered in Afghanistan and Chechnya, they will flee and never look back. That is

because the current structure of the American and Western armies is not the same as their structure during the colonial era. They have reached a stage of effeminacy that makes them unable to sustain battles for a long period of time, a weakness they compensate for with a deceptive media halo.” The quote is from Abu Bakr Naji (2004) “The Management of Barbarism” (p. 1). The most recent example for the Canadian case was a statement in April, 2006 by a senior Taliban official, Yousaf Ahmed, declaring Canadians to be risk averse and claiming Canada’s resolve in Afghanistan was weak.

3 Several prominent examples include: Amy Argetsinger and Sonya Geis “4 Charged With Terrorist Plot in California.” Washington Post, Thursday, September 1, 2005, page A02; Michael Evans “Al-Qaeda agent's laptop yields vital intelligence clues” London Times On Line (August 07, 2004); Associated Press “Pakistan arrests damage al Qaeda network: report” CTV News, Saturday, August 7, 2004. <http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20040807>; CBC News “Australian arrests foiled 'catastrophic' attack: police.” Tuesday, November 8 2005. CBC News.ca; Carl Limbacher “Major Terror Plot Against U.S. Ignored.” Thursday, January 5, 2006. NewsMax.com; Fox News “Major Anti-Terror Bust in U.K.” Tuesday, March 30, 2004. FoxNews.com; Jeremy Zakis and Steve Macko “Major Terrorist Plot in Singapore Discovered.” Saturday 12th January 2002. EmergencyNet News Special Report -- EmergencyNet.com; BBC News “Major al-Qaeda attack foiled (in Spain).” Friday, 24 January, 2003 – BBC News -- News.bbc.co.uk; Nina Gilbert “ Hamas mega-attack thwarted.” June 16, 2004. Jerusalem Post Online Edition -- http://www.jpost.com/; “Top al-Qaida terrorist blows himself up in Saudi.” Thursday, July 03, 2003 -- <http://archives.tcm.ie/>; CBS News “Morocco Arrests 17 Terror Suspects.” November 20, 2005 -- CBS.com.; Doug Saunders “Al-Qaeda raid in Pakistan led to arrests in London -- British officials say information gathered is not enough to raise terror alert levels.” Friday, August 6, 2004, Page A9, GlobeandMail.com; Peter Baker and Dan Eggen “Bush Details 2002 Plot to Attack L.A. Tower.” Washington Post. Friday, February 10, 2006; Page A04 – Washingtonpost.com; Associated Press “UAE stops suspected sale of nuclear secrets.” July 20, 2004. Jerusalem Post On Line; William Bacon “Scorecard on the War on Terrorism.” July 3, 2003. FrontPageMagazine.com; Luis M. Alvarez “The whole picture.” Washington Times. August, 2004; James Dunnigan “Keeping Score Against al Qaeda.” February 20, 2005 -- <https://www.strategyworld.com/>; “Bush’s War Score Card Has More Pluses than Minuses.” August 15, 2005. Heritage Foundation -- Heritage .com; John Hughes “Four years after 9/11, terror’s hold is loosening.” August 31, 2005 -- <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0831/p09s02-cojh.html>; Gerard Baker “The war on terror has been a great success - but still Bush can’t sell it.” Timesonline.com, October 7, 2004.

4 For a comprehensive compilation of terrorism related polling results for each organization, see Karlyn H. Bowman, Resident Fellow, the American Enterprise Institute -- http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.22819/pub_detail.asp. The specific wording used in the surveys listed in Table 2 asked “How much confidence do you have in the U.S. government to protect its citizens from future terrorist attacks?” The Table combines percentages for respondents selecting ‘a great deal’ and ‘a fair amount.’

5 See Karlyn H. Bowman (2006) Ibid. Specific wording for the surveys listed in Table 3 follows: ABC News / Washington Post -- “Do you think the United States is doing all it reasonably can do to try to prevent further terrorist attacks, or do you think it should do more?” Percentages responding ‘doing all it can’ were registered. CNN / USA Today / Gallop -- “How satisfied are you with the way things are going for the U.S. in the war on terrorism?” Percentages responding ‘very satisfied’ and ‘somewhat satisfied’ were

registered. Harris Interactive -- "How would you rate the job the Bush administration has done in preventing a terrorist attack in the United States since September 11, 2001?" Respondents who selected 'excellent' and 'pretty good' were registered in the Table.

6 Bowman (2006) Ibid. The following question was asked -- "Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Bush is doing handling the issue of terrorism?" The percentage of respondents selecting 'approve' were registered.

7 The reasons for highlighting these specific events and for noting the logarithmic linear regression line (in shaded red) for the ABC News / Washington Post data will be explained toward the end of section 2b (and in endnote 16, below).

8 Despite the steady decline in public confidence, George W. Bush won the 2004 election, in part, because Republicans consistently generated higher approval ratings than Democrats on security issues.

9 Budget figures were obtained from the United States Department of Homeland Security, "Fact Sheet: Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2005," press release, October 18, 2004. <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=4065>. See also http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/Budget_BIB-FY2006.pdf. Additional information can be found in "Budget-in-Brief Fiscal Year 2006." Department of Homeland Security, http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/Budget_BIB-FY2006.pdf.

10 The Department of Homeland Security was established by Presidential Executive Order on October 8, 2001. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011008-2.html>

11 Frank P. Harvey (2004) "Addicted to Security: Globalized Terrorism and the Inevitability of American Unilateralism." International Journal (Winter 2003-2004) pp. 27-57.

12 With respect to emerging standards for measuring success and failure, the 9/11, Iraq WMD and Katrina reports all provide illustrations of public expectations, regardless of whether those standards and benchmarks can ever really be met. For a detailed review of the mutually exclusive recommendations flowing from these reports, see Frank P. Harvey (2005) "Canada's Addiction to American Security: The Illusion of Choice in the War on Terror." American Review of Canadian Studies (Special Thomas E. Enders Issue) Vol. 35 (2), Summer, pp. 265-294.

13 See Harvey (2004) "Addicted to Security: Globalized terrorism and the inevitability of American unilateralism." International Journal. Vol. 59 (1), Winter, pp. 27

14 Joseph S. Nye Jr. (1995) "Strategy for East Asia and the U.S.-Japan Security Alliance" Defense Issues, Volume 10, Number 35. See also remarks by Joseph Nye, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Pacific Forum Center for Strategic and International Studies/Japanese Institute of International Affairs Conference, San Francisco, March 29, 1995 -- <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/1995/s19950329-nye.html>

15 Few observers are likely to recall any of the reports of successful counter-terrorist operations listed in endnote 3, not because they are irrelevant to a balanced account of successes and failures, but because we tend to expect successes and then quickly forget them. In contrast, images of failures are vivid and tend to linger.

16 A logarithmic linear regression model is ideal, because the decline in support (measured by confidence, trust, approval, etc.) is expected to taper off -- it will never approach either

extreme over time (i.e., 0% or 100%). There will always be a core group of Republican (or Democratic) respondents who would support their party regardless of the scope or number of failures.

<u>Polling Series</u>	<u>Log R²</u>
ABC News / Washington Post	0.8926
CNN / USA Today / Gallup	0.8855
CBS News / New York Times	0.8478
PEW Research Center	0.7976
Fox News / Opinion Dynamics	0.7076

18 The surveys asked, "How worried are you that there will soon be another terrorist attack in the United States?" The percentage of respondents selecting 'very worried' and 'somewhat worried' were combined and included in the table. With respect to the ABC News / Washington Post survey, the question was -- "How concerned are you about the possibility there will be more terrorist attacks in the United States?" Those selecting 'a great deal' and 'somewhat' are represented in the table.

19 The ABC News / Washington Post poll asked -- "How concerned are you about the chance that you personally might be the victim of a terrorist attack?" Percentages answering 'a great deal' and 'somewhat' were noted in the table. For the CNN/Gallup/USA Today poll -- "How worried are you that you or someone in your family will become a victim of terrorism?" Those selecting 'very worried' and 'somewhat worried' were registered. For the PSRA / Newsweek poll -- "All in all, how worried are you that you or someone in your family will become a victim of a terrorist attack?" Respondents selecting 'very worried' and 'somewhat worried' were included in the table.

20 See Karlyn Bowman and Frank Graves (2005) "Threat Perceptions in the United States and Canada: Assessing the public's attitudes toward security and risk in North America." One Issue Two Voices. Canada Institute: Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars -- <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/threats.pdf>

21 For a recent example of how poll data on threat perceptions is interpreted, see Karlyn Bowman and Frank Graves (2005), *ibid*.

22 "CSIS Reports Al-Qaeda attack 'probable'". Chronicle Herald, Wednesday, May 10, 2006. p. A6

23 Several other factors are cited in the literature to explain why certain risks are over- and under-estimated, although 'controllability' and 'familiarity' are commonly accepted as instrumental. For an excellent treatment of these issues, see Peter Sandman -- <http://www.psandman.com/articles/cma-appc.htm>. In addition to 'controllability' and 'familiarity,' for example, Sandman lists the following factors to explain why risks are overestimated (all of which apply to the post-9/11 experience) -- catastrophic potential, lack of understanding, uncertainty, voluntary exposure, effects on children, effects on future generations, victim identity, effects dreaded, absence of trust in institutions, media attention, costs/benefits, reversibility. See also Tracy Croxford (2005) "Public Perceptions in a Changing World." World Nuclear Transport Institute, Prime, February 13-15, 2005, Paris; and http://www.wnti.co.uk/attachment/publications/speeches/presentationpapers/WP_PIME_TCR_Poster.pdf

24 David G. Myers (2001) "Do We Fear the Right Things?" Observer: Journal of the American Psychological Society, December -- <http://www.davidmyers.org>

25 <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>

26 Critics of the Iraq war should consider that prior to the invasion the primary directive for security and intelligence communities was to find and connect the dots, because failures to do so could be catastrophic. Consequently, the potential pitfall of connecting too many dots, as with Iraq's WMD program, was not a serious concern.

27 <http://www.marisec.org/shippingfacts/keyfactsnoofships.htm>

28 <http://www.aeanet.org/AeACouncils/txiJDbXivUH.pdf>. The push the point a little further, 10,000,000 containers going through North American ports represents about 27,400 per month, 1,141 each hour, or about 19 per minute.

29 <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/dilemma>
<http://www.answers.com/topic/dilemma>

30 For example, the apparently rational decision in 1972 to sign the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty (a cooperative arms control and disarmament agreement prohibiting the deployment of large-scale ballistic missile defence systems) actually undermined security by creating the conditions for the most rapid vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons in history. On the surface the ABM treaty seemed to make perfect sense, but the Cold War security dilemma forced American and Soviet leaders to expand their respective inventories of offensive weapons as a way of establishing a reliable second strike retaliatory capability. For a comprehensive treatment of these trends and other problem with multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements, see Frank P. Harvey (2004) Smoke and Mirrors: Globalized Terrorism and the Illusion of Multilateral Security. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

31 David G. Myers (2001) "Do We Fear the Right Things?" Observer: Journal of the American Psychological Society, December -- <http://www.davidmyers.org>

32 Brian Flemming (2006) "*Dispatches from the War on Terror*." Speaking notes for a conference sponsored by The Calgary Chamber of Commerce and the Van Horne Institute, Calgary, Alberta. Co-Sponsored by The Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, (March 14) – www.cdfai.org.

33 The following are among the more prominent examples of authors who seem to have missed this basic point: Gwynne Dyer (2006) "Lying for jihad: The '20th hijacker' shows terrorists were a bunch of bumbler." Winnipeg Free Press. Monday, April 3, 2006 -- <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/westview/story/3420216p-3954600c.html>; Bruce Schneier (2003) Beyond Fear: Thinking Sensibly About Security in an Uncertain World. New York: Copernicus Books; Marcus J. Ranum (2004) The Myth of Homeland Security. Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing; Richard Minter (2005) Disinformation: 22 Media Myths That Undermine the War on Terror. Washington: Regnery Publishing Inc; Louis A. Delvoie (2005) "Terrorism: Global Insecurity or Global Hyperbole?" Canadian Military Journal Vol. 6, No. 4, Winter 2005-2006; David G. Myers (2001) "Do We Fear the Right Things?" Observer: Journal of the American Psychological Society, December -- <http://www.davidmyers.org>; Milton Leitenberg (2006) "Bioterrorism, hyped" Los Angeles Times, February 17 -- [LA Times.com](http://www.latimes.com); Barry Glassner (2000) The Culture of Fear: Why Americans Are Afraid of the Wrong Things. New York: Basic Books; David Altheide (2002) Creating Fear: News and the Construction of Crisis. New Jersey: Aldine Transaction (State University of New Jersey); Marc Siegel (2005) False Alarm: The Truth About the Epidemic of Fear. Toronto: John Wiley and Sons; Frank Furedi (2002) "Culture of Fear: Risk Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation." London: Continuum

International Publishing Group, 2002; Frank Furedi (2002) "Epidemic of fear" www.spiked-online.com (March 15); Katherine Lemons, Patricia Purtschert and Yves Winter (2003) "Feeding Fear: The New Security Culture." [AlterNet](http://www.alternet.org), December 3, 2003 -- <http://www.alternet.org>.

34 For one of the more impressive online treatments of critical risk communication and management, see Peter Sandman -- www.psandman.com/col/part1.htm

35 "CSIS Reports Al-Qaeda attack 'probable'". [Chronicle Herald](http://www.chronicleherald.com), Wednesday, May 10, 2006. p. A6

36 For example, in response to demands that he resign for mismanaging the Iraq war, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld defended his record in these terms: "I have a sense of urgency. I get up every morning and worry about protecting the American people and seeing if we are doing everything humanly possible to see that we do the things that will make them safe."³⁶ Calls for his resignation slowly dissipated.

37 Other examples include the Critical Infrastructure Assurance Program; National Disaster Mitigation Strategy; Canadian Emergency Preparedness College; Joint Emergency Preparedness Program; Government Operations Centre; Canadian Cyber Incident Response Centre; Disaster Assistance Inventory; Provincial/Territorial Emergency Management Organization; Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements.

38 See Martin Collacott (2006) [Inadequate Response to Terrorism: The Need for Policy Reform](http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/admin/books/files/Terrorism%20Response4.pdf). Fraser Institute Digital Publication, February 2006. -- <http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/admin/books/files/Terrorism%20Response4.pdf>. Collacott describes serious security gaps in Canada's approach to identifying and accepting refugees. As he concludes, "failure to exercise adequate control over the entry and the departure of non-Canadians on our territory has been a significant factor in making Canada a destination for terrorists. The latter have made our highly dysfunctional refugee determination system the channel most often used for gaining entry. A survey that we made based on media reports of 25 Islamic terrorists and suspects who entered Canada as adults indicated that 16 claimed refugee status, four were admitted as landed immigrants and the channel of entry for the remaining five was not identified. Making a refugee claim is used by both terrorists and criminals as a means of rendering their removal from the country more difficult."

39 For details on the Government of Canada's terrorism action plan, see <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/anti-terrorism/actionplan-en.asp>. For a complete list of dozens of major Canada-U.S. agreements, MOUs and accords related to security, see <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/can-am/main/menu-en.asp>.

40 Recent U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports of undercover agents smuggling radioactive material across the B.C.-Washington State and the Mexico-U.S. borders is but the latest example of a 'failure' that will trump any of the 'successes' so far. While this was obviously a failure at the U.S. border, the smugglers came in from Canada and could just as easily have entered Canadian territory first -- a point U.S. Congressman will likely exploit in their search for scapegoats in the next crisis. According to one report, "On Dec. 14, two teams of investigators -- one on the Canadian border, the other on the Mexican border -- put radioactive material in rental cars and attempted to cross over into the U.S. Kristi Clemens, a spokeswoman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, said the radiological material was cesium-137. Detection equipment alerted authorities at both borders of the radioactive materials. When

questioned, the investigators said they needed the material to calibrate construction equipment, a common use. The investigators presented the authorities with counterfeit Nuclear Regulatory Commission licenses and freight inventories.” For additional details, see “‘Dirty Bomb’ Material Smuggled to U.S., GAO Says -- Bloomberg.com March 28 -- <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000103&sid=a.6ODqglGQO0&refer=us>. See also: <http://edition.cnn.com/2006/US/03/27/radioactive.smuggling/index.html>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4852410.stm>; <http://www.unionleader.com/article.aspx?headline=Border+breach%3A+Hey%2C+it%E2%80%99s+only+a+little+radioactive+material&articleId=7a6ea462-850c-4b46-9dcf-c3c4b7e53e06>.