



Best seller 2002

Targeting security bucks

by Alex Binkley

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The shockwaves from the September 11 (9/11) terrorist attacks on Washington and New York stimulated unprecedented spending on security products and services. The threat was now real and with it came an extra challenge – keeping crucial trade links from being disrupted. Plans were quickly revisited and updated and procurement processes ramped up to meet the demand.

So last fall, the government authorized the spending of \$280 million on security, border protection, intelligence gathering and law enforcement measures. Then it went even farther in the December budget planning to spend \$6.5 billion during the next five years boosting security in Canada and another \$1.2 billion to make sure our borders were secure and open for business. Then finance minister Paul Martin set three goals for the plan – “keeping Canadians safe, keeping terrorists out of Canada and keeping Canada’s borders secure, open and efficient.”

Thus far, the first goal seems to have been accomplished despite continuing uncertainty about how many terrorists may be hiding here. Cross border trade with the United States continues, although lineups at some border

crossings remain and transportation officials fear container shipments into the US may yet hit major roadblocks. In late June, Canada and the US updated the Smart Border Declaration between the two countries with measures that should stem the flow of asylum seekers and speed up commercial traffic.

The security spending covers everything from increased training of police and fire departments to respond to terrorist attacks, to specialized equipment for inspecting the contents of containers arriving in Canadian ports, to biometric devices that enable frequent travelers to gain fast access to the US, to more military and Coast Guard patrols of our shores. In many cases, several officials noted, it enabled departments to ramp up projects and programs that mostly existed on paper before the attacks.

While the government’s plan includes a lot of new spending, Ottawa had already invested at least \$2 billion on anti terrorism measures prior to 9/11. The Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness was established in February 2001 as part of the Department of National Defence (DND) under the purview of Associate Deputy Minis-

ter Margaret Purdy. Its job is to develop plans for protecting Canada’s basic infrastructure from natural disasters, terrorists and even cyber hackers. Michel D’Avignon, director general national security, told the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, June 19, that Canada developed a National Counter-Terrorism Plan in 1989, updated on a regular basis since then, “to ensure it responds effectively to the evolving threat environment and the changing roles and responsibilities of the various players.” In addition to his department, DND, the RCMP, Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) and Transport Canada have all had roles in beefing up security against terrorist attacks.

In all, 19 departments will receive a share of the security funding. DND was allocated a major chunk of the cash to cover both military and civilian responsibilities. The RCMP, Transport Canada, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA), CIC, Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency also obtained significant sums.

The biggest outlays – in the area of \$1.5 billion – will be spent in the 2002-03 and

2003-04 fiscal years, the budget document outlines. Over the five years, \$1.6 billion will be spent on intelligence and policing including boosting marine surveillance and trying to cut off terrorist funding. Another \$1 billion was earmarked for better screening of people arriving in Canada and checking out refugee claimants. The government also allocated \$1.6 billion for emergency preparedness and military deployment.

Another \$2.2 billion was slated for the Canadian Air Transport Security Agency and other aviation protection measures although the government expects to recoup much of this expense from its air travelers security charge.

DND will spend about \$300 million on acquiring new equipment that can be used in anti-terrorist activities, explained DND's Jim Shelvock, acting section head for estimates and reporting. Another \$210 million will be spent deploying troops to Afghanistan to participate in Operation Apollo. As well, the military will be increasing the capability of its JPF2 special task force and undertaking research projects, such as how to combat the effects of chemical warfare. It will also be putting additional funds into the Communications and Security Establishment for detection of terrorist communications. Another \$149 million will go to the Office of Critical Infrastructure. As well, DND will be involved in a number of joint initiatives with other government departments.

Solicitor General Lawrence MacAulay announced in June that the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) will get 283 new positions and a 30 percent increase in its budget during the next five years on top of an allocation of \$10 million it received late last year for new investigators and technology. The extra staff and funding is "absolutely necessary so that CSIS can deal with the increased security screening responsibilities related to overseas immigrants as well as refugee security assignments," MacAulay explained.

In May, CIC Minister Denis Coderre noted that his department and CCRA were working together "to create the most modern, sophisticated border possible, using state-of-the-art technology to speed legitimate traffic while stopping those who would do our country harm." He added, CIC has increased its front line personnel by 28 percent and will spend "\$646 million on pre-screening programs for

frequent travellers, introducing state-of-the-art detection equipment and establishing Integrated Border Enforcement Teams." As well, there will be increased checks of refugee claimants and a new automated fingerprinting identification system is being installed at all main ports of entry. Information will be shared with the RCMP.

CCRA will spend \$433 million on a variety of initiatives. In May, Revenue Minister Elinor Caplan announced that her department would buy \$3.6 million worth of new equipment to check cargoes arriving at the Port of Halifax. These gamma ray detectors can look inside a stuffed shipping container. There will also be special scanners to check for narcotics and radioactive material. Similar machines will be purchased for the ports of Montreal and Vancouver. Vancouver had placed an order for a gamma ray detector several months before CCRA decided to start buying them.

CCRA spokeswoman Collette Gentes-Hawn said that an extra 260 employees are being hired so that more inspections can be made at seaports, airports and border crossings. At the same time, CCRA has introduced or expanded programs that will help frequent travelers and low risk cargoes cross the border with ease so that more attention can be paid to other risks. As well, Canada and the US are posting customs officers in each other's key ports to conduct initial assessments of incoming container shipments.

In June, the government announced the launch of four Integrated National Security Teams – special squads of federal, provincial and municipal police to track down and apprehend terrorists operating in Canada. The teams will be based in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. They are part of a \$64 million, five-year federal program "to detect, deter and respond to existing and emerging national security threats," an RCMP statement said, and will work closely with police forces across the country and around the world.

Even for special funding, the process for obtaining approval for any spending follows the usual process of the federal government, says Treasury Board spokesman Dan Kingsbury. Valerie de Montigny, a spokeswoman for the Privy Council Office (PCO), says the departments know what has been allocated in the budget and must prepare a memorandum to cabinet explaining what they propose to do and what costs are involved. That pro-

posal goes to the PCO, then to the appropriate cabinet committee and then to full cabinet for approval. Then it goes to Treasury Board. She says the government has set its overall security objectives and it is up to the departments to fulfill their responsibilities under that plan.

Even though the war on terrorism is still underway, the government is reviewing how its counter terrorism strategy worked in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, D'Avignon told the Senate committee. "September 11th demonstrated that the existing architecture works and served to underline the importance of this national security apparatus. However the experience also demonstrated some gaps including response capabilities in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear terrorism, breakdowns in information sharing among agencies and departments, Canada's public image in the United States and shortcomings in some of the country's laws." The government is working to remedy these shortcomings.

An interdepartmental working group, headed by D'Avignon, oversees the counter terrorism plan. The group coordinates the communications and operational issues involved in responding to a terrorist incident and works closely with the Public Safety and Anti-Terrorism Committee headed by Paul Kennedy, senior assistant deputy solicitor general.

"It got a lot bigger and had more frequent meetings following the 9/11 attacks," explained Blaine Harvey, director general of communications for the department of the Solicitor General. It has representatives from CSIS, PCO, CCRA, Justice, the RCMP, DFAIT, CIC, DND, Treasury Board and Transport Canada. It handles much of the work coming out of decisions made by an *ad hoc* cabinet committee on public safety created under Deputy Prime Minister John Manley after the attacks. It became the government's clearing house for all decisions related to spending and other matters concerning the response to the attacks.

So while there is probably always more that could be done, Ottawa is investing a lot of money in new security measures. *MM*

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