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NEWS RELEASE

The time is now for Canada to invest against terrorism

Montreal – While Canada has not been the subject of terrorist attacks since 9/11, it has not been immune to the major trends in terrorism in the past and will not be in the future, according to a new study from the Institute for Research on Public Policy.

In the study, “The (Un)Peaceable Kingdom? Terrorism and Canada before 9/11,” author David Charters (University of New Brunswick) observes that experience from the period before 9/11 suggests it is best to be proactive rather than reactive in developing responses to terrorism, even when the threats are intermittent.

“Time, money and resources spent in advance settling issues such as decision-making processes, jurisdictional responsibilities, intelligence sharing, and inter-agency coordination, and then testing them, are likely to pay dividends when an attack occurs,” says Charters.

Canadian parliamentarians and the public have traditionally been reluctant to devote significant resources to security when threats seem remote. However, in addition to benefiting Canadian security, such efforts will help to reassure Canada’s principle ally, the US, that its northern border is as secure as it can reasonably be.

“Since no democratic country can secure all potential targets at all times, counter-terrorism security involves risk management – making choices about the allocation of resources,” says Charters. “And that requires that the government be well-informed about potential threats.”

The new paradigm of terrorism, which emerged just before 9/11, blurs the distinction between international and home-grown terrorism. Now, politicians, security officials, and the public need to reconsider whether the time has come to bolster Canada’s foreign human intelligence capabilities, according to Charters. “There is no time like the present to invest in security against terrorism.”

“The (Un)Peaceable Kingdom? Terrorism and Canada before 9/11,” by David Charters, can be downloaded free of charge from www.irpp.org.

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