



Chapter 5

Contributing to the Security of Québec and the North American Continent

In the 21st century, threats to international stability come increasingly from non-military factors such as terrorism, transnational organized crime, the spread of infectious diseases and the deterioration of the environment. These emerging perils directly affect Québec's areas of responsibility, whether it is acting alone or jointly with the federal government.

Within the Canadian federal context, the issue of security involves a range of different powers, some provincial, some federal. The powers exercised by the provinces regarding the administration of justice, public safety, health care, environmental and agricultural issues and the protection of infrastructures illustrate just how important their role is.

Emerging threats transcend borders. Their presence is often difficult to detect and to quantify. They blur the lines between what is international and what is local. As opposed to the classic threat of war, which is handled by the international institutions and sovereign states, the prevention and appropriate response to these new threats often call upon domestic jurisdictions, especially those of federated states and municipalities.

When terrorist attacks occur, the targeted cities, towns and regions are the first responders, coordinating the efforts of health services, police and fire departments to come to the victims' aid. During the outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic, it was the local health care systems that took responsibility for treating the victims. Now more than ever, this new reality calls for innovative approaches and solutions. It also necessitates information-sharing and

collaboration in administrative and judicial matters at the local, regional and global levels.

The Fight against Terrorism

The events of September 11, 2001, sparked an awareness of the scope and magnitude of terrorism. Terrorist groups often take advantage of open borders and adapt their methods to take advantage of the modern means of communication. The international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, is alarmed by the potential access of terrorists to weapons of mass destruction and the ties they are able to form with criminalized groups.

Canada and Québec are not immune to the threat of terrorist attacks. That is why the Government of Québec has taken special measures to step up security. For example, it has enacted legislative changes to make the issuance of official documents more secure and to respond more efficiently in cases involving infractions against immigration laws. The Sûreté du Québec and the Montréal Police Department, in collaboration with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, are members of the integrated national security and anti-terrorist team. The Ministère de la Sécurité publique has created a task force to counter chemical, bacteriological, radiological, and nuclear threats. An emergency preparedness plan is in place to deal with the possible aftermath of various types of catastrophes, including terrorist attacks.

Québec has equally strengthened its ties with bordering American states by signing memoranda of understanding which provide for information-sharing with Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. It also signed an anti-terrorist cooperation agreement with the State of New York. In addition, the Government participates in the Northeast Consortium of Internal Security Officials comprised of ten American states and three Canadian provinces. The consortium is deeply committed to the fight against terrorism and its efforts over the coming years will be aimed at strengthening its actions, both internally and with international partners.

Transnational Organized Crime

According to the United Nations, transnational organized crime will represent another major challenge for the international community in the 21st century. Perpetrators of this form of crime are taking advantage of the opening up of markets to engage in drug trafficking, the smuggling of illegal weapons, human trafficking, and money laundering on a larger scale.

- In its 2005 report, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime estimated the number of drug users in 2004 at 200 million, generating proceeds of \$U.S. 320 billion.
- The smuggling of illegal weapons is a major security concern for the governments of Canada and Québec.
- After drug trafficking and the smuggling of illegal weapons, human trafficking ranks as the third most lucrative criminal activity.
- Money laundering is vital to transnational criminal organizations. Studies indicate that between five and seventeen billion dollars are laundered each year in Canada.

Contributing to the Security of North America

- The Premier of Québec headed a mission to Washington in 2005, during which he explained to members of the Senate and of the U.S. Administration, including the Secretary for Homeland Security, the various initiatives the Government of Québec has taken with regard to security;
- The Minister of International Relations has undertaken discussions on key transborder issues with members of the U.S. Administration and of Congress, as well as with security experts;
- In August 2004, Québec's Minister for Public Security hosted in Québec City the heads of the Northeast Regional Homeland Security Directors Consortium, that comprised representatives of 13 Canadian provinces and American states;
- The Government of Québec signed agreements for emergency preparedness assistance and management with neighbouring American states.

While the power to amend the Criminal Code falls within the purview of Parliament, it is the Attorney General of Québec who enforces criminal laws. Many of these laws are based firmly on international conventions and resolutions of the U.N. Security Council such as the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons*, and the *International Convention for*

the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

Several of the measures contained in these international conventions directly affect Québec's responsibilities in matters of law enforcement. Moreover, the Attorney General has the power to prosecute members of criminal and terrorist groups in Québec, including, in certain cases, individuals who reside abroad. The Attorney General also has the authority to have goods located outside Québec confiscated if they have been used to commit a criminal offence in Québec or constitute the proceeds of such offences.

The Québec government's responsibilities within its borders make it a key player in the hierarchy of operations that are essential to the security of Canada and its neighbours. With regard to both crime and terrorism, Québec has established close ties in the area of technical cooperation with neighbouring American states. To be an effective partner, Québec must have access to reliable sources of information on individuals and groups who engage in terrorist and criminal activities. It must furthermore be cognizant of situations in which new threats develop as well as of the international instruments used to prosecute them. In collaboration with the federal government and other jurisdictions, Québec actively seeks solutions while ensuring that the fundamental values of respect for personal freedoms and the rule of law are preserved.

Making Cross-Border Trade More Secure

Since its economic prosperity is largely dependent on trade with the United States, Québec must contribute to the task of maintaining a secure and efficient border. On December 12, 2001, in order to facilitate the flow of trade while taking security needs into account, Canada and the United States decided to establish a "Smart Border" plan and adopted a number of measures aimed at guaranteeing not only a more secure border, but also heightened cooperation with respect to immigration issues.

To give impetus to the Smart Border plan, both countries implemented several common programs, some of which directly affect citizens and businesses. The NEXUS program, for example, facilitates border crossings for Canadian and American citizens who meet the security criteria of both countries. In the United States, the aim of the FAST/EXPRESS program (quick and secure shipping) and the C-TPAT (*Customs-Trade*

Partnership Against Terrorism) is to expedite the transit of pre-inspected goods through customs.

Border management decisions have a direct impact on the responsibilities borne by the provinces. They must deal with these new circumstances and adapt their laws, policies and programs in consequence. Their participation is therefore crucial to the success of the Smart Border, and Québec is cooperating fully in this process.

The Smart Border is not the sole Canada-U.S. border initiative. Unilateral measures can be taken at any time, as is the case with the new stringent standards governing the entry of agri-food products into the United States, and with the new

Passport issuance is a federal responsibility, but the issuance of civil status certificates, a prerequisite for obtaining a passport, is a provincial responsibility.

documents that will be required to cross the U.S. border beginning January 1, 2008. The *Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America* (SPP), which was signed by Canada, the United States and Mexico in 2005, is evidence of this desire to act in a more concerted fashion. The trilateral partnership should lead to better coordination of security policies and legislation. Implementation will require a substantial commitment by federated states. Several public security, energy, health, transport, environmental, and agricultural measures covered by the SPP fall within Québec's responsibilities.

The Government of Québec established one of the first animal health risk management and prevention systems in North America and it works to prevent problems that are essentially local in nature from getting out of hand, resulting in a closed border for a whole range of agricultural products. To this end, Québec will promote new and innovative risk management approaches. The idea of dividing the Canadian territory into zones that are approved by the International Organization for Animal Health would allow for more efficient bio-security monitoring while at the same time maintaining open access to the various agri-food markets.

The tightening of transborder operations is an inevitable reality that will be accompanied by the implementation of other related procedures. In this context, securing Québec's exports and supply chains is a strategic objective. The Government of Québec hopes to encourage export businesses and their suppliers to adhere to

programs designed to facilitate border crossings for low-risk individuals and merchandise.

Borders are no obstacle to the expansion of the cyberspace. The generalized use of information technology and advanced computer systems makes governments, businesses and individuals vulnerable to cyberattacks. As e-commerce and e-government grow ever more important, data banks and information systems become strategic infrastructures that need protection. Organizations cannot face those challenges alone; the Québec government will pursue efforts with the federal government to increase international cooperation on this issue. With the aim of sharing knowledge and best practices concerning the protection of information, it will also work with countries and organizations seeking to reinforce security of data bank systems.

The Fight against Pandemics

In its 2004 report, the *United Nations High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change* noted that infectious diseases have become a threat to international security due to the speed with which they can be transmitted, the high number of persons that can become infected, and the enormous pressures they place on health and social services and on socio-economic systems.

The opening of borders and volume of transcontinental passenger travel have increased the risk of spreading infectious diseases. The past thirty years have witnessed the development of new diseases and the reappearance of others thought to

A pandemic is defined as a sudden and massive rise in cases of an infectious disease caused by a biological agent and against which few if any individuals have immunity.

have been eradicated. Malaria, measles, pneumonia, dysentery, and tuberculosis are on the rise and are among the world's most serious infectious diseases. The most widespread and tragic is undoubtedly HIV/AIDS, which has killed more than 24 million people the world over.

Some viruses, such as SARS and influenza, have appeared in various regions of Canada and are among the diseases being actively monitored. Health care authorities are also

paying close attention to animal diseases that are transmittable to humans and to the possible mutation of the avian flu virus.

Investing in Prevention

The Government of Québec will :

- Invest in the construction of new animal pathology laboratories
- Support farmers who realize the necessary investments for the confinement of poultry

The best way to confront this threat is through effective public health measures, prevention and pandemic preparedness. Québec has in place infectious disease tracking and monitoring systems. It is also better prepared to respond to a major health crisis, following the creation of the Institut national de santé publique and the Institut national de santé animale, and the establishment of the Government's

emergency preparedness plan. Beyond organizational measures, the development of Canada-wide and international information and collaboration networks is indispensable in order for Québec to better anticipate the risks associated with the spread of infectious diseases and to deploy all necessary means to control them.

The Government of Québec Develops a Flu Pandemic Action Plan

In March 2006, the Minister of Health and Social Services announced the Government's action plan to manage the consequences of an eventual flu pandemic. This plan includes notably the following elements:

- Epidemiological monitoring, preventive measures and measures designed to control infections;
- A massive vaccination campaign and the use of antivirals, if necessary;
- Controlled access to hospitals;
- Creation of appropriate mechanisms for public information;
- Maintenance of services in the health care system, by having recourse to replacement personnel and volunteers

Environmental Risk Management

Environmental degradation has serious political and economic implications for societies. States and governments must take the requisite steps, beginning with cooperation, to preserve the quality of the environment within their territorial boundaries. Since problems are often

international and regional in scope, solutions should be as well.

Prevailing winds carry pollutants that are causing air quality to deteriorate in the Northeastern part of the continent. This transboundary pollution is aggravating three problems that are of the utmost concern to Québec: acid rain, smog, and airborne toxic substances such as mercury. The Government will continue to work with decision-making bodies stemming from the *Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement* and within the framework of the *Mercury and Acid Rain Action Plans* adopted at the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers.

In terms of climate change, the Northeastern portion of the continent is one of the regions most directly affected. The St. Lawrence River banks and Northern Québec are already feeling its first effects. Better regional and global cooperation on this issue is necessary. The New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers have resolved to bring greenhouse gas emissions back to 1990 levels by the year 2010 and to realize a further 10 percent reduction by the year 2020. In the longer term, they aim to reduce these emissions to levels that no longer pose a threat to the climate.

Access to water and prudent water management constitute other strategic international and continental issues. Over 70 percent of the planet's freshwater supply is used for farming and nearly one-third of the world's population is dependent on subterranean water. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), human activities such as farming and industrial development contribute to water contamination and to the over-exploitation of water sources. More importantly, these activities contribute to the progressive depletion of water supplies. Since the 1960s, water siphoning has doubled to meet domestic and industrial needs.

Québec possesses 3 percent of the world's freshwater supply. It has a responsibility to preserve this resource and take the necessary steps to protect water quality and the ecosystems. Québec also shares the major system formed by the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River with the rest of Canada and with the United States. Managing this system is complex and requires the collaboration of several governments.

The International Conference on Biodiversity, held in Paris in January 2005, stressed the fact that increasing numbers of animal species are disappearing. According to the United Nations, declining biodiversity is occurring at unprecedented rates and the deterioration of large ecosystems has reached such dramatic proportions that their

long-term sustainability will be compromised unless radical changes are made. Human activity, global population growth, the increase in waste pollutants, deforestation, and water supply shortages are partly responsible for the decline in biodiversity. Finally, the increase in international trade has considerably amplified the risk of epizootics and the dangers inherent in the introduction of non-indigenous species. This requires more international vigilance and cooperation.

To better control the risks associated with climate changes, water basin management, and biodiversity, Québec intends to intensify its collaboration with the federal government and neighbouring provinces, and with American states.

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters can be devastating in terms of the resulting number of victims, the destruction of living conditions, and economic losses. Over the past ten years, more than two billion people have been victims of natural disasters. Moreover, the number of disasters of this kind is likely to increase.

Having experienced such events, Québec has worked to devise an emergency preparedness plan to protect the population in the event of major disasters. The Government of Québec has created a government operations centre that is mandated to anticipate events that could affect civil security. The centre has been tasked with compiling and analyzing incoming information and disseminating it to first responders and the appropriate authorities. It also oversees emergency management.

Natural disasters know no borders and in many cases their consequences reach far beyond the scope of a single decision-making body. Intergovernmental cooperation is therefore essential because it results in adequate aid distribution to affected communities. Thus, the Government of Québec, the Atlantic provinces and six neighbouring American states have endorsed measures to ensure heightened protection of their communities by signing a mutual aid agreement, providing a response mechanism to natural disasters, resource shortages, and technological disasters. To that end, the parties involved created the International Emergency Management Group.

Priorities and Key Initiatives

OBJECTIVE CONTRIBUTING TO THE SECURITY OF QUÉBEC AND THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

Priorities

- Ensure rapid and reliable access to strategic information, and participate in the work of regional and international bodies with respect to non-military security
- Facilitate the safe and efficient cross-border flow of people and goods and enhance the security of Québec's strategic infrastructures

Key Initiatives

Ensure rapid and reliable access to strategic information and participate in the work of regional and international bodies with respect to non-military matters

- Establishment within the Ministère de la Sécurité publique of an integrated center for security information
- Collaborate more fully with states in the U.S. Northeast on security matters
 - Step up Québec's involvement in the Northeast Regional Homeland Security Officials Consortium
 - Establish new cooperation between the Québec Attorney-General and his counterparts in bordering states
 - Reinforce existing ties between administrative and police organizations in Québec and the state of New York.
 - Increase security-related simulation exercises involving Québec and states in the U.S. Northeast
 - Collaborate on scientific issues with the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) and conclude technical collaboration agreements with the states of the East Coast aimed at preventing the spread of infectious diseases and pandemics
 - Increase regional collaboration on environmental security issues with special emphasis on improving air quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, preserving the resources of the St. Lawrence River, and fighting invasive species
- Cooperate with France on civil security issues and establish an international network of Francophone police training facilities in collaboration with European countries
- Participate in the work of international organizations and forums dealing with non-military threats

Key Initiatives

Facilitate the safe and efficient cross-border flow of people and goods and enhance the security of Québec's strategic infrastructures

- Establish infrastructures that facilitate cross-border flows, especially FAST/Express lanes, at the following border crossings: Lacolle, Saint-Armand de Philipsburg, Stanstead, and Armstrong
- Create training and financial support programs to increase the accreditation of businesses to Smart Border programs
- Participate in the Canada-United States Cargo Security Project for making inter-modal containers secure
- Complete work on the agri-foods tracking system
- Secure electric energy infrastructures, and Québec's access to oil supplies
- Collaborate with the United States and certain European countries on making public information technology systems secure and protecting personal information
- Reinforce the verification of identity documents issued by the Québec government, to reflect new North American standards
- Establish partnerships and enhance measures to deal with criminal activities that may be related to immigration