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# Subcommittee on Public Safety and National Security of the Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness

EVIDENCE

## Tuesday, December 14, 2004

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**Chair**

**Mr. Paul Zed**

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● (1730)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Mr. Paul Zed (Saint John, Lib.)):** Order, colleagues.

I want to welcome Frank Graves, from Ekos Research Associates Inc.

Do you have an opening statement?

**Mr. Frank Graves (President, Ekos Research Associates Inc.):** I have a presentation.

**The Chair:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Frank Graves:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and committee members.

I'm going to take the next 15 or 20 minutes—and I know you're running late, so I'll try to keep it snappy—to give you an overview of what the Canadian public are thinking about some of the issues around security, civil liberties, emergency preparedness, and so forth.

I'm going to try to tell you some things, some of which I think you will find obvious, and some of them I think you'll find surprising. I want to present those as an antidote to some of the received wisdom about where the public are on some of these issues.

Our conclusions and research—which will only involve a mercifully very short set of slides today—are based on a number of detailed surveys that we've been doing on this topic, going back immediately to the aftermath of September 11. In addition to looking at Canadian public opinion, we've also been monitoring public opinion in the United States, which provides an interesting context, and we'll share a little bit of that with you as well.

As well as distilling what we see as the conclusions about where the public are, I will try to put a little more emphasis on some of the more recent twists and turns, drawn from research that's now only a couple of weeks old.

There are four key areas that I'd like to review today. First, I'd like to talk about what I think is one of the most important things we see, which is a strong and growing commitment to a security ethic in Canada. There are a lot of peculiarities to that. I'll talk a little bit about that under the topic of what we call a "risk paradox". The strong commitment to a security ethic seems to coexist with a fairly modest sense of what levels of risks are actually confronting Canadians, particularly in the area of terrorism, and we'll try to understand a bit why that's the case.

Then we'll turn to that crucial question of the balance of security and civil liberties and how that's playing out, and I'll conclude by looking at how this is being perceived increasingly through the lens of our relationship with the United States, which is an area that is in some flux as well, which I think poses some considerable challenges.

To begin with what I've called this "security ethic", from a range of different indicators and tests that we've conducted, we see Canadians leaning quite strongly to a greater focus on security. Of those who think governments haven't hit the mark here—and in this area, governments are doing a reasonably good job of hitting the mark in the minds of Canadians—the lean is decisively for a more, not a less, aggressive approach. So the incidence of people saying we should be moving even faster or doing more is substantially larger than the incidence of people who say we should be slowing down.

More importantly, when the rubber hits the road and we test these things in terms of real-world questions like "Would you support a national identity card or biometrics?" or "What do you think about paying $24 at an airport for a security tax?", or "What do you think about surveillance cameras in your community?", and so forth, consistently we find people opting for the security side of the equation. So it's not just that people say that in theory these things are important; in practice, in real-world trade-offs, they seem to quite decisively lean to the security side of things.

I do offer the caveat that we have seen some recent bounce-back and concerns about civil liberties, and in particular privacy, and I'll explore that more as we go along.

In general, this is an area where the public are saying that governments are more or less hitting the mark in terms of providing the right equilibrium of resources and pace compared to the urgency of the problem. In fact, when we compare Canadians and Americans on these sorts of questions, we find that there is more unease in American society about whether or not we're moving too far and too fast than there is in Canadian society. Nobody is out on the street giving government hosannas for this particular area, but they are saying this is something where, compared to most other areas of government, people think they're doing relatively well.

Those lacking in confidence, though—and there are some strong divisions—tend to split into two groups, the more numerous saying we really need to be moving a little more quickly on taking a more aggressive posture on security, and a smaller but perhaps more engaged group saying they're alarmed about the pace and particularly the implications for privacy and human rights.

I would note here that the smaller group has more recently been invigorated by a number of trends, including some rising nationalism, or perhaps more appropriately, concerns about the direction of the American administration as it relates to the war on terror, and so forth.

It's also notable here that specific events such as the Arar case have had only modest and dissipating effects on the overall balance on these issues with the public.

There are some fairly typical indicators here on the question, "All things considered, would you say the Government of Canada is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction in terms of national security?"

●(1735)

We see it's quite stable here. I've lots of other time series in between. There's not much movement. There's also not much disagreement. We see more disagreement on other issues, throughout different regions and groups within Canada, but generally speaking this is a fairly consistent response, about a two-to-one lean that, all things considered, we're moving in the right direction—which is considerably better than when we ask the question overall about the movement of government, where the numbers are much less positive.

If we look at the question of the balance—and I think this one is instructive— "Thinking about the response to the issues of terrorism, do you think we've moved too far, not enough, or that we have responded appropriately?", again you can see that the majority, a strong plurality, think we're hitting the mark. But of those who disagree, there's a pretty large six-to-one lean to say that actually we should be moving faster, not more slowly.

When you compare that to American data, you can see that there's far more polarization on that issue, with about one in five Americans concerned about the pace, whereas that number is a scant 7% in Canada.

In this area, we do see some fairly significant segmentation in the public. We find that residents of Quebec and young Canadians are not as convinced that we need to be moving faster. The idea that we need to be picking up the pace is stronger in Alberta and among Ontarians, and among older Canadians and baby boomers.

I talked a little about a risk paradox. There are a couple of dimensions to this. First of all, the most important is that what we have is a fairly strong commitment to security, which seems to exist despite the fact that there's only a modest appraisal of the imminent risks out there, particularly with respect to terrorism as they might affect me and my family or indeed the country as a whole. The public readily acknowledged that these are threats for the United States, but for Canadians, the incidence of people who think this is quite likely is actually fairly small.

It has moved into the realm of plausibility, but for most Canadians it's not something that they think is very likely. So why, then, do we see on these various trade-offs and tests and questions this strong lean to security?

I think there are a number of factors at work here. First of all, I've already mentioned that even though it's not likely, it's something that can happen here, and it's seen as so horrendous that Canadians are willing to make major investments and sacrifices to prevent it.

A second thing is that we find Canadians, even through they don't think we're going to be targets of terrorism, quite convinced; the majority believe there's a substantial amount of activity in support of terrorism going on within our borders, and we certainly don't want to be known as exporting terrorism, particularly to the United States.

Here's a third area. Although Canadians are reluctant to acknowledge just how important it is—there are some ambiguities here—they are extremely concerned about our relationship with the United States and worry that in the case of another security episode, particularly one that would involve Canada, they would not want a drawbridge to be pulled up at the 49th parallel.

I think in the longer term, too, we also see some demographic changes and cultural shifts where the folks who grew up in the shadow of the Second World War, had the influence of Orwell, and saw what state socialism, fascism, and so forth could do have become less convinced of that. The more vivid imagery today has been September 11, and that sort of caveat and the big-brother scenario seems to have had diminished force in contemporary society, particularly in Canada.

So we also see at the second dimension of this risk paradox that when we track people in terms of specific risk episodes like travelling to the United States, going on an airplane, being exposed to a strange virus, and so forth, or even experiencing terrorism, on most individual risk indicators, people say that the likelihood of these things happening is actually going down. They're feeling safer. But what we see at the same time is a very high generalized sense of fear about the broad environment in which people live, particularly as it applies to things going on outside our borders. So the world is a scarier place today, and this is something that has left Canadians feeling quite nervous and anxious about what in fact needs to be done.

It's also important to recognize here that security, in the public's mind, is a very broad thing that does not simply equal terrorism, but in fact, more importantly, is linked to things like the environment, health, climate emergencies, and so forth.

In general, we see some fairly strong pressures that are producing a shift in some of the traditional expectations of government to emphasize more and more its role as a guardian or risk manager. I think increasingly there will be a challenge as the gap between the perception of risk and the statistical treatment of that risk, or at least the objective level of risk, becomes quite widened. That is more true as we move to events that are occurring outside of our borders.

●(1740)

I'll show you some slides in support of this. You can see that most people think Canada is less safe than it was, say, five years ago. The lean is slightly towards seeing it as less safe, but in the case of the world, a large and growing number of people think the world has become a more frightening place.

Here's the problem: that when we ask people about the impacts of things outside our borders, in all kinds of areas, including the social realm and the economic realm but also security and safety, they say that more and more of the problems in our lives are authored by things that go on outside of our borders.

If I could, I'll just move on. This particular tracking, which goes back some time—in fact right to the immediate aftermath of September 11—shows the incidence of people who think it's highly likely or quite likely they will actually experience a terrorism attack. That's the bottom line, which you can see is very low, currently registering at around 5%. The second line is the percentage of people who think the country will experience a terrorism event, and the top line, which you can see is dramatically higher, is the percentage who think the United States will experience one. You can see that the support for lots of investment in scenarios is not driven by a sense of apoplexy that this is going to happen to me or the country in the near future.

Now, turning to this very complex and, I would stress, somewhat turbulent area of security and civil liberties, we find there seems to be a sense in the Canadian public that these things are reasonably well balanced. When we confront issues of civil liberties against the imperatives of security, the public seemed to lean more to the security side of things, although there is some mixed evidence here and there that this has become a little more ambiguous and turbulent in recent months.

We find there is strong confidence in police and security agencies. People are not willing to provide them with carte blanche, but the level of permission Canadians will assign to police agencies to deal with these sorts of issues is quite strong.

Even when Canadians express skepticism about whether or not, for example, this access to more information from the Internet or electronic communications would make them safer, they seem to say that even though that case isn't necessarily clear, they quite strongly think that in this new world, where terrorists and criminals are using these types of devices, these devices have to be made available to police and security agencies. This fits very much into the Canadian public's sense of what sorts of things are most appropriate for dealing with terrorism and security risks. The intelligence ingredient is the one that is seen as most prominent by the public.

Now, we do find there are heightened concerns about privacy. If there is a line in the sand the public has drawn with respect to security and its balancing in society, it's that they seem to be very concerned about privacy, and some indicators show that's rising. It seems to be more focused on "my" privacy rather than the privacy of others. There is a sense that things like ethnic profiling are okay. Even in the case of interception of my Internet communications, for example, the public's willingness to go along with that is quite strong, particularly as it relates to the type of area being looked at.

I think this is fairly reflective, although it's a very simple question: recognizing that both are important in today's world, which of the following do you feel the government should put the most emphasis on? Protecting public security, 62%; but guaranteeing civil liberties, 32%. Now, the public are torn, because both of these are important and they don't accept the dichotomy that these are mutually exclusive. On the other hand, when push comes to shove, it seems

they will lean by a fairly significant margin to the security side right now.

The case here is just to show you some contrary evidence. You'd see that the patterns here have been quite consistent if I were to show you all the intermediate points, which aren't available. Police and intelligence agencies should have more powers to ensure security even if it means Canadians have to give up some personal privacy safeguards. There's a very strong agreement in the immediate aftermath of September 11, almost three to one, but now you can see it's slipped under the majority. It's just a plurality who agree that in fact we should be bestowing those powers on police. So privacy again seems to be sticking out as a bit of a contrary trend.

I want to talk a little bit about the relationship to the United States and how that's increasingly challenging this debate. We find there's some profound ambivalence and instability in Canadians' outlook on the United States. There are some shifting forces here that seem to be producing a desire for what one might call a more made-in-Canada approach.

●(1745)

We may agree equally with Americans about the significance of the problem and the resources to be devoted to it, but there appear to be fairly profound disagreements about what in fact are the root causes of this and what indeed are the most appropriate remedies.

Canadians are telling us in the aftermath of an American election, which they felt was more important for their future than even their own election, and where they were very concerned that the result was going to be exactly what happened, that they in fact would prefer that the Government of Canada actually accented differences rather than try to get more in line or be accommodating in terms of areas such as terrorism and security strategy, but also a broader approach in terms of foreign relations. This exists despite the fact that Canadians tell us that there's an inevitability to greater integration with the United States in terms of security and the economy, and in fact support for that.

So we do see that there are some significant contradictions in tensions here. One of the more notable is a quite striking divergence in attitudes to immigration. We're finding that opposition to immigration in Canada is at a recent historic low, whereas we find twice as many Americans saying that there are too many immigrants coming to their country, despite the fact that there's relatively half as much immigration. There's also a whole range of other things that go along with that difference that I suspect will make this a looming next collision between American and Canadian outlook on issues of security and what to do about it.

We do find, however, that despite the fact that issues like ballistic missile defence are quite controversial, the issue of a security perimeter is something that is supported strongly both in Canada and the United States.

Here you can see, and we were really somewhat surprised at the strength of this response, and this question is only a couple of weeks old, given the results of the American election, which statement comes closest. Should we place emphasis on policies that emphasize our different values, or should we strive to make our policies more in line with those of the United States? The margin is quite striking, and overwhelmingly leans to that we should be emphasizing our own different values.

Here I thought it was interesting to look at the long-term tracking on opposition to immigration. In the middle part of the last decade, nearly ten years ago, you had over half of Canadians saying there were too many immigrants coming to the country. You could see it was declining steadily to the point where from September 11, which is the dotted line, there was a sharp rise in concerns about immigration. But you can see the pattern is coming down still further.

The American pattern, on which I don't have as much detail, shows it's now up in the mid-50%, as opposed to the 26% we have in Canada. So there are large and growing differences on attitudes to immigration, but more broadly, on attitudes to the role of tolerance and diversity in multiculturalism. Many Canadians see those as ingredients of a long-term strategy to deal with security and terrorism issues as a method of inoculating, whereas that view is not well held in the United States.

If I could continue, you can see that despite disagreements and desire for some divergence in terms of some of the strategies, there is a strong support in Canada, which is quite stable, for a common security perimeter, somewhat smaller than it is in the United States. Interestingly enough, in both Canada and the United States this also exists with rising support for stronger borders. We think both Canadians and Americans seem to want both a belt and a suspender here, and that seems to be somewhat the driving motivation here.

In conclusion, I'd like to summarize what I think are some of the key areas to watch or what we could extract from this. First of all, the surprising robustness of this security ethic that exists in Canadian society doesn't seem to be some ephemeral backlash or weak aftermath of September 11. It seems to have now endured and even grown, despite the fact that we haven't seen more episodes of that sort in Canada or North America.

There seems to be reasonable confidence in government and security agencies, and—particularly in Canada—rising expectations of government to devote more of its direction and activities from traditional areas to a risk manager or guardian role. Privacy, possibly diversity, are emerging as some areas that are clearly bucking a trend to put a harder focus on security. For many, privacy seems to have become a line in the sand that is associated with this debate. What we've seen now is most Canadians saying that they really need to enjoin a clear debate on these topics. The instances of those saying that has actually been growing in recent months.

But Canadians also seem to espouse a quite different sense of why these problems exist in the world today, why they might be affecting Canada, and in the long term how they should be dealt with. At the top of their list is a treatment both in terms of an emphasis on intelligence and an emphasis on multiculturalism and immigration.

The risk paradox that I spoke of seems to pose considerable challenges for government as we try to balance rational risk management with irrational risk perceptions.

● (1750)

I saw a recent book that came out that estimated that in American society 20% of Americans believe that it's highly likely they will experience terrorism in the next year or two. For that to actually have been statistically true, there would have had to have been events tantamount to a September 11 every day since September 11. So we get a sense of this enormous gap between the perceptions and the actual statistical occurrence. Nonetheless, the public are judging and making their expectations of government in terms of their perceptions.

Finally, there is this confounding factor where we see diverging paths with the United States, which I don't want to overstate because there are still enormous areas of consistency and common values and interests that are perhaps more impressive. However, in areas like security, immigration, potentially environment, we see some potential areas of collision that seem to be growing larger, not smaller.

Thank you very much. I'd be pleased to answer questions now.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your fascinating presentation, Mr. Graves. It is very enlightening.

Mr. Sorenson wants to be our first questioner.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC):** I have a very quick question. Did you find much marked difference in your research between English-speaking Canada and Quebec? You did make mention of Alberta, that they felt a very strong need for security. But was there a noticeable difference between Quebec and English-speaking Canada?

**Mr. Frank Graves:** Yes, there was. Of the most notable differences, there are three that I would highlight. First of all, Quebec had in general a more blasé attitude to the questions of risk —a sense that the current levels of effort were indeed enough and that the levels of risk were perhaps significant, but there was less alarm certainly than we would see in places like Alberta, for example.

The second key difference is, and this is a new one, that Quebeckers have a much more negative view to the United States and particularly to the American administration than would have been true in the past. This is influencing a lot of their response to some of these questions.

The final area, and this is an area of some inconsistency in the data in Quebec, is although Quebeckers typically give strong emphasis to human rights, and immigration is viewed more positively in Quebec than in the rest of the country, on the issues of ethnic profiling and attitudes to immigration from countries of Islamic or Arabic origin, the responses are consistently more negative to those issues in Quebec, or there is stronger support for ethnic profiling than in other parts of the country.

So those are the most notable ones, and there are some others as well.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson:** When you say "significant", how significant? When we look at some of those polls, it was huge. But how significant?

**Mr. Frank Graves:** Both statistically significant, well beyond any conventional test, and I would say, more importantly, substantively significant. On some of the differences, for example, we would have differences of 20 and 30 percentage points, maybe even larger, of people agreeing or disagreeing with some of the questions I've shown you here today. So very large differences. By the standards of what we typically find, those differences I just underlined, the differences would be from 10 to 30 points, and probably closer to 30 on most of those questions.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson:** On these polls, how many people would you have contacted—5,000 perhaps?

**Mr. Frank Graves:** The samples are based typically on between 1,000 and 1,500, but because we've done these on a repeated basis for several years now, these findings that I just talked about would be repeated from poll to poll, so there'd be no question whatsoever of them being statistical artifacts of a bad sample. They would have been based on literally tens of thousands of cases, and even the Quebec numbers would have been cumulatively several thousand.

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen.

**Hon. Roy Cullen (Etobicoke North, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Graves.

On the notion of a common security perimeter, and I think we've had this discussion before, it's quite a laden phrase. I'm wondering whether people who answered that question really totally understood it. It's like voting for motherhood, but the devil is in the details. Does that mean, for example, that we'd have to have uniform immigration policies? We might have to have the same attitude towards guns, or the same policies with respect to harmonizing product standards, or whatever. So I wonder if you could just comment on that briefly.

● (1755)

**Mr. Frank Graves:** That's an excellent question. I think the answer is that if the question of support were attached to the examples you put in place, unquestionably support would soften.

The support, I think, is rooted most strongly in a sincere desire first to ensure the security and safety of Canada and Americans. That is something that is a very strong motivation in Canada and in the United States. It's also based on a desire to ensure that we continue to have access to the maturing business opportunities associated with the huge economy to the south, and that if there is, as they say, another episode, the drawbridge would not be pulled up at the 49th parallel. Are these attitudes elastic with respect to some of the questions such as immigration?

We've explored this on questions such as decriminalization of marijuana and find that it softens the support. In some cases it still remains a majority, and in other cases it's less clear.

We've seen a situation where the outlook on the United States administration is particularly driven down by issues like its foreign affairs policy and particularly in Iraq. If you think back, for example, when the war in Iraq began we had 60-odd percent of Canadians saying they supported the government's position, but about 45%

were saying the Americans were right too, so there was a high level of ambivalence. That has changed to a situation where the last time we asked it, about a month ago, it's 85% to 25%. So there's now a new view that "we both couldn't be right, so you must be wrong".

What's happened is that other views about integrated policies may have been dragged down to some extent. More specifically, we see in support for things like ballistic missile defence, where I don't think the public's substantive appraisal of it has changed that much, that the actual support levels have come down, because there is the sense, "If you're wrong on that, what about these other things?"

I also think there's a sense in Canada—and this is unfortunate—a spurious belief among Canadians that Americans are mad at Canada about its position on Iraq and so forth, perhaps from watching CNBC. But in fact when you poll Americans, the net effects of that position were neutral or mildly positive. Canada became something of a poster child for lost liberal aspirations in America and for a large number of Americans who, even if they didn't approve of the positions of the United States, more or less said they respected Canada's position.

I think there is a sense now, which may not persist, that we have to be more wary or careful of these sorts of things. But I highlight the issue of immigration, where I think you see a fairly significant different trajectory and direction. I don't think Canadians would accept, for example, harmonizing their immigration policies, particularly in light of the differences we see. Would they accept, for example, harmonizing food inspection? Probably they would, and I think there's a continuum here that would be practically judged by Canadians. But there are clearly issues where they would be very troubled.

**Hon. Roy Cullen:** May I just ask one more quick question?

I know your job is not to psychoanalyze people who respond to polls, but when doing them you obviously get a good comprehension, or you read between the lines what people are actually saying. Concerning solutions to terrorism and the ideas surrounding immigration, in the U.S. generally people are thinking "Beware"—and I'll use very trite language—"We want fewer of these people who might try to blow us up internally", in contrast with the attitudes of Canadians, who are calling for more embracing and more multicultural acceptance that helps us understand these other people, such as Islamic fundamentalists, or makes us safer because they're not going to try to terrorize their own. What do you read into that?

**Mr. Frank Graves:** I don't know how clearly Canadians have thought it through, but clearly when provided with a menu asking, say, "what are the main things we should be doing about this?", things like multicultural policy and immigration factor quite high. They're not at the very top of the list, but they are close in second place behind intelligence and security measures linked to counter-intelligence information.

By the way, I showed you some of the differences on immigration attitudes. They are also reflected in much more primordial attitudes and values with respect to the importance of tolerance or cosmopolitanism. There are behavioural differences between Canadians and Americans. Canadians are more likely to have passports. They travel more and think more favourably about, for example, multilateral institutions and their importance in the world.

If you look at the demographics of Canadian society, the ethnic heterogeneity of the under-30 population in Canada is substantially higher than in the United States. All these things suggest these differences should become larger rather than smaller as time goes by. I am saying this in full acknowledgement that the United States is a pluralistic, broadly speaking liberal society with respect to these sorts of issues as well.

For example, Canadians believe that some of the problems related to security and terrorism are in fact linked to the economic and political outlooks or approaches the United States uses in the world. This is not unique; it is a growing consensus in most places outside the United States. There is a sense that perhaps the process could be described as inoculating yourself against being seen as one of the authors of the so-called war of civilization, or the economic gap between the developed and undeveloped world, which Canadians see as part of the root cause much more than is the case in, for example, the United States.

There is a loose sense that having a society that features more ethnic heterogeneity and more racial diversity, which is more open and cosmopolitan in its posture with respect to the world, would in fact both minimize the instances of these sorts of problems in the world and more practically make you a less attractive target.

● (1800)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Graves.

Monsieur Ménard.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Ménard (Marc-Aurèle-Fortin, BQ):** If I understand correctly, your presentation is based on several polls that were done, is that the case?

[*English*]

**Mr. Frank Graves:** Yes, it is. It is based on several, probably at least 15 or 20—

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** Since this is a public meeting, your presentation is public.

[*English*]

**Mr. Frank Graves:** Yes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** So you would have no objection to sending us an electronic version of your PowerPoint presentation.

[*English*]

**Mr. Frank Graves:** No, I wouldn't.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** My question is along the same lines as that raised by Mr. Sorenson earlier. Do you have a breakdown, if not by province, at least by language—French and English—on the questions?

[*English*]

**Mr. Frank Graves:** Yes, on these questions I think I've already pointed out the main difference. If I could go through them, I can certainly tell you the key differences.

On immigration, as I mentioned, the opposition to immigration levels is lowest in Quebec. On some of the questions, in terms of support for ethnic profiling, it is higher in Quebec. The concerns about the likelihood of various risks associated with terrorism and security are somewhat lower in Quebec, and the sense that we should be more aggressive or have a faster pace in dealing with them is also lower in Quebec than in other parts of the country.

There are obviously other important differences among other provinces and regions and demographic groups. The most striking are that younger Canadians seem to share the outlook seen in Quebec more than, for example, baby boomers and senior Canadians do. In other words, they don't think the risks are as extreme as other parts of the population do. They're more wary about American policies in this area and are a little more concerned about not accelerating the pace; they are more comfortable with the current balance.

There are other differences as well, but those would be the most important.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** I very much appreciate the work that you have done, and without wanting to add to your workload considerably, would it be possible when you send us a copy of this presentation to add a few pages illustrating that difference?

[*English*]

**Mr. Frank Graves:** Yes, I have these notes already prepared. I or my willing associates will prepare the presentation with the demographic breakdowns by region, language, age, and so forth included. I'll just give you the highlights. I won't bother showing them all. I will include the ones where it is significant.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Serge Ménard:** Thank you very much.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Merci, Monsieur Ménard.

Mr. Comartin, please.

**Mr. Joe Comartin (Windsor—Tecumseh, NDP):** We constantly see that the perception of crime is that it's much higher. If you ask the average Canadian how bad crime is, you get this perception of it being 100% to 1,000% worse than it is in reality. I'm getting some sense from your comments about the U.S. side that their perception of the risk of terrorism is in that same range, way out of proportion, but you made no comment about Canadians. Is our perception of the risk way out of proportion to the reality?

● (1805)

**Mr. Frank Graves:** Frankly, I would think Canadians are being reasonably circumspect in appraising the risks, thinking they're lower in Canada than they are in the United States.

Although I have some direct indicators, there's also indirect analysis that shows part of Canadians' commitment to this is not driven by a sense of imminent danger but more by a sense of prudence. We really don't want these problems being exported to the United States; that would be very calamitous. We wouldn't want it on moral grounds, but we certainly wouldn't want it in terms of our economic interests either. I think there's a healthy dose of pragmatism underlying what is also a sort of shared sense of moral imperatives.

We don't have time to get into it, but it was a fascinating question.

The gap between the appraisal of individual risks and their statistical level is very interesting. In many areas, I would say, the correspondence through time is becoming closer. In other words, Canadians and probably Americans are more accurately assessing the real risks associated with things like smoking cigarettes, driving on highways, and flying in planes. This is linked to higher levels of education, media effects, and so forth.

It seems the most profound gap we see between the statistical risks and the perceptions is on things that are further away from us, both geographically and also in terms of what psychologists call your locus of control. That's why you feel more comfortable driving your car than flying in a plane, even though you're much more likely to die in the car.

In particular, now what we're finding is that people are very concerned about geopolitical instability: what's going on in the Middle East and what's going on in strange terrorist cells that might be operating in ways we don't even know about. That kind of concern is really adding an additional layer of anxiety, and I also think it has something to do, frankly, with the demographics of our society. We have a strong baby-boom cohort, and you get more worried about these things as you get older, it seems.

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** I just have one more quick question, because everyone wants to go.

There's this sense of concern over security provisions and security legislation affecting them personally in their privacy rights. We've had a good deal of media attention on this in the last few months, certainly since the federal election and much more than we did in the spring, when you last did your soundings. Is it possible this concern over privacy is short-lived? Is it going to fade away as the news stories drop off?

**Mr. Frank Graves:** That's a very good question. First of all, I think the concerns we see expressed in the media, which are probably welcome cautionary notes, are not reflective of broader public opinion at this point in time. The public say yes, that's very important, but frankly, perhaps unlike Americans, Canadians do not worry that governments are collecting this information for the purposes, for example, of engaging in some kind of insidious surveillance and control of citizens, that there's some kind of ulterior motive. At worst they may think, well, maybe you're being a little slow-footed and inaccurate and are using too many resources, but they don't really worry about the ulterior motives.

I think this is a consistent feature of Canadian society, one that folks like Seymour Martin Lipset have commented on for some time. We're a little more respectful of authority on these sorts of issues, and this extends not just to governments but also to police and security agencies.

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** But it is showing up as a significant factor?

**Mr. Frank Graves:** The prime exposed flank of this whole area is the issue of privacy and personal privacy. It is one where Canadians say they... And they are genuinely the most concerned.

But I would also stress that in cases where we have real-world tests, those concerns have yet to come to a level where they have said, for example, "Let's not do biometrics, or national identity". Generally, the majority will clearly lean to the security side, even though there are deep concerns. Now, I suspect the public are being quite vigilant. If they see an example where really bad things happened because of that charter they've provided, they will say "No, no, no, stop."

**Mr. Joe Comartin:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Graves. It was a fascinating presentation, with a lot of information to disseminate. I want to thank you and your colleagues for the work you have done; you've left us with a lot of food to chew over on the cocktail circuit. It was a first-class job.

Colleagues, we're adjourned.