# *Olympic Security: Assessing the Risk of Terrorism at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Games*

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The upcoming 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver-Whistler represent sixteen days of athletic competition, international revelry and an opportunity to showcase Canada on the world stage. This last benefit, however, is a double-edged sword because the Games run the risk of being overshadowed by negative events as well. Historically, the Olympic Games have always served as a platform for drawing attention to specific political grievances. They have been used as "a vehicle to embarrass host governments, draw attention to injustices, apply political blackmail and raise serious ethical concerns"[1] on many occasions. Traditionally, these concerns have manifested themselves in social and political demonstrations: drawing attention to civil rights issues (Tommie Smith and John Carlos "power to the people" salute during Mexico 1968 Games), minority issues (treatment of Aboriginals during Sydney 2000 Games), and human rights issues (the crackdown on Tibetan protesters during the Beijing 2008 Games). However, the Olympic Games have also fallen victim to episodes of terrorism, most notably the kidnapping and execution of Israeli athletes by Black September during the 1972 Munich Games and the Centennial bombing at the 1996 Atlanta Games. In fact, between 1972 and 2004, there have been 168 terrorist attacks related to sporting events more generally.[2]

This paper explains the very real security issues which Canadian Olympic organizers will face this February. It documents the traditional security challenges facing all Olympic organizers, especially those responsible for Games occurring post

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[1] John Milton-Smith, "Ethics, the Olympics and the Search for Global Values," *Journal of Business Ethics* 35 (2002), p. 132.

[2] K. Clark, "Targeting the Olympics," US News and World Report, June 14th, 2004, p. 34.

9/11, and examines them through the lens of the Vancouver Games. The comparison reveals a potentially troubling scenario. The Vancouver Games must contend with the same security challenges that all Olympic Games have faced, but all of these issues appear much more severe in the Vancouver context. Further, the Vancouver Games must also contend with several unique challenges which further heighten the risk for a serious attack or disruption during the upcoming Games. An analysis starts from the premise that the Olympic Games, especially in a post 9/11 world, are attractive targets for terrorism. Simply, the Olympic Games represent the single best opportunity to make a grandiose and symbolic statement coupled with a potential for mass casualties. The paper then identifies three challenges security organizers have faced in previous Olympic Games: logistical disadvantages of planning the Games, inter-agency cooperation, and a reliance on volunteers. A final section examines the Vancouver experience. It takes the previously identified challenges and views them in the context of the Vancouver Olympic Games in an effort to provide an answer to questions about the likelihood of a terror attack or attempted terror attack, the target of such a plot and who appears to represent the most likely threat to the upcoming Games.

**The Olympic Games as a Target: A Post 9/11 Reality**

Following the events of 9/11, there has been a fundamental shift in security planning, organization and management. This shift affects those responsible for securing the world's largest special event, the Olympic Games. Since 9/11, the Olympic Games, unfold in a new environment, one where symbolism and a desire for mass casualties intersect. The new reality is that no target is off-limits. Based on this assessment, the Olympic Games in the post 9/11 era of terrorism represent opportunity, a significant example of what Toohey and Taylor term "terrorist capital."[3] Terrorist capital is represented by a highly symbolic event, attended by hundreds of thousands of tourists, athletes and support staff as well as international leaders and international media. This is exacerbated by the reality that it is a live event televised around the globe to billions of people.[4] All of these factors make the Olympic Games a highly desirable target. In fact, threat assessments for the 2000 Sydney Games had already

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[3] Kristine Toohey and Tracy Taylor,"Perceptions of Terrorism Threats at the 2004 Olympic Games: Implications for Sports Events," *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 12, no. 2, (2007), p. 100.

[4] Ronald Noble, "International Conference on Security Cooperation for 2008 Beijing Olympic Games," (Interpol, 2007). http://www.interpol.int/Public/ICPO/speeches/Beijing20070910.asp (June 5, 2008), p. 2..

recognized this reality.  The concerns, however, were downplayed because, at that time, an analysis suggested that the greatest threat would be from "lone militants, with their own agenda," rather than established groups.  It was hypothesized that "groups conducting attacks against the Games would face worldwide condemnation," something they would not risk.[5]  This analysis, however, now appears somewhat dated considering the brutality and lethality of September 11th and the reality that worldwide condemnation no longer concerns some groups.

More recently, it has been suggested by security experts and the media that each subsequent Olympic Games represents a new target for a terrorist attack.  They argue that the publicity value of a successful attack on the Olympic Games cannot be measured given the "Olympics mass cultural appeal and global media coverage."[6] Further, the games will be targeted for the potential pay-off they provide.[7]  Major sporting events, and the large crowds who attend them create tremendous logistical challenges for security.  These include the number of spectators, their movement and flow and the fact that this predominantly occurs in enclosed spaces coupled with an atmosphere of excitement and passion.[8]  The large number of venues and spectators at Olympic Games increases these challenges dramatically. This, perhaps, explains why the International Olympic Committee (IOC) stipulates that security issues are the sole responsibility of the host city because it is unwilling or, more accurately, unable to meet the demands it would face.[9]  It has been suggested that planning for an Olympics is a unique experience: "It is the largest peacetime security effort" of the respective host country; "wars have been planned and executed in less time and with less people."[10]

**Logistical Issues: Disadvantages of Olympic Planning**

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[5] Terrorism Research Center, "Terrorist Threat to the Australian Olympics," (2000) http://www.terrorism.com/News&file=article&sid=5647 (September 5, 2008).

[6] Michael Atkinson and Kevin Young, "Terror Games: Media Treatment of Security Issues at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games," *OLYMPIKA: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*, no. 11 (2002), p. 55.

[7] Applebaum, S. et al., "Management of Sports Facilities: Stress and Terrorism Since 9/11," *Management Research* 28, no.7 (2005).

[8] Kristine Toohey and Tracy Taylor, "Perceptions of Terrorism Threats at the 2004 Olympic Games: Implications for Sports Events," *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 12, no. 2, (2007), p. 100.

[9] Christopher Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: A Strategic Logic of Special Event Security," *Homeland Security Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2007), p. 9.

[10] P. Ryan, *Keynote Address to the Olympic Security Review Conference,* (Salt Lake City: Oquirrh Institute, 2002), p. 24.

Olympic security planners cannot escape the realities faced by any risk analysis process: overcoming the "limited budget versus infinite demands" problem. Olympic security budgets allot tremendous resources for security but are unable to envision or realistically account for every possible contingency, a fact known all too well by those who study terrorism.[11] Decisions must be made and risks must be weighed and prioritized because it is impossible to protect against every scenario. The process is complicated and requires an extended planning process focusing on risk management: "the ideal security plan is based - in theory - on managing risks."[12] These risk analyses change depending on the location of the Games. For example, one determining factor is the geophysical and geopolitical location of the country which is hosting the Games.[13] Australia, being geographically isolated, versus Athens, located in continental Europe, affected security planning. Similarly, winter Games are planned differently than summer Games based on fewer participants and venues, and the fact that they are typically in remote and less accessible cities.

Limited resources may also be stretched thin. One lesson from the 1996 Atlanta Games was that massive security investments could not guarantee the safety of the public. In the 24 hours following the Centennial Park bombing, over 100 hoaxes were reported. Each one represented a potentially serious incident and each one needed to be investigated, requiring an investment of money and manpower.[14] Similarly, the Turin Olympic Games under-estimated the potential threat to information technology and data integrity as reports surfaced that the network had been compromised.[15] Issues related to network and data security are a new phenomenon and represent a new potential security concern which must be acknowledged. This may divert resources which might have previously gone to more traditional security concerns.

Some of the challenges facing Olympic Games security planners are purely logistical and cannot be avoided. Due to the scope, size and complexity of the Games,

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[11] Chris Johnson, "A Brief Overview of Technical and Organizational Security at Olympic Events," http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/~johnson/papers/CW_Johnson_Olympics.pdf (accessed November 2, 2009).

[12] Christopher Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: A Strategic Logic of Special Event Security," *Homeland Security Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2007), p. 5.

[13] Oquirrh Institute, *The 2002 Olympic Winter Games: Security Lessons Applied to Homeland Security*, (Salt Lake City: Oquirrh Institute, 2003), p. 25.

[14] Chris Johnson, "Using Evacuation Simulations to Ensure the Safety and Security of the 2012 Olympic Venues," *Safety Science* 46, no. 2 (2008), p. 3.

[15] Associated Press, "Man Threatens to Attack Olympic Computers: Would Be Hacker Under Investigation," February 13th, 2006.

the host sites are made public years in advance; for example, the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games were announced six years prior to the event.[16]  Further, all venues are expected to be completed at least one year prior to the Games.[17]   While these benchmarks make perfect sense, they also have one unfortunate drawback: these timeframes provide tremendous logistical advantages for anyone interested in planning a terrorist attack.  Because the location and the date of the events are known, and the infrastructure generally built beforehand, anyone interested in planning an attack has time to plan, conduct surveillance, assess security measures, and potentially plant insiders well in advance.  Another issue which cannot be avoided is the number of individuals who will attend the Games.  Large numbers of attendees allow individuals to "blend in" with crowds making it difficult to identify them.  Proximity of events to transportation hubs allows for quick and easy escape, and event-associated hospitality sectors (hotels, restaurants, etc) also have a potential to be affected, thus "increasing the scope of the reach and impact of any terrorist incident."[18] The reality is that an Olympic Games is much more than a variety of venues, it involves the entire city.  Successfully planning, implementing and then managing such a logistical challenge requires a small army of personnel.  This small army often represents any number of departments and agencies from across any number of jurisdictions and they are expected to seamlessly coordinate a security protocol.

**The Challenge of Inter-Agency Cooperation**

Devising and executing a security plan for the Olympic Games is unquestionably a formidable task.  Each Olympics is larger and more complex than its predecessors.  Traditionally, security at the Olympic Games was predominantly a domestic issue; that is, it was managed by a variety of domestic agencies of the host country, best demonstrated by the efforts at the 1984 Los Angeles Games.[19]  This approach has revealed significant cooperation, communication and coordination problems time and

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[16] Oquirrh Institute, *The 2002 Olympic Winter Games: Security Lessons Applied to Homeland Security*, (Salt Lake City: Oquirrh Institute, 2003), p. 7.

[17] Jean-Loup Chappelet, "Management of the Olympic Games: The Lessons of Sydney," E*uropean Journal for Sports Management* (2001), p. 43.

[18] Kristine Toohey and Tracy Taylor, "Mega Events, Fear and Risk: Terrorism at the Olympic Games," *Journal of Sports Management* 22 (2008), p. 454.

[19] Craig Lawson, "Intergovernmental Challenges of the 1984 Olympic Games," *Publius* (1985).

time again.

The initial planning stages are often very challenging. Cooperation may be difficult due to problems most readily attributed to the collective action problem. The more parties involved, the more difficult it is to attain consensus on the best way forward. When this way forward does materialize, unanimity is difficult. This is because when the overall goal - securing the Olympic Games - is actually a sum of many individual tasks assigned to various agencies, the "forest gets lost among the trees." Each agency is inevitably concerned about their specific responsibility and views their task as the highest priority, especially if it can publicly be associated with their agency. The reality is that different people, or in this case, different agencies, are going to have their own interests, their own agenda and, to a certain degree, their own internal culture which inhibits spontaneous cooperation.[20]

Second, jurisdictional issues lead to hierarchy and power-sharing disputes at even at the most basic level of security planning. One such example was observed during the lead-up to the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta. In one of the final meetings prior to the opening of the Games, Vice President Al Gore interrupted the FBI presenter with one simple question:"Who is in charge?" When no one voiced an answer, he once again posed the question and was told that "it all depends on the situation" with no further elaboration offered[21] The Atlanta problems were so serious that an emergency re-organization of the entire Security Support Group tasked with planning the Games occurred mere months prior to the Games began.[22]

Publicly, a united front is always projected, but behind the scenes, in-fighting, mistrust and "organizational inferiority complexes" exist.[23] The 2002 Salt Lake City Games involved more than 100 local, state and federal agencies[24] and a study following the Games revealed numerous problems among the various agencies:

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[20] Oquirrh Institute, *The 2002 Olympic Winter Games: Security Lessons Applied to Homeland Security,* (Salt Lake City: Oquirrh Institute, 2003), p. 26.

[21] Suburban Emergency Management Project (SEMP), "Securing the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta: Parts I and II," (2005). http://www.semp.us/publications/biotID=205 (August 8, 2008).

[22] Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, *Privacy Games: The Vancouver Olympics, Privacy and Surveillance,* (Report to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), p. 19.

[23] Christopher Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: A Strategic Logic of Special Event Security," *Homeland Security Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2007), p. 11.

[24] Ibid, 11; Also see Oquirrh Institute, *The 2002 Olympic Winter Games: Security Lessons Applied to Homeland Security,* (Salt Lake City: Oquirrh Institute, 2003).

On a bad day getting ready for the 2002 Games, cops were perceived by other disciplines as being prima donnas. Firefighters were seen as lazy. Public work was fragmented. Private and corporate security personnel were viewed as rent-a-cops. Emergency medical groups were looking for someone to tell them what to do. Public health agencies only seemed able to hold meetings. Infrastructure owners did not want to tell anyone about their vulnerabilities. Everyone was afraid the cops would get more than any other group.

The National Guard and the active duty military component disagreed about almost everything; the Secret Service was reluctant to share anything. The FBI worried another agency would invade its turf. FEMA was fretful it would not get called to meetings and the US Attorney kept sticking his nose into everyone's business.

Federal law enforcement agents brought in to help plan the Games looked at Utah public safety as a collection of well meaning but naïve hicks. In turn federal agents were seen as arrogant and inept

Rural agencies didn't trust their urban counterparts. Sheriffs didn't trust police. Neither trusted the State. No one trusted Washington. And Washington returned the favor.

Despite consistent statements made by all parties recognizing the importance of cooperation and an espoused willingness to set aside petty jealousies and agency turf wars, the reality was quite different. Inter-agency rivalry does exist, people do not cooperate as they should, and information is not freely exchanged. If all goes well, the extent of this is never an issue but in the event of a crisis or high pressure situation, there are no guarantees that the various agencies and departments can avoid resorting to an individualistic mindset.[25]

One further challenge, which often goes unmentioned, concerns the rising commercialization of the Olympic Games. This is accompanied by an increase in private leadership who want input into the organizational process. This became evident at the Atlanta Games where disputes emerged among "private leadership"

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[25] Oquirrh Institute, *The 2002 Olympic Winter Games: Security Lessons Applied to Homeland Security*, (Salt Lake City: Oquirrh Institute, 2003), p. 26.

(ACOG), including sponsors or those hosting social events, and the government leadership who were in charge of security. Those who invested money from the private sector emphasized the "party atmosphere," while those in charge of security were concerned about the safety of participants and attendees. It has been suggested that ACOG volunteers, under orders from their bosses, were turning the settings of the metal detectors down and, in some instances, completely off in an effort to facilitate the movement of people into events.[26] This represents yet another clear-cut example of the potential for conflict among various parties. Each one has its vision of the Games, their own agenda and goals which may end up conflicting with others. Miscommunication, disagreements and perceived slights can have a very real effect on securing venues or events and risks creating security lapses which may be taken advantage of by those seeking to disrupt the Games.

While concerns surrounding cooperation and coordination among domestic agencies have existed for several Olympic Games, more recently securing the Games has become an international effort. This re-creates the issues outlined above but exacerbates them as more international agencies play an increasing role in not only securing the Games but also securing their athletes and dignitaries. The idea to request assistance from the international community is attributed to the planners of the 2004 Athens Games. In 2000, a seven-nation Olympic Advisory Group (OAG) was founded by the Greek government. Its members included nations which have had some experience with terrorism, massive security operations or both. It included: the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Israel, Australia, France and Spain.[27] The purpose of this group was to provide advice, training and where applicable tactical support.[28] Athens also reached out to Russian experts on chemical and biological attacks as well as NATO and the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA) following the 2004 Madrid train bombings, fearing a repeat attack during the Games.[29] The Athens government also signed 32 special bilateral agreements with each of its closest neighbors in the Balkans, Mediterranean and southeastern Europe in an effort to

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[26] Suburban Emergency Management Project (SEMP), "Securing the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta: Parts I and II," (2005). http://www.semp.us/publications/biotID=205 (August 8, 2008).

[27] Kristine Toohey and Tracy Taylor, "Mega Events, Fear and Risk: Terrorism at the Olympic Games," *Journal of Sports Management* 22 (2008), p. 463.

[28] Carol Migdalovitz, *Greece: Threat of Terrorism and Security at the Olympics*, (Congressional Research Service: Library of Congress, 2004), p. 5.

[29] Ibid, 6.

address issues which might arise in connection with the event.[30] While this approach yielded significant benefits, it also set the precedent of including foreign agencies in the security model. At the 2004 Athens Games, the United States, with permission from Greek officials, established a full control center in downtown Athens as "a precaution."[31]

In addition to their contribution during the planning stages, many states choose to have their athletes and dignitaries accompanied by their own agencies. It had long been suspected that several countries, most notably Israel and the United States, unofficially provided their athletes and dignitaries with security forces as a precaution. The United States announced publically, prior to the 2004 Athens Games, that they would be sending "The US State Department Bureau of Diplomatic Security to provide the US Olympic team with a security force of 100-110 agents, analysts and administrators," and the American area in the Olympic Village would have unspecified "special security arrangements."[32] Further, while the United States official position is that the host government has "ultimate responsibility for the security of the Olympics," US officials maintain that Presidential Decision Directive 62, authorizes American personnel to "protect its citizens, even abroad" and this obligates them to protect the Olympic athletes and officials on foreign soil.[33] This has not yet been an issue, but should some sort of security crisis emerge, this may prove to be an awkward and murky situation.

**Volunteers**

While the first line of security is provided by trained public and private security professionals, these groups alone cannot provide the necessary manpower for an event as large as the Olympic Games. In order to provide an adequate level of security as well as minimize issues related to spectator flow, another large group of people is

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[30] George Voulgarakis, "Securing the Olympic Games: A Model of International Cooperation to Confront New Threats," *Mediterranean Quarterly* (2005), p. 4.

[31] Kristine Toohey and Tracy Taylor, "Perceptions of Terrorism Threats at the 2004 Olympic Games: Implications for Sports Events," *Journal of Sport and Tourism* 12, no. 2, (2007), p. 103.

[32] Carol Migdalovitz, *Greece: Threat of Terrorism and Security at the Olympics,* (Congressional Research Service: Library of Congress, 2004), p. 6.

[33] United States General Accounting Office (USGAO), *US Support to Athens Games Provides Lessons for Future Olympics,* (Washington: United States Library of Congress, 2005), p. 11.

required.  Volunteers have always assisted Olympic organizers filling a variety of roles including serving as ambassadors, taking tickets and selling memorabilia.  These volunteers are, however, also crucial for security operations, serving as extra eyes-and-ears for the limited number of trained security personnel.  One of the lessons taken from the Salt Lake City Winter Games was that venue security relied heavily on volunteers.[34] Relying on volunteers is a necessity, but it poses several fundamental problems.  First, all of these volunteers must be identified and vetted by security checks.  This is a very lengthy and time consuming process which is not infallible.  Many Olympics have been accused by the media of falling short on volunteer accreditation.  They claim that they have breached Olympic security protocols and, by posing as volunteers, have managed to by-pass security and access venues or restricted areas without being challenged.  In Athens, a British journalist obtained employment within the main stadium with a false name, no references and no interview.  He alleges that his unrestricted access to the venue allowed him to plant mock bombs which remained undetected even during several security sweeps prior to the opening ceremonies.[35]

Second, a reliance on volunteers introduces another actor to a system already challenged by cooperation and coordination issues.  Again, organizers assume that trained personnel and volunteers can co-exist without friction.  Unhappy volunteers, because they are not being compensated, may choose to simply not show up. Evidence suggests that relying on volunteers has been problematic in the past.  During the 1996 Atlanta Games, absenteeism was a chronic problem; over twenty percent of volunteers did not show up on a daily basis.  On the day of the Centennial Park bombing, 9600 volunteers, over eighty-five percent of volunteers, failed to show up for their duties.[36] Recognizing that the Olympics cannot be postponed or cancelled, law enforcement had to make do with a significant reduction in resources.  In an effort to avoid this pitfall, Sydney planners made efforts to offer volunteers incentives such as event tickets and training up to two years in advance in an effort to instill a sense of duty.[37]  While no

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[34] Oquirrh Institute, *The 2002 Olympic Winter Games: Security Lessons Applied to Homeland Security*, (Salt Lake City: Oquirrh Institute, 2003), p. 39.

[35] Chris Johnson, "Using Evacuation Simulations to Ensure the Safety and Security of the 2012 Olympic Venues," *Safety Science* 46, no. 2 (2008), p. 308.

[36] Suburban Emergency Management Project (SEMP), "Securing the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta: Parts I and II," (2005).  http://www.semp.us/publications/biotID=205 (August 8, 2008).

[37] Jean-Loup Chappelet, "Management of the Olympic Games: The Lessons of Sydney," E*uropean Journal for Sports Management* (2001), p. 45.

official numbers are available, organizers admit that volunteer attrition, although nowhere near the level seen in Atlanta, remained an issue.[38]

**The Vancouver Experience**

Having identified some of the main security challenges facing previous Olympic Games it is now possible to examine them in the context of the upcoming Vancouver-Whistler Games. It is important to acknowledge that this section has been developed primarily through the acquisition of public documents and reports. Vancouver Security organizers made it clear very early on in the process that they would not be discussing security issues beyond what they released to the public.[39] While this makes an analysis of the process limited, this should not deter us from making some logical inferences. Not surprisingly, research indicates that each one of the security issues noted in previous Olympic Games exists in some capacity at the Vancouver Games. It is, however, troubling that some of the issues have in fact been compounded by the Vancouver planning itself. This, plus the specific challenges each host city brings to its respective Games suggests some very unique challenges ahead for Vancouver security planners and organizers.

<u>Logistical Challenges</u>

One of the greatest advantages Olympic security planners have is their ability to learn from previous experiences, successes and failures. The statement: "All Olympics are different. All Olympics are the same"[40] recognizes that, while each Olympics is unique, they share enough security features in common that organizational or institutional learning can occur. However, there is very little evidence supporting the notion that Olympic organizers actually "incorporate lessons learned from one jurisdiction into their own."[41] This appears to be the case in the Vancouver experience. Vancouver organizers have suggested their security designs "had no corresponding

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, *Privacy Games: The Vancouver Olympics, Privacy and Surveillance*, (Report to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), p. 16.

[40] Christopher Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: A Strategic Logic of Special Event Security," *Homeland Security Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2007), p. 2.

[41] Ibid., p. 4.

model" on which to base their planning. Bud Mercer, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit (V2010-ISU) admitted that the Vancouver security plans were "unique," built from the ground up due to "unique geographic challenges and diversity."[42] This flies in the face of conventional wisdom of learning from the past

While some of the challenges faced by organizers, such as the reliance on volunteers and the perils of inter-agency cooperation cannot be avoided, other lessons can be learned and carried forward in new ways. Traditionally, "after-action" reports are created following each Olympic Games and provide an overall assessment of the organization and execution of the event. Following the events at Munich in 1972, these reports became increasingly focused on security issues. This trend continues today due in large part to the events of 9/11.[43]

After Munich, a new security strategy described as "the rings of steel" approach emerged. This approach was characterized by "regulatory management, fortification and surveillance… its primary principle was to categorize, divide and control Olympic sites."[44] This approach has evolved as well and more recent Games have focused on securing areas as opposed to venues. This strategy can best be seen by examining the Beijing Games. Numerous venues were constructed in close proximity to one another, and emphasis was placed first and foremost on perimeter security and then secondly upon entrance to the venue itself. This approach, while logical, cannot necessarily be duplicated at all Olympic Games, partially due to challenges unique to Winter Olympics. Despite being much smaller than the Summer Games, Winter Games must contend with fewer venues, farther apart. Winter weather also creates additional issues with clothing and baggage which must be addressed/searched, and with the transportation system, as moving people around, especially into venues during periods of extreme cold, can be very challenging.[45]

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[42] Clive Addy, "Safe and Silent Security: Vancouver 2010," *Frontline Security* (Spring 2009), p. 6.

[43] Christopher Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: A Strategic Logic of Special Event Security," *Homeland Security Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2007), p. 2.

[44] Kristine Toohey and Tracy Taylor, "Mega Events, Fear and Risk: Terrorism at the Olympic Games," *Journal of Sports Management* 22 (2008), p. 453; For further discussion see J. Coaffee, and D. Wood, "Security id coming home: rethinking scale and constructing resilience in the global urban response to terrorist risk," *International Relations* 20 (2006).

[45] United States General Accounting Office (USGAO), *US Support to Athens Games Provides Lessons for Future Olympics,* (Washington: United States Library of Congress, 2005), p. 23.

One very real issue is that Winter Games are often spread over two sites—the main city venues and a second venue required for certain Games specific events such as downhill skiing. From this perspective, the traditional "rings of steel" approach to securing the Olympics becomes problematic. The distance between Vancouver's two main venue locations is quite large. Salt Lake City had a distance of approximately 48 kilometers (30 miles) between its two main venues and Turin approximately 84 kilometers. Both of these venues also had several road accesses should the main route be closed or suffer significant delays. Vancouver is separated from the Whistler venues by approximately 125 kilometers (77 miles) but has a single major access point. The road linking the two venues, Highway 99, "the Sea to Sky highway" boasts unparalleled scenery. However, this is primarily due to the fact that a large portion of the winding roadway is sandwiched between water on one side (Howe Sound) and mountainous terrain on the other. This roadway could become a major issue because of its location, its accessibility and its importance linking the two venues. In August 2008, a landslide on the highway forced its closure for several days.[46] Should a similar event occur during the Olympics, it would present a myriad of serious problems and potential security concerns. In essence, it appears as if the Vancouver Games has three zones it needs to secure: the two main venue sites and a third zone which links the two main sites. This requires more resources which may come at the expense of another security area.

Representatives of upcoming Olympics usually visit and/or solicit advice from previous Olympic organizers in an effort to "learn what they did right and what they could've done better."[47] Despite the logic of this approach, evidence suggests that Vancouver organizers are seemingly reluctant to incorporate lessons learned from previous Games and listen to the advice that previous organizers are offering. Organizers from the Turin Games voiced their reservations about Canadian security officials opting for metal detectors to provide venue security. Several individuals, including a high ranking Turin official and an Israeli IOC delegate have suggested that the use of walk-through metal detectors offered little (if any) protection against bombs because they do not detect anything non-metallic.[48] They further suggested it was an

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[46] Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, *Privacy Games: The Vancouver Olympics, Privacy and Surveillance,* (Report to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), p. 10.

[47] Ed Comeau, "Olympic Sized Fire Protection," *National Fire Prevention Association Journal* (2002), p. 49.

[48] Jeff Lee, "VANOC security plan goes too far, IOC member says," *The Vancouver Sun*, October 8th, 2009,

unnecessary expense which added the illusion of security but required significant manpower to operate properly.[49]

RCMP officials have also been stressing that the security plans for the Vancouver Games "will take a distinctly Canadian approach." This approach emphasizes less frontline officers than at previous Games in an effort to avoid a scenario where "police and security take away from the athletes."[50] This represents a Catch-22: Canadian officials recognize that a reduction in visible security may weaken a deterrence effect, but images portraying a police state with "barbed wire, armed roadblocks and military carriers in the streets" can be as damaging to the spirit of the Olympics as a backpack bomb in a celebration plaza."[51] Canadian officials will be relying on alternative forms of surveillance in an effort to avoid the appearance of a "Fortress BC."  One emphasis has been on the placement of Closed Circuit Television surveillance (CCTV).   It has been revealed by Bud Mercer that as many as 900 surveillance cameras will operate around the Olympic venues[52] which will require approximately 2.5 million dollars to procure, install and monitor during the Games.[53]  While there is little doubt that these cameras will be monitored during the Games, security cameras appear more as a reactive tool— identifying individuals after the fact as a means to prosecute their actions.   How effective will these cameras be in preventing attacks or disruptions by groups that do not care about avoiding detection or prosecution?

<u>Inter-agency Issues</u>

Inter-agency cooperation problems are likely to exist in Vancouver because of the current structure.  The V2010-ISU was formed in 2003 to plan and execute security for the Games.[54]  From the outset, the Games were declared a "major event" by the then Minister of Public Safety Stockwell Day which by law made the Royal Canadian

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B7; See also Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, *Privacy Games: The Vancouver Olympics, Privacy and Surveillance,* (Report to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), p. 43.

[49] Jeff Lee, "VANOC chooses metal detectors against advice," *The Vancouver Sun*, June 6th, 2008, p. B5.

[50] Andrew Mayeda, "Canadian approach to security promised at 2010 Games," *CanWest News*, November 2nd, 2006, p. 1.

[51] Jeff Lee, "Fortress BC definitely not Canadian way," *The Calgary Herald,* August 5th, 2007, p. A6.

[52] Mike Howell, "Olympic policing chief issues dire warning about looming protests," *The Vancouver Courier,* July 10th, 2009, p. 10.

[53] Jackie Wong, "Groups call for answers on closed-circuit TV," *The Vancouver Westender*, August 20th, 2009, p. 5.

[54] Josue Kibambe Muaka Bambi, "The V2010 Olympic Integrated Security," *Frontline Security* (Spring 2008).

Mounted Police (RCMP) the lead agency responsible for all security plans.[55] Led by the RCMP, V2010-ISU includes agencies and departments from all levels of government. These include municipal agencies such as the Vancouver City Police, West Vancouver Police, and the Whistler Police. Estimates suggest that another 1800 officers representing approximately 118 other local police agencies will also take part.[56] Provincial agencies with expertise in disaster management, emergency planning and public health will add input and provide support where applicable as will several other federal agencies including the Canadian Forces.[57] Intelligence and risk assessments will be provided by Canada's Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC), a unit within Canada's Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) working in conjunction with the RCMP's Joint Intelligence Group (JIG).[58] This brief overview provides merely a snapshot of the organization responsible for security planning. The V2010-ISU has acknowledged that it will be "continuously bringing on other partners as appropriate."[59] In a rare interview, V2010-ISU Assistant Commissioner COO, Bill Mercer, identified the coordination of all of these agencies as well as all of the private partners as a major challenge for all involved.[60] In a subsequent interview, one year later, he reiterated this challenge:

> It was big when I arrived and every day it gets bigger. It touches all levels from local, municipal, provincial and federal to international. It is also probably the occurrence of bringing so many organizations with varied cultures under an integrated security framework ever seen in Canada. They are all different, from their language and acronyms, their operational and battle rhythms and even their differing expectations of accountability frameworks, decision making and relative effectiveness. [61]

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[55] Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, *Privacy Games: The Vancouver Olympics, Privacy and Surveillance,* (Report to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), p. 20.

[56] Andrew McGilligan, "They'll be standing on guard for thee," *The Telegraph-Journal, St. John,* October 1st, 2009, p. C8.

[57] Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, *Privacy Games: The Vancouver Olympics, Privacy and Surveillance,* (Report to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), p. 21.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Josue Kibambe Muaka Bambi, "The V2010 Olympic Integrated Security," *Frontline Security* (Spring 2008).

[60] Ibid.

[61] Clive Addy, "Safe and Silent Security: Vancouver 2010," *Frontline Security* (Spring 2009).

Despite the involvement of numerous agencies representing many levels of government, Assistant Commissioner Mercer remains convinced that the integrated approach is the best way to meet the enormous security challenges involved.  This statement, however, must be tempered with a dose of reality: an integrated approach is the preferred method by default—the size and complexity of the event dictates this fact.  The problems which emerge based on this framework have been seen and documented time and time again, especially during previous Games.  This would seem to support the inference that it will also pose potential problems for Vancouver organizers. One might also be concerned that Canada's record on inter-agency cooperation, especially on security and intelligence matters, has been less than stellar.  The reality is that many of Canada's departments and agencies have previously been at odds with one another in times of national importance.    While some may suggest that issues related to the bungled Air India investigation and deportation of Canadian citizen Maher Arar on terror suspicions have been addressed, the truth remains that there are documented instances of miscommunication, turf-wars and self serving agendas which cannot be easily dismissed.

Efforts have already been made by organizers to mitigate potential communication, cooperation and coordination problems. In October 2007, Ward Elcock, former CSIS head and deputy minister of National Defense was designated Coordinator for 2010 Olympic Security.  In his words, his role is not "to do security, but to facilitate security efforts between federal departments and between them and outside agencies."[62]  This suggests that organizers are aware of the difficulties in inter-agency planning and execution.  But, while this may play a role in an improved capacity for the Canadian agencies at the various levels of government, it does little to address similar issues with foreign bodies.

Setting aside domestic inter-agency issues, other countries, most notably the United States due to its proximity to the Games, are expected to play a large role in security operations.  While it is being pegged as "an opportunity to deepen cross border cooperation on large scale emergencies, border security and counter-terrorism,"[63] American officials have created the US Olympic Security Committee (USSC) and an

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[62] Josue Kibambe Muaka Bambi, "The V2010 Olympic Integrated Security," *Frontline Security* (Spring 2008), p. 38.

[63] Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, *Privacy Games: The Vancouver Olympics, Privacy and Surveillance,* (Report to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), p. 23.

integrated Multi-Agency Coordination Centre (MACC). These two agencies are essentially "shadow agencies" located just across the Canada-US border. Reports suggest that the USSC has been investigating legislative changes which might allow US involvement in the management of cross-border issues that might arise during the Vancouver Games.[64] Rumors have also circulated that the US has offered to assist in the overhead monitoring of the Games by loaning the Canadian government Predator surveillance drones which would be manned by American military personnel.[65] Further, the responsibility for monitoring air traffic has apparently been assigned to NORAD. While Canada is considered an equal partner in this organization, it nevertheless has opened the door for US jets to patrol Canadian airspace over the Vancouver Olympics.[66] This is potentially troublesome because each country has separate rules of engagement. A news release[67] compares the two approaches. According to the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), "The US government may use deadly force against an airborne aircraft if it is determined that the aircraft poses an imminent security threat." Conversely, Transport Canada suggests "any unauthorized aerial activity within the restricted airspace will be subject to intercept by military intercept." This simply points out two separate approaches which may potentially, in a worst case scenario, conflict with serious consequences.

Volunteers

As with all Olympics, volunteers will play an assortment of roles during the Vancouver Games. In order to meet its most basic needs, Vancouver organizers estimated they would require upwards of 25,000 people.[68] Screening and checking the credentials of this number of individuals has proven to be an arduous task. This is a concern because processing, screening and determining access to venues and restricted spaces is one of the most basic requirements for security. Organizers have remained confident that this process will be effective and efficient in time for the Games. They point to technological advances made in the field of accreditation as providing them

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[64] Ibid., p. 23.

[65] Ibid., p. 42.

[66] *Calgary Herald*, "US jets could patrol Vancouver during Olympics." July 5th, 2008.

[67] CTV News, "Security standards for 2010 Vancouver Olympics," September 25th, 2009. http://www.ctvolympic.ca/aboutvancouver/news/newsid=16371.html (accessed October 19, 2009).

[68] Vancouver Province, "Olympic volunteer program kicks-off: 25,000 jobs for grabs," February 11th, 2008.

with the ability to meet this challenge.[69]

However, it has recently been revealed that efforts to secure the necessary volunteers have stalled and organizers are facing a significant shortfall. This led to the organizing committee asking local businesses to lend their staff to the Olympic Games. Olympic historian Kevin Walmsley said that this is unprecedented and that the time frame makes it near impossible to organize.[70] This lack of volunteers presents several problems. First, should volunteers not be found, a reduced number of volunteers will undoubtedly affect the efficiency and effectiveness of security procedures. Second, it may force organizers to be either less discriminating in their background checks or accept some volunteers who were previously deemed unacceptable. A shortage of volunteers or last minute replacements is a very real issue which may affect the Vancouver Games.

**Likelihood of an Attack or Disruption**

During the Olympic Games, the host country's concerns multiply exponentially. This is because, for sixteen days, the "world comes" and along with it all the world's problems. Not only does the host country have its domestic problems to deal with, it also must deal with all the problems of all nations of the world.[71] There is an increased risk that it may unintentionally become caught in the middle of disputes or grievances not of its own doing. The big question therefore remains: is a terrorist attack likely and how might it manifest itself? Will it be a large scale attack committed by an international organization akin to al-Qaida or a small scale campaign by local or domestic groups designed more to disrupt and complicate the Games?

Vancouver security organizers, while tight lipped, are quietly planning for both potential scenarios and monitoring all possible risks. CSIS and RCMP officials have been very general in their public statements but censored documents and reports obtained by various news agencies reveal they have identified several potential domestic threats including anti-globalization, anti-corporate and First Nations

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[69] Josue Kibambe Muaka Bambi, "The V2010 Olympic Integrated Security," *Frontline Security* (Spring 2008), p. 38.

[70] CBC News, "Lend us your employees Olympic organizers plead," July 30th, 2009.

[71] Oquirrh Institute, *The 2002 Olympic Winter Games: Security Lessons Applied to Homeland Security*, (Salt Lake City: Oquirrh Institute, 2003), p. 26.

activists.[72] A former RCMP intelligence expert recently suggested that the level of organization and "forward planning" by some of these groups, and, the willingness of some groups, specifically First Nation and anti-poverty groups, to form alliances are "unprecedented" and cause for real concern.[73] Security organizers confirm that as early as May 2008, there were already approximately 20 violent acts directly connected to the 2010 Games.[74] This domestic scenario has unfolded at a previous Games when globalization and environmental protests occurred prior to the 2006 Turin Games. Sixty incidents involving improvised explosive devices, mostly targeting corporate sponsors occurred in the lead-up to the those Games. They went largely unreported because they occurred prior to the Games and were designed to embarrass rather than injure people.[75]

Domestic groups, however, should not be dismissed as a minor nuisance. Even if they are unlikely to carry out large scale sophisticated attacks, attempts to sabotage and de-rail the Games are a real possibility. The problem which arises is that there are an infinite number of "soft targets" which cannot be secured. During the Olympics, the global media will inevitably latch on to any potentially embarrassing story regardless of how small it might appear thus encouraging these groups to make their statements.[76] In an effort to placate the majority of political protest, Vancouver organizers have promised to construct several "free speech areas" where protesters can assemble and voice their concerns or displeasures.[77]

Questions about the Vancouver Games being targeted by international groups on a larger scale are more difficult to answer. While the profile of the Games makes them a highly desirable target, there is a great deal of debate among security experts about the likelihood of an attack occurring. One side argues that the risk is very high and points

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[72] Jeff Lee, "Police predict escalating 2010 protests; Documents show CSIS and RCMP have identified several threats to Olympic security," *The Vancouver Sun*, October 9th, 2008, p. A4.

[73] Ibid; See also Jorge Barrera, "Spy agency watching extremist Olympic protesters, threat assessment reveals," CanWest News, May 6th, 2008.

[74] Stephanie Levitz, "Olympic security threats; Change in activists' tactics poses serious threat to 2010 Games," *The Moncton Times*, May 5th, 2008, p. B1.

[75] Chris Johnson, "Using Evacuation Simulations to Ensure the Safety and Security of the 2012 Olympic Venues," *Safety Science* 46, no. 2 (2008), p. 309.

[76] Philip Boyle and Kevin Haggerty, *Privacy Games: The Vancouver Olympics, Privacy and Surveillance,* (Report to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), p. 40.

[77] Jeff Lee, "Games free speech areas won't be fenced, security officials say," T*he Vancouver Sun*, July 18th, 2009, p. A4.

to statements made previously by al-Qaida operatives indicating that Canada is a target due to their presence in Afghanistan and subject to 9/11, London or Madrid style attacks if they do not withdraw. They also point to a specific threat uncovered by the RCMP in 2006 that al-Qaida wanted to attack Canada and specifically oil and natural gas facilities.[78] Others are less certain that the Vancouver Games are a target and point to London's successful 2012 bid as a more likely target since threats have already been made.[79] Stewart Bell reports that his investigation has revealed intelligence reports deeming the threat level of international terrorism, organized crime, cyber attacks, critical infrastructure attacks as "low," while domestic episodes are listed as a "medium" threat.[80]

One last thought on the potential of an attack at the Vancouver Games requires an examination of Canada's perceived weakness on security issues and its reputation for being a terrorist friendly safe haven. One of the main challenges for the 2004 Athens Games was the concern that it was susceptible, more than any Olympics previously to a terror incident due to its geographical proximity to the Middle East and Balkans, the existence of countless points of entry and its reputation for defective borders and deficient passport controls.[81] Canada, some suggest, may itself suffer from similar problems. Critics often point out Canada's poor record on identifying and neutralizing terrorist entities within its borders.[82] While it is certain that security will be bolstered at entry points in the months prior to the Games, this does very little if groups or individuals are already in the country. In light of recent terror trends, Canada and Vancouver's large ethnic populations may also provide additional coverage for terrorists and help them remain undetected.

## Conclusion

The Vancouver-Whistler Winter Olympic Games will open on February 12th 2010,

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[78] Jeff Lee, "CSIS IDs 2010 security threats; Globalization critics, al-Qaida watched," *Edmonton Journal*, October 9th, 2008, p. A9.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Stewart Bell, "Intelligence report signals concern spies may exploit Vancouver Games," *The Ottawa Citizen*, December 11th, 2008, p. A3.

[81] Carol Migdalovitz, *Greece: Threat of Terrorism and Security at the Olympics*, (Congressional Research Service: Library of Congress, 2004), p. 4.

[82] Stewart Bell, *Cold Terror: How Canada nurtures and exports terrorism around the world*, (Toronto: Wiley Press, 2007).

and the world will be watching. In the months and weeks leading up to the Games athletes will continue training, spectators will continue to purchase tickets and finalize travel plans, and organizers will be rushing to put the finishing touches on a massive project six years in the making. Behind the scenes security planners will be weighing the possibility of terrorist attacks or disruptions and making every effort to prevent them. This paper has demonstrated that planning Olympic security is a formidable task in part due to three challenges: logistical issues, interagency cooperation and a reliance on volunteers. It also demonstrates that these issues, coupled with several issues unique to the Vancouver experience, will challenge Vancouver security planners. While it is impossible to accurately predict the likelihood of a terrorist attack or disruption at the Games, this paper does allow us to draw some tentative conclusions. First, the Vancouver experience has arguably compounded some of the traditional challenges faced by security planners. The distance between the two main venues and creation of a third zone between them stretches limited resources, the number of agencies involved and their proven history of limited cooperation and coordination, and a documented shortage of volunteers may all affect security in some way. Second, based on this assessment it appears that while the likelihood of a large scale terror attack carried out by an international group like al-Qaida is unlikely, disruptions to the Games by domestic groups remains a real possibility.

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