



# SPECIAL REPORT



CENTER FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND SECURITY

# CONTINENTAL SECURITY CONFERENCE



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*“He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils”*

*Sir Francis Bacon*

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These famous words from Sir Francis Bacon are particularly pertinent in today’s security environment. Finding new and innovative ways of supporting our national and international security initiatives has been a hallmark of the University and Agency Partnership Initiative (UAPI) of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security, which is precisely what led it to conduct its first-ever Continental Security Conference (CSC) in late 2010. The event is likely the first of its kind, bringing together participants from Canada, Mexico, and the United States, and focusing on common security issues of interest to all three nations with an emphasis on academic perspectives and contributions. We are pleased to provide this report that overviews this important event.

The genesis of the conference stems from the expansion of the UAPI into the international arena. The UAPI mission is to expand and support U.S. based homeland security education and training programs. This successful initiative has assisted program development in all 50 states, and has hosted dozens of conferences and workshops, to include the Annual Homeland Defense and Security Education Summit held in the National Capital Region each spring. Program support includes development of comparative homeland security courses – those which look at how security is conducted in other nations and learning of their best practices, procedures, and lessons learned. In late 2009, the UAPI reached across the border to Canada in an effort to learn of their academic programs, better inform our comparative homeland security courses, and offer the wide range of academic support provided to UAPI partners domestically. After visiting the University of Ottawa, Carleton University, and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, a decision was made to reach out to Mexico as well, and the ideal forum would be through a conference that brought together

academics, practitioners and policymakers from the three countries that share the North American continent.

The goals coming in to the CSC were straightforward. First was knowledge development and educating the participants on security issues and academic efforts as undertaken in each country. Second was to build relationships between the participants and to begin institutionalizing those relations between their organizations. Once the conference began and the value of it became apparent, an additional goal was added: to generate a concrete list of objectives to establish for future conferences.

Considering the attendee nations’ extensive, common borders, and the nature of today’s natural and manmade threat environment, few long-term initiatives of this type exist. The World Affairs Council has conducted an annual North American Forum which brings together key thought leaders to interact on issues of mutual concern. Additionally, the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America was created in 2005 to conduct regional dialog on security and economic issues, but it ceased to be active after 2009. Several trilateral agreements exist, most notably the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as well as numerous bilateral accords, but none which institutionalize regular gatherings to discuss security issues from academic perspectives.

Academic partnerships can clearly make long term contributions to a safer and more secure North America where its citizens can thrive and prosper. This, and future Continental Security Conferences, will inevitably play a key role.

Stanley B. Supinski, PhD

Director, Partnership Programs

Center for Homeland Defense and Security

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# UAPI HOSTS INAUGURAL CONTINENTAL SECURITY CONFERENCE



*UAPI Deputy Director Steve Recca addresses assembled homeland security scholars attending the UAPI Continental Conference*

**T**hirty-five leading homeland security academics and practitioners gathered Dec. 7-8 in Colorado Springs, Colo., to explore a relatively untapped topic of homeland security: Research on issues encompassing concerns among Canada, Mexico and the United States.

The inaugural Continental Security Conference was hosted by the University and Agency Partnership Initiative (UAPI), one of several educational programs conducted by the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS). The event was a milestone for the 5-year-old UAPI program in that it brought together scholars from each country to begin considering mutual homeland security education and research.

Attendees sought to define just what continental security means, the value of scholarly study to the topic, and how academics can contribute to the security of the three geographically linked nations.

Reaching consensus among professors and practitioners is no easy feat, especially when it comes to a tri-lateral relationship with a certain amount of historical mistrust. Yet there was some general agreement on the value of educational research.

"I think the non-governmental community, especially academics and think tanks, are able to think a little more broadly," said former Ambassador Andrés Rozental of

Mexico. "I have found that when you push issues in non-governmental spheres, you get people to think outside the box."

The conference addressed an aspect of the homeland security academic discipline that has been sparsely researched and rarely broached. Nonetheless there was agreement that increased tri-lateral cooperation regarding security was well worth pursuing.

"I don't think there is any doubt in anybody's mind that when it comes to disasters, they don't respect borders," said UAPI Director Stan Supinski.

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*"We're in the infancy of creating the momentum that is required to make a difference for all three nations."*

*Jeff Burkett  
CHDS Master's Program Graduate*

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Attendees were able to focus on issues currently challenging all the three countries, allowing for a sort of comparative government seminar.

Participants said studying security relations among the North American nations was sorely needed.

"It's long overdue," said Jeff Burkett, a 2005 CHDS



graduate who authored his thesis on Mexican-United States defense relations. "We're in the infancy of creating the momentum that is required to make a difference for all three nations."

As with most CHDS offerings, the opportunity for professionals in the field to network was one of the goals of the conference. Carole Cameron, Director of International Affairs for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said she benefitted from networking with members of academia and learning their perspectives on security issues.

"Education provides academic rigor to the policy decisions made not only at FEMA but with the federal government at large," Cameron said. "Academics can raise issues that people in Washington may not always see as an issue. Academics look at things through a different lens."

A second annual conference is expected to follow next year.

Established in 2005, UAPI seeks share expertise of the CHDS by exporting homeland security curriculum to campuses and agencies across the country to further the study of homeland security as an academic discipline. Some 220 schools and agencies have joined the initiative since its inception.

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## ROZENTAL DELIVERS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE

### FORMER DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF MEXICO CITES ACADEMIA AS CRITICAL TO TRILATERAL SECURITY AND COOPERATION

The role of academia is critical to greater security and cooperation among Canada, Mexico and the United States, a former Deputy Foreign Minister of Mexico told participants at the inaugural Center for Homeland Defense and Security Continental Security Conference held Dec. 7-8 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Andrés Rozental, formerly Mexico's Deputy Foreign Minister, gave the keynote address at the two-day event hosted by CHDS' University and Agency Partnership Initiative (UAPI).

The three nations share threats, he noted, that non-government entities could assist in addressing.

"I think the role of non-government actors is crucial for building any effort, especially this kind of effort," he said during a brief interview. "In academia, you are free to propose unconventional and outside-the-box thinking that sometimes finds its way into the box."

Currently a political and business consultant, he praised the conference for its multi-disciplinary approach that brought together academics and practitioners.

During his 30-minute keynote address, Rozental outlined some challenges facing the three North American nations and some steps under way to address those issues. He recalled traveling to the United States a week after 9/11 to discuss with, among others, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell the future of Mexican-United States relations in the wake of the attacks. He recounted coming away with a new concept about homeland security that would consider a perimeter around North America that encompassed all three nations.

"The concept of a 'homeland' can never be limited to one single country," Rozental said. "You have to look at it from a broader perspective. You have to look at it from the point of view of North America. We have such an enormous amount of synergies among and between the three countries that you cannot stop at either of the



*Left to right: UAPI Deputy Director Steve Recca, Andrés Rozental, formerly Mexico's Deputy Foreign Minister, and UAPI Director Stan Supinski*

borders and consider that is where the homeland ends.”

In the time since that vision, Mexico has undertaken a series of measures to reinforce ties with its NAFTA partners.

“Following on that we have, I think, gone very far from 2001 to 2011,” he said. “In those 10 years there have been radical changes in how we see each other. On the Mexican side, I think we have radically changed how we cooperate with the United States and, increasingly, with Canada.”

Rozental cited what he called a “sea change” in cooperation in areas such as intelligence sharing and creating joint intelligence centers. He further cited some milestones: Assistance from the Mexican Army after Hurricane Katrina slammed the Gulf Coast in 2005 which marked the first Mexican military presence in the United States in response to an emergency situation and, subsequently, reciprocal visits by the U.S. Secretary of Defense and Mexico’s Minister of Defense.

In relations with Canada, Mexico has received assistance to its Federal Police force and is working on a series of other measures to improve its capacity to combat organized crime.

The bulk of Rozental’s remarks regarded border security and issues surrounding that topic. He summarized the recommendations of a bi-national task force sponsored by the Pacific Council on International Policy and the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations titled “Managing the United States-Mexico Border: Cooperative Solutions to Common Challenges.”

The task force sought to develop recommendations that

would make the border more user-friendly and bolster security while respecting each nation’s sovereignty.

“This task force report has to a large extent become the basis on which both governments are working to fix the border between Mexico and the United States,” Rozental said.

Some recommendations are coming to fruition. For example, beginning in early 2011 a “trusted traveler” program is scheduled to be implemented that would pre-screen visitors to allow them to pass through land, sea and air borders more expeditiously, similar to the NEXUS program in place between Canada and the U.S. Similarly, a program is in the works that would pre-clear goods to be delivered between the two countries, Rozental explained, and measures are afoot to establish more border crossings and upgrade the aged infrastructure at existing crossings.

The stakes are important as well-functioning borders help all three countries better compete economically with the rest of the world.

However, in order to ensure those initiatives work efficiently, the North American nations will need to squarely address drug trafficking and the violent cartels behind it. Canada, Mexico and the United States share in this responsibility.

“Today, Mexico has become a larger threat to North American security than it was before, from the point of view of its use as a crossing point for drugs and other criminal activities into the United States or Canada,” Rozental said. “The threat is one which has to involve all three countries.”

# COMMON THREATS UNITE CANADA, MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES



*Conference attendees discuss the issues at the UAPI Continental Conference*

The homeland security academic community can influence new methods of cooperation in continental security by making its research expertise available to policy makers and the media.

That was at least one point of consensus as 35 academics and practitioners from Canada, Mexico and the United States who convened for the inaugural Continental Security Conference hosted by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's University and Agency Partnership Initiative. The event was held Dec. 7-8 at the Antlers Hilton in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Attendees sought to 1) define what "continental security" means; 2) whether it is important; and, 3) how academics can contribute to the security of the three geographically linked nations.

Consensus was lacking on exactly what term should define the notion of continental security, but most attendees agreed there are common threats facing all three countries and that academic research could aid in addressing them.

The culmination of two days' worth of discussion yielded some action items to be addressed at a future conference:

- Forming a council of subject matter experts (SME). Such a council would be centered on North American security.
- Establishing a medium to continue discussion and extend the conversation to other experts who did not attend the conference.
- Exploring funding mechanisms to conduct research on the topic.

## Common issues

While each of the three nations comprising North America face unique challenges, all three have shared concerns that represent new fronts in homeland security.

"While our countries are sovereign and independent, in a globalized and interconnected world we are increasingly dependent on each other, particularly with our North American allies," said Pamela Matthews, a manager with Canadian Public Safety. "We each have a mutual objective of prosperity for our people, our countries."

Fueled by demand in the United States, drug trafficking was often mentioned as the cause of raging violence in Mexico. Meanwhile, the British Columbia province of Canada has become renowned for its marijuana production and exporting across its border to the United States.

Other issues that were identified included pandemic disease, critical infrastructure protection, transportation security and counter-terrorism as well as trafficking of drugs, weapons and humans.

Former Mexican Ambassador Andrés Rozental noted that, in a post-Cold War era, the threats faced on the continent come not from other nations but from cartels, terrorists and other non-government actors.

Davis Schanzer of Duke University cautioned against creating new continental security institutions that could overlap and compete with existing bi-national and regional entities.

"We have robust bilateral relations on a huge number of issues and dialog takes place through those channels," he said. "I think the threshold should be

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*Pamela Matthews  
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high for developing a new concept in thinking about security threats.”

For an issue to fall within the concept of “continental security,” Schanzer postulated that there needs to be a genuine, common threat posed against all three nations that can be best addressed through coordinated action by all three nations.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) implemented in 1994 shows that the three nations have a common interest in teaming together to compete economically with the rest of the world, several participants noted. And, there are many instances of bi-national and regional cooperation among the North American nations and cooperative frameworks, such as NAFTA and the Organization of American States. Some participants noted post-9/11 cooperation by the three countries on issues that range from border security to intelligence gathering and sharing.

### **The role of scholars**

When it comes to contributing to Canada-Mexico-United States security, academics should be careful to stick with what they can do best, said Stephane Roussel of the University of Quebec at Montreal. He noted that university researchers are not good at predictions, decisions and implementation of strategies.

What they do excel in is documenting, providing arguments, critical analysis, identifying options, and education.

“After giving a general opinion, we need to let those people do their work,” he said, referring to homeland security professionals in the field.

Scholars can offer “systematic frameworks for analysis” and the ability to “think outside the box,” said Harold Trinkunas of the Naval Postgraduate School's Department of National Security Affairs.

“There is definitely the risk of an ‘echo chamber’ effect in Washington where everyone eventually starts agreeing with each other,” Trinkunas said. “It's good to bring outsiders in to provide a different perspective.”

He suggested research in this field could be furthered by coordinated panels at professional conferences,

sponsored research on continental security and, in the long term, creating a forum for continental security research and education based on the model provided by the Summer Workshop in the Analysis of Military Operations at Cornell University.

Academics can contribute to research in the mid- to long-term, but generally not with the immediacy often demanded by practitioners, he noted.

### **Words matter**

In a glimpse into why cooperation among even friendly nations can be a daunting endeavor, the first afternoon of the conference futilely sought to define “continental security.”

While there is consensus on what issues all three nation's have in common, debate about the term produced no clear conclusion.

Part of the reason is that focusing on homeland security issues germane to the three North American nations is a fairly new academic and policy concept. Examples abound regarding bi-national cooperation among the countries, but not so many exist for efforts that encompass all three.

David MacIntyre of the Homeland Security and Analysis Institute said the concept suffers from “conceptual immaturity.”

There are cultural and political distinctions each among the nations that can make terminology topically controversial.

Words such as “tri-lateral” or “North America” raise concerns among a segment of conservative citizens in the United States. And in Mexico, “continental” has a different connotation than it would in the other two nations.

Rozental suggested a more straightforward label, “Canadian-Mexican-United States Security,” and encouraged academics not to lose sight of the bigger goal by getting bogged down in terminology.





# THE NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL CENTER FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND SECURITY



## ABOUT THE CENTER FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND SECURITY

Since 2002, the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) has provided a neutral educational forum where current and future HS leaders develop policies, strategies, programs, and organizational elements to counter terrorism and handle catastrophic events. Through graduate-level coursework, seminars, and research, homeland security leaders gain analytic homeland expertise while bridging gaps in interagency, intergovernmental, and civil-military cooperation.

## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY AND AGENCY PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

The demand for homeland security education continues to grow across undergraduate and graduate level programs. The Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) offers the courseware for its graduate education programs through the University and Agency Partnership Initiative (UAPI).

Programs are developed in partnership with and are sponsored by the National Preparedness Directorate, FEMA.

