

1-1-2004

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Recommended Citation

Shulman, Mark R., "A Public-Private Strategy for Enhancing Domestic Security Worldwide" (2004). *Pace Law Faculty Publications*. Paper 335.

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A public-private strategy for enhancing domestic security worldwide



by John Edwin Mroz & Mark R. Shulman

The EastWest Institute's Worldwide Security Initiative addresses new security threats in the world. Because terrorism knows no borders, international dialogue and cooperation are indispensable. Homeland and domestic security goes beyond the present counter-terrorism agenda. Complex modern society is increasingly vulnerable to asymmetric security threats to both the public and the private sectors. Government, business and citizens must work together to create a safer world. But this new security agenda brings with it challenges to the free

“National responses to the terrorism threat are inadequate. A global approach is therefore indispensable.”

flow of people, ideas and trade. Our aim must be to minimize the side effects and collateral damage of the whole phenomenon of international terrorism.

John Edwin Mroz is President and Founder of the EastWest Institute established in 1981. He has served as an advisor to G-7 summits and several governments and writes regularly for US, European and Russian newspapers and journals.

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Protecting society against transnational terrorism in fact boils down to two basic approaches: prevention and protection. The EastWest Institute has two programs, Global Security and Middle East Bridges, which deal with prevention by addressing problems at their source. But we are also keen to work on improving society's ability to protect what we believe it holds dear: liberty and the physical integrity and safety of its people and its infrastructure.

National responses to the terrorism threat are inadequate. Terrorists can reach across borders, making our infrastructures vulnerable to attacks from innumerable points around the world. Defensive strategies require information and greater resources than can be marshalled by one state alone. In any case, unilateral responses may trigger resentment that would feed further terrorism. The threat of military strikes may not deter acts of terrorism that lack a return address, or whose perpetrators are not afraid of retaliation. A global approach to the threat of terrorism is therefore indispensable.

Europe and the United States share cultural heritages, basic values and a history of cooperation on maintaining international peace and security. With Russia, they control a preponderance of the world's financial, military, and intelligence resources, and they also account for much of critical infrastructure. Perceptions of the terrorism

threat differ between these actors, so finding common ground between Europe, Russia, and the US presents an important challenge

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The difference in institutional responses to these threats is in itself an obstacle to cooperation. For instance, the USA Patriot Act and Russia's war in Chechnya have triggered a great deal of international criticism. Ways must therefore be found to bridge these institutional gaps and promote a wider dialogue. Much has already been done in areas like container security, intelligence sharing and financial flows, but efforts to protect the supply chain and cyberspace need to be made the focus of future initiatives

The other side of the anti-terrorism coin is the possibility that some of our responses may imperil the free flow of people, ideas and trade. Security measures that have an impact on civil liberties and human rights need to be weighed carefully. Privacy rights and freedom of movement are the most frequently encroached upon. Concerns about terrorism may even threaten to reverse long-

term trends toward greater individual liberty and freedom. Permitting terrorists to force changes that curb personal freedoms would hand them a victory without a fight.

Because of the nature of the threats, it is essential that public and private sectors work together more closely than ever. Most people live, work and play in non-public spaces, and private sector business owns and operates much of the world's most critical infrastructure. Governments should introduce the necessary security measures and work with private entities to ensure compliance. The private sector must be involved early in the legislative and rule-making processes. International consultation should also play an important role in avoiding disruption for international business. Public-private cooperation offers important opportunities to balance the costs and benefits of security initiatives

As a first step, the Institute convened in partnership with the New Defence Agenda a major international conference, "Towards Worldwide Security: Building the Transatlantic Agenda," on November 17, 2003 at the Palais d'Egmont in Brussels examined the different transatlantic threat perceptions and approaches to clarify the agenda, and encourage international cooperation on worldwide security. Going forward from this important conference, WSI is focusing on three main objectives:

Aim No 1 is to narrow the gaps between threat perceptions, by identifying shared perspectives and areas of contention

- ▣ WSI will identify components of threat perception within the transatlantic alliance where there is agreement and work to expand on them
- ▣ WSI will identify areas of contention and strive to improve what is not working well By providing new contexts (from other actors, sectors and countries). WSI can help to depoliticize the analysis of threats. leading to more objectively based understanding

Aim No 2 is to minimize collateral damage to liberty and opportunity imposed by efforts to protect society. We will do so by working to optimize security and the freedoms of conscience and economic opportunity. This "smart security" approach cuts across sectors to help decision makers weigh trade-offs and to recognize the point of diminishing returns on security investments.

- ▣ WSI will work to sensitize legislators to security demands and the impact of initiatives seeking to meet them. Because the policies they adopt will inevitably have serious international implications and international compliance is necessary for their efficient implementation. legislators need opportunities to consult with their peers abroad before they write new laws

- ▣ By fostering a culture of security in regions outside the transatlantic area. WSI's Regional Security Forums will help minimize the collateral impact of Western security measures on the ability of such regions as the Black Sea to integrate into the global economy. Failure to do so would mean deepening the divides between rich and poor.

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Aim No 3 is to promote a "revolution in border affairs" in which people, commerce and ideas flow freely but threats do not. We will work towards this by promoting integrated border management and by working to minimize the tensions between trade and liberty as well as trade and security.

- ▣ While the burdens of setting policy and integrating border security management should remain with governments, business and international organizations can provide the information required to make the best decisions

■ Economies and the overall health of societies rely on flows of people across borders. A "revolution in border affairs" will demand input from business and civil society to formulate integrated border-control policies.

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The EastWest Institute believes it has a unique role to play in bridging the divides that threaten international peace and security. Our world-class network can offer a variety of skills including (i) forming and developing classes of dedicated, decent, and competent professionals;

(ii) fostering trans-frontier cooperation through confidence-building measures and shared undertakings, and (iii) encouraging respect for the rule of law and, in particular, transparency and integrity in corporations and governments. This new initiative expands on EWI's work to help foster cooperation on a global level and address some of the most urgent security issues of our time.

The foundation of global security must begin with a strong and united transatlantic security agenda. Governments on both sides of the Atlantic are so far responding inadequately to the need for developing countries to be much more actively involved in creating a worldwide web of security. We at the EastWest Institute are convinced that a worldwide security partnership to address this range of challenges will go a long way to promoting widespread security, prosperity and freedom. ■

For additional information, please visit www.ewi.info/worldwidesecurity.
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