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**FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND  
POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES**

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**Nouvelle vague: The Securitization of the US-Canada Border in American Political Discourse**

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**Nouvelle Vague: The Securitization of the US-Canada  
Border in American Political Discourse**

**Geneviève Piché**

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Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
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## ABSTRACT

In recent history, particularly over the last decade, the US-Canada border has been increasingly treated as a security issue. During this period, policies and measures have been put in place, such as strict identification documentation requirements, advanced surveillance equipment, information-sharing between law-enforcement and intelligence agencies on both sides of the border, and greater numbers of border patrol agents. These measures represent a significant departure from what was previously understood as a permeable, “undefended” border that prioritized above all else the facilitation of trade and travel. In my study, I have sought to better understand the process by which the US-Canada border is becoming understood by some as a security issue.

Participants in critical security studies argue that issues, such as borders, become security matters through a process. The Copenhagen School (CoS) argues that this process, called securitization, occurs when a speaker performs a discursive action, “speech-act,” claiming that the issue constitutes a security matter, and is successful when the relevant audience accepts this claim, thus legitimating the use of exceptional measures as a response. (Buzan, de Wilde and Waever, 1998) While I argue that this is an oversimplified interpretation of the process, I use this theory as a point of departure for my research and attempt to use my case study to illustrate the merits of a more comprehensive understanding of securitization.

Based on the CoS’s emphasis on the discursive element of the securitization process, I have asked: *how is the US-Canada border being securitized in American political discourse?* I have conducted a discourse analysis of statements made by President George W. Bush and the Department of Homeland Security within the period beginning with the signing of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act in December, 2004 and ending with the signing of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America in June 2005. I have sought to understand how these speakers participate in the securitization of the US-Canada border, analyzing the discursive tools they have adopted, the contexts within which they speak, and the way they structure their claims.

The results of my analysis have led me to conclude that, first, the securitization process as a whole must not be understood as a singular speaker performing a singular speech-act in a singular moment accepted by a singular audience, but rather as the on-going interaction between varying relevant actors who participate in creating momentum or resistance within an issue’s securitization. Secondly, I conclude that within the securitization of the US-Canada border, the two speakers included in this research participate in the perpetuation of the process through both what is said – primarily the identification of the terrorist threat, but also the inclusion of borders in larger, existing security contexts – and what is not said – the absence of details and definitions, as well as the choices made by the speakers in terms of the types of evidence provided. Taken together, these findings illustrate the importance of considering a more complex understanding of the securitization process and create an opportunity for an expanded research project that will include an analysis of activities performed by a wide range of actors.

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

Over the last decade, the US-Canada border has received a great deal of public and political attention. This is the result of shifting priorities and perceptions surrounding the border, as well as the tensions that arise from conflicting priorities of varying stakeholders. While trade remains of the utmost importance for some, others argue that maintaining a relatively open border compromises security, which should be, regarded as the primary concern in policymaking at the border. These two priorities continue to be pushed forward, but the increased concern with security represents a significant shift in the concerns surrounding the US-Canada border. I ask *how* the US-Canada border is becoming increasingly considered a matter of security. This question is the point of departure for the entirety of this research project.

Prior to the 1990s, the US-Canada border was primarily considered an open door to trade and travel between the two countries. Canada and the United States represent the most important trade relationship in the world. Each country relies on the other, though disproportionately, for a significant portion of its income. It has thus long been in the interest of both countries to maintain a border that works primarily to facilitate the transportation of goods into each other's markets. Being long considered the "world's longest undefended border," it was clear that security measures were not given a high level of priority.

In 1995, the two countries announced the Shared Border Accord, which sought to improve the efficiency of legitimate trade and travel across the shared border while addressing the common "concerns about the scourge of drugs, about the smuggling of illicit goods, and about the illegal and irregular movement of people into our countries."

(Embassy of the USA, 1995) Some of the measures considered within this agreement included the development of a frequent traveler program, information-sharing, and the coordination of patrol procedures and personnel training. This agreement demonstrated an increase in attention to security concerns, but remained within a context of the highly prioritized trade relationship.

Since then, however, the policies and agreements that have emerged with regards to the US-Canada border have reflected an increase in the perceived importance of a security agenda. Agreements such as the Smart Border Declaration and Action Plan in 2001 and the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) in 2005, in which Mexico is a participant, are indicative of a simultaneous prioritization of trade and security at the border(s). Within the same period, however, the US has demonstrated an increase in vigilance at the border, particularly with regards to documentation requirements for those entering the country via land ports of entry. Programs such as US-VISIT and the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) require those entering the US to prove their identities using valid and tamper-resistant approved forms of documentation, such as biometric-enhanced identification cards, passports, or, should they qualify, safe frequent traveler program cards, such as NEXUS or FAST.

Other policies, such as the Secure Border Initiative (SBI) of 2005 serve to further emphasize the security agenda at the US-Canada border. While the SBI contains in its explicit mandate the goal of facilitating legitimate trade and travel, the initiative includes measures such as dramatic increases in border patrols and the implementation of new detection and patrolling technologies at the US's shared land border with Canada.

Much of the existing literature on the US-Canada border is centered primarily on the activity at the border and the types of changes that are occurring in border controls on both the Canadian and American sides, as well as emerging cooperative efforts between the two countries. What remains insufficiently understood, however, is the process by which these changes are initiated, by which the issue has increasingly become conceived as a matter of security. The question of *how* is relevant as an understanding of the process will allow a better grasp of the different roles that are played by varying actors, including academics, and the types of activities that are involved in shifting issues not only further into, but also further out of the realm of security.

In attempting to understand the changing perception of the US-Canada border, I began to ask how this shift further into the security realm was occurring. The Copenhagen School in security studies has put forth a theory of securitization in order to attempt to understand the process by which issues become considered security matters. They argue that the process begins with a discursive action. According to the theory, a relevant speaker, usually qualified as an “elite,” may initiate securitization of an issue by naming it so. This initial step is called a “speech-act.” Once the speech-act has been performed, the relevant audience can either accept or reject the claims made by the speaker. Rejection would indicate a failed securitization attempt. Acceptance, on the other hand, would make the securitization successful and thus create legitimacy for extraordinary or exceptional measures to be implemented as a response to the issue in question. (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998: 23) While there are many weaknesses to this theory, some of which will be discussed further in this paper, the Copenhagen School makes some valuable contributions to how we understand the process of securitization. I

have taken this theory as a point of departure to further refine my research question. Given the emphasis on discursive action found in the Copenhagen School's securitization theory, I have elected to ask how political discourse contributes to the securitization of the US-Canada border. More specifically, I seek to understand how the US-Canada border is securitized in American political discourse.

Throughout the pages that follow, I will present the results of my analysis of statements released by George W. Bush and by the Department of Homeland Security, the two speakers I have elected to study, during the period beginning with the signing of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, in December of 2004 and ending with the signing of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America in June of 2005. As I will demonstrate throughout my paper, the research I have conducted has revealed that these speakers participate in the perpetuation of the security context surrounding the US-Canada border. They do so through a threat-naming process focused on the terrorist threat and the discussion of the US-Canada border as belonging to larger existing security projects. The manner by which the threat of terrorism is discussed, with regards to the types of evidence provided to support the threat claims, reveals the notable disconnection between truth and discourse. I believe that these findings are central to the understanding of the process of securitization of the US-Canada border.

Following both a detailed presentation of my methodological approach and a brief literature review of the key research that has been conducted on understanding security, as well as on the subjects of borders, and of US-Canada border security, I will present the findings of this research.

The first section of my results explores how one of the key elements of discursive securitization, threat-naming, appears in both sets of statements. I will demonstrate that the threat of terrorism is the most prominently discussed by both speakers and that this has an important impact on how both positive activities, such as legitimate trade and travel, and potential dangers other than terrorism are treated and contextualized.

The second section of my results will explore how the border itself and the relationship between the two countries are discussed. I will demonstrate that while my research reveals discussions of Canada as an ally, partner, and friend to the United States, there are increasing resemblances – or rather, decreasing distinctions – between American conceptions of Canada and Mexico. I argue that given the historically prominent concerns surrounding the US-Mexico border, mainly with regards to drug smuggling and illegal immigration, the absence of active distinctions between the Canadian and Mexican borders contributes greatly to the urgency with which speakers are able to discuss the US-Canada border.

The next section of my results explores how land-border security is discussed in the larger security context. I will explain the way land-border security is related to a larger national security project, within a context of an even larger international security project. Land-borders are seen in the discourse as one layer among others, namely air and seaports, in the national security project which intends to protect the national territory from the entry of threats originating from outside the United States. The larger international security context is mainly shaped by the current war on terror. A national security agenda is the defensive layer that works alongside more offensive measures, such as the invasion of Afghanistan in order to affront an elusive enemy: terrorism. This

section will discuss a third layer, that of internal security, and address its relatively low prevalence in the discourse.

Finally, the last section of my results will seek to assess the soundness of the logic used in calls for expansions of security measures at the US-Canada border. In the statements studied for this research project, discussions of security policies and measures may include any or all of the following: the stated goals of the existing or proposed policies, the successes of existing practices, their short-comings, and recommendations for future measures or for the expansion of those already in place. I will demonstrate that a relatively significant level of specificity is only found in discussions of stated goals and in the presentation of policy-successes. The short-comings and recommendations remain quite general. In an evaluation of these arguments, they appear to be coherent. The specific successes, however, do not relate to the most prominently named threat, terrorism. I argue that there is a disconnection between what speakers identify as the most significant threat to American security and what they claim border security encounters and addresses on the ground.

Following the presentation of the results of my research, I present a discussion of these findings and the ways they might be interpreted as relevant to the understanding of the securitization of the US-Canada border. This discussion will consist of an assessment of the energy and direction of the securitization of the US-Canada border in the case of the two speakers explored in this research, based on an adapted interpretation of the securitization process. My findings indicate that both speakers participate in the perpetuation of the securitization process, but do not attempt to accelerate it. I will then argue that this particular type of momentum has significant impacts on the potential

future of the treatment of the US-Canada border. I argue that the maintenance of the issue in its current position within the realm of security allows the possibility to push it further into the security context or, equally, to begin to shift it further away from or out of this realm. The discussion section will also explore the points of interest in the method by which this perpetuation is accomplished. I argue that there is an important disconnection between truth and what is presented in the discourse. I explore the choices made by the speakers, particularly with regards to the evidence provided to support claims of the threat of terrorism and its relation to the US-Canada border, and argue that in attempting to understand the securitization process, it is crucial to look at both what is and what is not said.

I will conclude this project with a look forward at the expansions on the research that I intend to conduct in the future. I will explain that future projects aimed at understanding the securitization of the US-Canada border should include expansions on the data. The body of data should include the analysis of security-talk by a larger group of speakers. Going beyond the discourse, however, I will argue that it is important to look at policy development and implementation as crucial elements in the securitization process. Future research should thus be aimed at including these as well.

## **CHAPTER II:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research question I sought to answer in this project was: How is the US-Canada border increasingly becoming considered a matter of security? I refined this question based on the securitization theory put forth by the Copenhagen School, which emphasizes the role of discourse in the process by which issues become considered matters of security. Adopting this theoretical conception of the process as a point of departure, I developed a more specific question. I asked: How is the US-Canada border securitized in political discourse? In order to accommodate the limited time-frame and means available for this research, I refined my objectives further, to address the question:

*How is the US-Canada border securitized in American political discourse?*

#### **Theoretical Perspective**

The theoretical framework adopted from the outset of this research is one inspired by and adapted from the Copenhagen School's theory of securitization. This theory stipulates that an issue becomes considered a matter of security when an elite actor completes a discursive action declaring it so and that this declaration is accepted by the relevant audience. When securitization is successfully completed, the authors of this theory argue, responses containing exceptional measures are legitimated. (Buzan, de Wilde, and Waever, 1998) While this theory makes valuable contributions to security studies, it is insufficient to understanding the process by which issues are treated as matters of security. Instead, I have elected to adopt a perspective that understands the process as much more complex in several ways. First, the distinction between the political and

security is not simple. They are not placed on a linear scale that creates a threshold through which issues may pass. Rather, issues may be moved further into or out of the security realm and pushed into different directions within it. Second, it is important to recognize that an issue may not be fixed into the realm of security. In order for the issue to remain a security consideration there must be constant activity surrounding it. Third, this constant activity (or sudden or gradual inactivity, which is also significant) is the result of the statements and actions of several relevant actors, and not a singular elite voice. This serves to illustrate that the lines between audience and speaker are blurred, as the speaker in one moment may be or may have been the audience in a number of other instances. Finally, as securitization is a matter of the degree to which an issue is or is not considered a security matter, the process can be understood in a language of energies. The types of energy may include acceleration, perpetuation, stalling, halting, or reversal. The actors involved contribute to the energy behind the (de)securitization of an issue through the generation of momentum or through resistance. Given that the relevant actors perform these activities within a setting alongside others with varying tools and agendas, the movement of the issue is determined by the interactions surrounding it, rather than simply by the statements or actions of one speaker.

### **Discourse Analysis**

In order to address the research question, I adopted a method appropriate to the particular purposes of this research and the theoretical framework selected: critical discourse analysis. While discourse analysis may consist of both quantitative and qualitative methods, the latter is most valuable to the research undertaken here. I thus developed a

qualitative discourse analysis framework, to be elaborated below, that will allow for an understanding of the discursive content used in the process of securitization. Lene Hansen (2006) sets out a framework by which the analyst is called upon to make choices regarding the discourses that will be analyzed. She illustrates the four elements required to facilitate the framing of the study and thus, the data collection process. The analyst must choose which “self”, the type of intertextual model(s), the temporal period, and the number of events it intends to study. (Hansen, 2006: 74-82) Based on Hansen’s framework, I chose to study a single self (the United States), using an intertextual model of official discourse (though it was originally intended to include wider political debate and marginal political discourses), over a relevant six-month period to be elaborated below, through multiple events surrounding the issue of the US-Canada border. The following pages will outline the specific criteria adopted for the data selection and the framework for analysis.

### **Data Selection**

The discourse analyzed in this research was initially selected on the basis of certain criteria regarding the temporal period and the types of speakers appropriate to the research question. Following the determination of a limited time period from which the data would be collected, five groups of relevant speakers were identified and individual speakers chosen within these groups. A preliminary data collection was conducted and was followed by further limitations and filtering to produce a feasible body of data for analysis.

### *Time Period*

Before beginning to elaborate the framework used in the analysis, it is important to explain the method by which the data, that is discourse, to be analyzed was selected. It was first important to determine which period of time was not only feasible, but significant for the purposes of this project. As my research question was not interested in the historical (dis)continuity of the subject, but rather pre-supposed a recent shift in the qualification of the US-Canada border, the data did not need to be chosen from an extensive period of time. What was most important was that there be a sufficient amount of data from varying sources from which one could draw some general conclusions. I decided to limit the time period to a matter of months, and from there, established which events could be used as points of departure and conclusion. Based on these factors, and the implicit requirement that the data be relatively recent (meaning occurring within the shifting perception of the border), I selected the six-month period beginning in December 2004 and ending in June 2005. The start-date coincides with the signing of the United States' Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTP), which is relevant to this case as it represents the point of initiation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). The WHTI demonstrates a dramatic shift in North American border relations as it contains new regulations regarding identification requirements for Canadians entering the United States. These requirements have a significant impact on the process of border-crossing as well as a symbolic impact on the perceived relationship between Canada and the US – what Canadians may once have perceived as a privileged “friendly neighbour” status with the US has become a position resembling those of citizens of other states. Since the implementation of its documentation requirements at

land-border crossings, the WHTI has been blamed for a reduction in United States visitors to Canada. (National Post, June 23, 2009) Meanwhile, however, the extent to which the implementation of the WHTI's land-border crossing documentation requirements will impact cross-border trade and travel is yet unknown given the recentness of this event. The end-date coincides with the formalization of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP). The SPP is relevant because, while it reiterates the value of existing cross-border trade, it demonstrates a shift, accepted by all three participating countries, that prioritizes the security of North America, including an emphasis on securing its internal borders. That this shift occurs and that all three countries have agreed to it despite the economic ramifications of posing greater restrictions on North American internal border activity, such as reduced efficiency in the movement of legitimate goods in trade and increased difficulty of cross-border travel impacting tourism, indicates that there is some level of acknowledgement that concerns surrounding internal border security are legitimate.

### *Speakers*

The next step in the data-selection process involves the type of discourse that is relevant to the question asked. It is obvious that the first limit is placed based on accessibility. In order to analyze the discourse, it had to be available. Secondly, it was important to determine which speakers would be relevant to this study. This selection was based on specific criteria. The potential speakers would have an interest in the case, would have the ability to reach a relevant audience, and would have a certain amount of credibility based on their positional authority. The positional authority or power was measured in

terms of specialized knowledge or responsibilities in the political and/or security realms. Five groups of speakers responded to the criteria with regards to this specific case: mass media, political leaders, government agencies, private firms, and academics.

In attempting to collect data from all five groups of speakers (mass media, political leaders, government agencies, private firms, and academics), it became clear that the body of statements would be much too large to analyze within the framework of this project. The relevant news articles collected from the New York Times (68) and the Los Angeles Times (20) – print media sources chosen for their wide readership and their focus on national news – totaled 88 articles. The statements deemed relevant to this study as released by the political leaders group (limited to statements made by the President of the United States, George W. Bush) totaled 15 statements following the final stage of the filtering process elaborated below. Those collected from the Department of Homeland Security, again following the last stage of filtering, totaled 45 statements. The body of data collected at this point exceeded the amount considered feasible for the project undertaken. Furthermore, the relevant statements by private firms (Accenture and Boeing) as well as those from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) were released only prior to and following the time-period chosen for this study. Therefore, in order to include their statements, the time-period would have had to be shifted or expanded, thereby increasing the already excessive amount of data collected. The decision that the data must be limited was made before the collection was completed. The views of the final group, academics were thus included solely in the literature review. In order to maintain the feasibility of such a project, limitations were considered both in terms of the time-period of the data collected and with regards to the number of speakers

included in the research. The time-period was ultimately maintained, while the number of speakers was instead drastically reduced. It was decided that it was more valuable to examine more numerous statements from a limited list of speakers, than to study a small number of statements from a larger number of speakers. The main reason for this decision was that the limited list of speakers would allow a more in-depth examination of these particular speakers which could then be applied more easily to an expanded version of this project. Whereas the contrary approach would have created little in-depth knowledge and instead a superficial over-view of the climate in general, which would be more difficult to expand (for example through the expansion of the time-period with the same amount of speakers), as those statements would then need to be considered within the context of those newly added statements in order to understand the individual speakers' techniques in the (de)securitization process. In other words, the same analysis would need to be repeated were this project expanded in the future.

As described above, given the limited scope of this research, these groups represented a much larger body of data than would have been feasible for analysis. As a result, I refined the selected speakers to those who responded best to the criteria elaborated above, asking which would reach the broadest audience while maintaining the greatest amount of credibility to that audience. The Copenhagen School outlines that elite politicians represent the primary actors involved in the performance of securitizing speech-acts. (Buzan, de Wilde and Waever, 1998: 146-8) Based on these criteria, I elected to analyze statements made by the President of the United States (Bush) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The discourse from the Department of Homeland Security included in this research consists primarily of statements by the

Secretary of Homeland Security (Tom Ridge or his successor, Michael Chertoff). This data also includes, however, press releases from the Department in general. These three potential speakers have been treated as one speaker in this research and thus all fall under the same speaker title, DHS.

### *Filtering*

All publications and publicized statements produced by these two speakers within the period outlined above were examined in terms of their relevance to the project. The discourse was then filtered to retain only the statements or publications that discussed (1) Canada-US relations, (2) North America's internal borders, and/or (3) the US-Canada border. What remained was the body of data that would be put through the analysis process to be elaborated in the section below. The final body of data included 15 statements by President George W. Bush and 45 statements released by the Department of Homeland Security. On occasion, the statements included in the analysis contained portions that were not considered a part of the body of discourse for the analysis. In these statements, there were occasions on which the speakers included in the research were not the only presenters. For example, there were occasions in which Bush was speaking alongside Mexican President Fox and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin. These statements came either in the form of joint press releases, or a series of statements presented by each leader individually. The joint statements were maintained as a part of the discourse, while the portions of individual statements presented by the two other leaders were not considered discourse, and thereby omitted from the body of data to be analyzed. Similarly, the DHS statements that contained portions presented by non-DHS

actors were omitted from the data set. In the cases of both speakers, comments or questions by the press, in the event of press conferences, appeared in the collected statements. These portions were also omitted from the discourse category. The omitted portions of the statements were considered, however, to be integral to the understanding of the context of the statements analyzed here, and so were included in the contextual analysis, which will be discussed further below.

### **Analysis**

Analysis of the selected discourse has been conducted based on three major groupings of information: content, context, and structure. These three components of discourse are relevant to the research question posed here as they serve to indicate the manner by which the statements selected contribute to the construction of a context in which the US-Canada border is (or not) considered a matter of security.

### ***Content***

The content of statements includes both what is said and what is not said. With regards to what is said, the analysis of the content was conducted based on the discursive tools adopted by the speakers as well as on the presuppositions that underlie the logic supporting the arguments they present.

### ***Tools***

While it is difficult to fathom an exhaustive list of the tools available to a speaker, in the interest of my particular research, my content analysis consisted primarily of an

examination of threat-naming within the statements and the presentations of evidence used to justify the prioritization of threats. Threat-naming was identified and distinguished as being either general (such as the permeability of the border) or specific (a particular group of people participating in a specific activity), and could also include the presentation of that threat's referent object(s), meaning the object that finds itself threatened. Referent objects could also be understood as general or specific, and, in the interest of the analysis, would be examined on the basis of their relations to the audience. Presentations of evidence might include explicit references to particular incidents, budget information, public opinion polls, and personal accounts. It was important in this research to not only identify the individual tools adopted in statements, but also how they are used in conjunction with each other.

The initial step of the content analysis – the first reading following the statement filtering process – consisted of the preliminary identification and highlighting of the tools adopted by the speakers. Within the statements – again, all evaluated in a written format – the threats named explicitly, the referent objects, and the types of evidence provided were highlighted and coded as belonging to each of these three tool categories. Following this step, the tools were reviewed (within their respective categories) and coded according to their subject. For example, threats named were coded as belonging to subject categories such as: terrorism, illegal immigration, and criminal activity. An “other” category would contain other infrequently listed threats or more general threats, such as “dangers.” The same type of coding was conducted in the identification of referent objects and evidence used to support this threat claims. Following this, quotes – which will be discussed later – were selected and reproduced under thematic headings

and accompanied by brief descriptions of the contexts – again, to be discussed further below – surrounding them. Finally, any patterns or deviations were noted separately in order to facilitate the over-view of the general results of the analysis.

### *What is not Said*

Statements may contain elements called entailments and presuppositions (Chilton, 2004). An entailment is what may be implied by a statement based on a truth relation, regardless of its verifiability. A sentence such as: (a) *the border patrol agents arrested the driver of a vehicle containing illegal narcotics* entails the sentence: (b) *a person was attempting to transport contraband across the border*. If (a) is true, then (b) is necessarily true. Presuppositions serve as indications of the relationship between the speaker and the audience. Whether true or not, speakers may use language that is vague or that rests on knowledge that is assumed to be shared or common. The presuppositions of the statements presented by the speakers serve to clarify that which the speakers take for granted as common ground. It is also relevant to this research in that it serves to illuminate at what point a formerly explicated element becomes one that is implicitly presupposed – that is to say at what point a speaker finds it unnecessary to attempt to convince his or her audience of this argument and adopts it as already commonly accepted.

In addition to entailments and presuppositions, elements that form the context of the issue but that are absent from the statements analyzed were considered important to this research. For example, the statistics or events that contradict the position of the speaker that are left out of the statements serve to illuminate dimensions of the discursive

process of securitization that are not visible through the analysis of the explicit content alone.

### *Context*

The context was analyzed based on the historical and political framework of the time and space from which the data is presented. Historical and political contexts were determined based on the events surrounding the issue, both at the time and location of the statement, as well as those preceding it. This means that the statements analyzed are included in the contextual framing of later statements to be analyzed. It also included a consideration of the format of the statement (press conference, State of the Union address, written press release), as well as the positional situation of the speaker in terms of the arena in which statements are presented (including the ‘intended’ and potential audiences), and the authority with which the speaker may act in that particular arena. Finally, as discussed briefly above, the portions of the included statements that were omitted on the basis of the presenter were considered to constitute an integral part of the context, and thus the content of these portions was examined in this crucial step in the analysis.

The contextual and content analysis occurred simultaneously – statement by statement – in the research process. The contextual elements were first noted on-page in the initial analysis of the statements. They were then included in the coding notes of the content analysis. From this point, any occurrences, such as patterns or deviations were noted separately as findings. For example, discussions of partnership with Canada and/or Mexico are only prominent in the context of a meeting of the countries’ leaders with American leaders or surrounding the presentation of a joint agreement.

### ***Structure***

The statements presented may consist of any number of arguments, depending on their length and detail. The structure of the statements was evaluated both in terms of the formulation of individual arguments and the organization of the statement as a whole. The analysis of the structure of individual arguments considered the content. I examined how the content is organized in individual arguments and determined which are sound and which are inherently flawed. Following this, I mapped out the structure of the statement as a whole, outlining the arguments in the order they are presented. The individual arguments then become the premises to a larger conclusion. This allowed me to understand *how* speakers present their justifications for the (de)securitization of the US-Canada border.

The initial assessment of the structure follows the analysis of content and context. The coding processes utilized in these previous steps of analysis facilitate the on-page mapping of the statement structure. Similarly to these other initial steps in the analysis, the identification of patterns and deviations in the structure were noted separately as findings.

### **Exclusion**

The analysis framework explained above was elaborated to respond to the specific question this research attempted to address. The omission of two potentially relevant elements, the audience and the tone, requires some explanation. The question of the audience was not considered integral to understanding the securitization process. In addition, there are several difficulties that arise when attempting to define the audience

and measure its role in securitization. The decision to omit any analysis of the tone of the discourse was taken due to the difficulty of identifying it within the data as it consisted only of documents and written transcripts.

### *Audience*

In the Copenhagen School's securitization theory, the audience response to the speaker's claims – acceptance or rejection – is central to the process's completion. What is clear through empirical research, and has been argued by others is that the characterization of the “audience” and its role is highly problematic when looking at the securitization of an issue. There are several problematic elements in attempting to take the audience into consideration. First, it is very difficult to distinguish the audience from the speaker. (Stritzel, 2007: 362-3) Each might constitute the other in another moment. It is also impossible to strictly define the audience – who belongs to this group and who does not – as the likely intended audience may not be the only one reached and thereby affected. In addition to the difficulty of distinguishing the speaker from the audience, Salter (2008) argues that the particular audience relevant to the process is difficult to identify, especially in the Copenhagen School's under-theorized conception of the audience as a participant in securitization. Expanding upon critiques of CoS raised by Stritzel (2007) and Balzacq (2008), Salter (2008) proposes that it is necessary to consider the securitization process as including multiple audiences. Second, the audience's reaction itself is difficult to measure accurately. The reason is that tacit acceptance is unlikely to be visible, and where active acceptance or resistance is made, the audience would then constitute a new speaker. In this way, the audience does not really exist. It is merely

another potential speaker. This leads to a questioning of the theorization of the process by which issues become framed as security matters. As Balzacq (2008) argues, the audience is not necessary to the process of securitization. In order to understand the securitization as being successful or failed (and to what extent) it is more appropriate to look at the discourse and activities of all actors involved. The types of policies that are developed to address the issue and the prominence or priority with which this issue is treated are essential to understanding the degree of success of securitizing moves. While one could argue that this would be indicative of an audience accepting that these responsive measures take place, it is important to recognize that it is not the acceptance of an isolated audience that permits the contextualization of an issue as a security matter, but rather it is the collective activity (or inactivity) that creates this context.

The purposes of this research were not to determine whether or not the securitization of the issue is or is not successful, nor how, in the causal sense, this is occurring. The underlying assumption of this paper is that securitization is occurring and that the process is already in place. The interest of this paper was to track this process. It was to understand how the process works, in a descriptive sense. It is on this basis and on the basis of the problematic methodological and theoretical issues surrounding the “audience” elaborated above that the decision to exclude the “audience” from this research has been taken.

### *Tone*

One element that could be argued to be central to the analysis of oral discourse is tone. While I agree that the tone in which the elements discussed above are presented is

essential to fully understanding the manner by which a statement makes an impact on the audience and on the development of the context in which an issue is understood, it was not feasible to address this component within this paper. One reason for this is the limited scope of the project itself. Choices must be made in order to be able to complete such a project within the time-frame and space allocated to it. Upon examining the value of the different discursive elements I could study, I realized quickly that the three retained for the project were much more important to the research question I sought to address. Furthermore, given that the statements were mainly available in a written format, the tone would have proven very difficult to determine.

### **Presentation of Results**

Throughout the presentation of the results of the analysis conducted for this research, quotes taken directly from the data will be used in order to illustrate or provide examples of the findings. The quotes presented in this paper have been selected most often because they are indicative of the content of the larger body of data. In other words, they were chosen due to their representation of the statements in general. Where indicated, the quotes represent only the statements of one of the two included speakers. In addition, there are occasions on which the quotes included represent exceptions or infrequent occurrences. In these cases, these quotes have been explicitly identified in their introductions as such.

## **CHAPTER III:**

### **A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON US-CANADA BORDER SECURITY**

The body of literature deemed relevant to the case of the US-Canada border and its securitization consists of three broad categories. The first category of the literature review contains the academic work that has been conducted on the subject of borders and their conceptualization. The second portion of the literature review examines the work of academics in the area of critical security studies. The existing body of work in critical security studies offers reflections and analyses that are crucial to the understanding of the process(es) by which security issues are constructed. Finally, a review of the existing literature on recent US-Canada border security policies helps to situate the case within its current political context.

#### **Borders**

The concept of borders has developed significantly over time. It stems traditionally from the interpretation of territorial sovereignty, indicated by physical geographical delimitation. These symbolic delineations drawn to distinguish political entities are the result of the world's political history. They may follow natural physical divisions, such as bodies of water, but the demarcations of territories are not constant, and are not naturally occurring independently of the human social and political context. The border is no longer treated simply as a fixed symbolic line, a site at which the land is simply protected from outside invasion. Today it is a site of commercial activity, of welcoming to immigrants and travelers, and of rejection to the undesirable. Borders are no longer fixed, with the development of mobile check-points and pre-clearance programs.

With the reshaping of the concept of the border, there is also a reformulation of the security concerns that surround it. A border is no longer simply securitized and armed against physical military invasion. A border becomes a site where policies and technologies are implemented in order to protect against waves of immigrants or refugees threatening the integrity of the national identity and economy. It becomes a gateway that must be closed to the entry of the clandestine travelers and illicit drugs that endanger those who are law-abiding and act as accomplices to those who are not. It becomes a final obstacle to the entry of terrorists and other criminals who threaten the physical safety of those who call the territory home. Meanwhile, however, it also remains a site of welcoming for those who enter legitimately and for the international commerce that is now necessary to sustaining a sound economy. These conflicting priorities create tensions in policy development at the border.

Contemporary studies of borders can be interpreted as stemming from two approaches regarding the concept. The first of these approaches reflects a more traditional interpretation of the concept of the border, while the second represents a more critical perspective.

On the more traditional side, Andreas (2003) maintains a focus on borders' relationship to sovereignty, arguing that while borders have been traditionally understood as primarily concerned with military defense and economic activity, the conceptualization of borders have recently increasingly turned to policing in response to what he calls "clandestine transnational actors" or CTAs. (80) Andreas argues that, while others are convinced of a decline in borders' relevance, there is in fact a shift in concerns

that border controls seek to address, that has led to changes in the types of tools and practices adopted as a response. (2003: 78)

Andreas elaborates on the traditional interpretation of borders, which belongs within a realist framework. This traditional view consists of conception of borders in relation to states' physical territory and the delineation between this and the threats (military) that exist outside it. He indicates that this limited view of borders has lost its relevance in a context in which the frequency of military invasion and border conflicts has declined significantly. He argues that,

states have increasingly defined many CTAs as 'new' security threats, merging internal and external security concerns and providing a rationale for more expansive border controls and policing powers. (Andreas, 2003: 82)

Andreas states that many have argued that the impacts of globalization have meant a declining interest in preserving the integrity of territorial borders. (2003: 78) He says that this position ignores the shifting dynamic of border controls. He states that there are now attempts at balancing the demands of globalization with the identification and exclusion of undesirable entries.

Like Andreas, Walters (2006) argues that borders remain significant in the political arena, but that the priorities are shifting towards everyday practices and law enforcement in order to govern mobility and interdict undesirable entries. Contrary to Andreas's interpretation of borders through a lens focused on the question of sovereignty, Walters approaches the concept of the border in a more critical way that stems from a political sociology that focuses on governmentality. (2006: 189) He emphasizes the border's role in the demarcation of inside and outside, but states that rather than creating an impermeable wall, borders act more like gateways. There are, therefore, filtering practices that serve to distinguish desirable from undesirable entries. He argues that,

while this function may have been a part of border activities in the past, recent policies and practices indicate that this filtering of cross-border travelers is becoming more significant. (2006: 188)

Salter (2007) argues that the border represents a special case for analysts given its relevance to both domestic and foreign policy. He indicates that the failure of more traditional conceptualizations of the border to recognize this complexity leads to a flawed and incomplete understanding of the dynamics that shape border security policy-development.

The concept of national borders is directly linked to questions of citizenship.

The idea of belonging that is at the root of the concept of citizenship is threatened when people cross borders, leaving spaces where they 'belong' and entering those where they do not. (Torpey, 1998: 245)

Many authors, both on the more traditional side like Biersteker (2003) and those adopting a critical approach, including Bigo (2002) and Campbell (1998) explain the political utility of securitizing the border. It serves as an outlet to legitimize the positions of those in power. Political leaders may identify threats to the population as a whole and subsequently assure the people that they will protect them. The promises made will then be translated into policies that visibly address the permeability or weaknesses of the border itself, thus engendering support for the continued power given to those leaders.

The securitization of the border is significant, because, as Bigo (2002) argues, the legitimacy gained by those in power through the protection against outside threats can then be transferred to "other targets" who may be found within the national territory, such as immigrants. (Bigo, 2002: 63) He illustrates that the question of immigration is surrounded, much like the issue of borders, by the conflicting priorities of security and economic growth.

Furthermore, in order to respond to the more complex security concerns that have emerged since traditional conceptions of the political territorial boundaries, borders are equipped with highly trained staff and advanced detection technologies. Border patrollers collect data, question and detain persons if necessary. Cross-border travelers are increasingly required to prove their identities, using passports and biometric identifiers such as fingerprints and iris scans. Frequent or low-risk travelers are, in some cases, able to participate in self-identifying pre-clearance programs, expediting the border-crossing process and relieving congestion at the border sites themselves.

### **Critical Security Studies**

Critical security studies challenge the traditionalist perspective on security, arguing that threats do not exist independently of perception and identification. They argue that issues are prioritized through processes – these vary by school – of naming or classifying or shifting them into the category of security. Without these processes, issues would not become security matters, as they must be constructed as such. Three main schools belong to the category of critical thought in security studies: Aberystwyth, the Paris School, and the Copenhagen School. In addition to these larger theoretical schools, we find constructivists, feminists, and others.

The Aberystwyth School, also called Critical Security Studies (CSS), focuses on emancipation and human beings as central to the question of security. (Booth, 2005) This school pleads for a departure from state-centrism and state interests to focus on the fundamental and universal needs of humans. The CSS school of thought takes an explicit

normative position, asking not what security does, but what it *should* do. (c.a.s.e. Collective, 2006)

The Paris School of security studies is based on a political sociology perspective that asks how practices contribute to the shifting or framing of an issue as a matter of security. (Bigo, 2002) These practices are the concrete applications, and at times, deviations from the stated purposes of policies. This perspective believes that understanding the exercise of power at the extremities is crucial to grasping the process by which issues become considered security matters.

The Copenhagen School (CoS) puts forth its securitization theory, which is based on the belief that issues become considered matters of security when they are successfully put through a discursive process. This process consists of a speech-act, meaning a statement that is in itself an action, much like a promise or oath is an action. The securitizing speech-act is a statement that declares an issue to be outside the realm of normal politics, requiring exceptional measures. Securitization is only successful when the speech-act is accepted by the relevant audience, thus legitimating the use of exceptional measures. (Buzan, de Wilde and Waever, 1998) Furthermore, CoS argues that security is divided into specific sectors, and that threats are linked to particular referent objects. These sectors are: military/national security, economic security, societal security. (Buzan, 1991) National security revolves around the physical integrity of the territory of a state. Economic security's referent object is financial stability. Societal security's referent object is collective identity. One of the key components of CoS is the support of desecuritization. It is the belief of the CoS (not exclusively) that securitization, or dealing with matters in the realm of security, demonstrates a failure of

normal politics. CoS argues that issues are better dealt with in the realm through normal political processes, than through security, as the latter often assumes an urgency that requires that democratic processes be bypassed in order to take swift, but untested and un-debated, action.

Many critiques have been raised against the CoS, and in particular, securitization theory. The CSS argues that CoS fails to take a normative stance with regards to security. But this critique has been countered by others, who state that the stated goals of the two schools are explicitly divergent, and that the challenge posed to CoS by CSS is based on the expectation that its own purposes are more important than those of CoS who seek to understand security as it is exercised, rather than deciding how it *should* be exercised. (Taurek, 2006)

Other critiques have been raised against the CoS on the basis of the centrality of the speech-act. They argue that the process of securitization should not be examined as attributable to a singular speech-act. Williams (2003) argues that looking at the speech-act alone is insufficient to understanding the process of securitization. Rather, some argue that there are larger contextual elements, beyond the discourse, that must be understood as crucial to the securitization process. Stritzel (2007) critiques the Copenhagen School's "internalist" perspective, arguing that broad contextual elements need to be given greater consideration in the securitization process, rather than focusing strictly on the textuality of the speech-act. In his critique, Stritzel proposes that the positional power element of the context needs further development. He argues that in order to study securitization, analysts must recognize that there are many variations in what constitutes positions of power and the ability to influence constructions of collective meaning. Balzacq (2008)

argues that the Copenhagen School's theory overlooks the importance of policies and their implementation, which may not only be responses to securitization, but also participate as securitizing tools or instruments.

Balzacq challenges the Copenhagen School's emphasis on the speech act, demonstrating that discursive action is not the only element contributing to the creation of a security climate around an issue. He argues that it is necessary to look beyond performative discourse to include policies and practices that may act as "securitizing tools." He distinguishes securitization tools – that is, those measures employed following a successful securitization – from securitizing tools, which serve to contribute to shifting an issue into the realm of security (or expanding security to include that issue). Balzacq demonstrates that securitization tools may become securitizing tools, and that it is important to consider these instruments as participating in the securitization process.

Similarly to the critiques of the centrality of the speech-act, the Copenhagen School's securitization theory has been challenged based on its conceptualization of the relationship between the speaker and the audience. Given that neither position is fixed – meaning that the speakers and audiences vary depending on the case, location, or time period in question – it is difficult to precisely distinguish the speaker from the audience. This difficulty deeply impacts the applicability of this theory to empirical study. Balzacq questions the centrality of the speaker-audience relationship, arguing that securitization is possible without the element of audience-acceptance. These types of critiques do not represent a throwing-out of securitization theory, but rather a challenge to broaden the theory to include a wider-range of relevant activities and actions.

Other perspectives, such as feminism in security studies, have adopted much of the same point of departure in terms of the social construction of security issues. But these add critiques and challenges to existing critical and traditional schools in terms of specific weaknesses. An example found in the feminist critiques is the argument that many schools of thought, including the critical schools, fail to recognize gender and ethnicity as central to many cases of security.

Some authors argue explicitly that the lines between these schools of thought are blurry and oversimplified. But these remain, nonetheless, useful divisions for situating the general varying positions within security debates. It is, however, worth noting that many theorists find themselves between schools and others explicitly attempt (at times successfully) to unite certain elements of these different perspectives.

The expansion of security or placement of issues into the realm of security justifies the use of exceptional measures and the prioritization of that issue over others. This means, first, that responsive measures may be developed and implemented in a spirit of urgency that deems democratic process and debate to be an unnecessary impediment to the integrity of the threatened referent object. Furthermore, security can be used as a counter-argument for the highly prized democratic value of transparency. Should the restricted access to supposedly sensitive information be crucial to the security of that referent object, transparency becomes trumped by the urgency of the matter. Responses to security claims often include increased budgetary allocations for research, technologies, and other tools, such as security personnel and additional training. The responses are developed and selected in relation to particular threats and their referent objects.

## **US-Canada Border Security**

While prior to the events on September 11, 2001, the US-Canada border was subject to the implementation of increases in security measures, these were much more significantly intensified following these terrorist attacks. The following pages will outline the political context of US-Canada border security relations through a brief exploration of some of the initiatives that have emerged since the mid-1990s.

In 1995, Canada and the United States announced the Shared Border Accord, a joint initiative directed at improving trade and travel between the two countries while providing increased protection against illicit cross-border activities. (Embassy of the USA, 1995) Measures including improvements to pre-clearance expedited travel programs resulted from this initiative alongside measures intended to address concerns such as drug trafficking and illegal immigration. The Shared Border Accord thus demonstrated increased attention to security concerns at the US-Canada border while continuing to maintain trade and travel priorities held by both countries. (Pellerin, 2005: 57) Further commitments to joint efforts at addressing border concerns continued over the years following the Shared Border Accord, including the creation of the Canada-United States Partnership (CUSP), a forum in which cooperation would be emphasized in discussions of border management and efficiency, as announced by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and President Bill Clinton in October 1999. (Government of Canada, 2000; Kitchen, 2004: 708)

In December 1999, US-Canada border security received increased attention, as Ahmed Ressam was apprehended at a Port Angeles border crossing, the trunk of his car containing explosives that authorities claim were to be detonated at Los Angeles airport.

The highly publicized case of Ressam, dubbed the Millennium Bomber, revealed significant weaknesses in the Canadian passport application process. Ressam, who had been living in Canada as a refugee, was able to obtain a Canadian passport using a fake baptismal certificate. (Salter, 2004: 83-4) This event that took place at the US-Canada border created alarm and resulted in a reevaluation of the passport application process and ultimately in reforms that put in place additional requirements in the interest of restricting access to this document to those who can prove their identity. (Ibid.) Andreas (2005) explains that the event had significant political repercussions for US-Canada border relations, both in the immediate aftermath, in which Canada was accused by American media of being “soft on terrorism,” and even more significantly in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. (453-4)

Shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks, Canada and the United States demonstrated once more a joint commitment to the prioritization of security at their shared border, through the Smart Border Accord, accompanied by a thirty-point action plan. (Kitchen, 2004; Salter, 2007) As Veronica Kitchen (2004) explains, the Smart Border Accord was mainly drafted by Canada, but later finalized with the United States, and was constructed, “around three pillars: technical and policy cooperation; bureaucratic cooperation and high-level political attention; and implementation across a defined issue area.” (695) According to Andreas (2005), this agreement, signed in December 2001 represents a moment at which it becomes glaringly evident that the United States and Canada are actively engaging in attempts to maintain the facilitation of positive economic activities while emphasizing the border’s role as a security barrier. (458) The focus on creating a “smart” border is illustrated in the adoption of risk management approaches,

such as pre-clearance programs, like NEXUS and FAST, used to facilitate the movement of known and “safe” travelers across the border, while allowing for increased attention to inspections of higher risk or unknown travelers. (Kitchen, 2004: 695; Andreas, 2005: 458; Salter, 2007: 304-5)

The US-Canada border has since seen increases in border security measures, in the form of the adoption of more sophisticated technologies, a more significant agency presence at the border, and in continued and improved coordination of efforts by Canadian and American actors. Salter (2007) emphasizes the role of technology in both surveillance and in the process of authenticating the identity of a cross-border traveler. He explains that risk management efforts at the US-Canada border have been aided by increases in the use of surveillance equipment as well as the adoption of biometric technologies in the identification process. (304-5) While in 2001 United States patrol on the US-Canada border totaled only 334 agents, it was deemed necessary by the US congress to triple that presence in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks. (Andreas, 2005: 452, 455) These measures serve to illustrate the dramatic shift that occurred at the US-Canada border towards a more heavily prioritized security agenda.

One highly visible security measure came in the form of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) announced by the United States in April 2005. This initiative, which emerged from the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act enacted in December 2004, contained stipulations as to the documentation requirements for all persons entering or re-entering the United States, including American citizens. The WHTI, which addressed cross-border travel by land, air, and sea, stipulated that all persons entering the United States would be required to present a valid passport or

equivalent, approved document. This requirement was initially due to take effect at land-border crossings as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. This represented a point of contention, however, with Canada and the implementation of the rule for land-borders was postponed until June 2009. The requirements of the WHTI represented a significant departure from the types of documentation previously accepted at land-border crossings. (Kitchen and Sasikumar, 2009: 164-5)

Some authors have attempted to explain the shift that has recently occurred surrounding the US-Canada border, and demonstrate the impact of this shift on the types of policies that have subsequently emerged. In his recent work, Andreas (2005) argues that the issues that could be considered matters of concern at the border were, prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks, generally kept out of the political and media spotlight. Efforts made to keep attention away from the US-Canada border were facilitated by the emphasis on concerns at the US-Mexico border. But that the border was poorly guarded and porous became a highly politicized issue following the September 11, 2001 attacks despite the absence of a link between the events and the US's northern border. He says that regardless of the absence of such a link, "the US-Canada border was a ready-made target for those who blamed lax controls for America's vulnerability to terrorism." (454-5) Similarly, in an attempt to understand this shift, Whitaker (2004-5) argues that while the September 11, 2001 attacks were not the result of US-Canada border failures, the "Canadian connection argument quickly shifted to another, more slippery terrain: terrorists "could" enter through Canada." (59) Andreas attempts to explain this in different language, stating that,

The main US worry is that the expansive commercial cross-border networks and routes (both legal and illegal) can now be exploited to smuggle terrorists and weapons of mass destruction into the United States. (2005: 460)

As Salter (2004) argues, the change in policy priorities reflects that, whereas the US-Canada border had previously been viewed as “internal,” it was now considered to be “external” and inherently risky. (83) This thus indicates a profound shift in the perception of the US-Canada border, illustrating that it has been pushed further into the realm of security than it has been in the past.

### ***Gaps in the Literature***

While some important work has been conducted on the shifting dynamic at the US-Canada border, there is an absence in the literature of research that seeks to address how this shift is occurring. The research I have conducted here seeks to begin to address this gap, by asking primarily *how* the US-Canada border is being securitized. The work that other authors have presented has laid the foundation for my research. It has demonstrated that there is a shifting dynamic and has explored the different signs of this occurrence. Their research has sought to illustrate *that* the shift is occurring and has looked at its (potential) impact(s). My research attempts to add to theirs, by posing a different question and offering (the beginnings of) an understanding of the process by which this shift is occurring. Through a more complete understanding the process of securitization of the US-Canada border, it is possible to gain a better grasp of the role of varying actors, including academics, in the (de)securitizing this and other issues.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **STUDY FINDINGS**

The analysis revealed certain key findings regarding the manner by which the two speakers discuss the US-Canada border. First, the results revealed that the threat of terrorism represents the most prominent threat named in the discourse, to the point that it overshadows other cross-border activities, both favorable and unfavorable. Meanwhile, the manners by which the speakers substantiate their threat claims are both vague and logically flawed. Secondly, the analysis reveals that the discussion of the US-Canada border is contextualized both by existing North American relations and by the United States' larger national, international, and occasionally internal security projects. Third, the existing and proposed border controls are discussed in terms of their purposes and their results, be they successes or failures. The presentations of the results of existing policies are followed by recommendations for future measures. The analysis served to illuminate the relatively low levels of specificity and types of substantiations (or lack thereof) made by the speakers within these discussions. These results will be presented in the next pages and will be discussed in the following chapter in terms of their relevance to understanding the securitization of the US-Canada border.

#### **Threat Naming**

The process of securitization relies greatly on threat-naming. This action consists of identifying a concern as representing an urgent danger to a particular object or population. It is through this calling attention to a threat that a speaker can argue that actions must be taken to address it. The speakers included in this research frequently

identify the potential entry of terrorists into the United States as the primary security threat at the US-Canada border. This threat is named in all but a few of these statements. Many of these statements include explicit and direct references to terrorism as a threat requiring increased border controls. In these statements, the speakers will claim that the terrorist threat exists and that it must be addressed through enhanced measures at the US-Canada border. Where the potential for terrorist entry is not the primary threat explicitly related by the speakers to the US-Canada border, it makes up much of the larger context in which the US-Canada border is discussed, meaning that calls for increased border security are, in these cases, made within statements that prioritize terrorism as the most significant threat to American security. Often the discussions of the US-Canada border are included in statements that cover a broad range of political and security priorities. The majority of the statements are dominated by claims of the urgency of the threat of terrorist attack, shaping the general context in which other issues are discussed. The statements in which the US-Canada border is argued to represent a danger and that controls must be enhanced are thus shaped by a broader discussion of the need to address the threat of terrorism.

### ***The “Evidence”***

A significant part of the threat-naming process in securitization is the type of justification provided to support the claim that the threat in question does represent a significant danger that requires an urgent response. In the case of the primary threat presented in the discourse – terrorism – the attacks on September 11, 2001 are the most commonly referenced as a form of evidence to demonstrate the threat’s existence. It is notable,

however, that the case of Ahmed Ressam, or the Millennium Bomber, is not persistent in the discourse. These two events and their roles (including absences) in the discourse will be discussed in the pages to follow.

### *September 11, 2001*

In order to substantiate claims that terrorism represents a significant threat to American security, the speakers often make references to the attacks on 11 September, 2001.

All our lives transitioned as we tried to makes sense (sic.) of a brutal act of terrorism, and make secure our borders, ports, waterways, the very skies overhead. (DHS, May 18, 2005)

Claims that these events are relevant when discussing the case of America's northern border, however, are based on an evidently faulty logic. No link exists inherently between those attacks and the US-Canada border. The terrorists responsible for the attacks on 11 September, 2001 did not gain access to the United States due to any failures at the US-Canada border. At no point in the discourse examined here do any of the speakers attempt to justify the link between the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the border in question. This indicates that the speakers operate under the presupposition that this link does exist, that no explanation is necessary. The speakers do not attempt to justify this belief by demonstrating the logic that has led them to consider, despite the absence of an obvious link, these terrorist attacks relevant to the case of the US-Canada border. In fact, the speakers do not acknowledge the absence of an evident link between the events and the US-Canada border, and as result, they do not challenge each other to provide further justification to bridge this gap.

### *The Millennium Bomber*

What is notable in the discourse is not only what is present, but what is not said. As discussed above, September 11, 2001 remains a persistent reference in naming terrorism as the primary threat to American security, regardless of the failure to provide reason to believe that a link exists between the border and these events. Meanwhile, however, references to the case of Ahmed Ressam, also known as the Millennium Bomber, remain absent from all but one of the statements studied here. Ressam was intercepted at the US-Canada border when attempting to enter the United States with explosives in his vehicle. Ressam had planned to detonate the explosives at a Los Angeles airport. It is significant that while this case could be used to justify the argument that terrorists might attempt entry into the United States through Canada's land borders, it is almost entirely forgotten in the discourse. The only exception occurs when the Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff responded directly to a specific question regarding the incident and what it means for border security between Canada and the United States. Chertoff discussed the case as an isolated incident, arguing further that such an event can only be prevented outside policy and protocol with what he called the "intuition" of the border patrol agents.

I will say that, as with the Resam (sic) case, you know, our best weapon in many cases is still good old-fashioned, well-trained intuition. Even with the machinery, even with the high tech, you got to read it, and that requires training. And I'm continually impressed by the phenomenal job that our folks do at the border and at the airports in picking up on the cues that you need to know something. (DHS, June 9, 2005)

In this statement, Chertoff did not relate the Ressam case back to the threat of terrorism as it is discussed consistently elsewhere in the discourse. The speaker, in fact, appears to have played down the seriousness of the event and disassociated it from the larger

security context. In the discourse examined for the purposes of this research, the event that is seemingly most capable of drawing a tangible link between the threat of terrorist attack on the United States and the US-Canada border has been either entirely forgotten or, where it was included, presented as impertinent to the current security context.

### ***Terrorism Undefined***

There are few incidents of international terrorism that have occurred on American soil. This remains a persistent concern, however, in American discourse since September 11, 2001. The use of the term “terrorism” without further qualification is greatly problematic. While there is little explicit clarification on the type of terrorism that is being discussed, the term as it is used in this discourse implies that the threat originates from the outside. The context in which the terrorist threat is discussed is shaped by consistent presentations of the types of policies and activities that have been and continue to be enacted to address it. Those responses discussed here are almost entirely focused on that which exists outside the national territory, be it an outwardly-driven offensive tactic, such as the foreign invasions of the war on terror, or the defensive measures put in place at the border to limit access to the national territory. The focus on international terrorism is misleading as it ignores the much more frequent occurrence of domestic terrorist attacks. The discourse examined here reinforces the faulty perception that terrorism originates from outside the national territory and serves to legitimate policies and practices designed to restrict access to the United States. It does so by placing the spotlight on international terrorism and ignoring the overwhelming evidence to suggest

that most terrorist or attempted terrorist attacks in the United States have been committed or planned and attempted by Americans.<sup>1</sup>

It is not only the term “terrorism” that is troubling due to the failure of the speakers to qualify it further, but also the vague use of the concept in a context of uncertainty that renders it problematic. The speakers at times acknowledge that there is little that is certain about the threat, that it is difficult to assert any details regarding the actors involved in, methods adopted for, or targets of potential future attacks. In one instance, a speaker attempts to hypothesize some of these details, but acknowledges in the same statement that there is no way of being relatively sure that this is accurate. The general claim, however, that terrorism remains the greatest threat to American security is maintained throughout these statements, as they call for vigilance towards those who may gain access to the United States.

As discussed briefly above, the speakers do on occasion explore the possible shape of hypothetical future attempted terrorist attacks on the United States. These include claims that it is reasonable to suspect that terrorists might potentially attempt to attack the US using biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons.

First, within the risk management challenge, there are some threats of potential severity that we must eliminate. Weapons of mass effect, such as nuclear, chemical and biological, call for the rapid deployment of next generation radiation detection equipment at every port of entry. (DHS, Jan. 13, 2005)

The speakers list these in order to support arguments that land borders must be equipped with advanced detection technologies and the personnel properly trained to use them. For example, the first listed initiative under the theme of “Revolutionizing the Borders” is

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<sup>1</sup> I acknowledge that the absence of references to domestic terrorism may be a result of the type of discourse included in this research. It is important to note, however, that the discourse examined includes some statements discussing the larger American security and political contexts (e.g. Presidential State of the Union Addresses.)

WMD Detection Technology, which “is an integral part of the DNDO comprehensive strategy to address the threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism.” (DHS, Feb. 7, 2005) Again, a vague and inclusive conception of the threat of terrorism allows the speakers to argue for the expansion of border controls as a part of a larger and ever-expanding security project.

### ***Terrorism as the Threat***

The discourse included in this research reveals several key elements in the securitization process. As has been discussed above, the process relies greatly on the discursive tool of threat-naming. In this case, the most persistent threat named is that of terrorism. There are two significant consequences attributable to the importance placed on this particular threat. First, terrorism collapses all other ills into a generalized threat category. This means that the threat of terrorism may be presented independently of other dangers, which are then grouped together as one large category of undesirable activity. Or, this may mean that terrorism is presented within the larger category, but that this grouping is discussed in a context that prioritizes terrorism, thus creating a greater sense of urgency around all border security woes. Second, terrorism is presented as the threat that trumps all others. It is prioritized above any other concerns, be they other illicit or undesirable activities to be prevented or the positive activities that are meant to be upheld.

### ***The Collapse of the “Threat” Category***

Occasionally in the discourse, the speakers associate the US-Canada border with threats other than just terrorism, but rather than distinguish them from one another, these are all

presented under the title “criminal activity.” “We’re operating the US-VISIT program to verify the identity of travelers and stop criminals and terrorists before they can enter our society.” (DHS, Feb. 16, 2005) The listener is then free to define or further qualify this term based on his or her own understanding which may be shaped by experience, education, common tropes, or personal priorities. The activities that make up this grouping are at times explicitly listed – including drug smuggling, human smuggling, illegal immigration, document fraud, visa violations, criminal cross-border travel, and terrorism – but this type of list is often presented by the speaker in a single breath. This represents a vast range of activities with many different motivations and consequences. The distinction between them, however, appears to be of little importance to the speakers.

In terms of the border, listen, we’ve got a large border. We’ve got a large border with Canada, we’ve got a large border with Mexico. There are some million people a day crossing the border from Mexico to the United States, which presents a common issue, and that is how do we make sure those crossing the border are not terrorists, or drug runners, or gun runners, or smugglers. (Bush, in joint press-conference, with Fox and Martin, March 23, 2005)

Exhaustive lists and vague groupings, both tools demonstrably adopted in the discourse, serve the purposes of reaching a larger audience by acknowledging many concerns and thereby creating a greater sense of urgency around land borders. The US-Canada border is represented as a point of entry for any number of undesirables, include terrorists. Grouping these together allows the speakers to maintain the prevalence of terrorism as a threat, while reaching additional stakeholders and intensifying feelings of insecurity by associating it with others.

### *Terrorism Trumps All*

In many cases, the statements do not acknowledge the existence of threats outside the threat of terrorism. That this is by far the most prevalent border-related threat discussed in the discourse, and the only one discussed independently of others, outside general claims that the United States is in a state of insecurity, indicates that the political climate from which these statements have been pulled is one in which terrorism is highly prioritized. In the case of the US-Canada border, then, the threat of terrorism trumps concerns about other illegal activities. Where American border security was in recent history prior to September 11, 2001 mainly concerned with the threats of illegal immigration and drug trafficking – dangers which were discussed most often with regards to the US-Mexico border – attention has been shifted away, though not entirely, from these issues. For example, when discussing immigration reform as a part of efforts to improve border security, Bush argues that the resources of border patrol are best used to restrict access of drug dealers and terrorists, not to intercept illegal immigrants.

We should not be content with laws that punish hardworking people who want only to provide for their families, and deny businesses willing workers, and invite chaos at our border. It is time for an immigration policy that permits temporary guest workers to fill jobs Americans will not take, that rejects amnesty, that tells us who is entering and leaving our country and that closes the border to drug dealers and terrorists. (Bush, Feb. 2, 2005)

Illegal immigration and drug trafficking are occasionally acknowledged in the discourse, but these are included within the larger context of discussions of the threat of terrorism. The level of priority given to this threat thus serves either to down-play or to dismiss other previously perceived significant dangers.

Not only does the prioritization of the threat of terrorism trump all other dangers, it also serves to overshadow more favorable activities such as trade and tourism and the

concerns surrounding them. Speakers argue that initiatives are being developed and implemented, “in order to create more modern, secure and efficient border.” (DHS, Dec. 17, 2004) The goals of policies and practices are often discussed as multi-pronged, aimed at addressing the seemingly conflicting security and economic priorities.

The US-VISIT office is responsible for developing and implementing a biometric entry/exit system to enhance the security of U.S. citizens and visitors while facilitating legitimate travel and trade, ensuring the integrity of the immigration system, and protecting visitors’ personal privacy. (DHS, Jan. 25, 2005)

The inclusions of discussions of trade and tourism are much more frequent than those of dangers other than terrorism, particularly when discussing the goals and successes of specific policies, namely the US-VISIT program and the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. But much like those of trumped dangers, the discussions of favorable activities remain within a context of security, often directly referring to protection against terrorists.

While the goal of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is to strengthen border security and facilitate entry of legitimate travelers into the United States, we do understand that there may be implications for industry, business, the general public or even our own neighbors – Mexico and Canada. We are committed to working with affected stakeholders as this initiative gets underway. (DHS, April 6, 2005b)

The discourse clearly indicates that the threat of terrorism permeates a great deal of the discussion surrounding the US-Canada border. And while this on occasion may serve, when used in conjunction with the presentation of other threats, to create a sense of urgency around other issues, the result appears to be that other threatening activities, as well as positive activities become overshadowed by the persistent priority of addressing the threat of terrorism.

### *Terrorism: Beyond the Threat*

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 are the most consistently referenced as evidence by the speakers attempting to justify claims that terrorism is the most important threat to American security. Beyond this, however, for the speakers, this date represents a turning point in history – it represents the beginning of what is considered a new era, a new political and security context. “In the new era the threat is different, but our duties are the same. Our enemies have declared their intentions – and so have we.” (Bush, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004)

The speakers included in this research often refer to the current political context as the “post-9/11 era” or the “post-9/11 environment.” In some instances, they use this marker to compare the current context with those preceding it, defined by certain enemies or events.

Just as the Greatest Generation took on and defeated the threats of Nazism and Fascism, and Reagan’s generation won the Cold War, we are taking on efforts to defeat the very real dangers of terrorism. So let us continue to embrace this call to action and seek opportunities to improve our security and economic vitality. Let us embrace the vital responsibility of our generation and of our time. (DHS, Feb. 14, 2005)

The speakers argue that the enemy and the threat are new in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and that the September 11, 2001 attacks brought them to light. The enemy is no longer a particular state or actor.

Not only is the context different, but the threat and the enemy are argued to represent the calling of a generation. The speakers thus claim that the current generation has a duty to defeat a vague and elusive enemy: terrorism.

Now, winning this war against terror is the great calling of our generation. In ways large and small, we have enlisted in a cause larger than ourselves – the cause of responding against a dangerous and merciless evil with courage and

determination and an unyielding defense of the values to which this nation has long subscribed. (DHS, March 16, 2005)

Naming the terrorist threat as not only a security concern, but identifying the events of 11 September, 2001 as a the defining point of 21<sup>st</sup> century American politics sends a powerful message of urgency to the speakers' audiences, creating opportunities to legitimize expediting the security agenda and expanding existing security practices. Through this type of threat-naming, the speakers are able to rally their public (meaning the audiences they are addressing – in this case it is generally the American public) behind the cause of affronting this foe. They are participating in the construction of a context in which any other priorities – including not only addressing other dangers, but also maintaining the integrity of the political process and the respect of human rights – may be ceded in order to address this seemingly most persistent danger.

### **The Border**

Discussions of the US-Canada border occur in the larger context of existing North American relations as well as within a series of broader American security projects. When discussing the shared border, the speakers often refer to the US-Canada relationship as one that is based on a long-standing partnership and common values. In the larger North American context, however, the US-Canada border is not presented as distinct from the US-Mexico border. This is significant as the US-Mexico border has long represented a prominent security concern in the American political community. The US-Canada border is also presented frequently as a layer in the American national security project and within the larger international security project currently defined by the war on terror. On occasion, though infrequently, US-Canada border security is

discussed as relevant to an internal security project. These results illustrate the relevance of the discursive contextualization of the US-Canada border as a tool in the securitization of the issue.

### *Sharing the Border: US-Canada Relations*

Some of the discourse examined here discusses the US-Canada border in the larger context of historical as well as current relations between the two countries. While the porosity of the US-Canada border is considered in some of the discourse to be a significant threat to American national security, Canada itself is not discussed in a hostile fashion. Though the statements directly discussing the relationship are infrequent and limited to occasions on which leaders from both countries met all discourse relating to the relationship between Canada and the United States explicitly names Canada as a partner, ally, and friend.

There are references to the power relations that exist between Canada and the United States. For example, when addressing a Canadian audience, Bush jokes, “I realize, and many Americans realize, that it’s not always easy to sleep next to the elephant.” (Bush, Dec. 1, 2004)<sup>2</sup> The asymmetry in political and economic power between the two countries is, however, seldom explicitly acknowledged in the discourse. Instead, the speakers focus their attention on the language of partnership, of friendship, and of North America as a neighborhood. As Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge explains,

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<sup>2</sup> While this quote is discussed here as a reference to asymmetry, there is a more profound, contextual interpretation that must be acknowledged. This quote is a direct reference to the famous speech performed by Pierre E. Trudeau at the Washington Press Club in 1969. Given that the historical context of this reference would cause it to resonate profoundly with a Canadian audience, but not with an American one, this example is indicative of the consideration of speech-writers of the listener(s) they seek to address.

[y]ou have long been wonderful partners, but especially so since the tragedy of 9/11. We have accomplished a great deal together and set the foundation for future achievements. [...] Together as neighbors, partners and friends, we can make our homelands safe and free for generations to come. (DHS, Dec. 17, 2004b)

The partnership discussed between Canada and the United States refers to trade, but also to other dimensions of alliance. Presidential statements and those released by DHS make references to alliances in past military conflicts. These references are used in conjunction with and in support of the argument that Canada and the US are united through shared values and common duties and responsibilities. Explicitly listed, the speakers refer very vague and poorly defined values, such as liberty, justice, equality, and peace as those that underlie the partnership between the two countries.

Our community of values reaches back centuries. [...] Both Canada and the United States have accepted important global duties, and we will meet those responsibilities, for our own benefit and for the good of mankind. (Bush, March 1, 2005)

It is notable that these types of depictions of Canada and its relationship with the United States conflicts somewhat with claims that the US-Canada border represents a threat to American security. Claims in American discourse that the US-Canada border represents a significant danger rely necessarily on the believed existence of threats to the United States within Canada. Though direct discussions of Canada occur infrequently in the discourse, the arguments found within them imply that the country does not represent a threat to the United States, but rather a partner in affronting threats outside both countries. That these statements occur in the context of visits to Canada or meetings with Canadian representatives indicates that the partnership is emphasized in order to encourage further cooperation between the two countries.

### *North American Borders: US-Canada and US-Mexico*

The speakers included in this analysis often discuss the case of the US-Canada border alongside that of the shared border between the US and Mexico. These two land borders are rarely distinguished in the discourse based on the types of threats that are of concern to the speakers. The simultaneous discussion of these two cases is helped by the vague or general nature of the threats and referent objects presented by the speakers.

Historically, much of the concern surrounding the US-Mexico border has revolved around the high prevalence of entries into the United States by illegal immigrants, Mexican or other, entering through Mexico. The US-Mexico border has been viewed by many in the United States as representing a significant threat to the American national identity – although the existence of such an identity is problematic to begin with – as well as to employment and the integrity of social welfare programs. The perceived threats associated with the US-Mexico border also included concerns surrounding the physical security of the American population due to drug- and weapons-smuggling. Current discourse, however, illustrates that, while this concern remains, it has become but a part of a larger security discourse that seeks to address undesirable activity at both land borders. Fielding a question directly on immigration reform, Bush states that,

I am also happy to believe immigration reform is necessary to help make it easier to protect our borders. The system right now spans coyotes and smugglers and people willing to break the law to get people into our country. There is a vast network of shadowy traffickers. And I believe by making a – by advancing a program that enables people to come into our country in a legal way to work for a period of time, for jobs that Americans won't do, will help make it easier for us to secure our borders. (Bush, Jan. 26, 2005)

This statement contains no distinction between the United States' southern and northern borders. Like this statement, others throughout the data analyzed discuss the United States' "borders" in general as opposed to each of its land borders distinctively. The concerns surrounding the US-Mexico border have long been engrained in American political discourse and in the minds of many in the American public (Andreas, 2005). Grouping it with the case of the US-Canada border, the latter becomes a part of an already very familiar and historically heavily prioritized concern. This association may thus contribute to the construction of a sense of urgency or insecurity surrounding the US-Canada border.

### *The Border in the Security Context*

In much of the discourse, the speakers discuss the US-Canada border within the scope of a larger security context which can be broken into at least three security projects: the national security project, the international security project, and the internal security project. It is important to note that while there is a distinction between the three projects, the success of a national security project relies greatly on sound efforts on the international and internal levels.

### *National Security Project*

Given that the border has long been understood as the marker for delineating the national territory and domestic population from all that which falls outside itself, it is unsurprising that much of the border security discourse reflects a focus on national security. The national security project is one that is literally concerned with the integrity of the

imagined barriers that separate those inside from dangers and threats originating from outside. The emphasis here is on intercepting those who may wish to harm American people or infrastructure on United States territory. As a part of this national security project, the speakers group together efforts to increase border controls, both at the US-Canada and US-Mexico land borders, as well as to increase controls at sea ports and airports.

Existing security measures in place at land-borders, including the presence of patrol agents, as well as the implementation of identification requirements, detection technologies, and surveillance equipment, are presented as working in conjunction with one another to create a more secure barrier to undesirables attempting to gain access to the United States. Discussions of the expansions of security practices at land-borders are presented and understood as the addition of more “layers” to those existing security measures.

Meanwhile, land-border security comprises one layer among others, namely sea port security and airport security, in the national security project. These represent three prongs, working in conjunction with one another, in the attempt to secure the national territory by restricting access to it. Efforts are made to create layers of security on all of these fronts, as well as to “push out” the borders (DHS, Jan. 13, 2005) in order to maintain a critical distance between threats and the United States’ territory.

Our strategy is, in essence, to manage risk in terms of these three variables – threat, vulnerability, consequence. We seek to prioritize according to these variables, to fashion a series of preventive and protective steps that increase security at multiple levels. [...] When I say multiple levels, I’m speaking, of course, of layered security. Many of you have seen a layered system of protective measures at land borders, seaports and as you make your way across the skies overhead. Layering is a strong force multiplier. Taken together, a ‘system of systems’ cannot deliver perfect security, but it can increase the effectiveness of our efforts. [...] It is impossible to monitor every single person

who enters the country, but, with this system [US-VISIT], we can pull the welcome mat from those who come packed with evil intentions. (DHS, March 16, 2005)

The national security project is not the only one present in the discourse. Similarly to the different parts of the national security project, the larger, general security agenda is made up of layers. In this general security agenda, the national security project acts as one prong alongside an expansive, externally-driven international security project.

### *International Security Project*

It is possible in understanding the threat of (international) terrorism, to consider that the likelihood of successful national security increases with the implementation of effective international security tactics. In the discourse examined here, the speakers argue that in order to secure the borders of the United States against the entry of potential terrorists, it is necessary to reduce the likelihood that terrorists will reach the point at which they can formulate and execute plans to access American territory. In order to affect this potentiality, these speakers argue that in addition to securing the territory's ports of entry, the United States must address the problem of terrorism where it originates. This of course is based on the faulty logic discussed elsewhere in this research that the only threats of terrorism originate from outside the United States, when in reality there is such a thing as domestic terrorism. Before delving into a discussion of the national territorial security agenda, Secretary Chertoff discusses the larger international security project.

What happens abroad has an impact here at home. Let me be clear: homeland security is one piece of a broader strategy that the President has deployed to protect this nation. That strategy first involves bringing the battle to the enemy. To be blunt, over the past few years, we have forced terrorists to spend more time worrying about how to defend themselves against death and capture, leaving them less time to plot how to get by our own defenses. (DHS, May 18, 2005)

As has been stated repeatedly since the war on terror began, it is the duty of American leaders to take the fight to the terrorists.

The energetic defense of our nations is an important duty. Yet defense is not a sufficient strategy. On September the 11<sup>th</sup>, the people of North America learned that two vast oceans and friendly neighbors cannot fully shield us from the dangers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There's only one way to deal with enemies who plot in secret and set out to murder the innocent and the unsuspecting: We must take the fight to them. We must be relentless and we must be steadfast in our duty to protect our people. (Bush, Dec. 1, 2004)

Not only is the international security project centered on an offensive approach, but also there is a component that prioritizes international cooperation. The statements on national security emphasize the role and cooperation of neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, the statements which include the international security element occasionally simultaneously emphasize the importance of an offensive external approach as well as the value of the cooperation of allies around the globe in the war on terror.

I'd say the first part of the strategy is not part of what we do in this department, but what the president has done in taking the war to the enemy. I have say, I continue to believe that the first layer of defense is a good offense, and that means as we eliminate camps, we eliminate labs that the enemy has, we kill or capture them, we put them in a position where they spend a lot of time worrying about their own safety rather than training and recruiting, that is the first piece of a major strategy. A second piece of the strategy is working closely with our allies all over the world in making the world inhospitable to terrorists. And that again is a second piece. And then of course there is a piece that begins at our own borders. (DHS, April 13, 2005)

### *Internal Security Project*

In distinguishing the inside from threats originating from outside the United States, Bush also acknowledges explicitly, in two statements, that some of those dangers have potentially already gained access to the American territory.

We have been relentless, and we will continue to be relentless in our mission to secure the people of this country. From Florida to California to Massachusetts we have arrested and prosecuted terrorist operatives and their supporters. By our actions, we are sending the world a clear message that terrorists will not be permitted sanctuary or safe haven, or the tools of mass murder. (Bush, March 3, 2005)

The internal security project is used in conjunction with the national security project in order to ensure that the domestic national territory is ridded of and protected against threats originating from the outside. Following a presentation of the national territorial security agenda, Bush discusses the role of the USA Patriot Act, identified as a highly prioritized measure in efforts to enhance internal security.

We've also improved our ability to track terrorists inside the United States. A vital part of that effort is called the USA Patriot Act. The Patriot Act closed dangerous gaps in America's law enforcement and intelligence capabilities – gaps the terrorists exploited when they attacked us on September the 11<sup>th</sup>. Both houses of Congress passed the Patriot Act by overwhelming bipartisan majorities – 98 out of 100 United States senators voted for the act. That's what we call bipartisanship The Patriot Act was the clear, considered response of a nation at war, and I was proud to sign that piece of legislation. Over the past three-and-a-half years, America's law enforcement and intelligence personnel have proved that the Patriot Act works, that it was an important piece of legislation. Since September the 11<sup>th</sup>, federal terrorism investigations have resulted in charges against more than 400 suspects, and more than half of those charged have been convicted. (Bush, June 9, 2005)

And as Bush discusses further in this same statement, internal security addresses concerns that territorial security may not be able to address, but that still carries a component related to the threats that exist outside the national limits, and is thus carries connections with the international security agenda.

For several years, Iman Faris posed as a law-abiding resident of Columbus. But in 2000, he traveled to Afghanistan and met Osama bin Laden at an al Qaeda training camp. Faris helped the terrorists research airplanes and handle cash and purchase supplies. In 2002, he met Khalid Shaykh Muhammad – the mastermind of the September the 11<sup>th</sup> attacks – and he agreed to take part in an al Qaeda plot to destroy a New York City bridge. (Bush, June 9, 2005)

The internal security project discussed in the discourse included here is not one that seeks to address dangers that necessarily originate solely from inside the United States (such as American-born criminals, domestic terrorists, etc.) but rather to address those who have either gained access to the United States from outside and that are now hidden within American society (such as illegal immigrants, foreign-born criminals and terrorists) or who's threatening activities are in some way connected to the outside.

### **Maintenance of the Security Condition**

In the discourse examined in this research, the speakers discuss the successes and shortcomings of existing border security policies while making recommendations for future courses of action. It is important to understand how the speakers present the purposes of the implementation or expansion of policy-responses at the US-Canada border (or at both US land-borders) and how they assess the results of those already in place. In order to understand the soundness of the logic that underlies the speakers' policy recommendations, it is crucial to identify the relationships between four key elements found in the discourse: the stated goals of existing or proposed measures, the positive results or successes of existing measures, as well as their failures or insufficiencies, and finally, the future courses of action the speakers recommend. At times the discussed results of existing policies and the anticipated results for recommended practices are specific. More frequently, however, the accomplishments, failures, and recommendations are discussed only in general terms. The following pages will explore the discussions of current and future border security practices, particularly with relation to the stated goals as they are presented by the speakers.

### *Stated Goals*

A speaker will often discuss a proposed or existing activity as being implemented in order to respond to a particular concern and to serve a particular purpose. This named purpose is what is meant by “stated goal.”<sup>3</sup> The stated goals of proposed or existing practices at the US-Canada border are primarily presented in general terms. The most commonly stated goal is, in a very general sense, to improve security.

As the President says, we are safer, but we’re not safe. Ours is methodical work. We move towards a well-described end state of security that requires consistent effort and annual measured progress. [...] We must continue to rise to new levels of protection and look for innovative ways to consolidate and integrate existing security functions to more effectively serve our overall mission. (DHS, Feb. 7, 2005)

Where the goal could be made slightly more specific through identification of a referent object, such as the state, the American people, and so on, the referent object included is most often simply the United States in general. That which must be secured thus remains relatively undefined. The goal does become more specific, however, where the speaker identifies the threat from which the referent object must be secured. A speaker may, for instance, state that the purpose of border controls is to impede undesirables, such as criminals, illegals, or terrorists, from entering the United States.

As our mission statement calls us to do, the Department of Homeland Security must continue to lead a unified national effort to secure America – to prevent and deter terrorist acts and protect against and respond to all threats against our nation. (DHS, Feb. 14, 2005)

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that this analysis does not attempt to consider or understand any purposes of the proposed or existing policies beyond those goals that are explicitly named – it is not possible to determine intention beyond hypothesis, and I have not attempted to do so here.

The majority of the stated goals find their specificity in the explicitly listed priorities of particular policies. For example, Bush discusses the anticipated results of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act.

The many reforms in this act [IRTPA] have a single goal: to ensure that the people in the government responsible for defending America have the best possible information to make the best possible decisions. (Bush, Dec. 17, 2004a)

On another occasion, DHS discusses the purposes of the US-VISIT program. While this, like the discussion of the goals of the IRTPA presented above, includes explicitly stated purposes of a particular policy initiative, the listed goals remain relatively vague.

The goals of US-VISIT are to enhance the security of our citizens and visitors; facilitate legitimate travel and trade; ensure the integrity of our immigration system; and protect the privacy of our visitors. (DHS, Jan. 3, 2005)

Similar presentations of the goals of proposed, newly implemented or existing policies or cooperative efforts are made in discussions of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, and Radio Frequency Identification tags as part of the US-VISIT program.

The speakers frequently discuss the importance of balancing the priorities of security with those of trade. Beyond general discussions of the intention to implement policies that operate on the distinction between desirable and undesirable entries or activities, there is little in these cases in terms of specificity.

The result will be a future state in which cross-border travel and in-country immigration activities are simple and convenient for eligible, low-risk persons, and virtually impossible for those who seek to harm or violate U.S. laws. (DHS, Jan. 25, 2005b)

Throughout the discourse, the stated goals, whether with regards to particular policies or border controls as a whole, remain consistently general. There are no discussions that

conflict with the purposes of maintaining the level and methods of security already in place as well as facilitating legitimate cross-border activity. The policies discussed, therefore are argued to be intended for fulfilling a singular, general agenda, without addressing the particular task of each individual policy or measure in that larger agenda.

### *Successes*

Where border security measures are discussed as successful, the specificity of the policies and results may vary. For example, a speaker may state that border controls in general have been successful in improving security.

We all came together again after the nation was attacked on September 11, 2001. And since that day, we have made our country exponentially more secure, and helped facilitate the flow of goods across our borders. (DHS, Feb. 14, 2005)

Again, similarly to the case of the stated goals, the speaker may identify a referent object and specific threat from which that object is presumed to be more secure. Another manner by which a speaker may discuss border control successes is through reference to specific policies or practices. In a number of cases, DHS discusses the successes of the US-VISIT program. This program is often touted to have generally improved the security of the United States and protection of the integrity of the country's land borders. On occasion, however, its accomplishments are more specifically discussed, via the presentation of statistics regarding those who have been denied entry or apprehended at the border. "Because of US-VISIT biometric technology, the United States has arrested or denied admission to more than 407 people." (DHS, Jan 25. 2005b)

Those intercepted at the border through the US-VISIT program are most often grouped into a list of undesirable categories or activities. These groups may be quite

inclusive as in the discussion of the successes of the program being that, “more than 400 criminals and immigration violators have been stopped at our borders.” (DHS, Feb. 7, 2005b) They may also consist of more elaborate lists of smaller categories of undesirables.

At the same time, because of US-VISIT, the United States has been able to arrest or deny admission to more than 360 criminals or immigration violators. These included federal penitentiary escapees, convicted rapists, drug traffickers, individuals convicted of manslaughter and credit card fraud, a convicted armed robber and numerous immigration violators and individuals attempting visa fraud. (DHS, Dec. 21, 2004)

The speakers also discuss the positive results that policy measures have had in facilitating trade without compromising security. For example, pre-clearance programs are discussed as accomplishing both security and trade goals regarding US-Canada cross-border traffic.

The seven new FAST sites, in addition to the 12 already operational, our Safe Third Country Agreement, and the agreement to expand U.S. pre-clearance facilities to Halifax are recent accomplishments that facilitate trade and travel while also adding increased layers of protection for our countries. (DHS, Dec. 17, 2004b)

### ***Failures***

It is important to note that, in the discourse examined here, there are few explicitly named failures or short-comings of existing border security measures. Where this type of discussion is absent, it is still possible to identify some discussion of existing border measures as insufficient. Statements imply short-comings at the US-Canada border when discussing the need to expand existing measures. Border controls are mainly discussed as successful, but are presented as insufficient. For example, following a discussion of the progress that has been made in North American security since the 11 September, 2001

attacks, Bush, in a joint statement with President Fox and Prime Minister Martin, warned that there was room for improvement.

But more needs to be done. In a rapidly changing world, we must develop new avenues of cooperation that will make our open societies safer and more secure, our businesses more competitive, and our economies more resilient. (Bush, March 23, 2005b)

The majority of the occasions where the speakers state that border controls are incomplete or inefficient consist of general claims that insecurity remains. Statements made by both President Bush and DHS claim that “we are not safe.” These statements are not followed by claims that the existing policies are inappropriate to the concerns surrounding the border, but rather that they are simply insufficient.<sup>4</sup> The claims that insecurity remains may be made more specific than the general statements discussed above through the identification of particular dangers that continue to threaten the integrity of the US-Canada border. Even where claims that border controls are insufficient are not present, there are continuous efforts to construct an air of insecurity around the US-Canada border through, as discussed earlier, threat-naming.

### ***Recommendations***

Following claims that the current border controls are insufficient to adequately address the dangers associated with land ports of entry, the speakers make general or specific recommendations for future courses of action. In the most general cases, the speakers

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<sup>4</sup> During a hearing on June 9, 2005, some representatives argued that existing border security policies are unsuccessful. They did so in much more specific language than that of DHS elites and the President. The concerns raised by representatives were not responded to with the same type of language that they adopted, nor was there explicit acceptance or denial of their claims by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

state simply that more needs to be done. In some cases, the speakers argue that the existing policies need to be expanded or supplemented by other measures. None of the statements contained claims that any existing policies require revision or termination. The recommendations proposed by the President and DHS do not represent a departure from existing policies and practices. The speakers generally call for measures such as increases in the quantity of border patrol agents, improvements in personnel training with regards to newly implemented technologies, as well as increases in intelligence collection, storing and sharing.

There is much we have achieved together and much more work to do – in biometrics and prescreening standards, interoperable communication, sharing information and intelligence, in maritime and cargo security, more FAST lanes, joint facilities and infrastructure investments. (DHS, Dec. 17, 2004b)

And similarly, the focus on biometric technology is reflected again, but this time with an emphasis on the cooperation of other members of the global community. “And to that end, common international standards of biometrics must be developed, and the sooner, the better.” (DHS, Jan. 12, 2005)

A great deal of the recommendations surrounding border controls places this as a part of a larger security context. As has been discussed elsewhere in this work, the language most commonly adopted is that of a “layered” security approach, in which various border control measures are understood as working in conjunction with one another to improve border security, and land-border controls are understood as one part of larger national and international security projects.

And then of course, there is a piece that begins at our own borders, which is complementary and part of the layering approach. And that involves having increase capabilities both at our ports of entry and between our ports of entry to protect ourselves from bad people and bad stuff getting into the country; a capability inside the country to protect our transportation and our infrastructure;

our special effort that we're undertaking now with respect to nuclear detection capability, which I think is an area where need [sic.] almost a mini-Manhattan Project in terms of technology as well as deployment. (DHS, April 13, 2005)

Border security and expansions of the controls already in place are thus discussed as accumulating layers built upon each other in order to improve the security of the United States (or North America or the world, depending on the statement). Existing measures are not discussed as requiring revision or cessation, but rather are presented as creating the foundation upon which other measures should be added.

### *Coherence*

It is important at this point to examine the level of coherence between the four elements of the statements regarding border control activities, discussed above: stated goals, successes, failures, and recommendations.

The majority of the statements included here discuss these elements in fairly general terms. Where this occurs, there is a great deal of coherence between these elements, but they are nearly entirely devoid of content. They therefore are not necessarily indicative of incoherence, but are also not indicative of any substantial logic.

In the cases where these elements are discussed with more specificity, the analysis reveals some notable results. First, the stated goals of the existing and proposed policies correspond fairly well with the successes presented by the speakers. While this content has a tendency to be more specific, the possible reason for this result is that the lists of goals do remain somewhat vague and the touted successes consist mainly of expansive and inclusive lists of results. Second, there is one inconsistency to note between these two elements. That is that the terrorist threat is not often explicitly discussed in the

presentation of policy successes. The stated goals, however, are riddled with and surrounded by (the context of the statements as identified within them) claims that the policies put in place will address the threat of terrorism.

Finally, the failures or short-comings of border control practices are not discussed specifically and so are at times create an incoherent logic when considered alongside the presented recommendations. A logical line of reasoning would include recommendations that directly address the types of failures identified at the border. The absence of any sort of specificity in the presentation of failures of border controls makes it difficult to understand what weakness particular recommendations, such as the implementation of biometric enhanced identification technologies, would seek to address.

Overall, the elements, when discussed in a vague sense, create a somewhat coherent line of argument. There are, however, inconsistencies where the content becomes more specific. What becomes apparent is that the statements are either at risk of being incoherent or they are almost entirely devoid of substantial content.

## **CHAPTER V:**

### **DISCUSSION**

The results presented in the previous chapter gain relevance in the interpretation of their role(s) in the securitization process, particularly as it occurs in the case of the US-Canada border. The following pages will revisit the securitization process itself and how it can be understood. This will be followed by a discussion of the role of the discourse as presented in the results chapter in the securitization of the US-Canada border specifically. Third, the discussion will emphasize the importance of considering absent from discourse when attempting to understand the process of securitization. The results of the analysis conducted for this research have revealed the significance of the types of choices made by the speakers involved in this process. Finally, the impact(s) of the manner by which the speakers participate in the perpetuation of the US-Canada border within the security realm will be presented, emphasizing the potentiality of shifts further into or out of the security realm.

#### **Securitization Revisited**

As was discussed earlier in this work, this research has been based on a theoretical framework that takes the Copenhagen School's securitization theory as a point of departure. This theory stipulates that an issue becomes a matter of security only once a speech-act declaring it as such has been performed by a speaker and accepted by a relevant audience, thus legitimating the use of exceptional measures to respond to it. While this is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the process by which security matters become understood, accepted, and treated as such, it is insufficient to

gaining a complete comprehension of how securitization occurs. An adapted version of this theory has been presented in this paper. As was discussed earlier in this paper, securitization is not such a simple process. Failing to recognize the intricacies of the securitization process in general will likely lead to overlooking key elements when attempting to understand how a particular issue has become or continues to be more or less considered a matter of security.

While it may be unlikely to fully comprehend the securitization of an issue, researchers will benefit from recognizing some of the process's more complex but important elements or characteristics. First, the securitization of an issue is never complete, permanent, or absolute. This process is on-going, as the issue may only be (de)securitized to varying degrees and may be shifted further into or out of the security realm at any time. Second, the process is not only linear (unlike the familiar model which illustrates that issues are shifted only along a spectrum of politicized – securitized), but may include shifts in a variety of directions. Third, the type of energy applied to the issue is central to the process of securitization. Speakers may create momentum or resistance, accelerating, perpetuating, stalling, halting, or reversing the process. Fourth, this on-going process requires the continued interaction of relevant actors on the issue in question. The interaction between these actors helps to shape the context in which the issue is treated, and can range from the very simple (few actors, all performing the same tasks – i.e. accelerating securitization through the identification of new threats associated to the issue) to the very complex (multiple actors with diverse perspectives and varying agendas, performing conflicting tasks – i.e. some accelerating, while others attempt to reverse the process, while still others attempt to shift the direction of the securitization.)

This interpretation of the process is useful to developing a methodological framework that will reveal a clearer picture of the securitization of a particular issue.

### **Securitizing the US-Canada Border**

In the case of the US-Canada border, there is no question that securitization has increased in recent history. Evidently, it was beyond the scope of this work to gain a full understanding of the securitization of the US-Canada border, as the number of relevant actors and the breadth of the relevant temporal period create a body of data that far exceeds that which could be considered feasible for this project. This paper has thus sought to reveal how certain American political actors at a specific moment have participated in this process. The results of this analysis conducted in this research project reveal that during the period beginning in December, 2004 and ending in June, 2005, President George W. Bush and the Department of Homeland Security have contributed to the securitization of the US-Canada border through perpetuation. The speakers do so through a continual discourse of threat-naming. The statements do not, however, create an acceleration of the process, as they at no point present new evidence or attempt to associate new threats to the case. The speakers do not contribute to any stalling, halting, or reversal of the process, as they do not provide any resistance to the expansion of the security agenda at the border. This is evident when all the statements regarding the accomplishments of existing border controls are accompanied by threat-naming or claims that these remain insufficient. Finally, the speakers perpetuate the process as, within the statements explore here, they do not shift the focus of border-talk onto newly emerging concerns (that is, those that have not been mentioned previously.)

The majority of the statements examined for this project have discussed the US-Canada border within larger security contexts. It is clear through the analysis that the largest and most inclusive discussion is that of the war on terror. Many issues are discussed within a security framework in the context of the war on terror, including defensive methods such as border security and other forms of national or territorial security, offensive methods adopted in Afghanistan and Iraq, and priorities such as policing and law enforcement, and international cooperation. These components of the larger security project are discussed as constituting layers within that project. The national or territorial security project is also discussed as being comprised of layers – namely land-border controls, airport security and sea port security. The discussion of the US-Canada border as belonging to both a slightly larger territorial security project and the larger war on terror context helps to facilitate its securitization. The issue's securitization is less likely to encounter challenges as, rather than requiring the construction of an entirely new security framework with newly identified threats and responses, it is simply being included in an already – presumably – accepted and recognized security context.

### **What is and is not Said**

What quickly became evident in the data was both the frequent lack of specificity and the glaring distinction between what could have been included and what was actually said by the speakers. These are the types of findings that will be discussed here with regards to their relevance to understanding the securitization process. This will begin with a presentation of the prominence of vagueness and its role in the discourse. This will be

followed by a discussion of a particular area, the speakers' presentations of policy inadequacies, in which the level of generality interrupts the coherence of the recommendations that follow. Finally, the importance of the types of choices made by the speakers, particularly with regards to evidence, will be presented through the notable example of the almost entirely absent case of Ahmed Ressam in the context of the prominence of terrorism in threat-naming and references to 11 September, 2001.

### *The Vague*

Throughout the discourse, there are several incidents of vagueness regarding certain elements associated with the US-Canada border or with the expansive security context in which it is discussed. While it is not surprising that political discourse lacks clarity or definition, there are two important and recurring incidents of vagueness that contribute greatly to the possibility of successful securitization of the US-Canada border.

Upon considering the content of a statement to include both what is and what is not said, the discourse clearly reveals the absence of an explicit definition of one of the key terms used in threat-naming within the securitization of the US-Canada border. The term "terrorists" is evidently vague as there is an absence in the great majority of the discourse of any further definition or characterization. This facilitates the securitization of the US-Canada border as, while the speakers discuss the issue in a manner that implies that the threat originates from outside the national territory, they are not faced with the challenges that might arise should this characterization of the term "terrorists" be made through an explicit claim. Explicitly discussing terrorists as exclusively originating from outside the national territory would prove problematic as evidence would easily

corroborate the position that domestic terrorism exists in the United States and, in fact, occurs more frequently than attacks carried out by foreign terrorists. The terrorist threat, as it is presented in the discourse, however, only implies – through the discursive context shaped by the rest of the content of the statement – this “foreign” characteristic. The absence of any clear definition thus allows the audience(s) to interpret the threat as originating from outside the national territory – with the guidance of the discursive context, of course – while absolving the speaker of the responsibility to justify explicit claims that this is the case.

In addition to the absence of a clear definition of what is meant by the term “terrorists,” a key component is missing in the discussion of the US-Canada border itself. While there are occasions of explicit association of the US-Canada border with the US-Mexico border, what is far more prevalent is the implicit association created by the frequent absence of any distinction between these two borders. Discussing land-borders in general, the speakers do not acknowledge or present any differences between the two, and thus create a tacit association of one with the other. This in turn creates an opportunity for the audience(s) to interpret the borders as identical and thereby extend any concerns or priorities surrounding one border to the other. The consequence in the case of the US-Canada border is significant. Historically, this border has been seldom interpreted as representing or being associated with security threats. Meanwhile, the US-Mexico border has long been considered a matter of security with regards to questions of illegal immigration, drug-smuggling, and human trafficking.<sup>5</sup> Attempts to securitize the

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<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that there has not been a recent intensification of the perceived urgency of securing the US-Mexico border with regards to the issue of the terrorist threat.

US-Canada border are facilitated by the association – explicit or implicit – with the US-Mexico border, as the latter represents long-standing security concerns.

### ***Critical Failures***

The discussions of the short-comings of existing US-Canada border security measures are either entirely absent or devoid of content. As was discussed in the presentation of the results of this research, the discourse regarding the stated goals and results of existing and proposed policies revealed that the most significant levels of specificity were found in the identification of positive results. Meanwhile, however, general discussions of urgency and calls for expansions of border controls remain. The missing element to create a logical link between these is the discussion of failures, short-comings, or insufficiencies. Instead of explaining how or why the existing policies are insufficient, the speakers simply adopt a vague and general approach, stating that “we” remain “unsafe.”

### ***A Key Choice***

When a speaker presents a statement, he or she is making certain choices between what is explicitly included and what is explicitly left out. In the case of the statements analyzed for this research, one of the most glaring and possibly surprising discoveries concerns a choice made by both speakers in terms of the types of evidence provided to substantiate their claims. The speakers repeatedly – almost in every statement, in fact – make reference to the events of 11 September, 2001 in order to substantiate claims that the threat of terrorism exists and, beyond that, the date is representative of the birth of a new era shaped in which the political and security agendas are shaped primarily by this threat.

These references are not unexpected. What is unexpected, however, is the absence of discussion of the case of Ahmed Ressam in any of the statements, with only one exception which occurred when the speaker was asked directly to address the subject. The reason this omission should be considered surprising is the following. In discussions of the US-Canada border, the speakers make claims that the security agenda at the land-border must be increased in the name of the threat of terrorism, illustrated by the events of 11 September, 2001. These events, however, were in no way related to any failures at the US-Canada border. There is, therefore, no inherent link between the events and that border and the speakers do little to present arguments that would bridge that gap. The speakers could easily have referred to the Ressam case in order to create a link between the perceived threat of terrorism and the US-Canada border, but did not. This illustrates clearly that there is a distinction to be made between the events and available evidence and the content of the discourse, and that these do not necessarily need to correspond or be coherent in order for securitization to be (relatively) effective. This only serves to further emphasize that a more comprehensive analysis of the securitization process must take into account not only what is present in the discourse, but also what is omitted.

### **The Impact**

Perpetuating the securitization of the US-Canada border creates potentialities for both further securitization and for desecuritization. Given that the discourse explored here maintains that the US-Canada border is a security issue significant enough to merit some attention, there is an opportunity for actors (those included here or others) to intensify this securitization, arguing that there is an increase in the urgency surrounding the issue.

This can be easily imagined, through the identification of new threats or the presentation of new evidence to support the argument that existing threats are becoming more urgent or relevant.

On the other hand, this type of energy (perpetuation) in the securitization process creates an opportunity for the removal (again to a degree) of the issue from the security realm. Given that the issue is not being securitized in an accelerated fashion, there is a greater opportunity – although perhaps less urgency or desire – to successfully stall (slow it down), halt (stop it where it is), or reverse (begin removing the issue from the security realm) the process through resistance or shifting. There may be less political will to begin desecuritizing the issue, however, as the perpetuation may cause little disruption when compared to impact of issues that are subject to an accelerated securitization.

## CHAPTER VI:

### CONCLUSION

Throughout this research paper, I have sought to address the question: *How is the US-Canada border becoming increasingly securitized in American political discourse?* I conducted a discourse analysis of statements by George W. Bush and by the Department of Homeland Security during the period beginning in December 2004, with the signing of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act and ending in June 2005, with the formalization of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America. Based on this analysis, I have argued that these speakers contribute to the perpetuation of the securitization of the US-Canada border, primarily through naming terrorism as the most significant threat to American security and claiming that the border must represent a critical barrier to the possible entry of that threat into the national territory.

The US-Canada border has historically been described as the “world’s longest undefended border.” Given the importance of the trade relationship between Canada and the United States, the main priority at the border was to maintain an open door to trade and legitimate travel. There has recently been a shift in priorities at the border, however, to increasingly favour security concerns. Policies and practices have been developed and implemented at the border over the past few years aimed at improving identification and detection.

There has been much literature produced on the subject of US-Canada relations and in particular on the subject of the two countries’ shared border. As many authors have sought to explain the extent to which policies and practices were shifting at the US-Canada border to prioritize security over all other concerns, as well as exploring the

important questions surrounding the consequences of an expanding security agenda at the border, I have sought to understand *how* this changing perception of the border has occurred.

My methodological and theoretical approaches were guided mainly by the Copenhagen School's theory of securitization. I have argued, however, that this theory is overly simplified and that a more complex understanding of the process of securitization is necessary to gaining a more complete grasp of the method by which issues become understood as matters of security. The securitization process must be understood as occurring through the continued interaction of a number of varying actors relevant to the issue in question. Based on this interpretation, the discourse analysis conducted for this research project has included statements from two relevant speakers over the course of an important six-month period.

The discourse examined here revealed that the threat of terrorism was consistently named by both speakers as the primary danger to American security with regards to the US-Canada border. The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 are the most frequently referenced in the statements as evidence that terrorism presents an urgent threat to the United States. In fact, this date is cited repeatedly by the speakers as not only evidence that illustrates the reality of the threat, but as the marker of a new era that is entirely defined by the threat of terrorist attack. The speakers presuppose a link between the September 11, 2001 attacks and the US-Canada border, while no such link is inherently present. The speakers fail to acknowledge and bridge this gap in logic by providing credible arguments to support claims that the two are related. Meanwhile, however, the case of Ahmed Ressam, an event that could legitimize claims that the threat of terrorism

is a central concern at the US-Canada border, remains almost entirely absent from the discourse. This indicates, as I have argued in this paper, that the types of choices made by the actors involved in the securitization process are important to understanding the method by which this process occurs. Threat-naming in this case indicates that there can be a disconnection between reality or truth<sup>6</sup> and the discourse used to securitize issues.

The research conducted for this paper indicates that the US-Canada border is increasingly becoming perceived as less distinct from the border shared between the United States and Mexico. Given that the US-Mexico border has long been viewed in the United States as an overly-permeable line, allowing frequent entry of (perceived) threats such as illegal immigrants and drug smuggling, a decrease in the distinction between it and the US-Canada border has led the latter to be perceived with a great deal of urgency.

The discourse analysis performed for this project has also revealed that the securitization of the US-Canada border rests on an understanding of land borders as a part of a larger security project. Land borders are seen as a layer among many in a larger national security project that seeks to impede external threats from entering the national territory. Meanwhile, this national security projects belongs to an even larger international security context in which the United States seeks to address potential threats to its security and that of its allies through more offensive measures. This larger context is that of the current war on terror.

Finally, in exploring the ways in which the speakers discuss existing or newly proposed policies, the discourse has revealed that the touted successes of border controls are not directly related to the most consistently named threat that they are meant to

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<sup>6</sup> The concepts of truth and reality are evidently problematic as they are indicative of a more realist discourse that presumes that events occur and have meaning independently of our (subjective) interpretation of them.

address: terrorism. Where the stated goals, successes, and recommendations remain vague, the assessments provided by the speakers appear to follow a coherent logic. These statements, however, remain almost entirely devoid of substance or meaning. What is consistent throughout the discourse analyzed for this research is the pattern followed by the speakers in terms of recommendations. The stated goals of existing or proposed policies are similar, but with varying degrees of specificity. Existing policies are discussed in a way that suggests that they are responding to the concerns they are meant to address, that is that they are successful, though the stated successes vary in specificity as well. Meanwhile, however, the speakers argue that these policies are simultaneously successful and insufficient. The shortcomings of these policies are only discussed in general terms, be it that they are simply insufficient, that insecurity remains, or that threats – mainly terrorism – persist. The recommendations made by the speakers reflect this position as they do not call for shifts in the methods used in border controls, but rather for expansions of existing methods, including increases in funds, training, technologies, and personnel.

Based on an understanding of the securitization process that views the role of the varying actors involved to be the creation of energy behind the movement further into or out of the realm of security, the results of my research have indicated that the speakers examined here participate in the *perpetuation* of the securitization of the US-Canada border. They create the continuing activity that is required to maintain the issue's position within the context of security by actively discussing the US-Canada border as a security matter, without accelerating or slowing the process through increased momentum or resistance. The speakers do not provide or make reference to any new

evidence or events to attempt to accelerate the securitization of the US-Canada border. Meanwhile, however, given that they continue to discuss the issue within a security context and do claim that the border represents certain dangers that must be taken seriously, they do not create or contribute to the creation of resistance towards the securitization of the shared border with Canada.

In the future, I intend to expand this research to gain a more complete understanding of the process by which the US-Canada border has been and continues to be securitized. In order to do so, it is important to take into account a much wider range of relevant speakers. First, the statements collected from political leaders and agencies must include Canadian speakers as well as a larger variety of American ones. Secondly, the speakers must not be limited to political actors alone, but also include human rights organizations, media, and private firms. In addition to the expansion of the statements collected for analysis, it is crucial to look beyond discourse to include an examination of the policies developed and their implementation, as well as daily practices at the border and in the bureaucracies that shape their operations. Taking into account the lessons of the theory of governmentality, it is possible to understand the (de)securitization process as occurring not only through discourse, but also through practice. It is important to recognize that a great deal of the (de)securitization process occurs not through individual statements or actions, but through the continued interactions between varying relevant speakers and actors. These actors create different energies in the process, attempting to shift it in potentially varying directions. This can create tensions or turbulence within the process that may be difficult to grasp fully, but it is only through the recognition of the complexity of the process that we might begin to better understand it.

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