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**Environment Activism or
National Security Threat?
Policy Options for Addressing
Radical Environmental Targeting**

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Abstract

Ecoterrorism – radical violent or destructive acts committed for environmental motives or on environmental targets – has been an under-studied domestic security concern in Canada. The seemingly intractable conflict between energy needs and environmental concerns, as exemplified by the recent series of pipeline bombings in northeastern British Columbia, has served to highlight the need for strategic thinking about this emerging threat. The question needs to be asked: who is responsible for responding to these kinds of security threats? The "Canada First" Defense strategy" lists terrorism response as one of the 6 core missions of the Canadian military. Does their mandate therefore extend to eco-terrorism, or are such acts better addressed as cases of civil disobedience, under the purview of the police and judiciary? We must consider the likely effectiveness of military responses for securing Canadian energy sources, particularly in the context of concerns about transnational as well as domestic eco-terrorists. This paper addresses this question and provides sets of scenarios to help guide the discussion regarding the kinds of security responses that are both necessary and feasible to address the security problem of eco-terrorism.

List of Acronyms

CF	Canadian Forces
CFDS	'Canada First' Defense Strategy
CSIS	Canadian Security Intelligence Service
INSET	Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams
ITAC	Integrated Threat Assessment Centre
NSCI	National Security Criminal Investigations
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RET	Radical Environmental Targeting

Introduction: Energy Security and “Radical Environmental Targeting”

Energy security has taken a central role in the cross-border dialogue between the United States and Canada. Clean energy initiatives, in particular, have gained traction in recent months following the announcement of a “senior-level U.S.-Canada Clean Energy Dialogue” by the leaders of the two countries (White House 2009). This collaboration suggests the acknowledgement of the integration of energy interests across the border, and highlights the interdependence of the countries with respect to energy. The need for diversified and alternate forms of energy has become increasingly important to North American leaders, to mitigate climate change by moving away from fossil fuels, to reduce the impact of oil price fluctuations on the economy, and to achieve national or regional energy independence for political reasons.

The inclusion of energy security in the current strategic landscape highlights its importance; it also serves to highlight the vulnerabilities of the energy supply and the potential hazards that disruption of this energy partnership may cause. A series of natural gas pipeline bombings in northeastern British Columbia in the fall of 2008 proved a vivid symbol of the vulnerability of Canadian energy resources. The attacks on oil and gas pipelines—in Canada and elsewhere in the world—combined with the increased interdependence of Canadian and American energy production, complicate Canadian domestic efforts to identify and respond to threats to energy resources and infrastructure. The multiplicity of reasons for targeting oil and gas facilities—including public health concerns over “sour gas” (natural gas containing hydrogen sulfide), environmental concerns over oil transportation through sensitive ecosystems, and the destruction of energy sources to cause political turmoil and unsettle governments—poses a challenge for agencies tasked with responding to these incidents and leads to many unanswered questions. Should these activities be treated

merely as a case of misguided environmental activism and so be addressed through dialogue? Are these actions merely a response to public health, safety, or territorial concerns and can therefore be addressed through policy changes? Should these actions be considered a fundamental challenge to Canadian national security or even state survival and thus be dealt with at the highest security levels?

This paper will address the potential impacts of the phenomenon currently understood as “eco-terrorism” on energy security in Canada, domestic and transnational. We argue that the conceptual category of eco-terrorism is insufficiently defined, limiting both the understanding of the various kinds of threats to Canadian energy systems and the available security responses. Instead, we advocate the use of the conceptual category of “radical environmental targeting” (RET), which can include public mischief, sabotage, and terrorism directed at environmental and natural resource facilities and infrastructure. As demand for energy grows, and, simultaneously, environmental concerns increase in public importance, we may be more likely to see competition between these sectors for political attention. Moreover, as energy security becomes a strategic priority, the targeting of this infrastructure becomes more profitable as a means of influencing political decision-making. Given these trends, it is likely that RET activities will increase in prevalence as actors design effective methods to achieve their goals. Therefore, although law enforcement and security institutions already have highly coordinated response mechanisms for addressing actions considered to be terrorism, it is crucial that these institutions adapt existing intelligence gathering and response mechanisms to deal effectively with the range of threats that RET activities pose.

We advance our argument in five parts. In the first section, using the recent gas pipeline bombings in Northeastern British Columbia as an example, we consider the

value and implications of labeling RET as eco-terrorism and offer an alternate form of classification for these radical acts, namely mischief, sabotage, and terrorism. In the second section, we assess the current state of governmental allocation of responsibility across agencies and organizations in Canada to national security threats, including RET activities. We propose, in the third section, a systematic classification of possible government responses to radical acts of environmental targeting that differentiates actions by motive, and organizational structure of the perpetrating group. The final two sections offer insight into the applicability of our proposed classification and response framework: the fourth section outlines a series of snapshot scenarios that illustrate how the typology could provide guidance for political responses to these destructive acts, and we conclude in the fifth section by offering some thoughts on further developing Canadian policy with respect to energy security and radical environmental targeting.

I: Re-thinking Labels: The problems with “eco-terrorism”

Natural gas infrastructure belonging to EnCana, a large Canadian oil and gas company, was targeted in a series of attacks in northeastern BC in the fall of 2008. While no people were injured by the actions, media reports documented that the detonation of four bombs near Dawson Creek, BC, damaged pipelines, a wellhead, and a metering shed (CBC 2009). Investigations into the attacks were led by the RCMP, and included its explosives unit and national terrorism team (CTV 2008a). The terrorism experts were included in the response team since the bombings compromised provincial infrastructure and were therefore treated as possible terrorist threats (CTV 2008b). While the bombings appear to be fairly isolated events motivated by local environmental health and property rights

concerns (Hansen 2008), and reflect broader community members’ concerns about sour gas exploration and transportation near their homes (CBC 2009), they also reveal the vulnerability of energy infrastructure to disruption. An October newspaper article on the bombings included a quote from Alan Bell, a security and terrorism expert, who stated: “Pipelines run through isolated parts of Canada and other parts of the world. It’s very difficult to put up any kind of surveillance technology...[and] it makes us very vulnerable [to terrorism]” (CTV 2008b).

While the implications of energy infrastructure targeting are potentially severe, it is still necessary to question whether eco-terrorism is an appropriate and useful label for radical environmental targeting. In the case of the BC bombings, the RCMP clarified to the media that the blasts were not terrorist acts, instead calling them “vandalism” (CTV 2008b). However, the media persists in describing these and other oil and gas pipeline attacks as “eco-terrorism.” This proves problematic for several reasons, not the least of which is the delegitimization of the message of resistance that the label of terrorism automatically implies.

The definition of terrorism itself is contested, and has been challenged by analysts as both vague and problematic for voicing social protest. Described as “one of the most abused terms” (Best and Nocella 2004: 1), terrorism has been seen to muffle meaningful political dissent (Miller et al. 2008; Smith 2008; Amster 2006; Eagan 1996). “Eco-terrorism” similarly has been a malleable term, considered, for instance, to be “any crime committed in the name of saving nature” (Walker 2007: 102, from Runyon 2001), or, alternately (and more specifically), to be the “use or threat of use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally-oriented subnational group for environmental-political reasons”(Amster 2006: 289). It has also been equated with acts of sabotage, described by

some as “ecotage” (see, for example, Bondaroff 2008: 1-2). Smith (2008) calls the strategic labeling of radical environmental activists as ecoterrorists a powerful mechanism to discredit environmental groups, particularly in a post-9/11 context.

Beyond the problems associated with the terrorism moniker, the category of eco-terrorism also prevents the full understanding of activities that target natural resources and resource infrastructure, by suggesting that ecological goals are the sole motivating factor. This excludes from consideration political and economic goals that may instead be driving the attacks. While the targeting of natural resources and infrastructure could be carried out by radical environmentalists—along the lines of spiking trees and other forms of “monkeywrenching” (Miller et al. 2008: 115)—it also appears to be a strategy for groups with political motives aiming to undermine the political control, economic flows, and security of a government. In the context of oil infrastructure attacks, Lia and Kjæk (2004: 112) find that these destructive activities are predominantly carried out by domestic groups, and mainly for political and economic—not environmental—reasons. They suggest that “this inactivity on the part of militant environmentalists may well stem from a fear of inflicting additional environmental damage, a major risk when attacking petroleum infrastructure” (Lia and Kjæk 2004: 116).

The vulnerability of energy supplies has both domestic and transnational implications. Lia and Kjæk (2004), in work on “petroleum terrorism,” describe one of the goals of attacks on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia as aiming to threaten the United States, based on the reliance of the US on Saudi oil supplies. This suggests that as energy integration between the US and Canada intensifies, with, for example, Alberta already supplying more than 90 percent of California’s natural gas,¹ transnational groups aiming to force political change in the US could

target Canadian energy infrastructure to threaten the perceived safety and stability of the United States.

Other examples of politically-motivated energy infrastructure attacks can be found across the world. In Mexico, a leftist guerilla group, the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), claimed responsibility for a series of oil and gas pipeline blasts in the summer of 2007, and additional bombings of pipelines in September were also attributed to rebel groups with domestic political motives (Medina 2007). In Iraq, in 2008, pipelines linking oil fields with refineries and exporting terminals were damaged by bombs; these attacks were linked to battles between Iraqi security forces and Shiite militia forces (Jahn 2008). Finally, in Nigeria, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta has targeted Shell Oil’s facilities in its efforts to stop oil exports from the region for both political and environmental reasons, in protest against the pollution and social exploitation of local people caused by the industry (da Costa 2008).

Sensitivity to motive could be informative for policy makers and policing units charged with responding to these threats, as the appropriate level of response will depend on the intentions of the groups carrying out these attacks. When considering new responses to protests against the management of natural resources and threats to resource infrastructure, it may therefore be useful to shift the focus from the criminality of the actions towards addressing the root causes of the protests (Marr-Laing and Severson-Baker 1999). While there is a need to uphold legal principles of the protection of people and property, the most effective responses might include policy changes that speak to the concerns about environmental degradation, public health, and broader political systems.

To allow for these diverse political and law enforcement responses, the concept of “eco-terrorism” can be broken down into three subconcepts that may be more

¹ These numbers were attributed to Mercedes Stephenson, a military analyst, in an interview reported by CTV News (CTV 2008a).

analytically useful: mischief, sabotage, and terrorism. The legal definitions of these terms, from the Canadian Criminal Code, provide an indication of how these destructive activities are distinguished from each other (Department of Justice 2009a; see Appendix 1 for the complete definitions from the Canadian Criminal Code).

Mischief involves the willful destruction or damaging of property, or the obstruction or interference with the lawful use of property; while mischief is usually punishable by imprisonment for up to ten years, when such actions cause danger to life, the sentence can be increased to life. Mischief also can include using explosives or other lethal weapons in public places, transit systems, and government and infrastructure facilities, with the aim of harming people or property.

Sabotage refers to acts (or omissions) that damage or destroy property in ways that threaten the “safety, security or defence of Canada” or that threaten the military forces of other countries while they are lawfully in Canada. These acts may be against vehicles and machinery, along with other property, and are punishable by jail terms of up to ten years.

While mischief and sabotage refer to specific forms of criminal activities within Canada, the Code specifies that terrorism can be “in or outside Canada.” Terrorism, distinguished from actions committed during official armed conflicts, is defined in part by motive. Terrorist acts are committed, at least in part, for “a political, religious or ideological purpose,” with the intent of using intimidation to achieve the desired goals. The acts themselves must be performed with the aim of directly or indirectly (through property damage or service disruption) endangering a life, using violence to cause death or harm to a person, or causing serious public health or public safety risks.

Radical environmental targeting activities, such as the blasting of oil and gas pipelines, could fall under any of these three categories; the value of such categories, then, is to help direct appropriate responses. The next section explores the allocation of responsibility for responses to RET activities in general by

Canadian agencies and organizations, and considers the space for coordination within the existing policy framework. In order to adapt policy responses and the framework for addressing radical environmental targeting in Canada, it is necessary to first understand the organizational framework that currently guides investigation and prosecution of these crimes.

II: Responding to RET

The responsibility for responding to a wide range of RET activities belongs to a number of levels of government, based primarily upon the nature of the activities and the impact they have on Canadian security interests. Since RET activities can span the range from relatively benign acts of vandalism to acts of terrorism against military installations and other infrastructure of national importance, a broad spectrum of responses should be expected. Therefore, a distinction must be made between activities that are disruptive and/or unlawful but do not directly threaten Canadian national security interests, and activities that do threaten the security of Canada. While the former activities are problematic, they tend to fall under the sole purview of civil authorities: “officers of the peace” whose role is to allow for peaceful protest, uphold the law, and ensure that violators of the law are dealt with through the courts. The latter activities—those impacting Canadian national security interests—require a greater explanation of the laws and organizations involved.

The *Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS) Act 1984* defines what is meant by “threats to the security of Canada” (CSIS Act 1984). There are four categories of such threats:

- (a) “espionage or sabotage that is against Canada or is detrimental to the interests of Canada or activities directed toward or in support of such espionage or sabotage,

- (b) foreign influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person,
- (c) activities within or relating to Canada directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political, religious or ideological objective within Canada or a foreign state, and
- (d) activities directed toward undermining by covert unlawful acts, or directed toward or intended ultimately to lead to the destruction or overthrow by violence of, the constitutionally established system of government in Canada” (CSIS Act 1984).

It is important to note that activities such as civil protest or dissent are not included as threats to Canadian security, unless they are conducted alongside the activities mentioned above.

In a 1998 report submitted to the Special Committee of the Senate on Security and Intelligence, Ward Elcock, then-director of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS), wrote that while some kinds of single-issue violence were less serious than they had previously been, “the potential for future violence remains a concern” (Elcock 1998). According to the report, CSIS has the legal responsibility to assess the threats of politically-motivated violence that may emerge in Canada. In this way, CSIS has a significant preventive role to play in the gathering of intelligence and communicating the analysis of that intelligence to the appropriate bodies, the key one being the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Section 6 of the 1985 *Security Offences Act* provides the RCMP with the authority to deal with the security threats outlined in the *Canadian Security Intelligence Services Act*, thereby

making the RCMP the primary responder to activities that threaten Canadian national security (Department of Justice 2009c). Within the RCMP is the National Security Criminal Investigations group (NSCI) that is responsible for investigating threats to national security, including terrorism in its many forms. The mission of the NSCI is “to provide a national program for the management of criminal information and intelligence which will permit the RCMP to detect, prevent and disrupt crime having a National Security dimension in Canada, or internationally as it affects Canada” (Paulson 2007). The key role of this organization is to “enhance preventive measures” against the threat of terrorism through community outreach programs, strengthening relationships with other organizations (both domestic and foreign), and feeding valuable information into the public policy process.

The RCMP has also launched a pilot program called the “Suspicious Incident Reporting System”, which began in 2008. The purpose of this system is to allow a variety of national infrastructure stakeholders (such as transit and pipeline companies) to file reports of suspicious activity on a secure database. This information is then analyzed by the RCMP for linkages between incidents and potentially concerning trends (Ross 2008). Such a program would allow for a greater monitoring of the types of properties that RET activists tend to target.

In addition to these, the RCMP has partnered with various other government organizations in order to increase their capacity to deal with threats to national security. Two of these organizations are the Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams (INSETs) and the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC).

There are four INSET offices across Canada, located in Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Their teams consist of members from the RCMP, CSIS, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, and various local police

forces. These teams are tasked with three major responsibilities:

1. "Increase the capacity to collect, share and analyze intelligence among partners, with respect to targets (individuals) that are threat to national security.
2. To create an enhanced enforcement capacity to bring such targets to justice.
3. Enhance partner agencies' collective ability to combat national security threats and meet specific mandate responsibilities" (RCMP 2007).

While these teams have a preventive role through the collection and sharing of intelligence, they also have enforcement or reactive capacity, with the responsibility to bring individuals to justice.

Finally, the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) was created in 2004 to be the federal organization responsible for analyzing and assessing threats to the security of Canada and Canadians, particularly the threat of terrorism. Its role is to produce comprehensive threat assessments based on material gathered from organizations such as the RCMP, CSIS, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Public Safety Canada, Transport Canada, and the Department of National Defence (ITAC 2008). Although RET-type activities are not mentioned in ITAC's materials, it does not exclude such activities provided they fall under the terrorism definitions given in the Criminal Code (as described in Section I).

What is the military's role with regard to responding to RET activities? There is little precedence for the involvement of the Canadian Forces (CF) in responding to RET activities; however, given the increasing attention being given to the role that the military can play as aid to the civilian power in matters of national interest, along with the increasing importance of energy in today's strategic landscape, the

relevance of the military in responding to certain RET activities may become greater in the future.

According to Section 273.6 of the *National Defence Act*, the Governor in Council may authorize the deployment of the CF to "provide assistance in respect of any law enforcement matter" with two caveats. Assistance must be "in the national interest" and only when "the matter cannot be effectively dealt with except with the assistance of the Canadian Forces." One example of potential CF involvement included in the Act is in the case of "a riot or disturbance of the peace, beyond the power of the civil authorities to suppress, prevent or deal with." In this case, military personnel would have all the powers and duties of constables, while still being accountable to the military hierarchy (Department of Justice 2009b).

Perhaps more promising in terms of widening the scope of the CF mandate is the 2008 release of the "*Canada First Defense Strategy*." This document outlines six core missions that the CF could be expected to undertake, two of which are pertinent for RET responses. The first is the ability to "respond to a major terrorist attack," while the second is the ability to "support civilian authorities during a crisis in Canada such as a natural disaster" (DND 2009). The key for both of these missions is the ability of the CF to play a supporting role in emergencies, empowered by the *National Defence Act* and instituted by the apparent willingness of the Canadian Forces to become involved in non-traditional security issues.

The body through which the CF will conduct supportive missions is Canada Command, an organization that was established in 2006 to help security organizations deal with the new security environment. The role of Canada Command is to act as a single point of contact for civil authorities that require the support of the CF to deal with domestic problems. It acts only when support is requested, and when national

interests (Canada and Canadians) are in need of protection or defense (DND 2008).

Therefore, the responsibility for dealing with RET activities, when they constitute defined threats to Canadian National Security, falls to a number of organizations: the intelligence gathering of CSIS, the analysis, coordination, and law enforcement capacity of the RCMP and affiliated agencies, and the supportive role of the Canadian Forces. While there is a lot of activity with regard to the prevention of and reaction to terrorism in Canada, these extreme acts seem to be seen (intuitively if not legally) as the tool of religious or nationalist radicals, not radical environmentalists. There is a good deal of infrastructure in place to deal with these kinds of issues: the key challenge here is to change the mindset of security providers so that they consider the differences between the perpetrators of these activities and can therefore better understand the kinds of security threats that they may face from RET activists. This change in mindset is also important in helping security officials to anticipate how the changing strategic landscape (including increased concerns about climate change and environmental damage) could exacerbate these threats and bring them to the forefront of domestic security.

III: Typology of RET Activities

There are response mechanisms already in place for responding to RET activities, but gaps remain in the specific consideration of the differences between environmental, social, and political motives driving the targeting of natural resource infrastructure. Consequently, we present a typology in Table 1 that helps to clarify the linkages between the kinds of destructive activities in the Criminal Code, the motives and organizational structures of perpetrators of RET, and the possible responses that might be considered by law enforcement and defense officials to address both the criminal activities themselves and their underlying concerns. We recognize that these are simplified categories that in practice are unlikely to have such clear boundaries; however, the creation of a typology is helpful for guiding the development of policy responses.

Table 1: Motives for, Perpetrators of, and Responses to Radical Environmental Targeting Activities

RET Type	Motives	Organizational Structure	Response
Mischief	Direct action, immediate results Environmental/Social goals	Unaffiliated individuals Loosely-affiliated individuals	Police Political dialogue Community engagement
Sabotage	Direct action, immediate results Symbolic action, political message Environmental/Social/Political goals	Unaffiliated individuals Loosely-affiliated individuals Members of organized groups	Intelligence Police Political dialogue Community engagement Military as back-up
Terrorism	Symbolic, fear-inducing action Political/Revolutionary goals	Members of organized groups	Intelligence Police Military as back-up

RET Types

As outlined in section 1, the types of RET activities loosely known as “eco-terrorism” are divided into the three categories of mischief, sabotage, and terrorism. Here, we add to their descriptions in order to provide a better understanding of the links between these categories and a specific RET activity like oil and gas pipeline bombings.

With mischief, actions threaten property; in the process, they may harm people, particularly when explosives are involved. Actions need not be focused on security targets, but can be any type of property, from small-scale private property to large-scale public facilities; public or private infrastructure, like pipelines, could be the target of acts of mischief. For sabotage, actions specifically threaten security targets. In the context of a shift towards a broader understanding of security—beyond the traditional understanding of national security in military terms, defined by threats at the borders from outside forces—these security threats could include actions that jeopardize energy supplies or other resource flows. In terrorism, actions can target people or property to further ideological goals, with the aim of harming people through provoking fear. Targeting energy infrastructure could therefore constitute terrorism where these targets are used to endanger lives, by threatening communities near pipelines or people working on the pipelines, or by creating public health or safety risks, through the disruption of energy supplies.

Motives

Among the distinguishing features of the three RET types are the intentions of the perpetrators of the destructive acts. As we have explained, the Criminal Code suggests that ideological goals drive terrorism; however, sabotage and mischief may also be driven by political and other ideological goals. The categories are differentiated, then, by the type and scale of the goals that motivate these acts. The key driving force for mischief is direct action to achieve immediate goals; for sabotage, the aims may be immediate but could also be symbolic, and involve security targets or threats; and for terrorism, the goals are symbolic and political, with revolutionary intent.

The goals of those committing acts of mischief—through destroying property (and not directly targeting people)—are to achieve immediate, practical results for predominantly environmental or social reasons. The actions tend to be aimed at direct action to stop harmful activities, where the targets of attack are related clearly to the goals of the perpetrators. Mischief focuses on direct actions, such as blowing up a pipeline, to stop or contest a harmful activity (eg. the movement of natural gas through a community). It may be used to send a message to those in control of the pipelines, about concerns associated specifically with the pipelines and with fossil fuel transport. In the northeastern BC pipeline bombings, for instance, the blasts were attributed to public health concerns; alternately, environmental groups might destroy energy infrastructure to stop further expansion of pipelines in sensitive ecological areas, or to send a message to companies or politicians that there is dissatisfaction with energy development activities.

For sabotage, the goals of the action may, like mischief, be to directly stop or slow specific perceived harmful activities, in this case through jeopardizing domestic security by tampering with property (these actions of sabotage are distinguished from mischief by their focus on targets that threaten security). However, unlike mischief, sabotage may also be committed to convey symbolic, political messages that are not directly related to the target of attack itself. For example, one symbolic motive may be to convince policy-makers of the destructive impacts of current energy sources and the dangers of a national dependence on fossil fuels.

The motives of terrorist activities should be seen not as intending to stop a specific set of practices or to convey political messages about the desire for changes within the system. Instead, the goals pursued through terrorism should be seen as revolutionary, to challenge the very basis of the political system and social power structures, particularly from radical ideological perspectives. The fear-inducing activities of terrorism, including the disruption of energy security through the destruction of oil pipelines, are symbolic and are motivated by ideological goals of fundamentally changing the existing pattern of social and political organization.

Perpetrators of radical environmental targeting activities may be individuals acting alone to catalyze change or communicate grievances through their actions, may be working as part of a loosely affiliated movement (eg. members of non-hierarchical, minimally organized groups that share ideological views), or may be part of organized groups (local organizations or local chapters of international organizations). Organizational structure—shortened for convenience to “unaffiliated individuals,” “loosely-affiliated individuals,” and “members of organized groups”—is related both to the motives for performing these RET acts, and to the category of RET under which their actions fall.

For mischief, we consider that perpetrators aiming to stop specific activities and convey messages directly related to the target of attack are likely to be unaffiliated individuals acting out of personal beliefs (as was seen in the BC pipeline bombings), or loosely-affiliated individuals acting from a principled position about specific environmental or social concerns within the context of a movement that promotes and supports those goals. Examples of such groups or movements might be the Earth Liberation Front or other “monkey-wrenching” groups. Targets such as pipelines are public or private property that may be attacked, and fall under the category of mischief if the pipelines are economically valuable but not critical to national energy security.

Those involved in activities categorized as sabotage could fall into any of the three organizational structures, as unaffiliated individuals, loosely-affiliated individuals, or members of groups. As with mischief, individuals with personal grievances might engage in RET activities; in the case of unaffiliated individuals, they might target not only property but specifically property that has security implications for Canada, for either direct action or symbolic reasons. Alternately, individuals may engage in the targeting of natural resource infrastructure that has security links (like major oil and gas pipelines or facilities that are needed for maintaining national or international energy supplies) as part of a larger movement (for environmental reasons, as part of a group with a mandate of protecting the earth) or as part of a coordinated group (with clear organizational structures and a coherent plan of action). Unaffiliated or group-affiliated individuals may try to convey political messages unrelated to the targets themselves.

Given the motives driving terrorist actions, we suggest that only individuals acting as part of organized groups can commit RET acts that count as terrorism. Since the aims of terrorist actions are

revolutionary, the actors involved must emerge from a group that offers an alternate ideology to replace the existing system. Individuals acting alone or even loosely-affiliated with groups may have political motives and may use violent tactics, but these should be considered as acts of sabotage rather than terrorism.

Advised Responses

Given the variation in the likely perpetrators and their motives for engaging in destructive actions, different policing and governmental responses are needed for different RET activities. Since it may not be clear at the outset who is responsible for a RET action (eg. it may not be immediately evident who has attacked an oil pipeline and for what reason), security and law enforcement response mechanisms must be prepared to address multiple types of threats, and lines of communication across agencies that may be implicated in responses must be open. For all three types of actions, the first lines of response to RET events are, and should be, local police forces and the RCMP. The questions in framing appropriate response patterns, then, are what should happen once the first investigations have been conducted, and how should the grievances underlying the criminal acts be addressed, in order to prevent the recurrence of such activity?

In cases of mischief, once the perpetrators of the acts have been identified and brought to the appropriate legal and judicial channels for prosecuting criminal acts, the government must consider how to respond to the grievances that led to the RET activities. In cases of public health concerns in communities, or of environmental destruction in sensitive ecosystems, authorities must consider carefully whether the anger leading to RET has merit. Without approving the method of voicing dissent, the government must still take seriously the root concerns that provoked the actions. One

method could be to consult with local communities to determine the sources and breadth of the concerns; for example, with natural gas pipelines, to determine what local impacts are thought to be associated with the pipelines. Meaningful engagement with the community will involve more than placation of concerns through reassurances of the safety of pipelines; instead, the government must consider whether the precautionary principle should be employed in choosing sites for pipelines and whether alternative options for pipeline placement would alleviate the risks perceived by communities. Political dialogue across government agencies, through which public health and environmental departments are involved in natural resource extraction and land zoning planning for example, might be one option for creating political processes that listen and respond to the underlying concerns that lead to radical actions.

Similarly, in dealing with sabotage the government must take steps to deal with both prosecution of the perpetrators and with addressing the causes leading to radical actions, through community engagement and political dialogue across agencies. However, with sabotage an extra dimension of information is necessary to address the issues for two reasons: first, given the potential for symbolic and non-target related messages, there may be more of a role for intelligence forces in determining the intentions of the attackers, particularly when the perpetrators are loosely or formally affiliated with larger movements or groups who may launch additional attacks against environmental and security targets; and second, since the targets are not only environmental but also compromise Canadian national security, there may be a greater need for the military to be put on a stand-by alert, as a back-up response team in case the RET activities lead to emergency situations (i.e. power outages leading to compromised safety of citizens or to riots and panic).

In contrast, political responses to terrorism must take a different track, given the revolutionary motives of the perpetrators. As with sabotage, the role of the military should be confined to providing assistance in the case of national emergencies, and should not be central to the investigations and prosecution. The police should take the primary responsibility in responding to the individuals responsible for the terrorist RET activities, and, since terrorist acts are associated with organized groups, the intelligence services will be critical partners with the police forces. Intelligence agents will need to determine not only the chains of responsibility for the attacks, but will also need to determine the potential risks for other targets, to assess the extent of protection needed for other environmental resources and infrastructure, and the type of surveillance that might prevent additional events of RET. Actions by groups premised on instilling fear to achieve ideological goals and aimed at revolution are not ones that lend themselves to engagement through political dialogue and community engagement.

The political infeasibility of compromise in the aftermath of terrorist events underscores the importance of avoiding the conflation of sabotage and terrorism. A label of terrorism justifies extreme government responses and has substantially different implications for the possibility of political and democratic community engagement in finding solutions to the underlying causes of anger. Without condoning criminal acts, responses to mischief and sabotage can include concerted efforts to address the valid fears and concerns of communities and interest groups, on social, environmental, and even political grounds. Conversely, the government cannot meaningfully engage with terrorism, and so this term should only be applied in the most extreme cases, where negotiation and compromise are impossible.

IV: Scenario Snapshots

Scenarios are used across the social and natural sciences to examine how events might unfold and what the consequences of different actions might be, under different sets of conditions, responses, and contexts. In this section, we develop a fictional RET event to show how the same initial event can be interpreted in different ways and that the various interpretations necessitate qualitatively different responses. From a common starting point, we trace out the possible chains of events that could result from different sets of motives, organizational structures of the perpetrators, and the responses of government and law enforcement officials to RET. Critical differences to be particularly attuned to in the following narratives are: the difference between attacks that constitute security threats and those that are destructive but do not threaten national security (sabotage versus mischief); the difference between attacks with direct action, practical aims and those with symbolic, political aims (mischief versus sabotage and terrorism); and the difference between political, symbolic goals and revolutionary goals (sabotage versus terrorism).

The Event

Late in the afternoon of January 29, 2010 the town of Prince George, British Columbia is celebrating the arrival of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch. Traffic is blocked off from the city centre as children, adults, and seniors pile into the Prince George Civic Centre to escape the cold. Just as the Mayor steps up to the microphone to welcome the large gathering, a distant explosion echoes through the auditorium!

That evening, the local news reports that the Spectra Pipeline, carrying natural gas from the Alberta oil sands to the United States via Prince George, had been the subject of an explosive device causing

serious structural damage to the pipeline, although, thanks to the fast response of the operator, the environmental damage was minimal.

Scenario I: Mischief

Earlier that day, the RCMP had received an unsigned letter at the Prince George detachment, part of which stated that *“The presence of sour gas in our community has caused untold damage to the health of our children, the purity of our water and soil. Numerous attempts to plead our case to the company have gone unheeded: therefore, extreme action is necessary. We will no longer tolerate the presence of this pipeline!”* Through communications with residents of the northern district of Prince George, it came to light that one particular man—a father of 2 children whose wife had just experienced a second miscarriage—had been threatening violence against the pipeline. The man was asked to accompany the RCMP to the local detachment, was interviewed, and was subsequently charged with “mischief” under the Criminal Code.

- **Organizational Structure:** The bombing was perpetrated by one individual, unaffiliated with any movement or organized group.
- **Motive:** This man’s motive was based on health concerns, specifically the belief that the presence of the pipeline was contributing to childhood illness and to the miscarriages his wife experienced. Given the lack of response by the owner of the pipeline and government officials, the man felt that there was no other way to express his concerns and frustration. His aim was to stop the movement of natural gas near his community, and send a signal to the government that the pipeline’s presence would not be tolerated.
- **Responses:** The RCMP met its responsibility to investigate the explosion, arrest the person responsible for the crime, and prosecute him under the law.

Once these duties had been discharged, however, additional measures should be taken to respond to the concerns that led to this man’s extreme actions.

- **Community Engagement:** It is crucial that the concerns of the man not be dismissed simply because of his recourse to destruction of property: the legitimacy of his health and welfare concerns should be assessed. Moreover, it is important for the community to have the opportunity to express their concerns, particularly in an environment where community members feel they will not be dismissed as radicals or suspected of possible future RET crimes if they share the views of their neighbour.
- **Political Dialogue:** If legitimate concerns have been expressed, there should be corresponding policy changes at the municipal, provincial, and even federal level. For Prince George, this might involve local governments changing land zoning and permit systems and the involvement of the health and environmental departments in testing waters and soils for contaminants.

The crime of mischief, while serious enough, is low on the scale of potentially escalatory RET activities. Because these actions are often associated with concerns that are visible and can be directly addressed, the key to understanding and responding to mischief-oriented RET activities is to take the issue away from those that might choose criminal means of expressing their concerns: by addressing the issue at the appropriate levels, in a legitimate and participatory forum, security responders can prevent such activities in the future.

Scenario II: Sabotage

The news story continued with an announcement that, just prior to going on air, the station had received an anonymous phone call from a woman, claiming the act on

behalf of Earth First! and announcing that the pipeline company should expect more bombings in the future: *“The Tar Sands in Alberta are destroying our forests, killing our wildlife, releasing untold amounts of carbon into the air, and polluting our streams. When will apathetic governments and greedy big business learn that to build the economy at the expense of the environment means death for us all? We will not rest until the tar sands are shut down for good!”* In the hours following the explosion, the military was notified and reserve forces in the surrounding area were put on high alert, in case emergency responses were needed if additional bombs were detonated.

According to RCMP intelligence sources, there was an active group of students at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) that had been loosely associated with Earth First! over the past few years. Over the course of several months, undercover officers were able to get close to group members and discover the identity of the woman that was responsible for the January bombing. In addition, they discovered the identities of those responsible for several incidents of vandalism against the local Husky Refinery and gathered details of a plan to travel to Fort McMurray—a trip that would allow the group to bring their activities closer to the heart of the oil sands. In an attempt to prevent the attacks from occurring, the RCMP publicly revealed its knowledge of these planned activities with the identities of the suspected students kept anonymous, warning that anyone involved in such plans would be tracked and punished to the full extent of the law. Security at the oil sands was tightened and no attacks were carried out.

- **Organizational Structure:** This was one individual, loosely affiliated with a small group of activists and operating under the transnational banner of the Earth First! movement.
- **Motive:** The motive of this attack was environmental and political. Concerned

for the state of the environment and the devastation caused by the oil sands, this woman (and the rest of her group) was willing to use destructive violence to further the goals of shutting down the oil sands and radically altering governmental policies on energy and the environment. The attack was symbolic, rather than one of direct action, as the destruction of a single pipeline would not alone prevent oil sands development, environmental damage from oil spills caused by pipeline explosions was likely, and threats were used to warn of additional pipeline bombings if no satisfactory response was offered. Moreover, the phone call threatened national security through the possibility of additional energy disruptions or radical actions.

- **Responses:** As in the first scenario, the RCMP is the first responder for this situation. They have the task of investigating, arresting, and prosecuting those responsible. However, these are not the only responses available.
 - **Community Engagement:** With regard to the oil sands, much stakeholder engagement has been carried out—consultations have been held with community members, environmental groups, businesses, and various levels of government. However, if there are groups that feel their concerns have not been heard, additional efforts should be made to bring these stakeholders in to the process.
 - **Political Dialogue:** Meaningful engagement with community members requires serious attempts to address their concerns, and this is where the biggest changes must be made. If the activists have legitimate concerns, the government must find ways to address them, regardless of the means used to express these concerns.

Sabotage in this case reflects a more serious crime, and proves to be more difficult to address than the mischief of the first scenario. In claims against oil sands development, there is room for some additional community engagement, but much of the change being demanded by the environmentalist group is change that can only be brought about through regulations and policy decisions at higher levels of government. Dealing with a group like Earth First! is difficult because it is, by definition, an extremist group: they demand extreme and costly changes from a fairly static society. Intelligence is important for keeping track of such groups, and helping the police to ensure that justice is served and that future crimes are prevented. Greater coordination between the law enforcement officials responding to these crimes and the decision-makers responsible for the economic and development choices that govern the oil sands should be fostered, and more participatory decision-making strategies should be developed for activities that involve severe environmental disruption. It is up to the political process to find balance between addressing the legitimate concerns of radical groups, and ensuring that citizens and critical infrastructure are secure from violent attacks.

Scenario III: Terrorism

Unbeknownst to the residents of Prince George, the bombing of their pipeline was not the only energy infrastructure to see damage at that moment. Minutes after the Prince George explosion, two other small bombs went off: the first exploding next to the Kinder Morgan oil pipeline just outside of Vancouver, and the second exploding next to the Enbridge Pipeline just north of Seattle, WA. 24hr news networks in both Canada and the US began to report the events immediately: *“Several bomb blasts have been reported in the past few minutes, from Seattle to northern British Columbia. No casualties have yet been reported. Authorities are working quickly to stop*

environmental damage from the oil and gas leakage...Breaking News...we have just learned that Los Macheteros, a radical group aiming to secure Puerto Rico’s independence, has circulated a video to major media outlets claiming responsibility for the bombings: ‘this is only the beginning, we will bring down the American empire and will use her allies to do it.’” The group threatened to bring the bombings gradually closer to urban centres, both in Canada and the United States, to cripple the continental economy by stopping the flow of energy to key regions and to instill fear in the hearts of the surrounding populations.

According to intelligence sources, this organization is actually a splinter cell of Los Macheteros, currently unsophisticated with their method but with considerable potential for future destruction. Taking the threat seriously, the authorities noted the heightened risk of casualties if the attacks were to converge on urban centres—a consequence to which the group does not seem adverse. The RCMP is mobilized and liaises with its counterparts at the FBI in order to share intelligence and try to track down any members of this group.

- Organizational structure: these are members of a small splinter group of a larger organization, operating in a structured way and trained in tactics of terror.
- Motive: The motive here is not simply political but revolutionary. There is no political compromise acceptable to Canada or to the US that would bring about an end to this group’s goals: their desire is to radically change the nature of the American state.
- Responses: In this case, too, the response is primarily the responsibility of the RCMP in Canada, along with the FBI in the US. Reliance upon intelligence is crucial for tracking down the groups, and in Canada, this intelligence comes both from within the RCMP and through CSIS.

- Community Engagement: Revolutionary groups are difficult to engage with, given their radical goals; however, there may be Puerto Rican community groups that share these grievances but do not support the adoption of terrorist tactics –and would therefore be willing to discuss the underlying issues with political representatives.
- Political Dialogue: It is always prudent to re-examine policies in light of challenge; however, since no compromise is acceptable for the radicals of the terrorist group, any policy changes should focus more on bringing the more moderate members back into the mainstream process.
- Heightened security alert: Based on the threat of more bombings and the explicit transnational dimension of security and implications for border movements and border security, security forces within both countries will have to be on alert, even as the RCMP maintains primary responsibility for the situation in Canada.

There must be caution exercised when dealing with the concept of terrorism: many acts currently characterized as “terrorist” may not be, and exhibit marked differences in the types of RET activities, organizational structures, and motives. An organized group threatening specific future events and intent upon revolutionary goals counts as a terrorist threat. However, even given the increased level of seriousness, it is still primarily the same organizations that are meant to deal with the issue. In this kind of situation, the CF may come in to assist the RCMP with securing infrastructure, but otherwise the RCMP seems to be in charge. There is still some room for community engagement and policy review, with the explicit intent of creating alliances with moderate groups, but there is little space to

negotiate with groups intent on destroying the current system.

V: Conclusions

As illustrated by the three pipeline bombing scenarios, a label of eco-terrorism is unhelpful for understanding the motives for and appropriate responses to these actions of radical environmental targeting. While mandated responses to terrorism are reactive and likely to lead to the identification and punishment of the perpetrators, they are unlikely to contribute to prevention by solving the root problems leading to the use of extra-legal means of voicing dissent about government actions and policies. Therefore, both preventive and reactive responses are needed. The three-part typology for RET activities offers an analytic framework for conceptualizing the range of appropriate law enforcement and policy responses to these threats.

Energy security is becoming an increasingly important fixture of the contemporary strategic landscape and as a result, energy infrastructure will become a more valuable target for those dissatisfied with the status quo. Explicit consideration of the environmental properties of threats will be necessary as international priorities shift towards issues of the environment, climate change, and energy use. The potential proximate and symbolic goals of domestic and transnational groups willing to use destructive tactics of protest must be identified by security officials; in addition, there needs to be a political process in place to respond to the legitimate concerns motivating many of these groups. In light of the potential ecologically-focused motives driving RET activities, agencies charged with responding to security threats must incorporate strategies for addressing environmental issues. The coordination mechanisms needed for responding to RET

do exist in the current framework for addressing security threats, but must be extended to specifically consider environmental motives. Beyond these responses, though, further policy changes are necessary: in addition to responding to

actions once they have taken place, we contend that the Canadian government must devote more energy to the policy-level of RET prevention. This will help to prevent destructive RET activities from occurring in the first place.

APPENDIX 1: CRIMINAL CODE OF CANADA (Selections)

PART XI: WILFUL AND FORBIDDEN ACTS IN RESPECT OF CERTAIN PROPERTY

MISCHIEF: Section 430

- (1) Every one commits mischief who willfully
 - a. destroys or damages property;
 - b. renders property dangerous, useless, inoperative or ineffective;
 - c. obstructs, interrupts or interferes with the lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property; or
 - d. obstructs, interrupts or interferes with any person in the lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property.

Punishment

- (2) Everyone who commits mischief that causes actual danger to life is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for life.
- (3) Every one who commits mischief in relation to property that is a testamentary instrument or the value of which exceeds five thousand dollars
 - a. is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years; or
 - b. is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction

Idem

- (4) Every one who commits mischief in relation to property, other than property described in subsection (3),
 - a. is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
 - b. is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

PART II: OFFENCES AGAINST PUBLIC ORDER

SABOTAGE: Section 52

- 1) Every one who does a prohibited act for a purpose prejudicial to
 - a) the safety, security or defence of Canada, or
 - b) the safety or security of the naval, army or air forces of any state other than Canada that are lawfully present in Canada,is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.

Definition of "prohibited act"

- 2) In this section, "prohibited act" means an act or omission that
 - a) Impairs the efficiency or impedes the working of any vessel, vehicle, aircraft, machinery, apparatus or other thing; or
 - b) Causes property, by whomever it may be owned, to be lose, damaged or destroyed.

PART II.1: TERRORISM

DEFINITION OF “TERRORIST ACTIVITY”: Section 83.01 (1)

(b) an act or omission, in or outside Canada,

(i) that is committed

(A) in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause, and

(B) in whole or in part with the intention of intimidating the public, or a segment of the public, with regard to its security, including its economic security, or compelling a person, a government or a domestic or an international organization to do or to refrain from doing any act, whether the public or the person, government or organization is inside or outside Canada, and

(ii) that intentionally

(A) causes death or serious bodily harm to a person by the use of violence,

(B) endangers a person's life,

(C) causes a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or any segment of the public,

(D) causes substantial property damage, whether to public or private property, if causing such damage is likely to result in the conduct or harm referred to in any of the clauses (A) to (C), or

(E) causes serious interference with or serious disruption of an essential service, facility or system, whether public or private, other than as a result of advocacy, protest, dissent or stoppage of work that is not intended to result in the conduct or harm referred to in any of the clauses (A) to (C),

and includes a conspiracy, attempt or threat to commit any such act or omission, or being an accessory after the fact or counseling in relation to any such act or omission, but, for greater certainty, does not include an act or omission that is committed during an armed conflict and that, at the time and in the place of its commission, is in accordance with customary international law or conventional international law applicable to the conflict, or the activities undertaken by military forces of a state in the exercise of their official duties, to the extent that those activities are governed by other rules of international law.

For greater certainty

(1.1) For greater certainty, the expression of a political, religious or ideological thought, belief or opinion does not come within paragraph (b) of the definition “terrorist activity” in subsection (1) unless it constitutes an act or omission that satisfies the criteria of that paragraph.

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