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## **Nova Scotia requires reconnaissance unit**

By Murray Lee

At a time of continuing international instability, Nova Scotia's Atlantic coastline is vulnerable to criminals, illegal immigrants and potential terrorists.

What is the solution?

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) of Nova Scotia believes an army reconnaissance unit should be located in the province so that operational readiness can be assured in time of crisis. Such a unit needs to establish a familiarity with the province's extensive coastline, its communities, coastal watch organizations and the RCMP.

The RCMP confirms the coastal security threat is taken seriously and is not likely to diminish any time soon. In fact, it could escalate.

RUSI's Security Affairs Committee (SAC) has determined that responsibility for coastline security rests with the RCMP and the Army is mandated to support its operations upon request. Other than an infantry battalion and an artillery regiment in the Halifax Garrison and an artillery battery in Yarmouth, there are no other combat forces in the province stationed on the coastline from Yarmouth to Canso where RCMP security operations are most likely to require Army support.

A reconnaissance unit, with its surveillance capability, is deemed best suited to support RCMP coastline security operations. Its "seek and find" capability would enable it to respond most effectively to RCMP requests for support with soldiers trained for the task. All other Canadian provinces have Army reconnaissance capabilities and at present Army backup for the RCMP in Nova Scotia would come from regiments in New Brunswick and PEI.

SAC concludes that a Nova Scotia reconnaissance unit is in keeping with the government's determination to keep our border, airspace and coastlines secure and protect Canadians. Establishing or reactivating a reconnaissance unit would not be a costly undertaking.

RUSI has sent its study findings to the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Public Safety, the Chief of the Defence Staff as well as other military and political leaders. We are awaiting a detailed response to what is surely a modest measure to keep our citizens safe.

Col. Murray Lee (Ret'd) is President of RUSI Nova Scotia which serves as a forum for the study and debate of defence and security issues.