

INFORMATION BULLETIN

DATE: February 9, 2009

SUBJECT: New patrol to monitor Quebec-U. S. border

SOURCE: National Post

A special border-patrol unit consisting of RCMP and Canada Border Services Agency agents will soon take shape in Quebec under a pilot project that could herald a new nationwide effort to beef up border security.

The patrol will monitor Quebec-U. S. crossings and combat criminals taking advantage of the boundary, said Jean-Pierre Fortin, vice-president of the Customs and Immigration Union.

The initiative comes from a Conservative party platform to enhance security by creating "a border patrol that can patrol the many unguarded roads and the border in between official entry points," Mr. Fortin said.

He added talks were underway between the RCMP and border services and that details were expected soon on where the Quebec project would take shape. RCMP said they couldn't confirm anything about the project pending an official announcement.

Mr. Fortin said Quebec was chosen because it represents the area with the most unguarded roads to the border in the country.

"The government must think this will be a good laboratory to go forward and create this patrol," he said.

The region has also been affected by RCMP cutbacks, he said, noting the closure of nine detachments.

The initiative is taking place as the United States is about to have drones patrol the border and Homeland Security reviews vulnerabilities along the world's longest undefended boundary.

The U. S. Border Patrol is testing the readiness of the drones, which were expected to begin regular patrols by the official opening of the North Dakota station housing them on Feb. 16, according to a U. S. Border Patrol spokesman.

In the meantime Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano singled out the U. S.-Canada border in one of her first action directives days after being sworn in.

"As we have designed programs to afford greater protection against unlawful entry, members of Congress and Homeland Security experts have called for increased attention to the Canadian border," says the department's directive, which was issued days after President Barack Obama's inauguration.