

Situating Arctic Challenges

CANUS Res GOAB 2024
5 June 2024



HLCol P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Ph.D.
Trent University / NAADSN

Themes

- Persistent Arctic “myths”
- The importance of analytical precision:
 - Threats through, to, and in; sectors of security; domains and “accessibility”; levels of analysis
- “Nothing about us, without us”





Canada's Defence Policy (2017)

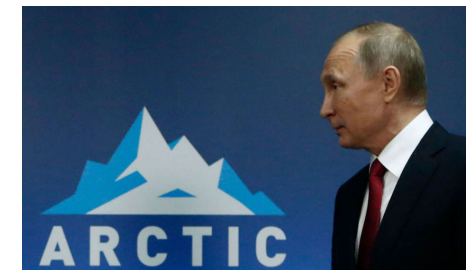
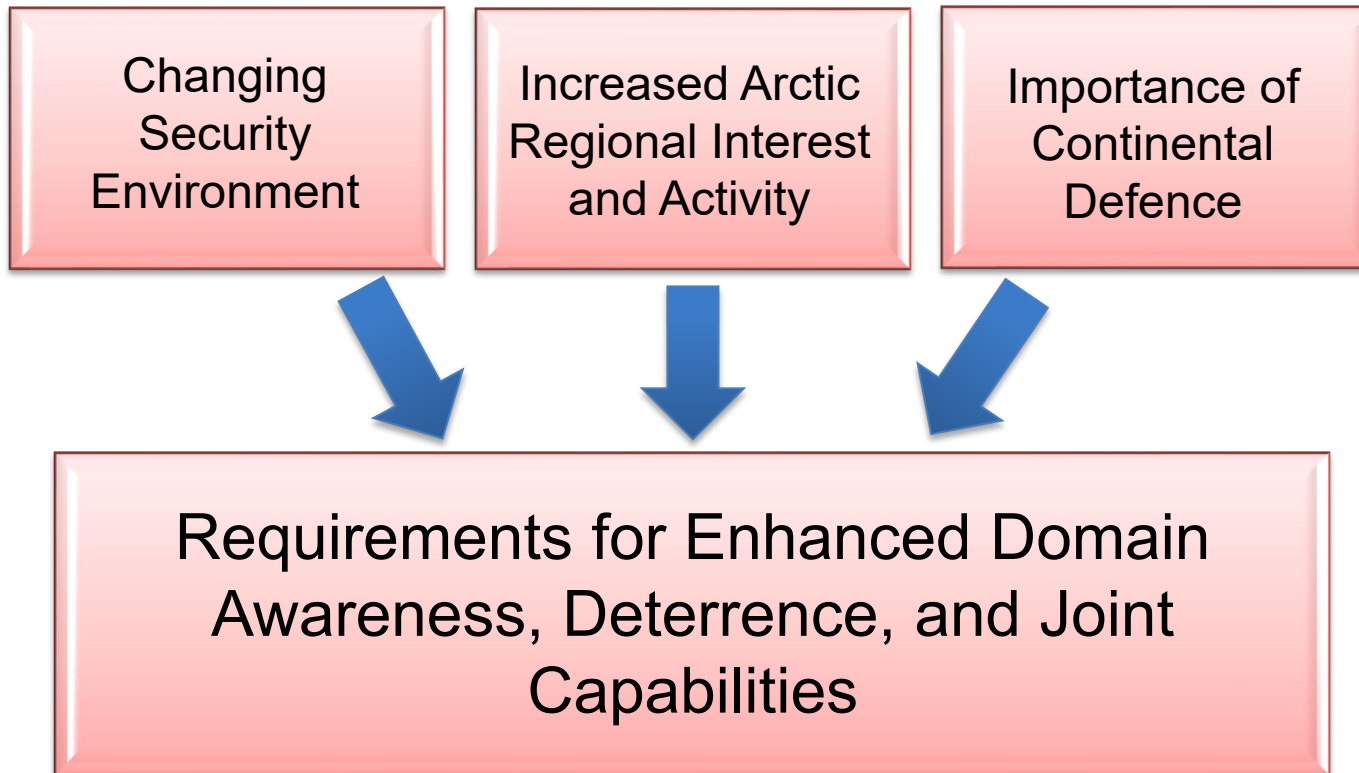
*Strong,
Secure,
Engaged*

A CHANGING ARCTIC

“The Arctic region represents an important international crossroads where issues of climate change, international trade, and global security meet.... Arctic states have long cooperated on economic, environmental, and safety issues, particularly through the Arctic Council, the premier body for cooperation in the region. All Arctic states have an enduring interest in continuing this productive collaboration.... This rise in [commercial, research, and tourism] activity will also bring increased safety and security demands related to search and rescue and natural or man-made disasters to which Canada must be ready to respond.”



The Arctic in an Era of Global Strategic Competition (2014-)



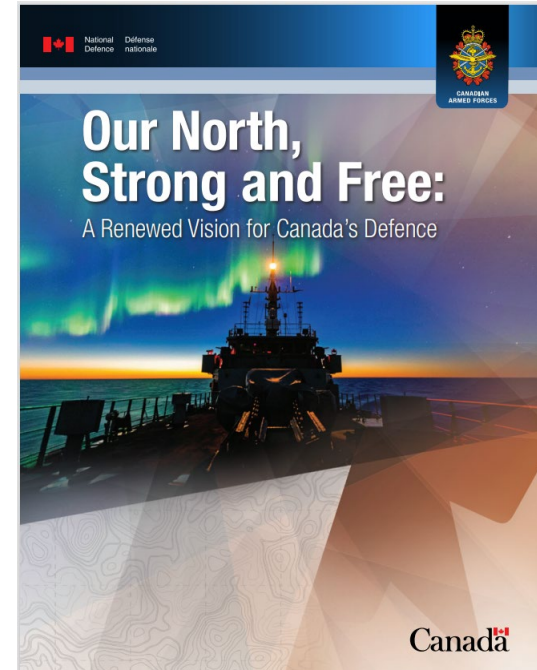
Changing Threats to Canadian Security

- **Climate Change**
 - Increasing the accessibility of the Arctic
- **Disruptive Actors**
 - Russia and China are threatening the international order
- **Disruptive Technologies**
 - Redefinition of conflict and what is required to keep Canada safe and secure



Our North, Strong and Free (2024)

- “The **most urgent and important** task that we face is asserting Canada’s **sovereignty** in the Arctic, where the **changing physical and geopolitical landscapes** have created new threats and vulnerabilities to Canada and Canadians.”
- Commitment to increase the CAF’s presence, reach, mobility and responsiveness in the Arctic
- “Security our Arctic will keep North America safe, allow us to support our allies abroad, and contribute to deterring global conflict.”



Pan-Domain Force Employment Concept

- Air
- Maritime
- Land
- Cyber
- Space
- Information

“Our adversaries are challenging us in the cyber and space domains as well as in the land, maritime, and air domains. They use information to sow confusion, mask their intentions, oppose our actions, and gain advantage over us. **We must meet these challenges across domains and in the information environment. ...**

Military power alone is insufficient to deter and defeat the aggressive actions and behaviours of our adversaries. **The military instrument must coordinate more closely with other instruments of national power.”**

Key Strategic Elements/Drivers

Sector	Key Strategic Element / Driver
Military	Great Power Competition spillover
Political	Rules-based order (UNCLOS) and the resilience of the regional governance mosaic
Economic	Extractive resource development (including destination shipping and foreign investment) vs. conservation economy
Environment	Climate change and new patterns of human activity
Society	Stresses on Indigenous peoples

Proposed operating assumption...

Competition will continue, but this does not mean that we are equally vulnerable at all scales or in all domains, or that *Arctic conflict* is inevitable...



Strategic Drivers

“The Arctic region represents an important international crossroads where issues of climate change, international trade, and global security meet.” (SSE, 2017)

- geopolitical competition
- technology
- climate change
- shipping routes
- Arctic resources
- Arctic boundaries?

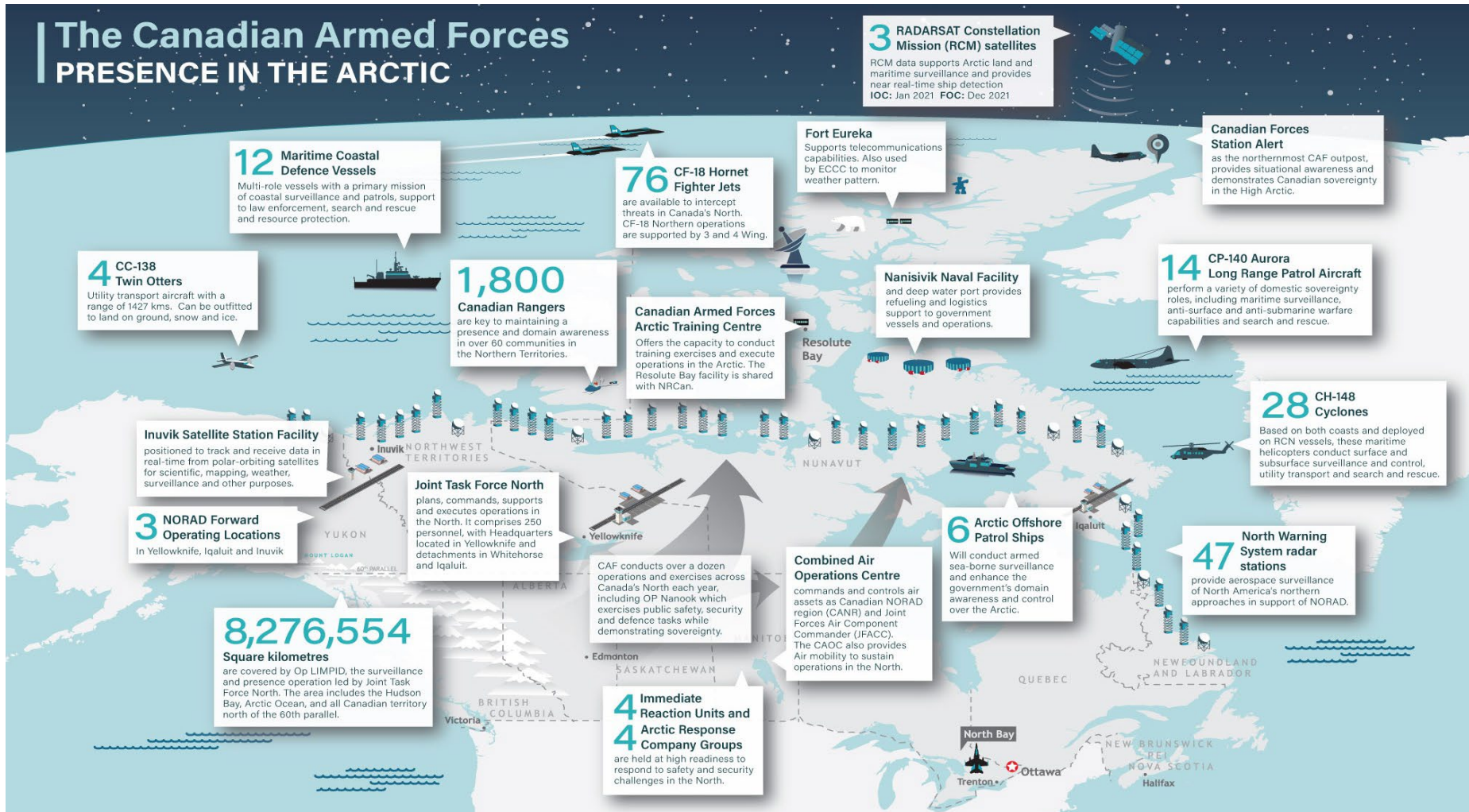


Myth #1:
Canada's Arctic
is "undefended"





The Canadian Armed Forces PRESENCE IN THE ARCTIC



- Op NANOOK** – Demonstrate CAF ability to sustain Operations in the North. Op NANOOK is the overarching operation comprised of four annual sub-components:
 - Op NANOOK-NUNALIVUT – capability building with multinational partners in a joint High Arctic land environment
 - Op NANOOK-NUNAKPUT – CAF led integrating ODGAs supported by Canadian Rangers
 - Op NANOOK-TATIGIIT – CAF led HADR exercise engaging territorial and federal partners
 - Op NANOOK-TUUGALIK - Multinational Maritime live exercise (LIVEX) in the Eastern and Central Arctic
- Op LIMPID** – Ongoing CAF surveillance and presence operations of Canada's territories and approaches in order to achieve all-domain situational awareness of the maritime, air, terrestrial, space, and cyber domains.
- Op BOXTOP** – Ongoing CAF sustainment operations in high Arctic (Alert)
- Op NEVUS** - Annual operation to Ellesmere Island to perform essential preventive and corrective maintenance on the High Arctic Data Communications System.

Canada's 'tenuous hold' in Arctic could be challenged by Russia, China, says top soldier



Gen. Wayne Eyre said that while the threat isn't immediate, it's out there

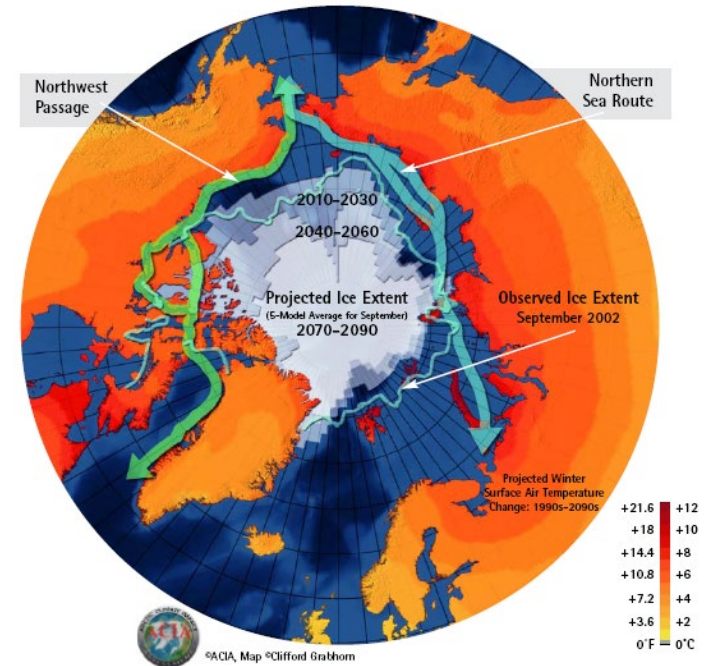


Murray Brewster · CBC News · Posted: Oct 18, 2022 6:52 PM ET | Last Updated: October 18



- “Right now, today, we don't see a clear and present threat to our **sovereignty**, not today, not this week, not next week, not next year,” [CDS Gen. Wayne] Eyre said. “However, in the decades to come, **that threat, that tenuous hold that we have on our sovereignty**, at the extremities of this nation, is going to come under increasing challenge.”
- Canada has a “**persistent, not permanent presence**” in the Arctic “which will be challenged as climate change opens up the northern sea lanes.”

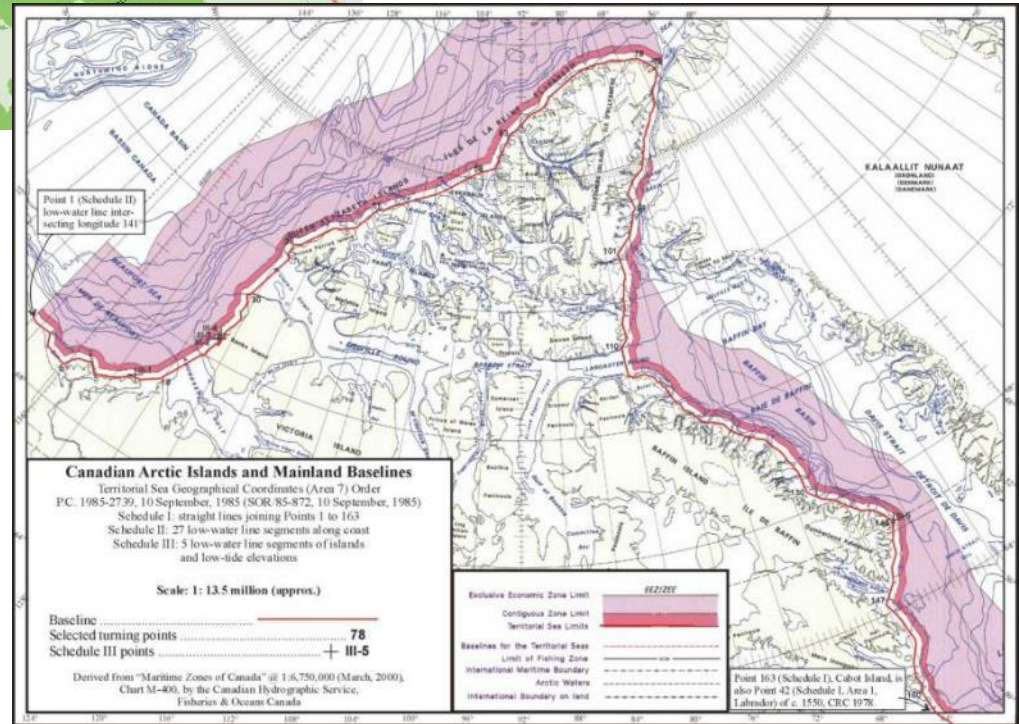
Myth #2: Arctic States' Sovereignty is on "Thinning Ice"



The Northwest Passage



Eaux territoriales à 12 milles nautiques



ASTD DATA CONTAINS INFORMATION ON THE SIZE OF SHIPS IN GROSS TONNAGE

Gross tonnage (GT) is a function of the volume of all of a ship's enclosed spaces (from keel to funnel) measured to the outside of the hull framing.

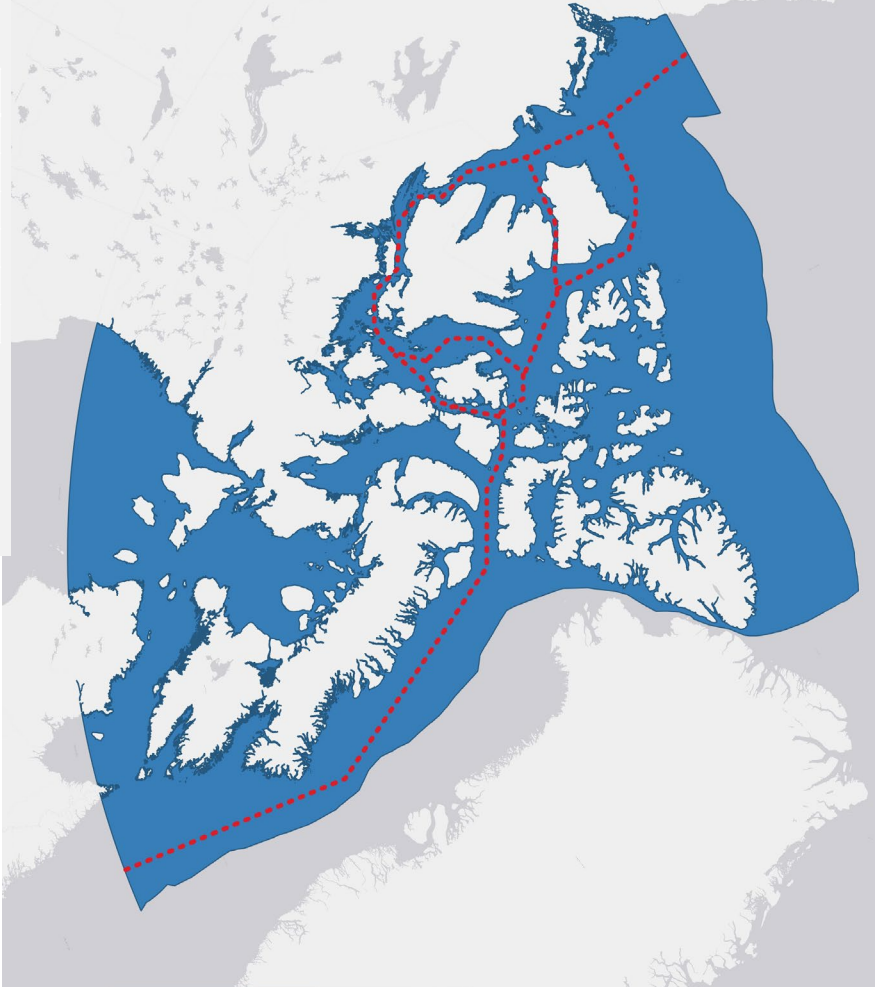
ASTD Size Groups:

- <1000 GT
- 1000-4999 GT
- 5000-9999 GT
- 10,000-24,999 GT
- 25,000-49,999 GT
- 50,000-99,999 GT
- >= 100,000 GT

NORTHWEST PASSAGE

Size group	2013	2019
< 1000 GT	20	23
1000 - 4999 GT	25	19
5000 - 9999 GT	25	28
10,000 – 24,999	22	32
25,000 – 49,999	10	48
Unknown	10	10

No ships in the two biggest size groups (50,000-99,999 GT >= 100,000 GT) were present – showing that the ships operating within the NWP are comparatively smaller to ships operating elsewhere.



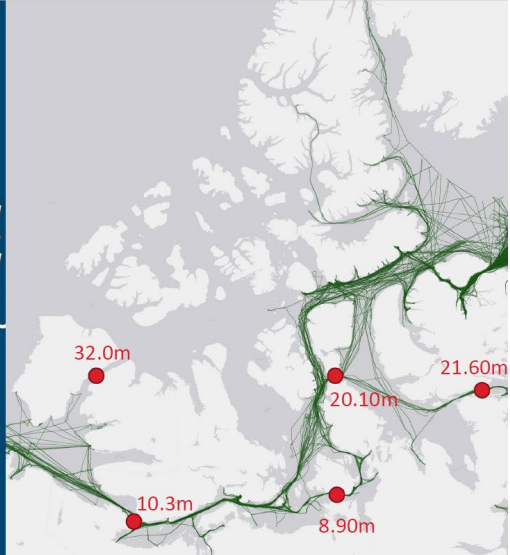
“Between 1990 and 2019, there has been a substantial reduction in the number of highly strengthened PC3 ships (25%) and a large increase in the number of medium-strengthened PC7 (605%) and low-strengthened 1B (180%) vessels.”

- Dawson et al, “Analysis of Changing Levels of Ice Strengthening...,” *Arctic* (2022)

LIMITING DEPTHS IN THE NWP

Image shows AIS tracks in 2019 for all ships alongside examples of known chokepoints, with their associated depth in meters.

OCEAN DEPTH



PAME
Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment

SHIPPING IN THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE: COMPARING 2013 WITH 2019

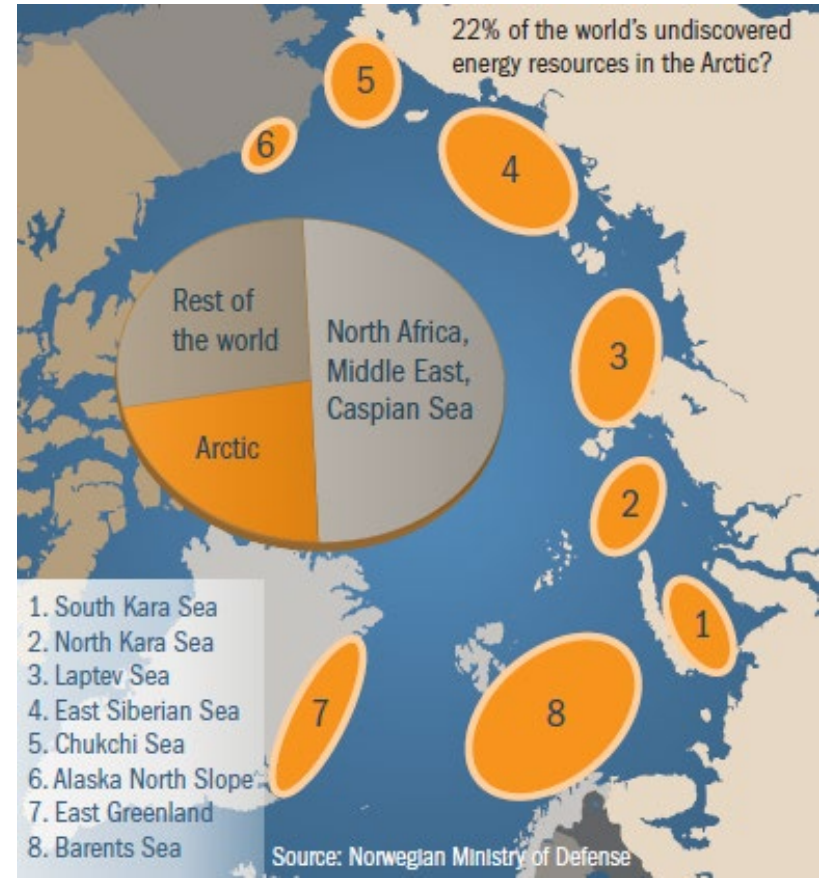
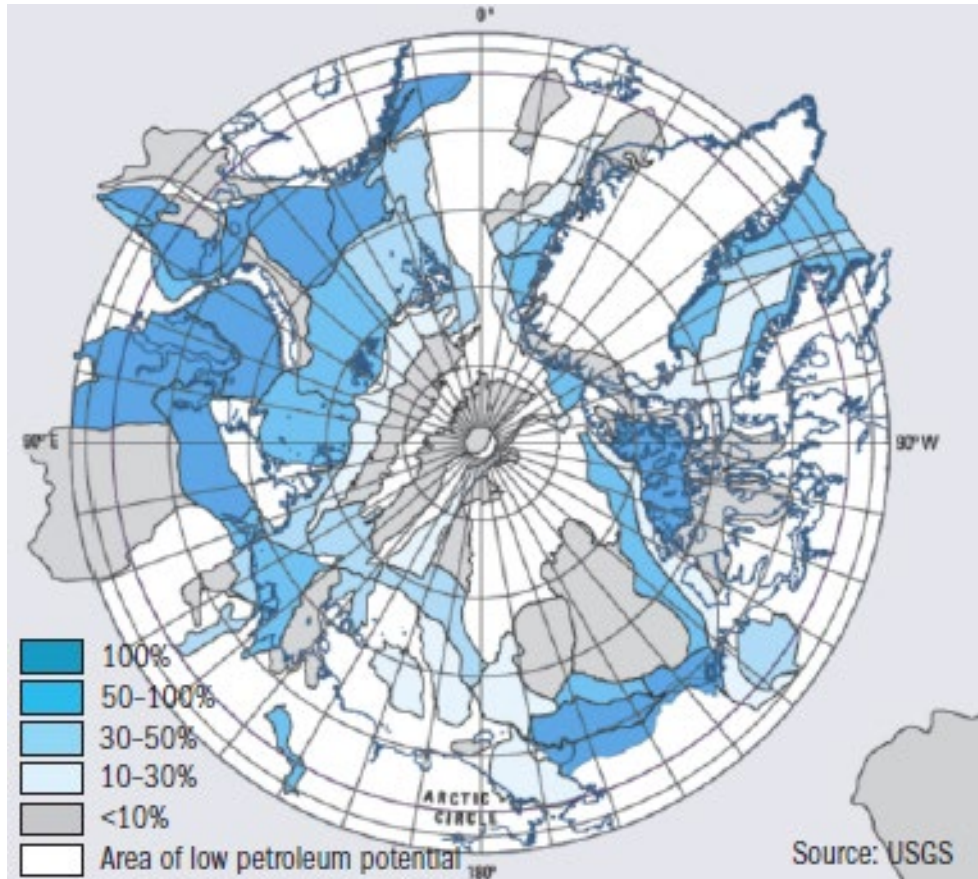


Canada-U.S. Tri-Command Arctic
Cooperation Framework (Dec. 2012)

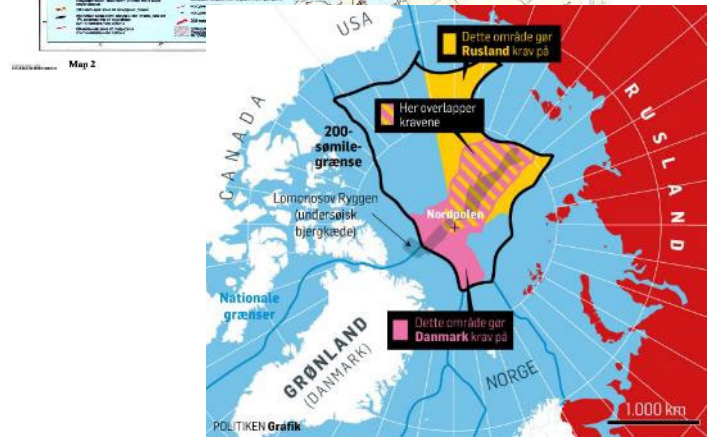
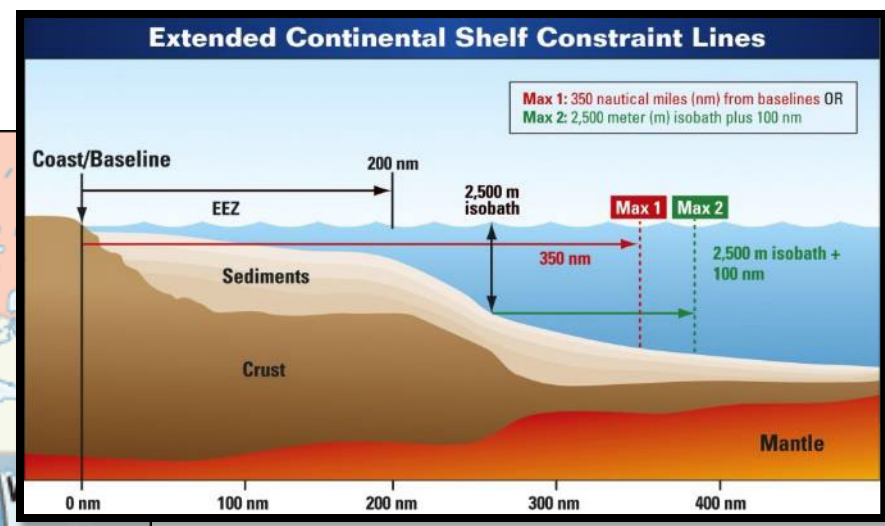
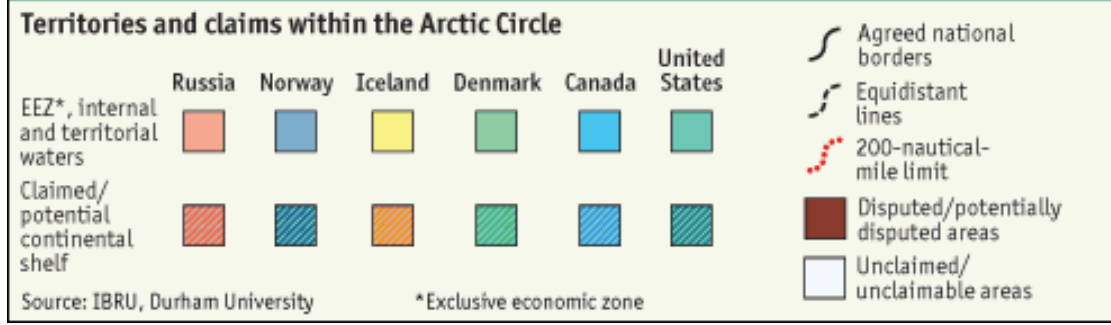


Canada and the US as “Premier Partners”

A Race for Resources?



Reading: Kathrin Keil, “The Arctic: A New Region of Conflict? The Case of Oil and Gas,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 49, no. 2 (2014): 162-190.



Revised Russian ECS claim (March 2021)

“Most experts expect the process to continue peacefully, as the states involved seem determined to follow the rules of the UN. The two Russian documents are written in strict accordance with established procedures....”

Martin Breum, [Russia extends its claim to the Arctic Ocean seabed – ArcticToday](#)
(4 April 2021)



Military “Presence”

“It is difficult to see what expanded role the Canadian Armed Forces could usefully play in support of Canada’s claim to sovereignty over water between the Arctic islands.... It is not a military problem. It cannot be solved by any amount of surveillance or patrol activity in the channels by Canadian forces.”

-- Erik Wang, CFHQ, April 1969



E.B. Wang, "Role of Canadian Armed Forces in Defending Sovereignty," 30 Apr. 1969



- “It should not be ‘presence’ for the sake of ‘presence’, in the absence of any military rationale. To build a role for Canadian forces merely to satisfy the optical demands of political sovereignty would be to build on shifting sands.”

Myth #3:

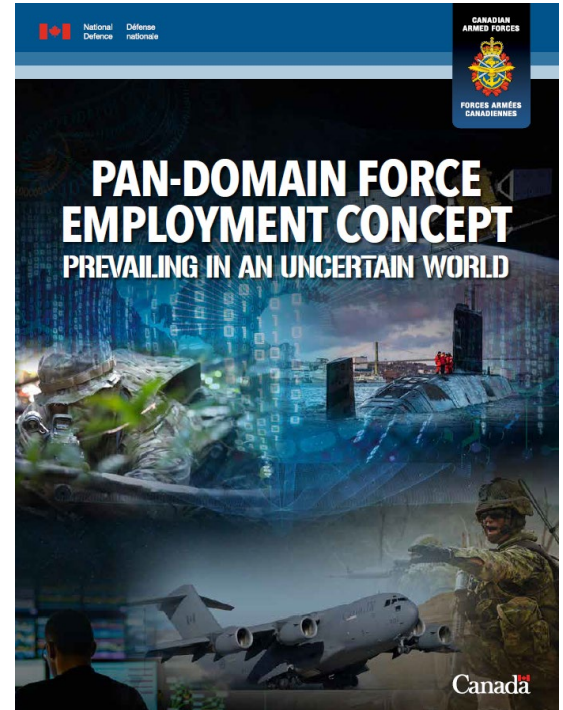
Climate change, access to Arctic resources, and uncertainty over Arctic boundaries are driving the hard security agenda in the North American Arctic

- current focus on “Great Power Competition”
- analytical value of distinguishing between threats passing *through* or *over* (particularly air / aerospace / space) rather than threats *to* or *in* the Arctic borne of *regional* dynamics

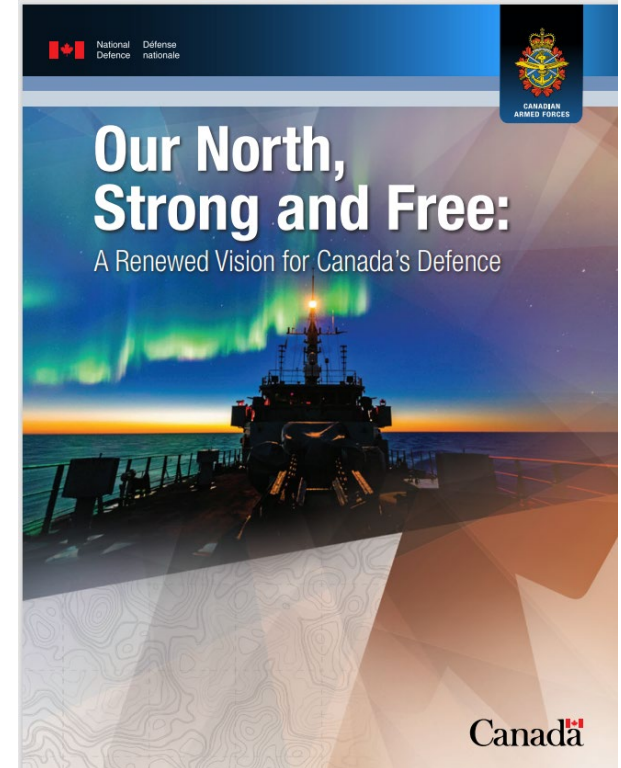


Pan-Domain Force Employment Concept

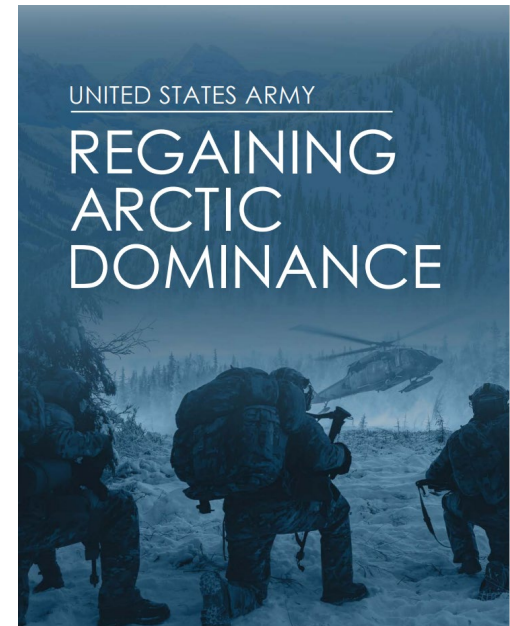
“Canada and its allies face increasingly dangerous competition from malign and hostile adversaries. ... Canada’s Arctic has experienced warming temperatures and melting sea ice, making the region **increasingly accessible to exploitation and military activity.**”



“Our Arctic is now warming at four times the global average, making a vast and sensitive region **more accessible to foreign actors** who have growing capabilities and regional military ambitions. By 2050, the Arctic Ocean could become the most efficient shipping route between Europe and East Asia. **Canada's Northwest Passage and the broader Arctic region are already more accessible**, and competitors are not waiting to take advantage—seeking access, transportation routes, natural resources, critical minerals, and energy sources through more frequent and regular presence and activity.”



“As the Army moves toward multi-domain capable formations, we need to understand the nature of maneuver and sustainment in harsh conditions with **limited accessibility** posed by the Arctic Terrain and environmental conditions in the Arctic and sub-Arctic impacts maneuver in both the cold and warmer months. Frozen tundra offers relief from mountainous terrain, which is synonymous with ECW environments unique constraints on equipment functionality both electrical and mechanical, which **during the warmer months constricts maneuver** with wheeled vehicles. This **challenge is only amplified** by extensive bog or wetland areas **in the warmer months.**”



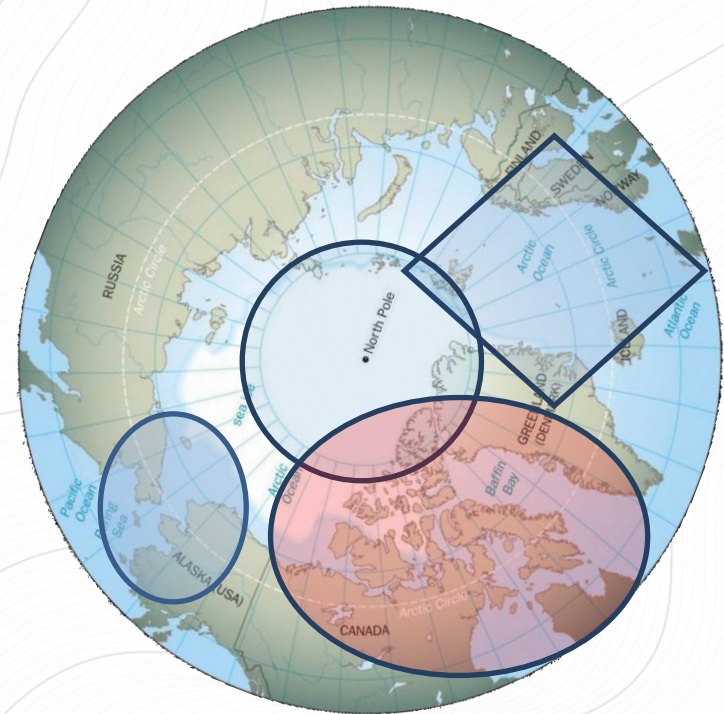
An aerial photograph of a vast, snow-covered landscape. Several tracks, likely from a sled dog team, are visible, winding across the snow. Small figures of people or dogs are scattered along these tracks. The overall scene is bright and textured, with shadows cast by the tracks and figures.

*The Sea Ice is
Our Highway*
(ICC, 2008)

The sea, for Inuit, is their highway. In wintertime, their highway is sea ice. In summertime, it is the open sea. The sea is integral to the Inuit way of life. Because they still rely on traditional Inuit food for a large portion of their diet, and because hunting and being out on the land are central to their culture, they continue to use the land and sea in the same way as did their ancestors for thousands of years. This connection to land and ice gives Inuit a great sense of pride, well-being, and connection to the past.

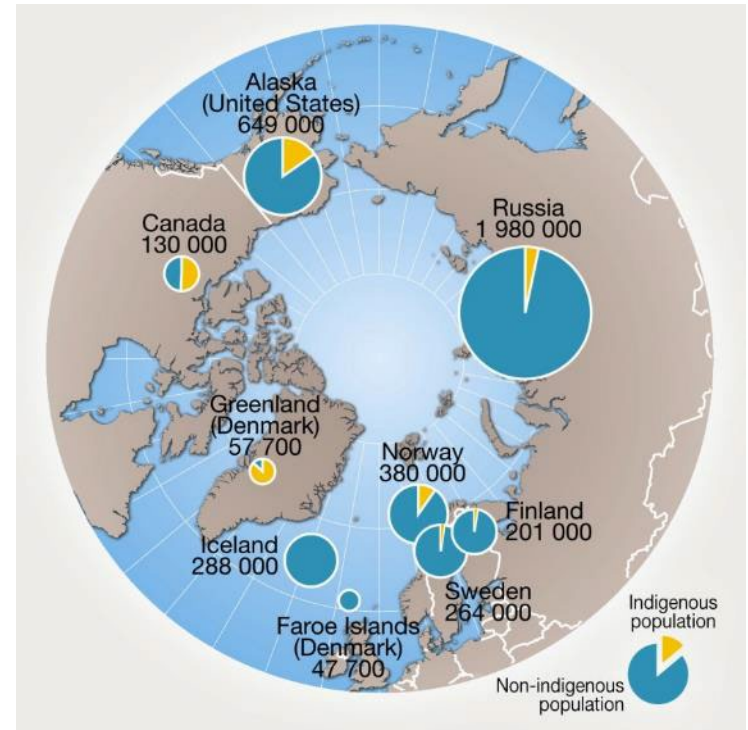
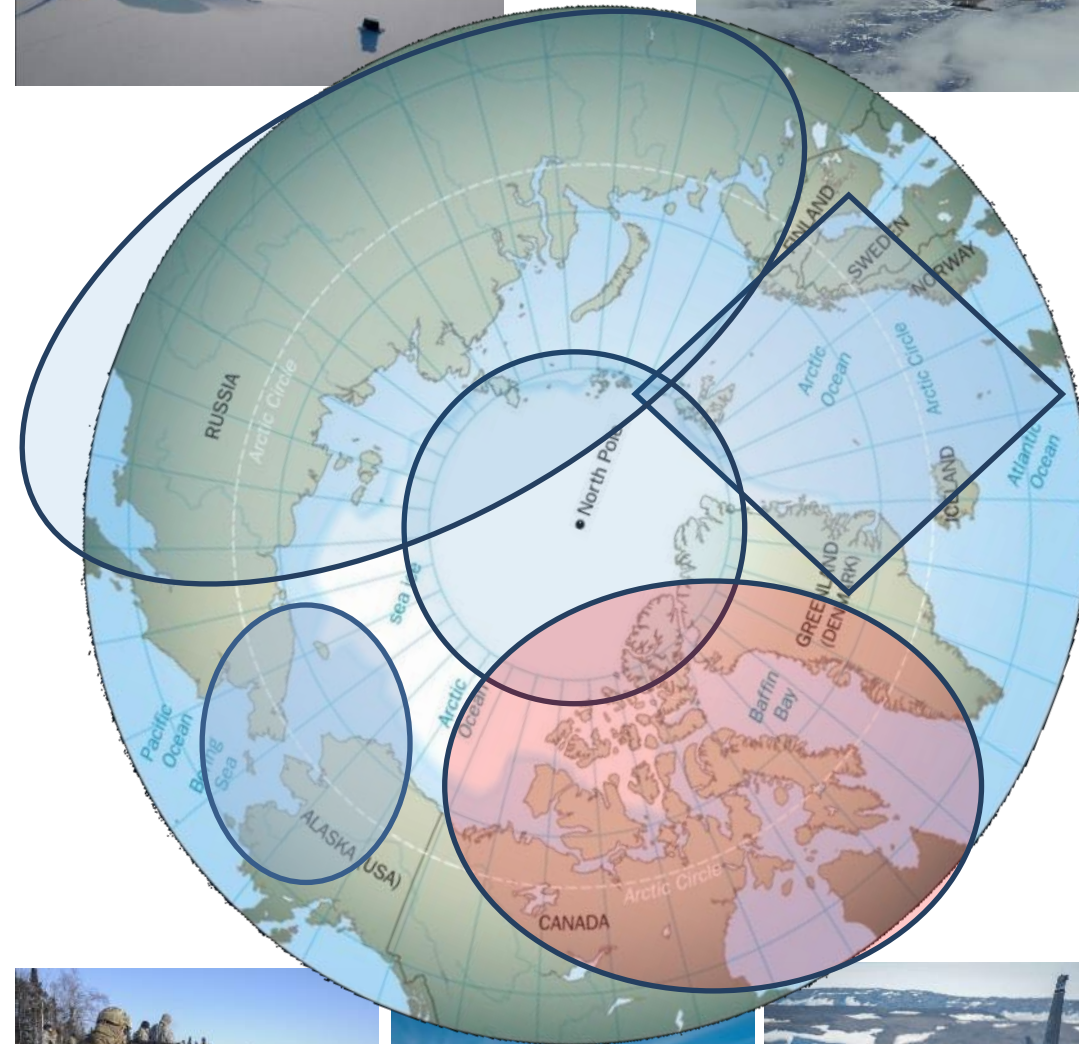
“Accessible” Arctic

- Where and how is the Arctic more accessible today?
- How does accessibility vary by domain (air, maritime, land, cyber, space, info), and where does it (and does it not) relate to climate change
- What is common and distinct across Arctic regions?



Myth #3

“The Arctic” as a single geostrategic theatre



Myth #4: Russians believe that they stand to gain from Arctic military conflict / conquest



Myth #5: China is a “Peer Competitor in the Arctic”



CHINA AS A POLAR GREAT POWER



ANNE-MARIE BRADY

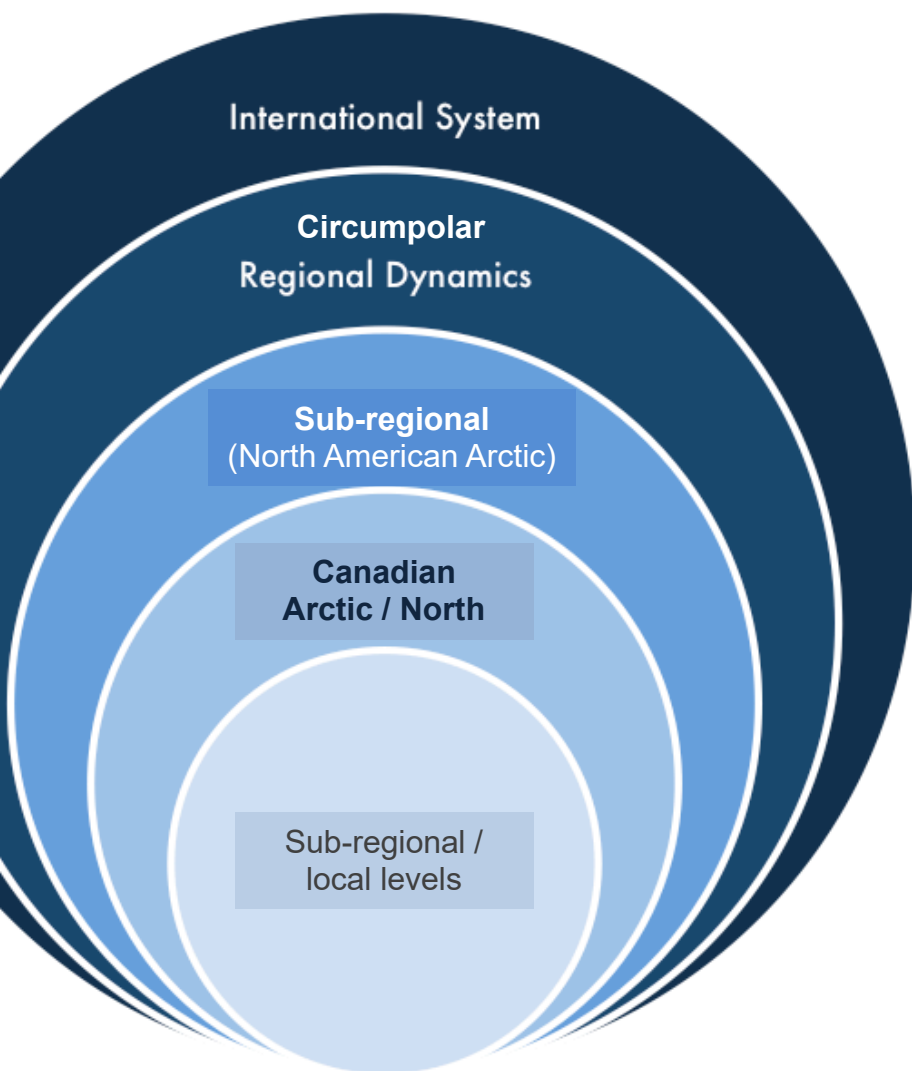
P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Adam Lajeunesse,
James Manicom, and Frédéric Lasserre



CHINA'S ARCTIC AMBITIONS

and What They Mean for Canada

Levels of Analysis



Strategic competition between Russia, China, and the West has “spillover” effects on the Arctic, but is *not generated* by Arctic climate / environmental change, resource, boundary disputes, or Arctic governance issues

We need to carefully analyze global, circumpolar, sub-regional, and national level threats to the changing Arctic defence and security environment



KH-101 missile



Hyper-kinetic glide weapons



Blackjack bomber



ICBMs



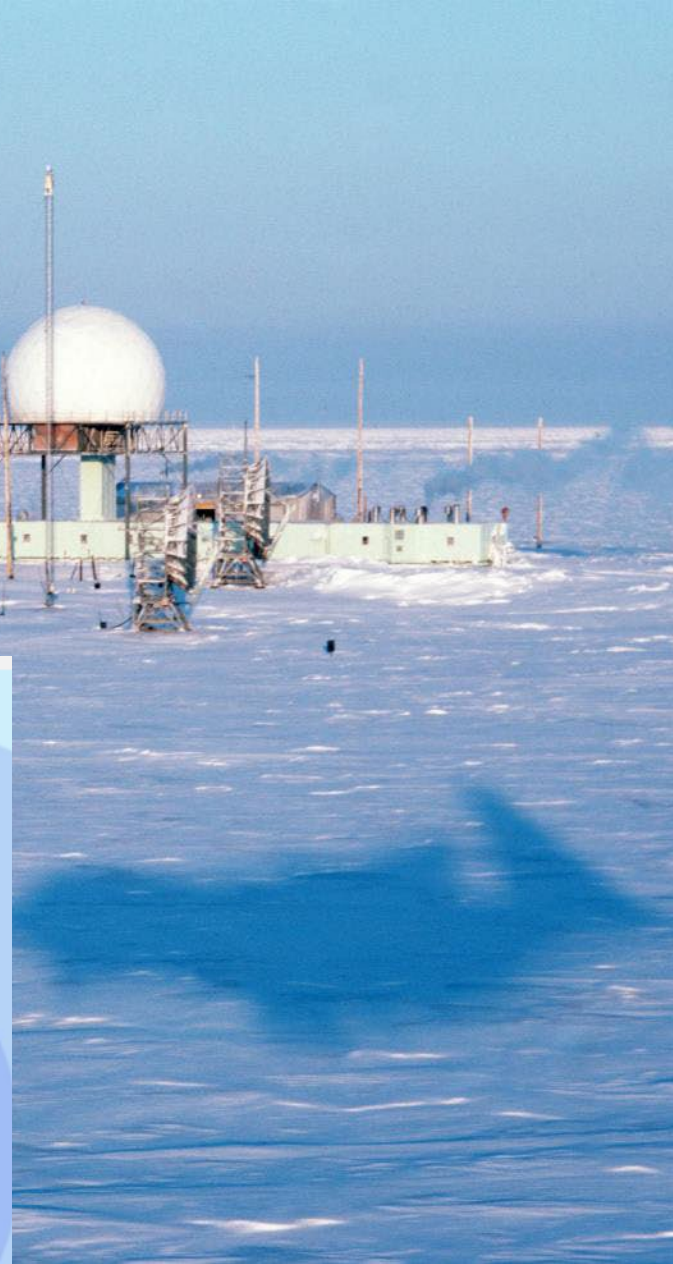
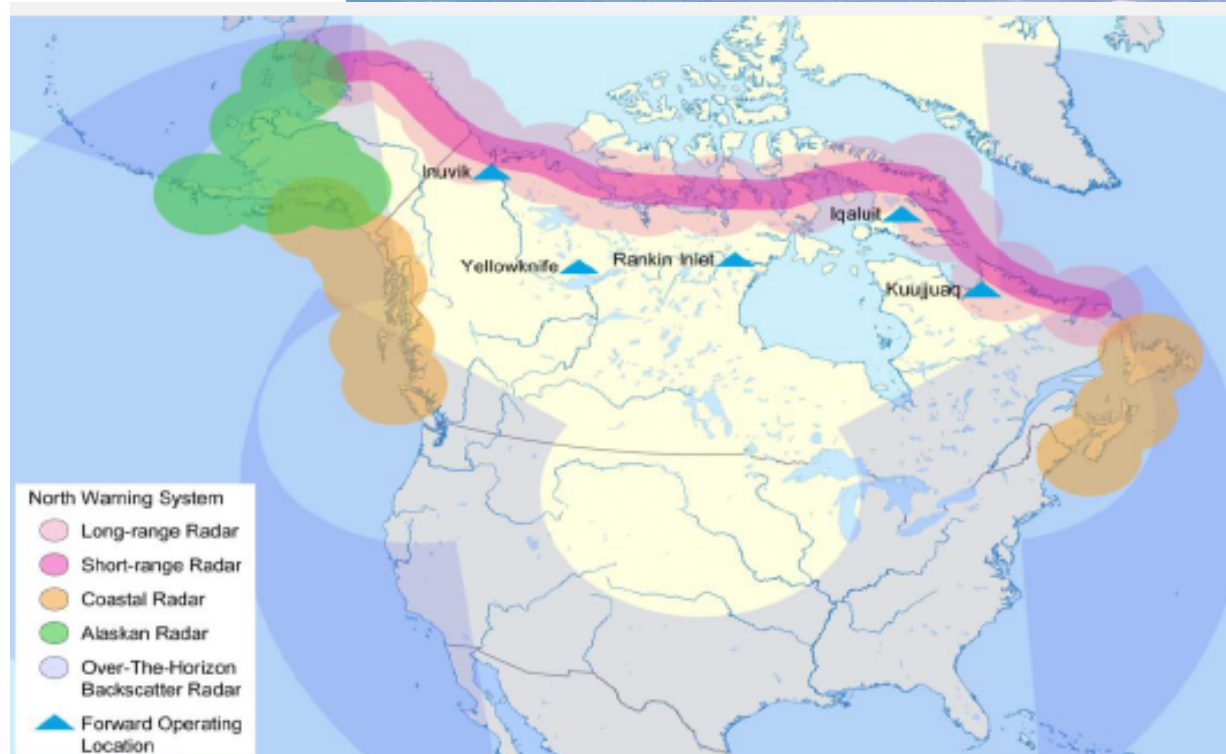
Arctic Shipping Routes

- North-West Passage (NWP)
- Northern Sea Route (NSR)
- Transpolar Sea Route (TSR)
- Arctic Bridge Route (ABR)



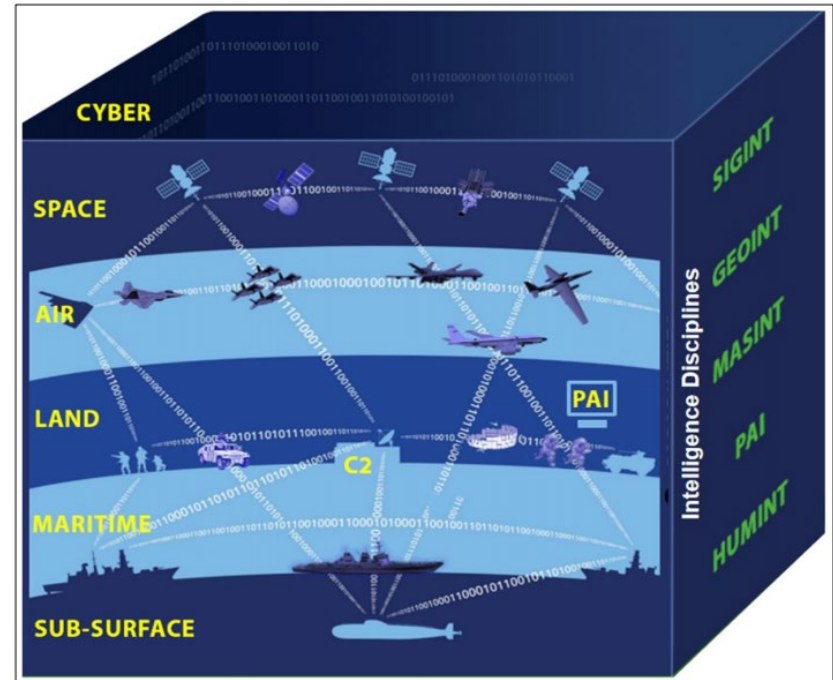
Northern Fleet submarines accessing the North Atlantic via the GIUK Gap

THROUGH...



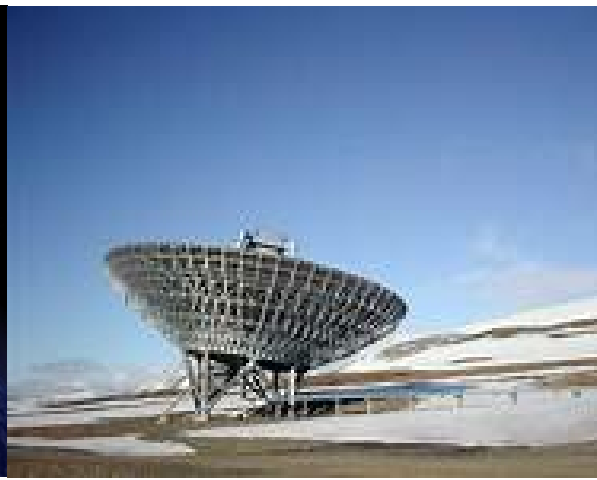
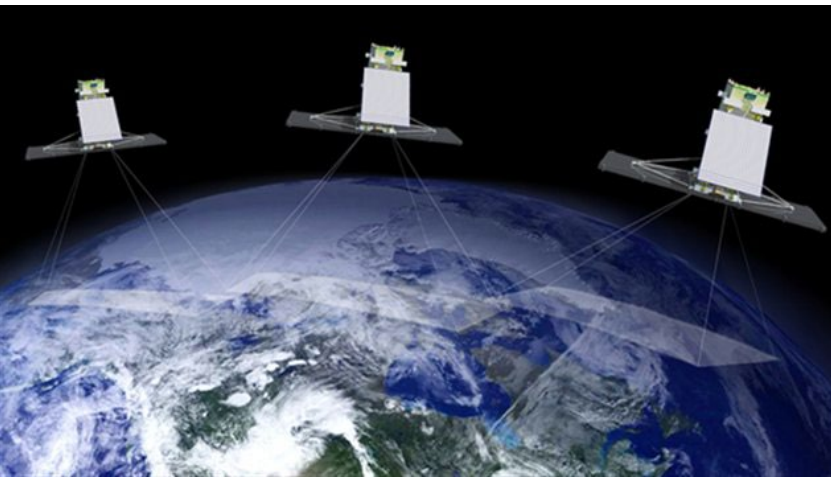
Layered, all-domain “system of systems” / ecosystem

- NORAD modernization
 - domain awareness
 - layered sensing grid
 - information dominance
 - data fusion/C2
 - decision superiority (deter / deny / defeat mechanisms enabled by artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning)



Integrated Deterrence

- Nuclear, conventional military, and hybrid “warfare” / grey zone / below the threshold
 - “The combination of credible deterrence and reassurance across the full spectrum of peace, crisis and armed conflict is becoming more important, and more demanding. Nations will be put to the test by their ability to foster measured and strong responses to various kinds of aggression where more instruments of power are in play. In this environment, it can be challenging to separate state security threats from societal risks.”
(Norway, *Defence Strategy*)
- Resilience and “Whole of Society” approaches
- NATO’s collective defence and deterrence



NORAD Modernization

Canada will modernize its NORAD capabilities by investing \$4.9B on a cash basis over the next 6 years, and total funding of \$38.6B on an accrual basis over the next twenty years in five areas:

- 1. Surveillance (~ \$7B)** strengthen awareness of northern and maritime approaches and better equip Canada to detect, deter, and counter new aerospace threats (e.g. cruise missiles, aircraft), including:
 - New Arctic and Polar Over-the-Horizon Radar capabilities
 - Additional investment in new space-based surveillance, including of Canadian territory and maritime approaches
- 2. Technology-enabled decision making (~ \$4.1B)** through enhanced command, control, and communications to ensure the CAF can deter aerospace threats, de-escalate in a crisis, and respond if needed
- 3. Modernized air weapons systems (~ \$6.4B)** will bolster NORAD and the CAF's capacity to deter and respond to evolving air-breathing threats
- 4. Enhancements to infrastructure and support capacity (~ \$15.7B)** will support NORAD operations and strengthen the CAF's ability to launch and sustain a strong presence across the country, including in the North
 - Upgrading CAF basing infrastructure at designated northern and deployed locations
- 5. New Defend North America Science and Technology program (~ \$4.2B)** to address emerging threats and enable continuous evolution of R&D technology solutions and defence innovation

Our North, Strong and Free

- “Establishing greater presence, reach, mobility, and responsiveness in the Arctic and North ... also means that our Arctic waters, airspace, and territory cannot be vulnerable to intrusion or used as an avenue to harm Canada, our closest ally, the United States, or other NATO allies. Our contributions to securing the Arctic are an important component in the defence of NATO’s western and northern flanks, and directly support broader NATO deterrence efforts.”

Geostrategic Considerations

- Gaps, seams, and stressors
 - the GIUK Gap and Russian “Bastion concept” (linking the security of the Kola Peninsula and access of the Northern Fleet to the North Atlantic and beyond)
 - a different “Arctic” mindset than Canada?
 - “the Arctic” as a wedge issue that adversaries can use to divide NATO members?



Energy Security Nature Business Arctic Culture Borders Politics Society
Arctic Brigade trains counter-terrorism at Novaya Zemlya



Russian ice Arctic Brigade has the last few months engaged in anti-air operations also in the Russian Arctic. (Photo: Alamy)

TO...



R U S S I A

Atlantic Ocean

RUSSIA'S ARCTIC BUILD-UP



DAN SULLIVAN



G R E E N L A N D



WSJ | OPINION

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The Arctic Front in the Battle to Contain Russia

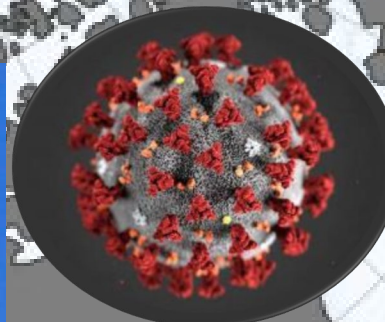
Given Putin's threat, the Obama-Trudeau talks need to address the U.S.-Canada Northwest Passage dispute.

By Brett Bergerson and Michael Flynn
March 8, 2016 5:05 pm ET

China, Russia send naval warships near Alaska, triggering forceful US response

'We've entered a new era of authoritarian aggression,' Sen Dan Sullivan tells Fox News Digital

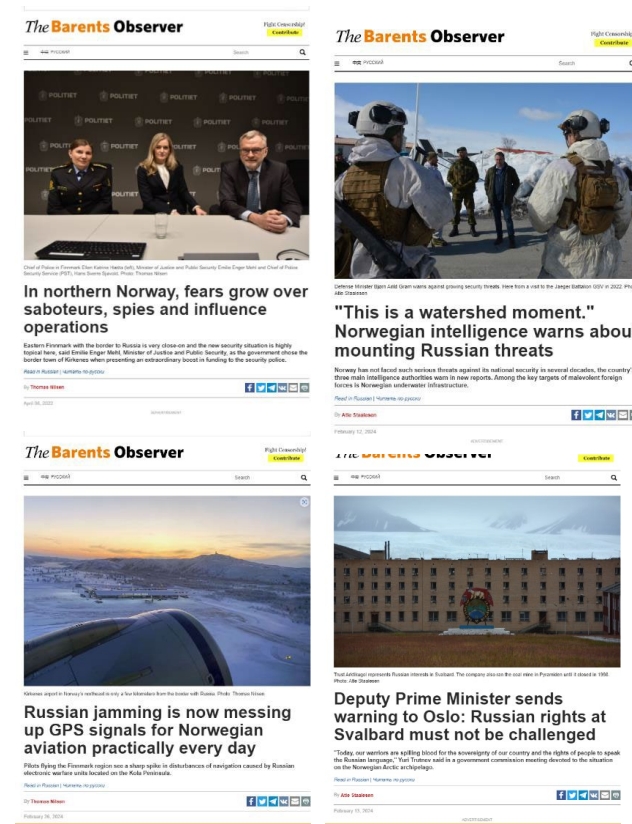
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A L A S K A

The Hybrid Threat Environment

- Russian violations of airspace
- GPS jamming
- fishing and research vessels
 - Cutting subsea cables
 - marine scientific research
- critical infrastructure interference
- lawfare
- “tourists”
 - drones and photos
- cyber attacks (DDoS)
- dis/misinformation campaigns
- academic espionage
- migration



Sub-conventional activities: “no consistency in responding to these violations and no meaningful punishment” (Matus Halas, Hybrid CoE report, 2024)

What is the Russian Threat *to* or *in* the Canadian Arctic?



STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

NAADS
North Atlantic Area Studies
and Defense Research
naadsn.ca

May 4, 2020

Why Fear Russia in the Arctic?

Contemplating Scenarios as an Exercise in Assumption-Testing and "Red Teaming"

P. Whitney Lackenbauer
Network Lead, NAADS

In an increasingly complex and uncertain global environment that features renewed strategic competition, it is important to continuously test assumptions and contemplate "known unknowns" and "unknown unknowns." Most of my publications emphasize opportunities for circumpolar cooperation and downplay the probability of conventional armed conflict in the Arctic. I have highlighted points of convergence between Canadian and Russian Arctic interests, suggesting a decade ago that our countries' respective Arctic regional strategies often appeared as "mirror images." Messaging from both countries, however, combines elements of strategic deterrence and the idea that the region should retain its status as a "territory of dialogue" and cooperation – or, at the very least, non-conflict.

Although Canada and Russia continue to share many interests in the Circumpolar Arctic, geopolitics and the global security environment suggest that they are likely to remain, at best, "frenemies" in the region for the foreseeable future. Does Russian international behaviour over the last six years (highlighted by its illegal annexation of Crimea and aggression in Eastern Ukraine) portend similar revisionist designs for the Arctic, or do Russian national interests dictate that it preserve the regional status quo because the costs of deviating from it are too severe? Russian media discourse spans a range of opinion, from hard "conflict" frames that emphasize NATO aggression to those promoting "Arctic cooperation" – with the latter as a "hope of peace."



Breaking the Ice Curtain?

Russia, Canada, and Arctic Security in a Changing Circumpolar World

Edited by P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Suzanne Lalonde



Возможно ли растопить ледяной занавес?

Россия, Канада и вопросы безопасности в меняющейся Арктике

под редакцией П. Уитни Лакенбауэр и Сюзанны Лалонде
Перевод на русский язык под редакцией Андрея Тодорова



Why Worry About Russia in the Arctic?

- The War in Ukraine and global revisionism
- Talk of U.S. and NATO as threats to Russia's Arctic security
- Jamming GPS in Norway during Trident Juncture exercises and other hybrid attacks
- Continues to militarize the Arctic through snap exercises, investments in new and refurbished military bases, and deployments of enhanced military capabilities
- Aims to assert a credible and capable deterrence posture in the Arctic, and to secure economic and strategic interests, including by projecting power into the North Atlantic and beyond



May 4, 2020

Why Fear Russia in the Arctic?

Contemplating Scenarios as an Exercise in Assumption-Testing and "Red Teaming"

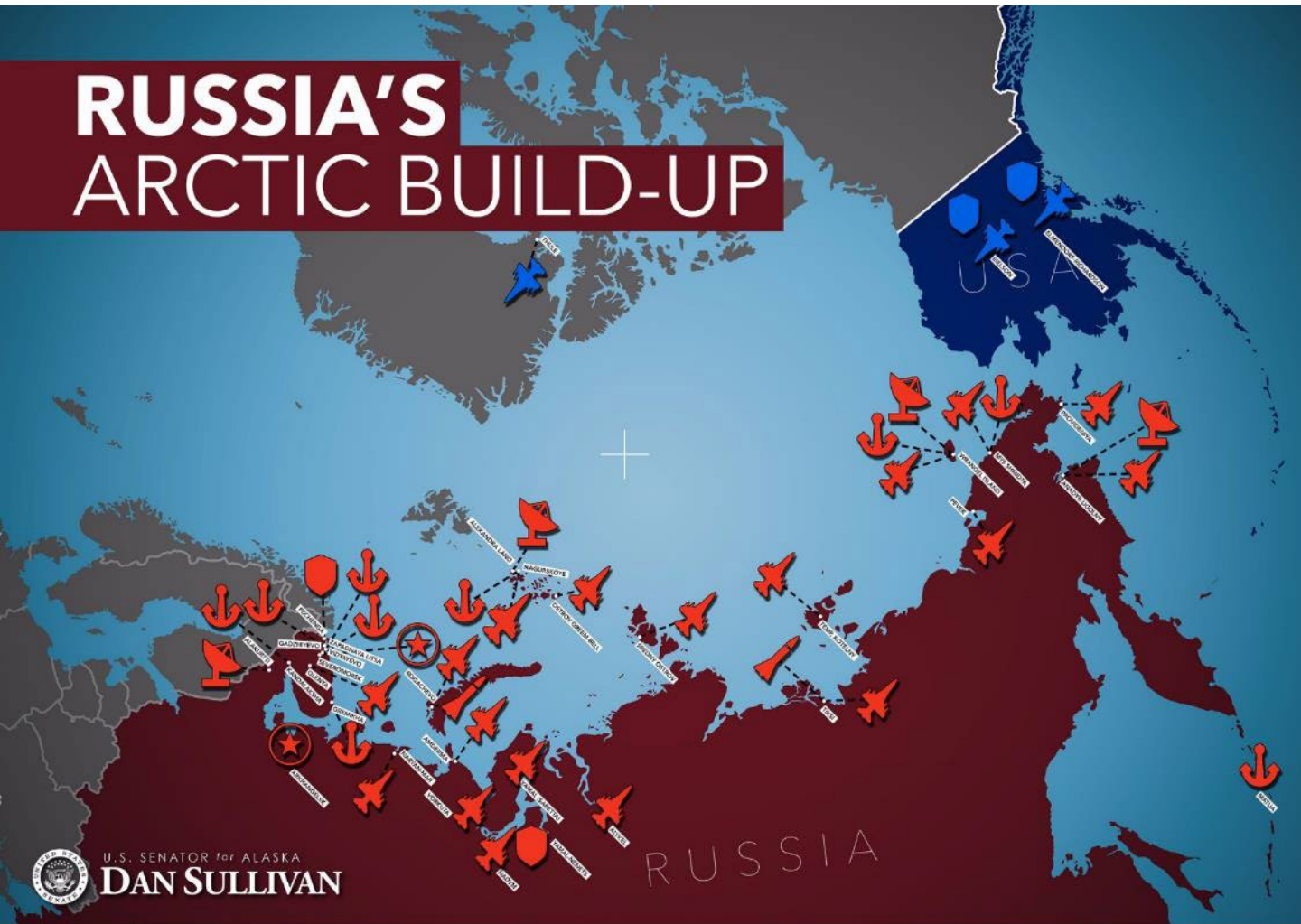
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RUSSIA'S ARCTIC BUILD-UP



U.S. SENATOR for ALASKA
DAN SULLIVAN

- KEY**
- INFANTRY BASE
 - HEADQUARTERS
 - NAVAL BASE
 - ELECTRONIC WARFARE & RADAR
 - AIRFIELD & SEARCH AND RESCUE
 - AIR DEFENSE



memecenter.com/djskee

Strategic position

Less ice means big potential for a key shipping route along Russia's northern coast.



Satellite images show a build-up of several **Russian military bases** on the Arctic coast.

Andreas Østhagen (2023)

“Russia is unlikely to engage in direct conflict with NATO countries in the Arctic or High North, and there are few disputes in the Arctic regarding territory or resources that might escalate or drive further conflict. Instead, concerns about conflict escalation relate to two dimensions:

- (1) possible mishaps and unintended incidents due to increased military activity in the region or risk-taking by Russian actors; and
- (2) intended actions and escalation (i.e., hybrid threat operations) that remain below the threshold of outright conflict and/or plausible deniability.

Hybrid CoE Paper 18

The Arctic after Russia's invasion of Ukraine:
The increased risk of conflict and
hybrid threats



Russian Information Operations: The Kremlin's Competitive Narratives and Arctic Influence Objectives

Journal of Peace and War Studies (Nov. /22)

P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Troy Bouffard, and Adam Lajeunesse

Abstract: Although the Arctic states share many common interests in the circumpolar region, resurgent strategic competition globally and the war in Ukraine have reinforced how Russia and the other seven Arctic states are not like-minded and are competing for international legitimacy. This article examines how Russia wages its perpetual adversarial competition in the information environment via state-funded media channels and proxy websites. These tools reinforce Russian strategies to *legitimize* its position as the major Arctic power and to frame its military investments as *defensive* in nature against potential NATO aggression. First, we frame Russia's core Arctic goals, using its strategic plans unveiled in 2020 as the official framework guiding national action. Second, we describe Russian propaganda and disinformation ecosystem, with particular emphasis on two major state-funded media outlets and various proxy sites. Third, we provide an analysis of various themes in Russia's anti-Western and pro-Russian

- legitimize Russia as the largest Arctic rightsholder (while delegitimizing others)
- establish the requirement for Russia to defend its Arctic territory against the US and NATO as strategic competitors
- embarrass Arctic states like Canada and divide our population

Themes in Russia's Anti-Western Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem

- Russian superiority over the West
- legitimize Russia as the largest Arctic rightsholder
- requirement for Russia to defend its Arctic territory against the US and NATO as strategic competitors
- promote Kremlin statements and its Arctic Development Doctrine, touting Russia's icebreaking and construction programs in the North (including the refurbishing and modernizing of military infrastructure and air-defence systems), and claiming the superiority of Russian weapon systems in the Arctic region
- trumpet the extensive energy resources in the Russian Arctic, and suggests that these are a primary driver of the Americans' covetous interest in the region
- Russian narratives also highlight the country's adherence to international law, respect for sovereignty, openness to dialogue, and readiness to discuss common issues

Should we stress about the Russian military invading or threatening to attack the Canadian Arctic?



“Spillover”

- Effects of phases of war in Ukraine (2014 and 2022) on Arctic governance:
 - 2014+ affects defence and security cooperation: Russian participation not welcomed in Northern Chiefs of Heads of Defence meetings; Arctic Security Forces Roundtable
 - Russia launches full-scale war on Ukraine in Feb. 2022 – like-minded seven Arctic states “pause” participation in Arctic Council activities until “new modalities” for cooperation can be found, as well as Arctic Coast Guard Forum
 - April 2023 – Russia and China agree on coast guard cooperation in the Arctic
 - Sept. 2023 – Russia withdraws from the Barents Euro-Arctic Council
 - Nov. 2023 - Russia withdraws from treaty of conventional armed forces in Europe

Future of Arctic Council in doubt after end of Russian chairship



Co-operation with Russia has been formally suspended since 2022 invasion of Ukraine

John Lee - CBC News - Posted: May 11, 2023 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: 4 hours ago



TIME

Ukraine's Conflict Has Rippled All the Way to the Arctic Circle



The Economist

The Economist explains

How war in Ukraine is changing the Arctic

Co-operation with Russia has collapsed—and China is ascendant



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ANALYSIS

After Ukraine, Can the Arctic Peace Hold?

A Western boycott of the Arctic Council could backfire.

By Ingrid Burke-Findlay, a fellow at Harvard University's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies and a former consulate officer at the US Embassy in Kazakhstan

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The Ukraine War and the Future of the Arctic

Editorial | October 2022

ISSUE 100 | 10 | 2022



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Russia's invasion of Ukraine is fracturing the delicate peace in the Arctic

The Arctic was once an oasis of international cooperation. Russia's invasion brought it to a halt.

How is China a threat to the Canadian Arctic?



CHINA AS A POLAR GREAT POWER



ANNE-MARIE BRADY

P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Adam Lajeunesse,
James Manicom, and Frédéric Lasserre



CHINA'S ARCTIC AMBITIONS

and What They Mean for Canada

China's Polar Interests

- For years, People's Republic of China (PRC) official statements and state-run media have asserted that China is a “near-Arctic state” (近北极国家, jin beiji guojia) and an “important stakeholder in Arctic affairs” (北极利益攸关者, beiji liyi youguanzhe) with the right to a greater role in Arctic governance, defining the region as a global commons rather than a strictly regional space.
- Lacking a geographical connection to the Arctic, China legitimizes this status through extensive scientific research, investment, and economic development in the North.
- China self-identifies as a “polar power” (极地大国, jidi daguo) that aspires to become a “polar great power” (极地强国, jidi qiangguo) by 2030, hence its perceived need to be “dominant in the polar regions.”
- China seeks to advance the “community of human destiny” or “community with a shared future for mankind” [人类命运共同体] in the polar regions.

Why worry about China in the Arctic?

- Leveraging all tools of state power (diplomatic, information, military, economic) to achieve national objectives, including its “Polar Silk Road”
- Self-declared “near-Arctic” state conducting military intelligence collection and influence activities under cover of economic development and scientific research
- Developing Arctic-capable military and dual-use assets – e.g. ice-capable ships, Arctic satellite communications and imagery, and cold weather drones
- Seeking to use economic investment as way to get a footprint, influence people, conduct espionage, and steal intellectual property

An Economic Peer Competitor?

- Lots of focus on *potential* Chinese investments, but sober analysis reveals that the Arctic states have not blindly or naively accepted Chinese investments, and recent trends suggest a strong sentiment against attempts by Chinese actors to acquire land or strategic infrastructure in the Arctic.
- **China has not been able to force its way in.**
- China does not have unlimited resources and the level of its direct investment in the Arctic has been overstated – particularly when it comes to northern infrastructure development.
- Although few Chinese projects have actually materialized, Western media and experts have inadvertently played into the narrative that China is a key (and even essential) economic player across the Arctic, relying on superficial information and media releases to reinforce China's claims to relevance.



Sign bears the logos of Vital Metals, right, and NWT subsidiary Cheetah Resources. Sarah Pruys/Cabin Radio

GNWT takes no position on China mine deal that some call a betrayal

Ollie Williams · December 18, 2023

Share    

The new NWT government says it “cannot comment” on the sale of rare earths from the territory’s Nechalacho mine to a Chinese

OPINION




China is on a relentless mission to control Canada's Arctic waters

ROB HUEBERT

SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

PUBLISHED AUGUST 25, 2023

UPDATED AUGUST 27, 2023

 COMMENTS SHARE BOOKMARK

Rob Huebert is a senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and associate professor of political science at the University of Calgary.

Ever since an icebreaker called Xue Long arrived in Tuktoyaktuk, NWT, in 1999, Canadians have been curious about China's interest in the Canadian Arctic. While some observers view China's presence in the region as benign, even benefiting Arctic science and research, recent Chinese actions and announcements are pointing to Beijing's determination to have a military capability in the region that will exceed that of Canada.

China has already developed the ability to deploy underwater listening devices that can be used to track American and other allied submarines in the Arctic, and in about two years the country will have deep-diving submersibles that can be used in those waters. So, unlike Canada, they will be able to listen to what is happening under the ice cap and will have the ability to deploy assets there accordingly.

A Polar Maritime Peer?



CANADIAN GLOBAL AFFAIRS INSTITUTE
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Making sense of our complex world.

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Trojan Dragons? Normalizing China's Presence in the Arctic



Image credit: Xinhua/Liu Shiping

POLICY PAPER

by Bryan J.R. Millard and P. Whitney Lackenbauer
June 2021

This paper is an academic document, and thus contains facts and opinions that the authors alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence.

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- China has effectively leveraged its reputation and limited activities to “normalize” its regional presence
- China is not a peer to the Arctic coastal states in the maritime domain
- Its scientific research icebreakers do not have the same presence, impact, and capabilities as the Arctic state fleets, and its knowledge of the region naturally lags those states’ considerably

Military Peer Competitor in the Arctic?

- The Arctic is not as central or important to China as the writings of many Western Arctic commentators might suggest
 - Beijing's main preoccupations are still closer to home
- Narratives tend to conflate the more hypothetical risk that China poses as an international actor in the Arctic with the real risk that it already poses as a regional actor in the Pacific
 - small Chinese footprint in the Arctic and *hypothetical* military threat in or through the Arctic
- Over-inflated or misplaced fears about China's military threat to and in the Arctic may prove to be a strategic distraction, diverting Arctic states' attention and defence resources from elsewhere.
 - In this sense, prematurely elevating China to military peer or near-peer competitor status in the Arctic can divert attention from parts of the world where its capabilities and interests actually warrant such status



JOURNAL OF INDO-PACIFIC AFFAIRS

The Department of the Air Force's Professional Journal for America's Priority Theater



Why China Is Not a Peer Competitor in the Arctic

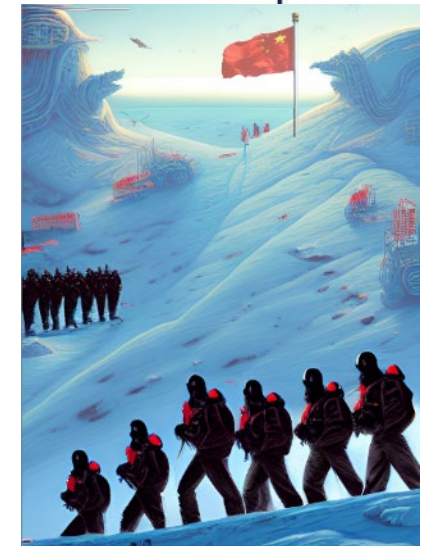


Published Oct. 3, 2022

By Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Dr. Adam Lajeunesse, & Ryan Dean

Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs, Air University Press --

- not a “peer competitor” in the Arctic
 - situating a “near Arctic state” in a GLOBAL and regional perspective
- need for vigilance
 - economic investment as vector for influence
 - marine scientific research as means to “normalize” China’s presence (amongst other things...)
 - information and influence (cognitive)
- how do we *compete* with China in the Arctic without conferring undue legitimacy or status?



HOME > POLITICS

Russia Wants to Cooperate With BRICS Countries on Research on Svalbard



ARGUMENT *An expert's point of view on a current event.*

Arctic Harmony Is Falling Apart

An isolated Russia is turning to China for help in the north.



By **Elisabeth Braw**, a columnist at *Foreign Policy* and a senior associate fellow at the European Leadership Network.



Isolated Russia invites faraway countries to Svalbard science center in Pyramiden

👤 Thomas Nilsen, *The Independent Barents Observer*

📅 Posted: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 at 10:47

💬 0 Comments

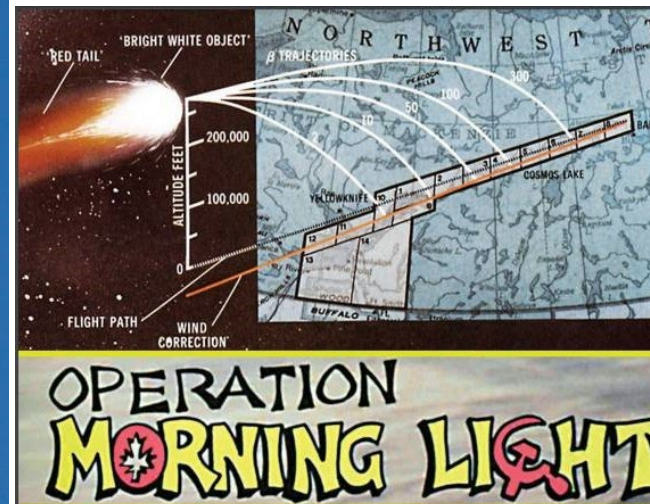


Russia's icebreaker 50 Let Pobedy moves into ice near Sabetta, Tyumen region, Russia, April 4, 2021 (Shutterstock)

Friction Points in the Sino-Russian Arctic Partnership

By Adam Lajeunesse, P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Sergey Sukhankin, and Troy J. Bouffard

Balloons, Satellites, etc.

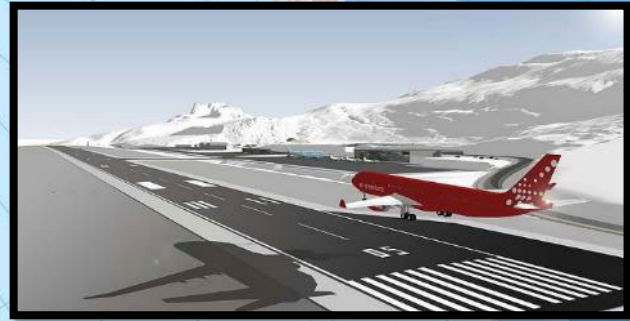


Edited and introduced by
Ryan Dean and P. Whitney Lackenbauer



Members of JTF2 storm a ship during Operation Nanook off the shores of Churchill, MB, 24 Aug. 2012. CP/Adrian Wyld





Inuvialuit
Nunangat
Inuvialuit
Settlement
Region



Yellowknifer editorial: No clear alternative to China buying Hope Bay



IN...

North · Point of View

Dear Qallunaat (white people)

[f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [v](#) [i](#)

'Recognize and admit your power and privilege and the fact you are benefiting from racist systems'

 Sandra Inuitj · for CBC News · Posted: Feb 17, 2019 6:00 AM CT | Last Updated: February 17, 2019

Nunavik

Umiujaq
Kuujjuaraapik
Chisasibi

Rankin Inlet
Chesterfield Inlet
Igloodik
Hall Beach
Cape Dorset
Kimmirut
Aupa
KipukKak
Postville
Rigolet
Kikiak

Increased hazards to Arctic defence infrastructure and military operations

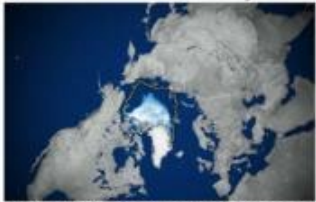
Department of Defense Climate Adaptation Plan

September 1, 2021



To National Climate Task Force and Federal Chief Sustainability Officer

IFS Insights 11-12-2020



Why should the Norwegian Armed Forces care about climate change?

By Johannes Amund Olsen

Takeaways

- Climate change is a "great multiplier" due to its ability to amplify existing security challenges and threats. It is likely to affect the military as an institution and organization, including recruitment and assignments, as well as operations and the character of warfare. Hence, it is an all-encompassing threat factor that needs to be taken into account in long-term security assessments and defence planning.
- Climate change may also be a direct threat to the military itself, as the armed forces are and will be operating in the polar regions and areas of other sensitive Arctic features and areas of politics are bound to be faced by the climate change.
- Among the broad spectrum of experts, climate change is likely to affect air craft and the marine environment, potentially cause a secondary wave of military forces to respond to global security, as well as operate a new level of power transfer to the Arctic due to the impact of climate change and the melting of sea ice.
- There are basic knowledge gaps regarding how climate change will affect the Norwegian Armed Forces, including operational and strategic aspects, as well as how climate change will affect the recruitment and security alliances such as NATO, which requires further research.

Climate Change Impacts on the Arctic Operating Environment

UNCLASSIFIED

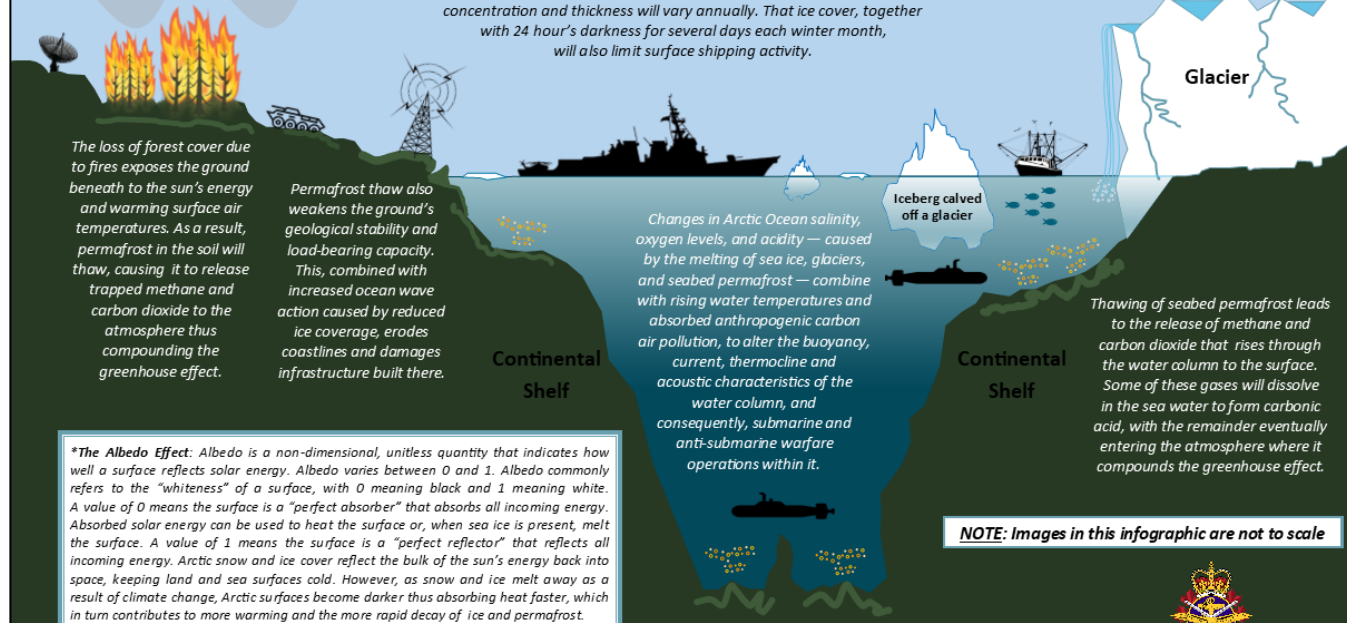


Forest and peatbog fires in the Arctic and sub-Arctic will become more frequent and intense, threatening nearby military infrastructure and civilian population centres. Smoke produced by the fires will drift great distances and drop black carbon soot on remaining ice throughout the Arctic, amplifying the Albedo Effect* thus accelerating the ice melt and permafrost thaw. Smoke will also reduce visibility for aircraft operations.

Sea ice coverage in the central Arctic Ocean will diminish more each year and it may be nominally "ice free" (< 10% coverage) in the summer months by 2040, enabling increasing volumes of ship traffic, both military and commercial. However, icebergs and their remnants will continue to present hazards to surface navigation. Also, without extensive sea ice present to restrict wind and wave action, rougher sea states will prevail in Arctic waters each summer.

Glaciers throughout the Arctic will experience accelerated decay. This will be evidenced by increased cracking, "calving-off" of icebergs, larger melt-water lakes on the ice surface, and increased fresh water runoff into the ocean. Melting glaciers will result in rising sea levels and coastal flooding globally. Melting glaciers together with thawing permafrost are also likely to release ancient pathogens, potentially resulting in pandemic diseases.

As floes of drifting sea ice diminish, so too will the natural "bastion" areas for submarines to hide beneath, making them easier to detect by surface warships and maritime patrol aircraft. However, sea ice will continue to provide cover during the winter months, although the extent, concentration and thickness will vary annually. That ice cover, together with 24 hour's darkness for several days each winter month, will also limit surface shipping activity.



***The Albedo Effect:** Albedo is a non-dimensional, unitless quantity that indicates how well a surface reflects solar energy. Albedo varies between 0 and 1. Albedo commonly refers to the "whiteness" of a surface, with 0 meaning black and 1 meaning white. A value of 0 means the surface is a "perfect absorber" that absorbs all incoming energy. Absorbed solar energy can be used to heat the surface or, when sea ice is present, melt the surface. A value of 1 means the surface is a "perfect reflector" that reflects all incoming energy. Arctic snow and ice cover reflect the bulk of the sun's energy back into space, keeping land and sea surfaces cold. However, as snow and ice melt away as a result of climate change, Arctic surfaces become darker thus absorbing heat faster, which in turn contributes to more warming and the more rapid decay of ice and permafrost.

NOTE: Images in this infographic are not to scale

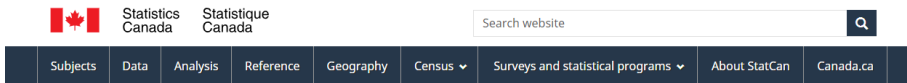


Socio-economic inequities

- adversaries seek to exacerbate and exploit North-South and Indigenous-State divisions in the Arctic states
- lack of infrastructure



Arctic and Northern Policy Framework:
Inuit Nunangat



Home > 85-002-X > Juristat > Main page

Victimization of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit in Canada

by Samuel Perreault, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics

Highlights

- Due to the historical and intergenerational trauma resulting from colonialism and related policies, as well as individual and systemic racism, many Indigenous people today—that is, those who are First Nations, Métis or Inuit—face a number of deeply rooted social and economic challenges, including higher rates of criminal victimization.
- According to self-reported data from the 2019 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), about 4 in 10 Indigenous people experienced sexual or physical violence by an adult before the age of 15. The proportion victimization.
- According to self-reported data from the 2019 General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), about 4 in 10 Indigenous people experienced sexual or physical violence by an adult before the age of 15. The proportion

Social and Economic Inequity in Inuit Nunangat

Many Inuit face social and economic inequities that impact our health and wellbeing

Inuit Nunangat

52% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat live in crowded homes*¹

34% of Inuit aged 25 to 64 in Inuit Nunangat have earned a high school diploma¹

70% of Inuit households in Nunavut are food insecure²

\$23,485 The median before tax individual income for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat¹

30 The number of physicians per 100,000 population in Nunavut⁴

47.5% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat are employed¹

72.4 years The projected life expectancy for Inuit in Canada⁵

12.3 The infant mortality rate per 1,000 for Inuit infants in Canada.⁶

All Canadians

9% of all Canadians live in crowded homes*¹

86% of all Canadians aged 25 to 64 have earned a high school diploma¹

8% of all households in Canada are food insecure³

\$92,011 The median before tax individual income for non-Indigenous people in Inuit Nunangat¹

119 The number of physicians per 100,000 population in Urban Health Authorities⁴

60.2% of all Canadians are employed¹

82.9 years The projected life expectancy for non-Indigenous people in Canada⁵

4.4 The non-indigenous infant mortality rate per 1,000 for Canada.⁶



Emergency Response and SAR

“This rise in [commercial, research, and tourism] activity will also bring increased safety and security demands related to search and rescue and natural or [humanitarian] disasters to which Canada must be ready to respond.”

Canada, SSE (2017)



Canadian Rangers

Role: Provide a military presence in those sparsely settled northern, coastal and isolated areas of Canada which cannot conveniently or economically be covered by other elements of the Canadian Armed Forces

Mission: To provide lightly-equipped and self-sufficient mobile forces in support of CAF sovereignty and other domestic operations.



Canadian Rangers
Rangers canadiens

PATROLS/PATROUILLES

Junior Canadian Rangers
Rangers juniors canadiens



- ★ CRPG HQ/NDHQ – GPRC OG/OG DN
- Capital / Capitale
- 170 Canadian Rangers Patrols / Patrouille de Rangers canadiens
- 4,394 Canadian Rangers / Rangers canadiens
- 123 Junior Canadian Rangers Patrols / Patrouille de Rangers juniors canadiens
- 3,463 Junior Canadian Rangers / Rangers juniors canadiens

CRPG/GPRC	1	2	3	4	5
patrols JCR/patrouilles RUC	37	29	16	27	14
JCR/RUC	9/1	7/8	6/2	8/2	4/0

CRP/RC Gander

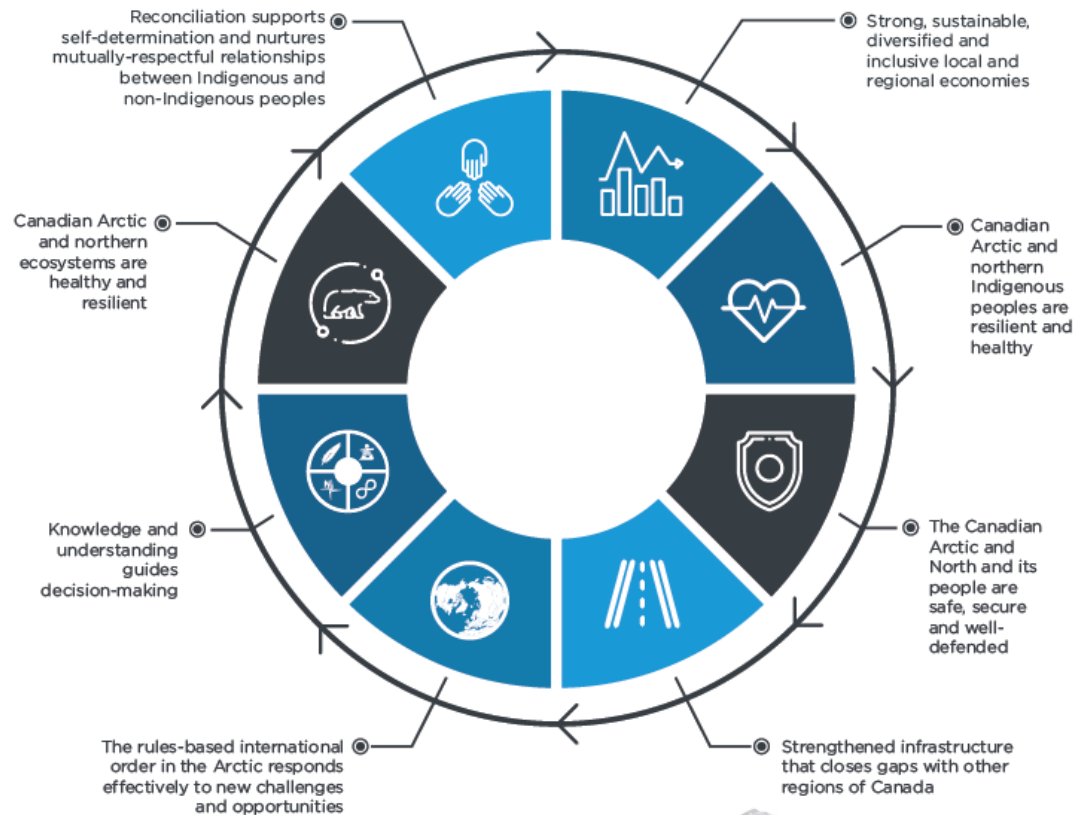
Strategic Reconnaissance Screen



Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (2019)

***Vision:* Strong, self-reliant people and communities working together for a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable Arctic and northern region at home and abroad, while expressing Canada's enduring Arctic sovereignty**

» The **framework** builds on 8 overarching and interconnected goals:



Arctic and Northern Policy Framework

Safety, Security, and Defence Chapter (2019)

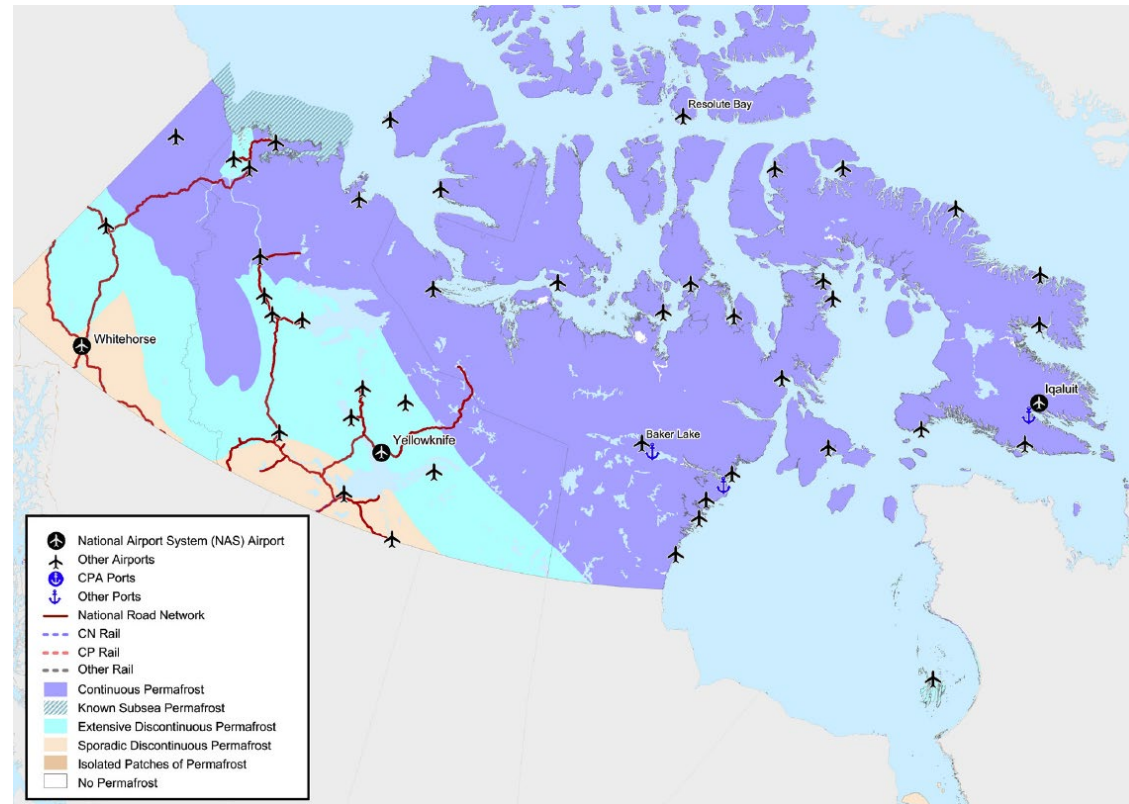
- **Goal: The Canadian Arctic and North and its people are safe, secure, and well-defended**
- Strengthen Canada's cooperation and collaboration with domestic and international partners on safety, security and defence issues
- Enhance Canada's military presence as well as prevent and respond to safety and security incidents in the Arctic and the North
- Strengthen Canada's domain awareness, surveillance, and control capabilities in the Arctic and the North
- Enforce Canada's legislative and regulatory frameworks that govern transportation, border integrity, and environmental protection in the Arctic and the North
- Increase the whole-of-society emergency management capabilities in Arctic and Northern communities
- Support community safety through effective and culturally-appropriate crime prevention initiatives and policing services

Our North, Strong and Free

“In delivering on this vision, we will **collaborate with Indigenous partners and northern communities** to safeguard our security and assert our sovereignty. Our investments in Arctic defence present enormous opportunities for the region. To help realize these opportunities, we are committed to **doing things differently**—to an inclusive approach to national defence that recognizes that there is nothing to defend if we do not put our **people first**. We will deepen our dialogue with northern and Arctic stakeholders, including to establish **multipurpose northern infrastructure** that can support Canadian Armed Forces operations and contribute towards the needs of territorial governments, Indigenous peoples, and Northern communities wherever possible, consistent with the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. In doing so, we will rely on Indigenous expertise, experience and talent across the region.”

Canada's Northern Transportation System

- 70 communities are only accessible year-round by air, or seasonally by water or ice roads
- Constraints on supply chains, lack of redundancy
- climate change threatens the resilience of existing infrastructure and presents challenges to constructing new infrastructure



Northwest Territories	Nunavut	Pan-Territorial Chapter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Growing a diversified and sustainable economy • Healthy people and communities • Food security • Responsibly stewarding the land and resources • Safe and secure people and communities • Governance and reconciliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the well-being of Inuit and communities • Closing the infrastructure gap • Facilitating economic developments that benefit Nunavummiut • Raising employability through education and training • Strengthening Nunavut as a distinct territory in Canada and the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible, sustainable development of Northern economies • Tools and authorities necessary for Northern self-determination • Alignment of regulatory regimes with social and environmental responsibility • Healthy, self-reliant people and communities

“Each of the territorial governments is challenged by constrained fiscal capacity and the consequential limits to invest in essential core programs and services, let alone strategic and economic infrastructure.”

– Pan-Territorial Chapter

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

ANPF: Inuit Nunangat



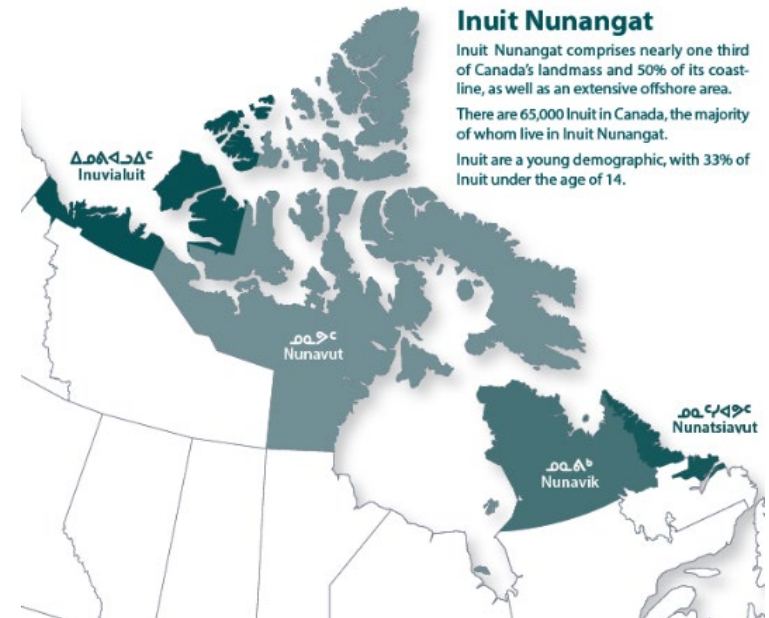
Arctic and Northern
Policy Framework:
Inuit Nunangat

Priorities for action and investment:

- Infrastructure and economic self-reliance
 - marine and air infrastructure
 - Telecommunications
 - Renewal energy
 - Mental health and suicide prevention
- Inuit self-determination in research
- Education
- Wildlife and Food Security
- “the federal government should work with Inuit to co-develop federal action plans”

www.itk.ca

75



Implementation Challenges

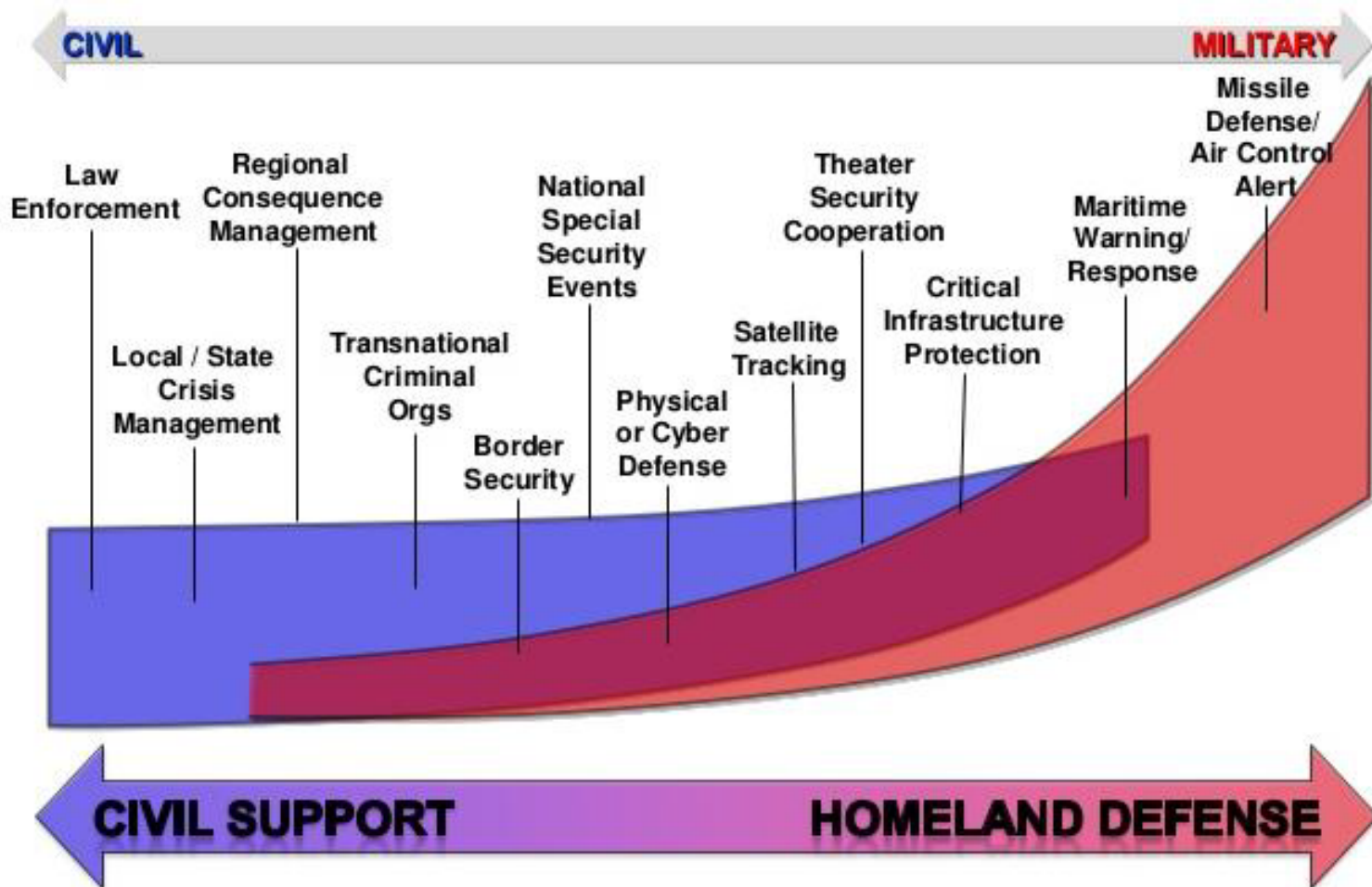
- Expectation management
 - “Nothing About Us, Without Us”
 - UNDRIP, Consultation, and consent
- Prioritization and alignment of initiatives at the speed of relevance for all parties
 - *ONSF* commitments ... with long time horizons and delayed spending
- Military vs human vs environmental security
 - How to avoid a zero sum game?

Considerations

- Threats through, to, and in
- Sectors of security
- Domains and “accessibility”
- Levels of analysis
- “Nothing about us, without us”



Capability to project and sustain forces to deal with situations that fall across the spectrum of operations



How might Canada and its allies use our *Arctic strengths* to influence our adversaries and competitors?



Indigenous Peoples

- Russian media actively emphasizes how Canada and the US are guilty of committing “genocide” against Arctic Indigenous peoples
 - suggests that poor treatment of Inuit and other groups means that they have no legitimacy criticizing Russia or accusing Russia of violating Indigenous rights
- Goal: illegitimize Western claims that they respect Indigenous peoples; goal to absolve Russia of need to make its case



NATO's "Nordic Expansion"

- Elite political circles
 - belittle Finland's new status as a NATO member and the impact of the Nordic NATO enlargement
 - will result in greater militarization (and thus destabilization) of both the Arctic and the Baltic regions (note the contradiction with narrative above)
 - decision to join NATO as the byproduct of a lack of strategic foresight, as well as severe pressure imposed from outside forces (ie. US) – pawns and fools
 - by joining NATO, FIN and SWE achieve no security objectives, and instead put themselves at risk of retaliation in case of hostilities
- The "power wing" of the Kremlin (MOD and its close circles)
 - US is lobbying for a "trilateral regional military alliance" (Norway, Finland, and Sweden) supported by the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF/CO)
 - NATO poses a growing threat to the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and upsets the geostrategic balance in the region

July 30, 2023

Russian Reactions to NATO's "Nordic Expansion"

Sergey Sukhankin, P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Adam Lajeunesse
NAADSN Postdoctoral Fellow, Network Lead, and Network Coordinator

We welcome Finland as the newest member of our Alliance. This is an historic step for Finland and for NATO. For many years, we worked closely as partners; we now stand together as Allies. NATO membership makes Finland safer and NATO stronger.

We reaffirm our commitment to NATO's Open Door policy and to Article 10 of the Washington Treaty. Every nation has the right to choose its own security arrangements. We look forward to welcoming Sweden as a full member of the Alliance and, in this regard, welcome the agreement reached between the NATO Secretary General, the President of Türkiye, and the Prime Minister of Sweden.

Peace in the Euro-Atlantic area has been shattered. The Russian Federation has violated the norms and principles that contributed to a stable and predictable European security order. The Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

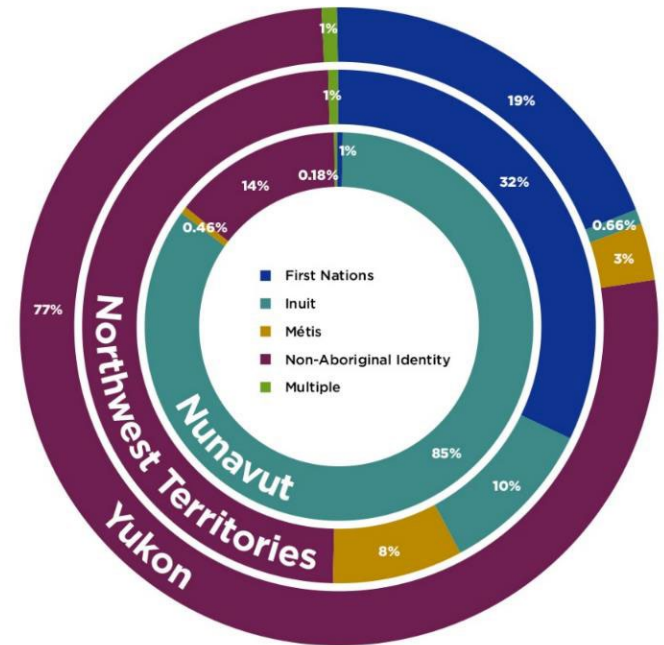
NATO Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 11 July 2023¹

Following Russia's unprovoked, full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, popular support for NATO membership surged in Sweden and Finland. Although both countries had tightened their working relationship with NATO in previous years, they maintained official policies of non-alignment. This changed when Stockholm and Helsinki submitted formal applications to join the North Atlantic alliance on 18 May 2022, with NATO heads of state inviting them to do so at the Madrid Summit on 29 June. Finland deposited its instrument of accession on 4 April 2023 after the last two Allies (Hungary and Türkiye) notified the protocols in late March.² Sweden also is set to join after Türkiye's president withdrew his country's objections at the July 2023 Vilnius summit.³ This means two strong Nordic military powers entering the Alliance, while simultaneously undermining Russian President Vladimir Putin's messaging to his country's citizens that his war against Ukraine will strengthen Russia's security.



Canada's Northern Territories

- Canada's three territories account for nearly 40 percent of the country's land mass and have a coastline that is twice as long as the Atlantic and Pacific coasts combined
- About 118,000 Canadians live in the three territories (2021 census), with many living in the territorial capitals of Iqaluit, Yellowknife and Whitehorse
- Indigenous peoples make up 86% of the population of Nunavut, 51% in the Northwest Territories and 23% in Yukon



Share of Population by Indigenous Identity
(Census 2016)

The Territorial North Today



Political Context

Governance systems unique in each territory

Territories and Indigenous peoples have unique status in the Canadian federation

Devolution / shared jurisdiction with territorial and Indigenous governments



Economic Context

Rich in resource wealth but significant growth barriers

Public sector largest employer; heavily reliant on federal fiscal transfers

Uneven availability & distribution of income & employment

High operating/living costs & diseconomies of scale



Geographic Context

Vast distances between communities and to South

Under-developed marine, rail, land & broadband links, with heavy reliance on air travel

Harsh climate & fragile ecosystems

The Territorial North Today

Social & Cultural Context

High rates of poverty, overcrowded housing, crime, negative lifestyle behaviours, and food insecurity

Young & growing Indigenous population, cultures in rapid transition

Environmental Context

Traditional food sources under pressure; rapid warming trends impacting health, safety, and critical infrastructure; health risks associated with contaminated sites and external air & water contaminants/pollutants



Global & Technological Context

Renewed geopolitical interest in Arctic

Increasingly accessible and subject to global economic/environmental change drivers

Increased “connectivity” with the rest of the world (from internet to cell phones) bringing new opportunities ... and threats



Inuit Nunangat

- 53 Inuit communities in Canada
- Sea is the main artery for re-supply (sea lift) in summer
- “Highway” for visiting family and friends in neighbouring communities in winter and spring



Northern Canada in the 70's (1970)

- “**People, resources and environment** are the main elements in any strategy for northern development. In the course of its policy review during the past year, the Government affirmed that the needs of the people in the North are more important than resource development and that the maintenance of ecological balance is essential. In the setting of objectives and priorities in the North, in line with national policy goals, the essence of choice for the Government is to maintain an appropriate degree of balance among those three elements.”