

# ACTIVITY REPORT



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Montreal Climate Summit 2024

## Third Annual Montreal Climate Security Summit

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The third iteration of the Montreal Climate Security Summit took on a NATO flair this year as it was a partnered event with the new NATO Center of Excellence, the NATO Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence, alongside the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. The summit focused on the themes of timing, mitigation, prevention, and education. Over the course of the summit, various speakers expressed their concern over the melting arctic sea ice and the impact that this would have on polar navigation and security. As, the more accessible Arctic (because of climate change) is becoming an area in which competitors and adversaries are seeking new shipping routes and resource opportunities. The Arctic focused panel shifted the discussion away from shipping routes and instead took a very Canadian approach to understanding the security risks that the changing climate creates in the North. The international nature of the Summit illustrated that climate change is a global problem and we need to be looking to international cooperation to find solutions instead of working in parallel silos.

### Day 1

The Summit opened with a recorded message from Bill Blair during which he explained that the evolving climate creates new and evolving climate challenges. Blair focused in on the impact climate change is having on Canada's defence considerations in the Arctic, as it is a region disproportionately impacted by climate change. There are urgent defence and security challenges that Canada needs to address in the Arctic because the melting of the ice is creating new and more efficient shipping routes that Russia and China are expressing increased interest. Blair concluded with the idea that Canada cannot fight global climate change itself. It needs to be a global effort.

After the message from Bill Blair Lieutenant-General Michael C. Wright of the Canadian Armed Forces gave a welcoming keynote speech. Wright definitively stated that the key threat of not only his lifetime but also that of his children's lifetimes is not Russia and China but is instead climate change. Canada is not immune to the security challenges created by climate change, and our Arctic is especially vulnerable. The increased number of domestic operations that the CAF responds to impact their ability to meet our pre-existing international commitments. The frozen northern waterway which used to serve as a natural barrier is becoming a high traffic

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corridor according to Wright. We are actively preparing for an increased role in the Arctic because of climate change and remain committed to working alongside northern and indigenous partners. Lieutenant-General Michael C. Wright concluded with the statement that the CAF remains resilient and ready to protect our north, strong and free.

Mr. Noah Gordon chaired the first panel of the Summit titled “The State of Climate Security Today,” and Dr. Stefan Rahmstorf, Dr. James Clare, The Hon. Sharon E. Burke, and Ms. Janani Vivkanada served as panelists. The panel opened with remarks about how the climate we are experiencing today is already well outside the historic data. Militaries have an important role in dealing with climate security because they already exist to communicate serious security risks to the population. We are causing climate change ourselves. If aliens or some other external force began attacking the earth’s environment, all the states would come together and figure out how to fight against a climate crisis. Thus, climate security can only be addressed if humanity collectively wants to solve the problem. If we do not come together, we will not be able to find a solution in time. A problem with addressing climate security is that the term is so broad that it can create misconception. It is key for a common understanding to be established in order to understand how climate security impacts fragile environments. We also need to work on building climate resiliency in all areas of life: peace building, military operations, strategic planning, etc.. The panelists all highlighted that climate security is not just a long-term risk, it is a risk right now. For example, the United States national defence strategy views China as a pacing threat, but if we consider climate change in the same context, it is clear the United States is being outpaced. CCASCOE is so important in the fight against climate security because it brings states together and helps develop understanding and collective solutions to dealing with climate change.

The Honorable Sherri Goodman gave a talk about her new book *Threat Multiplier: Climate, Military Leadership, and the Fight for Global Security*. Global climate change increases tension in stable regions of the world and acts as a threat multiplier in the more volatile regions. The Arctic is a common theme today, but that is because the region is faced with melting sea ice and increasing tensions. The opening up of the North American Arctic increases the threat profile of North America because of Russia and China’s increasing interest in the Arctic. Goodman talked about how we need to climate proof security as climate change, national security, and energy dependence are a related set of global challenges. In order to climate proof security, four things need to happen. First, there needs to be awareness about improving climate prediction, second, there needs to be the adaptation of managing the unavoidable impacts of climate change that will occur. Third, states need to actively pursue mitigation towards creating a net-zero military. Lastly, alliances need to reimagine global cooperation and competition in this era of uncertainty.

Goodman then chaired the “Operational Resilience: Adapting to Climate Change” panel which featured Ms. Swathi Veeravali, Professor Mohammad Alqattan, Colonel Nicholas Dickson, Colonel Giancarlo Turco, and Colonel Benoit Mainville. Climate resiliency cannot be considered a partisan issue because four or even eight years is not enough time to achieve resiliency. We need to work together and view climate security mitigation as a cooperation multiplier instead of leaving the climate crisis the ability to turn into a threat multiplier. We need to enhance environmental collaboration even if we have political or cultural problems as we cannot fight climate change without joint operations. While the entire world will suffer the impact of climate change regions like the Arctic and Africa will be disproportionately impacted. The conversation then turned to the important role

that the Canadian Rangers can play in monitoring climate change. The Rangers had tried to track climate change in the past but were told it was not a military job, but the new Ranger guidance that is being drafted states that one of the primary responsibilities of the Canadian Rangers is to watch the environment and monitor climate change. The Canadian Rangers are the state's eyes and ears of the north and the added environmental responsibility demonstrates Canada's recognition of the climate crisis.

Dr. Sarah-Myriam Martin-Brûlé chaired the Summit's fireside chat "Climate Security in Multilateral Diplomacy" with Mr. Hans-Olav Ibrekk and Mr. Matthew Hudson. Ibrekk started off the conversation saying it's hard to be optimistic these days, we should be working together but instead the number of conflicts are increasing around the world. Multilateral diplomacy is hard especially when it involves the consciousness principle because that means the laggards determine the collective action. Climate needs to be further integrated within the peace and security framework and we can use climate diplomacy to build trust. Hudson then talked about climate is a key concern for Australia and that the risks posed by climate change will not impact the Indo-Pacific in a uniform manner. Australia is heavily investing in order to become a global renewable energy producer in addition to working closely with NATO on issues related to climate change. International diplomacy and multilateralism needs to focus on climate across all issue areas.

Dr. Joshua Elliott chaired the "Data and Climate Security Panel," which featured Dr. Erin Hughey, Mr. Mike DiiOrio, Ms. Alessandra Ussorio, and Dr. Kiersten B. Johnson as the panelists. The speed of relevance is quickening and states have to be able to respond much quicker to emergencies than in the past. We need to work together and innovate in order to give decision makers as much information as possible before decisions have to be made. Validated open source data is extremely important as confidence levels increase the more we can build on previous data. Open source data also is extremely important in terms of global climate cooperation compared to the classified data that militaries tend to rely on. In order to gather global data on climate security, it requires the ability to process large amounts of information very quickly and scientists are working with artificial intelligence in order to try to speed up the process. Government and industry need to be working together in developing climate data due to new types of data that emerge, the quantity, and the need for experts to collaborate. There tends to be too much separation between the operational world and the scientific world, and we need to bridge this gap. We are starting to reach the stage that we need to move on from just performing data proliferation into intelligence integration as policy makers are now running into the challenge of being faced with a lot of raw data but not the intelligence needed in order to utilize it.

Dr. Will Greaves chaired the "Climate and Human Security Panel" which featured Dr. Louise van Schaik, Ms. Catherine Wong, Brigadier General Raffaele Pio Manicone, Dr. Ayesha Siddiqi as panelists. The panel discussed how climate change has both slow and sudden security impacts. Therefore, militaries need to increase their resiliency in order to respond to a wide range of climate challenges. The act of addressing climate security is not something a country can do individually, but it is something that has to be addressed via partnerships. When working with partners, it is important to recognize that the military can have differing impacts on a civilian population based on history, so when talking about responding with the military to climate change, decisions makers need to be aware of the impacts of simultaneous conflicting realities. It is important to integrate and value both scientific and local knowledge and have them work together so there is not also a clash of knowledge

sources as well as conflicting priorities. The panel went on to talk about how important it is to frame climate security in a way that is rationale and powerful as to not have the issue deprioritized.

The last panel of the day was “Greening Defence and Military Readiness” chaired by Dr. Louise Van Schaik and featuring Ms. Iris A. Ferguson, Mr. Samu Paukkunen, Mr. Peter Hammerschmidt, and Mr. Louis Brunet as panelists. The panel discussed the importance of efficiency in innovation and that those states who complete the energy transition first will have the market advantage going forward. The war in Ukraine has also served as a wake-up call that we need to be divesting away from adversary energy sources. The change in climate is going to have a profound impact on military platforms and machinery. Interoperability is essential and NATO members will see efficiency in innovation if the members all work together. NATO members need to collaborate to address climate change in order for success. CCASCOE will be able to provide vital training and education for NATO members as well as serving as a platform for discussing lessons learned and expertise. The panel shifted the conversation to focus on Canada, highlighting the fact that the DPU has an infrastructure budget, which is essential because Canada is a very large country, which makes greening difficult. Canada is optimistic that it will hit the green military target in the next few years. The biggest difficulty will be greening the military in regard to the Arctic, but the process of greening as the added benefit of benefiting Northern communities.

## Day 2

The Honorable Mélanie Joly gave the opening keynote of the day. Joly explained that while climate change has always been a priority of the government, it is not something that only impacts Canadians, which is why allied efforts such as CCASCOE are so important. She explained that climate change is *the* defining security challenge of our time and, as an Arctic nation, Canada is able to bring a unique perspective to the table. Canada also needs to recalibrate its Arctic understanding in light of climate change as Canada no longer receives the level of protection from Arctic sea ice that it once did. Joly asserted that Canada is on the front lines of a new Arctic geopolitical reality and as the ice melts and more shipping routes open up, more countries will be looking northwards. Therefore, Canada needs to do a better job of strengthening Canadian security and sovereignty and advancing Canada’s national interests in the North.

The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Espen Barth Eide, gave the second keynote of the day. His Excellency pointed out that the Climate Security needs to be understood as an integral part of security focused thinking and not an afterthought. The Norwegian government has already recognized the importance of making climate integral to all aspects of security, including planning and procurement. He concluded with the point that climate change will increase the number of times militaries are called on to provide aid, which means climate oriented security thinking is not something that can be put off for tomorrow; it is a challenge states must face today.

The Arctic focused panel of the conference, “Regional Focus : The Arctic Evolving Security and Melting Landscapes” was chaired by Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer and featured Ms. Marisol Maddox Major-General Henning A. Frantzen Ms. Lisa Qiluai Koperqualuk Dr. Matthew A. Rhodes as panelists. Unlike the other times during the summit that mentioned the Arctic in the context of emerging shipping routes, this panel looked more



broadly at the Arctic security environment and the importance of resiliency in community. The panelists agreed that understanding Arctic security can be complicated, but it is vital to understand the changing environment in order to understand the region. Arctic security requires a whole of government approach, and there is a recognition that the action and inaction we take in the Arctic will have worldwide impacts. In terms of NATO's activity in the region, this panel reaffirmed that, since its formation, NATO has been an Arctic alliance, even if the region had been considered one of the more forgotten theatres. Now, NATO can no longer categorize the Arctic as a forgotten theatre, but this growing recognition of the region's importance has not brought a corresponding increase in institutional Arctic knowledge. The Arctic NATO states have a responsibility to share their northern expertise and avoid the inclination to remain insular. The panel also discussed that, in order to have a secure Arctic, one needs to have secure and resilient Arctic communities. In the Canadian Arctic, the local communities struggle to become secure and resilient because a lot of infrastructures and supports are lacking across areas such as nutrition, housing, health care, communications, and energy. Inuit know when communities are secure and resilient, and peace will follow.

Dr. Katie Woodward chaired the "Strategic Foresight Panel" that featured Mr. Himanshu Gupta, Ms. Caroline Baxter, Commodore Ruud Schoonen, and Mr. Anthony Agotha as panelists. This panel addressed the questions of what it means when people discuss strategic foresight, and how strategic foresight tools can be used to help address climate crises. The panel explained that strategic foresight had three components : creating a shared understanding of the future (up to twenty years), capability development, and report development. Strategic foresight strategies allow NATO to test policies and become better prepared to respond to problems as they emerge. The tools of strategic foresight are important because in times of crisis there is very little time to respond, so the tools allow members to learn how to respond better.

General Tom Middendorp gave the closing keynote of the summit. Climate change is already having a profound impact on the security environment, he explained, and this impact will continue to grow over time. General Middendorp brought up the point that while some NATO leaders are committed to integrating climate change into their strategies and plans, others are worried that measures to address climate change will pull already scarce resources from current tasks – and a striking number of NATO member states still do not recognize climate change at all. Gen. Middendorp highlighted that, while the world has come a long way in recognizing the significance of global climate change, we are still only at the beginning of addressing the problem. He closed the keynote with three tasks for CCASCOE to work towards: first, to develop a successful narrative about why climate change is important; second, to build a base of knowledgeable stakeholders; and third, to understand climate change as a force multiplier.