

CANADA AND THE NORTH
INSUFFICIENT SECURITY RESOURCES

Prepared by: Pierre Leblanc

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, the Arctic was a no-man's land between the Warsaw pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Little activity took place other than military operations. It was a time of classic state security. It appears that with the end of the Cold War the Canadian Arctic has started to bloom and open up in more ways than one.

The level of human activity in the Arctic has increased significantly over the last decade and continues to do so today. A new dimension to security has surfaced, that of human security. As the threat of state-to-state conflict has receded, the threats to human security have increased.

Unfortunately, military budgets have been reduced to meet the demands for a "Peace dividend". The result is that forces, which were inadequate to meet the security needs of the Arctic in the first place, were reduced further, at a time when the activity level was on the rise.

OVERVIEW

The issue with the Arctic security is that since the end of the Cold War, the level of human activity has increased significantly while at the same time security resources have been reduced. This has create a delta that needs to be addressed. In addition, global warming is in the process of melting away one of our most convincing strategic arguments for the entire Arctic Archipelago to be claimed as Canadian.

Global warming is making the Arctic more accessible and vulnerable. The arctic eco-system is a very fragile one. It would require decades to recover from an Exxon Valdez type accident in the high arctic. Ships can operate in the Arctic for longer periods of time. The Northwest Passage is now being used for commercial reasons. A Russian dry dock transited in 1999 across the Northwest Passage and cruise ships have multiplied almost at an exponential rate. It is now fashionable to travel the Arctic on board of former Russian icebreakers such as the Kapitan Khlebnikov.

Valuable commodities such as oil and gas are becoming increasingly accessible and valuable. The US sees those reserves with envy and the pressure of their energy needs has already generated a massive amount of activity in the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea. The known gas reserves in this area exceed \$200 billions. Billions of dollars of diamonds have been found in the Arctic. The second diamond mine is under construction and a third one has initiated the licensing process. Diamond exploration has multiplied manifolds.

The value of water is increasing and will raise the likelihood of illegal export or theft. Canadians today think nothing of paying over \$1.00 for a liter of water coming from their backyard and will complain when the cost of gasoline exceeds \$0.80 per liter despite the vast difference in the treatment required. In Newfoundland, there have been a number of attempts to sell complete lakes such as in the case of the Gisborne Lake. The value of water will appreciate. Water is essential for life. With the world population increasing steadily and the increasing levels of pollution of water bodies, fresh water will become increasingly valuable. More importantly, a pirate ship stealing water could release ballast containing a foreign species such as the zebra mussel in the fragile arctic eco-system.

Drugs have already made their way into the Arctic. Given the level of security present today, the Arctic may be perceived as the open backdoor to Canada. Drug entry into North America tends to follow the easiest way in. As the US applied more of their military efforts to block illegal drug entry into the US, smugglers have looked further north to enter North America. The Arctic could become their next destination.

Illegal immigration continues to be a problem for Canadians. Again, the Arctic could be perceived as the open backdoor to Canada. There has already been a number of attempts to enter Canada illegally from the north such as in Iqaluit in 1997. The presence in 1999 of the Xue Long, a Chinese Government vessel off the coast of Tuktoyaktuk raised many questions.

Long-range wide-bodied aircraft have started to fly directly over the Arctic now that they can stay airborne for extended periods of time. Direct New York to Tokyo flights over the Arctic have taken place since 1998. Russia is in the process of opening its airspace to commercial traffic. NavCanada predicts that we could have as many as 500 flights per day over the polar area. There are already well over 80,000 flights per year over the Arctic. The increase in numbers will generate a proportional increase in the risk of an air disaster in one of the most challenging environment in the world. The Canadian Forces who are responsible for Search and Rescue involving air and marine incidents have no primary assets north of 60.

CURRENT CANADIAN STRATEGY

In its document The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy, the government of Canada states four overarching objectives in the north:

- a. to enhance the security and the prosperity of Canadians, especially northerners and aboriginal people;*
- b. to assert and ensure the preservation of Canada's sovereignty in the North;*
- c. to establish the Circumpolar region as a vibrant geopolitical entity integrated into a rules based international system; and,*
- d. to promote the human security of northerners and the sustainable development of the Arctic.*

The stated Canadian Government objectives over the Arctic are appropriate. However the government has been speaking in a different tone through its actions. Although the Canadian Government claims sovereignty over all the landmass of the Arctic Archipelago and the waters of the archipelago using the straight baseline method, it does not appear to be willing to enforce it. In October 2000, the Arctic Security Interdepartmental Working Group failed to make the NORDREG system compulsory. In effect, it abrogated Canadian sovereignty over the waters of the archipelago.

From a strategic perspective Canada has always anchored its defence on alliances. It would be impossible for Canada to appropriately defend the second largest country in the world on its own. The protection of the Arctic falls under this umbrella. Our NATO partners and more importantly our NORAD partner would come to the rescue of Canada should the Arctic be threatened. This approach is a reasonable one provided that we are seen to carry our own weight. We must also have a degree of autonomy that would allow us to act unilaterally to preserve or protect Canadian national interests. At this time Canada does not appear to be willing to do that given its allocation of security forces in the Arctic.

The security resources allocated to the Arctic are very limited. The presence of Canadian Forces and other federal departments responsible for security issues is inadequate.

Canadian Forces

- a. **The Navy.** At present the Navy has no capability to operate with a surface ship or a submarine in the Arctic. Canada must be one of the few countries that have no capability to actively patrol all of its territorial waters. We do not currently have any system to monitor underwater activity either. The long-range maritime patrol aircraft, the Aurora, operate under the operational control of the Navy. This year it is reported that only one planned patrol will be done in the Arctic; one patrol to train in one of the most challenging environments in the world; one patrol to cover an area as large as continental Europe.
- b. **The Air Force.** The Air Force still has the North Warning System in place. This includes the four F-18/15 Forward Operating Locations in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit. The radar system is operational and provides a trip wire to identify incoming aircraft. Unfortunately, a large area north of the North Warning System line has no radar coverage. In essence we do not know what goes on in the airspace over this area. The Air Force has acquired helicopters that cannot fly when the temperature drops below –25 degree Celsius. That will significantly restrict their usefulness in the Arctic all year around. They have just recently further reduced the number of aircraft.
- c. **The Army.** The Army is smaller than the RCMP. With the operational deployment on peace-keeping/peace-making missions, its presence in the

Arctic is basically limited to the irregular Canadian Rangers. It has a limited capability to deploy in the Arctic and this capability is continuously eroded through the lack of training. Without an airborne capability, the Army is forced to deploy only where there is a prepared runway.

- d. **Others.** There is a Joint Headquarters situated in Yellowknife for the coordination of military activities. At present, this Headquarters is not well resourced to fulfill its mission.

Other Departments

The next department that has a significant presence in the north in terms of sovereignty is the Canadian Coast Guard. Their icebreakers with red and white colors are one of the most tangible signs of Canadian sovereignty. Unfortunately, there are only six ships which operate in the Arctic for a relatively short period of the year. Their mission does not include the projection of Canadian sovereignty. The ships are focused on marking and clearing routes for resupply ships and to escort them in case of difficulty.

The RCMP has a strong presence throughout the Arctic by virtue of their collocation with the northern communities. Their focus however is that of community policing. They provide the police services under contract with each of the territories. The RCMP assets that are focused on national security issues such as drugs and contraband are very small. They probably number less than a dozen north of the 60th parallel.

The Canadian Security and Intelligence Services have no presence north of the 60th parallel. Customs and Immigration have a small presence in Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit. The same goes for the other departments. During the 1990s all federal departments saw their resources reduced. Many achieved their reduction targets by reducing the resources in the Arctic. Unfortunately there was no inter-departmental coordination of the reductions with the end result that nobody has the ability to monitor or enforce efficiently Canadian sovereignty in the north.

STRENGTHS

There are few strengths to the strategy adopted to deal with the sovereignty of the Arctic. Mother Nature used to provide a formidable defence but unfortunately, this defence is fast melting away. It has been reported that the ice cap has already shrunk by 40% in thickness over the last 15 years. The surface of the ice cap would have shrunk by 8% over that period. Some scientists predict that the Arctic could be free of ice in as little as 10-15 years.

The use of alliances is the only strength in the strategy. Canada is fortunate enough to have the most powerful military in the world as an ally in both NORAD and NATO. It is however ironic that one of the nations that does not recognize Canada's claim to the waters of the Arctic Archipelago is that same ally. This will prove interesting at a time

when the USA is becoming more vulnerable because of its dependence on sources of energy.

The most effective defence system presently in the Arctic is the North Warning System. The system provides an effective trip wire across the Arctic. Access to most of Canadian airspace in the Arctic can be monitored effectively. The Forward Operating Locations provide a reasonable base of continuous operations in the Arctic.

Canadian Forces Station Alert is another asset of value in the Arctic. Its strategic location makes it a very useful tool in the gathering of intelligence and allows us to participate meaningfully to the defence of Canada and North America.

WEAKNESSES

The most important strategic weakness is the obvious lack of security resources allocated to the Arctic. The various commanders cannot be expected to provide the appropriate level of surveillance and intervention if they are not provided with the resources.

Another important strategic weakness is the lack of intelligence collation. The National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa is too far removed from the Arctic to fully understand the situation and the challenges presented by the Arctic. It also tends to be preoccupied with the various peace-making and peace-keeping operations that have seemed to multiply in the last decade. On the other hand, the Headquarters of Canadian Forces Northern Area is ill equipped to collate information and provide intelligence. The totality of the intelligence staff is still one regular force senior non-commissioned officer and one reserve corporal to accomplish all the functions normally allocated to the intelligence element of a headquarters. One of the direct impacts of this situation is that the Canadian Government does not really know what goes on in the Arctic.

Our inability to monitor the Arctic coupled with our reluctance to make the NORDREG compulsory increases our vulnerability to environmental disasters. Recently there was a report to the effect that nuclear waste was going to be transported from Europe to Japan to be used in nuclear power generation. The nuclear waste was to be transported through the Northeast Passage. Given the Russian track record on the environment, it is not surprising that this route was chosen. To consider moving the material across the Northwest Passage, which is a short route between Europe and Japan, is only one step away, especially if there is the perception that one does not need to report this transit or that Canada does not care if the ship goes through or not.

One of the weaknesses of our strategic approach in the Arctic could be deemed to be its foreign content. Canada has very few assets of its own to monitor the activity in the Arctic. We therefore rely to a great degree on what the American military provides. Although the defence of North America should and must be done as part of an alliance, must should strive to reduce our vulnerability to information and protection provided by a third party.

The Canadian Government must exercise due diligence in the protection of the environment. It means having the ability to enforce our environmental standards over the Arctic. To do that, we must first claim our sovereignty over it. Then, we must ensure that we monitor the situation and, if need be, take coercive measures to enforce Canadian laws and standards.

Another weakness is our lack of scientific understanding and research of the arctic environment. Research was one of the areas that were severely reduced in the government's efforts to reduce the deficit. The net result is that Canadians do not fully understand what is going on in the Arctic in terms of the environment. Furthermore, other nations spend more on research in the Arctic than we do. We are in the sad situation where we are obliged to ask other nations to tell us what goes on in a significant portion of our country. Although we will never have the ability to study the Arctic as much as it deserves, we must do enough to have a basic understanding of it and sufficient knowledge to be able to validate the information provided by other nations. We must not be at the mercy of the latter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, if all implemented, would see a shift of resources towards the Arctic. This would coincide with the increase level of human activity in the north and provide a better presence and monitoring capability in the Arctic. Some would require additional funding, others require a repositioning of resources already available. The recommendations would involve a number of other federal departments. In these days of reduced budgets, Canada would be wise to use all of its federal government assets to monitor and enforce Canadian sovereignty.

Canadian Forces

The use of space. One of the most effective ways to provide continuous surveillance of the Arctic is through the use of space based assets. Ideally this should be done using Canadian satellites such as the RADARSAT. Infrared detection would be very efficient. Picking up ships over the cold background of the Arctic Ocean should be technically easy. Ship spotted from space would be checked against the NORDREG entries and unknown ships could be challenged using the Aurora aircraft.

Deploy the HFSWR. The Canadian Government should deploy the new High Frequency Surface Wave Radar to monitor the choke points leading into the Arctic Archipelago. By locating the radars in North Warning System locations such as Tuktoyatuk, economies of efforts can be made. One radar would be sufficient to cover the western approach. Two radars would probably be required to cover the eastern approaches. The radars would only be required to operate during the shipping season.

Modernize the Aurora fleet. The Canadian Government should modernize the Aurora long-range maritime patrol aircraft. It is the only one in the inventory that has the all-weather and staying power to operate in the Arctic. Once targets are spotted from space or from the High Frequency Surface Wave Radar, the Aurora can be dispatched to investigate and challenge intruders. The number of aircraft should not be reduced.

Regular reports. Many military aircraft fly over the Arctic en route to various destinations. All military aircraft that transit the Arctic should be tasked to report on ships observed in the Arctic. This information should be collated in one central location preferably the Headquarters of Canadian Forces Northern Area. The RCMP should similarly be tasked with the same mission.

Canadian Rangers. The use of the Canadian Rangers should continue. They provide the eyes and ears of the Canadian Forces in those areas close to their communities. They have the ability to pick up signs of a foreign presence for which we have no sensor. Their closeness to the environment is such that any change to that environment alerts them. The Ranger Program should continue to be supported, as it is one of the most cost-effective sovereignty programs in place.

US Assets. The use of American assets could be brought to bear. Already they fund part of and support the North Warning System. Their space assets could complement ours. We must not solely rely on foreign systems to provide us with information that is key to our sovereignty.

Multiple layers of surveillance. The age-old principle of multiple layers of surveillance assets must prevail. It would be foolish to place all our resources in a single system or platform. Redundancy and overlap must occur between systems to ensure continuous coverage in the event of the failure of one or multiple systems.

Electronic monitoring. Another cost effective way of monitoring activity in the Arctic would be through the use of electronic monitoring. Ships and aircraft operating in the Arctic will more than likely use some electronic or electromagnetic devices. Electronic monitoring would allow to identify the presence of a source in a specific location. It may be able to identify the source as friendly or foe. It would allow targeting of an Aurora mission.

Intelligence gathering. The gathering of information and the production of intelligence must be improved. It is recommended the Canadian Forces Northern Area Headquarters be better resourced to do this function properly. It would require that all federal departments responsible for security report this information to one single source.

Move Search and Rescue assets. There is a growing shift in transcontinental flights. Given the mission of the Canadian Forces to provide Search and Rescue involving ships and aircraft, it should move some of its assets to be better positioned to react to incidents in the Arctic.

Coast Guards

Since our Navy is incapable of patrolling the Arctic, the mission of the Coast Guard should be increased to include the provision of a sovereignty presence in the Arctic. The red and white ships with the huge maple leaf are the most visible signs of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. Their sovereignty mission should be assisted directly by the Canadian Forces with the provision of intelligence and military support if required.

Other departments

All the other federal departments must be given the mission of exercising sovereignty in the conduct of their day-to-day activities. Federal departments responsible for research should be provide with adequate resources to better monitor and understand what goes on in the Arctic in terms of the environment.

NORDREG

NORDREG must be made compulsory to increase control and enforce sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago.

CONCLUSION

The situation in the Arctic requires attention. The resources allocated to its security are inadequate.

The Canadian Government needs to increase its presence in order to better monitor all activities taking place in the Arctic and exercise sovereignty over it. It needs to provide the federal departments responsible for its security with the assets required to perform their mission and assure the *human security* that Canadians deserve.

The Arctic is the attic of Canada. It is a beautiful and vast part of our country. It contains incredible amounts of natural resources. We must protect it adequately.