





CANADIAN DEFENCE POLICY – SSE: SHOULD THE "STRONG AT HOME" DUE TO CURRENT NORTH/ARCTIC DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN THE REAL FOCUS?

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JCSP 45

Exercise Solo Flight

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INTRODUCTION

1. Canadian National Security has been in the center of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) policy. More said, the new Defence Policy "Strong, Secure and Engage" published in early 2017 as a review to the white paper is the most ambitious and elaborated monetary military commitment plan the Canadian Government has put forth since the end of the Cold war. The first adjective that defines the new CAF security strategy stands with the "Strong at Home" and it is in strong correlation through the support of "Secure in North America". Since the coming out of this SSE policy, new global changes have open Canada to potential threats. Through the climate change, the opening of the Arctic due to global warming, there is a considerable exposure to new consideration and problems to Canadian Northern sovereignty. Ben Kesling who covers national security and veterans issues at The Wall Street Journal's Washington bureau states, the Arctic has become markedly more contentious military and commercial environment as the changing climate has led to greater ice melt in the summer opening more navigable waterways and leading to greater sea traffic in once-impassable lanes¹. During the 2016 ARNPRIOR Arctic summer meeting whom regrouped many Northern researchers, Indigenous peoples, Stakeholders as well as all level community and government Decision-makers it was evaluated that Arctic Defence was a gaping hole in our National security.² In SSE, it was recognized that there is a clear need for a new

¹ Ben Kesling, Cold War Games: U.S. is preparing to test the waters in icy Artic; Navy explores expansion of operations in far North, going head-to head with rivals Russia and China". *Wall Street Journal*. (Jan 2019). https://search.proquest.com/docview/2166192893?pq-origsite=summon

² Arnprior EMC, "Protect the Artic, don't waste time on UN peacekeeping missions: MP". Arnprior, Ont. A.16, (July 2016), p. 1. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1895870978?pq-origsite=summon.

Arctic capabilities review to answer a future unquestionable scenario that is the global opening of the Arctic.³

2. The publication of SSE was a shift in Canada security mentality, it moved away from less to threat to sensitive orientation. This was mainly caused, and it could be said to be "GAP" driven from old procurement issues, by mishap and worn down equipment.⁴ Those gaps are clearly defined in the SSE publication but the policy remains broad on many topics. The orientation of SSE seems to avoid clarity except for its procurement position and effort by applying big monetary numbers to alleviate current deficiencies. Numerous area and subject with major impact on Canadian's way of life; the Arctic and the importance of its defence for national sovereignty are still widely covered not including a divulgation of an operationalized plan. SSE is an impressive commitment and this paper will cover the "Strong at Home" part to address how, even if mostly left out, the Arctic should be a major interest. This new situation brings a critical question to bear; has the new Defence Policy publication of SSE done enough through its operationalization of "Strong at Home" to mitigate such national sovereignty threat? As well, it should have been fully operationalized to have by the latest 2030, at the end of the policy, control and sovereignty of this critical part of our national geography. Three parts are going to be developed to rationalize the lack of effort towards the Arctic. First, what is operationalization as a function and its criteria, supported by the SSE broad lines towards the Arctic comparing it to past policies' directions and strategies. The second part will expose some of the actions taken by other members of the Arctic Council

³ Adam Lajeunesse, *The Canadian Armed Forces in the Artic: Purpose, Capabilities, and Requirements* (Canadian Global Affairs Institute. 2015), p. 2.

⁴ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secured, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: ON: Department of National Defence, 2017).

towards their North. It will be divided by infrastructure, troop dispositions, political positioning and defence program/exercise to project Northern sovereignty as well as countries capabilities to project. The last points to be covered will hypothetically picture the road forward for the CAF and what accomplishments are required to settle true sovereignty in the Arctic.

SSE AND ITS CAPABILITIES

4. To expose SSE's northern sovereignty problem to the Arctic and the climate changes, the paper will first determine what the term "operationalization" is and what status can be attributed to the policy.

"Operationalization is the process by which a researcher defines how a concept is measured, observed, or manipulated within a particular study. This process translates the theoretical, conceptual variable of interest into a set of specific operations or procedures that define the variable's meaning in a specific study. In traditional models of science, operationalization provides the bridge between theoretically based hypotheses and the methods used to examine these predictions." 5

5. CAF's operationalization can be said to be "SSE" itself, but what portion of it has been attributed solely to the Arctic and its sovereignty? The policy gives set objectives, tasks and it allocates monetary resources to specific sectors that are combined to the global plan, let's break it down. CAF has been active in the North with its Search and Rescue (SAR) yearly contributions. CAF aircrafts and ships are tasked in approximately 1100 of the 8000 annual cases and less than 1 percent of those (60 per year) are located

⁵ Mike Allen, *The sage encyclopedia of communication research methods.* 4 vols. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2017).

north of 60 parallel.⁶ This statistic reinforces one of the broad objectives to "Increase presence in the Arctic over the long-term and work cooperatively with Arctic partners". This objective has been carried over from all the previous policies, but this new paper has taken opposite views on how to achieve it. The 1994 White Paper "was said to be a scaled back" on major capabilities and the term "Do more with less" was the efficiency of the new design. The 2004 policy themes worked towards creating a coherent defence policy relevant to the demands of the world era but ought to lay out specific monetary commitments. SSE to achieve its objectives shifted towards a committed long term investment strategy to acquire and replace capabilities to enforce Canada's sovereignty for all elements. In recognition of this new trend to complement the objective, 102,5 million was directed to revitalized partnership and outreach to external partners.

6. In the SSE policy, it is understood that the international landscape is shifting and the current security environment threat may transcend our National borders. ¹² Moreover, climate change, combined with advancements in technology, is leading to an increasingly accessible Arctic. Overtime, the rise of commercial interest and other Arctic activities

⁶ Adam Lajeunesse, and P. Withney Lackenbauer. *Canadian Artic Operations, 1941-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost, and Relearned.* Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, 2017. p. 388

⁷ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secured, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: ON: Department of National Defence, 2017). p.14.

⁸ Douglas, 1301.

⁹ Douglas, 195.

¹⁰ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secured, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: ON: Department of National Defence, 2017). p. 13.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹² Ibid., p. 14.

will bring increased safety and security demands to which Canada must be ready to respond.¹³

7. The CAF has an elaborated task list for Navy, Army and Air Force but the investments and contributions to the elements do not give truth to what in reality is needed to accomplish it without having to sacrifice or debug other priorities within elements. More specifically, the Navy is required to balance a mix of platforms in sufficient quantities to meet our domestic and international needs.

"A fleet build around an ability to deploy and sustain two naval task groups, each composed of up to four combattants and a joint support ship, provides Canada with a relevant contribution to any international mission while assuring the ability to monitor our ocean estate and contribute to security of North America. The Royal Navy's ability to establish persistent presence, be self-sustaining at sea, refocus rapidly form one type of mission to another, and interdict threats for from national territory and populated areas represents a vital component of Canada's prosperity, security, and defence" 14.

8. All these requests have to be executed with 15 Canadian Surface Combatants ships, complemented by two Joint Support Ships, and four submarines for 2x Coasts and international missions. These numbers are not adequate as long as the Navy remains status quo for all sailors' employment or augmentation like CAF in general. No ice breakers are part of the new strategy, the new Offshores vessel are good to navigate in no more than one year old thick ice¹⁵. For mobility, The Navy still has a heavy requirement for intergovernmental partnership with the Coast guards. The Army's commitments from

¹³ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secured, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: ON: Department of National Defence, 2017). p. 51.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁵ VAdm Thomas S. Rowden, "Surface Force Strategy Return to Sea Control" (San Diego: Naval Surface Force Pacific Fleet, 2016).

the policy and specifically directed towards the Arctic capability is the last of the nine (9) general investments to this element from SSE. It covers the acquisition of a list of utility vehicles for Arctic environment uses. ¹⁶ To operationalize the Army, infrastructure in the North to stage all equipment are required. Giving the requirement for flexibility, the policy requires, in case of non-Air support, to mobilize troops and equipment for adequate response time. As well, it implies the ability to deploy from those locations to decisively mobilize across the Canadian Arctic. So far, the capability for tactical movements of the Artic Light Over Snow vehicle (LOSV) is under development due to equipment failure in the harsh Arctic environment. ¹⁷

- 9. The continuous Air Force tasks are not innovative in SSE as they are mostly focused through NORAD with "SECURE in NORTH AMERICA" section. The Detect/Deter/Defeat role of the Air Force was and is a legitimate tool for Canada's sovereignty. Through the opening of the Arctic route, the focus will be shifting from obsolete Cold War mentality. It will require further political engagement and direction to adjust the response from the Air especially on illegal commercial activities in Canada sovereign Nordic waters.
- 10. SSE answers to some extend to the previous policy; CAF northern mission provided by Canada First Defence Strategy (2008), Statement of Canada's Artic foreign policy released by the Department of Foreign Affairs in 2010, to the need to establish a

¹⁶ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secured, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: ON: Department of National Defence, 2017). p. 37.

¹⁷ Adam Lajeunesse, *The Canadian Armed Forces in the Artic: Purpose, Capabilities, and Requirements*. Canadian Global Affairs Institute. 2015. p.1-3.

greater presence.¹⁸ The investments and tasks are not fulfilling political requirements and even less operationalizing it. Projects are put forth but real sovereignty is not political but in fact consists of exercising effective control in response to specific needs.¹⁹ If that need is to support, assist and enable other government department than sovereignty than SSE should not be judge primarily on infrastructure and Arctic platforms to qualify its sovereignty. The world views of our operationalization state could be totally different if compare with other Nordic countries posture.

THE NORTH: OTHER ARTIC COUNCIL NATIONS CAPABILITIES

11. In the past section CAF operationalization of SSE was briefly exposed and was dependable of a country's need and how it measured it. The World views are also to be taken in account when looking for a model of what it means to operationalize a policy. Someone only has to look south of our border to see the view differs quickly. The Americans extensive build up in the Arctic is not imminent and visible to this time but is a reality as it is planned to gear up with climate change on the horizon. They have put forth programs to have, like Canada, ice capable warships in service by the year 2020. Their Coast Guard has in its fleet one icebreaker, like Canada, but a second one is under construction, in the heavy category, which will put them ahead. Discussion around its specification is that the propulsion could have a nuclear power plant for Arctic long term capabilities.²⁰

¹⁸ Adam Lajeunesse, *The Canadian Armed Forces in the Artic: Purpose, Capabilities, and Requirements*. Canadian Global Affairs Institute. 2015. p. 4.

¹⁹ Ibid., p . 1.

²⁰ Oxford. "Artic: Russia tensions may hinder governance." *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service* (Feb 2016). p. 6.

https://search.proquest.com/docview/1764734036/abstract/51248FE523774F13PQ/1?accountid=9867

- 12. Canada closest ally, the United States, is also member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Arctic states are to ensure their own fleets comply with the Polar Codes. Arctic sea routes, thought its accessibility hinges on the use of icebreakers, will in most predictable future be open by 2030. ²¹ This situation is leaving Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic threaten as its control with its small Navy and one time Coastguards' icebreaker is a frail response according to the World's vision and point of view. 2030, gives a small window for reaction time, the immediate need for investments couple with the need to create robust strategic regulations and defence of the Arctic is crucial. Canada has to readjust SSE priorities from long term investments to short term project to be adaptive to the reality. In the book of Lassi Heinenen "Future Security of the Global Arctic" it recognizes the military dimension as a pertinent Arctic matter. Militarization is still a key concept even if the majority of the threat to be faced will be of non-military origin and character.²² Canada most potent military presence in the Arctic rely on the Canadian Patrol Ranger Group (CPRG) based on the Indigenous population habiting the North of its territory. This force ranges between 1800 to close to 2000 personal all year long.²³
- 13. Across the pond, or even more precise, the North pole, Russia has a total different approach. From Lajeunesse's book on "Lessons Learned from the Arctic", it is said that you don't defend national security with flags, cheap election rhetoric, and advertising

²¹ Oxford. "Artic: Russia tensions may hinder governance." Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service (Feb 2016). p. 4.

https://search.proquest.com/docview/1764734036/abstract/51248FE523774F13PQ/1?accountid=9867 ²² Lassi Heinimen, FUTURE SECURTIY OF THE GLOBAL ARTIC: State Policy, Economic Security and Climate. New York: Palgrave Pivot, 2016. p. 36-7.

²³ Adam Lajeunesse, The Canadian Armed Forces in the Artic: Purpose, Capabilities, and

Requirements. Canadian Global Affairs Institute. 2015. p. 8.

campaigns. You need forces on the ground, ships in the sea, and proper surveillance.²⁴ Russia is a strong example of this mentality and has done more than any members of the Arctic council combined. It has upgraded its border protection capabilities as part of the integrated security system in the Russian Arctic. As well as upgrading its maritime security, aerial and naval reconnaissance or Satcoms.²⁵ To enhance its Arctic readiness by 2020, Russian Coast guards will receive an additional six ice-class patrol ships, as well as the Russian fleet icebreakers will be renewed by 2030 with an extra three (3) nuclear type vessels to get to a total of forty (40) icebreakers.²⁶ Many infrastructures, ten (10) Searchand-Rescue stations along the Arctic coastline, are being stood up. To command and control all those additions, the military has created a new Northern command structure in December 2014. In 2016, it is able to supervise a 38k personal exercise, supported by fifty six (56) warships and one hundred ten (110) aircraft.²⁷ The Russian's Arctic capacity initiative²⁸ is a giant compare to Canada's effort in the North, which is the Arctic Company Response Group (ACRG) that generates one hundred (100) to a two hundred (200) soldiers, from each Land Forces area from the Primary Reserve. ²⁹ Canada has also

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²⁴ Adam Lajeunesse, and P. Withney Lackenbauer. *Canadian Artic Operations, 1941-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost, and Relearned.* Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, 2017. p. 332.

²⁵ Lassi Heinimen, FUTURE SECURTIY OF THE GLOBAL ARTIC: State Policy, Economic Security and Climate. New York: Palgrave Pivot, 2016. p. 40-1.

²⁶ Reuters. "Putin's Russian in biggest Artic military push since Soviet fall." *Egypt Independent; Cairo, Egypt.* (Jan 2017). p. 2. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1862919875?pq-origsite=summon

²⁷ Oxford. "Russia: Militarisation of Artic will grown." *OxResearch Daily Brief Service* (May 2015). p. 2. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1680468566?pq-origsite=summon

²⁸ Russia has in the past year become more overt and larger scale, including the formation of two specialized motorized brigades for Artic operations. The growing military activity could eventually destabilize the region, leading to Arctic arms races and shows of force. Russia's armed forces are currently about half way through a 700 billions dollar program to boost the proportion of its weaponry to 70%. The number of Russian regular ground and Special Forces units that will be based or rotate through the Arctic is increasing. Nine batteries of advanced S-400 Triumph interceptor missiles are deployed to establish a more effective air-and-missile defence.

²⁹ Adam Lajeunesse, and P. Withney Lackenbauer. *Canadian Artic Operations, 1941-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost, and Relearned.* Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, 2017. p. 338.

develop a command and Control structure called Joint Task Force North (JTF(N)) with significantly less capabilities and resources compare to the Russians' initiative.

14. To answer the future Arctic requirements, the operationalization of the first "S" of SSE needs to be embrace. Does it have to resemble or be the mirror image of Russia to Canadian, the answer might be different, but what it could look like has to be put to the forefront of political and military interest?

OPERATIONALIZING THE CANADIAN CONCEPT

15. The Arctic overview of the world effort from different Arctic Council partners and Observers has shown the importance for Canada via its CAF Defence Policy to produce a "Stronger at Home" strategic position. This new future stance is supported and recognized by the Canadian industry referencing that sovereignty suggests a clear connection between development of the Arctic resources frontier and the notion of National identity and state building. ³⁰ For the CAF, the new strategic approach of Anticipate, Adapt, Act³¹ would have to be remodeled to what other successful countries are using. The clear examples are the U.S. and Russia whose strategies are geared toward navigation, security, and energy production. ³² These milestones will emphasize on an even better Whole of Government (WoG) cooperation and an overall National involvement towards Arctic development. The research and resources development will

³⁰ Steinberg, Philip E., Jeremy Tasch, and Hannes Gerhardt, *CONTESTING THE ARTIC: Politics and Imaginaries in the Circumpolar North.* London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015.p. 104.

³¹ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secured, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: ON: Department of National Defence, 2017). p.

³² BBC Monitoring European, "Swedish Defence Analyst Assesses Russia's Arctic Military Buildup, US Policy." 2015. BBC Monitoring European, Oct 28. p. 1. https://search.proguest.com/docview/1727615446?accountid=9867

put Canada to the Forefront of Arctic Technology by engaging through heavy monetary commitment and political support to be a world leader in polar sovereignty.³³ By having the means, it will enforce the alliance with the U.S. forcing them to recognize as a hopeful result our sovereignty over the Northern route.³⁴ Canada at this time lacks enforcement over its national waters; many vessels fail to report their activities in the Northwest Passage.³⁵ There are eventual challenges for energy development and the control of the Northern route, but the main one is not of public interest but more of monetary commitment and political views and status.³⁶ Work can be done on the first proposed solution; technology, via Canada Research and Development to be the base of the program, which was lost since the first governmental budget cuts in the 1980's. ³⁷

16. All good strategy in the North will come with its obstacle. The North is not only representative of iciness, it is also qualified by its remoteness qualities, logistical avenues, and need of specific infrastructure. The military is the first step for collaboration in the future strategy. The need from the Arctic opening up has been stated as the control of water ways and its enforcement to prevent mischief and SAR overwhelm.³⁸ It is well understood that the projection will be hard and localized as the immensity of the white surface cannot be all covered. Strategic infrastructure placement at the In/Out of the

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³³ Barry Scott Zellen, *The FAST-CHANGING ARTIC: Rethinking Artic Security for a Warmer World*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2013. p. 88.

³⁴ Patterson, Senator Dennis. "Canada must assert Artic sovereignty." *National Post; Don Mills. A.* 10, (Nov 2017). p. 1. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1959665704?pq-origsite=summon ³⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

³⁶ Arnprior EMC, "Protect the Artic, don't waste time on UN peacekeeping missions: MP". Arnprior, Ont. A.16, (July 2016), p. 1-2. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1895870978?pq-origsite=summon.

³⁷ Adam Lajeunesse, and P. Withney Lackenbauer. *Canadian Artic Operations, 1941-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost, and Relearned.* Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, 2017. p. 337.

³⁸ Barry Scott Zellen, *The FAST-CHANGING ARTIC: Rethinking Artic Security for a Warmer World.* Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2013. p. 30.

waterways for the 3 elements presence will answer the points of entry. This will take care of initial access to the North for Canada, being the opening for future WoG approach to participate in the development of resource and security. Navy, Coast guard vessels, Helicopters could play an important role in the predicament of commercialization of the high North enhanced from those infrastructures/ports of entry. You need Para-military surveillance, exercise of authority and SAR upholding and operationalized sovereignty with boots on the ground and capabilities in the contested area. Frequent naval exercises, combined with the presence of the ACRG controlled by JTF (N) conducted in the North support the priorities of National interests. Such actions would send a clear signal to our citizens, allied and international commercial actors of Canada strong strategy.

17. There would not be a surviving North future strategy if we do not encompass the strength of today, Indigenous people cooperation and its importance to the success of such new endeavor is primordial. Their knowledge of climate change over the year to give insight on possible infrastructure emplacement and equipment requisite is key to national cooperation.⁴⁰ This will increase reliability on CPRG for basic winter courses for the Para-military personal as well as new communications requirements for new remote units. Now SSE operationalization status is limited to small scale operation and is qualified as reactive. The published policy of 2017 is based to undo the wrong of the past equipment, lack of mobility in the north and technical capacity and requirements. Those

³⁹ Barry Scott Zellen, *The FAST-CHANGING ARTIC: Rethinking Artic Security for a Warmer World*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2013. p. 43.

⁴⁰ Adam Lajeunesse, and P. Withney Lackenbauer. *Canadian Artic Operations, 1941-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost, and Relearned.* Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, 2017. p. 335.

good rephrased intentions are still far and between from the real needs the "Strong at Home" will face in the near future. It is to ask how good are the policies to be learned from one another.⁴¹

CONCLUSION

- 18. The preceding paper examined the strengths and weaknesses of the "STRONG AT HOME" portion from the latest published Canadian Defence Policy of SSE in 2017. It did so through a multiple expositions of context ranging from CAF strategic vision, existing defence frameworks, its comparison to Arctic members strategies, and various proposed CAF future plans. While the analysis was conducted especially towards the Arctic and the sovereignty of the North this lens exposed significant gaps specific to that region of our country. The paper was also intended to illustrate that even with SSE confirmed funding and recollection of sophisticated capabilities and task orientation under one conceptual umbrella it could miss the mark as its synergistic effect could be misleading the CAF to a "Weak at Home".
- 19. Despite the analysis, SSE has the potential to fulfill current strategic objectives of the Government program from both a cost and operational effectiveness perspective. Conceptually, it offers the appropriate mix of specialized features while remaining versatile in its potential scope of force employment activities both domestically and abroad. If decisively economical interest to the Arctic in a near future arises, the SSE concept could be the downfall of CAF efficiency, effectiveness and interoperability. SSE would deprive the CAF of its credibility in a defence sector as it will not be able to

⁴¹ Adam Lajeunesse, and P. Withney Lackenbauer. *Canadian Artic Operations, 1941-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost, and Relearned.* Fredericton: University of New Brunswick, 2017. p. 338.

answer the demands of high Arctic control and domination through the opening of the Northern route predominantly caused by the new access from global warming. CAF current reactiveness state of mind and its SSE future capacity building cannot respond to such a likely scenario for 2030. It is recommended that CAF maintain its focus in some traditional capability areas in order to meet the challenges of future Arctic changes, but drastic commitments have to be put in place to have the proper equipment and capacities from all elements to operationalize the Arctic adequately to mirror other initiative taken abroad. This shift will better align force development with emerging threats as well as current SSE focus areas. In the end, the CAF will be better positioned to deliver the necessary capabilities for Future Arctic Sovereignty Operations (FASO).

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