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Staying Warm in the Cold: Arctic Exceptionalism and Canadian Opportunity

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Exercise Solo Flight

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Staying Warm in the Cold: Arctic Exceptionalism and Canadian Opportunity

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INTRODUCTION

The Arctic is a large and exceptional place. Its vastness and harshness make it an unforgiving area for those who will underestimate it and nourishing for those who respect it. It is quickly becoming the world's final region where states will grapple for dominance. However, today, it remains relatively tranquil and almost frozen in time. Canada's Arctic is beautiful and laden with history and culture that must be preserved. It also presents one of Canada's largest security concerns as we head into a future that is currently dealing with state on state war, increasing global and regional political issues and great power competition. It is therefore odd to think that Canada's frozen oasis, so quiet and so tranquil, would have a role to play or links into the effects of those dynamics.

This paper aims to discuss the nuances of what it means to 'arm' the North. Specifically, it will focus on Canada's approach and options within Canadian territory with particular attention paid to the North West Passage. 'Arming' the North will point out the need to look deeper and wider into the National Security framework to which the Department of the National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are only one element. Arming the North is a nuanced target. For Canada, the answer should not be a singularly focused military response but rather an integrated, whole of government security network that creates a layered security apparatus for Canadians. Canada should improve its existing platforms but also increase its DND footprint only as an extension of the other security organizations who must have primacy to implement security and governance through economic and diplomatic prosperity.

First, a common language for the development of the security framework of Canada's North must be detailed. The nuances and breadth of the concept of security are used to understand why options other than the CAF should take the lead. Canada's Arctic policy and its

desires will also be dissected along with those of the Arctic council, the United States and key points from other Arctic players such as China. Therein, we will find several commonalities that create a profitable economical and environmental future where managed competition outweighs a need for conflict in a contested territory. This region cannot be operationalized like the rest of the world and therefore diplomatic relationships need to be identified and enabled. The arctic is indeed exceptional.

Second, in order to demonstrate the need for options other than DND and CAF this paper will look at what our adversaries have and want, what our allies have and want and what Canada itself, has and wants in the Arctic. Through the lens of what it means to have ‘military might’ in the Arctic, the need for additional security layers will become evident. There will be a need and role for Canada’s Army, Air force and Navy to work in concert with our key ally in Arctic defence, the United States, but additional security practitioners must be leveraged in the wake of increased traffic on the North West Passage. Establishing these layers correctly will ensure that our sovereignty in the area remains unquestioned and that we establish the appropriate level of preparation for any number of potential (however unlikely) conflict scenarios.

Lastly, this paper will observe the option space for Canada’s Whole of Government approach. There are several diplomatic options that Canada has with Allies and adversaries alike. Organizations and departments like science, research, fishing, transportation, and natural resource extraction will be identified as other governmental security layers to which DND and the CAF can enable.

THE ARCTIC APPROACH

The layered approach is not a new concept in the Arctic overall. The issue going forward will be with the robustness of those layers and their abilities to react and be prepared for change as quickly as the environment forces itself upon the region. Therefore, the difference between security and securitization is key to ensuring our national aperture remains wide. Through this lens, we can work with established policy with a view to have minor corrections into the future vice wholesale change. In the end, the relationships that are forged in the ice both internally and externally will create the security blanket that Canadians require. Internally, Canada must progress its departmental cooperation to achieve socio-economic and environmental benefits for its Northern and Southern citizens. These relationships must expand to allies, specially the United States, and our adversaries such as China and Russia if success is to be realized.

There are three key quotes that highlight the uniqueness of the relationships and the complexity of security in the Arctic. General Henry ‘Hap’ Arnold, a decorated US officer credited with being the General of the Army and the General of the Air force stated in 1946 that “If there is a Third World War, Its strategic center will be the north pole.”¹ General Arnold through his time in the Second World War is also credited with being the ‘Architect of America’s Air Force’.² In 1946, after ending the Second World War through nuclear strikes and the build of America’s air power, the need to look at shorter distances and understand the

¹ Herrmann, M. J. and V., Jacobsen, M., & Herrmann, V. (2018, March 7). *Arctic International Relations in a widened security perspective*. The Arctic Institute. Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/arctic-international-relations-widened-security-perspective/> p. 6

² Glines, C. V. (2018, July 20). *General Henry H. 'hap' arnold: Architect of america's Air Force*. HistoryNet. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from General Henry H. 'Hap' Arnold: Architect of America's Air Force | HistoryNet

extreme nature of flight in colder temperatures began. The idea of seeing the Arctic as a contested space starts here from the military point of view.

As the cold war progressed through the next 30 years, it would be Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987 who would usher in the next phase of Arctic cooperation. “The Soviet Union is in favour of a radical lowering of the level of military confrontation in the region [...] Let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace.”³ In less than a decade the world would see the formation of the Arctic council amongst the 8 arctic states who aimed to cooperate on Arctic specific issues of environment, fishing and indigenous concerns. The other regions of the world remained in various conflict but the arctic, compartmentalized, progressed positively and peacefully towards common goals.

In 2009, Canada had recently released its own Arctic Foreign Policy through the Harper government where cooperation was at the forefront and there was little to no specific mention of arming the north in the military sense. Then, Chief of the defence staff, General Walt Natynczyk stated that “if someone were to invade the Canadian Arctic, my first task would be to rescue them.”⁴ Over time, the Arctic has not changed sufficiently enough to warrant an upscale of militarization in the North. Although technology creates threats, the environment is still not favorable for any military to be truly effective nor does it, yet, allow the maximization of the economic benefits that we know the Arctic holds and that the world needs. It is from here that

³ Irfan, U. (2022, April 25). *Russia's invasion of Ukraine is fracturing the delicate peace in the Arctic*. Vox. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://www.vox.com/22993194/russia-ukraine-invasion-arctic-council-climate-change>

⁴ Collins, J. (2022, January 27). *On the Arctic Watch: Why we need to protect Canada's sovereignty and security in the Far North: Jeff Collins for inside policy: MacDonald-Laurier Institute*. Macdonald. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/what-we-need-vs-what-we-have-assessing-canadas-defence-capabilities-in-the-arctic-jeff-collins-for-inside-policy/>

security of the North must be prepared. Not only with weapons and ships but also with layered economic and environmental security that will make it unreasonable for conflict to occur.

SECURITY, INSECURITIES, SECURITIZATION AND ‘DESECURITY’

From the international relations perspective of the Arctic, security grew to incorporate domains outside of the military. These included economic, environmental, societal, and political zones. The over-arching idea behind security is to be protected from danger or threat. Ole Waever developed this securitization approach to detail how security needs to differentiate itself in the Arctic region.⁵

Each zone can have insecurities. Specific to the Arctic one of the more prominent factors is climate change. An insecurity uncovers gaps in a state’s ability to avoid a threat because means or procedures are lacking or non-existent. Securitization thus determines when the ‘securitizing actor’ states that an ‘object’ is sufficiently threatened to warrant having security placed on it.⁶

Desecurity becomes the opposite of security in this conversation as detailed by Waever. The process of ‘desecuritization’ is rules based, procedural and democratic. It effectively separates the security issue and allows normal politics to occur. These definitions allow states to work through the many complicated factors of what security means, what needs to have security and why and when certain elements can be removed for the betterment of all involved. Gorbachev’s statement above from 1987 at Murmansk was an influential desecuritization act that set the stage for the Arctic Council to form a few short years later. Security from the Councils

⁵ Herrmann, M. J. and V., Jacobsen, M., & Herrmann, V. (2018, March 7). *Arctic International Relations in a widened security perspective*. The Arctic Institute. Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/arctic-international-relations-widened-security-perspective/> p. 9

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8

formation in 1996, specifically avoided the topic of military arming at US request. Military cooperation occurs but mainly through NATO. This creates some issue, as not all Arctic states are members but is not enough to stall overall progress.⁷

Through these definitions, the idea of military security is somewhat straightforward. States can protect themselves through any number of mediums based on the adversarial threat. While the Arctic has its military limitations based on the still frozen landscape for much of the year, this brings to the foreground the need to establish securities in other zones while we have the time.

ARCTIC POLICY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Recent events between Russia and Ukraine have caused an abnormality when it comes to Arctic regional political dynamics. Russia is currently the Chair of the Arctic Council until 2023 and the remainder of the Arctic Council has banded against their actions and suspended any further official council activities with Russia as of 3 March, 2022. The statement is condemnation of the invasion, citing “Russia’s flagrant violation” of values the Arctic Council stands for and aims to uphold through their work. These values being sovereignty, territorial integrity, and international law.⁸

An important nuance to this instance is that the Arctic Region has enjoyed ‘negotiated exceptionalism’ designed by the Arctic states, for the Arctic states. The meaning behind this is

⁷ Pomerants, W. G. and D., Greaves, W., & Pomerants, D. (2017, November 21). *Soft securitization: Unconventional security issues and the Arctic Council*. The Arctic Institute. Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/soft-securitization-unconventional-security-issues-arctic-council/> . p. 35

⁸ U.S. Department of State. (2022, March 3). *Joint statement on Arctic Council Cooperation following Russia's invasion of Ukraine - United States Department of State*. U.S. Department of State. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-arctic-council-cooperation-following-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/>

the method enables the “effort to maintain cooperation in the region despite internal competition for resources and territory, and to compartmentalize Arctic relations from external geopolitical tensions.”⁹ This method of compartmentalized diplomacy has worked within reason and even survived the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. Despite other western sanctions that were levied against Russia at the time, the Arctic Council continued to function.

For now, similarities in policy across the Arctic continue to tell a story of cooperation. From here, we can see how the different interests turn into acts of securitization. Russia, as the chair of the Arctic Council produced its two year plan and delivered it to the council in 2021. Therein, Russia champions an integrated multilateral approach focused on four key areas. They want to develop human capital (healthcare, education and youth programs), increase global education on climate change and Arctic ecology which will be focused on hydrometeorology and prevention of emergencies. Next, they will focus on the socio-economic domain looking at international standards for shipping and transport and lastly further strengthen the Arctic council itself.¹⁰ At this stage, it must be noted that all of those programs have no links into state defence departments but will be heavily reliant on departments of transportation, oceans, fisheries, natural resources and indigenous leadership.

Russian intent in the Arctic is fully dedicated to production and acquisition of resources. While they may have the world’s largest military footprint in the Arctic circle, there is little viable deployable threat and they classify those forces as part of military ‘modernization programs’. For Russia, it is the need for oil. Arctic resources account for 20% of GDP. In 2012,

⁹ Murray, H. E.-P. and R., Exner-Pirot, H., & Murray, R. (2017, November 21). *Regional order in the Arctic: Negotiated exceptionalism*. The Arctic Institute. Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/regional-order-arctic-negotiated-exceptionalism/>. P. 47.

¹⁰ *The Arctic Council*. Arctic Council. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2022, from https://webmail.arctic-council.org/Арктика_приоритеты_англ_21.06.2021.pdf (arctic-council.org). p. 11-31.

70% of oil and 90% of natural gas for the country was produced in its Arctic. Canada, the US, and Denmark, as examples, get less than 1% GDP from their parts of the Arctic. It is easy to see why Russia would want to place security in this region without a real threat of projection but rather domestic assurance of the country's most valued resource.¹¹

Canada's Arctic foreign policy reads oddly similar to Russia. Its primary vision being one of "a stable, rules-based region with clearly defined boundaries, dynamic economic growth and trade, vibrant Northern communities, and healthy and productive ecosystems,"¹² Canada self describes itself as an 'Arctic Power' based on its resource potential which portrays a sense of where its securities would come from. There is mention however, of the Canadian security organizations, specifically, the CAF, Canadian Coast Guard and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) "exercise(ing) our sovereignty in the Arctic through our laws and regulations, as we do throughout Canada."¹³ Future preparations and growth of this security network align with environmental insecurities such as the melting ice and the opening of the North West passage where commercial shipping will require a safety network vice a defence network.

In this policy, the Canada First Defence strategy¹⁴ is inappropriately framed for future success. Military exercises and NORAD modernization are essential elements to security in the north but as detailed, territorial defence is not the main securitization act and nor should it be. These functions should be more comprehensive enabling plans to ensure the safety and security

¹¹ Murray, H. E.-P. and R., Exner-Pirot, H., & Murray, R. (2017, November 21). *Regional order in the Arctic: Negotiated exceptionalism*. The Arctic Institute. Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/regional-order-arctic-negotiated-exceptionalism/>. P. 59.

¹² Canada, G. A. (2017, May 12). *Government of Canada*. GAC. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/arctic-arctique/arctic_policy-canada-politique_arctique.aspx?lang=eng. p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Canada, G. A. (2017, May 12). *Government of Canada*. GAC. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/arctic-arctique/arctic_policy-canada-politique_arctique.aspx?lang=eng. p. 7.

(both physically and economically) of states and businesses that will bring value to Canadians and our partners.

The United States has an interesting relationship with the Arctic and the Arctic States. To frame this, in 2019 the US Department of Defense published an Arctic strategy stating its goals as “a secure and stable region in which US national interests are safeguarded, the US homeland is defended, and nations work cooperatively to address shared challenges.”¹⁵ The US Army thus produced a document in 2021 entitled ‘Regaining Arctic Dominance’. Therein, the arctic is described as “an arena of competition, a line of attack in conflict, a vital area holding many of our nation’s natural resources, and a platform for global power projection.”¹⁶ This is a much stricter look at arctic security than the remainder of the Arctic states (including Russia in this case), and is telling of the US strategic and operational mindset. US Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska desires a peaceful and cooperative approach and attributes the disconnect between the strategic and operational levels to a US Arctic leadership issue.¹⁷

Senator Murkowski penned an article about ‘Arctic exceptionalism’ in May 2021. She states that the challenge for the US in its role in maintaining peace is ensuring congress and corporations pay attention to the region. She notes that the US Foreign Service, as the first line of the US security network has a budget of only 3-5% of the defense budget and that the State department and military are often assuming the role of determining national interests.¹⁸

¹⁵ *United States Army – regaining Arctic Dominance: Wisconsin Procurement Institute*. Wisconsin Procurement Institute iCal. (n.d.). Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.wispro.org/united-states-army-regaining-arctic-dominance/>. P. 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. iii.

¹⁷ Irfan, U. (2022, April 25). *Russia's invasion of Ukraine is fracturing the delicate peace in the Arctic*. Vox. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://www.vox.com/22993194/russia-ukraine-invasion-arctic-council-climate-change>

¹⁸ Murkowski, L. (n.d.). American Foreign Service Association. Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://afsa.org/arctic-exceptionalism>

The Senator implores the solution is Arctic capable diplomats and leaders noting that the US does not even have an Arctic ambassador which many non-Arctic countries have.¹⁹ Clearly, the US is aware of the rest of the world's interest in Arctic resources, to include key adversaries such as Russia and China, but an immediate leap in to Military defence is concerning. Above all else, a diplomatic security approach to the Arctic is what is best for its future. The seemingly difference in opinions across the US executive branch could suggest that the US is beginning to be pulled in too many directions. The Arctic Region is potentially an opportunity for Canada to step in with more of a leading role for its good friend and ally.

China is not an Arctic state. Despite, self-classifying themselves as a 'near arctic state' it is simply not true.²⁰ What makes them an Arctic player is their posturing across the spectrum of diplomatic, economic and educational domains that turn the Arctic into their back yard. China believes that their position at the United Nations impresses upon them the need to ensure a peaceful and stable Arctic region. Therefore, their policy is based on the exceptionalism nature of the region where they would aim at common interests and sustainable development.²¹ China is the world's largest shipping country so it is natural that they will be seeking ways to decrease the distance between their ports and those of their importers.²² To that end, China has already demonstrated its willingness and desire to exercise dialogue and cooperation over force by developing the Chinese Maritime Safety Administration guide on sailing the North West

¹⁹ Murkowski, L. (n.d.). American Foreign Service Association. Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://afsa.org/arctic-exceptionalism>

²⁰ Marisa R. Lino, "Understanding China's Arctic activities," *The international Institute for Strategic Studies* (February 2020), Understanding China's Arctic activities (iiss.org)

²¹ State, Council Information Office. *China's Arctic Policy(English Version) 中国的北极政策 (英文版)*, China Intercontinental Press, 2018. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 7, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5620428> p . 9

²² *Ibid.*, p 74

Passage. Canadian rules and laws and processes are highlighted and thus can be used in Canada to ensure accuracy and relevancy as the water way opens in the future.²³

Definitions and relationships will matter as the diplomatic versus military definitions of security and arming the north come in to fruition. The nations identified above are friends and foes depending on the day and depending on the topic or region being discussed. Recent events have upset this delicate balance but not enough to be overly concerned and jump to large armaments in the Arctic. In this sense, arming the north with diplomats who are passionate, Arctic intelligent, enabled and cooperative would add many layers of security before conflicts would rise. Therefore, Canada must understand what its up against, what it can do and where it can create physical and diplomatic standoff in its Arctic.

THE MILITARY SECURITY SOLUTION?

Canada's military has a role in the Arctic security apparatus. The military and its elements can do much for Arctic security but the focus needs to remain on enabling the remainder of the National Security team so that Canada does its part in keeping the Arctic exceptional. General Baden-Powell, of Boer War fame, noted in 1908 that the next generation was becoming incapable and not properly equipped to handle the harshness of war in the future. He created the Boy Scouts so boys would learn scouting and skills with the ultimate goal of 'being prepared' to fight and die for ones country if required.²⁴

Being prepared for a military solution in the Arctic is not an easy task. However, one that is necessary to weave into the National Security framework now. As Humpert said, "The

²³ Ibid., p. 79

²⁴ Freedman, Lawrence. The Future of War: A History. PublicAffairs, 2019. P. 60.

question has always been, where do legitimate security interest's end and where does militarization of the Arctic begin?"²⁵ It is important to know what Canada and North America is up against, its efficacy and probability so that reasonable conditions can be set to avoid conflict but engage, credibly, if required.

RUSSIA AND CHINA AS MILITARY ADVERSARIES

China and Russia have not been completely clandestine with their Arctic build up. Their desires overall have been spoken to and their relationship is evident. Since 2020, they have even been exercising their Navies in open Arctic waters.²⁶ In terms of adversarial capabilities, Russia far exceeds any other nation in Arctic military establishment. In their Arctic, they have positioned 13 airfields, several anti-aircraft missile batteries, their new generation of submarines, several battalions of soldiers and even tanks. Russia also holds over 40 aging (yet still operational) ice breakers and 13 of their new ice breaker class, capable of traversing through waters with three meters of new ice.²⁷

China's Arctic specific fleet only consists of two medium strength icebreakers.²⁸ The larger concern from China is the overall size of their Navy and their internal ship building ability as they have 350 ships and submarines. This surpasses the United States as of 2020 with 293.

²⁵ Irfan, U. (2022, April 25). *Russia's invasion of Ukraine is fracturing the delicate peace in the Arctic*. Vox. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://www.vox.com/22993194/russia-ukraine-invasion-arctic-council-climate-change>

²⁶ Fisher, Matthew, (2021, April 19). *Commentary: Canada needs an Arctic defence strategy as Russia, China eye the north - national*. Global News. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://globalnews.ca/news/7355425/canada-arctic-defence/>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

China is also looking to pursue more nuclear launch capabilities where they would have options to deploy from land, sea, and air platforms creating their “nuclear triad.”²⁹

Even with Russia and China put together, the threat of using the Arctic as an avenue of approach is still relatively low today. Canada identified this growing trend in 2000 through the Arctic Security Interdepartmental Working Group, which was built to design and develop ‘whole-of-government’ solutions to Arctic concerns. These concerns correctly identified the broad scale of securities from the environmental, social, economic and military arenas. The recommendations of increased threats against security and sovereignty were not from the Russian and Chinese military tools noted above. They were from “environmental protection, increased shipping [...], heightened commercial airline activity and ‘trans-national criminal activity.’”³⁰

The department of National defence and government of the day focused its efforts elsewhere. Twenty-two years later, the same nonmilitary threats are coming to fruition as the environment allows for continued development and use of the North West Passage. However, now Canada’s Arctic must also contend with a well-developed maritime threat that the ice can no longer keep away as well as it once did. As Canada’s environmental security layer begins to melt, it must establish other layers in time to maintain its Arctic security apparatus. The chief concerns remain the same from 2000 and leveraging departments other than defence needs to remain at the forefront.

²⁹ Office of the Secretary of Defense. “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China: 2020.” *Annual Report to Congress*, (viii), 2020 China Military Power Report (defense.gov) .p. viii-ix

³⁰ Whitney Lackenbauer & Rob Huebert (2014) Premier partners: Canada, the United States and Arctic security, *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, 20:3, 320-333, DOI: 10.1080/11926422.2014.977313 .p. 323

CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES AS ALLIES

Canada and the United States have a unique relationship in several areas. The Arctic relationship they have has not always been one of lateral cooperation. While the two countries focus on working together it is important to note they disagree on the designation of the North West Passage. The US believes it to be international waters and Canada believes it to be territorial. This legal debate has been tabled since the 1969 voyage of the SS Manhattan which prompted Canada to enact the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act, effectively extending its boundary to twelve Nautical miles.³¹

Maintaining the exceptional nature of Arctic relationships is critical amongst these two countries because this legal debate is still not settled to this day. It also splits the Arctic states in their belief of who is correct. The US and the EU make up one side and Canada, China and Russia are unlikely allies in the other.³² The legal debate is not the focus for this argument but does highlight the fact that this domain is directly linked to security without any real focus on military security. Canada and the United States continue to work closely to protect and engage in the Arctic together.

The United States has sizable military forces in Alaska which includes F-35 fighter plane squadrons. In 2010, the United States Navy had drawn down its 2nd Fleet in Norfolk, Virginia but in 2019 that fleet was rebuilt purposefully for tasks in the North Atlantic and Arctic. They also

³¹ Nong Hong, "China's New Arctic Policy: Legal Questions and Practical Challenges." *Maritime Awareness Project* (March 2018): 2, analysis_hong_031618.pdf (nbr.org) . p. 2

³² Michael Byers and Emma Lodge, "China and the Northwest Passage," *Chinese Journal of International Law*, Vol 18, Issue 1 (March 2019): 84, <https://doi-org.cfc.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/chinesejil/jmz001>. p. 84

are the chief operators of NORAD and the North Warning System which are becoming outdated and could be out paced by adversarial missile capabilities today.³³

Canada does not possess any significant Arctic military capability but has made strides in recent years to develop operational skillsets in the Arctic environment. Its largest and arguably most capable ground force is the 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group that spans the three northern Territories. While the deployable force from the Canadian Army perspective is the Arctic Response Company Groups. Their capability comes in the form of survivability and communications.³⁴

The Royal Canadian Navy has fielded one of six Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ships (HMCS Harry De Wolf) which can go through ‘first year’ ice and has already completed a North West Passage voyage in 2021. One consideration that needs to be understood is that while this ship is considered armed with a 25mm cannon, it is by no means a dedicated fighting vessel.³⁵ Therefore, it is appropriately positioned to support security in the Arctic in an enabling function to aide in Coast guard, RCMP, and Border Service security concerns with a heavily trafficked waterway. This relationship exists but should be scaled and increased. Canada’s Coast Guard is a member, through the Arctic Council, of the Arctic Coast Guard Forum. This relationship is

³³ Ryan Burke & Jahara Matisek, “The Polar Trap: China, Russia, and American Power in the Arctic and Antarctica,” *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, Air University Press (25 October 2021), The Polar Trap: China, Russia, and American Power in the Arctic and Antarctica > Air University (AU) > Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs Article Display

³⁴ Lajeunesse, Adam. (n.d.). *The Canadian Armed Forces in the arctic: Purpose, capabilities, and requirements*. Canadian Global Affairs Institute. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from https://www.cgai.ca/canadian_armed_forces_in_the_arctic p. 4.

³⁵ Collins, J. (2022, January 27). *On the Arctic Watch: Why we need to protect Canada's sovereignty and security in the Far North: Jeff Collins for inside policy: MacDonald-Laurier Institute*. Macdonald. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/what-we-need-vs-what-we-have-assessing-canadas-defence-capabilities-in-the-arctic-jeff-collins-for-inside-policy/>

supported by the RCMP, DND, Canadian Border Services Agency and Public Safety Canada.³⁶ A dedicated physical maritime presence will need to be built as traffic increases. The Canadian Space Agency through its RADARSAT Constellation Mission is interoperable with the in place Automatic Identification System (AIS). However, satellite time must be dedicated to an area for it to be effective and ships must be close enough to intercept anything that is seen by the AIS.³⁷ More traffic in the future would encourage an upscale of this interdepartmental security system to encourage safety along the North West passage, while also ensuring sovereignty is respected.

The Royal Canadian Air Force is currently operating with CF-18 fighters but has announced the procurement of the F-35 which will aide in interoperability with the United States. Its primary tool, the CP-140 Aurora, which acts as a sensor over the Arctic is being upgraded but is a notably aging airframe.³⁸ For Canada's approach and needs, even in to the future, this should be seen as sufficient. However, scaling the force generation must be a consideration going forward so that capable CAF members can continue to support other governmental departments in any and all security situations that may come via Arctic or North West Passage development.

³⁶ ACGF. Home. (n.d.). Retrieved May 3, 2022, from <https://www.arcticcoastguardforum.com/member-country/canada>

³⁷ Buckley, Stephen, and Canadian Forces College. *Airborne Early Warning Aircraft as a Solution to Arctic Surveillance and Control*. Canadian Forces College, 2019, p. 6. Airborne Early Warning Aircraft as a Solution to Arctic Surveillance and Control (forces.gc.ca)

³⁸ Collins, J. (2022, January 27). *On the Arctic Watch: Why we need to protect Canada's sovereignty and security in the Far North: Jeff Collins for inside policy: MacDonald-Laurier Institute*. Macdonald. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/what-we-need-vs-what-we-have-assessing-canadas-defence-capabilities-in-the-arctic-jeff-collins-for-inside-policy/>

KEEPING MILITARY MIGHT IN THE BACKGROUND

The Arctic is therefore protected in one sense by military tools from all actors. The Arctic council members, like the United States and Canada, still have contested boundary issues that the melting ice will only exacerbate. However, all are committed to following the rules in place to distinguish any discrepancies with overlapping boundaries. The Arctic Council states have pushed a mutual beneficial and optimistic approach for cooperation and de-securitization in the Arctic. While each nation will need to increase their military capabilities, especially in the maritime domain, the focus on execution remains on safety and security for passage through the Arctic waters.³⁹ Normal government discourse remains at the forefront yet carefully woven with military capability as insurance. As the ice melts and reveals its passages it is vital that the states involved (adversarial or not) look into different interests they can all profit from to keep escalations from rising, as was done in 2008 when Arctic Arms seemed to be increasing.

Economically speaking, pushing a combative military agenda reduces any nation's ability to profit from the Arctic. A 'rules based and predictable' Arctic keeps billions of dollars of investor money flowing into Arctic states. Canada's role in shipping through the North West passage will be discussed shortly but stands to profit immensely from this. As do adversarial nations such as China. If everyone is poised to gain in the economic, environmental and social domains, the purpose of Arctic militaries is further encouraged to be enabling. Hospitable regions are difficult to find and would be further difficult to develop. The ground and maritime terrain can be dangerous and isolated. This makes any form of territory acquirement by an

³⁹ Strandsbjerg, M. J. and J., Jacobsen, M., & Strandsbjerg, J. (2020, March 24). *Desecuritization as displacement of controversy*. The Arctic Institute. Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/desecuritization-geopolitics-law-arctic/> p. 21-22

invading force, unrealistic. Planes can only go so far and only so many ships and submarines can fit into the narrow channels.⁴⁰ The idea of defending the arctic militarily is difficult.

Conducting offensive operations would be very problematic and ill advised.

Canada has partners and adversaries in the Arctic. In some debates, those relationships differ. This is the nuanced nature of what it means for Canada to arm its North. Arming its Arctic with a layered security apparatus that focuses on safety and security of those that mean to traverse or produce in the Arctic supports Canada's overall security, including its sovereignty. However, like General Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts, Canada must 'be prepared'. Canada's military procurement system can take decades to produce larger scale capabilities such as ships and aircraft. According to Canada's defence policy, up to 70% of projects could be subjected to delays.⁴¹ These timelines must be factored in to the defence security layer so that the other layers are not adversely affected or left without the necessary support to be effective.

SECURITY OPPORTUNITIES

There have been a few noted nonmilitary securities mentioned in this paper at this point. Shipping in the North West passage will be a profitable bi product of the two largest securities that Canada should look to focus on. These are natural resource exploration and extraction and fisheries. These two securities are suggested because they are most likely to have the greatest

⁴⁰ Murray, H. E.-P. and R., Exner-Pirot, H., & Murray, R. (2017, November 21). *Regional order in the Arctic: Negotiated exceptionalism*. The Arctic Institute. Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/regional-order-arctic-negotiated-exceptionalism/> p. 58

⁴¹ Collins, J. (2022, January 27). *On the Arctic Watch: Why we need to protect Canada's sovereignty and security in the Far North: Jeff Collins for inside policy: MacDonald-Laurier Institute*. Macdonald. Retrieved April 26, 2022, from <https://macdonaldlaurier.ca/what-we-need-vs-what-we-have-assessing-canadas-defence-capabilities-in-the-arctic-jeff-collins-for-inside-policy/>

yield for success for Canada but they are also, potentially, the most dangerous if the region became contentious.

Recent events between Russia and the Ukraine and the Arctic Council's pause on the regions exceptionalism exacerbate the fact that Russia leads the world in Arctic exploration and extraction. Approximately 60% of undiscovered reserves (both oil and natural gas) are within Russia's boundaries. Russia desired western corporation aide in its northern extraction efforts. However, in 2014, heavy western sanctions against Russia's invasion of Crimea forced those relationships to fail and China seized an opportunity to get involved in the North.⁴²

Canada's potential for natural resources in its Arctic is expected to be substantial. The current issue being that it is still one of the most unexplored areas in the world. Upwards of 2.8 billion barrels of oil and 60 trillion cubic feet of natural gas is estimated in the Mackenzie region and 4.3 billion barrels and 79.8 trillion cubic feet in the Sverdrup basin. Canada, however, currently lacks the support infrastructure to move any of that, even if they could extract it.⁴³ The opportunity lays in the layers of security that would be part of the natural resource production itself. These elements are environmental concerns which can lead into effects against fisheries and marine life. The necessary technology to clean an oil spill in this region does not exist. Canada must ensure that a comprehensive approach is adopted or else they will sacrifice one

⁴² Lackenbauer, P. Whitney, et al. *China's Arctic Ambitions and What They Mean for Canada*, University of Calgary Press, 2018. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 116, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5252883>.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 119.

security (the environment and its northern people and animals) for another (Natural Resource production).⁴⁴

Fisheries is also affected heavily by activities in the Arctic where a layered and cooperative approach must be built for a future that will see increased shipping through the North West Passage. Canada's governmental departments must ensure that the economic benefits of the Arctic do not outpace the ecosystem. As the North West passage opens to commercial vessels, erosion to shorelines and effects to marine and bird migration patterns must be understood and mitigated.⁴⁵ This human effect, coupled with climate change effects to fish stocks all over the world will contribute to global food supply concerns. The act of fishing is only one part of the security question for Arctic nations. Canada, the United States and Denmark have already placed a moratorium against commercial fishing to focus on researching vulnerabilities for fishing in the high Arctic. However, melting ice and warmer waters will change the landscape of national fishing grounds. This will be to the benefit of some and not to others.⁴⁶

These two examples of interconnected opportunities demonstrate Canada's precarious future in arming the Arctic. Economically, natural resource production would be hugely beneficial to Canadians and the world, but it cannot come at the cost of the ecological balance of a region that supports the globe in so many ways. This issue is not solved by submarines or

⁴⁴ *Arctic Oil & Gas*. National Ocean Economics Program. (n.d.). Retrieved May 4, 2022, from <https://www.oceaneconomics.org/arctic/extractive/>

⁴⁵ Sproule, David, and Whitney Lackenbauer. "Voices from the Arctic: Diverse Views on Canadian Arctic Security." *North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network*. January 2021, 7, 20-nov-ArcticVoicesProceedings-upload.pdf (naadsn.ca)

⁴⁶ Lackenbauer, P. Whitney, et al. *China's Arctic Ambitions and What They Mean for Canada*, University of Calgary Press, 2018. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 121, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cfvlibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5252883>.

missiles or soldiers. Equally, the oceans are a source of sustenance for the world. Canada and its three oceans are geographically advantaged in this domain. However, fish schools do not recognize international boundaries. They will follow the temperature of the water and the sources of their own food. This is also not an issue that can be solved by the military but one that the military must understand its role in more closely. The answer of more ships and submarines may aide in the shipping safety and security but will also contribute negatively to other securities. Arming the north is a balance and must be adopted collectively both internal to Canadian departments as well as internationally.

CONCLUSION

Canada has much to gain from its future in the Arctic but it also has much to prepare for as it arms itself for a balanced and sustainable version of that future. The nuance of arming the North comes from the definitions from what Canada wants to protect and how it aims to protect the region. The relationships that exist in the Arctic are exceptional and that must be maintained. As a nation, Canada must ensure its capability to protect its sovereignty and its people from any threat. It can do this in the Arctic by establishing the diplomatic, economic and environmental conditions of mutual benefit to all. Canada must equally be prepared to militarily defend and demonstrate our capability and willingness to do our fair share of continental defence with the United States.

By understanding the relationships and nuances of the exceptional nature of the Arctic region, arming the north from a military perspective can take a back seat while continuing to support and enable other security organizations as maritime and economic traffic increases. By increasing our maritime footprint through Arctic capable vessels the CAF can support the safety and security of foreign ships which supports Canadian economy along the North West Passage.

By increasing our Air and radar footprint and upgrading technology, the CAF supports research and environmental agencies in the region that can support mining and resource production. By increasing a land footprint to work more consistently with the Rangers, the safety and security of Canadian led resource and fisheries operations can be safe to produce on behalf of Canadians. All of these put together enable Canada to support its largest ally in defence and protection of the continent in the event it needed to. The only issue left is that Canada cannot do any of that, unless its starts doing it now.

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