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The North Policy Briefing

Arctic Ocean ridge claim about 'national pride' as much as potential resources: expert

Claims are inspired more by each country's desire to be seen as an Arctic power, and less by extractable value, says Prof. Adam Lajeunesse.

BY NEIL MOSS

As Canada prepares its submission on the claim over submarine shelves in the Arctic Ocean, there are questions if there are resources on and below the seabed worth extracting, experts say.

Canada's claim will deal with two ridges, jutting out from Ellesmere Island at Canada's northernmost point, crossing the Arctic Ocean—the Lomonosov and Alpha-Mendeleev ridges.

"I think a lot of this has to do with national pride as much as it does [with]

an actual assumption that there's going to be a wealth of resources discovered," said Adam Lajeunesse, Irving Shipbuilding chair in Arctic marine security at St. Francis Xavier University. "Both Russia and Canada, and Denmark to a lesser extent, ... want to be seen as Arctic powers. They want to be seen as owning a lot of this territory, or at least [administering] it."

"It would be a diplomatic embarrassment, or a political embarrassment ... if the Russian continental shelf spilled over onto the Canadian side of the pole for instance, or vice-versa," he added.

The claim allows for jurisdictional control over the sub-sand seabed resources of the ridges, as well as over some immobile seabed resources, but not sovereignty over the waters, as the sea will remain international waters and under international maritime law.

The submissions will be looked over by the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf under the mandate of the UN Convention on the Law



Since 2013, Canada has been conducting scientific mapping in order to submit its claim over its continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean. Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Each coastal state has a continental shelf that extends 200 nautical miles (370 kilometres) from its coast (known as the exclusive economic zone), but countries can have jurisdiction over submarine ridges if it can show the ridges are connected to its continental landmass, Mary-Lynn Dickson, head of Canada's UNCLOS program, told Radio-Canada in 2016.

Canada submitted its claim for the continental shelf in the Atlantic Ocean, but then-foreign affairs minister John Baird announced in 2013 that Canadian scientists would be charged with additional work to map its claim in the Arctic. According to the Canadian Press, it was a last-minute decision on the part of Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper, who wanted the North Pole to be included in Canada's submission, an allegation that wasn't denied by Mr. Baird.

The submission of Canada's Arctic claim has been delayed a number of times, as there is only a six- to eight-week period in the summer that research is possible given the harsh environment.

"All of the data needed to support Canada's Arctic Ocean continental shelf submission has now been collected (a final scientific survey was undertaken in the summer of 2016). Data analysis is nearing completion and the submission is being prepared," Guillaume Bérubé, a spokesperson for Global Affairs Canada, said in an emailed statement.

He said Canada is expected to file its final submission in early 2019.

Nothing known about potential Arctic resources in contested area: Lajeunesse

"Literally nothing" is known about the resources under the seabed, said Prof. Lajeunesse.

"The common refrain you hear is it's quite rich in oil and natural gas—that is probably not necessarily the case. The Arctic is rich in oil and natural gas, but that's all in continental shelves attached to Canada, Russia, the United States... and is claimed and recognized by the international communities," he said. "The area that people think will be in dispute has never been studied, there's no real estimate of what might be there."

Even if there is oil and gas, it is in the "one of the harshest" environments in the world to extract resources from, said Prof. Lajeunesse, who noted it's an area of the world that will "always" be covered by ice in the winter despite climate change. At its shallowest point, the Lomonosov ridge is about 400 metres deep, requiring an ultra-deepwater offshore drilling rig to extract the resources, and the closest infrastructure is far away.

"The cost of developing oil and gas in that disputed region would be astronomical," he said.

Despite the minimal research, the scientific surveys have brought far more scientific knowledge of the area than was known previous, according to Elizabeth Riddell-Dixon, an Arctic policy expert who

authored *Breaking the Ice: Canada, Sovereignty and the Arctic Extended Continental Shelf* in 2017.

In spite of the difficulty of extracting the resources, it doesn't mean that Canada doesn't want to, at the very minimum, establish its continental shelf, she added.

Arctic claim submission 'just the beginning' of process, says legal expert

"What little we know is, we don't know," said Suzanne Lalonde, a law professor at the Université de Montréal. "But there could be huge finds of things we can't even imagine."

The only way to have a claim to the continental shelf recognized, is to go through the legal process, starting with doing extensive scientific research on the shelf, submitting a claim.

"The process will just take us so far, the commission will look at Canada's scientific proof and will give its recommendations on Canada's dossier," Prof. Lalonde said. "But the commission cannot touch overlapping areas or areas in dispute, or in contention, [like] Lomonosov ridge."

It can signal which submissions have scientific backing, but can't declare which country has jurisdiction over what part of the ridges.

"Inevitably it is going to be political—it's going to be a diplomatic and political negotiation," Prof. Lalonde said.

"The legal process gets us not far in resolving this mess," she said. "When there's these overlapping areas ... the process is just the beginning."

"The continental shelves of the Arctic Ocean coastal states will overlap, but the full extent and location of these overlaps is not yet known. Canada, like the other Arctic Ocean coastal states, is committed to the orderly resolution of any such overlaps," Mr. Bérubé said in an email.

If there is no deal reached between the coastal Arctic countries, it will get "murky," according to Prof. Lalonde, as the convention doesn't give a clear resolution to boundary disputes.

The countries could go to the International Court of Justice or ask an arbitrator tribunal, but Prof. Lalonde said it's unlikely that Russia, or even Canada, would want to do that.

"I have no doubt this will be resolved through the slow grind of negotiations," Prof. Riddell-Dixon said.

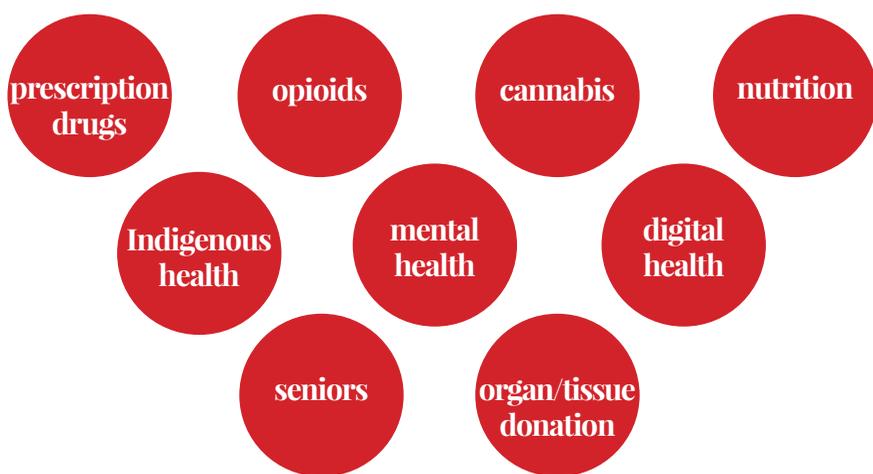
Although Mr. Bérubé said in an email that the outer limits of Canada's continental shelf includes the North Poles, according to scientific analysis.

It is unclear how long it would take for the boundaries of the ridges to be resolved. Prof. Lajeunesse suggested it would be a "very long timeline."

That could be reduced if the Arctic coastal countries go to the UN commission with a common claim that has been negotiated beforehand, and Prof. Lajeunesse said it was "still a possibility" that it could happen.

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ITK president Obed says he and Minister LeBlanc have pledged 'new course' on Nutrition North redesign

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president Natan Obed and Northern Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc recently met to discuss Nutrition North, in what both called a 'productive meeting.'

BY JOLSON LIM

Months after major Inuit organizations walked out of departmental consultations on revamping the northern food subsidy program, one Inuit leader says he and the new minister for northern affairs have "pledged to set a new course" on the program's redesign.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) president Natan Obed said he and Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) met about two weeks ago to talk about Nutrition North, in what he calls a "productive meeting."

"We pledged to set a new course when it came to working on a redesign of Nutrition North and then implementing those changes," he said, but cautioned it is "too early to tell that the positive intent that we have with Minister LeBlanc will then follow through to action."

The Liberal government promises to revamp Nutrition North, which is intended—but largely fails—to provide affordable and nutritious food to residents in Canada's North, where food prices are far higher and health outcomes far lower in comparison to southern Canada. The program provides subsidies on shipping to retailers for a list of products the federal government deems essential and nutritious.

In April, five major Inuit organizations—the ITK, the Northwest Territories' Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Labrador's Nunatsiavut Government, and Quebec's Makivik Corporation—pulled out of departmental

consultations, saying that federal program officials did not listen to their Inuit-specific recommendations in its review of the Nutrition North program.

Mr. Obed, who leads the country's foremost Inuit advocacy group in Ottawa, said all of the groups have still not returned to the federal government's Indigenous Working Group on food security.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the department responsible for Nutrition North and the working group, has only told the Inuit groups that there's a "standing offer" for them to return and has made no other efforts, he said.

"We find this is an unacceptable solution. We walked away because we had fundamental problems with the engagement process," he said.

INAC spokesperson Stephanie Palma did not say what the department has offered, but in a statement said "input from all parties is important in moving forward on food security in the North."

"We are hopeful that we can foster constructive dialogue towards food security solutions with Inuit organizations as they have an important and unique perspective to offer," she wrote.

Mr. LeBlanc told CBC's *The House* in mid-October that the program, which was launched by the Conservative government in 2011, had "lost its way" and that he'd like to see an announcement on its future made by the end of January.

In a statement, Mr. LeBlanc's press secretary, Vincent Hughes, said the minister had a "productive and collaborative" meeting with Mr. Obed on a "broad range of topics."

"The minister reiterated his commitment to work closely with Mr. Obed and ITK, as well as with all northerners, on improving the Nutrition North program," he wrote. "We know we can do better, and we look forward to continuing a positive dialogue... to ensure that changes to the program reflect the needs and priorities of those who live in the North."

In 2016, after the Liberals took power, the federal government increased funding of Nutrition North by \$13-million per year and expanded coverage by 37 communities.

Formal consultations were held in 2016 on how to improve the program and a final report



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president Natan Obed is pictured at a first ministers' meeting in December 2016. Mr. Obed says he and Northern Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc have pledged to set a new course on Nutrition North's redesign. *The Hill Times* photograph by Sam Garcia

was released in August 2017. Northerners had told federal officials that the program lacks transparency and had generally failed to cut food costs, particularly for people on fixed incomes.

Since then, however, no actions on the program's future have been announced. The \$80-million-per-year program now covers 122 communities, although food prices at best have only slightly declined.

Makivik Corporation's director of communications, William Tagoona, said in a statement that

of freight shipments per kilogram for certain foods, rather than the prices at which northern residents purchase food.

The result has been a limited dent on food prices, little corporate accountability and transparency over how the subsidy money is spent, and inconsistent prices among different northern communities, regardless if the food is transported on the same plane.

She said in order for the program to be improved, regulations on food prices need to be implemented that would ensure



Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc is pictured in the House foyer on Oct. 23. He admitted that Nutrition North has 'lost its way.' *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

"co-developing a program with the federal government is the only way to ensure the unique needs of Inuit are met."

Leading researcher says program needs price cap

Disparities in health between people living in the North and those in southern regions are well documented, with a 2008 Inuit health survey finding seven in 10 families in Nunavut short of food.

A 22,500-member Facebook support group for northern residents called Feeding My Family is filled with photos posted of absurdly high prices for common food items. A recent example includes a head of cabbage for \$28.54.

The sky-high costs are due to the high price to ship food to often small and isolated northern communities, the difficulty in growing fresh food in Arctic climate, and the limited market opportunities for competition between retailers, among other factors.

University of Toronto professor Tracey Galloway, whose research focuses on food security in the North, said Nutrition North currently subsidizes retailers' cost

residents are directly subsidized.

"There's a real chance to improve the predictability, and fairness of life in the North by regulating prices and making careful policy decisions about locating the services we can outside of corporate spaces," Prof. Galloway said. "I think the government's success or failure in the North hangs on its next decision on Nutrition North."

Mr. Obed said that Nutrition North has to become a "social program, first and foremost," and transparent and accountable to those it intends to serve. He said Inuit policy considerations should be "first and foremost within the redesign of this program."

"The challenge we've always faced is that the definition of nutritious food, the eligibility requirements for certain foods, are not necessarily key parts of an Inuit diet," he said, noting that northern diets are largely defined by a couple of retail interests, but also of the region's environment.

He said the federal government needs to ensure that program money is spent efficiently and goes to residents who see the savings directly.

Obed cautiously optimistic on redesign

Mr. Obed said he believed that, for the minister, "there was a genuine willingness to accept, in his words, that the program has lost its way," and that he wanted to know and understand Inuit policy positions on the issue.

That's at odds with his experiences at the departmental level, he said, adding that there's a "disconnect" between his relationship at the ministerial level versus his relationship with Nutrition North bureaucrats.

"I do hope that then our positions cannot just [be] advice to the departmental changes in the program, but can actually form some of the basis for revisions to the program," he said.

He also said he's hopeful that a planned merger between First Air and Canadian North—the region's two largest commercial airlines that ships much of its food—will provide new opportunities to save money.

"The opportunity is also that the merger is between Inuit representational organizations. Inuit control those entities, Inuit also have been key drivers for food insecurity and poverty to be addressed," he said.

First Air is owned by the Makivik Corporation while Canadian Air is owned by Inuvialuit Development Corporation.

However, Prof. Galloway expressed concerns that the concentration of corporate interests in the North could have "devastating" consequences for food prices.

"It puts power in the decision making about who flies freight, and what it costs, in the hands of fewer and fewer people," she said. "Decisions about licensing and mergers, they can really reduce retailer competition in the North and that has so far resulted in higher and higher prices for people."

She also warned about the reduction in resupply and ferry services in some northern regions and how Canada Post recently tendered all of its service for northern Ontario.

"All that foot traffic goes into a private space that's corporately owned and everything's for sale," she said.

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The North Policy Briefing

Minister LeBlanc says feds looking at 'all options' to cut cost of food in the North

Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc cautions that private-sector options to get food up north faster, like Amazon, are limited in scope.

BY JOLSON LIM

Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc says the federal government is exploring different options to improve access to local "country" foods in the North, as work on redesigning the Nutrition North food subsidy program continues.

In an email interview with *The Hill Times*, the veteran MP who is new to the role said the federal government's explorations come as it supports "community-driven efforts" to provide access to the production of sustainable local foods.

The Nutrition North program provides subsidies on shipping to retailers for a list of products the federal government deems essential and nutritious, although it has largely failed to cut the high cost of food in the North.

After previously expressing surprise and interest in how Amazon Prime can ship certain non-perishable foods at lower rates to Iqaluit, he told *The Hill Times* the federal government is looking at "all options" that would help reduce the cost of food in the

North, but cautioned that the private-sector method is currently limited in scope.

The minister, who was sworn in to his new roles during a July 18 cabinet shuffle, said work on Indigenous legal framework legislation continues. The Liberals have promised it would be tabled this fall, and Mr. LeBlanc (Beauséjour, N.B.) said he's had "many discussions" with Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett on the development of the framework.

He also talked about ongoing efforts to transfer more province-like powers to the territories, and other priorities of his office as the 2019 election ticks closer.

This interview has been condensed and edited for style:

There's one year left in this government's mandate. What are your priorities relating to the North for the upcoming year?

"We're committed to working with northerners to develop long-term opportunities that protect Canada's rich natural environment, build healthier communities, respect the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples, and support a strong, diversified, sustainable, and dynamic economy in the North. This is being done in the context of the dramatic impacts of climate change that the North is experiencing.

"We are co-developing a new Arctic and Northern Policy Framework in collaboration with Indigenous, territorial, and provincial partners to reflect the needs and priorities of the North and to replace the outdated North-

ern Strategy and the Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy. Once complete, the framework will identify a long-term vision for the North to 2030 and beyond.

"Access to affordable and nutritious food is a challenge for many families in northern isolated communities. We recognize that Nutrition North Canada can be and should be modernized and reformed. That is why we have been working to develop solutions by northerners for northerners through the 2016 public engagement process and the co-development work with Indigenous organizations and other stakeholders. We are also looking at options to improve access to local country/traditional foods as we support community driven efforts to provide access to the production of sustainable local foods.

"Strengthening northern governance and completing the devolution of province-like powers to the territories is a long-standing objective for our government. Devolution in Nunavut is an essential step in the political and economic development of the territory.

"We are also committed to providing Nunavut with more control over its economic and political future, including negotiating the transfer of public lands, rights, and resource management responsibilities. We will continue to work with the Nunavut government and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. to advance devolution in Nunavut."

You recently told the CBC you're frustrated it's taken so long to revise the northern food subsidies program Nutrition North,



Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc is pictured being sworn in at a ceremony at Rideau Hall on July 18 when he was moved into his current role. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

and that you hope to bring forward changes by the end of January. But all five major Inuit groups pulled out of the government's Indigenous Working Group on food security in April, saying the government isn't listening to them. How do you expect buy-in for the revised program, if these key groups feel they aren't being heard?

"Our government believes that input from all parties is important in moving forward on food security in the North. Nutrition North Canada is a national program of general application, which serves all residents in isolated communities in six provinces and three territories. This includes Inuit, First Nations, Métis, and other northerners.

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Policy Briefing The North

Continued from page 16

"Inuit organizations have an important and unique perspective to offer to the program, and we will continue to consult and listen to Indigenous communities and governments on how to reform Nutrition North.

"The feedback from all stakeholders to date has been fundamental in co-developing the improvements to the program, and was gathered through extensive consultations in partnership with the Nutrition North Canada Indigenous Working Group and other key stakeholders, including Indigenous organizations, registered retailers, airlines, provincial and territorial governments, and other federal government departments.

"We recognize that any changes to the Nutrition North program should not be made by bureaucrats in Ottawa or Gatineau, and should be guided by suggestions made by northerners.

"We are committed to continuing to work with Inuit, First Nations, Métis and other northerners to improve access to affordable, perishable nutritious food while ensuring Nutrition North Canada is more transparent, effective, and accountable to northerners and other Canadians."

You also noted that Amazon Prime can ship faster and at lower prices to the North. Is the federal government exploring private-sector options as a way to reduce the costs of food, as compared to a subsidy system?

"Access to affordable, nutritious food is a challenge for many families in northern communities.

"There are many factors that affect price, such as the isolation of the communities, the distance to transport food, size of communities, mode of transportation, cost of power and wages, competitive markets, and world market trends.

"Nutrition North Canada is one impor-

tant program helping to address the issue of food security in isolated communities. Using delivery services through private companies is another potential option to lessen the cost of delivering goods to the North. We are currently looking at all options that would help reduce costs on northerners.

"The typical cost of shipping to isolated northern communities given the extreme distances, multiple carriers involved and complications due to weather is a barrier to accessing the goods offered through online retailers unless they provide preferential rates. Iqaluit is the only isolated community that is eligible for free shipping with Amazon Prime, and most of the items Nutrition North Canada subsidizes are not available through Amazon, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, and milk."

In your role, you're tasked with supporting the minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Indigenous stakeholders on the creation of a new rights framework. What have you contributed and how is progress on a draft bill at the moment?

"Minister Bennett and the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations are currently reviewing and assessing what we heard during the engagement sessions, through conversations, correspondence, and proposals to identify what are the next steps forward. Work on the framework continues.

"I have had many discussions with the minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations regarding her work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as well as provincial and territorial governments and key stakeholders on the development of the framework.

"With over 100 engagement sessions, we have heard from more than 1,600 people, representing over 400 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. It is important for our government that this framework meet the expectations of rights holders. We are also

focused on ensuring that the voices of women, youth and elders are included in this process."

Earlier this year China announced its Arctic policy in a white paper, putting increased importance on the North. As the North faces an infrastructure deficit, does the government support Chinese investment in Canada's northern infrastructure?

"Canada's Arctic sovereignty is longstanding and well established. We continue to work with international partners, including through the Arctic Council, on the important issues affecting northern peoples and communities.

"China has said it wants to work constructively and make positive contributions to the Arctic Council and the Arctic region. We appreciate this and expect China to also abide by its stated commitment to international norms and laws.

"Our Arctic sovereignty is clear and our government will remain firm and steadfast in defending Canada's interests."

Part of your mandate is to help "support northern communities confronting immediate climate adaptation challenges." To that end, departments have been working with the territories and others to develop a Northern Adaptation Strategy. What's the status of the strategy and can you give us a sense of what's in it? Will the federal government provide new funding to support its implementation?

"Substantial effort has been made to strengthen the ability of northern communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We have held extensive engagement sessions across all regions of the North with stakeholders including with governments, with Indigenous communities and with elders and youth.

"This has helped identify community concerns as well as key objectives as well

as priorities, and action areas to support community resilience. This includes building local capacity to empower people to make their own decisions on what is happening in their communities, respecting Indigenous knowledge and culture, and fostering collaboration and partnerships, in addition to better understanding what the federal government is doing with respect to climate change adaptation in the north.

"The Northern Adaptation Strategy is still under development. We will continue to work with Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Québec, and Newfoundland and Labrador, and with northern and Indigenous governments, communities, and organizations to advance next steps. Investments under Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's existing climate change programming will help to support this work."

The federal negotiator crafting a devolution agreement with Nunavut, Fred Caron, has said a deal must be reached by the end of this year to give cabinet enough time to okay it before the next federal election. How close are you to a deal? If gaps remain, elaborate on why and what they are.

"Our government is committed to working together with the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to support the people of Nunavut's ability to make decisions over resource development and conservation that affect their communities, culture, and well-being.

"Advancing devolution in Nunavut is a key priority in my mandate letter. Devolution agreement-in-principle negotiations are ongoing.

"All parties are making best efforts to advance this important initiative. As this process remains confidential, we are not at liberty to disclose further details."

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The North Policy Briefing

Time to improve outcomes, ensure northern communities' needs are met

The priorities of the North are the priorities of our government.



Liberal MP Yvonne Jones

Arctic Policy Framework

Canada is a proud Arctic nation, and its vast northern region is a defining part of who we are as a country and the role we play on the international stage. It is the homeland to more than 120,000 people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. As a northerner myself, I know that interdependence, tremendous resilience, and remarkable achieve-

ment in the face of persistent challenges and change are hallmarks of the region and its residents.

Canada's North is blanketed by modern land claim settlements and self-government agreements. There has been steady progress on the devolution of federal jurisdictions to Yukon and Northwest Territories and the creation of a new territory, Nunavut.

People of the North share serious and similar challenges. They constantly struggle with the high cost of living, food insecurity in remote regions, socio-economic issues, and changing climate, all of which undermine the quality of life of northerners. To ensure a prosperous future, northern communities need infrastructure investments, innovative technologies, proven renewable energy options, and co-managed resource development.

Northerners are no strangers to overcoming challenges, and our government is working hard with them to address these pressing issues. The priorities of the North are the priorities of our government:



The government has put \$52-million toward 350 projects in northern and Indigenous communities for things like assessing the impacts of glacial melt. Photograph courtesy of Christopher Michel

reconciliation, a clean environment, a strong economy, and making sure that our communities have the support they need for good health and well-being for all citizens.

Canada is also advancing international Arctic co-operation with a view to addressing the key challenges and opportunities affecting the people, the economy, and the environment in Canada's North.

Of all the areas globally that are experiencing the stress of climate change, the Arctic is seeing some of the most dramatic effects. This was a sentiment shared by all Arctic regions represented at the recent Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region that I attended in Finland.

We know that the environment and the economy go together. To manage the harsh and often unpredictable impacts of climate change, Canada needs to foster resilient, integrated approaches to environmental protection and socio-economic development.

Our government has committed more than \$220-million over five

years to help address the impacts of climate change in the North. To date, \$52-million has gone to support 350 projects in northern and Indigenous communities for things like monitoring marine life, assessing the impacts of coastal erosion and glacial melt, and offsetting diesel fuel with wind and solar power alternatives. Making sure there is a price on pollution across Canada, which our government did last week, is also an important step in the fight against climate change.

Canada has also become a world leader in tackling the issue of contaminants that are polluting the Arctic ecosystem. Together with scientists, Indigenous peoples, local residents, and others, we are supporting research to monitor and reduce contaminants in country or traditional foods.

We know that a nutritious diet is essential to good physical and mental health—yet we also know that access to affordable, nutritious food is a challenge for many families in northern isolated

communities. Our government is responding to this challenge.

We are working with Indigenous organizations and other northerners to update and improve the Nutrition North program, which subsidizes the cost of nutritious, perishable food in isolated northern communities. We are also exploring options to improve access to local country or traditional foods and improve community-driven efforts to build sustainable local food production.

It's time to improve outcomes and make sure that the needs of northern communities are met.

To embrace opportunities and confront challenges, our government is co-developing a new Arctic Policy Framework alongside Indigenous, territorial, and provincial partners to replace the outdated Northern Strategy and the Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy. The new framework will be a long-term vision for the North to 2030 and beyond that encapsulates the distinctive needs of each region, which will ensure that the North's full potential is realized. This means a specific focus on economic development and job creation in the North. The framework will be informed by the priorities of our partners and will include actions to achieve shared goals.

As an Arctic nation, we need to work together on long-term opportunities to support a strong, sustainable economy in the North, while continuing to build healthier communities and protect our rich natural environment. Our government remains strong, proud, and determined when it comes to Canada's North.

Yvonne Jones is the parliamentary secretary to the minister of intergovernmental and northern affairs and internal trade, and the MP for Labrador, N.L.

The Hill Times

Government inaction is a roadblock to building a sustainable economy for Nunavut

What little action there is is slow, and funding is spread over a number of years.



Independent MP Hunter Tootoo

Social services

“There is no relationship more important to this government than our relationship with Indigenous people.”

How often have I heard that said in the House as the prime minister and his cabinet ministers rise to answer questions on Indigenous issues? Nunavummiut can be for-

given for questioning their sincerity.

In Nunavut we share a vision that we can build a sustainable economy that will support our communities, create jobs, reduce our dependency on Ottawa, and put our standard of living on a par with Canadians in the South.

Doing that will require substantial investment from the federal government, and we have to start by addressing critical and urgent needs in food security, housing, and community infrastructure.

But by its inaction and painstakingly slow response to these needs, the federal government is creating barriers that prevent us from realizing our vision.

Nutrition North Canada is a prime example. Since it was introduced in 2011 there have been problems with this program. It simply doesn't do what it was intended to do: deliver quality food at affordable prices to remote northern communities.

Updating and expanding Nutrition North was an election promise the Trudeau Liberals made in 2015. We have talked about it for three years. I have asked repeated-

ly in the House when the changes are coming, but the only answer the government gives is that “we are taking the time to get it right.”

Frustration has risen to such a level that all five of Canada's major Inuit organizations have pulled out of the government's Indigenous working group on food security.

Now we understand changes are coming in or just before 2019—just in time for another election announcement.

This issue is about meeting a basic human need. If we can't even guarantee food security for the people of Nunavut, how can we begin to build a sustainable economy?

Here's another example. In 1993, Canada signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Article 24.3.1 required Canada to develop and implement procurement policies to support Inuit-owned businesses. In May 2015, Canada was ordered by the courts to have these policies in place by July 31, 2016. We're still waiting.

That lack of support for Inuit-owned businesses is another barrier to creating a sustainable economy.

To be fair, the government is making investments in Nunavut; it's just doing it too slow. Too often the funding is spread over a number of years and that minimizes the impact in our communities.

The response to the housing crisis in Nunavut is an example. The federal National Housing Strategy allocated \$240-million over 10 years for Nunavut housing. But when you break that down, it works out to roughly 48 new houses per year for the entire territory.

That doesn't begin to address the current need, and we have a growing population. Right now, it's estimated that 38 per cent of Nunavummiut live in overcrowded conditions, and that's a contributing factor to our high rates of youth suicide, poverty, and tuberculosis.

Basic community infrastructure that is taken for granted in the South, like sports facilities, community centres, health-care, mental health, and social services facilities, are lacking or inadequate in many of our communities.

It's hard for Canadians in the South to imagine being without

internet access. Think about the impact that would have on education and local economies.

Well, one of the biggest barriers to building a sustainable economy in Nunavut is the lack of connectivity. A big opportunity exists to bring hydroelectric power and fibre-optic cable into one region of Nunavut for the first time. The Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link project has been talked about for years but, again, progress is moving at a snail's pace.

Nunavut has great potential for growth, but we need to build safe, healthy communities where families can thrive. We need infrastructure to support economic development. And too many critical issues are standing in the way of that.

If the government truly values its relationship with Indigenous people, we should be working together to find immediate solutions to these issues. Only then can we begin to build a sustainable economy for Nunavut.

Hunter Tootoo is the Independent Member of Parliament for Nunavut.

The Hill Times

The North Policy Briefing

Canada's North: Canada's future

If the government doesn't invest in infrastructure, education, and other long-term needs now, the gap between the 'have' South and the 'have-not' North will only grow.



Senator Patricia Bovey

Churchill rail line

Almost 40 per cent of Canada is north of the 60th parallel. Do Canadians in the South understand northern issues, or the riches of the North, its unique, fragile ecology and centuries of Inuit, Dene, and northern First Nations traditions?

The North is Canada's future. The Senate Special Committee on the Arctic is mandated to assess and address complex, interrelated northern issues: sovereignty, security, climate change, social realities, housing and health, digital infrastructure, education, mining, oil, language, culture, and more.

Last month, the committee travelled to Kuujuuaq, Que.;



The Winnipeg-Churchill train is seen at the Churchill railway station in 1997. The train, a vital supply link to the North, hasn't run for more than a year due to flood damage. Photograph courtesy of Peter Van den Bossche

Iqaluit, Baker Lake, Meadowbank, and Cambridge Bay, Nunavut; Yellowknife and Inuvik, N.W.T.; and Whitehorse, Yukon to understand how present realities and future opportunities and needs link, so appropriate policies and actions can ensure positive futures. The future must be made by the North, in the North, and for the North—and the North must be reachable.

The first step is to repair Churchill's rail line and deep-sea port in Manitoba, cut off on May 17, 2017 due to the flooded railway. The government's Sept. 14, 2018, announcement of \$117-million supporting the acquisition and repair of this rail line by the Arctic Gateway Group was critically important.

The group comprises Fairfax Financial Holdings, Regina-based AGT Limited Partnership, and Mississippi Rail Limited Partnership, involving the First Nations of the Mathias Colomb Cree, Fox Lake Cree, Opaskwayak Cree,

Tataskweyak Cree, War Lake First Nation, York Factory First Nation, Cross Lake Band of Cree Indians, and the Nisichawayashik Cree Nation. Municipalities serviced by the line are also involved.

Churchill Mayor Mike Spence said: "This is historic. I don't think there's another model out there in Canada that would fit into this equation. First Nations, communities and municipalities, and the private sector hand in hand with the Government of Canada. This will work, we are excited for the future."

Rail bed and bridge repairs, essential for all deliveries, tourism, the Churchill Northern Studies Centre's ongoing research and the Churchill Marine Observatory now under construction, are virtually complete. Certification should be in several weeks.

Then Churchill's railway, deep-sea port, and airport, originally a military airstrip, can again serve the whole Arctic and global markets.

The Arctic Committee is addressing the government's Arctic Policy Framework's six interlocked topics: comprehensive Arctic infrastructure; strong Arctic people and communities; strong, sustainable, and diversified Arctic economies; Arctic science and Indigenous knowledge; protecting the environment and conserving Arctic biodiversity; and the Arctic in a global context.

Climate change, mining, oil and gas exploration, and environmental concerns are especially complex. Stewardship of northern resources is imperative, balancing extraction and sales with the environment. Financial gains should be reinvested in the North, not solely profit international and southern corporations. Short- and long-term effects of rapid climate change, melting sea ice, and changes to sea life are overarching.

Marine species are being recorded further north than ever before. Mercury levels are rising with melting permafrost. The food chain is changing. What will result from rising sea levels and the projected demise of 40 coastal communities?

The opening of the Northwest Passage will increase international marine commercial traffic and tourism. Yet only a tiny fraction of Canada's Arctic Ocean coast is charted.

Russia and China have better knowledge of our seabeds than we do.

Increasing numbers of cruise ships give rise to opportunity and challenge. Icebreakers took several days to reach a grounded cruise ship this summer, rendering them unavailable to assist the once-a-year deliveries to remote communities like Cambridge Bay.

Compounding issues in the North include the lack of adequate housing; access to health care; mental health crises; substance abuse and suicide; employment; and inequitable access to education and training. Education and training are prerequisites in solving all these issues.

Several top high school graduates revealed they were lost academically and tested at a Grade 5 level when in southern post-secondary programs.

The link to housing is obvious. How can one do homework in a small house with three or more generations, or keep up with only slow dial-up internet or satellite technology?

Further, extracurricular sport and activity facilities are non-existent or insufficient.

Fibre-optic cables are critical for education, health care, business, and more. Northern per capita funding does not meet needs. Distances between communities are vast.

We must attend to these myriad concerns collaboratively, and tie scientific and Indigenous knowledge together, recognizing local residents' perspectives. Otherwise Canada will face serious regression. The gap between the "have" South and the "have-not" North will increase. All Canadians, north and south, will lose.

Patricia Bovey is an Independent Senator for Manitoba. She is deputy chair of the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic.

The Hill Times

Liberals' approach to the North is people-driven

I am most proud of our focus on those who are vulnerable, improving housing, and health.



Liberal MP Larry Bagnell

Social services

Our government's approach to the North is very much people-driven. Since coming into office in the fall of 2015, the government has made a substantial increase to the Northern Residents

Deduction, targeted the Canada Child Benefit to those who need it most, and changed the rules around the Canada Workers Benefit to make it more accessible.

All this is helping northerners with the high cost of living. I am very happy with the work being done to improve the lives of all Yukoners. But I'm most proud of our focus on those who are vulnerable.

Housing has always been one of the biggest issues facing the North. The federal government has taken a leadership role on this front, in November 2017 introducing the first-ever National Housing Strategy. This commitment includes \$300-million, as laid out in the 2017 budget, to help 3,000 northern families find affordable homes.

Yukoners have been fortunate to see several projects already start construction. From Whitehorse to Old Crow, affordable housing options are being built across the territory.

We are working with our partners in First Nation governments, and their development corporations, to not only boost the supply of houses in rural communities, but to also create jobs through construction and retrofits. In several communities, funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, through the Yukon Housing Corporation, is supporting First Nations like the Little Salmon Carmacks and Kluane in retrofitting existing units. This is revitalizing and modernizing older homes in these communities and improving the adequacy of housing options.

One project that broke ground in recent weeks presents a dual opportunity. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN), in Haines Junction, is constructing 10 tiny homes to provide housing to single individuals in precarious living situations. Often, affordable housing programs target families, and single individuals do not qualify.

As an additional benefit of the project, CAFN citizens will be trained to build the new houses as part of the Dän Ts'ānanān training program. The federal government's Skills and Partnership Fund is supporting this program. That means that the village of Haines Junction and the people of CAFN will not only have new housing options, they will have increased skilled-worker capacity.

In July, the governments of Canada and the Yukon signed a new \$30-million bilateral health care agreement. A key component of this new agreement is targeted funding to meet our governments' shared goal of supporting mental health and addiction services. The funding will be used to expand access to community-based mental health and addiction services for children and youth, as well as using models of community mental health care and culturally appropriate interventions, that are integrated with primary health services. To accomplish this, the Yukon government will be increasing the number of clinical counselling positions and the scope of mental health nurses.

Recently, Status of Women Minister Maryam Monsef announced a joint funding collaboration with the Yukon government to support three Indigenous women's organizations: the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, the Whitehorse

Aboriginal Women's Circle, and the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council. The combined funding of more than \$1.6-million will improve the capacity of these organizations to address systemic issue affecting Indigenous women in the Yukon. Canada will be providing \$867,500 over three years to support activities related to the development and implementation of strategic planning processes, organizational skills development, enhanced human resources, partnership and communications strategies, and other capacity-building activities. Women's groups across the North and the rest of Canada are run by small but dedicated staff groups who accomplish so much with finite resources. By supporting these organizations and the crucial work they do, we are empowering all Indigenous women in the Yukon.

The Yukon is thriving. The tourism sector has been seeing some of the highest visitation numbers ever, several mines are in development, and thanks in part to the historic federal infrastructure investments, month over month we are seeing some of the lowest unemployment in the country. But in times of growth and prosperity it is important that nobody is left behind. Our government is working hard to ensure that.

Larry Bagnell is the Liberal Member of Parliament for the Yukon.

The Hill Times

The North Policy Briefing

Clean electricity crucial for Northwest Territories

Making renewable energy available at competitive rates and providing for security of supply is essential to the well-being of N.W.T. residents, the economy, and our environment.



Liberal MP Michael McLeod

Infrastructure

In last year's *Hill Times* special policy edition on the North, I stated I was eagerly awaiting news on Canada's National Trade

Corridor's funding to begin to address our infrastructure gap, link our communities, and help bring down the cost of living and the cost of developing our resources and bringing them to market.

I was thrilled that the government of the Northwest Territories succeeded in its application and received \$102.5-million for just such a project. This funding supports key phases of the longer-term Mackenzie Valley Highway project.

Priority corridors in the N.W.T. include the continuation of the Mackenzie Valley Highway and better access into the Slave Geological Province. Other needed investments in transportation include lengthening runways to allow for larger planes to land, and providing for better transport of supplies into remote communities with limited or non-existent road access.

We must focus on decreasing our use of fossil fuels. Canada's clean-growth investments in the past three years approximate \$250-million for green infrastructure in the N.W.T. Our government is putting \$23-million towards families and businesses in the Northwest Territories to protect the environment and grow a clean economy by improving energy

efficiency in homes and buildings, and for forest regeneration.

Twenty-five of the N.W.T.'s 33 communities get their power from diesel generation stations. Making clean electricity available at competitive rates and providing for security of supply is essential to the well-being of N.W.T. residents, the economy, and our environment. Providing clean, non-carbon electricity would also result in a major reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Investment in renewable electricity generation should be a priority.

There are many potential hydro developments across the N.W.T. that have already had varying levels of research completed that could be developed in the next few years to allow for communities to come off or reduce significantly their diesel usage. These include Lutsel K'e mini-hydro project, La Martre hydro development, extending the transmission line to Fort Providence, and both large- and small-scale options in the Sahtu.

In addition to hydro development, work is being done on viable wind and solar options in the North. I look forward to seeing what potential this can bring into the mix of cleaner, greener power generation.



Yellowknife is home to these transmission towers at the Northwest Territories Power Corporation power plant. Twenty-five of the N.W.T.'s 33 communities currently get their power from diesel generation stations. Clean electricity would result in a major reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, says Liberal MP Michael McLeod. Photograph courtesy of WinterCity296

We still need to strive for political certainty in the N.W.T., which means settling and fully implementing land claims and self-government agreements where Aboriginal people are full partners in the development of their land. Finalizing these land claims will open up areas for new development and create certainty for Aboriginal people, for industry, and for governments.

No column written by me on northern development or policy would be complete without a mention of our need for investment in housing. This remains a critical piece: providing someone a home empowers them as individuals to build better lives for themselves. Overcrowding is a root cause of many of the North's social problems including addictions, sexual and elder abuse, and mental health issues. I look forward to the full roll-out of the National Housing

Strategy to help address the high core need for housing in the N.W.T.

Since my term as a Member of Parliament began three years ago, we have had significant investment in infrastructure but also in people, through the legacy Canada Child Benefit, multiple skills-training investments, and funding for mental health and home care as well as Indigenous languages. As we head in to our final year of this mandate, I am very satisfied with how we have positively affected the lives of northerners.

There always remains more work to do, and I sure hope we will be able to add to this growing list of accomplishments by becoming a major contributor in the fight against climate change in the near future.

Liberal Member of Parliament Michael McLeod represents the Northwest Territories.

The Hill Times

Canada's research capacity in the North lags other countries

We can't rely on American, Chinese, or Norwegian research to procure the scientific foundation on which to base the sustainable development of our North.



Leah Braithwaite, Louis Fortier

Research funding

The changing Arctic is a new frontier of scientific discovery, industrial development, and socio-economic innovation.

From China's plan for a Polar Silk Road to Norway's Nansen Legacy program on the Barents Sea and adjacent Arctic basin; from Rus-

sia's intense extraction of its Arctic resources to Canada's reconciliation with its Indigenous people; from the building worldwide of new research icebreakers to the recent Fairbanks treaty on enhancing international scientific co-operation in the North, the Arctic has become a defining global issue in the early 21st century. Both Arctic and non-Arctic countries increasingly require scientific information and local expertise on which to base decisions and policies that have global repercussions.

The rapid transformation of its northern territories, seas, and communities raises issues of strategic importance for Canada, and of vital consequence to northern residents including Inuit, First Nations, and Métis.

The Canadian Arctic Archipelago includes more than 35,000 islands, some among the largest in the world, as well as Baffin Bay and Hudson Bay, intra-continental seas, and vast continental Arctic and sub-Arctic land masses. Demographically, 51 small communities and a few larger agglomerations (Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Iqaluit, Inuvik) shelter 200,000 Canadian northerners, including about 73 per cent of the 65,025 (2016) Canadian Inuit. By comparison, four million people live in the rest of the circumpolar Arctic, mostly in large cities above the Arctic Circle in Russia, Alaska, and the Nordic countries.

Hence, in geographic terms at least, Canada is the Arctic country par excellence. And yet, Canada's Arctic remains underdeveloped. Economically, our share of the \$443-billion Arctic regional gross product in 2010 was a mere 1.6 per cent.

Socially, colonization in northern Canada has left deep scars and disparities relative to some other Arctic regions. Strategically, our Inuit Rangers are no match for the Arctic military might of Russia, the United States, and Europe. Scientifically, we are out of the Dark Ages of the 1980s and 1990s thanks to investments beginning in the early 2000s, but Canada's research capacity in the North lags that of small and large Arctic countries such as Norway and the United States, or even that of non-Arctic countries such as Germany and the United Kingdom.

Given the unique challenges facing Canada's Arctic, we cannot rely on American, Chinese, or Norwegian research to procure the scientific foundation on which to base the sustainable development of our North.

So how can Canada attain the research capacity crucially needed to inform the sustainable and environmentally responsible socio-economic development of its North?

First, both academic and governmental northern research efforts must be fuelled by regularly increasing funding. In 2000,

a report on the state of Canadian northern research commissioned by the main federal research councils clearly demonstrated that, given the difficult funding situation, Canada could not meet its national and international mandates in the study and stewardship of a rapidly changing Arctic.

Starting in 2004, the powerful combination of the trans-sectoral ArcticNet Network of Centres of Excellence and the research icebreaker CCGS Amundsen revitalized Canada's lacklustre research effort in the North by defragmenting the academic research community and partnering it with Inuit and the private and public sectors.

With the recent creation of Polar Knowledge Canada and the soon-to-be-inaugurated Canadian High Arctic Research Station, the opportunity now exists to expand the government-based research effort. The way forward is to progressively increase research capacity and funding in both academic and governmental northern programs, and to create as much synergy as possible between them.

Second, post-secondary training and research capacity must be developed in the North, by the North, and for the North. Both Inuit rights-holders and territorial authorities see a wanting education system as the root cause of the social underdevelopment of

the Canadian North. This demands changes to the Canadian research funding ecosystem that would allow northerners to build a post-secondary training and research capacity that respects their culture.

Third, northern industries must participate in the environmentally responsible and sustainable development of Canada's Arctic. Together, trans-Arctic shipping, ship-based tourism, fisheries, and mining (with ship-based transportation of ores) form a new and emerging Blue Economy in the Canadian Arctic.

From the mapping of the sea-floor and maritime hazards to market projections to assessing the environmental and social impacts of their activities to the development of new technologies, industry increasingly needs to inform strategic investments with scientific facts and northern expertise.

Canada's fiscal plate is likely too small to match the rapidly expanding northern research programs of Norway, China, the U.S., and several European countries. We have no choice but to integrate disconnected Canadian northern research efforts into a national approach if we are to meet our domestic and international duties in the stewardship of the changing Arctic. The country's vision should be that of a coordinated university-Indigenous-government-industry partnership towards the evidence-based sustainable development of northern Canada. Short of such a national concerted effort, Canada will no doubt miss the global Arctic train.

Louis Fortier is the scientific director of ArcticNet and Leah Braithwaite is its executive director.

The Hill Times

We must act now to maintain an Arctic able to keep global climate liveable

With its current emissions-reduction targets, Canada is not committed to keeping the Arctic cold enough to ensure the survival of the Inuit.



Green Party Leader Elizabeth May

Climate change

Human civilization, indeed the evolution of human beings as a species, has depended on a frozen Arctic. But the North Pole as a frozen ice cap on the top of the world is now in doubt. The rapidly melting Arctic—measured in loss of sea ice, melting permafrost, and temperature surges in mid-winter—is a threat to climate stability globally.

Scientists increasingly warn that the loss of summer sea ice is looming, and that even winter ice may disappear. In a Canadian context,



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president Natan Obed told a global climate summit last year about global temperature increases: '1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels is not only ambitious, but necessary for the survival of our people.' *The Hill Times photograph by Sam Garcia*

we have a passable Northwest Passage. Cruise ships have traversed it, yet we lack the essential infrastructure for emergencies, search and rescue equipment, and ports. Even the promised icebreakers are still undelivered. Canada's Arctic sovereignty requires attention.

Key to governance of the Arctic is the self-determination of Inuit peoples. Under existing agreements, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) represents people in control of territory comprising 35 per cent of Canada's land mass. However, the 60,000 Canadian Inuit have contributed inconspicuously to the massive changes threatening their homeland.

Natan Obed, president of ITK, is one of the most impressive people I have ever met. His is a clear and consistent voice for Inuit peoples. Anything said by a southern settler-culture Canadian about

the Arctic must be tempered by acknowledging Inuit sovereignty.

Development decisions belong to the peoples of the Arctic. But the threats posed to homes due to collapsing permafrost, the loss of hunting opportunities due to the lack of multi-year ice, and the threat to survival comes not from Inuit-led decisions, but from consumption of fossil fuels globally.

At global climate negotiations last November in Bonn, Germany, Obed said, "1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels is not only ambitious, but necessary for the survival of our people."

Holding global average temperature increases to no more than 1.5 degrees C (above the global average temperature before the Industrial Revolution) is the global Paris Agreement target. Canada's current target, developed under Stephen Harper's former govern-

ment, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, is far too weak to meet our fair share of that target. In other words, Canada is not committed to keeping the Arctic cold enough to ensure the survival of the Inuit, nor the stability of global climate systems.

The depth of permanent cold over the Arctic is what has maintained a global climate hospitable to humans. The jet-stream currents, those rapid rivers of atmosphere found at mid-latitude, were relatively stable and horizontal due to the temperature differential between a very cold Arctic and a very hot equator.

As the Arctic has warmed, the jet stream slowed into wavier loops sitting for a long time, creating long heat waves over vast areas adjacent to long rain events over others.

This winter, the polar vortex—the circle of polar winds that created a fortress of cold—virtually collapsed. The Arctic, which had received no sun in months, warmed 25 degrees C above what it would normally be. The Arctic cold was pushed south into Europe, driving fierce winter storms. Meanwhile, the melting of Arctic ice contributed to the slowing of the Gulf Stream. It is now 15 per cent slower than it was in 1950.

The imperative to keep the Arctic cold enough to prevent the melting of the permafrost is essential to human survival. If all the world's permafrost were

to melt, the release of methane would be equivalent to four times all the greenhouse gases released by human activity since the Industrial Revolution began. This would push us well above the tipping point into runaway global warming.

The reality is that we are no longer talking about climate change as a threat to future generations. We are talking about a threat to those alive now. In the House, MPs rail about the national debt that our children must repay, but forget the ecological debt that threatens their very existence.

The opportunity to hold the global average temperature to no more than a rise of 1.5 degrees C is closing rapidly. We have very few years to ensure the global course is set. By 2030, when Canada's current weak promise falls due, it will be too late to ramp up ambition to reach 1.5 degrees. That window of opportunity will have closed.

While it remains open, even a crack open, we must meet the obligations of leadership, heed the warnings of settler-culture scientists and wisdom from Indigenous knowledge and change course. We need to determine what steps we must take to keep the Arctic cold, and allow that firm resolve to drive all our decisions.

Elizabeth May is the leader of the Green Party of Canada and the Member of Parliament for Saanich-Gulf Islands, B.C.

The Hill Times

Canada's Arctic security efforts can't only be domestically focused

The potential for conflict between Russia and Canada's allies can't be forgotten among other priorities.



Julian Schofield

Defence

With climate change, Canada faces a variety of security issues in the Arctic. These include, most seriously, Canada's obligation to its allies in the event of a conflict with either Russia or China. A confrontation between

NATO and Russia could emerge over the Baltic States, the Suwalki Gap in Poland, the Ukraine, Georgia, or Syria. Or Russia may provide support to China in its conflict with the U.S. and its allies over the South China Sea, Taiwan, or North Korea. Though not to be exaggerated, this dimension of possible conflict is often forgotten amid other priorities.

The Arctic is a strategically salient region for energy extraction, most importantly for Russia's economy. Despite the density of Arctic railways in central-northern Siberia, oil and gas are most cost-effectively moved by tanker, both for exports and domestic consumption. China has also sought means by which to implement its Polar Silk Road with Russian assistance. This, the Northeastern Passage, runs along the Russian littoral. It takes seven days to traverse at 14 knots. In 2013, 15 tankers passed through its waters. Russian estimates are that there will be 300 tankers passing annually by 2020. For ships travelling between East Asia and Western Europe, the Northeastern Passage is 43 per

cent shorter than the Cape route and 25 per cent shorter than via the Suez Canal. Taiwan is at the point of indifference between the two shortest routes. By comparison, Canada's 4,500-kilometre long Northwest Passage is far less navigable, and the trans polar route will not be safely navigable for the foreseeable future.

To secure this complex, in 2015 Moscow embarked on an ambitious program to develop military capabilities in the Arctic. These include a division equivalent of specially equipped ground troops and Special Forces, 14 airfields, 16 deepwater ports, dozens of icebreakers, and the concentration of two-thirds of the Russian fleet. Russia has deployed sensors and its S-300 air defence system on the Arctic islands of Franz Josef Land, New Siberian Islands, Novaya Zemlya and Severnaya Zemlya.

However, geo-strategically, the Northeast access to the Arctic Ocean is easily plugged by the U.S. at the Bering Strait in Alaska at one end, and by NATO forces in the Norwegian Sea at the other end. Airbases in Norway give the closest access to the concen-

tration of Russian facilities at Murmansk and Archangelsk, and to the Barents Sea and its coastal shipping. It should be pointed out that none of the projected Russian bases are positioned or equipped to overcome these points of blockade. At best Russia could mount a bold, aerially delivered, company-sized raid against Canada's facility at Alert.

In the event of a crisis with Russia, the threat of blockade by NATO's control of the sea may become an important instrument of escalation dominance. However, none of Canada's recent efforts would contribute to this effort. The main challenge is that the distance from Canada to the Laptev Sea facing it on the Russian littoral, is immense. Almost all recent Canadian Armed Forces operations, like Operation Boxtop (re-supplying Alert) or Operation Nunaliut (Sovereignty Patrols) are defensively focused on Canada's archipelago. Canada has six icebreakers, but its Victoria class submarines do not operate effectively beneath the ice, and none of its 15 projected Type 26 Frigates will have hardened hulls.

By comparison, Denmark, which operates its navy in both the Baltic and off Greenland, has had half of the hulls in its fleet strengthened to withstand the Arctic ice. However, the extreme cold, fog, long nights, ice sheets and wandering ice, absence of reliable telecommunications and navigation aids, high fuel consumption, difficulties of anti-submarine warfare, make the Arctic mostly inaccessible for the principal craft of any fleets until century's end.

Canada can respond with three policies. First, upgrade one or two airfields into developed airbases for maritime reconnaissance aircraft en route to the Northeast Passage (such as at Alert), and perhaps a single base for support of allied nuclear submarines (possibly at Nanisivik). The bases, though costly, would dovetail with sovereignty and surveillance objectives. Second, prepare for further military support to northern Norway, consistent with Cold War commitments. Third, consider long-term investments in platforms that can operate in an Arctic environment in addition to normal Canadian conditions, such as nuclear-propulsion submarines, modern maritime surveillance reinforced-hull minesweepers, and armed icebreakers.

Julian Schofield is an associate professor in the department of political science at Concordia University.

The Hill Times

The North Policy Briefing

When it comes to food security in the North, Inuit need a seat at the table

Canada cannot dictate to the North what healthy and nutritious food is as it reforms Nutrition North Canada.



Conservative Senator Dennis Patterson

Food security

No one can survive without food. That is why I was not surprised to learn that Inuit left the federal government's Indigenous Working Group on food security, nor was I surprised by the comments made by Shylah Elliott, a health policy analyst for Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI), who called the working group "tokenism and optics" during an

interview with CBC on Oct. 19.

I happened to sit in on a working group in Kuujuaq, the capital of Nunavik, an Inuit land claim area located in northern Québec, and can attest to the claim that Nutrition North Canada (NNC) officials had trouble grasping the issues being discussed by Inuit and other northern stakeholders. Whenever I have discussed the issue, the message that I have received loud and clear is that Inuit want food security, something enjoyed by the majority of southerners, and they want to be able to enjoy more of their traditional foods, known as country food.

I had the opportunity to discuss this topic earlier this year with Graeme Dargo, a partner of Dargo and Associates consulting firm, which reviewed the Food Mail Program that NNC would eventually replace. The review and report was tabled in August 2008. Mr. Dargo found that although the Food Mail Program was necessary for access to affordable and nutritious foods, he believed the program had lost its focus and "vastly exceed[ed] the budget available," further predicting that "the current program costs will continue to soar and with limited program performance results."

He had made several recommendations, including that the eligibility

criteria for communities and foods or goods be re-evaluated, that management systems be put in place to provide retailers with compensation for the subsidies they would provide, that the base budget of \$27.6-million be revised, and that a market-based system be introduced and replaced with a new delivery model co-created in partnership with northern retailers.

Mr. Dargo discussed an interesting concept that he had originally proposed but that had not received much traction:

what if the cost of basic food items such as milk, eggs, and so forth be subsidized in a way that ensured prices were consistent throughout all communities under the program? It would be a subsidy that enabled a litre of milk, for instance, to cost the same in Nain, Labrador, and Grise Fiord, Nunavut, with prices comparable to those in southern Canada.

I find this particular concept very appealing.

I also hosted a roundtable in April 2018 that brought together small, independent northern retailers to discuss their experiences with the NNC program. Additionally, I had conversations and received submissions from communities, local Hunter and Trappers Organizations, and NTI, the organization that represents Inuit beneficiaries of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.



Members of the Senate's Special Arctic Committee, chaired by Dennis Patterson, went on a fact-finding mission in the North in September to hear from people on the ground. Photograph courtesy of the Senate of Canada

Many common

themes emerged from these discussions and inspired me to table my own recommendations for change with the federal government. These recommendations were submitted to the minister's office and I intend to continue to push for the change that those I have spoken with describe

as the way forward.

Retailers have asked me to push for changes such as a set freight rate based on consultations with all retailers, unannounced inspections of retailers to ensure program compliance, the revision of guide-

lines to enable fresh meat from reputable butchers to be brought up, that more funding and support for consumer awareness be put in place and that capacity support and funding for smaller retailers be made available to counter the bureaucratic burden placed on them.

Meanwhile, Inuit that I have engaged with have identified a new approach that is primarily focused on recognizing the traditional and preferred diet of Inuit and Indigenous peoples in the North, and ensuring that all policies on health and nutrition are designed to support sustainable hunting and harvesting.

I have heard time and time again that Canada cannot dictate to the North what healthy and nutritious food is. Inuit need to be at the table to help develop the food baskets that make sense to them and no program imposed on the North, without this kind of input, will be successful at addressing food insecurity.

To read my full report with recommendations, please visit: www.dennispatterson.ca

Nunavut Conservative Senator Dennis Patterson is chair of the Senate's Special Arctic Committee. He is a former premier of the Northwest Territories.

The Hill Times

Don't squander the chance for Arctic Policy Framework to be a gamechanger for Inuit

For too long, Inuit have suffered from incremental change that ultimately led to the management of poverty, rather than its elimination.



Natan Obed

Arctic Policy Framework

Inuit welcomed the Government of Canada's announcement in December 2016 that it would co-develop a new Arctic Policy Framework (APF) with Inuit, replacing Canada's 2009 Northern Strategy and the 2010 Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy. The inclusion of Inuit in the announcement as co-development

partners signalled that there could be a potential shift by the Government of Canada from a paternalistic and colonial approach to developing and implementing Arctic policy to one that respects Inuit self-determination and is inclusive of the priorities identified by the region's majority Inuit population.

The APF will also serve a critical function in redefining Canada's foreign policy, to recognize Inuit rights, interests and relationships across the circumpolar Arctic. As an international region of growing strategic importance, Inuit are seeking to work with Canada to ensure Canadian sovereignty, sustainability, and economic prosperity across the circumpolar Arctic.

We envision the APF as a critical exercise in recognition and nation building, whereby Inuit Nunangat—the Inuit homeland—is finally brought into Canada from the geographic, political, and economic margins of society. Inuit Nunangat encompasses nearly one-third of Canada's landmass and half of its coastline, and creating prosperity in the region is necessary to enhance national security and sovereignty amidst growing international interest and activity in the region.

The federal government has a

unique opportunity through the APF to redefine Canada's relationship with the Arctic: moving from an underdeveloped region in Canada to a thriving, diverse and inclusive region. Realizing the potential of the Arctic requires transformative approaches to policy and program development, an unprecedented investment in Arctic development and coordination between provincial and territorial governments and Inuit.

Inuit are working to develop an Inuit Nunangat chapter for the APF, which outlines the joint policy priorities of Canada and of Inuit. The inclusion of an Inuit Nunangat chapter in the document is the most efficient and impactful way to ensure that Inuit priorities are clearly defined and reflected in the APF and, most importantly, guide future investments and activity in our homeland. Furthermore, the APF should build upon advances made by other federal departments to implement an Inuit Nunangat policy that recognizes Inuit Nunangat as a distinct political, geographic, and cultural region.

The application of an Inuit Nunangat policy through the APF is necessary to delineate Inuit as a rights-holding Indigenous people who, by population and territory, occupy the majority of the Arctic

territory in Canada. Applying an Inuit Nunangat policy in practical terms respects our right to self-determination and is premised on the fact that Inuit are the most knowledgeable about the issues affecting our communities and society, possess the greatest incentive to address those issues, and are best positioned to develop and advance innovative solutions for our people.

The past three federal budgets have applied an Inuit Nunangat policy by allocating funding directly to Inuit representative organizations and governments' service delivery agents. Doing so creates efficiency, cost savings, and more-immediate positive impacts and benefits for Inuit that in turn benefit all Canadians. Most recently, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, along with the Canadian Coast Guard, applied an Inuit Nunangat policy when they jointly announced with Inuit, on Oct. 24, the creation of a new Arctic administrative region, marking a milestone shift in formalizing this important policy approach.

The potential success of the APF for Inuit will be determined in large part by the department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs' ability to develop a transformative policy framework, capable of leading to

a renewed Arctic. For too long, Inuit have suffered from incremental approaches devised by government departments, which ultimately lead to the management of poverty, rather than its elimination. Such incremental approaches have led to the widening of gaps in social and economic outcomes between Inuit Nunangat and the rest of Canada.

The APF has the potential to bring Inuit Nunangat into Canada, thereby helping to create prosperity for its citizens that in turn benefits all Canadians. The sharp divide between Inuit Nunangat and most other parts of Canada has for decades demanded urgent action and investment to remedy what can only be achieved through serious and concerted federal action and investment. The outcomes of our work on the APF with federal and provincial/territorial governments over the coming months, whose focus is the future of our homeland, will determine whether Inuit truly have entered into a new era based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, and partnership.

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