2.5 The Emerging Arctic Security Environment (Arctic Security)

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ABSTRACT

Climate change is fundamentally reshaping the Arctic region. Boundary disputes, newly viable transportation routes, access to resources, and governance issues have generated significant questions about Arctic security and circumpolar geopolitics in the twenty-first century. Anticipating future prospects for competition, conflict and cooperation in the region requires a systematic examination of the new forces at play, both internationally and domestically. Our project examines the fundamental questions: what is Arctic security? What should policy makers anticipate that the circumpolar world will look like in the future, given the various forces that are now transforming this region? These questions will be posed at the international and national levels to discern what senior government officials, indigenous groups, corporate interests, scientists, academics, and Northern residents perceive to be the most significant security and safety challenges in the Arctic, and to determine what unilateral, bilateral and multilateral mechanisms should be in place to address them. This project will make two primary contributions: one policy focused and the other academic. First it will add to the public policy debate about the evolving Arctic security environment. Our research team will critically assess the interplay between traditional, state-based military security and environmental, health, and societal security concerns. Our development of future scenarios – based upon a robust knowledge of past decision-making processes and practices, Northerner’s experiences and priorities, and scientific modelling about climate change in the region – will facilitate responsible policy development. In linking international and domestic security practices to human impacts, we will generate more integrated tools to anticipate the consequences of security action/inaction on Northern ecosystems and peoples. This will improve Canada’s capacity to deal with external challenges in a way that is sensitive to, and better integrates, Northerners’ concerns and priorities. Second this project will advance the academic debates about how best to understand the relationship between environmental, political, and socio-economic processes that are changing ideas about Arctic security. Community consultations will ground our analyses of how the changing geopolitics of the Arctic will impact Northerners’ culture, well-being, and economies. We will refine existing frameworks and models to incorporate the complexity of these new forces, better explain the actions that are now being taken, and generate appropriate lessons for future relationship-building.

KEY MESSAGES

- The complexity of the changing Arctic security environment requires an interdisciplinary approach (history, political science, law, geography, etc.) that blends realist, liberal internationalist, and constructivist approaches.

- Developing the right Canadian Arctic foreign, defence and security policies (including confidence-building measures in the region) and translating them into appropriate facilities, equipment and practices requires a long lead time that is not factored into most academic discussions. Our assessments consider current priorities and future scenarios (up to 2025 and beyond).

- Northern communities’ understandings of security are not limited to the national security/military dimension. Through collaborative research with Northern communities and shared work with the Munk-Gordon Arctic Security project, we explore “best practices” that incorporate various dimensions of security and balance national defence and security imperatives with community development priorities.

OBJECTIVES

- to examine the interplay between sovereignty and security practices in Canada and in other Arctic states since the Cold War. What opportunities exist for cooperation and confidence-building in the region? Should policy makers also anticipate future conflict in the Arctic, and if so how should
they best prepare for probable and possible contingencies?

- To analyze the drivers behind Arctic and non-Arctic states’ security interests in the Arctic and to develop policy recommendations for the federal government so that it can promote Canada’s national interests with an awareness of how they align with those of other actors

- To critically investigate historical and contemporary military activities in the Canadian Arctic and what these have meant to Northern communities through documentary and oral history research.

- To facilitate better decision-making and policymaking on defence and security issues through a more robust understanding of best practices, including how military activities can support the lifestyles, traditions, and values of Canadians living in remote regions.

**Project Milestones**

- Edited volume (Lackenbauer) on Arctic Security: Historical Perspectives, Calgary Papers (CMSS and University of Calgary Press), published in 2011

- Monograph (Huebert, Lackenbauer, and Franklin Griffiths) on Arctic Sovereignty, Security and Stewardship: Canadian Perspectives (published by WLU Press in November 2011)

- Various books (Lackenbauer) on the Canadian Rangers, including a monograph on The Canadian Rangers: A Living History, 1942-2012 (accepted by UBC Press, recipient of ASPP funding, to be released in Feb./Mar. 2013); the edited book Canada’s Rangers: Selected Stories, 1942-2012 (Canadian Defence Academy Press, forthcoming 2012); and the edited book The Canadian Rangers: The CF’s Eyes, Ears, and Voice in Remote Regions (Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, In Harm’s Way series. to be submitted August 2012).

- Edited volumes on The Canadian Air Force’s Experience in the Arctic (Trenton: Canadian Aerospace Power Studies Series, Canadian Forces Air Warfare Centre, forthcoming 2012, edited by Lackenbauer and Major W.A. March), the navy in the Arctic (Huebert and Lackenbauer), and army activities in the Arctic (Lackenbauer and Kikkert).

- Conference on Arctic Peoples and Security, held in collaboration with the Munk-Gordon Arctic Security project in January 2013. Lackenbauer is the co-chair of the Arctic Peoples and Security pillar of this research program.

- Dissemination of research findings at Canadian and international conferences. (ongoing)

- Author and co-author scholarly articles and book chapters, as well as op-ed and shorter policy examinations for newspapers and magazines (ongoing)

- Maintaining a website that charts Arctic foreign and defence policies and activities in the region (ongoing)

**INTRODUCTION**

In the last five years the issue of Arctic Security has developed as one of the most important questions in the international system. Mixed messages from journalists, academics, and government officials predict both conflict and cooperation in the region. On the one hand, talk abounds of “a new Cold War” tied to a supposed “race for resources,” an international scramble to claim the riches of a newly accessible region, and the buildup of military capabilities for Arctic operations. On the other hand, the governments of the Arctic coastal states suggest an era of enhanced cooperation rooted in international law and respect for sovereign rights.

This research project interrogates the underlying premises of emerging Arctic security issues. What should policy makers anticipate that the circumpolar world will look like in the future, given the various forces transforming this region? How do we measure processes of conflict and the processes of cooperation? By posing these questions at the international and national levels
to discern what senior government officials, indigenous groups, corporate interests, scientists, academics, and Northern residents perceive to be the most important sovereignty, security and safety challenges in the Arctic, our research team seeks to determine what unilateral, bilateral and multilateral mechanisms should be in place to address them.

Our project complements the ArcticNet projects on “Climate Change and Commercial Shipping Development in the Arctic” and “The Law and Politics of Canadian Jurisdiction on Arctic Ocean Seabed.”

**ACTIVITIES**

Archival research was conducted by Whitney Lackenbauer in Ottawa and Yellowknife and by Peter Kikkert in Ottawa, Inuvik, and Washington, DC. This related to projects on Canadian concepts of Arctic sovereignty and security during the Cold War; Canadian-American relations related to Arctic issues; and the impacts of security projects on Northern peoples and ecosystems.

Field research with the Canadian Rangers was carried out by Peter Kikkert in the Mackenzie Valley and western Arctic (in conjunction with JTFN), Cambridge Bay (in partnership with 1 CRPG), and Resolute; and by Harry Borlase in Goose Bay, Makkovik, and Hopedale, Labrador (in partnership with 5 CRPG). Lackenbauer also continues to work closely with the Canadian Rangers across Canada.

Lackenbauer conducted interviews with military officials and senior Arctic officials in Canada, the United States, and Europe. He also advised various government departments and the Canadian Forces on Arctic security issues, appeared on several television and radio programmes, and was frequently interviewed for newspaper and magazine articles about Northern sovereignty and security topics.

Suzanne Lalonde’s research into the legal challenges which confront the Arctic region was conducted principally by an in-depth analysis of the primary documents produced at the national level (principally within Canada and the United States), at the regional level (with an emphasis on the work of the Arctic Council and the OSPAR Commission) and at the international level (in respect to the development of the concept of marine protected areas).

Her field work, as a legal academic, consisted in conducting interviews and initiating discussions with officials and experts from around the world. Taking advantage of a prolonged stay in Australia, Suzanne Lalonde was able to discuss Australia’s initiative at the International Maritime Organization in regards to the protection of the Torres Strait with various officials in government but also the Australian legal community. A major international conference in Wollongong also afforded the opportunity of discussing the sensitive question of the Torres Strait with experts from countries opposed to the Australian measures.

This research pattern was repeated throughout the year. While an investigation of official documents provides the raw material for her research, Suzanne Lalonde gains critical insights into the key issues and priorities of the Arctic States and those beyond the region through her participation in international workshops and conferences.

For personal reasons, Rob Huebert had to postpone most of his research trips planned for 2011-12 to 2012-13. Nevertheless, he continued to meet with policymakers and academics at domestic and international academic conferences, and he was actively engaged in public outreach activities through the media and speaking engagements. He also supervised graduate students working on Arctic security topics.

**RESULTS**

**The International Dimension (lead: Rob Huebert)**

Although many of the travel plans for 2011-12 associated with the International Dimension were put on hold
for a year owing to personal reasons, Rob Huebert’s publications continue to examine the international militarization/securitization of the circumpolar north, and its implications for Canada. Although media coverage continues to adopt the frame of an “Arctic race,” most academic assessments and official northern strategy documents emphasize cooperation rather than conflict. Huebert cautions that, while cooperation is desirable, ongoing investments by the Arctic states in advanced military capabilities, coupled with growing interest in Arctic resources and transit routes by non-Arctic actors, may heighten competition. Furthermore, Huebert identifies how the Arctic remains a key geostrategic theatre for Russian and American deterrence, and postulates how non-Arctic conflicts may spill over into the Arctic in the future.

Over the past year, the research team continued to consult with (and advise) senior political bureaucratic and military officials in the eight Arctic states, as well as non-Arctic stakeholders, international organizations, and private sector interests.

ArcticNet funding has helped to facilitate a wide array of publications, conference papers, public lectures, editorials in national and regional newspapers, television and radio interviews, and meetings with government decision-makers. To give a few examples, Suzanne Lalonde was invited to participate in a round-table discussion with Réal Brisson, Captain of HMCS Montreal about the challenges facing the Canadian Navy in the Arctic in March 2011. She also participated, along with Huebert, in an international gathering of government and academic experts from the five Arctic coastal States in Fairbanks, Alaska in July 2011. This meeting produced a set of recommendations for the future governance of the Arctic Ocean beyond national jurisdiction. All three researchers also participated in the third wrap-up conference of the International Polar Year, held in Montreal at the end of April 2012.

Lalonde also collaborated with political geographer Clive Schofield at the University of Wollongong in Australia and obtained a research development grant from SSHRC for a project contrasting Canadian and Australian policies in regards to a strategic strait under their jurisdiction: the Northwest Passage and the Torres Strait.

Lackenbauer met with various scholars and officials from Europe and Asia during conferences in Reykjavik and Nuuk, laying the groundwork for closer collaboration on opportunities for enhanced bilateral cooperation as well as a comparative studies on the development of Arctic security policies. He has published short commentaries on security questions and the Arctic Council, and presented his insights on Canada’s security relationships with other Arctic states at various academic, policy, and defence events in Canada and the United States.

In this past year, James Manicom’s specific work on “Overlapping Claims to the Arctic Seabed: Lessons from East Asia’s Maritime Disputes” yielded five papers for peer-reviewed journals, numerous opinion pieces and eight conference papers. He was invited to present his work to the Canadian Forces College, the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, Temple University in Tokyo, the Ocean Policy Research Foundation in Tokyo, the US Naval War College, the Liu Institute at UBC, and the Asian Institute at the University of Toronto.

The Domestic Dimension (lead: Whitney Lackenbauer)

One of the key elements in our project is to systematically analyze and debate the relationship between sovereignty, security and safety in Canadian political discourse and policy.

This dimension of our research plan was exemplified this past year in Lackenbauer and Huebert’s book Canada and the Changing Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Stewardship, co-authored with Franklyn Griffiths. The authors grapple with fundamental questions about how Canada should craft a responsible and effective
Northern strategy. They outline diverse paths to achieving sovereignty, security, and stewardship in Canada’s Arctic and in the broader circumpolar world. This book should inspire continued debate on what Canada must do to protect its interests, project its values, and play a leadership role in the twenty-first century Arctic. It also includes forewords by Senator Hugh Segal and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and of National Defence Bill Graham.

Historical aspects of this subject area were also analyzed in two edited volumes: The Canadian Air Force’s Experience in the Arctic, part of the Canadian Aerospace Power Studies Series published by the Canadian Forces Air Warfare Centre, which Lackenbauer co-edited with Major W.A. March (in translation, forthcoming June 2012), and Canada and Arctic Sovereignty and Security: Historical Perspectives, edited by Lackenbauer for the Calgary Papers in Military and Strategic Studies series which was published in 2011 (e-version available online at http://cpmss.synergiesprairies.ca/cpmss/index.php/cpmss/issue/current). These books include a wide range of perspectives on diplomatic, military, and socio-cultural issues related to Arctic security practices.

The recent flurry of scholarship on Arctic sovereignty and security often marginalizes the place of relationships and memory in Northern responses to southern sovereignty and security agendas. To address this shortcoming, we have partnered with Northern stakeholders to critically examine the historic and contemporary practice of Arctic sovereignty and security assertion in evolving cultural, political and spatial contexts. For example, Lackenbauer and Kikkert visited Cambridge Bay in February 2011 to develop research plans with the Kitikmeot Heritage Society for a pilot project on community history, emphasizing relationships with the military.

Lackenbauer’s completion of a major monograph entitled The Canadian Rangers: A Living History, which has been favourably peer reviewed and will appear with UBC Press in early 2013, will stimulate further dialogue on this particular (and unique) relationship between Northerns and the Canadian Forces (CF). So will forthcoming edited books on Canada’s Rangers: Selected Stories, 1942-2012 and The Canadian Rangers: The CF’s Eyes, Ears, and Voice in Remote Regions (contracted by the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute for the In Harm’s Way book series which will be submitted this summer).

This past year, various research team members met with CF officials to discuss strategic planning issues. They disseminate research findings at policy related conferences, most notably a workshop on The Defence of Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security: The Role of the Canadian Forces, organized in partnership with the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies and Canada Command, held in Calgary on 25 March 2011.

**Media and Public Outreach**

ArcticNet funding this past year facilitated a wide array of publications, conference papers, public lectures, editorials in national and regional newspapers, television and radio interviews, and meetings with government decision-makers. For example, presentations by Lackenbauer and Lalonde included:

**Keynote Addresses**


Conference papers


Lalonde, « Claims to an Extended Continental Shelf by the Arctic Coastal States. » Paper at the 10th anniversary conference celebrating the partnership between the Faculty of Law of the University of Montreal and the School of International Law of the China University of Political Science and Law, 9 November 2011.


Huebert, “Canada, Europe and the Defence of the Arctic: Partners or Competitors?” Conference - The Eu-


Huebert, “Canada’s Defense Security and the Arctic: what has been done and where is Canada going?” Conference – Canada’s Arctic Policies and Strategies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, September 16, 2011.


Huebert, “Understanding the new arctic: Canada and The Emerging security regime: The Strategic Dimension of Canada’s North,” briefing to the Canadian Coast Guard, Calgary, July 4, 2011.


Lackenbauer and Huebert also participated in a morning seminar roundtable for parliamentarians on “Canada’s Arctic Challenges,” hosted by the Library of Parliament, on 17 February 2011.

Lalonde also participated in a workshop organized by Network investigator Michael Byers which brought together a group of law of the sea experts to discuss
various issues relating to the general theme of the meeting: “Resolving Arctic Boundary Disputes”, Salt Spring Island, B.C., 11-13 March 2011. She also participated in an international workshop hosted by the University of Fairbanks, Alaska: “The Arctic Ocean Beyond National Jurisdiction”, 24-28 July 2011. She was assigned to the international law group and, with colleagues from the Arctic coastal States, drafted a set of recommendations for the future governance of the Arctic marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. She was also invited to take part in a round-table, organized by the Observatoire de la politique et la sécurité de l’Arctique, at the Université du Québec à Montréal with Captain Réal Brisson (Montreal frigate) on 12 May 2011.

DISCUSSION

International Dimension

Arctic melting driven by climate change is reshaping the geopolitics of the far North, and as governments respond with steps such as rebuilding their military capabilities, multilateral mechanisms must be strengthened to head off potential conflicts. Climate Change and International Security: The Arctic as a Bellwether, a major report produced by a team led by Rob Huebert and released in early 2012, examined a recent spate of Arctic-related announcements and actions by circumpolar states, including the United States, Canada, Russia and several European countries. The emerging security issues in the Arctic, it concludes, could foreshadow climate change’s broader influence on geopolitics globally in the post-Cold War era.

Temperatures are rising in the Arctic at about twice the global rate, and the decline in summer sea ice over the past decade is outpacing scientists’ projections. The rapid melting is driving increased interest in new and expanded shipping routes, oil and gas exploration, and Arctic fisheries. In the five years since Russia planted its flag at the North Pole, Arctic states have issued a string of major policy announcements and begun reassessing and rebuilding their military capabilities in the region. “The repositioning we see in the Arctic clearly demonstrates that climate change presents not only huge environmental and economic challenges, but national security challenges as well,” said Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) President Eileen Clausen, formerly Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and Senior Director for Global Environmental Affairs at the National Security Council. “These emerging Arctic issues are unfortunately just a preview of the kinds of security challenges we’ll see more of as the world warms.”

Building upon his previous analyses of countries’ announcements and actions since 2008, Huebert found that while all support the goal of maintaining cooperative relations in the region, several have also made clear that they intend to defend their national interests there if necessary. In policy statements, as well as multilateral actions and agreements, the Arctic countries have demonstrated a sincere desire for the region to be developed cooperatively and peacefully, the report says. For example, in the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, the five coastal Arctic states—Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States—agreed to settle any territorial disputes under accepted principles of international law as they seek to extend their claims to Arctic territory.

On the other hand (and in contrast to the dominant academic viewpoint espoused by scholars like Oran Young, Lawson Brigham, Franklyn Griffiths, Whitney Lackenbauer, and others), Huebert and his co-authors observe that some countries are rebuilding military forces far beyond “constabulary” needs, such as policing waterways, and others are drawing up plans to do so. For example, Russia plans to build several new nuclear-powered submarines for fast attack or nuclear missile launch missions, and the Norwegian Air Force has announced plans to acquire 48 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. “Consequently,” the report says, “if political cooperation in the region should sour, most of the Arctic nations will have forces that are prepared to compete in a hostile environment.”

One potential source of tensions is access to shipping routes through the Northwest Passage, through the Ca-
To keep relations from veering toward conflict, the report calls for countries to move quickly to strengthen existing multilateral mechanisms. As a first step, it recommends that the Arctic Council, which includes all of the Arctic states, reconsider its existing prohibition on discussing military security issues. Otherwise, it warns, smaller groupings may emerge, and countries left out may feel threatened. As another example, the report cites support by the Department of Defense for U.S. ratification of the Law of the Sea treaty, which provides a framework for resolving issues such as the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Arctic. “The Arctic is a true bellwether on climate-related security issues,” said lead author Huebert. “Arctic states should act quickly to reinforce multilateral mechanisms before resource competition and core national interests take center stage. And other countries should watch closely to learn from our successes or failures in managing this new breed of security challenge.”

More generally, Lackenbauer suggests that a formal security dialogue would have dramatic institutional implications. For example, if national security issues dominate the agenda, the voices of Permanent Participants would be marginalized. “The Arctic Council is a successful, creative, and flexible experiment that has rightfully become the primary forum for Arctic cooperation – but it is not a panacea for all Arctic challenges,” he concludes. “In its current form, the Council continues to improve our awareness of soft security and safety issues facing the Arctic and its peoples. Pushing to broaden its mandate to include hard security issues, however, risks setting it up to fail.” Unlike most Canadian academics, Lackenbauer envisions an ongoing role for the five coastal states (the Arctic-5) to work directly on some Arctic Ocean issues. In Canada’s case, he asserts that a multi-layered approach is appropriate for a country that has to balance domestic, continental, circumpolar, and global interests.

In addition to these debates, the research team is actively developing a research focus on Asian security interests in the Arctic. In addition to secondary literature reviews, interviews with key stakeholders, workshop and conference participation, and media monitoring, we are comparing how East Asian and Arctic states respond to maritime boundary disputes (with reference to cooperation and confrontation). James Manicom, for example, is investigating the relationship between domestic actors (“Arctic constituencies”) in Canada and the government. Although the East Asian experience suggests that these actors can tie the hands of policymakers, this
does not appear to be the case in Canada. The absence of “an anti-other” legitimizing narrative in Canada prevents such an eventuality. Problematically, the government has at times indicated the beginnings of such a narrative, with a potentially adverse effect on cooperation. As a product of emerging research opportunities (including collaboration with the “Climate Change and Commercial Shipping Development in the Arctic” project), our research has expanded to include interactions between South and East Asian states and Arctic states.

**Domestic Dimension**

Canada boasts the world’s longest coastline, and most of it is in the Arctic. It has extensive jurisdiction and sovereign rights in the region, which it sees as a resource frontier, a homeland for its northern peoples, and a source of national identity. Uncertainty over climate change, international interest in Arctic resources, undefined continental shelf boundaries, potentially viable maritime transportation routes (particularly the Northwest Passage which Canada considers its internal waters, not an international strait), and perceived sovereignty and security threats make Canadians keen observers of geopolitical dynamics related to the Arctic and what these mean for their foreign, defence, and domestic policies.

At the highest political levels, the Canadian government has intertwined sovereignty issues with strong rhetoric asserting Canada’s status as an “Arctic superpower.” On the one hand, the Conservative government of Stephen Harper adopts provocative rhetoric, proclaiming that it will “stand up for Canada” based on the idea that “use it or lose it is the first principle of sovereignty.” It has adopted a sovereignty-security framework as a pretext to generate domestic support for investments in Canadian Forces capabilities and to defend its jurisdiction.

For all the attention that hard-line rhetoric generates in the media and in academic debates, this discourse is only one part of a more complex picture. A more positive and constructive message emerges from Canada’s official Northern Strategy and Arctic foreign policy documents released since 2009. These documents emphasize confidence in Canada’s sovereignty position and the need to improve the social and economic well-being of northern residents; promise to advance measures for environmental protection and sustainable development; and commit to enhance internal governance and mechanisms of multilateral cooperation. It is this dual messaging – emphasizing sovereignty, national security, and national interests, as well as international cooperation and stewardship – that reveals Canada’s complex perspective and position on Arctic issues.

Canada’s historic and ongoing dilemma is how to balance sovereignty, security and stewardship in a manner that protects and projects national interests and values, promotes sustainable development and healthy communities, and facilitates circumpolar stability and cooperation. This remains the centrepiece of the academic debate in Canada, which is encapsulated in the respective viewpoints of Rob Huebert and Whitney Lackenbauer. Their chapters in James Kraska’s edited book Arctic Security in an Age of Climate Security, published by Cambridge University Press in 2011, are a case in point. Huebert emphasizes that, although the post-Ilulisaat political discourse in Canada has explicitly emphasized circumpolar cooperation and faith in legal frameworks to resolve disputes, senior politicians’ statements and defence planning continue to intimate potential conflict. Lackenbauer, by contrast, sees no inherent contradiction between investments in improved Arctic military capabilities and an unfolding “Arctic Saga” rooted in cooperation. Balancing an Arctic security agenda with domestic imperatives to improve the quality of life of Northerners, and converting a broad strategy into deliverables that produce a more constructive and secure circumpolar world, are real challenges facing Canada in the twenty-first century Arctic. Although the deep cuts announced in recent federal budgets have not hit core Arctic defence and security projects, the question lingers about whether the government will carry through on its plans. Much will depend upon public support for the government’s Northern Strategy, and the project team continues to gauge public opinion about Arctic sovereignty and security and how this informs policy implementation.
One clear success story is the Canadian Rangers, who are popularly recognized as the Canadian Forces’ “eyes and ears” in remote regions. Lackenbauer, who has been researching the Canadian Rangers over the past decade, observes in his groundbreaking research that they represent an important success story for the Canadian Forces as a flexible, inexpensive, and culturally inclusive means of having “boots on the ground” to exercise Canadian sovereignty and conduct or support domestic operations. As a bridge between cultures and between the civilian and military realms, the Rangers have evolved to represent a successful integration of national security and sovereignty agendas with community-based activities and local stewardship. This practical partnership, rooted in traditional knowledge and skills, promotes cooperation, communal and individual empowerment, and cross-cultural understanding. It is a positive civil-military and inter-cultural “success story” that, in his view, deserves to be better known. His three forthcoming books on the Rangers, which will appear in print over the next year, are designed to reach academic, popular, and policy audiences respectively. They will be the only major publications to date on the Rangers that are not merely travelogues by journalists tagging along on a single Ranger patrol.

Another primary goal of our multidisciplinary research team is to critically interrogate past sovereignty and security practices in the Arctic to better discern trends that inform current and future decision-making. Historians Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert continue to correct what, in their view, is a problematic narrative suggesting that the Canada-United States relationship in the Arctic has been mainly conflictual. Their research findings suggest the opposite. Their chapter “Sovereignty and Security: Canadian Diplomacy, the United States, and the Arctic, 1943-68” argues that Canadian policy makers, particularly in the Department of External Affairs, did an admirable job of balancing Canadian sovereignty interests with the security needs of the United States from the early Cold War to the eve of the Manhattan voyage in 1969. Although Canada did not get its way on every issue, an underlying spirit of mutual respect allowed Canada to preserve - and indeed strengthen - its sovereignty while accommodating its American ally insofar as its national interests allowed. This approach secured United States acquiescence to Canadian territorial sovereignty claims, despite America’s rejection of the sector principle. When the emphasis shifted to maritime issues in the 1950s, the legal issues proved more intractable but a functional approach, predicated on “agreeing to disagree” over the status of the waters of the Arctic archipelago, maintained a cooperative bilateral relationship. Rather than seeing Canadian decision-making in the 1940s and 1950s as failing to secure American acquiescence to Canada’s future claim to the Northwest Passage, a more positive appraisal might recognize how careful diplomacy helped to position Canada so that it could implement a functional approach under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in the early 1970s and declare straight baselines under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in 1985. While post-war diplomatic actions appear ad hoc, reactionary, and tentative, they were appropriately suited to a complex situation. Officials at External Affairs acknowledged Canada’s limitations but managed in steering a prudent and practical course to lay the groundwork for future assertions of Canadian jurisdiction and sovereignty in the Arctic.

Project team members are testing this thesis about the bilateral defence relationship in the Arctic through a series of grounded case studies. For example, Lackenbauer and Kikkert used the case study of Task Force 80 and the high arctic resupply mission of 1948 to re-evaluate Canadian-American relations in the early Cold War Arctic. The archival record reveals that, rather than sacrificing sovereignty in the interests of continental security, the Canadian government scrutinized and monitored American defence activities in the Arctic to ensure that it retained an appropriate level of control. There were oversights, missteps, and miscommunication on both sides, but officials derived important lessons from the 1948 mission which were applied to subsequent resupply activities, setting the course for an increasingly smooth operational relationship.

Functional cooperation may have prevailed historically and continue today, but this does not resolve thorny international legal questions that remain and have in-
creased in importance as the impacts of climate change have become more manifest. Straddling the international and domestic divide, is the question of the role international law can play in both fostering the creation of multilateral cooperative regimes that are responsive to new realities in the Arctic but also in defending and securing critical national objectives.

Suzanne Lalonde’s research considers the extent to which existing international legal norms and frameworks can provide clear and predictable outcomes and thus provide stability for the region. Using two key processes – boundary delimitation as in the case of the Beaufort Sea and the determination of the limits of the outer continental shelf – Lalonde highlights significant gaps in the legal regimes and concludes that international law can only provide partial solutions and cannot alone guarantee the peaceful reconciliation of competing interests. Other processes, political and diplomatic, will greatly influence the model of governance which emerges in the Arctic. Lalonde’s conclusions thus underline the importance of the research conducted by the project team and the need to better understand Arctic policies as defined at the national and regional levels.

Lalonde also investigates whether international legal instruments can promote Canada’s sovereignty and security in the Arctic. At the core of this research pillar are Canada’s stated objectives and priorities in regards to the Northwest Passage. In light of significant opposition to Canada’s claim to the waters of the Arctic archipelago, Lalonde has analyzed whether existing international mechanisms might not help Canada fulfill its stewardship obligations without sacrificing the needs of Canadian Northerners and the marine environment. The focus of her research has been the International Maritime Organization, identified by the 1982 UN Law of the Sea Convention as the competent international organization in all matters relating to shipping and navigation. The IMO’s work in relation to the Polar Code and its procedures for the designation of “special areas” and “particularly sensitive sea areas” (PSSAs) have been assessed and compared to the internal waters regime under the Law of the Sea. Lalonde has also devoted considerable research time to the concept of marine protected areas and its potential for promoting Canada’s priority of preserving the Arctic marine environment. She has also conducted this work in collaboration with the network investigators involved in “The Law and Politics of Canadian Jurisdiction on Arctic Ocean Seabed” project.

CONCLUSION

Arctic sovereignty, security, and governance issues continue to garner significant national and international attention. Our research findings raise important questions about the growing international scholarly consensus that the region is inherently cooperative. Assessments of military and security trends, as well as critical reappraisal of international legal issues related to boundary disputes and other uncertainties in the region, point to growing competition as well as cooperation. Although members of the research team differ in their interpretations of trends and debate what they means for the future of the circumpolar world, our ongoing dialogue (in publications, public lectures, and policy forums) continues to influence core academic and policy debates in Canada and other Arctic states.

By bringing historical, legal, and political science frameworks and methodologies to bear on our readings of the evolving Arctic security environment, this project is challenging widely held assumptions about Canada’s relationships with the United States and other Arctic states. Historical case studies suggest that Canada did a more successful job balancing sovereignty and security imperatives than scholars like Shelagh Grant have asserted. This revised narrative emphasizing bilateral cooperation provides a strong basis for a confident and enhanced Canada-US Arctic security relationship without undue concern that this erodes Canadian sovereignty.

Our work continues to critically assess Canada’s northern policies and practices through policy papers, academic publications, opinion pieces, and media engagement. Our findings confirm the need for promised investments in enhanced defence capabilities, particularly to support broader whole of government security
and safety priorities (such as search and rescue, emergency response, and enforcement of Canadian regulations). Furthermore, Lackenbauer’s work with the Canadian Rangers affirms that national defence and security agendas are not necessarily harmful to Northerners, but can actually support healthy, self-governing communities.

Confidence-building measures, both domestic and international, are key to a stable, secure, and peaceful Arctic. In improving our understanding of past and present sovereignty and security considerations, this project encourages the implementation of a Canadian northern strategy that reflects Northerners’ interests, aligns with the interests of the other Arctic states, and anticipates the rising interest of non-Arctic stakeholders in the region so that they can be appropriately engaged both today and in the future.

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REFERENCES


2011-12 PUBLICATIONS

All ArcticNet refereed publications are available on the ASTIS website (http://www.aina.ucalgary.ca/arcticnet/).


