

DEFENCE POLICY REVIEW – YELLOWKNIFE ROUNDTABLE

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SUBMISSION OF COLONEL (RETIRED) PIERRE LEBLANC

The Government of Canada has stated “Climate change is making the North more accessible, thereby increasing economic activity and international interest in the Arctic, which is likely to continue to rise in the coming decades. Such increased Arctic activity brings additional responsibilities for the Department of National Defence (DND) and other government departments in search and rescue, emergency response and environmental monitoring. A greater awareness of the potential challenges posed by foreign military and commercial activities in the Arctic region is also essential for Canada.”

The statement above speaks to the need for a “whole of government” approach to working in the Arctic. The Arctic practitioners know this full well. Some of my recommendations fall under the responsibility of departments other than the Department of National Defence. The defence policy review would benefit from a larger national security policy review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INCREASED SURVEILLANCE

There is a need to increase our surveillance of growing activities in the Arctic. This capability has to be all weather, 24/7/365 and include several overlapping sources of information. This may include:

Surveillance from space. This is the most cost effective approach. Increase our ability to monitor to include faster repeat rates and resolution. It should include space based Automatic Identification System monitoring.

High Frequency Surface Wave Radar. Introduce this capability to monitor the maritime approaches to the Arctic Archipelago choke points.

Maritime Role for the Rangers. Increase the role of the Canadian Rangers to include a seasonal maritime surveillance and patrolling capability. They would act as first responders for several departments.

North Warning System. Ensure continued monitoring of the air space against airborne threats. Modernize the present system.

Northwest Passage Monitoring. It should be technically possible to monitor surface activity on the Northwest Passage using radars of the North Warning System.

NORDREG. Make NORDREG mandatory for smaller vessels. It will provide another source of data to cross reference information from multiple sources to identify targets of interest.

Develop specific Northwest Passage corridors. Develop specific corridors and force ships to use only those safe corridors to reduce cost and risk to safety and the environment.

Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships (AOPS). Continue with the procurement of those vessels. They could be fitted with equipment to support mapping of the seabed.

Arctic Communications. There is a need to increase communication options for Arctic operations such as a major search and rescue operation of a large cruise ship.

Subsurface Surveillance. Develop a capability to monitor subsurface activities at least in the choke points of the Arctic Archipelago.

Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV). Consider the use of UAV for arctic surveillance.

Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft. There is a need to maintain the capabilities of the CP-140 Aurora fleet to investigate targets of interest and take appropriate action.

Canadian Coast Guard. They provide a great sovereignty presence but their mission should also include a security dimension.

CAPACITY TO ACT

A multi-layer of surveillance assets will identify potential targets of interest that will need to be investigated. Uncooperative targets may need to be forcibly boarded and/or stopped. We need to develop such a capability.

SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR). We have responsibility for Search and Rescue of a very large surface area. We need to reduce response time by deploying assets further north.

RESOLUTE BAY

Develop Resolute Bay as a multi-departmental facility from which many functions and services can be provided on a seasonal basis such as SAR, environmental response and patrolling activities. It would provide at least one port in the Arctic to support operations.

ARCTIC SECURITY WORKING GROUP

Maintain this working group to facilitate communications and coordination of activities in the Arctic across the responsible departments.

EXERCISES TO MAINTAIN CAPABILITIES

On several occasions it has been evident that Arctic deployments require regular training to be efficient and safe. Unprepared troops will soon become part of a problem and compound a challenging situation.

SOVEREIGNTY

All of the above recommendations will also reinforce Canada's position that the waters of the Northwest Passage are internal waters.

NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The above recommendations will support many objectives of the Government of Canada and aboriginal leadership such as increasing capacity and providing meaningful employment to the residents of the territories.