

THE NORTH



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The North Policy Briefing

Opportunity to advance Arctic infrastructure strategy in response to increased defence threats, say NDP MP, CSG senator

Arctic360 argues that Canada needs an Arctic infrastructure strategy to address issues facing northern communities related to telecommunications, energy, roads, ports and airports.

BY JESSE CNOCKAERT

Security threats facing the Arctic could potentially serve as a catalyst for Ottawa to finally move forward with a strategy to address infrastructure gaps facing northern communities, such as in transportation and telecommunications, say northern representatives and experts.

"There are definitely external factors that make it absolutely necessary for Canada to develop an infrastructure strategy [for the Arctic]," said NDP MP Lori Idlout (Nunavut), her party's critic for Indigenous services. "We're always hearing about rumblings of Russia's interest in the Arctic. With the opening up of the Northwest Passage because of climate change, Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic is being increasingly challenged by other countries."

According to Idlout, infrastructure in the Arctic has been



In June, Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal said investments in northern infrastructure, defence capabilities and enhanced threat monitoring will benefit all inhabitants of Canada's northern communities. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

neglected over the last 20 years, with communities in need of greater access to drinking water, and airports in need of paved runways. All 25 communities in Nunavut are powered by outdated diesel power plants, and require infrastructure investments to help transition to renewable energy, she said.

In a report released on Oct. 3, Arctic360, a non-partisan Arctic think tank, argued that Canada needs an Arctic infrastructure strategy to address issues facing northern communities related to telecommunications, energy, roads, ports, and airports. The

report said Canada must move away from an ad-hoc approach of patchwork announcements related to infrastructure for the region, and develop a vision with short- and long-term goals.

Idlout said current action by the federal government towards modernized defence in the Arctic could also help Ottawa to develop a holistic infrastructure strategy for the North.

"To me, I sense more urgency that something that needs to happen," said Idlout. "There are just so many infrastructure needs in the communities. I do agree that there needs to be a strategy to meet all the demands of keeping the Arctic secure."

In August, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg warned about possible threats in the Arctic posed by Russia and China. He said that Russia has established a new Arctic command by opening hundreds of new and former Soviet-era Arctic military sites, including airfields and deep water ports, and that China has plans to build the world's largest icebreaker, as reported by CBC News.

Defence Minister Anita Anand (Oakville, Ont.) announced on June 20 that Canada will spend \$4.9-billion over the next six years to modernize NORAD's continental defence capabilities to protect Canada from new and emerging threats.

"Investments in northern infrastructure, defence capabilities, and enhanced threat monitoring

will benefit all northerners, including Indigenous partners. Inuit communities and their knowledge of the land, waters, and environment play a central role in affirming and defending Canada's North and Arctic, and we will work collaboratively with Inuit through the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, the Inuit Crown Partnership Committee, and the Inuit Nunangat Policy," said Minister of Northern Affairs Dan Vandal (Saint Boniface-Saint Vital, Man.) in a National Defence press release.

The Arctic360 report argued that modernizing NORAD cannot be independent of addressing the social and economic needs in the North, including investments in broadband communication and ensuring reliable, low-carbon energy supplies for northern communities.

"Creating a secure Canadian Arctic is going to require major investments in state-of-the-art infrastructure from broadband to reliable energy, next generation, air, land, and maritime transportation infrastructure and an entire fleet of sensors to detect threats, but [which] could also very well monitor climate change [and] facilitate port logistics," reads the report.

A possible Arctic infrastructure strategy would need to have a multifaceted approach to ensure Nunavut's infrastructure needs are being met, according to Idlout. The top infrastructure

issue facing many people in Nunavut is lack of housing, she said.

"The biggest need in Nunavut is to make sure that the overcrowded housing situation is being met, as well as making sure that the conditions of all the old houses are being renovated," said Idlout. "There needs to be more ports so that communities are able to more safely deal with marine emergencies. There have been investments in the past that were not able to be completed because of inflation. This strategy needs to make sure that if rising costs are happening quite suddenly, like we've seen in the last year, that that doesn't prevent projects from going ahead, like I've heard from communities in Nunavut."

The Arctic360 report was released during a one-day summit to address Arctic sovereignty and security, held in Iqaluit. The event was co-hosted by Senator Dennis Patterson (Nunavut) of the Canadian Senators Group.

Patterson told *The Hill Times* that Canada needs a strategy that looks at the "whole infrastructure needs of the North." He said that modernizing NORAD will require stable energy infrastructure in the North, and communications infrastructure that provides redundancy in the event satellite communications are disrupted.

"I'm very heartened that the security of Canada and the North from new military threats will finally lead to a focus on the

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NDP MP Lori Idlout says there are 'external factors that make it absolutely necessary for Canada to develop' an Arctic infrastructure strategy. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade



CSG Senator Dennis Patterson says Canada's security in the face of 'new military threats will finally lead to a focus on the infrastructure deficiencies in the North.' Photograph courtesy of Dennis Patterson



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The North Policy Briefing

Getting to know each unique territory in the North

Each territory is unique in its population, geography, resources, and political and historical development.

ISG Senator
Pat Duncan

Opinion



The North is a mysterious place to many Canadians. We once described the Yukon to visitors as a place of magic and mystery. I am honoured as the Yukon Senator to attempt to dispel some of the mystery and to articulate the modern context.

Geographically, “The North” is that part of Canada north of the 60th parallel with three territories in the federation. Beyond this simple reference to “The North,” if you consider Atlantic Canada or the West, the Yukon is as

different from Nunavut as British Columbia is from Saskatchewan, or Newfoundland and Labrador from Prince Edward Island. Each territory is unique in its population, geography, resources, and political and historical development.

Arctic security in the Canadian North is most often considered in the context of the Northwest Passage, the North Warning System, and the Canadian Rangers. The Yukon has a small portion of the Arctic coast with two North Warning System sites at Komakuk Beach and Shingle



Then-United States ambassador to Canada Jay Pierrepont Moffat, left, and then-prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King at the exchange of notes between the governments of Canada and the U.S. on the Alaska Highway construction terms in March 1942. Photograph courtesy of Library and Archives Canada

Point that are not staffed. Comparatively, Northwest Territories is home to the National Defence Joint Task Force North Headquarters and North Warning System sites are contracted to be maintained and operated by Raytheon Canada Limited and Nasittuq, a Nunavut-based corporation. These sites are scattered throughout the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Yukon, like the other territories, has a vibrant Ranger community, more than 200 strong, throughout the territory. Whitehorse houses a scant Department of National Defence office and a cadet-training facility. Arctic security in the Yukon is an American historical story and a vital supply chain today.

The Alaska Highway linking the “lower 48” and Canada to Alaska and the North was the most expensive Second World War project undertaken by the American government with an investment of US\$147.8-million. Canada’s contribution to this war effort was the “right of way,” or access, for the more than 2,000-kilometre highway from Dawson Creek, B.C., through the Yukon, to Alaska. The highway, without a consultation process, pushed through a wilderness teeming with wildlife and pristine rivers, the home of First Nations, and some non-First Nations residents like prospectors, the RCMP, and family-owned businesses left over from the Klondike gold rush

of 1898. The influx of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, with approximately 10,000 soldiers and 250,000 tons of material, came to build the highway that changed the Yukon forever.

The first inhabitants of the Yukon were not part of Canada’s reserve system or treaty negotiations, but rather there were lands set aside for Yukon Indigenous Peoples. Almost 50 years ago, in February 1973, then-prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau accepted on the steps of Centre Block a document from Elijah Smith and Yukon First Nations. Entitled *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, the document formed the basis for the Umbrella Final Agreement reached by the Council of Yukon First Nations, the Yukon Government, and the Government of Canada in 1993. Eleven of the 14 Yukon First Nations have reached land claim agreements that establish a foundation for government-to-government-to-government relationships.

Appreciation of these relationships and the modern context of the Yukon can, in part, be recognized with beginning to understand the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. Old Crow, the home of the Vuntut Gwitchin, a self-governing First Nation, is the only community in the Yukon that is not accessible by all-weather road.

The Development Corporation of the Vuntut Gwitchin are 49 per

cent owners of Air North. The airline competes with others to provide twice-daily 737 jet service to Vancouver, and flies three times a week or more to Edmonton and Calgary. Air North also continues has daily air service to Old Crow, Dawson City, and Inuvik, N.W.T.

At one time, Air North also flew the fuel into Old Crow to power the diesel generators that supplied electricity to the community. At the forefront of change with their investment in the airline and on the frontlines of climate change in the north, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation was among the first to install a solar farm to power the community. The story was eloquently and visually told this past summer on CBC’s *The National*, and there is so much more to share.

I began this discourse sharing an understanding that the three territories are not just “the North.” Each territory being unique, I outlined the differences with Arctic security. Any treatise on Arctic security in the Yukon must begin with the Americans. The development of the Alaska Highway and the changes it brought to the Yukon leads to an explanation of the modern context of Indigenous relations and development in the Yukon in one aspect of climate change. There is considerably more to write about the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut on these and many other northern and Canadian issues and interests. I invite you, after this brief sample, to continue the dialogue and get to know each territory independently from the region, just as you do for each province.

Pat Duncan is a Canadian politician from Yukon. She was first appointed as a non-affiliated Senator by Justin Trudeau in 2018, and has been a member of the Independent Senators Group since February 2019. Between 1996 and 2006, Duncan served as a member of the Yukon Legislative Assembly in various positions, including as the first female premier of the territory between 2000 and 2002.

The Hill Times



Private Elbert Pieper of the U.S. Army stands sentry duty beside a trapper’s cabin containing construction supplies for the Alaska Highway in 1942. Photograph courtesy of Library and Archives Canada



Investing in the Northwest Territories brings benefits to all of Canada. The NWT wants to create connections in the territory. We want to expand our green energy potential, support a net-zero future, expand our critical mineral opportunities, make education for Northerners more accessible, and build strong, safe, and thriving communities that demonstrate security through sovereignty.

LOOK



NORTH TO CANADA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

“Resource revenues from development of these critical minerals and natural resources will benefit Northerners, as well as Canada and provinces directly.”

However, with our limited resources, collaboration with the Government of Canada and with Indigenous leadership is critical to closing the gap between the North and southern Canada.

Projects like the Taltson Hydro Expansion, Mackenzie Valley Highway, and the creation of the Northwest Territories first Polytechnic University will develop our economic potential, support the transition to a green economy, and improve the quality of life of NWT residents.

We have a lot to offer and we want to contribute to Canada's economic future.

The transformational opportunities that exist will not only support the development of our true economic potential; they will support national efforts to transition to a low carbon economy and create long-lasting economic benefits that will be good for all Canadians.

The Northwest Territories is positioned to be at the heart of the shift to a low-carbon economy. This means we can be a leader in the green mining and energy technologies needed to help grow Canada's economy and achieve its objective of Net-Zero emissions by 2050.

Resource revenues from development of these critical minerals and natural resources will benefit Northerners, as well as Canada and provinces directly. With a stronger northern economy, southern Canada will see significant economic benefits. This includes increased employment, service provision, and manufacturing that comes hand in hand with northern development.

An investment in the North is an investment in reconciliation. Closing infrastructure, housing and education gaps for Indigenous residents are priorities under the *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework*. Investment in the infrastructure requirements for a Polytechnic University will help address the significant gaps in access to education experienced by many Indigenous Northerners and will help meet future labour market needs by preparing Northerners to fill northern jobs.

People are our priority. We are focused on making sure all residents have what they need to thrive. It is time for Canada to undertake bold new nation building projects that will strengthen northern communities and make the North and Canada stronger.

It's time.

Caroline Cochrane
Premier of the Northwest Territories

Government of
Northwest Territories
gov.nt.ca



Connecting The Arctic

Renewable Energy. Broadband Internet. The Future Of Nunavut.

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The Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link

The Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link (KHFL) is an Inuit-led nation-building project that will be Nunavut's first infrastructure link to Southern Canada and will provide renewable power and fibre-optic internet capacity for the Kivalliq region for generations to come. It is a critical part of our collective effort to advance reconciliation and climate action and ensure Nunavut is physically connected to the rest of Canada with vital infrastructure.



Reconciliation

- Advance economic reconciliation as a 100% Inuit-led project with equity investment and ownership
- Ensure Inuit have access to the same critical infrastructure as the rest of Canada



Arctic Sovereignty

- Promote sovereignty and energy security by bringing domestic baseload power and reliable broadband connectivity to the Arctic region



Economy

- 15,625 person-years of employment from construction
- Career and business opportunities, training Inuit youth in the electricity sector
- \$3.2 billion contribution to Canada's GDP during construction alone
- Business opportunities for Manitoba and Nunavut, and support Canada's goals for a true Pan-Canadian electricity grid



Climate Leadership And Environmental Protection

- The KHFL will meet Canada's 2030 emission reduction targets for Nunavut by removing 371,000 tonnes of GHG emissions per year
- Protecting marine ecosystems by reducing heavy fuel shipments through Arctic waters
- Enabling the electrification of emission-intensive industries

Why A Transmission Line?

Despite being Canada's largest territory – Nunavut is 20% of the country's total land mass – the Territory is land locked, with no infrastructure connection to the rest of Canada. Nearly 100% of all energy needs in the region are met with burning diesel fuel. As a result, Inuit, who have lived in the Kivalliq region for generations and in harmony with the land since time immemorial, now find themselves having the highest carbon intensity in the country.

The Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link Offers:

- A ready now solution
- A proven technology for decarbonization in Northern climates
- Baseload energy with high reliability and responsiveness
- The only pathway that also enables fibre-optic broadband internet
- Opportunities for high integration of variable renewable generation such as wind and solar
- A grid connection between Nunavut and the rest of Canada, enabling two-way electricity trades

The Time Is Now For Nunavut

The Government of Canada has supported Inuit in advancing the KHFL to this important stage. The KHFL is ready to move forward and needs the Government of Canada as a committed partner to successfully complete this nation-building project.

One territory, one province, one country working together. A true story of national reconciliation, **visionary green infrastructure investment** to connect Nunavut for the very first time.



Nukik Corporation

Nukik is an Inuit-owned corporation developing the Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Link. Its majority owner is the Kivalliq Inuit Association which is the elected body representing the interests of all Inuit in the Kivalliq region, acting as an advocacy group, a land holder, and administering provisions of the Nunavut Final Agreement.

Show your support by learning more at nukik.ca

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The North Policy Briefing

Supporting northern and Indigenous communities key to Arctic sovereignty



Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal is responsible for the government's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, which outlines a modern, holistic, community-focused response, writes Liberal MP Brendan Hanley. *The Hill Times* photograph by Andrew Meade

Arctic sovereignty is far broader than territorial assertion or defence, and intricately connected with Indigenous self-determination and supporting the people who make the North their home.

Liberal MP
Brendan
Hanley

Opinion



The North is as much a part of Canada's identity as maple syrup and hockey. But while the North may represent more than 40 per cent of Canada's landmass, fewer than one per cent of Canadians live there.

Arctic sovereignty is not limited to asserting authority over

the internal land and waters or defending our claims to the seabed. It also does not simply mean defending the region, along with the rest of Canada, from international threats posed by increasingly bellicose states like Russia and China. These are only part of the equation. The key component to Arctic sovereignty is supporting the people and communities who make the Arctic and Northern Canada their home.

Investing in upgrading NORAD and modernizing the Armed Forces and Coast Guard are key components in expanding Canada's capacity to respond to these potential threats. I will suggest that Arctic sovereignty is something far broader, more complex than territorial assertion or defence alone, and intricately connected with Indigenous self-determination and supporting the people who make the North their home. International threats exist, but a far more dangerous invader is already here; an invader that is more insidious, and far more complex to defend against.

That threat, of course, is the changing climate, where global warming is occurring in Arctic regions at three times the rate in Southern Canada and it is having

a devastating impact on northern communities. Melting permafrost is wreaking havoc with physical infrastructure—including roads, buildings, and airstrips in northern communities. Permafrost melt is causing buildings to become unstable, and in the Yukon critical transportation routes were taken out temporarily by landslides this year. Climate change is altering traditional ways of living by changing animal migration patterns, putting more animal species and other food sources at risk of extinction. Changes in the Arctic also have global implications. The rising temperatures are melting the polar ice, leading to sea-level rise, putting communities in places like the Maritimes and British Columbia at risk, along with coastal nations around the world.

If there was ever a need to unite to defend our Arctic from this threat, it is now. The key to doing so is by taking a modern, holistic approach to understanding the Arctic.

In 2019, Canada released the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, which outlines a modern, holistic, community-focused response. Co-developed by the federal, provincial, and

territorial governments, northern communities, and Indigenous governments, it affirmed that decisions about the Arctic and the North will be made in participation and with the participation of northerners and Indigenous communities. The framework outlines a shared vision for advancing science and knowledge in the North, restoring Canada's leadership in the Arctic, addressing climate change head on, and outlining a guide for investing in jobs, energy, healthy communities, and reconciliation, amongst other objectives.

Canada must work in partnership with the territorial governments, and on a nation-to-nation basis with First Nations governments, to deliver on measures that northern communities need to grow, strengthen, and prosper. This includes climate-resilient critical infrastructure—whether in housing, transportation, communication, or energy supply. Resilient buildings, bridges, and roads, as well as low-emission energy infrastructure, are critical not only to those projects, but also to broader economic growth.

Many communities still rely on fossil fuels for energy produced from mini-grids and generators

which are not easily connected to larger, lower-emission grids. Last year, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation's solar farm opened in Old Crow, Yukon, cutting the community's emissions by almost one-quarter, as well as bringing more money into the community. It is just one of many Indigenous-led energy projects that the federal government has been supporting.

In the North, sovereignty is more than just lines on a map for foreign powers to take note. It is about supporting the people to live by strengthening their infrastructure, increasing their climate and community resiliency, and doing so as part of the journey toward reconciliation. Arctic sovereignty can only be achieved by working in full partnership with northerners and First Nations. A key part of demonstrating sovereignty is supporting the people who live there. Achieving Arctic sovereignty in its modern and broadest sense is in the interests of all Canadians—and indeed the future sustainability of our planet.

Liberal MP Brendan Hanley has represented the electoral district of the Yukon since Sept. 20, 2021.

The Hill Times

We need science in support of discovery and sovereignty in Canada's Arctic

Canada must continue to invest and lead by showing the world not just what science is important in the Arctic, but also how science should be done.

Jackie Dawson

Opinion



Innovation, Science, and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne, left, and Northern Affairs Minister Dan Vandal. Canada remains the only Arctic nation without an Arctic science plan, writes Jackie Dawson. *The Hill Times* photographs by Andrew Meade

In 2007, Russia planted a one-metre-high titanium Russian flag on the seabed floor north of Nunavut. The submarine entered Canadian inland waters and was spotted on Canadian radar. Russia's purpose was assumedly to lay claim, symbolically, to billions of dollars' worth of oil and gas reserves believed to be in the region.

Ten years later, in 2017, a purpose-built Chinese research icebreaker made its first-ever voyage through the Northwest Passage on a what was officially identified as a research trip, but tracking data revealed that the ship travelled in a pattern not aligned with plausible scientific objectives. The general consensus was that the vessel was laying foundations for China to sail cargo ships over the top of Canada via what has become known as the "Polar silk road."

By 2027, a decade afterward and year that is not very far into the future, scientists anticipate that climate change could warm the Arctic to more than 7 C, a rate four times the global average, facilitating irreversible losses in sea ice while also creating increased access to natural resources and Arctic maritime transit routes enabling the beginning of Arctic international economic development and maritime trade. Coupled with the current illegal occupation of Ukraine by Russia, this underscores Canada's urgent need to turn our attention to a region that makes up more than two-thirds of our nation's land mass.

Indeed, Canada is an Arctic nation. It is clear that the next frontline of geopolitical manoeuvring is likely to be the Arctic, an area in which Canada has an undisputed claim, but where even some of our closest allies question our inherent sovereignty. There is growing and urgent concern among the Canadian Arctic science community that without the continued presence of a co-ordinated, networked, and connected research presence in our North, it will become increasingly challenging to ensure the continued understanding, prosperity, and sovereignty of the region.

There are very strong arguments to be made that a key element of Canada's response to ongoing change and heightened interest in the Arctic region should be to ensure there continues to be a robust, diverse, and networked Canadian-led science

program in the region. We know that if we don't lead, other nations will. Canada remains the only Arctic nation without an Arctic science plan and even non-Arctic nations—such as the United Kingdom, France, India, Netherlands, and China—are all purported to be investing more in Arctic science over the next decade than is currently slated in Canada.

While shifting priorities in science funding in Canada are in play, a renewed commitment to established and thriving networks, like ArcticNet with 20 years of history and national and global partnerships, would go a long way to reinforcing our sovereignty in the region, and guaranteeing our global influence in Arctic and climate research while fostering Indigenous leadership and self-determination, reconciliation, and true partnerships that work.

The world is watching and waiting for Canada to take a leadership role in this space and we have the history, values, systems, and structures to do so. That is, if we continue to invest and lead by showing the world not just *what* science is important in the Arctic, but also *how* science should be done. We have an opportunity to do things right: to support a sustainable plan for Indigenous self-determined approaches to research that the world expects Canada to model and to lead; to make revolutionary discoveries in climate change mitigation and adaptation; to enhance innovations in energy transformations; to support reconciliation, shared and unleashed capacity of Indigenous expert, youth, and knowledge holders; and to clearly establish our sovereignty in the understanding, activities, and development of our Canadian Arctic.

What we know, we can understand, and what we understand we can protect. A strong, co-ordinated, and diverse Arctic science network can and will play a key role in maintaining our national position within an increasingly contentious and geopolitical Arctic.

Dr. Jackie Dawson is a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair and full professor in the department of geography, environment, and geomatics at the University of Ottawa. She also serves as the scientific director of ArcticNet.

The Hill Times

Here's how teachings from the First Nations of the North are leading the way



Climate action built within a system that sees ourselves as disconnected from the land and each other is unhealthy and unjust for all humans, write Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom and Jewel Davies. Photograph courtesy of Flickr/Umnak

To lead the way towards true climate action, we need to bring ourselves back into a good relationship with the places where we live and where we are from.

Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom & Jewel Davies

Opinion



One of the best parts about going to conferences is the networking. We're curious about the connections we'll make, the diversity of people we'll meet, and the teachings we'll bring back home. That, and getting to experience this together.

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity's Conference of the Parties, also known as COP15, begins in Montreal on Dec. 7. One of the outcomes we are hoping to see is a lot of space dedicated to Indigenous voices and youth. We see climate change from a relational lens and are excited to share our message and worldview as First Nations of the North.

To us, commitments like "30 by 30" by the federal government—protecting 30 per cent of land and waters in Canada by 2030—are an opportunity *and* just a starting place. These commitments come from a western perspective, meaning they tend to overemphasize quantitative measures, silo issues, and focus on symptoms of a problem, rather than the root causes. Think of the manufacturing of electric cars without considering the massive mining operations required to make the batteries. Or why we are so dependent on individual ownership of vehicles in the first place, rather than prioritizing shared or public transportation.

Climate action built within a system that sees ourselves as disconnected from the land and each other is unhealthy and unjust for all humans. We are intrinsically connected to this planet and our First Nations cultures have been able to hold onto this connection, despite generations of colonization. It's what

we need to lead the way today towards true climate action, ultimately bringing us back into a good relationship with the places where we live and where we are from.

That's why we've been working for the last year and a half in our Yukon First Nations Climate Action Fellowship to develop a Climate Vision and Action Plan. The main message we've decided to raise is that "Reconnection Is Climate Action," meaning disconnection from all parts of ourselves, each other, and the land is at the heart of climate change. You can view our draft plan, which we'll be releasing in February 2023, at yfnclimate.ca/yfnrvap.

We are attending COP15 as two representatives of our Fellowship and in relationship with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Yukon Chapter. We're excited for the chance to meet Indigenous people from around the world and to amplify the importance of upholding different ways of being, knowing and doing. We are interested in conversations about re-education and equity.

For one of us, growing up in the community of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation, I remember travelling to our first fellowship gathering, and I had this realization that this was the same road that my grandmother took when she was taken away to residential schools. Now, I am driving down this road to go hang out with Indigenous youth and mentors, to learn from and teach each other.

This is what reconciliation can be. And that's when we realized there's opportunity here—that perhaps there's something good to be gained. Rather than working against each other, how do we move forward together in a good way? We want to make it easier for all the youth coming after us.

Geehaadastee/Shauna Yeomans-Lindstrom is a part of the Yanyedi house of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation. In 2016, she began working for the Taku River Tlingit First Nation as a Land Guardian. She currently lives in Atlin, B.C. Jewel Davies (Yekhunashin/Khatuku) belongs to the Dakl'awedi (Eagle/Killer Whale) Clan of the Inland Tlingit people. She is a member of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, grew up in Teslin and has lived in the Yukon her whole life. She is now furthering her education with the Indigenous governance bachelor's degree program at the Yukon University.

The Hill Times

The North Policy Briefing

The North needs less Ottawa

What the North needs is support to build essential infrastructure so it can achieve a greater degree of financial autonomy and create more economic opportunities for residents.

CSG Senator
Dennis
Patterson

Opinion



Canada claims to be embarking on a project of reconciliation and our politicians seldom miss an opportunity to speak positively about the importance of nation-to-nation relationships with Inuit, Métis, and First Nations—but those of us who live in the territories should be forgiven for taking these pronouncements with a degree of skepticism.

As premier of the Northwest Territories in the late 1980s, for instance, I repeatedly advocated for measures to bring the stan-

dard of living for northern Canadians in line with the standard of living in the South.

As the Senator representing Nunavut since 2009, I continue to advocate for this.

It can be disheartening to see just how little things have changed over the past decades, despite the best intentions of successive governments. But today's conversations about reconciliation and nation-to-nation relationships afford an opportunity to inch closer to meaningful progress.

The solution lies in the terms themselves: we must ask ourselves what we mean when we talk about reconciliation and nation-to-nation relationships.

Too often, these concepts are taken to mean bringing Indigenous people to the table so Ottawa can hear their concerns before deciding what to do. Listening is certainly an important part—but Indigenous and northern voices cannot simply be things to be factored in to government deliberations.

A true nation-to-nation relationship would require the federal government to acknowledge the autonomy of northern peoples. We must have power to make decisions that affect us.

The status quo amounts to costly subservience—the federal government controls the purse strings and sets the rules. Sometimes this means onerous reporting requirements. Some-



First Nations Financial Management Board executive chair Harold Calla supports the financial autonomy of many First Nations by providing stable funding and good financial governance practices. Screenshot courtesy of ParIVu

times money is only available for a short time, with unspent funds clawed back. The territories have been playing Ottawa's game for decades, and housing, transportation, broadband, and clean energy are still a long way from the standards southern Canadians expect.

What the North needs is support to build essential infrastructure so it can achieve a greater degree of financial autonomy and create more economic opportunities for residents.

For example, there is vast wealth in the Arctic that is of considerable strategic importance. Rare earth elements and other critical minerals essential to clean technology can help Canada attain its environmental goals. Increasing production could make Canada an alternative to China, which dominates these markets.

But resource development is constrained by limited access to capital markets and the added costs of development in remote regions.

This brings us to closer to a more practical understanding of reconciliation. Harold Calla is executive chair of the First Nations Financial Management Board, which supports the financial autonomy of many First Nations by providing stable funding

and good financial governance practices. He and others use the term "economic reconciliation" to describe this work, which has proven enormously beneficial.

The board's success stories show that this economic reconciliation doesn't require the federal government to swoop in and save the day—rather, that First Nations just need time and space to develop their own practices.

As Calla noted in his appearance last month before the House of Commons' Indigenous and Northern Affairs committee, "we can't just feed the symptoms of poverty with money ... I believe that a solution is to provide a better opportunity to be self-governing and to develop our own solutions."

There are certainly opportunities to be had.

The federal government has committed to spend more than \$30-billion on modernizing Canada's Arctic defences, which could lead to badly needed infrastructure improvements and economic opportunity for the North.

At the Arctic Sovereignty and Security Summit that I organized in co-operation with Inuit organizations such as Nunasi, Pan-Inuit Logistics Corp., and Nasittuq, the message we received was

clear and consistent: this investment should be treated as an opportunity to advance economic reconciliation and must be made alongside co-ordinated investments in infrastructure, as well as capacity development.

Everyone from Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeagok, to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. CEO Kilikvak Kabloona and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami president Natan Obed, as well as academics and northern business leaders who spoke at the event, were clear that these strategic investments made in partnership with Inuit would lead to a healthier, stronger, more self-reliant North that is ultimately safer and more secure.

For too long, northerners have been trapped in a dependent relationship with Ottawa. A true nation-to-nation relationship and economic reconciliation could change this narrative, end decades of frustration and unleash the vast potential of the North.

Senator Dennis Patterson is a former premier of the Northwest Territories who served for 16 years in its Legislative Assembly. He played a key role in the creation of Nunavut and represents the territory in the Senate.

The Hill Times

Opportunity to advance Arctic infrastructure strategy in response to increased defence threats, say NDP MP, CSG senator

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infrastructure deficiencies in the North,” said Patterson. “I see the need for a holistic, whole-of-government strategy for our infrastructure in the North, rather than the piecemeal approach and the neglect that has characterized development in the Arctic in my 50-plus years of living in the North.”

Patterson also argued that Canada’s critical minerals strategy could motivate the development of an infrastructure strategy for the North.

On April 7, the 2022 federal budget proposed to provide up to \$3.8-billion over eight years to implement Canada’s first critical minerals strategy. The strategy is intended to help advance the development of critical mineral resources in Canada to power the green and digital economy domestically and around the world, according to a discussion paper released on June 14.

“The North is replete with rich mineral resources, including critical minerals like cobalt and zinc, but there are great challenges to access these resources, because of the lack of basic infrastructure,” said Patterson.

He said he supports development of an all-weather road between the highway system at Yellowknife, N.W.T., to the Arctic coast at Grays Bay in Nunavut. The Grays Bay Port road project is a proposed 230-km road connecting Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

“This all-weather road would give us a stable source of transportation for not only valuable

minerals, but for resupply to northern communities,” Patterson said. “That would be the first connection for Nunavut to the North American road system.”

Jessica Shadian, president and CEO of Arctic360, said that an infrastructure strategy for the North would need to start with a comprehensive inventory of the existing critical infrastructure in the region.

“We’re going to have to figure out what’s going to be the short-term projects we need to invest in now, [and] what are the medium-term, and what are the long-term, so this becomes a game of prioritization,” she said. “We have many different maps that itemize different assets that we have in the North, but we don’t really have one single, comprehensive inventory, and some of those existing maps are out of date. We don’t even have a real basic handle as to what we even have right now.”

Shadian said infrastructure needs in the North are currently handled as “reactive solutions to crises,” and Canada needs an infrastructure strategy to provide a vision for the North. In order to secure private sector investment, Ottawa needs a plan to show how one project could potentially relate to another, she said.

Current infrastructure announcements from government agencies—including Natural Resources Canada, the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, National Defence, and Fisheries and Oceans—are separate from each other, according to Shadian.

“All these things are being done in silos, and therefore it undermines the potential for creating strategic infrastructure,” she said. “I think they should be part of a single conversation. I think it’s very difficult to try to separate out infrastructure investment for the critical minerals strategy, to separate that out from a defence discussion, and the kind of infrastructure that we need for defence. It’s different types of infrastructure perhaps, but there could be some overlap.”

Jennifer Spence, an Arctic Initiative senior fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, told *The Hill Times* that infrastructure discussions for the North could possibly take on greater significance because of the growing security concerns related to Russia.

“I think there has been some effort by the federal government to recognize the need for dedicated attention to the Arctic, but



Jennifer Spence says people are increasingly ‘talking about a relationship between the security of Canada and the Arctic,’ which may result in ‘piggyback’ discussions related to infrastructure. *Photograph courtesy of Jennifer Spence*

I think the relationship between the infrastructure needs of the Arctic and the costs associated with that are always difficult, politically, for any government,” she said. “Increasingly, people talking about a relationship between the security of Canada and the Arctic and because of that, there’s always the opportunity for piggybacking. There’s lots of NORAD discussions right now.”

If an Arctic infrastructure strategy is developed, it will be important to define its purpose, because infrastructure can be a very broad term, according to Spence.

“We can be talking about public infrastructure, we can be talking about private infrastructure, we can be talking about physical infrastructure, we can be talking about social infrastructure, internet connectivity, which can be satellites,” she said. “Understanding the basic infrastructure needs is really

important, and recognizing that we’re talking about communities that are extremely small, and so the types of infrastructure that we may think about in a southern context are not necessarily the things that we need to think about implementing.”

In the past, it may have been more difficult for the federal government to justify development of an Arctic infrastructure strategy, because of where the majority of people in Canada live, she said.

“It’s hard for a federal government to put the dollars needed towards northern infrastructure when a majority of its population and a majority of its elected officials represent southern jurisdictions,” she said. “For better or worse, it’s the nature of politics. It’s a hard story to sell, politically. At the end of the day, this is why I think the security narrative may be useful in the current context.”

Professor John Pomeroy, Canada Research Chair in Water Resources and Climate Change, and director of the Centre for Hydrology at the University of Saskatchewan, told *The Hill Times* that infrastructure has always been a challenge in the North because of how remote many communities are, and because of long winters, blizzards, and thawing permafrost in the summer that can become “very wet and rather soupy.”

“Then, of course, they do get floods, and they get wildfires as well, just like in the south. There’s lots of things going on there that make it very challenging to develop infrastructure, such as roads or towns or even basic utilities,” said Pomeroy. “Climate change makes it far, far worse, because the North has already been warming much faster than the rest of the Earth and the rest of Canada.”

Pomeroy said that most climate models predict an

increase in precipitation in the North, mostly through rain, but also through increased winter snowfall.

“That will, by our model estimates, cause streamflow to more than double ... in many parts of the North,” he said. “That would wash out a lot of roads and culverts and flood homes and communities.”

Pomeroy is the lead author on a research paper released on Jan. 16, 2019, that provided detailed projections of major water challenges facing western Arctic communities. In a press release from the University of Saskatchewan, Pomeroy said a tipping point will be reached over the next several decades, putting at risk communities with infrastructure designed for 20th century climate and hydrology.

“We need some solutions. Most of these climate change impacts are related to water in some form, either the snow and ice in the ground thawing, or floods, or changing landscapes, and things like that,” said Pomeroy. “These are serious problems. I think they exceed the financial capabilities of Northern residents, who tend to be not particularly high-income Canadians. [They are] medium to low income in most cases.”

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Canada Arctic statistics

- Nearly 40 per cent of Canada’s land mass is considered Arctic and northern, consisting of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon, and the northern parts of several provinces.
- Canada’s Arctic is home to more than 150,000 inhabitants, of whom more than half are Indigenous. This represents less than one per cent of Canada’s total population.
- Indigenous Peoples make up the vast majority of the population in the Canadian Arctic. Most of them are Inuit and Inuvialuit.
- More than 36,000 Inuit and Inuvialuit live in Inuit territories in Canada known collectively as Inuit Nunangut, the Inuktitut phrase for land, water, and ice. Other Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian Arctic include Gwich’in in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, the Innu in Labrador, and the Cree in Hudson’s Bay.

—Source: the Arctic Council and Pewtrusts.org

Canadian Arctic climate change statistics

- Canada is experiencing climate change at twice the rate of the world’s average. In the Canadian Arctic, the rate is three times the world average. Increasing temperatures mean that glaciers are melting and permafrost is warming and thawing.
- Canada has the third-largest area of glacier ice in the world (roughly 200,000 square kilometres), and 50 per cent of Canada contains permafrost. Melting glaciers and thaw of permafrost affect freshwater availability and quality, groundwater dynamics, ground stability, and marine fish habitat.
- Almost all Indigenous communities in Canada’s North are located on the coast, putting them most at risk of experiencing climate change impacts.

—Source: Natural Resources Canada



Jessica Shadian, president and CEO of Arctic360, says Canada does not currently have a comprehensive inventory of infrastructure assets and needs in the Arctic. *Photograph courtesy of Jessica Shadian*



Professor John Pomeroy, Canada Research Chair in Water Resources and Climate Change, says the North is warming much faster than the rest of the Earth and the rest of Canada. *Photograph courtesy of John Pomeroy*

The North Policy Briefing

Russian President Vladimir Putin is making threats to use nuclear weapons today and Canadian national security is dependent on ensuring that neither enemies nor allies can ever conclude that there is a weak link in the North, writes Rob Huebert. *Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*



The return of the great power politics in the Arctic and renewed threat of nuclear war

It is clearly in Canada's interest that neither Russia nor China conclude that North America is vulnerable to new nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

Rob Huebert

Opinion



Since coming to power, Russian President Vladimir Putin has modernized Russia's nuclear arsenals and delivery systems. His threats to use them are not empty ones.

Many of these weapon systems are based in the Arctic region, making it among the most important and dangerous strategic locations in the world. Canadian leaders, however, scarcely think of the region in these terms. Moreover, there is almost no discussion in Canada about nuclear war; we must begin the terrifying process of considering it.

America became refocused on this matter after the Russians invaded Ukraine in 2014, continuously developing policy to manage the nuclear threat, including substantial investment into developing a concept of *integrated deterrence*. The most recent policy, the 2022 National Defence Strategy, was just released in October. This is based on deterrence by denial, resilience, and direct and collective cost imposition. Embedded in all three is a recognition that it is necessary to demonstrate to its adversaries that the United States and its allies are willing to meet its enemies in combat and to persevere. Though not explicit, a

willingness to use nuclear weapons is implied.

This, combined with a number of major investments in its nuclear capabilities and a refusal to adopt a no-first use policy, has demonstrated the intent of the U.S. in trying to respond to the increased nuclear belligerence of its adversaries.

Washington hopes to deter its enemies by convincing them that America will meet and defeat any threats, including, if necessary, by using nuclear weapons. If threats to use nuclear weapons are understood to be met with an American reaction that *could* include nuclear weapons, adversaries will be deterred from ever using theirs.

The problem? New delivery systems that are now being developed—such as the many categories of hypersonics or the new underwater delivery systems—may be seen by Russian or Chinese leadership as giving them an opportunity to strike at the right time. With risks of escalation increasing, Americans

are considering both deterrence and how to maintain national resiliency should such a terrible event occur.

What does this mean for Canadian security and security in the Arctic?

It is clearly in Canada's interest that neither Russia nor China conclude that North America is vulnerable to new nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Our adversaries mustn't believe they will succeed in launching an attack on the U.S. through Canadian territory. Ottawa recognized this as early as 2017, with its defence policy, *Strong Secure and Engaged*, when it promised to modernize NORAD to better detect new weapons. It is unclear whether the government is serious and willing to pay for it.

This past April, Ottawa committed to \$8.1-billion in new defence spending over the next six years. Of that sum, \$4.9-billion was to be spent on NORAD modernization, improving a host of surveillance and other capabilities. Ottawa is dedicated

to spending less than \$1-billion a year in new money to invest in new surveillance systems. But it also leaves unanswered how necessary systems—such as new aircraft, surface warships, and submarines—will be paid for on a leftover budget of roughly more than \$530-million in annual additional annual spending. The government did commit to spending \$38.6-billion beginning in seven years. Of course, the problem with such a promise is that there is no guarantee that the Liberals will be in power or willing to actually spend the money if they are still the government then.

Will this convince the Russian and Chinese that their new systems will be detected and hence deterred? Funding commitments may be a start, but they appear intended to only mollify the Americans.

Putin is making threats to use nuclear weapons today. China may use military force to reclaim Taiwan, a flashpoint that could easily spiral and must be planned for. Newer, faster, and stealthier capabilities, combined with leaders more willing to use modernized and expanded nuclear weapons arsenals, are all increasing risks.

Canadian national security is dependent on ensuring that neither enemies nor allies of Canada can ever conclude that there is a weak link in the Canadian North. This requires action, but the only way that action will be sustained and intensive is to ensure that we recognize what the new threat is—and that it is the possibility of nuclear war. Pretending the threat does not exist only makes it more dangerous.

Rob Huebert is an associate professor of political science at the University of Calgary and senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute.

The Hill Times

Ability to adapt to changing environment the best bet for Arctic defence

Members of 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, prepare to support operations in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, on March 23, 2019. The Canadian Rangers offer insight into how a community-based model of Arctic security can be effective, writes Sen. Marty Deacon. *DND photograph by Avr. Jérôme J.X. Lessard*



Security in the North counts for nothing though if these communities are not given every opportunity to live, work, and thrive.

ISG Senator
Marty
Deacon

Opinion



Last month, the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference shone a harsh light on the changes being wrought by climate change. And no region is being so dramatically altered, so quickly, as the Arctic. This, of course, is a problem for Canada. As the summer sea ice retreats and our Arctic shores become more navigable,

we will have to reassess how we assert our sovereignty along our longest coastline.

Modern ice breakers and offshore patrol ships receive most of the headlines about Canadian Arctic defence. However, the importance of adapting to local circumstances, working with and ensuring the security of our northern communities cannot be overstated. At present, it is unlikely that threats to northern sovereignty will involve invading expeditionary forces or hostile missile volleys. Instead, the threat will likely come from small incursions—be it from naval vessels or fishing trawlers—into our territorial waters that will test our ability to respond to these infractions. The recent fact-finding mission to the Arctic by the Senate Standing Committee on National Security, Defence and Veterans Affairs served to reinforce for me that our best bet for being able to respond quickly and nimbly to such events is to ensure that our Arctic communities have the means and support to thrive and adapt in a changing environment.

Canada's 2019 Arctic and Northern Policy Framework recognized the importance of Arctic communities. The framework consists of eight themes that view the Arctic through regionally distinct lenses. This regional approach is promising in renewing Arctic policy and how Canada asserts its Arctic sovereignty as the 21st century unfolds. Such an approach should be taken from a security perspective, as well.

The Canadian Rangers offer insight into how a community-based model of Arctic security can be effective. The Rangers are reservists serving in the northern communities where they grew up, live, and work. They possess historical and cultural knowledge specific to their community and an appreciation of the local effects of climate change. As Roberta Joseph, chief of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation in the Yukon, recently told our committee, participants in the Ranger program go out on their historical lands and learn the skills they will need to work and live in Canada's North. In return, our Armed Forces can rely on capably trained reservists who are able to quickly re-

spond to emergencies in the North; one need look no further than the Rangers response to the COVID-19 pandemic to see this in practice. To improve the Ranger program, the government must focus on improving a recruitment process that remains slow and cumbersome. We must also see investment in local multi-use infrastructure that can serve these Ranger patrols. This will have a pragmatic impact of allowing Rangers to store equipment, train Junior Rangers, and provide physical space for complementary federal organizations and supports.

Further to this, northern defence infrastructure overall can and should be more integrated within our Arctic communities. As Whitney Lackenbauer, Canada Research Chair in the Study of the Canadian North and a professor at Trent University, recently described at committee, "we find ourselves with a singular opportunity right now to find natural alignments between necessary investments in defense and hard security capabilities and what are very well-known, well-documented, and well-articulated civilian needs in the

North." The investments recently announced by the government for a renewed NORAD provides just such an opportunity for collaboration with Arctic communities, with a particular emphasis on Indigenous communities who have been left out of these projects in the past.

Our government has rightly come to realize investment is needed to improve our defence capabilities in the Arctic. Security in the North counts for nothing though if these communities are not given every opportunity to live, work, and thrive. The 2019 Arctic and Northern Policy Framework recognized this. And with investments like the 20-year, \$40-billion announced to modernize NORAD, we have an opportunity to put this policy into practice.

Senator Marty Deacon was appointed to the Senate in February 2018. Her present committee work includes membership on the Standing Senate Committee on National Security, Defence, and Veterans Affairs, as well as the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The Hill Times