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IN THE GRIP OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The Circumpolar Dimension

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Introduction

What a difference a few years will make. Until very recently any discussion of climate change and its impact on the Arctic focussed on convincing the audience that climate change existed and that its present and future impact on the Arctic was substantial. Those who were interested in the international environmental health of the Arctic were preoccupied with issues such as persistent organic pollutants (POPs), mercury and other such transboundary pollutants. It is clear that even as recently as the 1990s Canada's attention both domestically and internationally was not on climate change. Both the Arctic Environmental Strategy (AES) (which was developed solely by Canadians for domestic strategy) and the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) (which involved Canadians and was developed for the circumpolar region) were not concerned with climate change. However, our understanding of this issue has now undergone a dramatic transformation. Climate change has moved from being a non-issue to being the most important issue in any discussion regarding the Arctic.

This paper will examine climate change and its position as the dominant issue in the context of the Canadian Arctic in terms of both domestic and circumpolar issues. This is not to suggest of course that there are no other issues; but the current Arctic discourse is now almost entirely framed in the context of climate change. As it is impossible to examine all impacts of climate change on the Canadian north, this paper will frame some of the major issues to evoke both consideration and discussion.

The Circumpolar Challenge: The Promise and Limits of Adaptation

The greatest challenge posed to Canada by climate change is that the north is about to become a much busier place. The combination of new and increased activities by Canadians, other

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circumpolar nations and the rest of the world creates a wide spectrum of new challenges and opportunities. The north is being transformed by climate change in ways that are not yet fully understood. But the perception that the Arctic is opening for business has resulted in the Arctic increasingly attracting the world's attention. This creates large scale challenges in developing and instituting policies and actions that allow for adaptation to the new conditions created by climate change.

At the heart of the discussion on adaption is the recognition that the Arctic is being transformed and that the ability to reverse the change has been lost. The international community has neither the will nor the capability to reverse the actions that have led to climate change. Hence the discussion has increasingly shifted to adapting to the new climatic realities in the north. However, any effort to "adapt" is complicated by the fact that it is not only climate change that is transforming the north, but that other forces are also acting to transform the Canadian north.

Northern society is undergoing a social transformation. It already has the youngest population in Canada. At the same time the youth in the north are now becoming connected to the rest of the world in ways unimaginable a generation ago. Through new communication technologies the young people are as connected to the electronic global commons as any other Canadian youths in the south. This began with the rapid spread of satellite television but has been vastly expanded by the rapid spread of the internet and other electronic means of communications. This means that the youth of the region are being exposed to the world in a manner that was inconceivable just a generation or two ago. This exposure is transforming the expectations and hopes of many of this generation. While some still wish to follow the traditional way of life, many are demonstrating a preference for adapting to the southern life style. The real challenge here is that both education and employment

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opportunities in the north lag behind southern Canada. Thus in some communities there is a growing disconnect between expectations and opportunities. This in turn has created problems that are taxing the social system. For many youth in the north, climate change is only one of many factors that is transforming their life.

However, the impact of climate change is substantial for those wishing to follow the traditional way of life. As weather patterns change, traditional knowledge needs to adapt. There is growing awareness that it is becoming more dangerous to engage in traditional activities such as hunting and fishing as ice and weather conditions become more unpredictable due to climate change. Equally dire is the impact that climate change is having on the wildlife in the north. For example, there are fears that the polar bear is becoming increasingly threatened in certain regions of the Canadian north. Some analysts believe that the diminishing ice cover of Hudson Bay is resulting in higher seal cub mortality which, in turn, is reducing a primary food source for the bears of the region. If this trend continues, the fear is that the local bear population will soon lose a major food source. The loss of both the seals and the bears would be a very serious blow to the hunters in the area.

At the same time, the north has also been experiencing a political transformation that is often overlooked by southern observers. Initiated by the Berger Inquiry into the possible construction of a pipeline along the Mackenzie Valley, a new political awareness has developed among northerners that has led to new political institutions and leaders. This change would be taking place regardless of climate change, but the attention given to climate change means that southern Canada has been more willing to pay attention to these changes. Accelerated by both land claims settlement and political devolution, the Canadian north is experiencing the development of a new set of leaders. These include individuals such as the co-chairs of the conference - Mary Simon and Tony Penikett and others such as

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Sheila Watt-Cloutier and Nellie Cournoyea - who have emerged to provide a distinctively northern voice to the region. This is a short list of some of the leaders that have emerged. It is the vision and actions of these individuals that are to a large degree influencing (and often determining) the direction that policies of northern adaptation are taking. It is the work of these leaders that are very clearly educating the Canadian public about the impact of climate change and that puts a human face on the issues. While the process of political devolution of power from the federal government to the region has been much slower than many would like to see, important milestones, such as the creation of the territory of Nunavut and the development of a vigorous political system in each of the three territories, have been achieved.

The last major factor transforming the Arctic is the recognition of the vast quantities of natural resources in the north. The perception is that the impact of climate change will make it easier to gain access and therefore exploit the resources. The reality is more complicated. For example, Canada recently moved from being a non-producer of diamonds to being the third largest producer in the world. The ongoing warming trend brought on by climate change has hurt, not helped, the operations of these mines. The ice-roads that are essential for their resupply are facing a decreasing operating period. Recently the roads failed before the fuel oil resupply was completed for one of the mines. It was faced with the choice of either suspending operations or flying the oil in. The choice was made to fly in the oil, but it should be immediately apparent that this was a costly operation. It is not only gold mines that have faced problems. The melting permafrost is likely to add substantial costs to the building of new infrastructure on the land. The construction of a pipeline must now take into account the costs and challenges of securing the pipe to a shifting land base. There are technical solutions to such problems but they come with substantial price-tags.

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But there are some resources that may benefit. There are growing reports that new fish stock such as turbot and shrimp are moving north. These may offer new fishing opportunities. Likewise, it is also expected that as the ice melts there will be increased opportunities for transpolar shipping. When the ice melts completely in the summer months as is soon expected many of the world's shippers are expected to examine the potential of going over the pole as a means of shortening the distance between Asia and Europe. It is uncertain as to when such voyages will begin. While the shipping industry is currently watching the area with interest, there are no signs that such shipping is imminent.

There could be both opportunities and challenges for Canada in the case of new fishing and shipping. New fisheries may offer new sources of protein and employment opportunities for northern Canadians. On the other hand, a new and invading species will often disrupt the existing biosphere. Thus the entry of new species could adversely affect existing stock. The ramifications for the entire food chain could be significant.

The most extensively discussed impact of climate change on shipping is the expected use of the Arctic Ocean as a means of shipping goods between Europe, Asia and North America. On a purely geographical basis, there is no question that many of the existing routes could be shortened if the ice was to be removed. However, it is increasingly being recognized that before such shipping occurs, the ice must be gone for a substantially long period of time on a consistent basis. The word's shipping industry relies on consistency and any delay caused by a sudden re-emergence of ice earlier than expected can have dire economic consequences. In conjunction with the lack of infrastructure support in the north, most observers suspect that transpolar shipping may not occur as quickly as previously thought. Nevertheless, shipping is still expected to increase. Instead of being transpolar in nature, it will be destination-based shipping. That is, it will be arriving north to engage or

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support specific economic activity such as mining or energy development.

There are already indications of how this type of shipping is providing new opportunities. Furthermore, there are equally clear signs that many non-Arctic actors are leading the efforts to capitalize on these developments. For example, South Korean shipbuilders began to realize in the mid 1990s that there may be new shipping opportunities in the Arctic and they began a robust research program into building ice-strengthened commercial vessels. They realized that the Arctic would be losing most of its thicker ice (i.e., multi-year ice) but that ships that operated there year-round would need to be able to operate in first-year ice that reforms in the winter months. The result of this thinking is Samsung Heavy industry's design and building of a new class of ice-strengthened oil tankers that can operate in both first-year ice and ice-free water. They achieved this breakthrough by using a propulsion system known as Azipod. It placed the propeller of the ship on a pod that can rotate 360° under the vessel. The ship is then built with an ice-breaking bow placed on its stern and a regular bow designed to operate in ice-free waters on the front of the ship. These ships are now being used in the Russian north. So the Koreans moved from an appreciation of the new situation to delivery of the actual vessels in slightly over a decade!

What then are the ramifications? First the foregoing demonstrates that new technologies to deal with a transforming Arctic are already being considered, designed and implemented outside of the Arctic. Until these vessels began to appear in Russian waters very few Canadians were even aware that the Koreans were thinking about the subject. Having built the first oil tankers that can now operate economically in both open and ice-covered waters, the Koreans are now planning the construction of similar vessels that will be able to carry liquified natural gas. These ships will be larger than the oil tankers and it is expected that the Koreans will be successful in this venture. Thus there is a new economic player in the

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Arctic.

It is likely that these ships will be used in the Canadian north sometime in the future. The companies developing the oil and gas in the Canadian offshore and high Arctic islands may decide that these vessels offer a better means of bringing the product to market than a pipeline. The ramifications for Canada would be significant. If these vessels are seen as being a more effective means of shipping oil and gas from the offshore and Arctic islands in Canada to market would there be a willingness to build the Mackenzie pipeline? But if these vessels were to be used in the Canadian north would Canada be ready for them? Obviously they would need to conform to existing Canadian regulations. But once they were deemed to have met or exceeded the requirements of the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (AWPPA)*, would Canada be ready to have them operate in the north? Does Canada have the means to ensure that they do operate in conformity with Canadian laws? Are there sufficient search and rescue facilities if they were to run into trouble? What are the current means and technologies for cleaning up under ice if one of them has an accident? The argument has been made by some experts that the technology has not yet been developed to handle an oil spill in ice conditions. It may well be that the technologies exist to get the ships to the areas of thinning ice, but that there are not yet means of cleaning up an environmental incident.

Another interesting ramification of these vessels operating in Canadian waters may be related to Canadian claims of of sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. As long as they are operating within Canadian waters there is no problem. But a problem could occur if they are used in the American Arctic and then need to transit Canadian waters to go to either European or Eastern American markets. Both the Americans and Europeans have restated their position that the Northwest Passage is an international strait. On the one hand, these ships may be in compliance with Canadian laws and therefore Canadian officials will not

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be requiring them to stop as they transit. But if the Americans or the Europeans feel it is necessary to make a political statement by explicitly and publicly stating their refusal to ask Canadian permission to transit the Passage, then any Canadian government would be faced with a public opinion and diplomatic crisis.

Another issue that would arise is whether or not Canada would have the ability to benefit locally from these ships operating in the Arctic. If they are used as a replacement to the Mackenzie Pipeline, they would clearly disrupt the employment that could be gained from its construction. Without the existence of port facilities - which do not now exist - these vessels would be serviced and repaired in foreign ports. Likewise, it is unlikely that northerners would find employment on these vessels as the crews are generally non-North American.

It is not only the Koreans that are developing an Arctic awareness. The Japanese and the Chinese have also noted the impact that climate change is having on the Arctic and the potential impact that this could have for their interests. The Japanese have been funding research in Canada and the United States oriented towards understanding a resource known as gas hydrates. It is their belief that this resource could provide them with an important energy source outside of their current dependency on the Middle East. Gas hydrates are a jelly-like gas that forms at great depths and/or cold water. It is basically a form of natural gas that seeps from the ocean bottom and then forms in semi-solid form. While it offers a very concentrated source of energy, it is also problematic environmentally. While there are currently no economically viable means of raising these resources from the seabed, two possible means are to either reduce the pressure in the area immediately surrounding the hydrates or to heat the region. In the context of either heating or depressurizing part of the Arctic Ocean, it is immediately clear that significant environmental impacts will flow if

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either technique is ultimately utilized. The other problem associated with hydrates is that they produce methane gas when used. Methane is one of the most potent of the greenhouse gases. Thus it seems logical that a large scale use of these resources would only act to add to climate change. What would be the Canadian position in the face of a Japanese decision to exploit these resources? No one would question Canada's right to say yes or no, but would the government be willing to give up the taxation that could be placed on these resources? And if Canada was to allow this industry to develop how would it be overseen? What would be the regulatory requirements? Would there be any effort to offset the impact it would have on the possible increase in climate change? All of these questions will need to be answered if the Japanese devise a means of economically exploiting these resources.

These are only a few examples of how climate change, technology, environmental concerns, economics and new actors are poised to reshape the Canadian Arctic. Climate change is seen as the leading factor, but it should be clear that it is only one of many variables that are currently transforming the Canadian north. The question that follows is what is Canada now doing to prepare? This paper will now turn to the issues concerning the challenges that Canada will face in the circumpolar area.

Climate Change, Canada and the Circumpolar World

The onslaught of the impact of climate change comes at a time when the politics of the circumpolar world are under significant transformation. However, it is the perception of climate change that is accelerating the developing international legal framework and the geopolitical processes that are now occurring. The belief within the international community that the Arctic will soon be open for business has sparked a rush of two main types of international activities. First the international community is now positioning itself

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as competing models of Arctic governance are forming. On the one hand the five coastal Arctic states are trying to balance a desire to protect their own sovereign interests within the Arctic balanced against the knowledge that they need to rely on each other as the Arctic opens up. On the other hand, non-Arctic states are beginning to state their interests along with their desire to be included in any emerging governance system.

The second trend that is now accelerating is the manner in which the Arctic states are beginning to modernize/expand their Arctic military capabilities. Canada, Norway, Russia and the United States have all begun to plan or actually build new capabilities. In every case the main official reason for these actions is the belief that climate change will soon make the Arctic more accessible. It is then assumed that the increase in international activity that will follow will require strengthened abilities and response in the Canadian Arctic.

The issue of Arctic Ocean governance is quickly emerging as a major issue that Canada will need to face. The impact of climate change has finally convinced the international community that this is something that needs to be done. A new debate is now emerging as to how this should be done. The five Arctic states that have continental shelf claims in the Arctic - Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and United States - declared in a meeting in Greenland in May 2008 that there was no need to develop an Arctic treaty. Instead they agreed that all of the required governance systems were already in place.

At the same time there have also been calls to consider strengthening existing regional agreements. Recently, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon has made several speeches in which he has called for the strengthening of the Arctic Council. This is important because the Council is the only multi-lateral body that exists designed to address circumpolar issues. The Council was a Canadian initiative that was created in 1996. Originally Canadian officials had hoped that this body would be able to address all

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political issues pertaining to the circumpolar world. However, due to American reluctance to commit to joining new multi-lateral organizations at the time, significant limits were placed on it. It was given limited organizational abilities. Specifically, it had no independent budget or infrastructure. It depends entirely on the willingness of its members to contribute both resources and manpower. It is specifically forbidden from addressing issues related to security.

Nevertheless, it has proven to be an excellent body to examine the issues surrounding climate change. It was the Arctic Council in cooperation with several other bodies that established the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA). This multi-year, multi-disciplinary study firmly determined the vast arrays of impacts that climate change was having on the Arctic. To a very large degree it was this study that established in the minds of the world's leaders and their public the importance of understanding what was happening. However, the Council has not been as successful in organizing the necessary policy response to the problems that the study highlighted. It is to this end that Canada is now proposing that the Arctic Council be reinvigorated. Since this is such a new initiative, it is too soon to see if the Canadian government will sustain it, nor is it known how the rest of the member states will view such a proposal. The United States has stated in their most recent Arctic Policy statement that they do not favour changing the structure of the Council, but are open to suggestions to the contrary.

If the Arctic Council is strengthened, it may be possible to create some form of a regional based agreement to deal with the international impacts of climate change. This could possibly include agreements in regards to the fisheries, oil and gas development, shared search and rescue plans and capabilities and shared environmental response capabilities to name but a few. It is unlikely that the members of the Council would be willing to create a single treaty

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to deal with these issues. Instead it may prove more politically acceptable to them if there was a series of agreements. At the core however, would be a focus on a region approach.

The third option that is being considered by some is the internationalization of the issues facing the region. The European Union has recently released a policy paper where it suggested that some form of an international agreement or treaty should be considered to provide governance in the region. This has not been well received by the Arctic states. At the same time, there have been suggestions by other non-Arctic states such as China that the Arctic Ocean should be made into the common heritage of Mankind. A very recent op-ed in the *New York Times* suggested that the Arctic could be turned into a large park. The essence of these proposals are that the control of the Arctic states in the area should be reduced. It is therefore easy to understand why such proposals have not received strong support among the Arctic states.

It is too soon to know what the Arctic governance system will look like. But what is clear is that the impacts of climate change in the Arctic have gotten the attention of the international community. The outcome of this particular debate will determine how the international community structures its response to impact of climate change in the Arctic.

Geopolitical Transformation and Climate Change

Perhaps one of the most significant international impacts of climate change has been its impact on the geopolitical calculations of the Arctic states. With the realization that the Arctic is becoming more accessible, several of the Arctic states have begun to reconsider their need for military forces in the region. In particular, Canada, Norway, Russia and the United States have all announced their intent to begin to improve both their surveillance and their enforcement in the Arctic. On the one hand this may only be the actions of states that

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are determined to uphold their interests in their Arctic region. With the expected increase in international activity in the region, it is prudent to begin building new capabilities that can ensure that each nation's laws are respected. On the other hand, it is also possible that the build-up of forces could act to create tension between the Arctic states.

One of the greatest challenges in determining the impact of these actions is the reality that when it comes to the Arctic, this is really a subject in transition. From the end of the Cold War to at least 2002, a discussion of the Arctic states' abilities to operate their militaries and coast guards in the region would have been summed up in one word - reduction. As soon as the core elements of the Cold War dissipated, the Arctic states began to demobilize their military forces. Canada cancelled its decision to buy ten to twelve nuclear-powered submarines; the United States walked away from the construction of a large class of Seawolf SSNs whose design included the ability to fight a war under the ice. Even more stark, the USSR/Russia basically parked its northern fleet and supporting aircraft and walked away from them.

It was only at the beginning of the new century that Canada, Norway and Russia began to consider rebuilding their abilities. The United States is now considering what it needs to do to rebuild its Arctic forces. Iceland is currently facing near bankruptcy because of the economic crisis, but is becoming aware of the need to improve its security. The remaining Arctic states - Finland, Sweden and Denmark - have not yet joined in, but are beginning the process of reconsidering new alliance possibilities amongst themselves.

All of the Arctic nations are now in the process of redefining their Arctic priorities and interests. There has been a literal explosion of new Arctic foreign and defence policies in the past two years. All emphasize the existing good circumpolar relations and the ultimate desire to ensure that the Arctic remains a region of peace and cooperation. However, most

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also point out the requirement to ensure that their security in the region is protected.

Concerning efforts to rebuild northern capabilities, Canada was one of the first states to reconsider its Arctic security. Throughout the 1990s, the main commitment of successive Canadian governments had been to focus on the development of multilateral instruments to ensure that multi-lateral cooperation was enhanced in the region. To this end, the Canadian Government supported first the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and then the Arctic Council. However, in the early 2000s, Canadian governments became concerned that they had allowed their military forces to wither too far. As a result in 2002, the Canadian military recommenced limited Arctic military exercises. This was then followed in the mid-2000s by renewed examinations of Canadian policy first by the Martin Government and then by the Harper Government. These were followed by the Harper Government's commitments to rebuild some of Canada's capabilities. These include but are not limited to the building of six to eight Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessels (small patrol vessels capable of sailing through one metre thick, first-year ice); a training base to be placed in the high Arctic (in Resolute); a refuelling site in the middle of the Northwest Passage (Nanisivik); a new large icebreaker; and a commitment to improving Canadian surveillance capability. At the time of this writing, staff work is being prepared on each promise but it is not yet known if the government will deliver. In the past, the Canadian government has had a record of making significant promises to improve the country's Arctic capabilities until economic conditions deteriorated in the country. The country is now experiencing the effects of the current international economic crisis, but there has been no indication that the projects will be cancelled. By the same token none have yet been advanced to the actual construction stage.

The Russians faced an almost complete melt-down of their forces throughout the 1990s.

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Their navy seldom ventured out of harbour and most ships were allowed to deteriorate to a state of being non-operational. Much of the nuclear-powered submarine fleet was left to literally rot in harbour and required substantial funding assistance from the United States and Norway, and subsequently other members of the G-8, to assist in the safe decommissioning of their nuclear power-plants. However, by the beginning of the 2000s the Russian government changed from the pro-western Boris Yeltsin administration to the more assertive regimes of Vladimir Putin and then Dmitry Medvedev. At the same time, the Russian economy improved substantially throughout the 2000s as its oil and gas industry recovered as the price of oil sky-rocketed.

The new resources were soon being applied to the armed forces. In 2007, the Russian Navy successfully conducted a large exercise of the northern fleet (including its remaining aircraft carrier) all the way from the Barents Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. This was repeated in 2008 with a voyage to the Carribean Sea. At the same time, the Russian airforce resumed long-range bomber patrols in August of 2007. These have included a large number of flights over the Arctic close to the airspace of Canada, United States and Norway among others. These flights by TU-95 and TU-160 aircraft had stopped at the end of the Cold War.

The Russians have also announced their intention to rebuild their northern fleet. They plan to build up to six new SSBN (Project 995 Borey Class); 2 new SSN (Project 885 Yesen); as well as the ships to man up to five to six carrier battle-groups by the end of the 2020s. The Russians have also been issuing a continuing series of policy documents since 2008 in which they continually state their belief that the Arctic is central to the strategic well-being of the Russian state.

Norway has also been issuing a number of documents. Like the Russians they also point to the central role played by the Arctic in the security of their state. They also state

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their belief that there is no military threat in the Arctic. Their official policy is that they see no military threat in the region. They are also stressing their good relations with their Russian neighbour. However, while they say this, they are now completing the construction of five new frigates (the Fridtjof Nansen class) now being built in Spanish yards. What is striking about these vessels is the fact that they are outfitted with an Aegis integrated weapons system. These vessels are some of the smallest that this system has been fitted on and give the Norwegian navy an extremely powerful set of new units. At the same time, in December 2008, the Norwegian Air Force selected the American built F-35 Joint Strike Fighter as its next generation fighter. Once again, with this selection, Norway has clearly indicated that it is prepared to dedicate considerable resources on outfitting its forces with the most advanced war-fighting equipment that is available. Therefore, while Norway is talking about cooperation with its neighbours, it is also preparing for conflict.

The United States became concerned about military operations in the Arctic in 2000 when the navy began to examine the issue of operating in an ice-free Arctic. The US administration's concern was made official in early 2009 when they released their policy on the Arctic. The policy listed four main concerns: 1) Altered national policies on homeland security and defence in the Arctic region; 2) the effects of climate change and increasing human activity in the Arctic region; 3) the establishment and ongoing work of the Arctic Council; and 4) the growing awareness that the Arctic region is both fragile and rich in resources.

The Americans have been a little slower in rebuilding their military capabilities because they had maintained substantial forces throughout the 1990s. The United States kept at least three wings of Alaska National Guard F-15s (22 per wing) in Alaska. It also was able to maintain its submarine force. However, there are suggestions that the most recent

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additions to the fleet (the Virginia class) may not be good under-ice boats. This is not known for sure. What is known is that the Americans have recently publicised the fact that they are still training in the Arctic. In March 2009 two LA class SSNs were reported conducting an Ice Exercise off the north coast of Alaska. This is not the first time. In the early 2000s a British submarine (HMS Tireless) suffered an accident while conducting a similar exercise with the American navy.

There is not the same amount of military activity among the other Arctic states, but it is becoming apparent that they are interested in exploring new arrangements. In early 2009, it was announced that the Nordic states (including Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Iceland) are considering a "declaration of solidarity". It is not yet certain what this means, but it seems to have some security ramifications. There has even been some speculation that Finland and Sweden may be thinking about seeking membership in NATO.

Overall, it should be clear that there has been a substantial increase in military action, building and planning from the level of activity in the 1990s. It is too soon to know where this is going, but the trend warrants closer examination.

Conclusion

Climate change is transforming the Arctic. Equally important to the physical transformation that is occurring is the perception of access that is now emerging internationally. The world believes that climate change equates to melting ice. Melting ice in turn means access. It is this access that many are now seeing as new opportunities. The reality of climate change is much more complicated. But that does not really matter. What does matter is that the world is increasingly viewing the Arctic as a new frontier. As a result the states that border the Arctic Ocean now are faced with increasing interest in access. Further fuelling this process

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are a wide-range of other factors such as technological advancement, resource development, societal transformation and new and emerging geopolitical realities. All are being influenced by climate changes and with each other.

Canada now finds itself at the centre of these forces. Successive Canadian Governments have previously been able to avoid Arctic issues because climatic conditions prevented most outside influences from accessing the region. This is no longer the case. Even if Canadian leaders wanted to be able to ignore the Arctic, they no longer have the luxury to do so. The questions that now arise are what should Canada do? How can these new forces best be marshalled to favour Canadian interests and values? These must now be the core focus of Canadian policy-makers when looking to the north.

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