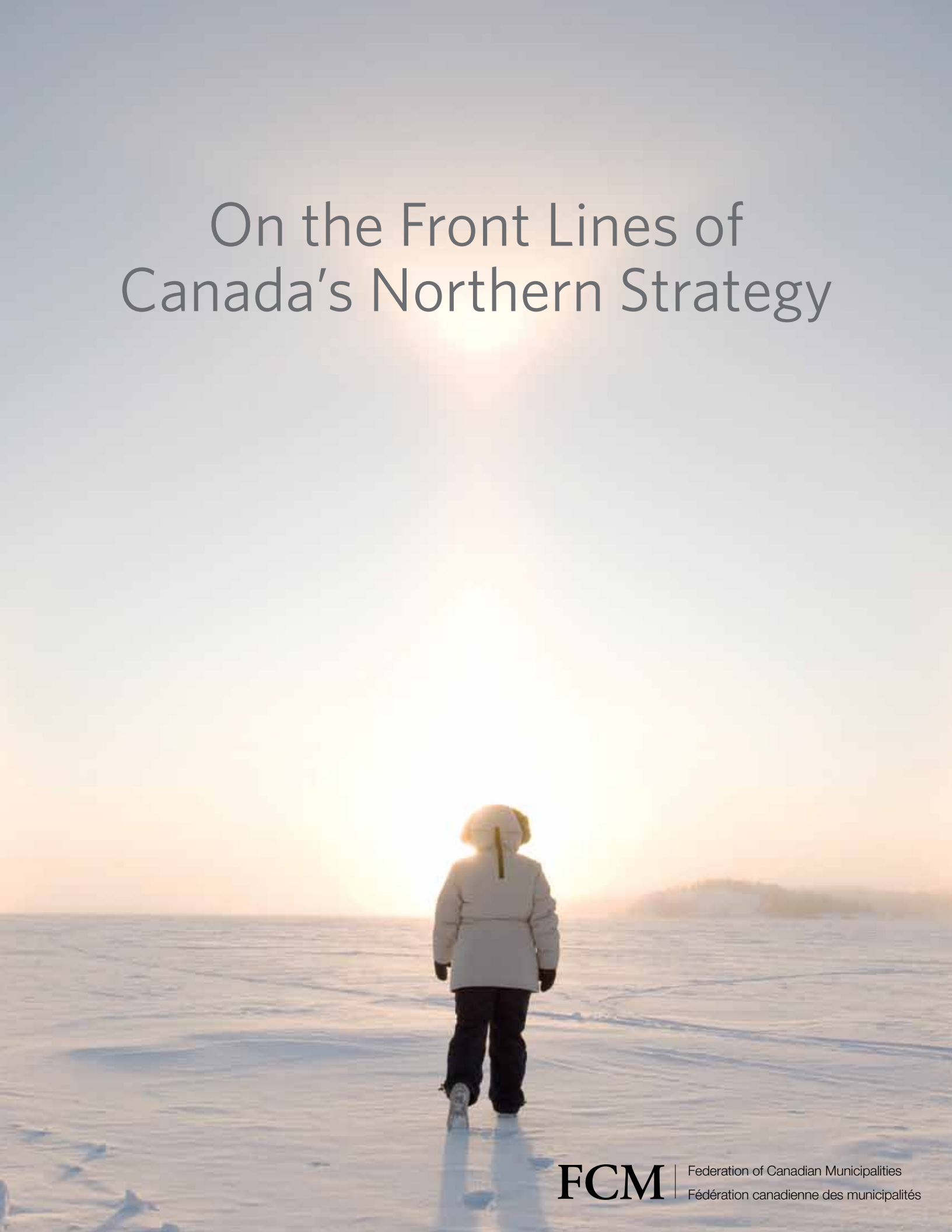


# On the Front Lines of Canada's Northern Strategy



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**FCM** | Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
Fédération canadienne des municipalités

# Message from the President of FCM

The North is essential to Canada's identity, security and economic development, but somehow we have failed as a country to invest in a long-term vision of its future.

To this day, thousands of Northerners remain trapped in almost Third World living conditions, lacking the infrastructure and services to support Canada's growing economic, military and environmental priorities in the region. As this report shows, nowhere are the destructive effects of short-term, ad-hoc policy decisions clearer than in Canada's North.

A strong Canada starts with strong communities. As mayors and councillors, we know that building communities does not happen overnight. It takes a long-term vision – and sustained investments – to build the basic public services Canadians need to raise their families and expand their businesses. These investments are necessary to support national priorities from defense to trade to environmental protection.

The Government of Canada's Northern Strategy provides an excellent starting point for building a new vision for the North. Now the federal government must work closely with front-line municipal leaders to develop a long-term plan to build the infrastructure necessary to sustain northern communities. This plan must also be driven by the imperative to adapt to a changing climate. We must make the most of every dollar invested in the region, particularly by leveraging the billions of dollars in military investments to lay the foundation for sustained growth and prosperity in northern communities. This can only be achieved through greater partnerships between governments.

Success in the North is attainable, but we must start today.

Our sincere thanks to FCM'S Northern Forum, the authors of the report, and all those who supported and assisted in its preparation.

Hans Cunningham

President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

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Ken has written and spoken widely on Arctic and Aboriginal issues, serving as a consultant for governments, Aboriginal organizations and international agencies. He is the author and co-author of numerous books on the North, most recently *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North*, which won the 2009 Donner Prize for books on Canadian Public Policy.

For almost 20 years, **Greg Poelzer** has been an enthusiastic advocate for northern and international post-secondary education and research. His passion for northern politics and development grew out of his experience as a doctoral student at the University of Alberta where he taught political science in aboriginal social work programs. In 1991, he spent four months in Siberia working in remote Indigenous communities, and has been to Russia more than 20 times since. Prior to his current position at the University of Saskatchewan, Poelzer was chair of the Department of Political Science at UNBC and served as the founding chair of the first bachelor's degree program in northern studies in Canada.

In 2003, Poelzer joined the Department of Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan and was appointed the inaugural dean of undergraduate studies of the University of the Arctic (UArctic), an international consortium of 110 learning institutions from the eight Arctic states. He provided visionary leadership in the development of the circumpolar studies curriculum which has grown from 66 students internationally in 2003 to more than 5000 by 2008.

This September, Poelzer was appointed interim director of the International Centre for Governance and Development of the University of Saskatchewan.



## Executive Summary

Throughout its history, Canada has had an on-again, off-again fascination with the North. These sporadic and short-lived periods of interest were usually sparked by international military endeavors or the chance to profit from the North's vast natural resources.

In Ottawa, one government after another failed to turn any one of these episodes into a sustained vision for the North. As a result, Canada never developed a long-term strategy to protect its national interests in the region or improve the almost Third World living conditions that persist in many communities to this day.

The northern territories of Canada are often perceived as empty, with little in the way of cultural and economic life; the reality could not be more different. The Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are home to a growing population of over 100,000 Canadians. Most communities are well over 100 years old, with rich social and cultural histories. The three territories and the provincial North are also the site of major natural resource industries, including mining and energy, as well as important manufacturing and tourism centers. Canadians in the North contribute more than \$7 billion to the Canadian economy.

Now the North is back in the spotlight, and there's reason to hope this time the fascination may be longer lasting. The question is whether we will put the opportunity to better use.

The severe impact of climate change and the growing desire of countries to access the North's key trade routes and untapped natural resources have fueled an international debate about the North's future. In Ottawa, parties across the political spectrum have made northern issues a priority, and the current federal government has put more emphasis on the North than any other in recent memory.

What Ottawa needs now is a true partnership with northern communities. It needs a concrete plan and timetable for investing in northern infrastructure. And it also needs a direct role for locally-elected municipal leaders in its agenda for the North. The federal government needs to work more closely with front-line municipal

leaders to build the infrastructure necessary to sustain their communities and support new industry, tourism, research, and military activities.

Without adequate fiscal tools, northern municipalities are struggling to provide the quality roads and bridges, clean drinking water, and community facilities that are the backbone of a strong economy and a decent quality of life. Municipal infrastructure is increasingly under assault by climate change, which is:

- destroying the ice roads that are a life-line for many remote communities
- eroding shorelines in front of households, businesses and public structures long protected by pack ice that is now breaking up earlier and earlier every season
- melting the permafrost that sits below local streets, bridges, and community buildings

Recent federal investments are helping, but they are not enough to build the modern infrastructure and transportation linkages northern communities need to grow stronger and more secure over the long-term. Given its current fiscal constraints, it is at best uncertain whether or not the federal government will increase these investments in the near term.

The surest way to jumpstart the long-term infrastructure investments needed in northern communities is to leverage the billions of dollars in new military spending intended to bolster Canada's northern sovereignty. This would in fact be consistent with the federal government's 2007 Northern Strategy, which laid out a vision for the North that integrates an increased military presence with building healthier communities, protecting the environment, and diversifying the regional economy.

It's time Canada caught up. We need to make the most of every dollar we invest in the North.

In the past, military investments in Canada's North were made hastily, usually under the pressures of war or the prodding of our American ally. The current situation – without the threat of imminent invasion or attack, and with a broader sense of Canada's northern interests and responsibilities – holds better prospects for long-term planning.

Other countries, including Russia, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Greenland and the United States, have used military investments to improve northern community infrastructure. Properly directed, these investments can underpin economic development and provide a foundation for stabilization and growth.

It's time Canada caught up. We need to make the most of every dollar we invest in the North. We need to define success as more than a short-term increase in drilling, mining and projecting military power. We need to lay the foundation for sustained growth and prosperity in northern communities to lift northerners out of poverty while supporting Canada's long-term economic and military interests in the region.

The first step is for the federal government to sit down with its provincial, territorial and municipal counterparts to define local needs and search out opportunities

where coordination between governments would benefit communities and support our national interests.

This would foster local support for new economic and military initiatives and save tax dollars by eliminating duplication and overlap in federal, territorial, and municipal investments.

The second step is to develop a coordinated, long-term strategy for protecting, improving and expanding the infrastructure necessary to build secure, sustainable communities in a secure, sustainable North.

By acting now and acting together, governments can leverage new investments and public attention to protect our long-term interests in the North and give the next generation of northerners the future they deserve. It's too important an opportunity to waste.

## Recommendations

Looking specifically at opportunities for northern communities, and building a more comprehensive view of what Canada needs to do in the areas of quality of life, infrastructure, sovereignty and defence, three key recommendations emerge. Underpinning all of these recommendations, however, is a realization that Canada must revamp its approach to the North, to create a new northern vision.

While we applaud ourselves for being a northern nation and while a significant portion of Canada's past and future prosperity rests on northern resources, we lag behind the rest of the world in developing and incorporating the North into the nation. There is a great deal to be done – but it must be done as part of an aggressive, assertive and proud national strategy to rediscover our collective northern obligations, and to build a North ready for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 1. Develop a long-term plan to invest in northern infrastructure

Canada needs a precise statement of the infrastructure needs and local aspirations of northern communities, and then a long-term plan to meet these identified needs.

The Government of Canada must work with its provincial, territorial and municipal partners to undertake this inventory and then develop and fund a long-term plan to improve core infrastructure in the North that will support community, military and commercial needs, and ultimately support and strengthen our sovereignty claims over the region.

This plan should not take the form of a community-by-community shopping list, but rather a description of the needs and requirements of northern communities, a set of standards connected to what southern Canadians take for granted and consistent with international circumpolar standards.

## 2. Make Canada's North the world leader in climate change adaptation

Many needs are driven by the imperative to adapt to a changing climate. A long-term infrastructure plan for the North would make Canada a world leader in developing the strategies, technologies and financing needed to adapt to climate change – lessons that could be shared and exported to the rest of the globe.

Canadians need to know – in detail – what is required to bring northern services and infrastructure up to national and international standards, and to do so with climate change as a key and new driver.

## 3. Use smart military investments as the backbone for building the New North

Once (or if) the Government of Canada decides that it must actively and aggressively project its sovereignty over the North through military presence, it must recognize the logistical challenges of protecting the North and should undertake a major infrastructure initiative in Northern Canada.

Protecting Canada's northern sovereignty has been tied to billions of dollars in new military investments. In order to implement and measure the progress of the Northern Strategy, the federal government must provide a full accounting of all investments intended to support the strategy across federal departments.

These investments should be developed with civilian and private sector interests in mind and should therefore form the foundation for long-term development in the region. Some of the projects – like the Dempster Highway before it – could drive integrated strategies supporting military training operations, human capacity building and infrastructure development at the same time.

### *Information technology*

It is always assumed that major infrastructure investments begin with huge ticket items, like roads and railways. Led or supported by the Canadian Forces and local municipalities, the Government of Canada should begin instead by building a world-leading information technology infrastructure for remote regions, focusing in particular on service access and bandwidth improvement. Doing this with Canadian business could help produce a global business opportunity. Creating a next generation information technology network to provide a wide range of services – e-government, e-entertainment/e-culture, e-health, e-education, remote work, etc. – will improve the quality of life in the North, and connect the region to the country and the world very effectively. The effective provision of IT services across the North should become a hallmark of Canada's 21<sup>st</sup> century commitment to the country's remote citizens, as well as any military stationed there.



*Make partnership official policy*

The Canadian Forces are strongly committed to working closely with communities. Properly empowered by the Government of Canada, the

Canadian Forces would collaborate with local and regional authorities on the development of shared strategies for regional development. This already happens on a minor community-level scale, with generally good results. There is little doubt that the Canadian Forces would embrace a northern-wide responsibility for building the tools of northern defence and northern nation – and community-building at the same time. It is important the northern communities understand, in full, the military's plans for infrastructure and development in northern regions and that these aspirations are coordinated with the needs of communities in the North. If nothing else, such coordination will ensure that northern people are not surprised by military announcements and that any Canadian Forces spending is designed to maximize the benefits for the North.

There are great opportunities for Canadians, including the military, to learn from northerners. The Canadian Rangers, which draw heavily on Indigenous participants in the North, provide an exemplary illustration of the national benefits of calling on northerners for help. This model can be expanded for military and strategic purposes, providing additional opportunities for northerners to engage with their country and for the nation to benefit from northern experience.

There are great opportunities for Canadians, including the military, to learn from northerners.

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The government has also set aside billions of dollars for new military initiatives designed to bolster Canada's northern sovereignty. Other countries, from Russia to Finland to the United States, have leveraged military investments to improve northern infrastructure and lay the foundation for sustained economic growth. Canada must do the same.

What Ottawa is missing is a true partnership with northern communities. It has no concrete plan or timetable for investing in northern communities, and it has given little direct role to locally-elected municipal leaders in its agenda for the North. This must change.

Without adequate fiscal tools, northern municipalities struggle to provide the quality roads and bridges, clean drinking water, and community facilities that are the backbone of a strong economy and a decent quality of life. Already crumbling infrastructure is increasingly under assault by climate change.

By acting now and acting together, governments can leverage new investments and public attention to protect our long-term interests in the North and give the next generation of northerners the future they deserve. It's too important an opportunity to waste.

## II. Setting the context: The North in Canadian affairs

From confederation through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Arctic issues flickered weakly on the Canadian political landscape. The country, closely tied to our southern boundary with the United States, paid only passing interest to the region. Short-term events like whaling at Herschel Island, the Klondike Gold Rush and the construction of defence projects during World War II, garnered political attention and boosted public interest. In each instance however, the interest of the Government of Canada and the public at large in the North proved transitory, and the country shied away from long-term commitments and avoided significant national investments.

This pattern changed after World War II. The combination of the Cold War, the rush for northern resources (that was in part sparked by the Diefenbaker government's Roads to Resources program) and the growth of the welfare state resulted in a wave of government investments, the creation of new communities, significant improvements in northern infrastructure and major societal changes. These activities were largely southern-driven, providing an effective illustration of internal colonialism. Northern residents, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, territorial and provincial, appreciated many of the investments but resented the lack of regional input into decisions and priorities.

## A History lesson in northern sovereignty:

### The 1898 Klondike Gold Rush and the role of strong communities

The current emphasis on borders and military and sovereignty issues in the North is not new. Indeed, these are the questions that have long defined and shaped the history of the Canadian North. With rare exceptions, typically related to short-lived enthusiasm around resource discoveries, the region has rarely generated national interest for reasons other than romantic symbolism and foreign threats.

During the Klondike Gold Rush – one of the single best-known events in Canadian history and the source of enormous international excitement at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – Canadians became engaged by such strategic questions. In addition to the famed North West Mounted Police detachments sent North, Canada dispatched the Yukon Field Force (complete with Gatling gun) to defend Canadian interests against potential American threats. During the same period, the country also engaged in a lengthy and high-profile debate with the United States and Great Britain over the precise placement of the Canada-US boundary in the far North, a precursor to current negotiations.

The Gold Rush transformed Dawson City, at best a logging camp and miners supply depot before the gold finds, into what was, for a short time, the largest city in Canada west of Winnipeg. This bustling centre, complete with civic government, a city jail, tax collectors and bylaw officers and dreams of rail connections to the south, was a major factor in demonstrating Canadian sovereignty over the Yukon Territory to our covetous American neighbours.



Even as a new North emerged, the region showed up only sporadically on the national scene. Short-lived excitement about new mines and roads, occasional concern about American and Russian designs on the North, and rare interest in northern peoples and communities left the impression that all was fine in the North. Vigorous Canadian reaction to the navigation of the Northwest Passage by the US vessels *Manhattan* and *Polar Sea* demonstrated the bottom line of Canadian commitment to the North. Only marginally interested on our own, Canadians quickly became passionate if and when outsiders descended on the area or threatened our symbolic hold on a region that defined our national mythology but defied inclusion in the realities of nation-building.

Clearly, national defence has been and will continue to be an important motivating factor in the country's focus on the North. This focus can derive benefit from and provide benefit to the places northerners call home: the region's cities, towns, villages and hamlets.

### III. Quality of life in Northern Canada: A “Northern Third World?”

Canada’s most serious failing in the North has been its ongoing inability to bring living conditions in northern communities in line with the rest of the country.

Northern Canada has long been portrayed as a Third World nation in our own backyard. The lack of reliable infrastructure, jobs, education, and health care in Northern Canada contributes and exacerbates a wide-range of social, economic and health problems (most often faced by Third World countries). Northern Canadians have consistently faced a lower life expectancy, increased child mortality, and higher incidences of health problems related to increased drinking, smoking and obesity. On average 84.6 per cent of Canadians have access to a regular doctor compared to 77.8 per cent in the Yukon, 38.7 per cent in NWT and 11.8 per cent Nunavut.



Furthermore, compared to their southern counterparts, northerners lack access to higher education and are faced with unemployment rates that regularly exceed the national average, especially in the smaller remote communities. Coupled with a shortage of adequate housing and reliable infrastructure, northern municipalities have become transient communities that are unable to sufficiently provide for, or retain their citizens.

### IV. The North in national politics

The current federal government has made the development and integration of the North a national priority. Regular visits to the region, promises of increased investments in military infrastructure, and an openness to consider other approaches to regional improvement have demonstrated the depth and extent of the Conservative government’s commitment.

Importantly, the North has not become a partisan issue. While emphasis varies a little, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party have likewise made formidable commitments to the region and clearly appreciate the symbolic and practical importance of the region. All three national parties understand the fundamental importance of responding to Aboriginal aspirations in the North as well, and to resolving outstanding issues relating to land claims and the implementation of settlements in order, among other objectives, to enable a continuance of mineral extraction and commercial opportunities. Canada has not seen such a broad commitment to the North

### Canada's Northern Strategy: A starting point

In July 2009, the Government of Canada released *Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future*, to address the social, economic and environmental challenges facing Northern Canada. The strategy articulates and delineates an unprecedented commitment by the federal government to help the North become "a healthy, prosperous and secure region within a strong and sovereign Canada".

The Strategy envisions four key outcomes for Canada's North:

- Self-reliant individuals live in healthy, vital communities, manage their own affairs and shape their own destinies.
- The northern tradition of respect for the land and the environment is paramount and the principles of responsible and sustainable development anchor all decision-making and action.
- Strong, responsible, accountable governments work together for a vibrant, prosperous future for all – a place whose people and governments are significant contributing partners to a dynamic, secure Canadian federation.
- The government patrols and protects our territory through enhanced presence on the land, in the sea and over the skies of the Arctic.

This vision is conveyed through the Northern Strategy in several priorities including exercising Canada's Arctic sovereignty, which is defined as:

1. maintaining a strong military presence in the North
2. enhancing the stewardship through stronger regulations and
3. advancing the geographic and geological knowledge of the region

The other priorities are listed as promoting social and economic development, protecting our environmental heritage, and improving and devolving northern governance.

Over the past year, the government has launched numerous initiatives and programs supporting the strategy including \$50 million to establish an Economic Development Agency for the North and \$90 million for the renewal of the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development program.

In practice, however, the part of the strategy that the federal government has placed the most emphasis on is increasing the military presence in the North. The government has linked billions of dollars in new military investments to protecting Canada's northern sovereignty. In order to implement and measure the progress of the Northern Strategy, the federal government must provide a full accounting of all investments intended to support the strategy across federal departments.

Although Canada's Northern Strategy is one of the most comprehensive federal northern plans ever presented to Canadians, there is more to be done to align resources and achieve greater gains for the benefit of northern citizens and Canada's claim on Arctic sovereignty. The strategy fails to incorporate northern provinces, lacks sufficient detail to provide the guidance for sustained resources Canada's military needs to make a long-term coordinated commitment with local communities, and for the most part does not lay out a clear plan for expanding or renewing core public infrastructure in the North to support other sovereignty-related activities.

since the Diefenbaker government in the 1950s and 1960s and, one could argue, the current multi-party interest in the region likely represents the most comprehensive commitment to the North in Canadian history. If there ever was a time to reposition the North and to get the attention of all Canadians, this is certainly that time.

Northern issues feature prominently in national priorities, and there is abundant evidence that Canadians are concerned about the country's hold on the Far North. In the past, such enthusiasm has proven to be short-lived and without much substance. This presents a significant opportunity for the federal government to make real, enduring change.

Canada's Northern Strategy, launched in 2007, includes broad and ambitious principles to guide northern development. What the strategy is missing, however, is a true partnership with northern communities. The federal government has no concrete plan or timetable for investing in northern infrastructure, and it has given little direct role to locally-elected municipal leaders in its agenda for the North. This must change.

## V. Municipal governments in the North

**M**unicipal governments meet the day-to-day needs of their communities and provide vital support for local commercial, military, and scientific endeavours. Many maintain and operate almost all basic local services and infrastructure, from airfields, to local roads, to drinking water and sanitation services, to community and recreation centres, policing and fire protection, and in many cases, housing and health services.

These governments also serve as a training ground and focal point for community leaders who play pivotal roles in local economic development and regional and even national politics. In communities like these, where civil society is often weak or non-existent, municipal government provides a viable and attractive alternative for residents committed to improving their communities.

Despite their critical role in northern life, beside the territorial capitals and a few of the larger regional centres, most northern municipal governments are much smaller and less empowered than their southern counterparts. Public financing looks quite different in most of these communities, with the bulk of municipal revenues derived from federal or territorial government transfers.

In short, although they appear “weaker” on paper than their southern counterparts, municipal governments in the North often play an outsized role in northern prosperity and quality of life. Any national ambitions and projects in the North must embrace these local governments to maximize success both nationally and locally.



## VI. Municipal challenges

Like municipalities across the country, northern municipalities lack the fiscal tools to meet growing needs, new challenges and responsibilities offloaded by other governments. Municipalities collect just 8 cents of every tax dollar paid in Canada, which has forced many to defer infrastructure maintenance and repairs, creating the \$123 billion municipal infrastructure deficit.

Without adequate fiscal tools, northern municipalities are struggling to provide the quality roads and bridges, clean drinking water, and community facilities that are the backbone of a strong economy and a decent quality of life. Municipal infrastructure is increasingly under assault by climate change, which is destroying the ice roads

### Climate change adaptation issues in the North

The impacts of climate change are higher in Canada's North than in almost any other region of the world. Warming temperatures, changing precipitation and land ice conditions, melting glaciers and sea ice, earlier springs, increasingly volatile weather and shifts in the distribution of animals and flora are all occurring at a faster rate in the North than anywhere else Canada, and even more quickly than projected by climate models.

The impacts of climate change pose enormous risks to northern economic activity and to traditional values. Successfully adapting to climate change will be essential to securing the future of northern communities.

The primary economic risks are to the region's infrastructure, including its roads, buildings and energy systems, as well as to the industrial facilities that support the North's energy and mining operations. Evidence from northern communities indicates that the unprecedented rate of permafrost melting will affect nearly every type of built structure in the region<sup>1</sup>. A large proportion of this infrastructure will need to be redesigned for new climatic conditions.

Scientists have estimated that adapting all vulnerable buildings across the Northwest Territories alone could cost \$230 million. These estimates are likely conservative, as one community alone (Inuvik) is facing costs of approximately \$140 million to repair buildings affected by permafrost degradation<sup>2</sup>. In order to deal with these impacts of climate change it is clear that communities in Canada's North will need a much stronger capacity to adapt, which in turn will require technical and financial support from the rest of Canada.



<sup>1</sup> National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (2009). *True North. Adapting Infrastructure to Climate Change in Northern Canada*.

<sup>2</sup> Angus and Mitchell (2009). Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment, and Natural Resources

that are a life-line for many remote communities, and melting the permafrost that sits below local streets, bridges, and community buildings.

Northern municipalities need help and they need to be part of a national strategy for bringing the North more fully into Confederation. To maximize the contributions these communities can make to this national project, as well as to realize the benefits of new national investments in the North, northern municipal leaders together with their territorial, provincial and federal counterparts will, among other issues, need to consider and adjust to the following northern municipal challenges and realities:

- **Limited resources:** Nationally, most municipal revenue comes from the property tax which does not grow with the economy, although many northern communities, that have limited tax bases, rely heavily on transfers from provincial and territorial governments. From these limited revenue sources, municipalities are forced to deliver a broad and growing suite of local services, from transportation infrastructure, to water and waste water services, to housing and community safety services, and recreation and community centres. These fiscal challenges are accentuated in the North, where taxing authorities and capacities are weaker, and services more costly to deliver.
- **Infrastructure deficit:** The municipal infrastructure deficit stands at an estimated \$123 billion nationwide. Municipal leaders have limited fiscal capacity and growing responsibilities often offloaded by other orders of government. They are also legally required to balance their books. They have maintained critical services by transforming their structural financial deficit into an infrastructure deficit by reducing infrastructure maintenance and replacement expenditures. The result: a crippling infrastructure deficit that compromises national productivity and local quality of life. This reality is faced in the North as it is elsewhere, although the scope and nature of the municipal infrastructure deficit there will differ from the south due to different service responsibilities, fiscal capacity and infrastructure condition.
- **Poor infrastructure:** The combination of small populations, isolation and high costs has meant that many northern municipalities operate with facilities that are below the norm in Canada. Proper water treatment facilities, housing, transportation links, emergency medical facilities, cultural and sports facilities for youth, broad band access, are only some of the basic infrastructure issues that many southern Canadians take for granted. The situation is past critical in some settlements and merely a national embarrassment in others. Ironically, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Canadian North had better infrastructure than the northern regions of many countries; now Canada is significantly behind in this crucial area.

Northern municipalities need help and they need to be part of a national strategy for bringing the North more fully into Confederation.

- **Small populations:** With fewer than 150,000 people spread over three territories and the northern regions of half a dozen provinces, northern municipalities are typically small and isolated. There are only two communities in the territorial North with more than 10,000 people – a situation that does not hold in other circumpolar nations. These small populations mean that economies of scale can seldom be achieved for many municipal services driving up costs to be funded from what is already a limited taxable population.
- **Isolation and remoteness:** Most northern municipalities are isolated and remote from other settlements and from major centres. This means that they must cope with their issues on their own. This distance means supplies and specialized expertise needed to deliver local services must be shipped in, increasing costs and often compromising the service quality.
- **Winter:** Winter defines much of Canadian life and no more so than in the Canadian North. Canada could be a world leader in developing solutions to winter conditions, but it is not so at present. As a consequence, northern communities have not been able to capitalize on new technologies, new urban and housing design and other opportunities to overcome the challenges of winter.
- **High cost of living:** Remoteness and climate add significantly to the cost of living, particularly in smaller municipalities. Basic costs can be crippling expensive, making economic development very difficult and adding to the social challenges.
- **Transiency:** Northerners, particularly non-Aboriginal people, move around a great deal. The constant movement of key people – on a seasonal or permanent basis – has enormous implications for the provision of services and the continuity of regional and public life. This did not traditionally hold for Aboriginal people, but that is starting to change, particularly among the well-educated.
- **Skilled and professional personnel:** Northern communities face a systemic challenge in finding properly trained professionals (doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers and others) able to and willing to work in the North. The high turnover in these professions adds to social instability in the region. These same challenges affect municipal operations as well, which often require specialized expertise not always found in local populations, and therefore requiring temporary workers brought in from other regions at higher costs with an additional cost to the municipalities for a lack of continuity in local expertise.
- **Northern science and research:** Not enough is known about the North – its climate, ecology, social environments, economic realities and political cultures. Canada is the only circumpolar country without a northern university, and it shows in terms of usable and applicable research results and the lack of a well-trained local labour force.

Not enough is known about the North – its climate, ecology, social environments, economic realities and political cultures.

- **Boom and bust economies:** Northern communities follow the ebb and flow of local and regional resource development. When the resource sector is booming, opportunities and prosperity abound; when prices, demand or availability of resource falls, the same communities can suffer sharp declines in population, business closures and general difficulties.
- **Government dependency:** Conversely, northern communities are among the most government-dependent in Canada. This has created a long-term confrontational relationship with governments and created regional and local economies that are strongly reliant on government funding. Municipal governments are more reliant on territorial funding than their counterparts in the south which makes long-term planning and building a local culture of accountability more challenging.
- **Adjusting to Aboriginal self-government and territorial devolution:** The exciting transformation of northern politics in recent years has had a profound effect on northern municipalities. The localization of jobs and political authority has shifted the decision-making cultures, created both opportunities and challenges, and required a major adjustment to the reality of Aboriginal control over their affairs.

Recent federal investments in roads, water systems, affordable housing, and broadband internet are helping, but they are not enough to build the modern infrastructure and transportation linkages northern communities need to grow stronger and more secure over the long-term. Given its current fiscal constraints, it is at best uncertain whether or not the federal government will consider increasing these investments in the near term.

Waiting for Ottawa to get its books in order, however, will only prolong the hardship in communities and weaken Canada's northern presence. Immediate action is required.

To jump-start the transformational investments needed in northern communities, governments need to work together to leverage the billions of dollars in new military spending set aside to bolster Canada's northern sovereignty. This would in fact be consistent with the federal government's 2007 Northern Strategy, which laid out a vision for the North that integrates an increased military presence with building healthier communities, protecting the environment, and diversifying the regional economy.

## VII. Northern communities and National Defence

While some communities have some military presence – typically short-term – the military and therefore issues of strategy and sovereignty do not factor strongly in local affairs.

Defence issues figured prominently during the Second World War, when US concerns about the defence of Alaska and the provisioning of the United Kingdom resulted in massive investments in northern infrastructure. In a very short period, 1942-1944, much of the current pattern for northern settlement and development was determined by way of a series of hastily planned military initiatives. In short order, the American government commissioned, and the Canadian government accepted, a series of truly impressive projects:

- the Northwest Staging Route airfields for the lend-lease commitments to Russia
- the 1,500-mile long Alaska Highway (poorly built in war time)
- the CANOL pipeline from Norman Wells, NWT into the Yukon – removed shortly after the war – and a series of supporting elements in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories
- Project Crimson airfields in the Eastern Arctic, and
- dozens of other initiatives ranging from subsidiary roads – the Haines Road and the Alaska Highway –, telephone systems, additional airfields, community development projects – especially along the Alaska Highway – and the like.

These undertakings, completed under the pressures and worries of a global war, shaped much of the post-war development of the Canadian North and its communities. The requirement that the Alaska Highway be reconstructed to proper civilian standard, for example, diverted money and attention away from more regionally

significant opportunities for road construction in the Northwest and, it must be said, undercut national support for other infrastructure development in the region. Edmonton's rise as a major regional and jumping-off point for the North owed much to this period, as did the collapse of Dawson City and the emergence of Whitehorse as the territorial centre and eventual capital. It was World War II projects that resulted in the expansion of Churchill, Manitoba and the establishment of Frobisher Bay (later Iqaluit) as major regional centres.

Much the same happened after World War II, when the imperatives of the Cold War with the Union of Soviet



Socialist Republics (USSR) resulted in the continued militarization of the Canadian North. The World War II projects laid some of the foundation for post-war strategic investment, but this was a different conflict, dominated by concerns about nuclear weapons, long-range bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles. New equipment, new strategies and new investments were required for this era.

The development of continental radar systems, such as the Mid-Canada Line, the Pine Tree Line, and the Arctic-focused Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, brought the military into the Canadian North with a vengeance, sparking a building boom and having an impact on communities from Labrador to the Yukon. The Canadian Forces maintained a significant presence in the Canadian North. The RCAF base in Whitehorse, closed in 1968, had a major impact on the city after World War II; the base itself defined the development of the urban space, with effects that can still be seen in the location and nature of suburbs and facilities in the community. There were lingering implications from these developments, ranging from the need for extensive post-Cold War clean up of environmental damage to the socio-economic impact of the military presence, particularly among Indigenous peoples in the North.

Military issues fell off the table somewhat following the end of the Cold War. With the USSR collapsing and Russia focusing on domestic affairs, the prospect of armed conflict in the Far North took a back seat in the Canadian consciousness. Canada, already modest in terms of overall military spending, cut back even further. What funds were available for military investments were devoted largely to overseas commitments.

The North itself continues to change, with increased efforts to respond to indigenous and regional aspirations, particularly in the territorial North. Over the past quarter century, one of the most remarkable political transitions in Canadian history occurred: the settlement of land claims, devolution of federal powers to the territorial governments, and Aboriginal self-government (showcased by the creation of Nunavut in 1999) – a transition that has largely bypassed the provincial North. These changes have altered the very foundations of northern governance. At the same time, increased levels of international circumpolar cooperation, launched by indigenous groups, picked up by northern governments and adopted, sometimes reluctantly, by national authorities, appeared to hold the promise of a demilitarized circumpolar region and a focus on social, economic, cultural and environmental concerns. That hope did not last.



The strategic and sovereignty issues in the North, longstanding and potent forces in northern history, could and should be used to define a long-term plan for the integration of the Canadian North – its people and its communities – into the fabric of the nation.

In the current debate about the future of the North, the implication is often left that military and strategic investments would somehow be unique in northern history. As northerners well know, this is far from being the truth. Northern communities have been shaped and structured by military investments, as far back as the Klondike Gold Rush. They will be shaped and structured similarly in the future.

In the past, military and strategic investments were made hastily, typically under the pressures of war or with strong direction from our American partner. The current situation – without the threat of imminent invasion or attack, with a longer-term

view prevailing about Canada's northern responsibilities, and with the prospect for extensive regional participation – holds completely different prospects for the people and communities of the Canadian North.

The strategic and sovereignty issues in the North, longstanding and potent forces in northern history, could and should be used to define a long-term plan

for the integration of the Canadian North – its people and its communities – into the fabric of the nation. The potential remilitarization of the circumpolar North and the emergence of the Arctic as a major political battleground in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have altered expectations, priorities and aspirations. Canada finds itself in a situation where it needs, once more, to determine its future in the Canadian North and determine where and when and how to invest in the strategic defence of its vast northern lands. The role that strong northern communities play in this defence must be considered and incorporated into this national project.

Well-managed military investments and commitments coordinated with northern municipal leaders can re-enforce local aspirations and activities and quality of life for Canada's northern communities.

## VIII. Lessons from other countries

There is no question that the presence of the military can and does have a significant impact on life in remote regions. The North experienced these effects during World War II, when more than 40,000 American soldiers and civilians entered the region, and less dramatically during the Cold War. When one looks at other remote and northern regions, a significant and simple pattern is observable: large-scale military commitments to an area underpin economic development, improve regional infrastructure and provide a foundation for stabilization and growth. These same arrangements are not without potential difficulties, including tensions between military personnel and local residents, distortion of the regional economy, environmental challenges and cultural clashes.

Well-managed military investments and commitments coordinated with northern municipal leaders can re-enforce local aspirations and activities and quality of life

for Canada's northern communities; poorly planned and hastily undertaken, they can and do have severe and negative impacts on northern communities and residents.

A quick overview of experiences in other remote and northern regions provides some guidance as to what northern communities in Canada could expect from comparable commitments to the sovereignty and security of the Canadian North:

- **Nordic countries:** Sweden, Norway and Finland set the gold standard for the integration and support of northern regions. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that all three countries have significant military investments in the region. The fact that Norway and Finland border Russia is an important historical driver; Canada, of course, is separated from Russia by the polar ice cap, although the threats and pressure still exist. Indeed, military service features prominently in the lives of Nordic citizens. The infrastructure throughout the North has been supported by military investments, and the long-term, secure and stable presence of the military in northern regions has strengthened local economies and provided a higher than anticipated level of public services and quality of life for residents throughout the region.
- **Greenland:** Despite having recently gained autonomy from Denmark, Greenland continues to rely substantially on Danish military engagement and investments. Indeed, Denmark has recently agreed to expand its presence at the US-controlled Thule base, part of the Danish response to boundary and sovereignty issues in the region. Through its own bases and its support for the American presence on Greenland, the Government of Denmark has ensured that there is substantial, long-term military capacity in the area, providing crucial infrastructure for the development of other activities and community facilities.
- **Alaska:** The United States provides perhaps the best illustration of the impact of long-term military investments in a region. Alaska has been heavily militarized throughout its history. The Alaska Railway was initially undertaken as a military project to provide a secure supply of coal to American vessels operating in the North Pacific. Major World War II, Cold War and Vietnam War investments resulted in the emergence of Anchorage and Fairbanks as sizable cities. Small but equally important commitments to northern military science have long underpinned the development of the University of Alaska. The economic, social and demographic development of Alaska would have been slowed dramatically without the constant and often extravagant spending of the US military in the region.
- **Russia:** For generations, the Soviet-command economy ensured the rapid and large scale development of the Russian North. Vast investments in military stations, prison camps, and northern mining and industrial sites resulted in the

The United States provides perhaps the best illustration of the impact of long-term military investments in a region.



movement of hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens into the region. Workers were effectively bribed to come, being offered high wages, access to apartments and cars, all items in short supply elsewhere in the country. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the demilitarization of the North, many of the stations and communities were shut down or cut back, resulting in a mass exodus from the North. Decades of Soviet build-up, it turned out, had not entrenched a commitment to the region among the incoming population. In recent years, sovereignty issues have increased the importance of the North, sparked new investment and encouraged a more positive national outlook on the region. Because of the scale and duration of the Soviet engagement, Russia has extensive scientific knowledge of the region, considerable infrastructure (although generally well below Canadian standards), and a large regional population. The military is a key element in supporting the northern economy and holding non-northern people in the North.

- **Outback Australia:** Australia is, in many ways, a close parallel to Canada. The engagement of the Australian armed forces in northern Australia – an area that is constitutionally, political, economically and socially much like northern Canada – has played a key role in stabilizing the regional economy and providing a high level of infrastructure for residents in the region. The prospect of military engagement with South Asia, particularly Indonesia, has kept the country alert to the military importance of the region, as has the appearance of refugees attempting to enter the country through the open coast line of the Northern Territory. Sizeable operations near Darwin and Katherine (and other bases in the northern parts of Queensland and Western Australia) have provided a secure and high profile Australian presence in the far north.
- **Pacific Islands:** The island nations of the Pacific are among the most remote locations in the world, hundreds or thousands of kilometres away from the mainland and offering vast distances for readily available professional services. The Pacific Islands played a pivotal role in World War II. Those that did not serve as battlefields between the Japanese and the Allied powers were pressed into service as supply and deployment centres for the American-led forces in the theatre. After the war, the necessities of Cold War politics convinced the United States, in particular, to invest heavily in the surveillance and protection of the islands. These extensive investments have been responsible for the key infrastructure developments – airfields, docks, storage facilities, roads, and telecommunications – on literally hundreds of islands in the Pacific. The American forces also brought substantial social change to the region, often sparking cultural conflicts with the local populations and the incoming troops.
- **Falkland Islands:** One of the most recent illustrations of the intersection of sovereignty concerns and local community development occurred on an isolated

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island in the South Atlantic. Following the bitter struggle between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands, the British invested heavily in a local military presence. The military base outside of Stanley now hosts more than 1,000 troops and has been pivotal in expanding the economy in the region, as have other military-inspired commitments to regional infrastructure. The number of troops on the Falkland Islands – over 300 kilometres from South America and thousands of kilometres away from England – greatly exceeds the total number of regularly stationed Canadian troops in the entire Canadian Arctic and, indeed, all of northern Canada combined. (The closest Canadian equivalent is Cold Lake – Canada’s “most remote” military base, which is located less than 200 kilometres from Edmonton, Alberta.)

What, then, are the lessons and insights to be gained from the experience of other countries managing the sovereignty and security challenges of northern and remote regions while at the same time supporting strong, sustainable local communities? Some of the key elements are the following:

- Properly managed, military investments have supported regional and community development.
- Military investments in infrastructure are an important factor to establishing a stable economic and social foundation for a remote region.
- Perhaps the most significant investments are those that connect the region to the outside and that allow for the flow of people, goods and information inside the area. These investments, essential for the military, establish a foundation upon which other regional development can occur.
- Over time, solid and sustained military investments pay off in terms of flow-on commitments from governments, the private sector and northern residents. In other words, there is a long-term multiplier effect from sustained military activity that is simply not associated with episodic investment.
- Canada is one of the few countries that seems preoccupied with cost-accounting for the effectiveness of northern infrastructure investments. In other countries, such commitments are assumed to be an essential core responsibility for nation building.
- There are vital scientific and technological benefits for the northern populations that arise from the initial military commitments.
- Military bases provide critical search and rescue capabilities much closer to northern communities.
- The co-existence of civilian and military populations has become progressively less problematic as military authorities have come to appreciate and respond to the needs and aspirations of local populations.

Perhaps the most significant investments are those that connect the region to the outside and that allow for the flow of people, goods and information inside the area.

- A substantial military presence is a critical element in convincing the rest of the national population that the remote region is an integral part of the country.
- Military activity circulates hundreds, if not thousands, of people through the remote region, adding to national awareness and understanding of the region and convincing some of the military personnel to return to the area to live.
- Canada devotes fewer resources to the protection of its northern and Arctic regions than any other major power in the world.

## IX. The realities of the new North

In a series of dazzling changes, the very foundations of the North have been transformed. In a little more than ten years, the following elements have reordered the national and international debate and challenged Canada to think anew of its responsibilities and opportunities in the North:

- **Massive environmental change, with the Arctic emerging as the poster-child for the real world impact of climate change.** The intensity and impact of global warming and attending social, cultural and economic impacts continues to shock many observers. The North has become the canary in the mineshaft in terms of global warming, generating both interest and concern. The long-term trajectory of environmental change is unknown, but it is crucial that Canada have the scientific and on-the-ground capacity to understand and respond to environmental challenges.
- **The realization that the resource potential of the Arctic and sub-Arctic – now more realizable due to global warming – held the key to meeting the medium-term oil, gas and mineral needs of the western industrial world.** Only a decade ago, few but the wildest speculators spoke favourably about Arctic resources. Now, with diminishing supplies of oil and gas, the Arctic is held up as the saviour for the western world. The prospect of a race for resources threatens to tip the balance in the region toward development, external control, and even more risky environmental changes.
- **The settlement of northern land claims and the empowerment of Aboriginal communities and governments.** While the transformation of Aboriginal governance remains a work in progress, there have been major advances. Furthermore, Indigenous people insist on a significant role in regional planning. The settlement of land claims provides the resources, authority and confidence necessary for active engagement.
- **The solidifying of international collaborations and partnerships through a variety of circumpolar initiatives.** The Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the University of the Arctic, and many other northern activities have increased the

profile of circumpolar affairs. More to the point for Canada, they have alerted this country to the fact that Canada does poorly in comparative perspective on responding to Arctic needs and interests. Northern Canadians now understand a great deal more than before about circumpolar options and possibilities; international engagement and partnerships have increased the stakes for Canada.

- **The post-Cold War remilitarization of the Arctic, highlighted by the re-emergence of Russia as a potent force in the region.** Russia is serious about its northern military presence and is now leaps ahead of Canada in this regard. The US has been quietly trying to keep pace. The result has been the remilitarization of the Arctic, in a way not seen since the Cold War. Scandinavian countries have made the Arctic their key strategic interest, as is evidenced in the Norwegian High North Strategy and in the decision to move headquarters for the national air command to the North in Bodoe, Norway. Canada still lags, despite several years of rhetoric.
- **The Internationalization of the circumpolar North.** The North has become a global zone, contested by more than just the circumpolar nations. China, Japan and Korea are interested in northern affairs. Northern shipping routes, Arctic resources, strategic interests, and climate change research are driving Asian imperatives for greater influence in the Arctic. The European Union demands a chance to participate in the allocation of Arctic and sub-Arctic resources. Canada is poorly prepared to cope with the more complex global political environment, but will find that understanding the imperatives of other nations and regions is now a central element in the Arctic debate.
- **The urgent need to settle international boundaries in the Arctic Basin.** This once somewhat arcane process is given greater authority by the realization that the Arctic continental shelf likely held valuable natural resources. The Arctic boundaries are one of the last unresolved boundaries in the developed world, and nations with circumpolar interests are rushing to make and defend their claims. There will be major political issues to contend with as the science is completed and the scientific decisions are made.
- **A series of small diplomatic incidents, like the Canada-Denmark row over Hans Island and Russia's assertion of national interest in the North Pole.** Each of these conflicts had or has the potential to spark nation-to-nation tensions and to escalate national concern about Arctic sovereignty. Citizens want their boundaries defended, even when what is at stake is largely inconsequential in economic, social or environmental terms. Diplomatic incidents are provocative in

The North has become a global zone, contested by more than just the circumpolar nations.

national political life, as the Russian response to Russian claims and actions in the Arctic reveal.

- **The growing political assertiveness of the North.** Northern territories, communities and organizations demand a place at the table. Their political positions, highlighted by Aboriginal activism and dominated by a new, strong and pervasive North-centric view of the region's present and future, have changed the political environment in Canada. For generations, the North took what the South dished out. That no longer holds and Canada will be different as a result.

These international and national conflicts and issues have the potential to recast the North as we know it and to bring about dramatic and wide-ranging change in the Far North.

This is clearly a new North, one marked by the intensity, urgency and diversity of political and diplomatic issues. These international and national conflicts and issues have the potential to recast the North as we know it and to bring about dramatic and wide-ranging change in the Far North. Furthermore, and to a degree not seen in Canada in two generations, the convergence of issues has reawakened national interest in the North. It is now possible – but far from certain – that the next decade will see a profound transformation in Canada's North. The role and effects of these transformations on northern communities must now be part of federal decision making processes.

## X. Towards a new northern vision for Canada: Building strong, sustainable northern municipalities and Arctic sovereignty

Looking specifically at opportunities for northern communities, and building a more comprehensive view of what Canada needs to do in the areas of quality of life, infrastructure, sovereignty and defence, three key recommendations emerge. Underpinning all of these recommendations, however, is a realization that Canada must revamp its approach to the North, to create a new northern vision.

While we applaud ourselves for being a northern nation and while a significant portion of Canada's past and future prosperity rests on northern resources, we lag behind the rest of the world in developing and incorporating the North into the nation. There is a great deal to be done – but it must be done as part of an aggressive, assertive and proud national strategy to rediscover our collective northern obligations and to build a North ready for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Recommendations

### 1. Develop a long-term plan to invest in northern infrastructure

Canada needs a precise statement of the infrastructure needs and local aspirations of northern communities, and then a long-term plan to meet these identified needs.

The Government of Canada must work with its provincial, territorial and municipal partners to undertake this inventory and then develop and fund a long-term plan to improve core infrastructure in the North that will support community, military and commercial needs, and ultimately support and strengthen our sovereignty claims over the region.

This plan should not take the form of a community-by-community shopping list, but rather a description of the needs and requirements of northern communities, a set of standards connected to what southern Canadians take for granted and consistent with international circumpolar standards.

### 2. Make Canada's North the world leader in climate change adaptation

Many needs are driven by the imperative to adapt to a changing climate. A long-term infrastructure plan for the North would make Canada a world leader in developing the strategies, technologies and financing needed to adapt to climate change – lessons that could be shared and exported to the rest of the globe.

Canadians need to know – in detail – what is required to bring northern services and infrastructure up to national and international standards, and to do so with climate change as a key and new driver.

### 3. Use smart military investments as the backbone for building the New North

Once (or if) the Government of Canada decides that it must actively and aggressively project its sovereignty over the North through military presence, it must recognize the logistical challenges of protecting the North and should undertake a major infrastructure initiative in Northern Canada.

Protecting Canada's northern sovereignty has been tied to billions of dollars in new military investments. In order to implement and measure the progress of the Northern Strategy, the federal government must provide a full accounting of all investments intended to support the strategy across federal departments.

These investments should be developed with civilian and private sector interests in mind and should therefore form the foundation for long-term development in the region. Some of the projects – like the Dempster Highway before it – could drive integrated strategies supporting military training operations, human capacity building and infrastructure development at the same time.

### *Information technology*

It is always assumed that major infrastructure investments begin with huge ticket items, like roads and railways. Led or supported by the Canadian Forces and local municipalities, the Government of Canada should begin instead by building a world-leading information technology infrastructure for remote regions, focusing in particular on service access and bandwidth improvement. Doing this with Canadian business could help produce a global business opportunity. Creating a next generation information technology network to provide a wide range of services – e-government, e-entertainment/ e-culture, e-health, e-education, remote work, etc. – will improve the quality of life in the North, and connect the region to the country and the world very effectively. The effective provision of IT services across the North should become a hallmark of Canada's 21<sup>st</sup> century commitment to the country's remote citizens, as well as any military stationed there.



### *Make partnership official policy*

The Canadian Forces are strongly committed to working closely with communities. Properly empowered by the Government of Canada, the Canadian Forces would collaborate with local and regional authorities on the development of shared strategies for regional development. This already happens on a minor community-level scale, with generally good results. There is little doubt that the Canadian Forces would embrace a northern-wide responsibility for building the tools of northern defence and northern nation – and community-building at the same time. It is important the northern communities understand, in full, the military's plans for infrastructure and development in northern regions and that these aspirations are coordinated with the needs of communities in the North. If nothing else, such coordination will ensure that northern people are not surprised by military announcements and that any Canadian Forces spending is designed to maximize the benefits for the North.

There are great opportunities for Canadians, including the military, to learn from northerners. The Canadian Rangers, which draw heavily on Indigenous participants in the North, provide an exemplary illustration of the national benefits of calling on northerners for help. This model can be expanded for military and strategic purposes, providing additional opportunities for northerners to engage with their country and for the nation to benefit from northern experience.

## Other recommendations

To build strong, healthy northern communities that can support Canada's economic, strategic, and environmental objectives in the North, governments must:

- **Include the provincial North:** Canada's northern responsibilities are not defined by territorial boundaries. The whole North – territorial and provincial – has to be seen as part of the sovereignty and security challenge. The current preoccupation with the territorial North, attractive for symbolic purposes, misses out on the needs and opportunities of the vast, resource-rich and valuable provincial North. Indeed, the provincial North, particularly Labrador and northern Quebec, but also the largely roadless northern sections of Ontario and the Prairie provinces, and its communities are among the most disadvantaged regions in the country and need attention on the strategic and socio-economic fronts.
- **Build northern scientific capacity:** Canada needs greater northern research capacity, and it must be located in the North. There are many models that would be suitable, ranging from the University of the Arctic to the University of Northern British Columbia. Mobilizing national research capacity to serve the interests of the North is an essential element in long-term success. Canada lags well behind its counterparts and has shown a remarkable lack of innovation and determination in finding an appropriate model for the development of research capacity in and for the North.
- **Build northern intellectual and professional capacity:** A major reason for building northern colleges and universities is to ensure that there are training opportunities for northerners. At present, post-secondary education is perhaps the main reason talented young people leave the North. New approaches that draw on community strengths and community resources could change this crucial dynamic.
- **Build a stronger civil society:** There are major questions about human capacity – northern representatives are typically stretched to the limit – but the need for collaboration and political cooperation are extremely strong. Municipal government often provides the training ground and the locus for strong local leaders – a strong civil society – which in turn builds a foundation and core of regional leaders. In this case, stronger, more empowered and resourced municipal governments will help build the region's civil society.
- **Introduce new Canadians to the New North:** New Canadians represent the fastest growing population group in the country. They are overwhelmingly urban and southern in patterns of residence and most come from temperate or tropical climates. For many, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and even Vancouver represent cold zones; there is, in this group, little natural or cultural affinity for northern areas. New Canadians are anxious to connect to their new country and have

Canada's northern responsibilities are not defined by territorial boundaries.



demonstrated repeatedly a willingness to support national visions and strategies. But the federal government together with northern provinces, the territories and northern communities have to take deliberate and clear steps to make the North part of the national view of new Canadians. Without aggressive outreach, and if new Canadians remain isolated from the realities of the Canadian North, the gap between the North and South will get wider and it will be increasingly difficult to mobilize the country to support regional interests. Given the strategic importance, as well as their Constitutional responsibilities, the federal government must lead this effort.

- **Promote northern region collaboration:** Northern Canadian communities need to understand that there are settlements around the world that share their challenges and that can both learn from the Canadian experience and offer advice on appropriate choices based on their histories. Developments in Darwin (Australia), Stanley (Falkland Islands), Tromsø (Norway), Pevek (Russia), Koror (Palau, Pacific Island), and dozens of other remote regions are highly important for the Canadian North. The region is not as unique as most northerners and Canadian think that it is. Learning from other remote and isolated communities could prove crucial to the North's long-term adaptation and development.

