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An Integrated Arctic Strategy

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Context

- **Inuit have lived in the Canadian Arctic and other parts of the circumpolar world since before recorded history. Similarly, First Nations have lived in sub-Arctic areas that now fall within Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories for thousands of years.**

- **Canada asserts sovereignty over Arctic lands and waters through a combination of rights and privileges originally asserted on behalf of the United Kingdom and Canada's own efforts. Canada's sovereignty is, with limited exception, uncontested with respect to land areas, but Canada has more significant differences in positions with respect to a number of other States in relation to marine jurisdiction issues.**

- **The Canadian Arctic includes geographic regions that fall within two provinces (Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador) and three territories (Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, Nunavut), and regions that are outside provinces and territories but still within Canada. A number of federal government Departments and agencies, notably but not exclusively the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, have special jurisdictional responsibilities and powers with respect to the geographic area that make up the Canadian Arctic and three territories.**

- **Comprehensive land claims agreements (modern treaties) are key Constitutional building blocks in Arctic and sub-Arctic Canada, as they are in other parts of Canada. With the conclusion of the Nunatsiavut (Labrador) land claims agreement in December, 2005, all four regions of *Inuit Nunaat* (the Inuit homeland in Canada) are governed by modern land claims agreements. Once ratified by Parliament, the Nunavik offshore agreement will supplement the geographic reach of the four principal Inuit regional agreements.**

- **The Inuit of Canada and Crown signed a *Partnership Accord*, May, 2005. The *Partnership Accord* called for the conclusion of a follow-up, more detailed, *Inuit Action Plan.* Inuit (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Inuit Circumpolar Council) completed a proposal for an *Inuit Action Plan* in February, 2007.**

- **Modern land claims agreements signed by First Nations also govern sub-Arctic areas that fall within the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories.**

- **A number of special institutional and organizational arrangements apply to both the Canadian Arctic and the broader circumpolar world. These include the Arctic Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council.**

- **A promise for a northern strategy was made by Prime Minister Martin in December 2004. That strategy did not materialize.**

- **The October 16, 2007, Speech from the Throne stated:**

  "But the North needs new attention. New opportunities are emerging across the Arctic, and new challenges from other shores. Our Government will bring forward an integrated northern strategy focusing on strengthening Canada's sovereignty, protecting our environmental heritage, promoting economic and social development, and improving and devolving governance, so that northerners have greater control over their destinies."

Key Realities

The Canadian Arctic is characterized, to greater and lesser degrees, by the following:

- **small populations, very low densities**
- **a few larger population centers, and many small geographically isolated communities**
- **young and growing populations**
- **high costs**
- **very limited land and sea transportation connections, but more modern air and high technology links**
- **small and underdeveloped economies that are heavily dependent on public sector spending financed by fiscal transfers from the federal government**
- **very large, but imprecisely known, non-renewable resource wealth (oil, gas, hard minerals)**
- **significant renewable resource wealth and potential (hunting, fishing, tourism, water and wind energy)**
- **large ratios of aboriginal peoples, including a large Inuit majority in one territory (Nunavut) and an aboriginal majority in many regions and communities elsewhere**
- **standards of housing and health care, and of educational achievement levels, that fall well below national norms, and**
- **levels of unemployment and underemployment among aboriginal peoples that greatly exceed those of non-aboriginal residents and national norms.**

For a variety of environmental reasons, the pace and reach of global warming are more pronounced in the Arctic than in other parts of the world. Arctic regions and communities face some unique problems of change and adaptation, as well as sharing in problems facing the planet as a whole.

The geo-politics of the Cold War no longer face the circumpolar world with the same intensity as characterized much of the post-World War II era. At the same

time, a number of unresolved sovereignty, resource development and transportation issues have come to the fore, flowing from or accentuated by climate shift, new technologies, and economic forces.

Key Pressures

- **global and regional warming and associated and other environmental uncertainties**
- **sovereignty challenges/questions posed by other States**
- **special demographic factors**
- **aboriginal homelands/Canadian frontier divergences**
- **domestic jurisdictional confusions/complexities**
- **a legacy of economic underdevelopment/vulnerability and a backlog of unsolved social problems**
- **high operating costs/diseconomies of scale**
- **exposure to boom/bust cycles**
- **lack of mixed economies, and heavy reliance on public sector activities and subsidies**
- **a history of dependence, and a desire to bring about a reduction in outside support**
- **issues in relation to productivity, and creativity in areas of comparative advantage**

Key Risks

- **open-ended environmental failures, as a consequence of both unmitigated external causation and absent or inapt adaptation strategies**
- **mounting international tensions; sovereignty challenges and erosions; loss of national interests and credibility**
- **alienation and disaffection of aboriginal peoples; souring of regional politics; spillovers into national politics; unfavourable international attention**
- **terminal collapse of aboriginal languages as working languages**
- **unanswered social problems and pathologies; deepening and increasingly costly regional fiscal dependence; loss of potential productivity and wealth**
- **intermittent attention gaps, with crisis driven decision making and conflict management**

Projected Time Frame

- **suggested time frame: 10 to 15 years**
- **should be long enough to shape events and see results, short enough to acknowledge degree and depth of unknowns**
- **should be beyond short term, partisan considerations to the extent possible, but also provide for near term, concrete priorities**
- **should carry within it a degree of flexibility**
- **transparency and measurability important whatever the time frame**

Choosing Themes

Considerations

History suggests that coherent policy making and decision making for the Canadian Arctic has been very much complicated, and often inhibited if not paralyzed, by the absence of a workable number of organizing themes. The development of an integrated strategy, as promised by the most recent Speech from the Throne, requires the careful selection of a workable number of themes from among the almost infinite number of candidate themes available. Themes should be sufficiently general to bring together and focus a variety of legislative, policy, program, and investment tools, cutting across a number of jurisdictions and playing out in both the public and private sectors, and sufficiently specific to encourage concrete results and transparent accountability.

The following themes are suggested as meeting those two considerations.

Themes Chosen

- **Theme #1: Getting the Geography Right**
- **Theme #2: Linkages to Bigger Stages and Stakes**
- **Theme #3: Multi-Purpose, Multi-Pay Off**
- **Theme #4: Home Turf Roles and Responsibilities**
- **Theme #5: Cultural Distinctiveness and Continuity**
- **Theme #6: Economic and Environmental Win/Wins**
- **Theme #7: Policy Making Built on Facts**

Theme #1

Theme Title: Getting the Geography Right

Objective: Dispelling Confusion and Defining a Workable Canadian Stage for Arctic Policy

Critical Considerations:

- **at the federal level, a variety of terms have been used in the past to describe Arctic and northern regions: "the Arctic"; "the North"; "North of 60"; "the territorial North"; "Northern Canada", and so on**

- **these variant terms have been associated with similarly variant stretches of geography; complicating the matter further, some of the terms have been used to refer to land areas only and some to both land and marine areas extending to the outer limits of Canada's internal waters**

- **the variety of terms and their geographic application has resulted in ground-floor uncertainty as what new policies and programs are intended to address, and considerable energies dissipated around kick-off issues of intentions and definitions**

- **in Canada, the concepts of both Arctic and North are historically and contemporaneously relevant: Hereafter we will use the term "ARCTIC STRATEGY" in this document-this title is meant to include both concepts Arctic and North.**

- **the term Arctic-as we use it in this document is capable of being broken into two, quite precise geographic component parts: an Arctic component, which can be said to be the same geographic area as Inuit Nunaat, the land and marine areas that make up the modern Inuit and claims agreements that stretch from the Beaufort Sea region to Labrador; and a North component, which can be said be composed of the remainder of the three territories**

- **this Arctic area unambiguously incorporates both land and marine areas, including all the marine zones that form the alternate channels of the Northwest Passage through the NWT/Nunavut archipelago**

- **the area included in the Arctic for the purposes of this Strategy; includes areas that are governed by a diversity of jurisdictional**

arrangements (federal, provincial, territorial, regional, aboriginal self-government governance, plus local institutions); this highlights the need for collaboration/coordination and a sharing of responsibility

- **the area included under the term Arctic emphasizes the core relevance of aboriginal peoples and aboriginal/treaty rights, and the unity of Canadian Inuit as Canada's one historical Arctic aboriginal people**

- **the need to have an appropriately wide geographic focus for a federal strategy has been noted by not just Inuit; it is revealing that the Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution in late 2007 calling on the federal government to include Nunavik in an Arctic strategy**

Priority Policy Initiatives

- **adoption of the term "Arctic" and its associated geographical application, as the spatial foundation for a new integrated strategy**

- **use of the Arctic-as the presumed/preferred stage for future federal policy-making and decision making**

- **recognition that many federal laws, policies and programs now diverge in their geographic application and that new laws, policies and programs may also diverge where compelling reasons exist**

- **recognition that an effective Arctic strategy requires a high and sustained level of inter-governmental and government-aboriginal cooperation**

Theme #2

Theme Title: Linkages to Bigger Stages and Stakes

Objective: A Peaceful and Stable International Arctic, Contributing to International Cooperation/Security

Critical Considerations:

- **while extreme Cold War tensions have abated, the Arctic remains an important theatre of international relations**
- **climate change will, because of its accentuated high latitude dimensions, create new international challenges in itself, and is likely to spin off additional challenges due to new possibilities for transportation use and resource exploitation**
- **a number of important sovereignty issues remain unresolved in the circumpolar world, including a number of sovereignty issues that have significant economic aspects**
- **the international community and circumpolar aboriginal peoples have shown some creativity and adaptability in the conduct of international relations dealing with the Arctic, for example the creation of the Arctic Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Council**
- **the world needs positive regional examples of how peaceful and stable international relations can be constructed and pursued**

Priority Policy Initiatives

- **delivery on the package of multi-year Arctic oriented military initiatives set out in the October 2007 Speech from the Throne**
- **an early examination of the viability of a new marine authority to govern the use of Canada's internal Arctic waters for transportation purposes; close attention should be paid to the unfulfilled commitments in relation**

to the creation of a Nunavut Marine Council set out in the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

- **Canadian leadership in the exploration of a more permanent footing to the Arctic Council and a more rigorous mandate for the Council**

- **Canadian leadership in expanded discussions among circumpolar States as to the feasibility of a regional Arctic climate change/adaptation strategy**

- **Canadian receptiveness to a discussion among circumpolar States as to the feasibility of an Arctic oriented approach for the sorting out of disputes regarding issues of jurisdiction over marine areas**

- **a review of the mandate and role of the Canadian Polar Commission as it relates to their capacity to establish research priorities**

Theme #3

Theme Title: Multi-Purpose, Multi-Pay Off

Objective: Sovereignty, Security and Civility Working Together in Canada's Arctic

Critical Considerations:

- **reinforcing Canadian sovereignty and security in the Arctic should entail building up healthy regions and communities as well; healthy regions and communities require a significant level of economic of economic productivity and self-sufficiency and acceptable levels and trend-lines of basic social well-being; as Inuit say, "sovereignty begins at home"**
- **issues of use, occupation, monitoring of lands and waters have special dimensions in the Arctic given its history, demographics and cultural make-up**
- **high costs of "doing business" in the Arctic argue for achieving efficiencies wherever possible**
- **possibilities exist for efficiencies in areas such as infrastructure, transportation and navigation, surveillance and environmental monitoring, and security and emergency preparedness**

Priority Policy Initiatives

- **ensuring that new investments in military infrastructure serve civilian as well as military functions as much as possible**
- **a re-conceptualization and expansion of the Arctic Rangers program so that, in addition to serving as a resident militia, it is able to serve the following functions effectively: (a) environmental monitoring; (b) supply of country food to communities; (c) work for those unqualified or unable to work in wage employment, particularly in small communities; and, (d) sustaining of land based skills and cultural/linguistic continuity**
- **acknowledging, particularly in the face of climate change, that the renewable resource economy is the patrimony of the aboriginal peoples**

of the Arctic, and investing in both the creation of a major Arctic- based commercial fishing fleet and industry, and the completion of a national parks and protected areas system

- **major investment in a geological surveying/mapping project that, according to scheduled increments, will supply essential information, and fill in large base-line information holes, for the resource development industry**

- **commitment to finding techniques, using whatever tax and other tools are available in the public sector, to smooth out, as much as practicable, the boom-bust dimensions of mining and oil and gas activity as a consequence of the volatility of international prices**

Theme #4

Theme Title: Home Turf Roles and Responsibilities

Objective: Entrusting the Vocation of Managing the Canadian Arctic to the Peoples of the Canadian Arctic

Critical Considerations:

- **the Arctic is a high cost area --- it is economically extravagant to build up larger populations than needed by importing labour from the South indefinitely**
- **reliance on imported labour, alongside the economic disempowerment/social distress of permanent residents, undercuts the political and social stability of the Arctic and detracts from the investment climate**
- **reliance on imported labour, alongside the economic disempowerment/social distress of permanent residents, undermines the productivity of the Canadian economy and undercuts international competitiveness**
- **reliance on imported labour, alongside the economic disempowerment/social distress of permanent residents, detracts from Canada's international reputation and interests**
- **in order to manage their affairs to a reasonable level, crippling gaps and deficiencies in core social areas, particularly education, housing, and health currently experienced by permanent residents have to be addressed and remedied**
- **none of the three territories is on the cusp of provincial status; it is important that arrangements struck between the federal government and territorial governments be struck so as to enhance as much as possible the economic self-sufficiency and productivity of permanent residents, particularly aboriginal peoples**

Priority Policy Initiatives

- **Government of Canada recognition of the importance of demographic and cultural continuity in the Arctic- as a key ingredient of appropriate resource development policies**

- **commitment to the creation of fully representative government work-forces at every level of the public sector within the time frame of the Arctic strategy**

- **investment in an intergovernmental/aboriginal program of action, to lift education, housing, and health standards to national norms within the lifetime of an Arctic strategy**

- **renewed Government of Canada commitment to build on the jurisdictional and division of rights features of modern land claims agreements throughout the Arctic, and to fulfill their fundamental and enduring objectives**

- **negotiation of federal/territorial power and resource revenue sharing agreements in relation to resource development jurisdiction and taxation that ensure an adequate flow of public sector revenues to meeting these priority initiatives before returning revenues to the federal treasury for broader national purposes**

- **inclusion of representatives of the regional governments within Inuit Nunaat in broad intergovernmental/aboriginal discussions affecting Inuit Nunaat**

Theme #5:

Theme Title: Cultural Distinctiveness and Continuity

Objective: Sustaining and Adapting the Distinctive Linguistic and Other Cultural Attributes of the Arctic, Anchored in the Special History and Presence of Aboriginal Peoples

Critical Considerations:

- **aboriginal peoples, with distinct languages and cultures, have lived in the Arctic for thousands of years**
- **since contact with Europeans, aboriginal peoples in the Arctic have experienced pervasive and accelerating pressures from outside**
- **aboriginal languages in particular are under stress, with their future as fully functioning languages adapted to contemporary life under threat**
- **aboriginal peoples are showing societal strains and problems attributable to rapid cultural shift**
- **inadequacies in the creative integration of education and language policies in particular are having detrimental affect on the life prospects of aboriginal young people and the functioning of aboriginal communities and households, and the productivity of Arctic economies**
- **aboriginal peoples seek to make an ongoing contribution to Canada at every level of Canadian federalism, and the vitality of aboriginal cultures can be creatively sustained alongside respect for other central features of Canadian federalism, such as the existence of two official languages at the national level, the accommodation of multi-culturalism, and the distinguishing attributes of individual provinces**

Priority Policy Initiatives:

- **federal government support for aboriginal languages in the Arctic on at least as generous as federal government support for English and French minorities in other parts of Canada. A solid commitment by the federal**

government to a long term coherent strategy to support the Inuit language

- **implementation of the recommendations of the March 2006 report of Thomas Berger with respect to the creation of an educational system capable of graduating acceptable numbers of student proficient in the Inuit language as well as one or both of English and French**

- **commitment on the part of all levels of government and aboriginal organizations to a "Full Stomachs, Full Minds" project to make sure that pre-school and school children aren't being permanently impaired by poor nutrition; this should involve making use of "best practices" from other parts of Canada and around the world, including giving day cares and schools front line places (and mandates and resources) in the fight against hunger**

- **emphasis on cultural distinctiveness and the importance of cultural industries in economic planning and priorizing**

- **joint consideration with Inuit organizations of a federal *Inuit and Crown Relations Act*, including consideration of provisions dealing with: occasions and methods of consultation; issues of Inuit identify and identification; fundamental objectives and more specific targets in relation to health care, educational, and other social well being indicators; commitments to representative public sector work forces in Inuit Nunaat; and reliable levels of support for Inuit representative organizations**

- **federal government support for those Inuit regions who wish to enact language legislation as a bedrock for protecting and preserving the Inuit language.**

Theme #6

Theme Title: Economic and Environmental Win/Wins

Objective: Building Up Arctic Sustainable Economies that Contribute to Both Regional and National Well Being

Critical Considerations:

- **Inuit and other aboriginal peoples, and their land claims agreements, are key factors in any successful resource development assumptions and objectives**
- **successful development of non-renewable resources should be combined with thoughtful use of renewable resources for reasons of economic diversification and cultural continuity and related land/marine monitoring purposes**
- **Canadian federalism demonstrates win/win outcomes contribute to national identify/unity, whereas regional grievances built around lack of benefits work against these things**
- **providing regional economic benefits now, in combination with targeted investments in social policy gaps, is more conducive to lower federal subsidies over the longer term**

Priority Policy Initiatives

- **clear commitment to the proposition that economic and social develop policy making and decision making are joined at the hip**
- **inclusion of marine areas in northern devolution deals**
- **consideration of a special federal tax regime to encourage entrepreneurialism and sustainable economic activities in the Arctic.**

- **inclusion, in any new or revised federal carbon tax aimed at combating carbon use and climate change, of a stream of revenues intended to assist those regions, communities and households that are particularly vulnerable to price changes in essential goods and services**

- **creation of a "model community in the Arctic for climate change abatement and adaptation purposes**

- **see Priority Policy Initiatives under Theme #4**

Theme #7

Theme Title: Policy Making Built on Facts

Objective: Giving Research and Learning their Due

Critical Considerations:

- **sound policy making and decision making must be grounded in fact**
- **global climate change amplifies the stakes of research in the Arctic.**
- **there is ample scope for misunderstandings between aboriginal and non-aboriginal participants in research for a variety of historical and cultural reasons**
- **the scale of current and projected research activities in the Arctic makes such research a topic of considerable economic significance in its own right**
- **in the public sector, research and education policies should be intimately connected**

Priority Policy Initiatives

- **early investment in the Arctic research station promised in the October 2007 Speech from the Throne**
- **new federal policy stipulating that federal moneys provided for Arctic research should be accompanied by aboriginal participation packages broadly analogous to the aboriginal components that routinely attach to federal procurement of goods and services (for example, DND's very successful DEW line clean up contractual arrangements)**
- **federal/territorial government sponsorship of a special research project into how federal/territorial employment/income support/education and training programs might be blended to put together innovative social policy approaches in the three territories; this effort should be extended**

to Arctic Quebec and Labrador with the participation of provincial governments.

- **CONCLUSIONS**

- **The Foregoing ideas and priorities are a product of the thinking of Inuit organizations-not external sources and will be included in the Inuit agenda going forward. We believe these ideas are compatible with the objectives and steps outlined in the " Building Inuit Nuunat-The Inuit Action Plan" We encourage the federal government to consider this Strategy as a coherent whole rather than on a sectoral or fragmented basis. As always Inuit stand ready to work with government in the implementation of the Strategy .**

Delivery Approaches and Mechanisms

- **the most effective integrated Arctic strategy would be one that not only worked horizontally across federal government Departments and agencies, but also brought in two other sets of actors: provincial and territorial governments; and aboriginal representative organizations --- this trilateral approach would be the preferred approach for the implementation as well as the development aspects of a strategy**

- **given the number of actors in a trilateral approach, it is not essential or realistic that all actors sign up for all parts of a strategy, or indeed that all actors participate; in this regard, federal government leadership, in concert with as many other actors as might seek to engage, would be appropriate**

- **a companion piece to a strategy could be the creation of an Arctic charter or statement of principles that could link as many actors as possible in a non-binding expression of shared outlook and common projects**

- **the strategy should be respectful of current jurisdictions and roles, offering federal government leadership and assistance where appropriate and in a transparent and non-coercive way**

- **there is no need for symmetry everywhere: different arrangements would likely be most suitable in different parts of the Arctic.**

- **there should be a willingness to use legislation where important long-term commitments of principle, or objectives, or methods of policy or program delivery are being made, and expectations of transparency of purpose and accountability for results are raised**