

The Arctic Linked to the Emerging Dominant Ideas in Canada's Foreign and Defence Policy

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Abstract: From an international security studies perspective, this article offers a discourse analysis of Canada's threat perceptions and security rhetoric in the Arctic between December 2005 and March 2009. It argues that since December 2005, the government of Canada has decided to securitize its political sovereignty, its northern identity, as well as its territorial integrity. The author offers a cultural explanation to these securitizations by arguing that Canada's strategic changes in the Arctic are a lot more than just rhetoric; they seem to be linked to the emerging dominant ideas in Canada's foreign and defence policy—hence, a phasing out of Canada's traditional internationalism and middle power status and a phasing in of the ideas tied to continentalism and to major power status. After linking the Arctic to Canada's place and role in the world, the author discusses the possible negative and positive effects of these processes of securitization. He then concludes the article by offering two specific recommendations to better Canada's role in the Circumpolar World.

Introduction: The Struggle between the Co-operative and Military-Strategic Principles

For a long time the Arctic was perceived to be a *terra nullius*. This mystical territory was completely ice covered, characterized by extreme climate conditions, and defined by European explorers and North American settlers as a geographical space favourable only for research and exploration. Its relative independence from world events suddenly ended with the Second World War when, for example, the Canadian North¹ became strategically important for the United States fighting to regain control of the Aleutian Islands in the North Pacific and when, between 1941 and 1945, the Arctic Ocean became a maritime theatre of war.

Following the Second World War, East-West tensions, combined with technological advances, changed the Arctic completely and permanently. From its historical isolation, the circumpolar region entered its militarization phase. A new variable, a military-strategic one, emerged from under and over the ice caps and remained pre-eminent during the entire course of the Cold War. This had, of course, an overwhelming effect on the evolution of the region for nearly forty years.

As late as in the mid-1980s, the Arctic was divided into a 'Western' and an 'Eastern' sector, between which there was little or no interaction. The lack of state-to-state and people-to-people interaction in the Arctic during the Cold War was largely due to the dominant place of security concerns in national perceptions and policies. Rather than being perceived as a potential arena for international and regional cooperation, the region was seen as a sensitive military theatre in which political, economic, cultural and other interests were subordinated to national security interests (Atland 2008, 290).

However, by the end of the 1980s Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and willingness to co-operate on the world stage changed international relations in general, but more specifically they changed the state of circumpolar affairs. On 1 October 1987, in Murmansk, the leader of the former Soviet Union pleaded for more co-operation between all of the Arctic states. "Let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace," he said. He then suggested that "all interested states start talks on the limitation and scaling down of military activity in the North as a whole, in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres" (Gorbachev 1988, 335 cited in Atland 2008, 290).

According to Kristian Atland, Gorbachev's speech in 1987, also known as the Murmansk Initiative, triggered processes of desecuritization in the Circumpolar World. These processes, dear to the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School (CS), are defined broadly as "the shifting of issues out of the emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere" (Buzan 1998, 4). Desecuritization is a re-politicization of an issue when it is no longer perceived to be a security matter, when the threat has disappeared, or when it is no longer considered as being existential (Atland 2008, 292).

Hence, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the processes of desecuritization triggered by the Murmansk Initiative a few years earlier, the co-operative principle became more prominent in the

region thus reducing the magnitude of the military-strategic variable and at the same time revitalizing the dream of creating “a global Arctic Mediterranean” (Henrikson 1992, 107 cited in Keskitalo 2007, 193). During the 1990s, the North was finally becoming an active international political region (Koivurova 2007, 159; Griffiths 2008, 1; Keskitalo 2007), which could in time, through practice and established norms, be decoupled from extra-regional factors. The multilateralism between the eight Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, the United States, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden) and the Inuit through the Arctic Council was also seen to be creating a sort of deterritorialization of the circumpolar sphere (Griffiths 1999, 1).

Still, since the early years of the new millennium, with climate change becoming a scientific reality, the region with its melting ice caps has ironically become more attractive economically—not only for the coastal states (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States) but also for a growing number of outside actors (i.e., the European Union, China, Japan, and South Korea). Furthermore, the speculations on the amount of oil and gas reserves, on the richness of the earth’s minerals, and on the increases in tourism and in maritime traffic, have affected some of the Arctic states’ threat perception, their rhetoric, and their overall northern strategy. These strategic changes warrant further investigation as they seem to demonstrate the resiliency of the military-strategic variable and a return to the dominant place of security concerns in national perceptions and policies.

Thus, from an international security studies (ISS) perspective, this article offers a discourse analysis of Canada’s threat perceptions and security rhetoric between December 2005 and March 2009. Specifically, it will be argued that since 2005 in the Arctic, Canada has securitized its political sovereignty, its northern identity, and its territorial integrity. Moreover, this article will offer a cultural explanation to these securitizations. Concretely, it will be argued that Canada’s strategic changes in the Arctic are a lot more than just rhetoric; they seem to be linked to the emerging dominant ideas in Canada’s foreign and defence policy—hence, a phasing out of Canada’s traditional internationalism and middle power status and a phasing in of the ideas tied to continentalism and to major power status.

The remainder of this article consists of five parts. The following section gives a quick introduction to the securitization theory by introducing International Security Studies’ concepts that will be useful to the analysis but which can be obscure to some readers not familiar with this literature. Consequently, I attempted to develop this section with the non-specialist

reader in mind. The methodology that was used to develop the discourse analyze is quickly addressed in the second part. The third part summarizes the government's "security rhetoric" and the fourth offers an explanation of its existence. The possible effects of these securitization processes are then briefly discussed in the concluding section in order to elucidate new insights.

1. Theoretical Insights

The article's main goal is to provide a discourse analysis of Canada's recent "security rhetoric" in the Arctic. To do this, one needs to follow some kind of methodology that enables finding the security rhetoric in official discourses such as speeches, and press releases. At the same time, one needs to explain this type of rhetoric and elaborate on its possible effects. For this, I turn to the International Security Studies' (ISS) literature on discursive security and specifically to the securitization theory developed by the Copenhagen School (CS) and its principal authors Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde.

For the CS, security is thought to be an urgent question of survival—an existential matter—rooted in the tradition of power politics. Security is also defined as a "speech act," meaning that the decision to present or to characterize an issue as relevant to security is an explicit political action (Wæver 2000 cited in Williams 2005, 520). When "speaking security," state actors claim the right to use any means necessary to stop all threatening development. It gives them control over a possible threat by taking an issue out of the sphere of "normal politics" and into a sphere of "security politics," where urgent measures or exceptional measures become legitimate (Atland 2008, 291).

Theoretically, this speech act is part of a securitization process, which is usually defined as being "constituted by the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects" (Buzan 1998, 25). This definition simply means that when a state securitizes an issue—correctly or not—it is a political fact that has consequences. The issue (i.e., sovereignty, territory, identity) becomes existentially threatened and this transformation changes the way state actors and the population view things and act. For that reason, speaking security will have impacts, not only in the society of the state, but also on its relations with others in the international system.

The CS also refers to two paradoxes that are quite relevant to our present analysis. The first one refers to the securitization of political

sovereignty. The paradox lies with the fact that a sovereignty threat does not exist until you say there is a problem or a challenge, as it clearly depends on one's interpretation of sovereignty (Wæver 1998, 112). The second paradox refers to the securitization of a common identity. It suggests that all securitization of a common identity tends to increase the feelings of insecurity and to perpetuate the security approach. Hence, the more you securitize identity, the more you increase the feelings of insecurity (Wæver 1998, 92).

2. Methodology

Thirteen official speeches, made between December 2005 and March 2009 by Canada's prime minister and ministers of foreign affairs and of national defence were scrutinized by following the methodology offered by the securitization theory of the CS. Consequently, I looked at the grammar of the text to find arguments that follow the logic of security (its survival nature)—urgent and existential—the “must act now or we/it will cease to exist” rhetoric. To tackle the cultural explanation of the existence of the securitization processes in the Arctic, an important number of primary and secondary sources were used to identify different socio-cultural factors. Several official documents and newspaper articles published between 2005 and 2009 were also used to further the analysis.

3. The “Security Rhetoric” Between December 2005 and March 2009: Threats to Canada's Political Sovereignty, Northern Identity, and Territorial Integrity

In the Circumpolar World, securitization processes have recently taken place (most notably in Canada, but also in Russia and in Norway), meaning that by making the claim that something is a security problem, state actors have moved some of the northern issues out of the sphere of normal politics and into the sphere of security politics (Perreault 2010). The securitization processes in Canada go as follows.

When the USS *Charlotte*, an American submarine, was spotted in Canadian Arctic waters—in the North West Passage (NWP)—in late 2005 during an election campaign, this situation ignited the national psyche. Gordon O'Connor, then the national defence critic for the Conservative party, stated that due to constant negligence by Liberal governments, Canada's sovereignty in its Arctic was now threatened. According to O'Connor, during the last decades American, Russian, Chinese, French, and British nuclear submarines had been trespassing Canada's territory

without necessarily requesting Canadian authorization. He announced that a “Conservative government will make sure that our sovereignty in the North is respected” (Canadian Press 2005).

Then a few days later, on 22 December 2005, Stephen Harper, then leader of the Conservative party, stood in front of a large map of Canada and introduced the Conservatives’ plan on matters related to national security. On this date, the expression “use it or lose it” was used for the first time as Harper promised – if the Conservative party were elected and he become prime minister – to protect Canada’s sovereignty and security in the North with all means necessary, but mostly with force. “You don’t defend national sovereignty with flags, cheap electoral rhetoric, and advertising campaigns. You need troops on the ground, ships in the sea, and adequate surveillance” (CTV.ca 2005).

Since this specific situation, and after the Conservative party was elected to form a minority government in 2006, Canadian political actors have successfully securitized the region. Through official discourses, Canada’s political sovereignty in the Arctic has been presented as being threatened by “others.”

The idea of a foreign presence in Canadian waters has strong effects on Canadian nationalism. Thus, the minister of national defence and the prime minister have seized many occasions to repeat the expression “use it or lose it” (i.e., MacKay 2008; Harper 2007, 2008b), and also to underline the government’s willingness to protect Canada’s sovereignty. According to these state actors, the situation has never been more urgent and never has it been more imperative to take all the necessary measures to protect Canada’s Arctic territory (Harper 2006a). Moreover, the prime minister has argued on American soil, Canada will not back down even if it means creating friction with the United States (Harper 2006b).

Hence, the expression “use it or lose it” is emblematic of the securitization processes that have taken place in the region between December 2005 and March 2009. The situation was presented as being urgent because the government allegedly must act now or it might lose its authority over parts of its territory, and it was presented as being existential because the intersubjective threat relates to a partial non-recognition of Canada’s sovereignty. Therefore, with the expression “use it or lose it,” the situation was presented as a question of survival and the regional issues were seen as too important to be exposed to the normal process of public politics.

Moreover, the government made a political choice to highlight the importance of the Arctic to Canada’s common national identity. Its

discourses frequently highlighted many historical facts, the numerous tales of early explorers, and “nordicity” as an important common denominator (Harper 2006a; Canada 2007; Harper 2008d). The government even argued that if it did not act immediately, this would mean that the government was turning its back on what it means to be Canadian (Harper 2008a).

Thus, the government decided to securitize Canada’s northern identity at the same time as its political sovereignty. These are interrelated securitizations because nordicity is tied to a geographical region. If Canada loses parts of this territory, then, does it not lose parts of its identity?

By highlighting Canada’s historical link to the Arctic, by transforming the country’s official motto “sea to sea” into “sea to sea to sea” (or “coast to coast” into “coast to coast to coast”) in order to include the Arctic Ocean, and by using the phrase of the national anthem “The True North Strong and Free” as the slogan of the government’s website, the government of Canada decided to push Canada’s northern identity onto centre stage.

The securitization of Canada’s political sovereignty and identity also enabled the government to easily move the political threat towards a military one. In August 2008, the territorial integrity of Canada in its “Great White North” started to be perceived as threatened by Russia’s military.

In the absence of a military threat (the United States being Canada’s closest ally) it is difficult to justify, in the long-term, the necessity for Canada to defend itself in the Arctic and, moreover, to explain the choice of privileging military might. Thus, on 24 August 2008, David Emerson, then minister of foreign affairs, made an explicit link between Russia’s actions in Georgia and the resumption of Russia’s strategic flights in the Arctic. The government considered Russia’s actions in Georgia, but also in the North, as being potentially threatening and Emerson stated that these events helped the Conservative strategy in the Arctic because they justified the government’s approach (CTV.ca 2008). Hence, the government of Canada explicitly tied the circumpolar region to extra-regional factors.

Reacting to the news of a Russian strategic flight being intercepted very close to Canada’s airspace in its North, Stephen Harper even talked about Russia trespassing in Canada’s national airspace and in an interview with the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) he said that the Russians were testing Canada’s airspace more frequently and that this represented an aggression not only in the Arctic but also more globally. According to the WSJ, Harper’s government was even considering Russia to be a threat to Canada (O’Grady 2009; Ballivy 2009). On 21 March 2009, the minister of national defence, Peter MacKay, reiterated these thoughts to Russia’s

foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, at the Brussels Forum. He told him that every time Russia sends airplanes close to the Canadian territory, Canada will do the same (De Grandpré 2009).

4. Explaining the Government's "Security Rhetoric": Putting It Into Context

In the introduction, we have seen that desecuritization in the 1990s led to greater co-operation between the Arctic states and to the end of the Cold War security rhetoric. Institutionalization of circumpolar relations became a reality, especially with the creation of the Arctic Council in 1996. So much had changed during the last decade of the twentieth century that in 1999, Franklyn Griffiths was describing a sort of deterritorialization of the northern issues as threats to sovereignty and to the Arctic states' territorial integrity were quasi non-existent, or so it was perceived. The Soviet threat had disappeared and other sovereignty issues had been politically set aside for the greater good of the regional building processes. Why then, six years later, did the Canadian government decide to start framing its northern issues as threats to its political sovereignty, northern identity, and to its territorial integrity?

Canada's Domestic Context: The "Security Rhetoric" as a Political Calculation

Since the end of the 1990s, Canadian foreign and defence policy experts had been calling for a change in the way the Canadian government was handling its North as most of them came to the conclusion that Canada's sovereignty was threatened, or at least not totally secured (for more information on this process, see Huebert 2005). According to Donald McRae, "the changing climate of Arctic regions, concerns about defence capability, interest in mineral exploitation, and greater awareness of the needs of Canada's indigenous peoples, have all combined to direct political attention to the north" (McRae 2007).

Besides, the domestic political scene was also changing pretty quickly. An election came up in 2004 and Canada got its first minority government in over twenty-five years. The Liberal government eventually called a public inquiry into the sponsorship scandal and as the Gomery Commission took its course, the 2005-2006 election did not come as a big surprise². What did come as a surprise is the fact that right in the middle of the election, the USS *Charlotte* incident in the Northwest Passage became a campaign issue. This gave the opposition the opportunity to try and convince Canadians that, unlike their predecessor, they would not treat the Arctic with indifference.

They were able to sing a different tune, a more assertive one, one that answered the experts concerns about Canada's defence capability and its ability to defend itself in the North. Moreover, this precise situation (the USS *Charlotte* incident) gave the opposition the opportunity to convince a large enough audience of the authenticity of the threat in the Arctic. Consequently, three years after the first securitization, more than 65 percent of Canadians are afraid of losing territory in the North to other states like Russia or the United States, according to a National Defence survey (Cameron 2009).

Even though the vast majority of Canadians live in southern Canada very close to the American border, the "Great White North" remains an important component of their national identity. The Northwest Passage is itself an important national symbol (Griffiths 2004, 1) and "'Arctic sovereignty' strikes a chord that resonates powerfully" (McRae 2007). Furthermore, Arctic defence is one of the rare foreign and defence policy causes that can rally a majority of Canadians (Roussel 2008b, 578). Besides, the fact that Stephen Harper's government announced a series of Arctic initiatives again, just before the 2008 election campaign, tends to accredit the "political calculation" hypothesis (Roussel 2008b).

Canada's Ideological Context: The Arctic and Canada's Place and Role in the World

Although domestic political calculation, mixed with the belief that Canada needs to be more physically present in the Arctic, definitely helps explicate the government's new security rhetoric, it does not seem to tell the whole story. There are two reasons why the strategic changes in the Arctic seem to be a lot more than just rhetoric intended to please the Canadian electorate.

First, the new security rhetoric has been consistent; it has not only been used during two election campaigns, but it has been regularly expressed in official discourses for over four years. Second, the nature of the security discourse (sovereignty and territorial integrity threats) also points to the fact that the rhetoric is intended for a much larger audience, which includes the circumpolar states and the growing number of outside actors interested in the region. Hence, the securitization processes in the Arctic enter the realm of international relations and in order to understand them better they have to be linked to the larger context of Canada's foreign and defence policy and, specifically, to the sphere of its dominant ideas (values, preferences, and beliefs). These ideas are socio-cultural factors that impact

on how Canadians and their state actors perceive their country's relations with the rest of the world.

Internationalism and Middle Power Status: "Old" Dominant Ideas?

The most enduring dominant ideas of the last century are tied to the concept of middle power, which itself designates a particular style of foreign policy—internationalism—which is active diplomacy reflected in a strong participation in all major international organizations and in a systematic participation in multilateral operations (Nossal 2007, 115). Middlepowermanship, as coined by John W. Holmes (Nossal 2007, 115), contributed to the development of the belief that Canada is a more social, humanitarian, mediating, conciliatory, liberal, discrete, and multilateral actor, always ready for peacekeeping duties. These dominant ideas have been part of official discourses for many decades now and they are often seen as a way for Canada to distinguish itself from its powerful neighbour. In fact, Canada's foreign policy is often thought to be a perpetual act of anti-Americanism as its principal objective is to preserve Canada's identity and to protect its interest as a distinct political entity on the North American continent (Nossal 2007, 278).

Continentalism and Major Power Status: "New" Dominant Ideas?

The most important rivals to these perceptions of Canada's place and role in the world are the ideas related to continentalism and to the strong belief that Canadians have to start seeing their country as a major power with all that this entails in relation to its military capacity, its interests, and its international relations. These shared ideas reflect a very different conception of doing foreign policy, as unilateral actions and the use of force are put on the same level as multilateralism and diplomacy. Furthermore, often criticized as being too "loyal" to the Americans, proponents of the ideas of continentalism believe that the United States is Canada's principal partner and that the Canadian government has to make sure that no possible future Canadian vulnerabilities will ever be able to jeopardize its neighbour's security. Integration is seen as a natural route, not only for economic reasons but because the two countries are thought to be very close culturally, ideologically, and linguistically. Hence, closer ties are not seen as threats to Canada's sovereignty and identity as the country is believed to be strong enough to resist America's influence and to defend its own interests (Nossal 2007, 273–278).

The attempts to dismiss the ideas of internationalism and middlepowermanship go a long way. Former prime minister Pierre Elliott

Trudeau first tried to get rid of these ideas in 1968 although he was doing this from a different premise; he saw Canada as a more modest power and not a major one. However, as time went by these dominant ideas were kept alive throughout his mandates.

Still, during the 1970s and 1980s the ideas related to continentalism and to Canada as a major power were more clearly articulated. In 1975, James Eayrs argued that Canada's relative power in the world was increasing because of its resources and the decline of America's power. According to Eayrs, everything was in place for Canada to take its place in the world; it only needed a foreign policy that was equal to the task (James Eayrs 1975, 16, 26, and 27 cited in Nossal 2007, 127). In 1977, Norman Hillmer and Garth Stevenson coined the term "Foremost Nation" to describe Canada (Hillmer and Stevenson 1977 cited in Nossal 2007, 128) and in 1979, Peyton Lyon and Brian Tomlin published an empirical study that put the country on the same level as China, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Japan (Lyon and Tomlin 1979 cited in Nossal 2007, 128). In 1983, David Dewitt and John Kirton argued that Canada was a principal power, a rising international star with a whole lot of potential (Dewitt and Kirton 1983, 40 cited in Nossal 2007, 129). Brian Mulroney's government also shared these ideas, especially on the economy, but although his government introduced the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, his foreign policy discourses and actions were still tainted by the dominant ideas of middlepowermanship and internationalism (Nossal 2007, 121).

More recently, in 2005, Paul Martin's Liberal government also wanted to brush off internationalism and middlepowermanship, when it published *Canada's International Policy Statement* (Canada 2005). This strategic document explicitly argued that "our old middle power identity imposes an unnecessary ceiling on what we can do and be in the world ... while we value multilateralism and know the great good that international co-operation can achieve, we must ultimately be committed to playing a lead role in specific initiatives and, on occasion, to resolving to go it alone" (see Canada 2005 and Justin Massie's analysis of it, Massie 2007). These arguments seem to reflect much of the current government's perception of Canada's place and role in the world.

Canada's Arctic Linked to the "Old" and "New" Dominant Ideas

If we start linking this ideological evolution to the Arctic, it has to be said that the region is itself an important piece in the enduring process of Canada's foreign policy objective to preserve Canada's identity and to protect its interest as a distinct political entity on the North American

continent. Hence, it can easily be tied to the ideas of internationalism and to its perpetual act of anti-Americanism. Since the Second World War, Canada has witnessed four different security and sovereignty crises in the North, with the United States being the central actor every time³ (Shadwick 2002). Thus, the fear of losing Canada's political sovereignty and national identity to the Americans has had many effects in the region.

On the other hand, Prime Minister Stephen Harper has never demonstrated deeply anti-American tendencies and, moreover, the current government's rhetoric related to the Arctic and to Canada's place and role in the world seems to have definitely moved away from the traditional dominant ideas tied to internationalism and middle power status. Accordingly, the government wants to eliminate Canada's old middle-power identity and construct a new one, much closer to the ideas of Canada seen as a major power in the world. In London, Stephen Harper was perfectly clear on the subject: "They [British investors] have recognized Canada's emergence as a global energy powerhouse—the emerging energy superpower our government intends to build" (Harper 2006c). At the Economic Club of New York, he reiterated that "Canada is an emerging energy superpower, the only stable and growing producer of this scarce commodity in an unstable world" (Harper 2006b). And more recently: Canada stands "amongst the first of the nations in the world in credit, in resources, in standing, in reputation, and in fruition" (Harper 2011).

Along these lines, the resource rich Arctic is explicitly linked to this major power status rhetoric as the minister of foreign affairs, Lawrence Cannon, does not hesitate to simultaneously repeat the fact that Canada is an emerging energy superpower and an Arctic power (Cannon 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). The government even launched an advertising campaign in Europe to promote Canada as an "Arctic power," the rightful owner of more than a third of the territory and resources (Embassy 2009). Thus, this clearly shows that the government is trying to project the image of Canada as a principal power, a rising international star with a whole lot of potential. Furthermore, the Arctic seems to be central to the government's political will to change Canada's image and status domestically and internationally.

Besides, the government seems determined to show that Canada must ultimately be committed to playing a lead role in specific initiatives and, on occasion, to resolving to go it alone. Unilateral actions and the use of force are put on the same level as multilateralism and diplomacy. Therefore, the unilateral actions in the Arctic and its related security rhetoric get

all their significance when one starts looking through the lens of these dominant ideas and, more so, when it is tied to the government's different actions and stances around the world, like Canada's recent Afghanistan role, the government stance on Israel's bombings in Lebanon, its direct condemnation of China's human rights handlings, or its unilateral sanctions imposed on Burma. The government's approach in the Arctic between December 2005 and March 2009 seems to correlate with its actions around the world, as it appears that Canada wanted to leave a lot less room for diplomacy and a lot more space for unilateral initiatives and also, if necessary, for the use of force. The security rhetoric, combined with the fact that at the early stages of the government's mandate it did not hesitate to abolish the position of ambassador for circumpolar affairs, also sent the signal that Canada was returning to the idea of creating a more national Arctic where defending its interest against other Arctic states was thought to be the biggest prerogative.

Likewise, the strong belief that Canadians have to start seeing their country as a major power, with all that this entails in relation to its military capacity, its interests, and its international relations, has been articulated quite clearly by the prime minister and the current government. From day one, this belief has been linked directly to the Arctic when the prime minister first announced the government's defence strategy during the 2005-2006 election campaign. In 2008, when the government officially presented its *Canada First* Defence Strategy, Stephen Harper argued that "if a country wants to be taken seriously in the world, it must have the capacity to act. It's that simple. Otherwise, you forfeit your right to be a player" (Harper 2008c). Furthermore, in the *Canada First* Defence Strategy document it is stipulated that "Canada cannot lead with words alone" (Canada 2008).

Hence, after securitizing the Arctic and thus claiming the right to use any means necessary to stop all threatening development, during the first two years of Stephen Harper's government Canadian Forces had over seven major military operations in the Arctic, three more than during the thirteen years of a Liberal government. The government also announced significant new spending to increase the military presence and the development of Canada's Arctic (for a list of these announcements, see Perreault 2010b). Moreover, as we end this section, it is also worth mentioning again, for the sake of the concluding arguments, that the perceived Russian threat to Canada's territorial integrity in the Arctic has also been used to justify the government's more robust approach.

5. Conclusion: Possible Effects and Insights to Better Canada's Role in the Arctic

We have seen that between December 2005 and March 2009 the government of Canada decided to securitize its political sovereignty, its northern identity, as well as its territorial integrity. Two possible and most probably interconnected explanations to these processes of securitization have been discussed above. Hence, taking these and the theoretical insights of the Copenhagen School into account, I first look at three possible effects of Canada's strategic changes in the Arctic. I then conclude this article by offering two specific recommendations to better Canada's role in the Circumpolar World.

(1) Positive Strategic Effects

There are, among others, three positive strategic effects that can come out of the recent government's securitizations in the Arctic. First, the urgency it creates enables the government to justify the use of extraordinary measures, such as building its military capabilities now in order to be able to physically have them in a not so distant future. Military acquisitions do have a tendency to take many years before they can actually be used. Second, the new aggressive rhetoric can help show other states the government's determination and interests in the Arctic before it actually enters into negotiations related to regional co-operation or to conflict resolutions. Third, and this strategic effect is clearly related to the ideas of continentalism, by building Canada's military capabilities in the Arctic and by rhetorically arguing that the government will protect it no matter what, this can have a positive effect in Washington. It tells the United States that the government of Canada is now making sure that no possible future Canadian vulnerabilities in the Arctic will ever be able to jeopardize its security. This capacity-building effort can also be seen as an occasion to improve bilateral security co-operation between the two countries (Roussel 2008b, 576 and 578).

(2) Negative Societal Effects

There are also negative effects of the government's recent securitizations in the Arctic. As we saw above, when you securitize an issue you transform it and you immediately start seeing things differently. Hence, during the 1990s, the Canadian government and the other Arctic states had decided to use the Arctic as a way to improve dialogue and co-operation between what was then the "Western" and the "Eastern" sector. Needless to say, Canadians and their government did not fear losing parts of their

territory. However, since December 2005, Canada's political sovereignty and identity in the Arctic were transformed in the mind of the population, and they became threatened.

Hence, the Copenhagen School argues that the security speech act, specifically when it relates to sovereignty and identity, has a tendency to perpetuate the general feeling of insecurity. Consequently, because of the "use it or lose it" rhetoric, I believe that there is a general sentiment in the Canadian population living outside the northern region that Canada has a lot to lose in the Arctic and that it is not ready to, or not capable of, defending what it already has. One can put this to a test by starting simple conversations on the Arctic with Canadians across the country. Most of them will immediately mention Russia or the United States as foreign countries that want to take pieces of Canadian territory away from them. This general sentiment is clearly reflected in a 2009 survey conducted by the Department of National Defence, where eight out of ten Canadians believe that the federal government has to do more to "re-enforce" Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic and more than 65 percent are afraid of losing territory in the North to other states like Russia or the United States (Cameron 2009). Yet, other than the small Hans Island conflict with Denmark, there is no territorial contestation. Hence, because of the "use it or lose it" rhetoric and of the national media's attraction to simple stories of "us" versus "them," there seems to be a general misunderstanding of the issues at stake and a lot less awareness of other important political matters (e.g., regional co-operation, Arctic governance, environmental protection, socio-economic development, building better civilian infrastructures).

(3) Negative Regional Effects

The revival of the Russian threat in Canadian discourse could definitely have substantial political effects. First, the fact that the government of Canada has explicitly linked Russia's strategic flights in the North to that country's actions in other parts of the world (Georgia) has the effect of bringing extra-regional factors onto the regional scene. If the region cannot be decoupled from outside factors, this could eventually have detrimental effects. For example, Norway, Russia, and Canada are now developing new military capabilities explicitly designed to be stationed in the Arctic and if we cannot decouple the North this could set a dangerous precedent for the region in the hypothetical event of a bigger struggle elsewhere. Second, when new military acquisitions are justified by a potential military threat to one's territorial integrity, this cannot but have a direct effect on

the confidence between state actors. Distrust rises and this can create a security dilemma.

Canada, an Arctic Power: Constructing a Foreign Policy That Is Equal to the Task

James Eayrs believed that everything was in place for Canada to take its place in the world; it only needed a foreign policy that was equal to the task (Nossal 2007, 127). If we share the beliefs tied to the emerging dominant ideas of continentalism and major power status, then Canada now has to be bolder and wiser in its international relations. As the Arctic is presumably central to the government's political will to change Canada's status internationally, the government needs to construct an Arctic foreign policy that is equal to that task. Because the positive strategic effects discussed above should have already been capitalized on, after more than four years of the "use it or lose it" rhetoric I believe that the strategic effects are now outweighed by the two other possible negative effects.

First, the insecurities felt by Canadians across the country concerning the Arctic should be dealt with immediately. In order to move in the right direction, to stimulate good national reflections and ideas to better Canada's North, the government has to raise awareness of the other issues at stake. The general population seems to be more aware of the international security aspects of its North than its development or socio-economic situation. I recommend completely eliminating the "use it or lose it" security rhetoric in order to start treating the region as just another part of the country with particular infrastructural and social needs. It must be said that, since 2009, the government seems to have taken this route; let us hope that it stays the course.

Second, if Canada is an emerging energy superpower and an Arctic power, then it has to develop important links with other similar or greater powers. Russia is the superpower in the Arctic in terms of military capabilities; hence, this is arguably the most important bilateral relation to Canada in its North. The last two official bilateral statements made by both heads of states date back to 15 July 2006. Since then, we have seen that Russia has been perceived as a possible threat to Canada's Arctic. In order to reverse this "us" versus "them" dynamic and to give a strong impulse to Canada's bilateral relation with Russia, I recommend the creation of a major diplomatic offensive. Here is an idea: Why not make 2012 "Canada's Year in Russia" and "Russia's Year in Canada." Russia and Spain will have 2011 as their cross-cultural exchange year. They will host over 700 events to boost mutual co-operation in science, education, culture, and economics;

why not take this diplomatic idea between these two countries and use it with an Arctic twist. This would be very beneficial, not only for Russia and Canada, but for the entire Circumpolar World. If Canada is an Arctic power, it has to take innovative steps and lead the diplomatic offensive. Maybe then its foreign policy would start equalling the task.

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Notes

1. When the geographical term “Canadian North” is used in this article it is meant to include everything north of the sixtieth parallel. The Arctic itself starts at the Arctic Circle (66.5622° north of the equator).
2. The Liberal Party of Canada formed government between 1993 and 2006. In order to help raise the federal government and Canada’s profile in the province of Québec, a “unity reserve” fund and a sponsorship program were created in 1994-1995. On 10 February 2004, the federal Auditor General Sheila Fraser published a report that strongly hinted at a “political scandal” in the administration of the program and the “unity reserve” fund; i.e., kickback funds to party “loyalists,” illicit payments, and funds that had been diverted or creamed off. After the report, the Liberal minority government asked Justice John Gomery to head a public inquiry and on 1 November 2005 he published his first report. In view of the findings, the opposition parties voted a motion of non-confidence to topple the government and the 2005-2006 election was called.
3. First, in 1943, there were roughly 30,000 Americans (civil and military personnel) in the Canadian North building infrastructure to counter Japan in the Aleutian Islands. In the face of this major presence of American military many Canadians started to fear losing their country’s sovereignty in the North. Second, during the 1950s, there was a similar debate related to the DEW line’s construction, to Canada’s right to own the infrastructure, and to the presence of an important number of Americans in the North. Third, during 1969-1970, there was the *Manhattan* affair related to an unauthorized passage of an American oil tanker through the Northwest Passage which ignited a political conflict over the two countries’ different interpretations of the international legal status of the Passage. Fourth, In 1985, an American icebreaker, the *Polar Sea*, passed through the Passage without seeking prior authorization from the Canadian government. Again, this sparked controversy over the legal status of the Passage.

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