



Northern Perspectives

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Renewing the Northern Strategy

This edition of *Northern Perspectives* was planned to explore some of the issues raised by the federal government's Northern Strategy, announced in December 2004. CARC had hoped to be able to contribute to the dialogue around the Strategy, a dialogue that had been started in some public meetings held by the federal government.

There is now uncertainty, however, over whether there will even be a Strategy. The idea was a joint project between the former Liberal government and the three territorial governments and was enthusiastically backed by the three territorial premiers, none of whom is an avowed Liberal (the Yukon Party — formerly the Conservatives — form the government in the Yukon, while neither the Northwest Territories nor Nunavut has party politics in its legislature).

During the recent election campaign, the federal Conservative Party spoke of its plans to bolster Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic by stationing three armed Navy icebreakers in a new deep-water port in Iqaluit. Following the election, newly minted Prime Minister Stephen Harper responded sharply to remarks by the United States ambassador about Canada's sovereignty over the Northwest Passage. Both events indicate the new Conservative government will be engaged in furthering the Northern Strategy, at least as far as the issue of sovereignty.

Further, as Opposition Leader, Prime Minister Harper replied to the three northern premiers by stating that "...the Conservative Party of Canada agrees that a comprehensive strategy is needed to advance the common socio-economic goals of the North. We also

believe it is essential to the economic development of the three northern territories that they have a resource revenue-sharing agreement with the federal government." There are several other aspects of the Strategy towards which the new Conservative government must make clear its intentions. It must say how it will work with Northerners to address the consequences and causes of Arctic climate change, how it plans to promote and preserve northern cultures and how it plans to address the chronic housing and infrastructure needs in the North. All of these were to be originally included in a Northern Strategy, and Northerners need to know how

Prime Minister Harper, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Jim Prentice and the new Conservative government intend to address these issues, whether they are to be examined within the developing framework of the Northern Strategy or through other means. We hope the following articles will contribute to the dialogue and the revitalization of the Northern Strategy, whatever form or process it may take. ■

"The danger in removing the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs from the northern equation is that the North would no longer be part of the central mandate of any federal department. Until or unless the three territories become provinces, it is essential that there be a department focused solely on the North that represents northern interests to the rest of Canada and national interests to northerners."

CARC, "A Federal Presence in the North?"
See pages 2-4.



A Federal Presence in the North?

This edition of *Northern Perspectives* is devoted to an examination of aspects of the Northern Strategy. The Strategy affects the three northern territories — Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut — which collectively cover nearly 4 million square kilometres, well over one-third of Canada. Although it could be argued that much more of the country is also “northern,” the territories are the only exclusively northern parts of the country, as provinces with northern portions also shade into the more developed lands of southern Canada.

The idea of a strategy for the North had been developing for several years before being formally announced in December 2004 by former Prime Minister Paul Martin alongside the territorial premiers. The Prime Minister also announced that each territory would receive \$40 million as a down-payment on the Strategy.

Since then, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, tasked with the development of the Strategy, has held public meetings focusing on

The following headings and goals were established as a framework for the Northern Strategy. For the full document, go to: <http://www.northernstrategy.ca/>

Strengthening Governance, Partnerships and Institutions

Proposed Goal: To strengthen governments and institutions, and support evolving relationships among them, in order to provide northerners with effective governance and greater control over decisions central to their future.

Establishing Strong Foundations for Economic Development

Proposed Goal: To build strong, sustainable, diversified economies where northerners share in the benefits of northern development.

Protecting the Environment

Proposed Goal: To engage all partners in the North in the protection and stewardship of the environment.

Building Healthy and Safe Communities

Proposed Goal: To ensure healthy, safe and sustainable northern communities that serve and support the needs of northern residents and promote self-reliance.

Reinforcing Sovereignty, National Security and Circumpolar Cooperation

Proposed Goal: To ensure that Canada plays a leading role and promotes concerted international action on circumpolar issues, and that northern concerns are taken into consideration in national efforts to reinforce sovereignty, security and circumpolar cooperation.

Preserving, Revitalizing and Promoting Culture and Identity

Proposed Goal: To ensure that the importance of language, traditional knowledge and way-of-life is recognized and encouraged.

Developing Northern Science and Research

Proposed Goal: To ensure that Canada is a leader in northern science and technology, and to develop expertise in areas of particular importance and relevance to the North.



Illustration: Clive Tesar

particular aspects of the challenges facing the North. A meeting on sovereignty and security was held in Ottawa, while Iqaluit hosted a discussion on climate change. In addition, there have also been many other lower profile public consultations with governments and northern indigenous peoples' organizations.

At the time of writing, we do not know what these discussions have produced. The details of the Strategy have not yet been unveiled, and the Conservative

government has not yet announced its intentions regarding the Strategy. Many of the public suggestions have come down to money, in the form of either direct spending by the federal government or transfers from the federal government to territorial and Aboriginal governments. Regardless of how the money is spent, however, people universally cited a pressing need to invest more in the North. Solving the housing crisis in the North will require money, for example, while effectively policing the increasingly ice-free areas in the

Arctic archipelago will require further investment. Both are examples of how the Northern Strategy is expected to select some priorities from the North's long shopping list of pressing needs and decide what to do in the short, medium and long term.

There are also moves governments could make that would not require an infusion of money but instead would focus on structural change. Such change is already taking place in the North, but only in an incremental and piecemeal fashion. The Yukon has a devolution agreement with the federal government that has transferred most land management responsibilities to the territorial government in Whitehorse, while similar agreements are being negotiated in both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Different land claims deals have created different orders of northern government, from the establishment of Aboriginal self-government in Nunavut to the groundbreaking Tlicho (Dogrib) claim in the Northwest Territories, which set up a regional government responsible for delivering a variety of services.

In addition to these changes in territorial governance, the federal government has given up some of its responsibility for land management in the North to the Yukon government and has set up a variety of boards in the territories to advise on such things as environmental impacts and water licences. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), however, maintains contradictory goals. While one branch seeks to foster development through mining and oil and gas initiatives, another branch works to ensure that northern land, water, wildlife and people are not adversely affected by development. While these aims are not necessarily mutually exclusive — evidenced by the very existence of the concept of sustainable development — in practice they are hard, if not impossible, to achieve in a single department, a fact recognized by two of the territories. In the Northwest Territories, for example, the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development was broken into two separate departments, with one half forming the basis of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment and the other leading to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Similarly, Nunavut changed the Department of Sustainable Development into a Department of Economic Development and Transportation and a Department of the Environment.

Such examples cause some to question the future of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, suggesting that services for developers could fall under the mandate of Natural

Resources Canada, while its environmental services could be folded into Environment Canada. Even with INAC remaining in its present form, territorial and Aboriginal governments would eventually take on many of those responsibilities through devolution (as has already happened in the Yukon), with the federal department retaining only residual responsibilities until the territories attain provincial status.

The danger in removing the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs from the northern equation is that the North would no longer be part of the central mandate of any federal department. Devolving INAC's current responsibilities into two existing departments would leave the three territories without any national profile and would create a situation in which northern issues would have to fight for recognition alongside a host of other national issues. Until or unless the three territories become provinces, it is essential that there be a department focused solely on the North that represents northern interests to the rest of Canada and national interests to Northerners.

One possibility is to create a "Department of the North." This idea is not without precedent; agencies exist for both western and Atlantic interests. The difference, however, is that whereas those agencies focus largely on regional economic development, a Department of the North would have a variety of northern issues as part of its mandate. One possible starting point would be for the Department to co-ordinate the federal response to the issues raised by the Framework for the Northern Strategy, from assisting Northerners with climate change adaptation to promoting circumpolar cooperation initiatives.

Regardless of what the Strategy contains when (and if) it is released, it should not be seen as the end of the process. The discussions of the North's future that were encouraged by the Strategy must continue. The dialogue between the North and the rest of Canada concerning northern needs and the national interest should be seen as a continuously evolving project that will not be wrapped up in a single strategy, but rather in a series of strategies that will take years to develop and implement. If the Strategy contains only a one recommendation, it should be this: that all parties continue to work in partnership to highlight and explore northern issues and the options for dealing with them. If it achieves only that, the Northern Strategy will have accomplished something worthwhile. ■

“Preserving, Revitalizing and Promoting Culture and Identity”

Joanne Barnaby is a consultant with extensive experience in working with northern communities. This experience includes over 27 years in Aboriginal organizations providing both leadership and senior management services to Aboriginal peoples. For 12 years, she was Executive Director of the Dene Cultural Institute in the Northwest Territories. She spoke with Northern Perspectives editor Clive Tesar.

‘Preserving, revitalizing and promoting culture and identity’ are big concepts — what does that phrase mean to you?

I think given the reality that we’re living in a small world these days, communications and travel the way they are, exposure to the larger world is all the more reason for us to try and create some sense of belonging and certainty. Culture gives us a degree of grounding, a sense of place and certainty.

Given the pace of change in the North, how does one go about preserving northern cultures?

The fundamental aspect of culture that is of importance, given the complexity of the world, given the multicultural nature of northern communities now, it is important we take a values-based approach to our decision-making. That means looking at the options and opportunities that we’re faced with in terms of recognizing that values are the foundation of Aboriginal cultures, and many northern cultures. It is important that we make a conscious effort to look at our choices and bring forward the values underlying our choices.

What does this mean in practice?

It means that we need to ensure balance, we need to ensure that our material needs are not overwhelming our spiritual needs, we need to consider the impacts of our choices on future generations, we need to demonstrate respect and we need to share.

Does this mean that some of the concrete, traditional forms of culture will fall away?

Those things serve as reminders of our values, but they’re not the foundations of our cultures. I had a hard time most of my life really understanding Euro-Canadians. It

was only when I went to Europe and saw the buildings, the culture there, that I really began to understand it.

The difference is that the physical expression of culture has not been a predominant preoccupation with Aboriginal peoples, it is not as important to Aboriginal peoples as it is to other cultures.

There are northern cultures that appear healthy, and others that appear to be on the verge of disappearing — why do we see this difference?

Leadership has played an important role there. Most of our cultures have experienced oppression to a similar degree — I’m not sure any one region was more oppressed than others. I think the leadership of the day made a difference for communities.

“There’s a difference between assimilation and people being strong in who they are and respectful of others. I recognize that people and cultures evolve and change over time.”

An obvious example is in the Dogrib region (in the Northwest Territories, north and west of Yellowknife. The Dogrib are also known as the Tlicho). You see today a much higher use of language, the strength of the language is fairly apparent, more so than most. Several key leaders over the last hundred years made conscious choices, spoke openly about the value of their culture, made choices based on values and commitment to culture and it has paid off. ‘Strong like two people’ is very much a commitment to cultural identity that realizes the reality of new cultures, but nonetheless commits to Dogrib culture, maintaining their strength while also drawing strength from other cultures. I think their approach to land claims and self-government is another example of that. It is a culture-based approach to self-government in a modern-day context.

You used the phrase, “strong like two people.” What does it mean?

To me it means that people need to draw from the strength of their culture and history to maintain a strong identity based on that, while also developing the capacity to interact and live effectively with other cultures and draw from their knowledge systems and their skills and abilities.

Given the level of sharing between different cultures in the North, in the intermarriage, both physically and culturally between the different peoples of the North, how realistic is it to try to keep those cultures distinct and separate?

I’m not sure it’s necessary to keep them separate — distinct, yes — there’s a difference between assimilation and people being strong in who they are and respectful of others. I recognize that people and cultures evolve and change over time; that is where being clear in the fundamentals of culture are important, and to me, the fundamentals are values.

If you were able to set policy on culture in the North, what would you do?

I think an important thing we need to do is create an environment where we encourage people to bring forward their values, and have discussions and debates about our choices based on those values, consider the impact of our choices on future generations, that includes the question of sustainability not only for current use but also for the future, and consider the global implications of our choices.

One of the roles of government and of policy is to ensure that those forums and opportunities are part of the

decision-making process. Quite often there’s a requirement for technical information that takes precedence over values, that can result in decisions that may be technically sound, but don’t make sense to people and may have consequences that are contrary to our values.

Government’s role is to provide that forum, create that values-based debate. As people in the North we have a responsibility to participate in that process and share our values openly in a way that is both respectful but also where there’s a strong commitment to upholding those values.

Gold mining in Yellowknife is an example. There were 50 years of decisions being made that relied on technical information available at the time, and the results after 50 years are horrendous. The problems that we are faced with, the environmental problems are huge. And yet, all of the rationale throughout the years was based on the best technical information at the time, despite the many, many times that Aboriginal residents in the area and others brought forward their concerns about the environment, their values related to the

environment, their responsibility for stewardship and observations of impacts.

How much of a role in preserving and promoting culture should be played by governments, and how much by people?

It is governments’ responsibility to foster values-based debate and to ensure that the policies that they establish reflect the values of the North. The peoples’ responsibility is active participation, openness, honesty, sharing values, open debates about choices. ■



Drummers prepare their drums before the “feeding the fire” ceremony, K’atlodeeche (Hay River), NWT.

Photo: Clive Tesar

“Reinforcing Sovereignty, National Security and Circumpolar Cooperation”

By Rob Huebert, Associate Director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, and editor of the Journal of Military and Strategic Studies.

Introduction

The geopolitical position of the Canadian North has always made the twin topics of sovereignty and security a politically sensitive issue. The vast size of the Canadian North, and its formidable climatic conditions, has meant that Canada has always faced tremendous challenges when it tries to protect its northern regions. Complicating the task for Canadian governments has been the fact that Canada shares the North American Arctic landmass with the United States. It appears that the responsibility to protect the North has been viewed by Canadian governments as too demanding, and they have preferred to pretend there were no problems and hope for the best. Canadian northern policy regarding sovereignty, security and circumpolar cooperation has tended to be reactive, piecemeal and ad hoc. Some policy actions such as the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act* (AWPPA), the 1988 *Arctic Cooperation Agreement* and the initiative to create the Arctic Council have been useful policy actions. But these examples have largely taken place in a policy vacuum. Canadian governments have sometimes attempted to develop an overall framework for the Arctic, but either have failed to complete the job of policy development and/or have failed to properly fund any initiatives that were developed.

During its time in power, the government of former Prime Minister Paul Martin decided that the time had come to clearly articulate an Arctic sovereignty and security policy. The Martin government's *International Policy Statement* was released in the Spring of 2005. It established the core elements of Canadian foreign, defence, development and international trade policy and included significant commitments to the protection of Canadian Arctic sovereignty and security.

The Martin government also committed to its international Arctic policy with a domestic Northern Strategy.

As noted in the introduction to this edition of *Northern Perspectives*, the framework for this document included a section on “Reinforcing Sovereignty, National Security and Circumpolar Cooperation” in the Canadian Arctic. To do so, it had proposed “to ensure that Canada plays a leading role and promotes concerted international action on circumpolar issues, and that northern concerns are taken into consideration in national efforts to reinforce sovereignty and circumpolar cooperation.” Had the Northern Strategy been released, Canada would have had a clearly set of articulated international and domestic policies on the protection and promotion of Canadian sovereignty, security and foreign relations for its Arctic.

However, the fall of the Martin government has raised important questions as to the future of the Northern Strategy. There has not yet been time to discover the intent of the Conservative government under new Prime Minister Stephen Harper in regard to the policy. It is unlikely that a policy that is closely associated with Martin simply will be accepted by Harper. However, even if the Harper government repudiates Martin's Northern Strategy, it is very likely that the Conservatives will develop their own

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version. During the election campaign, Harper promised to improve Canada's ability to protect and promote its Arctic sovereignty and security. Harper's promise, made on December 22, 2005, included several significant commitments such as the building of three new large icebreakers and the construction of a deep water docking facility in the Eastern Arctic. If delivered, these will substantially improve Canada's ability to protect its Arctic territories and interests. Thus the Harper government appears equally committed to its own Northern Strategy.

The historical context

The challenge before the government is substantial. Successive Canadian governments either have had limited success or failed to adequately respond to Canadian needs regarding the protection of Canadian Arctic sovereignty. Whenever threats to Canadian northern sovereignty have arisen, the public outcry that quickly develops demonstrates that Canadians care about the North and expect their government to act. However, the actions taken by past governments have been fleeting.

Conversely, the most dangerous threats to Canadian Arctic security in the past have remained hidden in the secrecy of the Cold War. It is known that the USSR would have fired its nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles over the polar region if deterrence had failed. Likewise, Soviet nuclear-powered submarines would have been engaged by American and British submarines in and near Canadian northern waters if the Cold War had turned hot. However, the secrecy surrounding these threats meant that the public tended to be unaware of the magnitude of the danger that existed. Thus, there have not been the same public pressures on the government to act on issues surrounding Arctic security as there have been in regard to the issues of sovereignty.

Current challenges

There are two main challenges that any Canadian government must deal with in regard to the protection of Canadian Arctic security and sovereignty. First, the Canadian North is no longer isolated from the rest of the world. It is now facing changes that have been brought on by global action. The most important changes are being caused by climate change. As the Arctic Council made clear in its landmark study, the *Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*, the polar regions are literally being transformed. One of the most important of these transformations facing Canada is that its Arctic is becoming more accessible to foreign activities and interests, due to retreating

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sea-ice. The second challenge facing Canadian governments is that the Canadian North is rich in natural resources. While some, such as diamonds, are being developed regardless of the northern climate, others, such as oil and gas, will be exploited in greater quantities as a warming Arctic makes them more accessible.

In total the Canadian Arctic is attracting greater and greater attention from the outside world. The Northern Strategy or any Conservative variant therefore must ensure that these new and expanded activities are conducted in a manner that respects Canadian laws and regulations and protects Canadians and their interests.

Requirements

To be meaningful, a Northern Strategy must provide three main elements: 1) policy direction; 2) surveillance capabilities; and 3) enforcement capabilities.

A Northern Strategy needs to provide a sustainable policy framework that is coordinated with the government's foreign and defence policies and that will provide the necessary boldness and willingness to meet the challenges to the Canadian North. It cannot provide empty platitudes that provide only vague promises to “do something.” This has for too long resulted in doing nothing. The Northern Strategy must provide for a clear and specific understanding of the challenges of the North. It must also provide for a means of establishing a capability of continually monitoring changes in the Arctic. The North has already entered into a period of great change. Some of the changes are now understood; others will still surprise. In order that a Northern Strategy does not

simply replicate past efforts that quickly become outdated, or ignore new challenges, a new institution that brings together all of the federal and territorial departments is needed. It would continually monitor and assess existing and new challenges facing the North. Ideally, the northern Aboriginal peoples, northern Canadians and others would also be welcomed into this body.

A Northern Strategy must get rid of the outdated dichotomy of Arctic sovereignty versus Arctic security. It must be clear that they are complementary concepts. Policy development must respond to both on an equal basis. During the Cold War, security challenges were understood to be posed by the USSR, while sovereignty challenges came from the United States. These were perceived to be unconnected and resulted in policy actions that treated the two separately. Canadian Arctic sovereignty and security are no longer separate concepts (if in fact they ever were). Canadian Arctic sovereignty is the ability of the Canadian Government to control its Arctic region for the security and well being of its citizens both within this region and in the rest of Canada. This means that Canada must know what is happening in its Arctic. The government needs to be able to respond whenever the activities of non-Canadians adversely affect the well-being of Canadians. This is being both sovereign and secure in the Arctic.

What then must be done in concrete terms? There have always been three major elements needed for a comprehensive long-term and sustainable policy for the reinforcement of sovereignty, national security and circumpolar cooperation for the Canadian Arctic.

The first is the actual recognition of the need for a national policy. Martin's *International Policy Statement* and the Northern Strategy provided for this. This is the first time that a Canadian government had taken the step of

Melting sea-ice due to climate change brings new sovereignty and security challenges.



developing policy for both its international and domestic approach to the Arctic, and it indicates a willingness to act that has not existed in the past. Prime Minister Harper's commitment of December 22 makes it clear that he shares a willingness to act. The question that follows is, will the new government continue to act on both tracks, domestic and foreign, and be guided by explicit policies on both?

Secondly, Canada must go beyond words and be able to effectively monitor what is happening on its Arctic lands and waters. To reinforce its Arctic sovereignty and security, it is necessary to know what is happening in the Arctic. To a large degree, important first steps have already been taken. RadarSat II is a satellite designed and built in Canada that is scheduled to launch this year. If it is successfully deployed, it will provide Canada with the ability to have near real-time surveillance capability, day and night, and in clear and cloudy weather. Through the use of its radar-based imaging system, this satellite is expected to be able to locate and track all surface ship traffic in Canadian Arctic waters. The Department of National Defence is also currently examining the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to further strengthen Canadian surveillance capabilities. These could give the Canadian forces the ability to economically and effectively patrol both the land and sea elements of the Canadian North. They could also be deployed to provide a closer examination of any suspicious contacts that RadarSat II discovers. There are also plans to improve the ability of Canadian Forces Northern Area (CFNA) to act as a central intelligence and surveillance coordinating body for all federal and territorial government departments. This would then provide the coordination to ensure that the new information is properly gathered and assessed. Prime Minister Harper has also promised to acquire an underwater surveillance system for Canadian northern waters. If this promise is fulfilled, the Canadian ability to know what is happening in all of its waters will be greatly expanded.

While all of these steps promise to provide a means of providing a much better picture, they still need to be instituted. RadarSat II needs to be launched; the UAVs need to be bought and deployed; the capabilities of CFNA need to be expanded and used; the underwater surveillance system must be bought and deployed. The government must ensure that these programmes are not abandoned as interest shifts elsewhere. The government also needs to address areas that are not being met by these initiatives.

There will soon also be a need to reconsider Canada's aerial surveillance capabilities. There is a move by NavCan to reduce its radar coverage of the North and rely on transponders placed in aircraft. While such a system works well for responsible aircraft users, it does not address the problem of aircraft that do not want to be detected. Thus Canada should be increasing and not decreasing its radar coverage. Similarly, the North Warning System (DEW line replacement) is aging and will need to be updated in the future.

Canada also needs to ensure that its efforts to monitor environmental impacts in the North are maintained and improved. Climate change is fundamentally changing the North and this must be monitored and studied by both academic and government scientists. Similarly, other threats to environmental security, such as persistent organic pollutants (POPs), mercury and other trans-boundary pollutants, need to be monitored carefully to ensure that the North's ecological integrity is not compromised further.

Thirdly, Canada needs to be able to act. While having a clearly articulated policy and the ability to know who is in Canada's Arctic region are both important requirements, they mean nothing if Canada cannot act to enforce its laws, rules and regulations and protect Canadians from harm from outside. There is a clear need to develop a long-term Canadian shipbuilding (or ship-buying) procurement strategy that ensures that when Canada builds new government ships, the needs of the North are adequately considered.

Currently the Navy is developing plans to replace its replenishment vessels and is looking to the long-term replacement of its destroyers and frigates. In both cases, limited Arctic capabilities for these new vessels are being considered. However, the Coast Guard has been unable to convince Cabinet of the need to rebuild its aging and small ice-breaking fleet. What obviously is needed is a policy and commitment to ensure that Canada will have the vessels that will be able to meet the coming requirements to patrol and protect the Canadian North. Prime Minister Harper's commitment to build three new large icebreakers is an important step in improving Canada's ability to act. But one has to keep in mind that as these vessels are being built (assuming that they are) Canada's remaining single large icebreaker will soon face retirement. The *Louis St. Laurent* was built in 1969 and is now 37 years old. Canada's three other medium icebreakers were built between 1977 and 1982 and will also soon reach the end of their operational lifetime.

Canada also needs to demonstrate to the world that it is serious about its intention to ensure that all foreign

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vessels follow Canadian laws and regulations by making the Arctic ship-reporting system (NORDREG) a mandatory requirement for all vessels entering Canadian waters. Currently, it is a voluntary system. With the heightened concern over vessels entering all North American waters, it seems logical that Canada integrate the new requirement of all vessels to provide 96 hours notification before entering any North American waters with a mandatory system for all Arctic bound shipping to also report to NORDREG.

Finally, Canada has to be willing to promote and support its efforts to reinforce its Arctic sovereignty and national security through a greater willingness to support the existing Arctic multi-lateral organizations and initiatives. Canada has played a leadership role in the formation of some key Arctic international organizations and initiatives: The Arctic Council, a body that brings together the eight Arctic Nations, has produced some crucial reports on the Arctic Environment; the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS); and Guidelines for Ships Operating in Arctic Ice-covered Waters. However, in recent years the ability of Canadian officials to sustain these initiatives has deteriorated. What is needed now is a review of what Canada created, what it has done and what it needs to do.

In conclusion, Canada has recently made some very important advancements for the reinforcement of sovereignty, national security and circumpolar cooperation in the Arctic. The attention given to this subject in the *International Policy Statement* indicated that the Martin government understood these challenges. The willingness of Harper to make the protection of Canadian Arctic sovereignty and security an election issue is a hopeful sign.

A Northern Strategy is still needed, and the government must ensure that it is not simply a catalogue of words and promises. Canada must have the tools and equipment to monitor and protect all of its Arctic. ■

“Establishing Strong Foundations for Economic Development”

Framework for a Northern Strategy: Encouraging opportunities for oil and natural gas development in Northern Canada

*By Pierre Alvarez
President, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
(CAPP)*

The upstream oil and natural gas industry (exploring and producing) welcomed the December 2004 joint government release of the Framework for a Northern Strategy. The Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP), representing 150 upstream companies, sees the framework as a positive first step for northern Canada, one that can help it take advantage of its immense resource potential and help boost the region’s competitiveness and economic sustainability.

Oil and natural gas in Northern Canada: Opportunities among challenges

Geological prospects and current oil and natural gas prices mean there is immense opportunity to make northern Canada a significant oil and gas producing region. A sustainable oil and gas industry North of 60° is once again on the horizon; an industry that brings with it important benefits to help Northerners establish a stable economy.

The requirements for a successful oil and gas business apply in northern Canada as they do in other regions of the world. The upstream industry is based on competition — companies compete for international investment dollars for projects. They must then decide which projects can get the most return on investment by comparing the costs of a project with the price they can get for the resources they produce.

The price of crude oil and of natural gas is currently high, but so too are the exploration and development costs for producers in northern Canada. In fact, costs are significantly higher than in other regions, reflecting the shorter drilling season, remote locations and complex regulatory system. Combined with lack of transportation and other infrastructure, the result has been delays, increased costs and higher risk. These factors make the

jurisdiction less competitive when compared to the rest of Canada and the world.

To encourage a strong oil and gas industry in the North — one that enjoys a higher level of industry activity and brings with it economic benefits for Northerners — the region must become more competitive with other jurisdictions. The industry supports the Northern Strategy Framework as a way to help make that happen.

Northern Strategy Framework: Seize the opportunities

The framework is a positive first step to address the many challenges faced by the oil and natural gas industry in the North. Industry strongly supports a number of the objectives within the Northern Strategy, especially those focused on engaging in stewardship of the environment, regulatory reform for increased competitiveness, the completion of devolution, the settling of outstanding First Nations and Aboriginal issues such as land claims and establishing foundations for economic development such as infrastructure and training.

Environment, health, safety and social principles

An important goal in the framework is “to engage all partners in the North in the protection and stewardship of the environment.” This goal is not unique to northern Canada — oil and gas producing regions around the country share the same vision. A responsible approach to business, such as maintaining the sustainability of the environment, upholding worker safety and engaging stakeholders, is critical. The industry is committed to various initiatives that encourage continuous improvement in environment, health, safety and social performance.

Industry recognizes the importance of the environmental assessment that takes place in the North. It is vital, however, that the assessment process for oil and gas be

“Industry recognizes the importance of the environmental assessment that takes place in the North. It is vital, however, that the assessment process for oil and gas be focused only on those environmental issues that are affected by oil and gas activity. The process should look to provide meaningful protection of the environment and not act as an open-ended process of addressing broader social or economic issues.”

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Increased competitiveness: A need for regulatory changes — one set of rules from one governing organization

The Northern Strategy outlines one of its objectives as “development of regulatory regimes to improve efficiency and apply consistent standards and practices.” To the oil and gas industry, this does not mean deregulation. Instead, it means putting together a regulatory strategy that is clearer, more effective, efficient and timely. A consistent set of rules to operate under would allow companies to make economic decisions based on those rules, lowering risk and minimizing costs.

An example of the complexity of regulations faced by industry is the number of regulatory bodies that govern a typical oil and gas operator in the Mackenzie Valley. An oil and gas company would have to deal with the rules put in place by at least three federal agencies, three territorial departments and three to five local bodies, as well as local communities. The sheer number of regulators — 10 to 13 for one oil and gas project — leads to inconsistent rules between regulators. This makes approvals for oil and gas activity extremely complex, costly and time consuming. The success of development in this region lies not only in the resource that is available but also in the efficiency of getting approvals.

A common set of rules or a coordinated effort by all the bodies governing oil and gas development would mean a much more efficient system. This would further encourage industry investment in northern Canada and bring with it economic benefits for Northerners.

Devolution and resource revenue

Another objective of the Northern Strategy is “completion of devolution and resource revenue sharing agreements.” As stated before, developing and producing oil and gas requires clear and predictable rules so companies can make decisions on where to invest capital. Industry is looking to governments for that stability and clarity through devolution and resource revenue sharing agreements. Part of these arrangements must be that there will be no negative changes to the existing system.

Resolving First Nations and Aboriginal issues

Successful conclusion and implementation of Aboriginal and First Nations land claims and other outstanding issues are critical elements to establishing a long-term competitive investment climate. Industry is committed to working with governments and First Nations to achieve these ends.

Foundations for economic development: Infrastructure and training

Many of the goals and objectives of the Northern Strategy can be achieved only if there is a strong, tax-paying economic base, as suggested by the framework’s goal “establishing strong foundations for economic development.” The oil and gas industry, along with other industries, can contribute to the establishment of a sustainable economy for Northerners while ensuring protection of the environment and safety of the public.

While industry expects to pay taxes and for the cost of infrastructure directly related to oil and gas projects, there are limits to what industry can provide. The responsibility for social infrastructure, such as public roads, hospitals, municipal services and schools, ultimately lies with governments.

With increased oil and gas development comes increased demand for labour. Industry has been working with local communities not only in including them in the consultation process around various projects, but also in encouraging and supporting training initiatives and career opportunities in the industry.

The Framework for a Northern Strategy can help address these issues by encouraging governments to invest in physical and social infrastructure and training in a coordinated way, recognizing industry and community needs over the short and long term.

Northerners can benefit from increased oil and gas development

The oil and natural gas industry is committed to the responsible and long-term development of oil and gas in the North. There has been considerable effort by

communities, governments and industry to build a sound foundation for constructive engagement. Northerners have been working for many years to achieve a voice in economic decisions affecting them, and with so much achieved, there is greater receptiveness to resource activity in the North than ever.

By achieving the goals and objectives set out in the Framework for a Northern Strategy, governments can encourage more oil and natural gas development to take advantage of the region's opportunities and to help Northerners realize their vision. ■

“Establishing Strong Foundations for Economic Development”

By Ben McDonald, member of Alternatives North and board member, Canadian Arctic Resources Committee

Now is an ideal moment in time for governments to engage civil society in the North in meaningful consultation that will lead to a plan for real and lasting beneficial change. For this reason, Northerners have welcomed the territorial and federal government initiative to formalize a concrete Northern Strategy.

The broad principles that should underpin a Northern Strategy include equity; sustainability; a strong social safety net; respect for diversity; democratic pluralism; a fair and progressive tax regime that collects the resources governments need from those most able to pay; and support for the precautionary and “polluter pays” principles.

A very important objective that is missing from the framework of the Strategy is the need to create a permanent northern “heritage” fund built up through the collection of legitimate taxes and royalties levied on development and the export of non-renewable resources. Such a fund should be created now and seeded with money already being collected by the federal government. There should be joint federal/territorial administration of this fund, with a public process of consultation to determine the priorities upon which the funds will be spent. Accumulated funds must not be used for personal or corporate tax relief

or for pay-outs to individuals, but rather to promote economic diversification and financial sustainability.

As responsibility for resources devolves to the territories, each jurisdiction must continue to contribute to the pool. Northerners must save so that we can prepare for the day a given resource runs out. Failure to prepare will reduce northern capacity to weather the inevitable periods of transition that will occur as one sector or development winds down and no replacement is on stream. These situations are made more painful and difficult because when they will occur, or how long they will last, cannot be predicted with any certainty.

With serious, planet-threatening climate change looming, sustainable development is the only type of economic development that can be acceptable. Indeed, a fundamental principle for a Northern Strategy must be sustainability. Such development assumes a fair public return for extraction and use of public resources. It will also favour the development of policies and regulations that promote sustainability rather than those that establish perverse subsidies. An example of a misguided subsidy is choosing to fund roads but not public transit, a gas mega-project but not renewable energy.

A niche opportunity for economic development that warrants public investment is research and development into

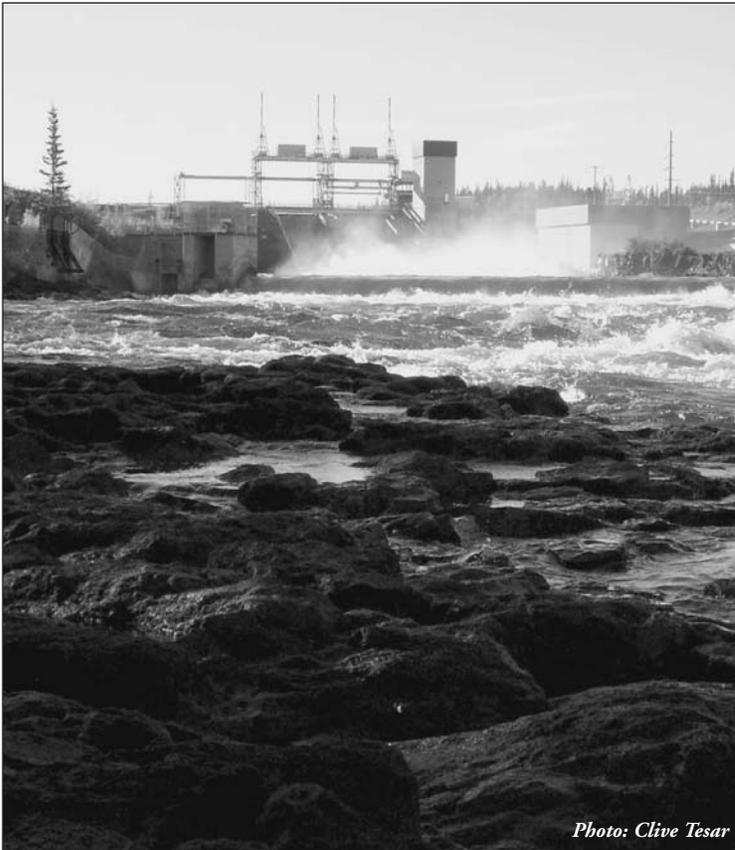


Photo: Clive Tesar

Hydro dam, Whitehorse

cold weather renewable energy technology. A northern research institute funded to achieve this end would be a worthy objective. Additionally, partnerships between renewable energy companies and Aboriginal or other economic development organizations should be assisted. Indeed, instead of joint venture pipeline consortia, why not joint venture renewable energy projects? Renewable energy development, implementation and use can lead to significant and sustainable economic development.

One consideration in the development of an effective regulatory regime involves efficiency, but the view that “cutting red tape” and “smaller, less intrusive government” are ends in themselves must be rejected. Governments have an important guardian role to play in protecting the public interest. The precautionary principle must always be the cornerstone of an effective regulatory regime. As has been proven countless times across Canada and around the world, deregulation and self-regulation of industry are ill-conceived and dangerous to the public interest.

Large-scale projects — as with any activity — can be beneficial, but they must happen only within socio-economic carrying capacity and the ecological limits of the North. It should not be our strategy to pursue every “opportunity” (especially in non-renewable energy areas) as quickly

as possible. In fact, doing so is clearly contrary to the collective interests of Northerners. Inevitably the rapid advancement of large mega-projects, especially when they are hydro-carbon extraction industries, is going to undercut critical strategic efforts to protect the environment.

Uncontrolled, harmful, boom-and-bust cycles are the inescapable result of such a strategy. In the Northwest Territories, there is presently a strong diamond mining industry. It is taxing the capacity of communities to provide infrastructure and services. The social safety net is also having difficulty coping with growing pressures. On top of this, the northern labour force is too small and undeveloped to provide much of the workforce. In this context, why would the advancement of a pipeline project be a public priority? What’s the rush? With the world about to reach, or perhaps already having reached, peak fossil fuel production, hydro-carbon resources will surely only continue to grow in monetary value as time goes by.

One of the issues relating to northern economic development is its unevenness. Certain communities, especially the larger ones with more substantial public sector employment and those which serve as regional transportation hubs and supply centres, are doing much better than the rest. The evidence that mega-project development has significant “trickle down” benefits in the smaller communities is lacking. Wishing for this not to be true does not change reality. Alternative models must be pursued. The very real problems faced by the far northern and more remote communities do need to be addressed, but better solutions than ever more mega-projects must be found.

Micro-economic alternatives targeted at women and other low-income people are proven successes in other developing areas of the world and must not be ignored in the North. Lack of access to credit and to small business loans continues to be an impediment to entrepreneurship and small business development.

Similarly, co-operatives and credit unions are proven producers of both jobs and local, sustainable economic activity. Public programs to foster and support such democratically controlled initiatives should also be a high priority in a Northern Strategy truly intent on establishing a strong foundation for economic development in northern communities, rather than grabbing for a quick fix. The underlying principle must be the absolute priority of relentless efforts to narrow the gap between poor and rich Northerners.

Unless they receive separate and specific attention, the special interests of Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, youth and women will once again be overlooked. A specific objective stating that the federal and territorial governments will use appropriate “lenses” (gender, disability, etc.) in program assessment is an essential minimum.

The section in the Northern Strategy framework relating to the protection of the natural environment is particularly weak and reflects a lack of vision and appreciation of the dire global ecological crisis.



Former diamond mine, Mirny, Yakutia, Russia

“Engaging” all partners in environmental protection, which is the core promise of the Strategy, is simply too weak a commitment. Northerners, like most Canadians, are ready to go much further than this.

An essential first step towards real protection of the environment is the development of a coordinated, integrated and fully funded suite of environmental management programs that respect local control but account for the reality that ecology respects no artificial jurisdictional lines. Included must be sound land-use planning, environmental assessment, land and water regulation and monitoring and auditing, all done in cooperation with Aboriginal governments.

That the remediation of contaminated sites is identified as a priority in the draft Strategy is positive. This is a federal responsibility, however, and it should not be transferred to any territory through devolution or other agreements. Moreover, since it is a federal obligation, none of the new money identified for the implementation of the Strategy should be used for the remediation of contaminated sites.

The Strategy seems prepared to accept climate change as inevitable, as something to be accommodated, mitigated and adapted to, but not prevented. Northerners, indeed the vast majority of all Canadians, are well beyond this point. The Strategy must reflect the public’s desire to minimize further damage in the Arctic from global warming. It must make a priority of measures to reverse climate-changing activities. Climate and environmental considerations must underpin every political and economic policy decision. Environmental protection laws and environmental monitoring infrastructure must be strengthened — period.

The Strategy calls for the increased use of cleaner energy sources but offers few details. Where is the support for community energy planning; for increased use of renewable energy; for a properly integrated and adequately funded environmental management system; for programs to promote the installation of energy-saving technologies; or for legally binding land-use planning policies and programs? All of these should be clearly enunciated objectives in a Northern Strategy.

Governments must commit to a full-cost and life-cycle accounting approach to the review and regulation of resource development, including implementation of the polluter pays principle. This means full security for final closure and reclamation of all projects as a preventive approach rather than the public purse paying for costly remediation later.

The North faces critical choices. If the Northern Strategy is not strengthened, made more pragmatic in fact, an opportunity to truly set us on the right path will have been lost. ■

“Building Healthy and Safe Communities” — The Health Perspective

Dr. Sandy MacDonald is an experienced northern physician, working as a family doctor for many years in northern communities. He is now Director of Medical Affairs for the Government of Nunavut. He spoke with Northern Perspectives editor Clive Tesar about the health challenges facing Northerners.

What are the largest health challenges facing Northerners now?

The major health challenges for Northerners are in the areas of infectious diseases, mental health and cancer. There is a higher than average amount of respiratory illness; there is a higher incidence of sexually-transmitted infections and other infectious diseases like tuberculosis. These are forms of infectious diseases you find among people who live in less than adequate housing.

The mental health issues have to do with higher incidences of suicide and suicidal behaviour, mostly among younger people in Nunavut. Associated with that there is a kind of malaise among younger people that makes them more prone to attempt to hurt themselves, seemingly impulsively, to abuse substances and so on. Much of these troubles stem from the social upheaval the population has undergone over the past 40 or 50 years.

Among cancers, there are some areas in which the people of Nunavut have a higher rate of cancers, and some in which they have a lower rate. The higher rates are in lung cancer, which reflects the higher rate of smoking, and bowel cancer, for which the rate is higher than the national average. There is a lower than average incidence of breast cancer.

Those are what I see in terms of the large disease types that represent challenges to the population of Nunavut now. I think there is a broader challenge, and that is in taking ownership of the health-care system. That is a societal challenge, which I think is key to dealing with these health issues.

The health-care system in Nunavut was something that was brought in when Inuit people were settled in communities and nursing stations were set up. This system was brought in with good intentions. Often the system performs well, particularly for acute illnesses, but I do not think it has ever become a system that the people have taken ownership of and a system that they feel is responsive to their needs.

Taking ownership is a very broad and vague term, but the steps involved in that include having more caregivers from Nunavut, Inuit caregivers, such as nurses, doctors, pharmacists and so on. For example, in Iqaluit people must begin to see the hospital as a community hospital, rather than as an outpost of the federal government, which is how it began 40 years ago. In the meantime, this process can be facilitated by a stable group of committed southern-trained professionals who live in the communities and are part of the new Nunavut society.

So I see the major issues as these disease challenges I mentioned earlier, and then this larger societal challenge for Nunavummiut (people who live in Nunavut) to take control of the health system.

“In the old days when people were living on the land, people were very physically active just keeping themselves alive from day to day. Now, when physical activity is optional, this is a very different concept of physical activity that takes a while to work its way through a population. Talk to a traditional hunter about exercise for its own sake, he would think you are crazy. Why would you go out and go jogging?”

What are some of the emerging health challenges that you foresee?

As an emerging issue, going back to the disease model, it will be lifestyle diseases. Up until now, the traditional lifestyle had its own risks, of starvation, of injury due to cold, going through the ice in the spring and so on. Peoples' lives have changed, and people in Nunavut mostly have sedentary lives. Most people in Nunavut now live in communities of one size or another and so the lifestyle diseases that plague the rest of the population of the country, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, are already making their presence felt and are only going to increase as Inuit become more urbanized.

The spectre of type 2 diabetes is looming in Nunavut. In First Nations communities in other parts of the North, type 2 diabetes is an absolute epidemic. The prevalence of type two diabetes in some small communities is 50% of adults. To date we have not seen that happen in Nunavut, but all the experts have told us it is bound to happen if people continue to gain weight and live sedentary lives and do not eat well.

With this change in lifestyle from the nomadic to sedentary, come changes in activity levels and the types of food people eat. People have to look at physical activity in a different perspective than they did before, have to look at eating in a different perspective than they did before, or they will continue to gain weight, eat badly, and get all these lifestyle diseases.

In the old days when people were living on the land, people were very physically active just keeping themselves alive from day to day. Now, when physical activity is optional, this is a very different concept of physical activity that takes a while to work its way through a population. Talk to a traditional hunter about exercise for its own sake, he would think you are crazy. Why would you go out and go jogging? In the old days, food was not always available; now that they live in communities most people, even if they're poor, have access to more food than they could possibly eat. There are choices to be made about it that people were not brought up to know anything about. Understanding food from that perspective is a knowledge base that takes time to work its way through a population.

How much are the community-level health challenges bound up with larger changes — I'm thinking for instance of increasing development of the North, changes in lifestyles and climate change?

Certainly there is strong evidence of changes in climate in Nunavut, but nobody seems sure of the exact impacts on, for example, availability of wild game, what's going to grow here, and if sea levels are rising, are communities going to be at risk of flooding? That certainly is going to be a factor, but I don't know how much of a factor. Local organizations and the territorial government do encourage people in Nunavut to eat as much country food as possible, seal, char, caribou, and one could speculate on how available country food may be if there are changes in animal populations because of climate change.

How much people will continue to rely on country food as they become more sedentary, more settled in communities, I'm not sure either. I suspect though that people will rely less on country food, even though we encourage it as very healthy food. I suspect the more people become used to living in communities and the more their lives are based on nine-to-five jobs and so on, their ties with the old ways are going to become smaller. There are certainly efforts to support people living off the land, and they are certainly worth a try, but people will be living in communities and they will probably be less dependent on country food. In the old days when people were living on country food, they moved around to follow the food, and people don't move around much any more, so the supply of food near the communities is going to be under increased harvesting pressures.

As far as development goes, it fosters the movement of people into communities, and increasingly into larger communities such as Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. As far as specific projects go, mining projects, exploration projects, they have come and gone in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The impact of those is hard to determine. The two mines in the Baffin region did not have a whole lot of impact on the local population because not that many Inuit worked at the mines. In the future, I am sure there will be regulations that oblige the mines to hire local people, to train local people and so on. If these are successful, I am sure they will have a positive impact on the health of the population, in that people have regular incomes and regular jobs. Adequate income and housing are important factors in good health.

What needs to be done to address some of the challenges?

One important thing is to provide the best possible acute care to the population, as people present themselves at their community health centre or hospital. This involves having an adequately funded health-care system with a stable, well-trained workforce of health-care professionals.

For the near future this will continue to be mainly Southerners who have relocated to Nunavut. Another important initiative is to put in place public health programs to educate people and to advocate for public health measures that have a large impact on the population as a whole. The third thing is tied up with the development of the population, the socio-economic development that Nunavut is in the middle of. It involves improved education, improved housing that is appropriate for the number of people living in the house, improved incomes, people having regular jobs that pay reasonably well, so that people are not having to go to food banks and are not faced with not having enough money to feed their families in the few days before the welfare cheque comes in.

In the short run, when we look at the disease patterns, one of the things we need to do is come up with research that is community based, reviews of disease patterns that are prevalent in Nunavut, then developing programming based on what the real needs are. There should be a partnership between people with the numbers, like myself, and people in communities to identify what the priorities are, then develop programs and get funding based on those priorities.

In the medium term, there are efforts to establish some northern-based research capacity, to have some of the research driven by the North and responsive to the North's needs. As well, in the medium term, there are programs being put in place right now to educate and train people from Nunavut. For example, there's a program starting in Rankin Inlet this year to train midwives,

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programs to increase training of community health representatives, to train them in areas like tuberculosis, maternity care, child care and mental health issues.

There's also a program beginning at Nunavut Arctic College, a two-year mental health worker program that will provide people with training to act as counsellors, advocates for mental health in Nunavut. That is not going to solve the mental health issues, but it will provide more skilled caregivers on the ground. We cannot ignore peoples' immediate needs while we are talking about their long-term needs.

There are various programs that the federal government funds, like the Aboriginal diabetes initiative, Aboriginal health initiatives, that, while they are sometimes not designed particularly well for Inuit, usually between the Government of Nunavut and Inuit organizations, people are able to access some of the funding and have it directed towards education programs.

The second medium- to long-term strategy is to improve the general educational level of the population. The quality of life of Nunavummiut will improve as the educational level of the population as a whole improves. A better-educated population is better able to take control of its own future and is better able to look after its own needs.

In the medium to long term, in Nunavut we have a specific educational undertaking to train more Inuit health professionals. We have a nursing school in Nunavut Arctic college now, it's starting to produce Inuit nurses trained in Nunavut, we've had two last year, and there will be more this summer coming. Health and Social Services is putting together a health human resources strategy that would establish partnerships with southern universities to train the higher end health professionals like physicians, dentists, pharmacists, rehab workers, where residents of Nunavut would apply, and the Nunavut government would pay for seats in these programs as long as people met the entry requirements. Nunavut would of course expect some return of service for that.

The next strategy in the medium term to long term is better housing. Many of these diseases, infectious diseases and mental health issues, stem from inadequate housing, not much employment and a low educational level overall.

As I've said to people here, the way you get rid of tuberculosis in a population is not only by giving pills to people, but by having an adequate place to live, three



Photo: Clive Tesar

A precious new house goes up in Arctic Bay, Nunavut.

square meals and a job. That's what gets rid of tuberculosis in a population. I don't think anyone disagrees with that, it's just how do you get to that?

Finally, in the medium term increased employment and the improved economic conditions associated with that are important to improved health status.

There are three parties to the challenge in Nunavut. The first is people in the general population, who need to understand their situation in a way that they begin to take some charge of it. Health is not something dispensed by a visiting doctor or a nurse. There is a certain dependency or passivity that the health system created by the federal government has created or exacerbated in the population. We need to get beyond that.

The other parties promoting change in Nunavut are the Nunavut government, which is charged with delivering programs for acute health needs and public health needs in the territory, and the Inuit organizations who are charged with protecting the interests of beneficiaries and have funding for education and advocacy for the

population's health needs. There are going to be some tensions between the government and Inuit organizations and that's probably healthy, but they have to work in partnership to respond to the needs of the population.

What role should the federal government play?

The days when government dispatched medical professionals to help out the poor downtrodden native people should be left behind. I think the federal government should provide financial and expert assistance to the Government of Nunavut and the Inuit organizations. I do not think the appropriate role for the federal government is to direct or drive these changes.

I think the leadership has to come from the three parties I already referred to. I know that the federal government has resources we in Nunavut do not have. If the federal government can help us with that, that is great, but leadership and direction must come from Nunavut. ■

“Building Healthy and Safe Communities”

Lois Little lives in Yellowknife and has spent more than 30 years working on social and community development issues throughout the NWT and Nunavut. She operates a small, independent consulting practice, Lutra Associates Ltd., that is in its 28th year of business. She spoke with Northern Perspectives editor Clive Tesar.

When we speak of building healthy and safe communities, what do you understand that to mean?

I’m going to reference a recent experience I had. In the last six months I have been doing workshops in 13 communities in the Northwest Territories around family violence, so personal security was a big issue. So when I speak of healthy and safe communities, I speak of communities that offer security in terms of personal, social and economic safety. You need the freedom of the individual and family unit to take part in community affairs without fear of reprisal. So it comes down to security and freedoms, and these are issues for people of all ages, elders or youth, men or women.

Is there a community already out there that exemplifies what other northern communities should aspire to?

Whatever this notion of community is, is the first problem, if you look at geographic communities, my answer is no. But there are ‘communities within communities’ that offer good examples; I am thinking about justice groups, doing work on community justice and trying to make their communities safe, youth groups and elders groups working on issues. They are little pockets within larger geographic areas that are making a difference, although they tend to be volunteers, not well resourced or supported by government or other leadership.

Why are they not well resourced?

That’s a good question. They are astounded that they are not, that they are manipulated by governments with such little funding. There is not an understanding in government that individuals, communities, families, need these things, nor is there a commitment to them. We have governments that follow the liberal economic



Photo: Lois Little

A lighter moment during a family violence workshop in Whati, NWT.

agenda and have little interest in the population. I think too, community leaders get co-opted into the bigger system. They say you have to make choices between language and cultural initiatives and health care, but it’s not about those choices — people shouldn’t have to make those choices.

What are the biggest obstacles at present to building healthy and safe communities?

Funding is one, but lack of government commitment, lack of priority of quality of life, lack of understanding seem to plague the best of efforts to build human security. And the problems are not just from outside the community, they are also inside the community. A few people in every community have maximum access to resources. They prevent other people from having access largely through bullying tactics. I see this from family violence in communities, front-line workers are fearful if they intervene in issues in communities because of this. It is that old ‘crabs in a bucket’ metaphor; people keep each other down.

Northern communities are all to some extent artificial constructs, places where people were settled largely by outside

“In terms of traditional leadership where certain families have control, volunteerism can help people find their own place in the community, and a sense of control. That is really hopeful, people recognizing if they volunteer, they have a place.”

forces, rather than natural places of settlement. How stable can they be, without a natural reason for being there?

Community is not just about geography, it's a sense of place, and identity, and family — that's one of the issues about Indian reserves — repressive and depressing as they can be, they are also places of safety and connection. The geographic place is a debatable thing; there is no reason for places such as Wrigley or Nahanni Butte to be exactly where they are. The point is about a place for people to connect or belong. People are certainly migrating into larger centres, where they are having difficulty in finding their sense of connection. Although many communities are unhealthy and troubled, they still are a significant reference for people. Until we're able to engage all people in a place like Yellowknife, no matter where they are from, to provide people with a feeling they belong and have a sense of identity, then all 32 communities in the Northwest Territories are as valuable and as valued as each other.

What are the most promising current trends in the quest to develop healthy and safe communities?

I am looking at a lot of the work that the voluntary sector is doing. Some of the work of the Literacy Council on family literacy, trying to understand what literacy really means in an Aboriginal context, those kinds of programs really bring together different generations, establish connections, a sense of identity, a sense of security. In a wider sense, Volunteer NWT promotes volunteer action, an avenue to participation and citizenship, empowering people to have a voice in their communities. In terms of traditional leadership where certain families have control, volunteerism can help people find their own place in the community, and a sense of control. That is really hopeful, people recognizing if they volunteer, they have a place.

In terms of what government is doing, in the Northwest Territories, new family violence legislation finally responds to the needs of victims. People are not forced to flee their communities for protection, instead authorities are removing the perpetrator. This is very hopeful, it is recognizing that victims of violence and abuse have rights. We also have human rights legislation that is starting to take hold. People are coming forth with complaints of racism and sexism. So there are some hopeful signs from the voluntary sector and from legislation — by participation, people are gaining confidence and security.

What additional steps need to be taken, on top of what is already being done?

There's no territorial-wide dialogue around these issues. We had a great social agenda forum some years ago in 2000–2001, that brought in 250 Northerners. There was a great discussion of issues, but no follow-up or effort to continue to engage people. Governments go off in their own direction and the corporate agenda gets larger and larger and overshadows everything. Communities throughout the North don't seem to have visionaries in our leaders, there is not really anyone driving this kind

“There is a notion that economic development is the answer to health and well-being. I do not buy that. That is what I mean by the corporate agenda; resource development is coming with a high price to northern people and that seems to be acceptable to the leadership, when it's clearly not acceptable to the general population.”

of dialogue. We have got a long history of consensus decision-making, it would be a natural fit for us all to be talking about these issues, but we don't do that anymore.

Whose responsibility is it to take those steps?

We all have that responsibility — it is part of our citizenship, our identity as Northerners. In our little post-colonial world we rely too much on government to take these steps for us. But governments do have this responsibility to show leadership, and I don't see them taking that on. I'm really quite fearful of how the corporate agenda is shaping the North — when people are prepared to mix government and economic interests, when the Government of the Northwest Territories is prepared to sacrifice the safety and security of people in communities for a pipeline or other forms of economic development. There is a notion that economic development is the answer to health and well-being. I do not buy that. That is what I mean by the corporate agenda; resource development is coming with a high price to northern people and that seems to be acceptable to the leadership, when it's clearly not acceptable to the general population. ■

Sustaining Northern Science and Research in Canada

By David Hik, Executive Director of the Canadian International Polar Year Secretariat, and Professor and Canada Research Chair in Northern Ecology at the University of Alberta

One of the goals of the framework for the Northern Strategy is “to ensure that Canada is a leader in northern science and technology, and to develop expertise in areas of particular importance and relevance to the North.”

This is a subtle yet important acknowledgement of the crucial role that science and research play in informing sound public policy and decision-making. In fact, this goal has been referred to as “the one ring that binds them all,” hinting at how critical the contributions of science, research and traditional knowledge (TK) or Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) are to the future of northern communities, cultures, environments and economies.

The acknowledgement of the role of science in the North is noteworthy given the inadequate federal funding for northern research in recent decades. The cumulative effect of this under funding has been to marginalize northern

“Support for northern science must be structured in such a way that will allow important research to continue despite changes in governments. Governments with foresight understand this.”

research and has led to a crisis in scientific capacity and knowledge. Including such a strong recognition of the value of science in the framework for the Northern Strategy suggests that this funding situation may soon be addressed; at the very least, it lends more weight to the argument that it should be addressed.

Such a focus on northern science and research is central to achieving major federal public policy objectives — wealth creation, social cohesion and sustainable development — and is mindful of Canada’s international responsibilities to care for the well-being of the Arctic region. While adequate funding of science and research is crucial to achieving these objectives, funding alone cannot guarantee their success. Various structural deficiencies within government associated with northern science and research must also be tackled.

For example, any approach to addressing northern science and research concerns must ensure the democratic engagement of Northerners. They must have the opportunity to have their voices heard and their will expressed in a way that is “institutionalized” within government and not dependent on the interests of current political leadership or outside interests.

There must also be greater recognition that many public policy goals require focus and work that is long term. Support for northern science must be structured in such a way that will allow important research to continue despite changes in governments. Governments with foresight understand this.

The coming International Polar Year (IPY) in 2007–2008 may act as a model of this type of approach. International Polar Year will establish a new foundation for future decades of science and research, particularly for northern peoples. The recent decision by the federal government to provide new funding to support IPY to the tune of \$150 million will allow Canada to play a crucial national role and provide leadership internationally in northern research and monitoring activities. Coupled with other long-term, forward-looking research initiatives that are being developed under the ICARP II process (Second International Conference on Arctic Research Planning), there are many reasons to be optimistic about the future.

The two priority areas for funding identified by the Canadian government — science for climate change impacts and adaptation, and health and well-being in northern communities — will go a long way towards meeting commitments the federal and territorial

governments have made within the Northern Strategy process and elsewhere. They will also create a long-term legacy of enhanced northern research capacity, and a new generation of trained polar researchers, including Aboriginal and northern peoples. A second phase of funding will be required to build new infrastructure

IPY in Canada

The federal government has put \$150 million into Canadian projects for the International Polar Year. It has already put out a call for proposals for science projects, with another call for projects on education and outreach expected later this spring.

Researchers hoping to access Canadian government funding are told to address two main issues: science for climate change impacts and adaptation; and health and well-being of northern communities.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.ipy-api.ca/english/index.html>

For more information on ICARP II, go to:

<http://www.icarp.dk/>

to support research and training in the North, but northern colleges, research institutes and governments are already developing plans for new facilities.

The last time there was such research attention focused on the polar regions, the International Geophysical Year of 1957–1958, it laid the foundation for tremendous activity in Arctic science that continued for decades. The emphasis in 1957 was on the natural sciences, but since then the approach to polar science work has evolved to include a greater understanding of the relationship between researchers and northern communities. As a result, there are now demands that scientists be more accountable and responsive to local communities and that their work be approached in more inclusive, integrated and interdisciplinary ways.

The 2007 IPY will see Northerners both leading and collaborating on research projects that address northern priorities. In addition, IPY outreach and awareness-building will result in Canadians from all parts of the country better appreciating our North and the contribution of northern research to our collective well-being.

Another important consideration for sustaining northern science and research would be the establishment of a Canadian Northern Research Service. This would provide coordination of existing programs dedicated to northern science and research and would become a convergence point for northern researchers across the country, be they academics, government scientists, private sector researchers or people working with traditional knowledge. Government programs that support northern science and research could be incorporated into the Service. It could also provide a home for northern training and education initiatives, particularly the University of the Arctic. Additionally, it could act as a portal for the international polar research community, thereby enhancing our national identity and providing a forum for our engagement in the International Polar Year programs, as well as ongoing commitments through the Arctic Council, the Northern Research Forum and other organizations. The development of a meaningful, Northerner-led northern research strategy could arise from this initiative.

Northern Canada is facing unprecedented social, political, economic, environmental and cultural changes. Unfortunately, attention to northern issues has typically been sustained for only short periods in response to external events, usually associated with large development projects. Developing a meaningful Northern Strategy, implementing important international research initiatives like IPY and addressing the structural deficiencies within and outside of government identified above will go a long way towards sustaining northern research and science in Canada. ■

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