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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES GOVERNMENT
DISCUSSION PAPER ON MILITARY ACTIVITY
IN THE NORTH
AND
ESTABLISHMENT OF A CIRCUMPOLAR ZONE
OF PEACE AND SECURITY



I INTRODUCTION

In the Speech from the Throne to the Legislative Assembly on October 19, 1989 Commissioner Norris announced that the Northwest Territories Government would be developing a position paper on military activity in the north.

As Commissioner Norris stated in his remarks, the Northwest Territories Government believes that a territorial position "may help to formally indicate our desire to work toward an Arctic zone of peace and security."

The purpose of the discussion paper is to outline the Northwest Territories Government's proposed response to issues which have been identified to date and to seek input from northerners in preparation of a formal position paper. For presentation purposes, the discussion paper will have four main thrusts:

- establishment of a circumpolar zone of peace and security;
- Canada's contribution to circumpolar and global peace;
- an ongoing northern role for the Canadian military; and
- input from northern residents.

To set the context for consideration of these issues, proposals and recommendations, some additional background information is provided. Sections Two and Three of the discussion paper provide a brief review of military initiatives in circumpolar nations and the Canadian north since World War Two and an overview of how the Department of National Defence interprets the Canadian military's mandate in northern Canada. Section Four provides an elaboration on the issues, opinions and concerns as expressed by northerners during the past decade in particular.

The following provides a summary of the discussion paper's recommendations respecting the establishment of a circumpolar zone of peace and security and military activity in the Northwest Territories.

II ESTABLISHMENT OF A CIRCUMPOLAR ZONE OF PEACE AND SECURITY?

Defence experts say that a "zone approach" is sometimes used by nations to designate an area which will be excluded from a variety of military activities, ranging from basing and testing of nuclear weapons to reducing or eliminating conventional military competition. The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 is an example of how nations reached agreement on establishing an internationally recognized demilitarized zone.

The following recommendations, which are drawn from a report prepared by the Panel on Arctic Arms Control for the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament in October 1989, represent a reasonable approach to starting the process of establishing a circumpolar zone of peace and security:

Recommendations

1. Establishing a Central Arctic Demilitarized Zone

The Panel suggests that Canada and its circumpolar neighbours seek to initially establish a Central Arctic Demilitarized Zone. As Map 1 shows, the area is quite small, but as the Panel notes, it is largely free of competing sovereignty claims. Moreover, the Panel recommends that initially, demilitarization would be restricted to this zone, while not prohibiting the use of military personnel, equipment and resources to assist in open scientific research, humanitarian or search and rescue missions, or environmental cleanup.

2. Arctic Open Skies

Since superpower disarmament negotiations began in the mid-1950s, the concept of open skies has been proposed as a way for the superpowers to monitor and inspect what each other is doing. In its report, the Panel recommended that an Arctic Open Skies agreement be negotiated between circumpolar nations to contribute to the broader goal of a demilitarized Arctic. The area which would be covered by an Open Skies Agreement and subject to international inspection is somewhat larger than the Central Arctic Demilitarized Zone. It is illustrated in Map 2.

3. Aerial Confidence-Building Measures

A third Panel recommendation which the Northwest Territories Government supports focuses on eliminating certain practices involving military aircraft which would be in addition to the Arctic Open Skies proposal outlined above. More specifically, the Panel report proposes that:

- peacetime simulated bombing missions be prohibited;
- adversary military aircraft be barred from the Air Defence Identification Zones;
- military aircraft not carry nuclear weapons within the zone in peacetime; and
- a common space-based surveillance radar system involving all of the circumpolar states be explored.

4. Sea and Air-Launched Cruise Missiles

The Panel's report also addressed initiatives which can only be undertaken through bilateral agreements negotiated between the superpowers. For example, the Panel's report recommended that both the Soviet Union and the United States be urged to place limits on cruise missiles which are launched from submarines as well as an outright ban on sea launched cruise missiles which carry nuclear war heads. These proposals should be considered along with proposals for reductions in other types of missiles at the upcoming second round of Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) talks between the superpowers.

5. Unilateral Soviet Initiatives

The Panel made two proposals specifically directed at the Soviet Union. The first called for a declaration by the Soviets that its submarines do not enter the waters of the Canadian archipelago and, further, to declare that it will not engage in such activities in the future. Since release of the report, the Soviets have issued declarations on both of these recommendations.

A more significant recommendation focused upon a proposal for the Soviets to stop nuclear weapons testing at the Arctic island Novaya Zemlya site which is located between the Barents and Kara Seas. Since the Panel released its report, information has been obtained which suggests that by 1993 all Soviet nuclear tests will be conducted at the site.

6. Conference on Arctic Security and Cooperation (CASC)

The Panel also recommended that circumpolar nations establish a Conference on Arctic Security and Cooperation (CASC). The CASC would be a permanent organization to facilitate negotiations of Arctic Security arrangements, and examination by circumpolar nations of military and civil developments, including extension of cooperative measures for the region.

7. Creating an Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs

Finally, the Panel recommended that the Canadian government establish an Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs as a means of elevating and strengthening Canada's Arctic diplomacy. In general, the Panel sees the Ambassador consulting with government departments involved in the Arctic and seeking input of Canada's northern aboriginal peoples and others who have an interest in circumpolar affairs.

III MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

When Commissioner Norris announced last November that the Northwest Territories Government would be preparing a defence position paper, the primary focus was seen to be on international initiatives directed toward the establishment of a circumpolar zone of peace and security. However, given the preliminary sampling of territorial residents' views and opinions, it became apparent that its focus must be expanded to include proposals and recommendations about the Canadian military's current presence and future role in the Northwest Territories.

The following provides a summary of recommendations from the Northwest Territories Government Discussion Paper on Military Activity in the North:

Recommendations

1. Cruise Missile Testing

In keeping with the positions of three Legislative Assemblies and the views of northern residents, the Northwest Territories Government recommends that Canada not renew its cruise missile testing agreement with the United States. Furthermore the Canadian government is encouraged to seek reductions in superpower cruise and ballistic missiles through START II and NORAD negotiations as proposed in Section Five.

2. Low-Level Training Missions

The Northwest Territories Government does not support the stationing of fighter jets at FOLs, nor large scale, permanent testing programs for fighter aircraft. This does not suggest that training missions cannot be conducted on a limited scale and under conditions which minimize potential environmental damage to wildlife and disruption in the lifestyle of northerners both urban and rural.

3. Related Military Training/Testing Initiatives

a. Contaminated Sites

First, the Northwest Territories Government concurs with current military practice of not creating any "contaminated sites" in the Northwest Territories.

b. Cold Weather Testing of Tanks and Large Scale Artillery

Second, the Northwest Territories Government concurs with the current military practice of testing large scale artillery, tanks and other weapons in southern Canada.

c. Arctic Training Centre

The Northwest Territories Government recommends that the proposal respecting a permanent training facility be reviewed in light of northern concerns over creation of contaminated sites, heavy weapons testing, and environmental damage.

Subject to further review and establishment of acceptable training/testing guidelines, FOL facilities in Yellowknife, Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Inuvik may provide a more cost efficient alternative for personnel training in particular.

4. Surveillance

The Northwest Territories Government supports the Canadian military's surveillance role in the north and recommends that steps be taken to upgrade air and waterborne reconnaissance for foreign submarines in particular. Moreover, the Department of National Defence is encouraged to continue its close co-operation with federal and territorial agencies when assistance is required to more effectively enforce drug, poaching and environmental pollution laws.

5. Infrastructure Improvements

The Northwest Territories Government believes that the Canadian military has an ongoing role to play in contributing to improving both transportation and community infrastructure in the Northwest Territories and recommends that it continue to work closely with federal, territorial and municipal authorities in responding to both the military's and northerners' requirements.

6. Meaningful Consultation with Northerners

a. Development of a New National Defence Policy

The Northwest Territories Government recommends that the Department of National Defence begin by consulting with all Canadians, including northerners, on the direction of a new defence policy for Canada and its implications for the north.

b. Impact of Current and Future Decisions

Following from this point, the Northwest Territories Government recommends that the Department of National Defence clarify how some initiatives, such as troop reductions in Europe or decisions to close bases in southern Canada, could change how the military currently operates in the Northwest Territories.

c. Social, Economic and Environmental Assessments

Third, if the Department of National Defence is planning major initiatives for the Northwest Territories, such as the proposed Arctic Training Centre, the Northwest Territories Government recommends that the federal government must ensure that they are subject to thorough environmental, social and economic assessments, recognizing restrictions which may be necessary for national security reasons.

7. Employment and Training Opportunities

a. Northern Region Rangers Program

The Northwest Territories Government recommends that the Department of National Defence take steps to improve upon the Rangers Program by further upgrading training and increasing wages provided under the Program. It also supports a more expanded role by the Rangers in maintaining and monitoring unmanned NWS radar sites.

b. Northern Region Cadet Program

The Northwest Territories Government fully supports the Cadet Program and recommends that the Department of National Defence increase its commitment to the Cadet Program by responding to petitions which have already been filed for the establishment of both army and air units.

c. Territorial Defence Regiments

The Northwest Territories Government recommends that the Department of National Defence support the establishment of Territorial Defence Regiments as a means to achieving the following:

- establishment of a viable northern alternative to joining the regular Armed Forces;
- employment and training opportunities for northern residents;
- a cost-effective alternative to using regular forces for FOL/NWS security; and
- contributing to sovereignty and security in the Canadian north.

8. Business Opportunities

The Northwest Territories Government supports the initiatives taken by the Department of National Defence and other federal agencies to insure that both short and long term benefits are realized from northern military projects. The Government recommends that a similar approach be taken with respect to future construction projects, whether large or small.

9. Search and Rescue Support for Civilian Authorities

The Northwest Territories Government recommends that the Canadian Armed Forces undertake a review of additional support which could be provided to local authorities with a particular emphasis on the search and rescue training function.

10. A Role for the Northwest Territories Government

The Northwest Territories Government is proposing to host seminars and workshops which will provide opportunities for an informed dialogue among northerners and between northerners and representatives of the Armed Forces, and southern or international organizations which have an interest in circumpolar defence issues. These seminars and workshops should be conducted on an ongoing basis and in response to national and international events which determine or influence the direction of Canada's defence policy.

IV CONCLUSION

The discussion paper on a proposed Northwest Territories Government position on military activity in the north and establishment of a circumpolar peace and security zone is intended to stimulate discussion and consultation over the next few months. While the issues, proposals and recommendations are complex, this need not prevent northerners developing and expressing their thoughts on how disarmament, demilitarization, sovereignty and security should be addressed at home and abroad.

The Northwest Territories Government is ready to hear from you. Please direct your submissions, questions or requests for further information to:

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