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# Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy

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Cat. No. FR5-236/2024E-PDF  
ISBN 978-0-660-74228-1

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# Foreword: Message from the Minister of Foreign Affairs

## Canada is at an inflection point in the Arctic.

For many years, Canada has aimed to manage the Arctic and northern regions cooperatively with other states as a zone of low tension that is free from military competition

This approach had significant benefits, uniting the Arctic nations to advance cooperation on issues of common interest, such as sustainable development, environmental protection and scientific collaboration, including through the establishment of the Arctic Council in Ottawa in 1996.

However, the guardrails that we have depended on to prevent and resolve conflict have weakened. Russia's illegal war in Ukraine has made cooperation with it on Arctic issues exceedingly difficult for the foreseeable future. Uncertainty and unpredictability are creating economic consequences that Canadians are facing everyday.

Threats to Canada's security are no longer bound by geography; climate change is accelerating rapidly; and non-Arctic states, including China, are also seeking greater influence in the governance of the Arctic. To respond, Canada must be strong in the North American Arctic, and it requires deeper collaboration with its greatest ally, the United States. Canada must also maintain strong ties with its 5 Nordic allies, which are now also all NATO members.

The evolving security and political dynamics in the Arctic have triggered a need for a recalibrated diplomatic approach to advancing Canada's national interests in the region, based on the principles of pragmatic diplomacy.

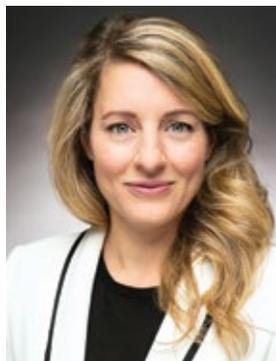
The Arctic Foreign Policy, a diplomatic strategy, addresses the challenges and opportunities Canada faces today, as well as those it expects to face in the coming decades. It gives Canada the diplomatic tools it needs to continue to assert its sovereignty, advance its national security interests and promote a stable, prosperous and secure Arctic.

This policy is built on, and benefits from, the knowledge and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples who call the Arctic home. It comes from a place of understanding that there is a dark chapter in Government of Canada policy in the Arctic, which includes forced relocations of Inuit to the High Arctic and other colonial policies. These have inflicted significant intergenerational trauma on Indigenous Peoples.

The Arctic Foreign Policy also draws on our Indo-Pacific Strategy and the Future of Diplomacy initiative. It also complements, and benefits from, the historic investments Canada is making in its national defence and security through its 2024 defence policy update Our North, Strong and Free.

It will make Canada more secure, especially for Canadians living in the North. It will support strong and resilient Arctic and Northern communities. It will also serve to advance the interests and priorities of Indigenous Peoples and northerners who call the Arctic home.

Canada's new policy is based on a shared vision of the Arctic's future; I am confident Canada will realize its ambitions through this policy.



The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

# Foreword: Message from the Minister of Northern Affairs

Released in 2019, the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework ('the Framework') was co-developed with over 25 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis governments, organizations, and territorial and provincial governments. It laid out a shared vision to ensure that the needs and priorities of the North remain paramount: "Strong, self-reliant people and communities working together for a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable Arctic and northern region at home and abroad, while expressing Canada's enduring Arctic sovereignty."

The launch of Canada's new Arctic Foreign Policy builds on the International Chapter of the Framework and is a pivotal moment in the realization of our shared vision for the Arctic. Informed by engagements with Indigenous Peoples and Northerners and their vast knowledge in the region, as well as with territorial and provincial governments, this Policy reflects the federal government's international approach to the Arctic to ensure that Canada remains well-positioned as an Arctic leader.

The Arctic Foreign Policy will promote a safe, strong, and thriving future for those who live in the Arctic and the North, while protecting Canada's enduring Arctic sovereignty. It considers the shifting geopolitical context and puts forward plans to ensure that the Canadian Arctic remains strong and adaptable on the international stage, now and into the future. Just as Indigenous partners are instrumental in the ongoing implementation of the Framework, the success of this new foreign policy will depend on continued learning from the immeasurable experience, knowledge, and wisdom of First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Modern Treaty and Self-Governing partners and communities. This shared learning is critical to a strong and sustainable Arctic and to the full and effective implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

Through this Policy, Canada's approach to the Arctic will be developed with respect for Indigenous self-determination and the values, interests, cultures, and traditions of Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples, including weaving traditional knowledge into Arctic decision-making at the global level.

The new Arctic Foreign Policy will expand and broaden Canada's international engagement, strengthen relations with our international partners and exercise Canada's sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic. It will also advance domestic priorities, including enhancing knowledge of the North, protecting the Arctic environment, and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples throughout the North.

By placing the invaluable perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom of Indigenous Peoples in the North, who have called the Arctic home since time immemorial, at the foreground this new policy and its implementation, we will ensure that the Arctic remains a vibrant, prosperous, and secure region now and for future generations.



The Honourable Dan Vandal, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Northern Affairs

# Foreword: Message from the Minister of National Defence

Canada has benefited enormously from our geography. Surrounded by 3 oceans, and our closest ally to the south, our country has enjoyed a degree of protection that has helped keep our borders safe and secure. That reality is changing in the Arctic. Where the polar ice caps provided physical protection, the region is now opening to the world as it warms at 4 times the global average.

In the coming decades, the Arctic Ocean will become a vital shipping route between Europe and Asia, while vast stores of natural resources become increasingly accessible. This growing access is already enticing nations to the region, heightening security challenges and geopolitical competition.

Canada must urgently strengthen our presence in the Arctic and northern regions as our adversaries aspire to a greater role in the region's affairs. The physical threat of climate change is compounded by challenges from authoritarian states to the rules-based international order that Canada and its allies strive to uphold. Simultaneously, the character of conflict is changing with rapid technological and cyber advances.

Canada's new Arctic Foreign Policy responds to these growing challenges by focusing on 3 key areas: asserting Canada's sovereignty, advancing our interests in the region, and promoting a stable, prosperous, and secure North. The policy addresses current needs and challenges while anticipating how the region will change in the coming decades. It also provides the diplomatic tools we need to partner with Northern communities to assert Canada's sovereignty and to support Arctic and Northern people so that they can thrive and remain secure.

The Arctic Foreign Policy complements the work and investments outlined in our new defence policy update Our North, Strong and Free, which was developed in part as a response to the emerging threats in the Arctic and around the world. Our North, Strong and Free focuses on Canadian values and strengths while underpinning our Arctic and Northern sovereignty, strengthening our diplomatic influence, and leveraging our world-leading cyber and space talent. It reinforces our capabilities and capacity in the region, in partnership with those who live there.

Canada remains committed to contributing to NATO and NORAD's awareness of the threat environment across the Arctic region, including in the North American Arctic. We likewise support the continued leadership of like-minded Arctic states on matters of security and defence.

The Arctic security and continental defence investments made in Our North, Strong and Free and NORAD Modernization support NATO's deterrence and defence agenda by protecting the Alliance's Northern and Western flanks. It ensures that Canada can engage in the world and deploy from a secure base in support of NATO allies, when needed.

As we expand and enhance our presence in the Arctic, we recognize that this will also impact the communities who inhabit the region. Indigenous Peoples have called the Arctic home since time immemorial, and working with them will enhance the prosperity and defence of the region. Our government will continue to prioritize working with Indigenous communities in the Arctic and deepening our relationship with them.

As the world continues to evolve and threats intensify, the connection between foreign policy and defence policy must remain strong for the protection of our country and our values. This Arctic Foreign Policy complements Canada's ongoing work in the region to expand our presence and safeguard our sovereignty in the Arctic.



The Honourable William Sterling Blair, P.C., C.O.M., M.P.  
Minister of National Defence

# Executive summary

## Canada is an Arctic nation.

Canada launched the co-developed Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF) in 2019, which sets out a common vision of the Arctic and the North, in which the peoples there are thriving, strong and secure.

Since then, strategic competition has intensified across the globe as major powers that do not share Canadian interests and values seek to shape the international environment to their advantage. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine in 2022, for example, has shaken the foundations of international cooperation in the Arctic.

At the same time, the Arctic is experiencing the considerable impacts of climate change, with significant implications for the security of the communities and people who live in the Arctic. By 2050, the Arctic Ocean will become an increasingly viable shipping route between Europe and Asia during the summer.

More than ever, the Arctic is a theatre of interest for many non-Arctic states and actors aspiring for a greater role in Arctic affairs. Canada's adversaries also try to achieve influence through non-military tactics, including cyber activities, foreign interference and economic coercion.

The North American Arctic is no longer free from tension. Canada must work even closer with its closest ally, the United States, to maintain a secure North American homeland. Canada should also be closer than ever to its Nordic allies.

To respond to these emerging geopolitical dynamics and to align more closely with the defence policy update *Our North, Strong and Free*, Canada has developed, in partnership with northern and Indigenous Peoples, the **Arctic Foreign Policy** to supplement the International chapter of the ANPF. This policy will help ensure that the Arctic remains a stable, prosperous and secure region for future generations.

The Arctic Foreign Policy provides new funding over the next 5 years to ensure that Global Affairs Canada<sup>1</sup> is fit-for-purpose in the Arctic. The policy also benefits Canadians who live in the Arctic and in the North, including by strengthening their ties and connections across borders.

To achieve its objective of a stable, prosperous and secure Arctic, Canada will continue to assert its sovereignty. Canada will also advance its national interests through pragmatic diplomacy; lead on Arctic governance and multilateral challenges; and adopt a more inclusive approach to Arctic diplomacy.

As part of this policy, Canada will:

- appoint an Arctic ambassador
- open a new consulate in Anchorage, Alaska
- open a new consulate in Nuuk, Greenland
- initiate an Arctic security dialogue with the ministers of foreign affairs of like-minded states in the Arctic
- expand information sharing with relevant territorial and provincial governments and Indigenous leaders on emerging and developing international Arctic security trends, including foreign interference threats
- support science and research coordination initiatives with foreign policy considerations as related to research security and science in the Arctic
- launch boundary negotiations with the United States regarding the Beaufort Sea and finalize the implementation of the boundary agreement between Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark regarding Tartupaluk (Hans Island)

Canada remains deeply committed to the full implementation of the ANPF, to Arctic state primacy and to upholding the rules-based international order<sup>2</sup> in the Arctic. The Arctic Foreign Policy will provide new tools for Canada to deliver on the objectives set out in the ANPF in a changing geopolitical context.

This foreign policy will secure its national interests and ensure stability and prosperity for the Indigenous Peoples who live in the Arctic and the North—including First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Modern Treaty and Self-Governing Partners—and other northerners. Canada's diplomacy is stronger when it is informed by Indigenous Knowledge, culture and practices, as well as by the lived experiences of northerners who call the Arctic home.

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, all uses of the first-person plural—we, us, our and ours—are in reference to Global Affairs Canada.

<sup>2</sup> The rules-based international order in the Arctic is the sum of international rules, norms and institutions that govern international affairs there.

# STRATEGIC CHALLENGES IN THE ARCTIC



Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

## 1. Russia since 2022

Canada has been clear that there will be no business as usual with Russia, at the Arctic Council or elsewhere, since its illegal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has fundamentally changed the geopolitical landscape, with spillover effects in the Arctic. It is an attack not only against Ukraine, but also on the fundamental principles of international relations, including respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and international law.

In addition to the existential threat Russian aggression poses to Ukraine and its people, Russian president Putin's war on Ukraine risks setting a broader post-Cold-War precedent that borders can be redrawn through violence.

Northerners understand how close a neighbour Russia is. Canada must be clear-eyed about the implications of its geographic proximity to Russia. Canadian Forces Station Alert, on Ellesmere Island, Nunavut, is closer to the Russian military's air force base at Nagurskoye, Russia, than Iqaluit is to Ottawa or Toronto is to Winnipeg.

For over a decade, Russia has invested in modernizing its Arctic infrastructure and its military capabilities in the Arctic to develop resources and control access to the region, with particular emphasis on its own western region and approaches. It is looking to profit from climate change in the region and will continue promoting the development of the Northern Sea Route as a major international shipping route. Given the strategic importance Russia places on its Arctic region, Canada expects these activities will continue.

Russia has also intensified its disinformation campaigns, conducted below-threshold military activities<sup>3</sup>, and crafted a vehement domestic narrative of a "hostile, unfriendly West," in part to justify its own militarization of the Arctic.

Russia's historic posture has been to ensure sovereignty and control over its own Arctic region and to limit the role of non-Arctic states in Arctic affairs. However, because of sanctions and of its massive expenditures on its illegal war against Ukraine, Russia is increasingly reliant on China to fund and support the development of its projects in the Arctic. These include investments in Arctic research, oil and gas development, ports and other critical infrastructure. We anticipate this trend will continue and lead to increased activity by China in the Russian Arctic.

Russia and China are aligned in their desire to undermine the liberal-rules-based international system, but the power asymmetry between them often highlights the divergence in their interests. Russia is increasingly dependent on China and is reversing its historic posture by opening its Arctic to China. For instance, in July 2024, Russia and China, building on their 2022 statement to cooperate in the Arctic, conducted joint military exercises in the Russian High North. In addition, Russian and Chinese warships have conducted joint patrols in international waters off the Aleutian Islands; the 2 countries' coast guards have conducted joint patrols into the Bering Sea; and Russian and Chinese military aircraft have been detected, tracked and intercepted by the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) while flying in Alaska's Air Defense Identification Zone. This demonstrates the continued deepening of Chinese-Russian military cooperation, particularly in the North Pacific approaches to the Arctic.

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<sup>3</sup> "Below-threshold conflict," also known as "grey zone conflict," refers to competitive interaction between states that falls short of traditional armed conflict but goes beyond normal peaceful relations. Such conflict involves actions that are coercive and aggressive but deliberately designed to remain below the threshold of armed conflict. These actions could include: information warfare and propaganda; cyber attacks and espionage; economic coercion; political interference and election meddling; the use of proxy forces or paramilitary groups; or "lawfare" and exploiting legal ambiguities.

## 2. Evolving security threats across the Arctic

The Arctic is a strategically important region for the defence of North America and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) northern and western flanks. However, the defence architecture and threat picture differ across the circumpolar north.

The safety, security and defence of the Canadian Arctic comprise a fundamental priority for the Government of Canada and are critical to the collective defence of North America. The Arctic regions of North America are protected by the armed forces of Canada and the United States, individually and bilaterally, and through NORAD, which is binational.

While the risk of military attack in the North American Arctic remains low, the region represents a geographic vector for traditional and emerging weapons systems that threaten broader North American and transatlantic security. Canada is seeing a number of potential threats, including increased Russian activity in Canadian air approaches, China's regular deployment of dual-use—having both research and military application—research vessels and surveillance platforms to collect data, and a general increase in Arctic maritime activity. Adversaries and competitors also employ disinformation and influence campaigns, malicious cyber operations and espionage and foreign interference activities to target Canadians, including northerners.

Close partnership with the United States is essential to the maintenance of a secure, strong and well-defended North American homeland, on which the 2 countries' mutual prosperity depends. It is critical in deterring and defending against increasingly sophisticated threats to North America, including in the Arctic and its approaches in the North Atlantic and North Pacific. We expect Canada–United States defence cooperation in the Arctic to continue to grow, as it is fundamental to both countries' national security interests.

Strong and resilient Arctic and northern communities increase Canada's defence against threats. With increased tension and with competitors looking to exploit vulnerabilities in the Canadian North, Canada must take action to build trust in public institutions and deepen ties with like-minded states. Canada's diplomacy and defence and security policies must work hand in hand to keep these emerging threats in check.

The security of the European High North is also of critical importance to Canada's security and economic well-being.

The European High North is a contested region militarily, including threats to critical infrastructure, maritime security, and safety, as well as access concerns. Russia has established a strong military presence in the Arctic, including with air and naval platforms equipped with missile systems capable of striking Europe and North America and of disrupting Canada's ability to project forces in support of allies and partners. Russia's below-threshold actions, military activities and continued weapons testing in the European High North and the Arctic are deeply troubling.

NATO has strengthened its deterrence and defence posture, including in the European High North, in response to the increased threat posed by Russia. The accessions of Finland and Sweden to NATO, in 2023 and 2024 respectively, reinforced the Alliance by bringing, among other things, their significant cold-weather experience and capabilities to NATO, thereby bolstering its strategic posture in the European High North. Canada was the first country to ratify each of their accessions. Canada will continue to share information on threats in the Arctic with allies and to support NATO operations and presence in the European High North.

Despite the changing threat picture, it is not in Canada's strategic interest that the Arctic becomes a theatre of military conflict. Canada will continue working with territorial and provincial governments, Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples and allies and partners throughout the Arctic region to enhance domain awareness, improve information sharing and strengthen interoperability and research security.

Canada must also take action to mitigate the impact that current and emerging defence and security threats to the Arctic have on the people who live in the region and who now find themselves at the frontlines of geopolitical competition.



**Photo Credit:** Joint Task Force (North) / Operation NUNALIVUT



### 3. Adapting to new dynamics for Arctic governance

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had cascading impacts on the governance of the Arctic. While Arctic states continue to fulfill the important responsibility of governing the Arctic region at a time of unprecedented change, like-minded countries are taking coordinated action to ensure it is not business as usual with Russia.

The Arctic Council is the pre-eminent forum for international Arctic cooperation and governance. It brings together the 8 Arctic states, the 6 Permanent Participant organizations representing Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic, and observers to address sustainable development and the environmental protection of the Arctic. The role of Arctic Indigenous Peoples, from the foundation of the Arctic Council in 1996 to the present, is one of the council's greatest strengths and is unique in multilateral governance. The council sets the bar for meaningful Indigenous engagement, which continues to grow to this day. Arctic governance must be done with those who have lived in the Arctic for thousands of years, recognizing the strength of shared knowledge and decision making.

Meetings with all members of the council at the ministerial and Senior Arctic Official levels remain on hold. Arctic states and Permanent Participants are working at the expert and scientific level to advance important projects on climate change and biodiversity, emergency prevention and preparedness and sustainable development. These projects, along with the other work of the Arctic Council, are helping to drive meaningful change for people who live across the Arctic. This unique work, done in collaboration between the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic and the Arctic states, is what makes the Arctic Council so valuable.

To ensure the maintenance of robust governance in the Arctic—governance that is capable of tackling the increasing challenges and opportunities the region is facing—cooperation must continue at the Arctic Council. Canada must also identify new forums and leverage existing ones in new ways to advance discussions on Arctic issues. Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples must be active partners in the conduct of international relations in the Arctic.

Arctic states also meet in other regional and international forums that contribute to upholding the rules-based international order, including the Arctic Coast Guard Forum and the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement. The latter came into force in 2021, establishing a precautionary 16-year ban on commercial fishing on the high seas of the Arctic Ocean.

Arctic states also play a leading role in advancing Arctic interests in broader global efforts through the UN system, such as the International Maritime Organization's (IMO's) ban on heavy fuel oil in the Arctic.

An extensive international legal framework applies to the Arctic Ocean. The law of the sea, including as set out in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), determines states' jurisdictions and their rights and obligations in various maritime zones. These rules apply to the delineation of the outer limits of continental shelves, navigation, the management of natural resources, the protection of the marine environment and other uses of the sea. Consistent with the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration<sup>4</sup>, Canada remains committed to the orderly settlement of Arctic disputes in accordance with international law and expects the same of other signatories, including Russia.

<sup>4</sup> The Ilulissat Declaration was signed by the 5 Arctic Ocean coastal states (Canada, the United States, the Kingdom of Denmark, Norway and Russia) at Ilulissat, Greenland, in May 2008. In the declaration, the 5 states pledged to enhance their scientific and environmental cooperation in the Arctic Ocean. They also committed to the orderly settlement of overlaps in their respective extended continental shelves, in accordance with international law.

Canada has a clear interest in maintaining the structures of governance in the Arctic that ensure Canada's central role in guiding the region's future. Canada especially values the Arctic Council because it provides a platform for Indigenous Peoples to help shape circumpolar affairs. Canada will not allow Russia to undermine, through its actions, the pillars of international cooperation in the Arctic.



Photo Credit: Joint Task Force (North) / Operation NUNALIVUT

## 4. Climate change: the overarching threat

Climate change is both the most pressing and the most proximate threat to Canada's security in the Arctic and the people who live there. Its causes and effects are not bound by countries' official borders.

Climate change is progressing at an alarming pace, with the Arctic warming 4 times faster than the global average, causing significant impacts on natural and human environments. These impacts serve as threat multipliers because changing environmental conditions create additional opportunities for foreign adversaries and competitors to covertly or overtly operate in the Canadian Arctic.

The total surface area of Arctic Ocean ice is shrinking, with varied implications for maritime shipping, trade and resource extraction across the Arctic. Maritime traffic in the Arctic will continue to increase, which will drive further foreign interest in the region. This includes maritime traffic in Canada's Arctic Archipelago, despite the risks and hazards associated with the unpredictable ice conditions.

With retreating sea ice and new technologies improving navigation and accessibility, foreign activity in the Arctic will continue to increase, bringing with it related safety, security and environmental challenges. With other Arctic states, Canada must be prepared to respond.

Climate change is also driving an increase in climate-related emergencies and disrupting ecosystems that Arctic communities rely on for their livelihoods, with significant implications for the security of northerners, including Indigenous Peoples, who are disproportionately affected by these changes.

Northerners, including Indigenous Peoples, have shared concerns about climate change and their ongoing efforts to improve their resiliency in the face of increased pressures on communities and livelihoods, food security and the destabilization of critical and civilian infrastructure. The disappearance of year-round ice cover and changes in the timing and durability of the floe edge; increasing subsidence due to permafrost thaw; and a greater frequency and severity of wildfires are examples of the impacts of climate change on Arctic communities, all of which have both material and psychological impacts.

For instance, communities in the North are often impacted by major wildfires. In 2023, more than half of the population of the Northwest Territories had to be evacuated.

There is an ongoing need to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change in the Arctic to reduce vulnerabilities. Canada must support Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples and other northerners in adapting to the environment as it is and will be—not as one wishes it would be.

In parallel, climate change is driving interest in the Arctic as a sustainable and reliable source of critical minerals, such as lithium, graphite, nickel, cobalt, copper and rare earth elements integral to the transition to a low-carbon economy. For Canada and its allies, the Arctic's resource potential provides an opportunity to diversify critical mineral production in partnership with territorial and provincial governments, Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This must be done carefully, respecting the livelihoods of local communities.

Climate change is a global problem; it requires global solutions and multilateral collaboration.



## 5. Increasing challenges to Arctic states' primacy

Canada's approach to the Arctic is guided by the fundamental principle that the Arctic should be governed by the Arctic states in collaboration with Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples. As in other regions, strategic competition in the Arctic is growing, with non-Arctic states and actors increasingly expressing foreign policy or security aspirations, thereby pushing for greater roles in Arctic affairs.

Since 2019, there has been a growing narrative among some non-Arctic states that they should have a greater say in Arctic governance. China, in particular, has expressed an ambition to become a "polar great power," by 2030.

Among China's priorities in the Arctic are developing commercial shipping opportunities, including a "Polar Silk Road," as well as natural resource exploitation, including of critical minerals, oil and gas and fish. China is also active in Arctic research, much of which can be considered dual use.

China seeks to shape the international order into a more permissive environment for interests and values that increasingly deviate from Canada's commitment to a rules-based international system. China can be expected to use all the tools at its disposal to advance its geopolitical interests, including in the Arctic. Canada will challenge China when it ought to and cooperate when its interests align with China's.

China, like all states, has rights and responsibilities related to its use of the world's oceans that apply equally in the Arctic. For example, in accordance with UNCLOS, China can only conduct marine scientific research in the exclusive economic zone of another state with the consent of that state. Canada will carefully review any such requests related to its own exclusive economic zone and provide or withhold consent consistent with the provisions of the convention.



Consistent with its Indo-Pacific Strategy and in collaboration with partners, Canada will always act on matters of Arctic governance to protect national and northern interests, including when dealing with China. Canada will cooperate with China to address pressing global issues—such as climate change—that have impacts on the Arctic.

In the Canadian Arctic, Canada will always work to protect Canada's economic security, safeguard Canadian values and protect Canadians from malign influence.

Canada will continue to work closely with the United States to counter all forms of malign influence and activity in the North American Arctic.

In the wider region, Canada will always uphold the founding principles that underpinned the Ottawa Declaration in 1996 on the establishment of the Arctic Council. These include Canada's commitment to the well-being of the inhabitants of the Arctic; its commitment to sustainable development in the Arctic region, including economic and social development, improved health conditions and cultural well-being; its commitment to the protection of the Arctic environment; and its commitment to ensure full consultation with, and the involvement of, Indigenous Peoples and their communities and other inhabitants of the Arctic on Arctic Council activities.

At all times, Canada's engagement in the Arctic will be focused first and foremost on promoting and defending Canadian national interests. Canada will adopt a pragmatic approach when circumstances require it.

# ARCTIC FOREIGN POLICY PILLARS



The Arctic Foreign Policy provides Global Affairs Canada with additional diplomatic tools to support a stable, prosperous and secure Arctic and to fully implement the objectives laid out in the International chapter of the ANPF given the changing geopolitical context.

We will do this by continuing to assert Canada's sovereignty; advancing Canada's national interests through pragmatic diplomacy; leading on Arctic governance and multilateral challenges; and adopting a more inclusive approach to Arctic diplomacy.

- I Asserting Canada's sovereignty**

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- II Advancing Canada's interests through pragmatic diplomacy**

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- III Leadership on Arctic governance and multilateral challenges**

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- IV Adopting a more inclusive approach to Arctic diplomacy**

# Asserting Canada's sovereignty

## 1. Leveraging diplomacy to support national defence and security

The Government of Canada will continue to take a comprehensive approach to Arctic security by prioritizing the security, interests and priorities of the Arctic region and northerners, as well as Canadians more broadly. Canada's foreign and defence policies are closely intertwined and complementary. Effective diplomacy is critical for shaping the international environment to defend and advance Canadian national interests; it is a first line of defence for Canada's national security. Canada's fundamental defence and security goal is to prevent and defuse potential crises before they can develop into conflict.

Canada's national security is also supported by human security. Strong and resilient local communities are vital to national defence.

Canada engages in the Arctic from a position of strength thanks to the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF's) presence and capabilities, exercises and operations, including those of the Canadian Rangers. Canadian Rangers are active, well-respected members of their communities, and they play a critical role in demonstrating Canadian sovereignty over the lands, waters and ice of Canada's North and Arctic.

Building on the NORAD modernization investments announced in 2022, Canada's defence policy update *Our North, Strong and Free* identified the Government of Canada's most pressing priority as the continued assertion of Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic and northern regions. Canada is making investments to ensure that the CAF has the capabilities required to operate in an evolving geopolitical context. By 2030, Canada will have **almost tripled its defence spending** from 2015.

Strengthened military capabilities will bolster the CAF's ability to conduct and sustain operations in the Arctic and create opportunities for strengthened collaboration with allies and partners. Canada regularly invites select allies and partners to take part in Operation NANOOK, the CAF's signature northern operation series. Canada also works with allies and partners on multinational research and development activities relevant to the conduct of defence and security operations in the polar regions.

In addition to NORAD modernization and the defence policy update, Canada is pursuing historic investments to increase its military capability in the maritime domain in the Arctic. Ensuring that Canada's internal waters in the Arctic are well defended is a critical component of maintaining a secure North American homeland. Canada will maintain strong defence capabilities in its internal Arctic waters, including in the Northwest Passage.

## Here is a summary of key defence and security investments:

- Several military capabilities will play a key role in exercising Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic and northern waters, including Canada's 6 new Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships; up to 15 new River Class Destroyers; 11 new MQ-9B Sky Guardian drones; up to 16 new P-8A Poseidon multi-mission aircraft specialized in anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare; and 88 new F-35A fighter aircraft.
- Canada's \$38.6 billion plan to modernize NORAD will significantly enhance domain awareness in the Arctic and the North through the establishment of a new northern approaches surveillance system to complement the North Warning System and further investment in space-based surveillance. It also includes further investment in space-based polar communications; additional air-to-air refuelling aircraft to support and extend the reach of CAF operations—and NORAD operations—in Canada; additional and longer-range air-to-air missiles for Canada's fighter fleet; significant infrastructure upgrades at airfields used to support NORAD forward operations; and more than \$4 billion in new funding for science and technology.
- The defence policy update announced an additional \$8.1 billion in spending over the next 5 years and \$73 billion over the next 20 years to support Canada's national defence and security in the Arctic. This includes a new fleet of **airborne early warning and control aircraft**; **specialized maritime sensors**, including some that can be deployed by Harry DeWolf-class Arctic Offshore Patrol vessels; a new fleet of **tactical helicopters**; and a new **satellite ground station in the Arctic** to enhance the use of Canadian, U.S. and other Allied space capabilities.
- The defence policy update will also establish a new network of **Northern Operational Support Hubs** to further enhance the CAF's presence, responsiveness and partnerships across the Arctic and the North and invest in multi-use infrastructure that also meets the needs of the territories, Indigenous Peoples and northern communities.
- In July 2024, Canada announced it would initiate new spending programs to put the country on track to reach **NATO's target of 2% of GDP spending by 2032**. This will include the purchase of **up to 12 conventionally powered, under-ice-capable submarines** by the Royal Canadian Navy.
- In 2024, the Government of Canada initiated the procurement of **8 new icebreakers made in Canada** to support Canadian Coast Guard operations in the Arctic, including 2 polar icebreakers that will enable year-round icebreaker presence in the Arctic. The icebreakers will contribute to the protection of the marine environment, the resupplying of communities and the collection of data that enhances Canada's maritime domain awareness in support of maritime safety and security, climate resilience and scientific research.
- In July 2024, Canada, the United States and Finland announced an enhanced trilateral partnership called the **ICE Pact**. It is a collaborative effort to build best-in-class Arctic and polar icebreakers and other Arctic and polar capabilities in each of the countries by sharing expertise, information and capabilities. This partnership also bolsters the ability of like-minded nations to uphold international rules, norms and standards to ensure safety and to sustain peace and stability in the Arctic.

The diplomatic initiatives in the Arctic Foreign Policy will complement all of these investments by better aligning Canada's strategic approaches and by strengthening its relationships with its Arctic allies, with territorial and provincial governments and with Arctic and northern Indigenous partners.

### i. Bridging the intelligence gap

To address the complex range of threats faced in the Arctic, Canada must conceptualize security not only in military terms. Security in the Arctic includes community security, research security, economic security, security against disinformation and any other form of interference and physical and digital infrastructure security.

We will work with Public Safety Canada to support efforts to strengthen Canadian national resilience to counter malign influence and activities of foreign powers. Canada will strengthen the defence of its critical infrastructure across the country, including in the Arctic, to protect northern communities against foreign interference. This can be achieved through the *Investment Canada Act*; by strengthening Canadian cyber security systems; and through new legislation to address foreign interference.

We will provide relevant **territorial, provincial and Indigenous governments with regular briefings and information on emerging and developing international security trends, including threats** affecting the Arctic, to ensure that they are equipped to support communities in Canada's Arctic and North and to make informed decisions about the security of their communities.

This will be achieved in collaboration with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Communications Security Establishment, the Department of National Defence and Public Safety Canada.



Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

Canada will support territorial, provincial and Indigenous authorities in **taking into account a national security lens to foreign research** in Canada's Arctic.

Global Affairs Canada will support the work of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs and its portfolio agencies, the Department of National Defence, Natural Resources Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, among others, to support the scientific research permitting process in the Arctic, particularly for international applicants undertaking research that can be considered dual use.

To help ensure emerging challenges concerning research security and science collaboration in the North are addressed, we will help by increasing our capacity to learn about concerns from those on the ground, holding annual round-table meetings on science and research relating to Canada's Arctic foreign policy priorities. We will work closely with other federal government departments and agencies to organize the round-table meetings.

The Arctic ambassador (see Pillar 4 - Adopting a more inclusive approach to Arctic diplomacy) will work with Indigenous Peoples and partners from territorial and provincial governments, as well as across the Government of Canada, to contribute to the efforts to address climate change, biodiversity and other areas where Indigenous Knowledge, science and technologies could contribute solutions to the challenges in the Arctic.

The Arctic ambassador will also work with Canada's Chief Science Advisor on issues related to science and research.



Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

## ii. Strengthening research security

International scientific collaboration plays an important role in addressing gaps in knowledge of the Arctic region, including in relation to climate change. The last 20 years have seen a marked increase in international research activity across the Canadian and circumpolar Arctic.

While Canada continues to welcome scientific collaboration in the Arctic, Canada's oversight, regulatory, safety and security bodies must be equipped to address potential threats and harms at all levels. In particular, Canada must guard against foreign research in the Canadian Arctic and North that is dual use—having both research and military application.

This requires balancing between the important priority of advancing recognized areas of needed international scientific collaboration, such as climate change research, with necessary due diligence to protect Canada's most sensitive research.



### iii. Partnering with the Canadian Coast Guard to support defence and security

The Canadian Coast Guard, alongside other partner departments and agencies, is responsible for maritime domain awareness and plays a critical role in supporting the defence and security of the North.

Building on the Canadian Coast Guard Arctic Strategy, released in 2024, the Canadian Coast Guard will continue to contribute to Canada's national security, including through its assistance to Arctic scientific research expeditions.

The Canadian Coast Guard currently operates up to 6 icebreakers in the Arctic from June to November each year, which helps advance maritime safety and security. In the coming years, the Canadian Coast Guard will acquire 8 new icebreakers, including 2 polar icebreakers that will provide capacity for year-round presence in the Arctic.

The Canadian Coast Guard also helps to deepen Canadian defence cooperation with Arctic allies through Operation Pacer Goose. The annual operation resupplies the United States' Pituffik Space Base (formerly known as Thule Air Base) in Greenland, ensuring that essential supplies are safely delivered in challenging Arctic conditions.

To strengthen the interconnections between the Arctic Foreign Policy and the Canadian Coast Guard Arctic Strategy, we will **collaborate more closely with the Canadian Coast Guard to leverage its maritime domain expertise and support its work with international partners.** Through its operations and activities, the Canadian Coast Guard helps contribute to stronger relationships with Canada's Arctic allies. Through deeper collaboration, the Canadian Coast Guard will also be able to expand its partnerships with regional coast guards from like-minded states.

#### iv. Strengthening regional defence and security architectures

To respond to the evolving threat landscape in the Arctic, Canada will strengthen coordination and dialogue with Arctic allies on security issues.

Alongside the Department of National Defence, we will increase our information sharing with NATO on circumpolar threats. We will improve interoperability and increase the collective understanding of the evolving security situation in the Arctic and enhance the Alliance's cold-weather capabilities. Canada will continue to be an active participant in NATO exercises and operations, including in the European High North.

To ensure seamless situational awareness and information sharing on northern threats that do not recognize borders or military command areas of responsibility, Canada supports greater coordination and collaboration between the military forces of like-minded Arctic states, including in the context of NATO and NORAD activities.

Canada will explore and foster new partnerships to strengthen the strategic resilience of the North American Arctic, particularly with Alaska, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Greenland.



Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

To complement existing defence forums, Canada is exploring opportunities to deepen security dialogue among all like-minded states in the Arctic, including through regular security discussions.

Canada will initiate an **Arctic security dialogue** with the ministers of foreign affairs of like-minded states in the Arctic. Discussions will focus on sharing information on, and on analyses of, issues relating to international Arctic relations and security; as well as discussing national approaches to cross-cutting security challenges; advancing opportunities for collaboration; and increasing collective resilience.

## 2. Upholding the rules-based international order

The waters of Canada's Arctic Archipelago, including the various channels comprising the Northwest Passage, are internal waters of Canada by virtue of historic title and in accordance with international law. Canada's Arctic sovereignty encompasses land, sea and ice. It extends without interruption to the seaward-facing coasts of the Arctic islands and beyond. These islands are joined, not divided, by the waters between them and are bridged for a large part of the year by ice.

Indigenous Peoples in Canada have used and occupied the ice and waters as they have used and occupied the lands for thousands of years. Every day, through a wide range of activities, Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples and governments, as well as territorial and provincial governments and other northerners, share stewardship over the Arctic lands and waters of Canada. It is through the reciprocal recognition of each other's mutual interests in these lands and waters that Canada and Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples share in the stewardship of them—further codified in modern treaties and self-government agreements. Sovereignty and sovereign rights in the Arctic are inextricably linked to issues of Indigenous self-government. Canada possesses environmental, economic, cultural and historical interests unique to the region, the reality and importance of which are clearly evidenced by long-standing usage.

Canada will work with Arctic and northern Indigenous partners to assert shared interests and priorities in the region, such as through partnerships with the **Inuit Marine Monitoring Program and the Indigenous Guardians program**.<sup>5</sup> These initiatives provide Indigenous Peoples with greater opportunities to exercise responsibility for the stewardship of their traditional lands, waters and ice.

Canada intends to continue to act as a responsible sovereign of its Arctic territories and waters, relying on the rules-based international order and supported by historical and scientific evidence. Canada's commitment to ensuring that maritime claims are addressed in a manner that is consistent with international law is one of its key enduring priorities in the Arctic.



Photo Credit: Arctic Council Secretariat/Linnea Nordström

<sup>5</sup> Launched in 2017, the Indigenous Guardians exercise responsibility in stewardship of their traditional lands, waters and ice by protecting and conserving ecosystems, by developing and maintaining sustainable economies and by continuing to foster the profound connections between natural landscapes and Indigenous cultures.

## i. Managing Arctic boundaries through a rules-based approach

At a time when the rules-based international order is under unprecedented threat, it is critical that states resolve their disputes responsibly, through dialogue and negotiation. Canada has made resolving boundary disputes in accordance with international law one of the foundational principles of its foreign policy in the Arctic.

Enhanced international cooperation on maritime boundaries also helps secure states' respective national interests over their resources, including energy, minerals, fish and wildlife.

Canada will **advance efforts to resolve Arctic boundary disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law**, including UNCLOS, and in consultation with Indigenous partners, particularly where these international boundaries may affect treaty rights.

## Canada–Kingdom of Denmark boundary agreement

Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, and Greenland have resolved the maritime boundary and long-time dispute over Tartupaluk. In June 2022, following 5 years of intensive negotiations, the Canadian, Nunavut, Danish and Greenlandic governments **agreed on a modernized single maritime boundary, from the Lincoln Sea in the north to the Labrador Sea in the south**—a distance of over 3,000 kilometres—which established the longest bilateral maritime boundary in the world. The agreement also resolved the overlap in our respective continental shelves in the Labrador Sea.

With the Kingdom of Denmark, Canada agreed to divide the island of Tartupaluk roughly in half; Canada is now advancing discussions on an agreed border regime for Tartupaluk, which requires engagement with the Government of Nunavut and local Inuit communities. This is the last step before the agreement can come into force, which Canada is committed to completing in the near future.

## Extended continental shelf

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In December 2022, Canada **filed an addendum to its Arctic Ocean extended continental shelf submission** with the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in response to Russia's addendum, which was filed in March 2021. Russia's addendum greatly expanded the size of the continental shelf included in its submission and tripled the area that overlaps with Canada's own continental shelf. Canada's 2022 addendum rebalanced the overlap area.

In December 2023, the United States published the outer limits of its extended continental shelf in the western Arctic Ocean. This announcement offers an opportunity for Canada to renew negotiations with the United States regarding the overlap of the countries' respective continental shelves. These discussions are expected to begin in late 2024.

Canada, like all Arctic Ocean coastal states, remains committed to **settling continental shelf overlap areas peacefully and in accordance with international law.**

## Canada–United States Beaufort Sea boundary

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In September 2024, Canada launched **negotiations with the United States to resolve the 2 countries' long-standing maritime boundary dispute in the Beaufort Sea.** The area in question is north of the Yukon and Alaska and measures approximately 270,000 square kilometres. Both countries claim jurisdiction over the disputed region by way of differing legal interpretations of the 1825 treaty between Russia and Great Britain.

Reflecting the Government of Canada's commitment to partnership and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, the boundary negotiations will involve impacted Inuit Treaty Organizations and close consultations with territorial and Indigenous governments.

# Advancing Canada's interests through pragmatic diplomacy

A fundamental principle of Canadian foreign policy is that the Arctic should be governed by the Arctic states. This has long been a shared principle of the Arctic states and has produced a long period of peaceful cooperation and development in the region.

## 1. Strengthening Canada's partnerships with Arctic allies

### i. The United States

The United States is Canada's closest partner and ally in the Arctic, and this collaboration extends across many shared interests. Collaboration is advanced by Canada's extensive diplomatic network of 13 missions across the United States and through various bilateral mechanisms.

The Canada–United States defence partnership is essential to maintaining a secure North American homeland. Canada welcomes the continued participation of the United States' military and coast guard in Canada-led exercises and operations in Canada's Arctic and North.

With the United States, Canada shares a unique relationship shaped by geography, history, shared values, common interests and strong people-to-people connections. This is especially the case in the Arctic, particularly among Indigenous Peoples, whose history, culture and connections transcend national borders.

Going forward, Canada will continue to **advance bilateral cooperation** with the United States in the North at all levels of government in existing areas of importance and **explore new avenues of cooperation in critical areas of national interest, including:** security and safety; the defence of North America; science and research technology; energy security; supply chains; climate change; critical minerals; sustainable development; Indigenous cross-border mobility; economic development; marine and terrestrial conservation; and the protection of transboundary species, including salmon and the Porcupine caribou herd.

## ii. The Nordic states

Canada maintains close relations with its Nordic Arctic neighbours; specifically, the Kingdom of Denmark (consisting of Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. These close relationships are underpinned by shared values, a common outlook on the world and a shared commitment to ensuring a peaceful and stable Arctic through the enduring success of NATO. They continue to grow stronger, with a particularly marked increase in dialogue and cooperation since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Now more than ever, it is critical for Canada to have strong partnerships with the Nordic states, as Canada and they are all now members of NATO and Russia's actions have complicated cooperation in multilateral spaces of Arctic governance. Examples of Canada's close relationships with its Nordic Arctic neighbours include the following:

- In 2022, Canada was the first country to ratify the accessions of Finland and Sweden to NATO.
- In June 2023, **Canada's prime minister was the invited guest at the Nordic prime ministers' annual meeting, in Iceland.**
- In June 2024, the Government of Canada committed up to **\$20 million in funding for an international research initiative on the sustainable development of the Arctic** in collaboration with NordForsk, an organization under the Nordic Council of Ministers. It will support collaborative and multi-disciplinary scientific efforts and contributions from across the Arctic region and include Indigenous perspectives.
- In September 2024, Canada's minister of foreign affairs and the premier of Nunavut co-hosted representatives from the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden for the first Canada-Nordic Strategic Dialogue, in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Canada is committed to deepening its partnership with the Nordic countries as friends and allies with common values and shared stewardship over the Arctic. Strengthening Canada's cooperation will also help it respond to new threats and below-threshold activities by its adversaries in both the North American Arctic and the European High North.

Working in collaboration with other federal departments, we will increase **our support for bilateral and regional cooperation** with the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden in Arctic science and technology, climate change, culture, Indigenous-to-Indigenous ties, natural resources, sustainable development through trade and infrastructure and defence and security.

We will also **create a new position in one of Canada's Nordic missions** with responsibility for increasing coordination and information sharing, including on security issues, with Nordic partners.



Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

### iii. The North American Arctic: Alaska and Greenland

The North American Arctic encompasses the vast northern territories of 3 countries: Alaska (the United States) in the west; northern Canada in the centre; and Greenland (the Kingdom of Denmark) in the east. The relationships in this region are unique due to geographical proximity and the ancestral relations that exist between Indigenous Peoples, which give rise to a number of shared interests, including on security, defence, climate change, sustainable development, critical minerals, trade, culture and Indigenous mobility.

The ANPF emphasizes increasing cooperation among federal, territorial, provincial and Indigenous governments and other organizations in and across the Canadian Arctic and with Canada's North American Arctic partners.

The Arctic Foreign Policy complements this by re-emphasizing the importance of deepening Canada's diplomatic engagement with its neighbours, the United States, including Alaska, and the Kingdom of Denmark, including Greenland. This will make the Canadian and North American Arctic more secure and create new opportunities for economic cooperation, scientific collaboration and cultural exchange.

To do this, we will open new consulates in Anchorage, Alaska, and Nuuk, Greenland.

Alaska is a key partner on a range of issues, including border security and crossings, security and defence in the Arctic, climate resilience and conservation, energy security, critical minerals and Indigenous affairs.

Members of the CAF are stationed in Alaska to support the NORAD mission and work alongside their U.S. military counterparts in the defence of North America.

In addition, the Yukon also has mature and close-knit bilateral relations with Alaska from both a political and trade perspective.

The **consulate in Anchorage** will help promote trade and economic ties between Canada's territories and provinces and Alaska; improve security and defence partnerships; strengthen collaboration on environmental and wildlife issues; engage with Alaskan communities, including Indigenous communities; and support cross-border people-to-people ties.

Many ties, both formal and informal, have been forged over the years at all levels of government and between Inuit organizations in Canada and Greenland. Several bilateral initiatives have been advanced in recent years, including the Letter of Intent for Cooperation on the Pikiyasorsuaq (2023) and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Greenland and the Government of Nunavut (2022). However, cooperation to date has largely occurred organically, without an overarching foreign policy framework.

In recognition of the growing importance of Greenland as a key Arctic partner, a more coordinated approach with Greenland, including with the government of Nunavut, is a priority in ensuring that Canadian interests are being advanced effectively.

The **consulate in Nuuk** will be a valuable resource for coordinating and advancing Canadian interests in Greenland, enhancing bilateral and commercial relations, facilitating research collaboration and supporting increased engagement and collaboration across many policy spaces.

We welcome **Greenland's commitment to open a representational office** in Canada.



Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

## 2. Holding Russia accountable

Russia represents a generational geopolitical challenge. Although Russia accounts for 50% of the Arctic geographically, bilateral cooperation between Canada and Russia, including in the Arctic, will remain exceedingly difficult for the foreseeable future.

Canada will **continue to hold Russia accountable** in regional and multilateral forums for its actions and counter disinformation promoted by the Russian regime, including through Canada's leadership of the **G7 Rapid Response Mechanism**. This includes countering disinformation targeting communities in the Canadian Arctic.

Alongside allies and partners, Canada will continue confronting Russian aggression, including through Canada's enduring support for Ukraine, and by continuing to meet NATO defence commitments.

Together with the United States, Canada will defend NATO's western flank, and with Arctic allies, Canada will defend NATO's northern regions and approaches.

Canada acknowledges that the actions of the Putin regime do not always reflect the values of the Russian people. This policy clearly differentiates between government actions and those of the broader Russian population, including its Indigenous Peoples, who themselves have been marginalized by the Russian regime.

Across all multilateral bodies, Canada will **maintain its policy of limited engagement with Russian officials**. It is for Russia to create the conditions that will enable a return to political engagement and cooperation by ending its war in Ukraine and acting in accordance with international law.

### 3. Pragmatic diplomacy with non-Arctic states and actors

While Canada will continue to prioritize cooperation with Arctic states, especially when it comes to setting the rules that govern the region, cooperation with a wider set of actors is beneficial and necessary to address challenges to the Arctic emanating from global issues, such as climate change.

Given the prospect of growing competition in the Arctic, Canada will be strategic in prioritizing pragmatic cooperation with non-Arctic states and actors that align with Canadian values, interests and objectives.

#### **Canada will be guided by the following principles:**

- › Respect for Arctic states' sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the Arctic.
- › Support for the rules-based international order in the Arctic and a demonstrated commitment to regional peace and stability.
- › Respect for Indigenous self-determination, Indigenous rights and the values, interests, cultures and traditions of Arctic Indigenous Peoples, including the participation of Indigenous Peoples in Arctic decision making, and other Arctic inhabitants.
- › Respect for the extensive legal framework that applies to the Arctic Ocean, including UNCLOS.
- › Recognition of interests and expertise that are relevant to, and aligned with, Canada's Arctic and northern priorities, as well as its national defence and security interests.
- › Maintaining a commitment to uphold and advance democratic values, human rights and gender equality according to international standards, regulations and principles.
- › Openness with regard to scientific data sharing and collaboration with Canadian researchers and local communities, including their representative governments.
- › Commitment to sustainable development, conservation, environmental protection and fighting climate change.

Engagement with non-Arctic states and actors will be channeled through a variety of multilateral forums, such as the Arctic Council, appropriate UN bodies, NATO and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable, as well as treaties that apply to the Arctic, such as the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement, and bilateral and multilateral platforms and projects that we will drive with other federal departments and agencies.

Going forward, based on the above principles, Canada will place particular emphasis on cooperation with non-Arctic states and actors in 2 regions: the North Atlantic and the North Pacific.

## The North Atlantic

Canada will **strengthen engagement on Arctic matters with the European Union, the United Kingdom and other key North Atlantic states** through established mechanisms, such as the Canada–European Union Strategic Partnership Agreement. Science, technology and innovation will remain the focus of Canada's cooperation with the European Union and key European states through Canada's engagement on the European Union–United States–Canada Arctic Working Group of the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance; the Canada–European Union Ocean Partnership Forum; and the Horizon Europe program.

Other priorities for Arctic cooperation include facilitating the mobility of Inuit between Canada and Greenland; facilitating the trade of, and access to, the seal products of Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples, in the E.U. market; the conservation of fish stocks through the Canada–European Union High-Level Dialogue on Fisheries; environmental protection; climate mitigation and adaptation; trade and sustainable economic development; security cooperation through high-level dialogues; and the Canada–European Union Green Alliance.

The United Kingdom is another close partner in the North Atlantic based on Canada's deep partnership with the country and their historic ties and shared values. The 2 countries enjoy a close-knit defence partnership, and they cooperate on shared priorities in the Arctic, including on climate change and research through the Canada–Inuit Nunangat–United Kingdom Arctic Research Programme.

Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

## The North Pacific

**Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy** recognizes that several Indo-Pacific states are looking to the Arctic as a region of opportunity and as a means through which to engage with Canada.

The strategy recognizes the North Pacific as part of Canada's neighbourhood. The North Pacific, through the Bering Strait, is one of the key approaches to the North American Arctic. Canada must not undervalue the strategic importance of these approaches—Canada's adversaries do not underestimate them. In line with the strategy, Canada will explore ways to deepen Arctic cooperation with key North Pacific states on issues of mutual interest while also responding to the emerging challenges some may represent.

While Canada is pleased to engage with Indo-Pacific states making positive contributions in the Arctic according to the principles for engagement with non-Arctic states, Canada will closely scrutinize activities of states whose ambitions or activities are potentially counter to Canadian values, interests or objectives in the region.

In addition to Canada's long-standing partnership with the United States on Arctic issues, focus will be given to increasing cooperation with other key partners in the region—**Japan and the Republic of Korea**—given the mutual long-standing relationships and shared values of the 3 nations.

Canada will work through established forums and mechanisms, such as the Arctic Council, the Canada-Japan Action Plan for Contributing to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific Region and the Canada-Korea Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, to identify concrete opportunities to deepen cooperation between the 4 countries on shared priorities, such as maritime security, science and technology, trade and sustainable economic development and fisheries.

# Leadership on Arctic governance and multilateral challenges

Despite exceedingly difficult relations with Russia, Arctic states continue to preside over a well-governed region operating under extensive national and international legal frameworks.

The Arctic Council remains the leading forum for Arctic cooperation and is complemented by other regional and international organizations, forums, declarations and legally binding treaties. These include several UN organizations that make decisions affecting the Arctic on a wide range of global issues, including climate change.



Photo Credit: Arctic Council Secretariat/Linnea Nordström

## 1. Reinforcing the Arctic Council

Canada is firmly committed to the enduring value of the Arctic Council and is adhering to its established Rules of Procedure. Canada remains focused on continuing the council's important work for the benefit of the Arctic region and the people living there, including Indigenous Peoples.

Since 2021, our Global Arctic Leadership Initiative has **funded the establishment of a permanent secretariat of the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group in Canada and provided over \$2 million in funding for more than 25 Arctic Council initiatives** with national, civil society and Indigenous partners.

The Arctic Council exists thanks in part to Canadian and Indigenous leadership. Canada will not allow Russia's actions to undermine the integrity or functionality of this important body. The people of the Arctic, who benefit so deeply from the important work of the council, should not be made to suffer because of Russia's choices.

We will **increase our contributions to the Arctic Council** to allow for more Canadian engagement and leadership in council projects and greater institutional support for the council, as well as provide funding for innovative Indigenous and youth ideas in the council. This support is critically important as the council continues to increase its activities.

Canada will increase its leadership in the council in preparation for **Canada's third chairship of the Arctic Council, from 2029 to 2031**. Working with Canadian and Arctic Council partners, Canada will meaningfully engage the Permanent Participants from Canada, territorial and provincial governments of Canada and other Indigenous partners on the planning and development of Canada's Arctic Council chairship program.

Those essential building blocks will also provide guidance on how Canada engages in other international polar processes, such as the International Polar Year: 2032 to 2033, which is an opportunity to showcase Canada's leadership through scientific and technological achievements, as well as by amplifying Indigenous Peoples' voices and their rich knowledge.

## 2. Addressing regional and global challenges

### i. Climate change and environmental protection

While the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution is a global problem that requires urgent collective action, the impacts of this triple crisis are disproportionately felt by northerners. Canada has taken a dual-track approach to addressing these issues, with engagement at the multilateral level through the UN system and at the regional level through the Arctic Council.

In addition to robust domestic measures to address climate change, Canada is also working with international partners to boost global efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C to avoid the most devastating impacts for the world, including the Arctic.

Cutting emissions of black carbon is the most powerful action to take to slow the pace of near-term warming in the Arctic. For this reason, Arctic states agreed to collectively reduce emissions of black carbon by 25% to 33% of 2013 levels by 2025. Canada is on track to do its part in achieving this collective goal.

Canada is also doing its part to address biodiversity loss and advance conservation domestically and globally. **Canada continues to work toward conserving 30% of its lands and oceans by 2030.** A large part of Canada's protected and conserved areas fall within Canada's Arctic and North, and many are being co-managed with Indigenous Peoples.<sup>6</sup>

To increase cohesiveness, we will continue to leverage our diplomatic resources in support of all government efforts led by Environment and Climate Change Canada in the UN system to ensure implementation of the historic **Paris Agreement**, of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and of the **Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework** under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

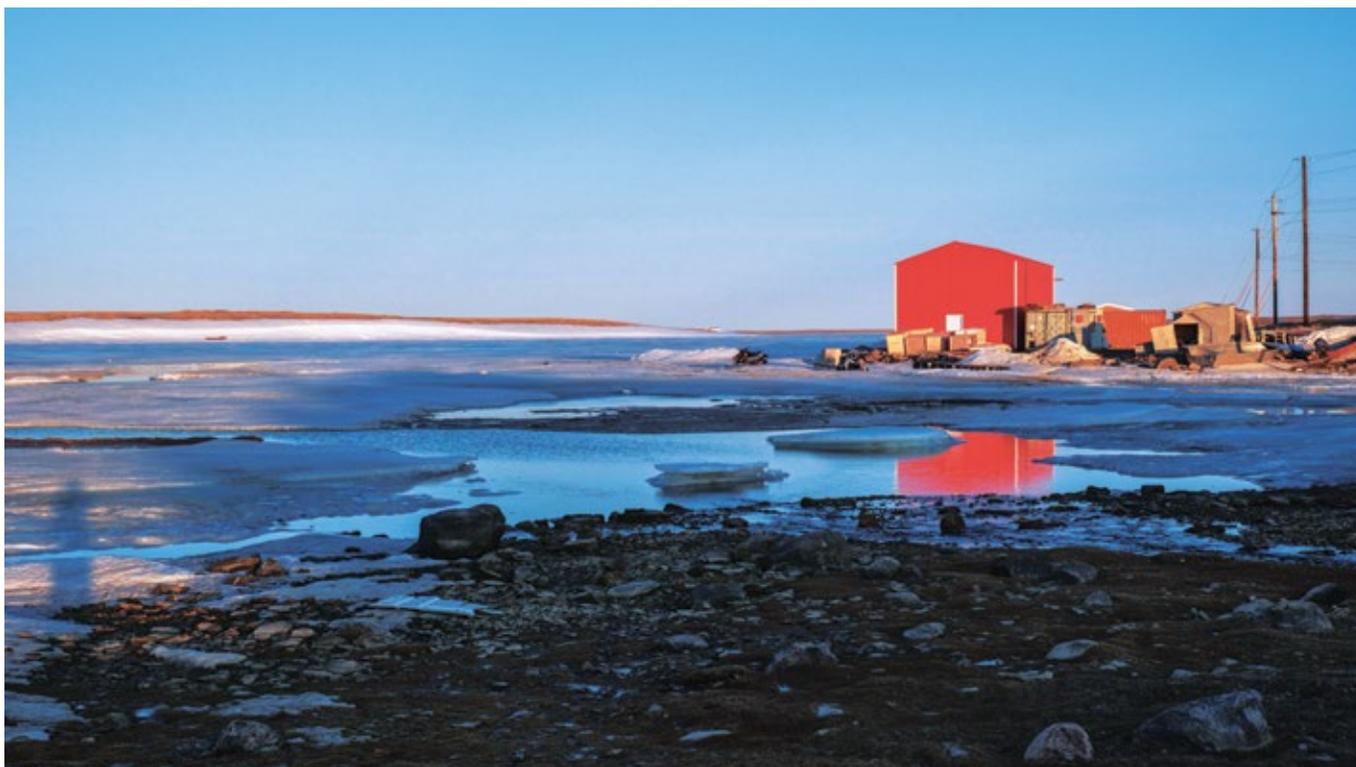


Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

<sup>6</sup> [Final Report of the National Advisory Panel on Marine Protected Area Standards](#)



Canada's ambassador for climate change will continue to advocate for international partners to join Canada-led initiatives on phasing out coal; reducing short-lived climate pollutants; finalizing a global treaty to end plastic pollution; protecting more of nature; and other related initiatives. The ambassador will also continue to promote any other diplomatic initiatives that address climate change. The Arctic ambassador will support this work.

Additionally, in the context of the Arctic Council's initiatives on climate change, Canada will continue its ongoing work at a regional level to **develop scientific assessments** on the impacts of climate change and the state of biodiversity in the Arctic; to reduce short-lived climate pollutants in the Arctic region; to encourage the use and development of renewable energy in remote Arctic communities to exchange knowledge and implement solutions on wildfires and climate change adaptation in an Arctic context; to develop a pan-Arctic network of marine protected areas; and to implement the regional action plan on marine litter in the Arctic.

Elsewhere, we will **encourage all allies to join NATO's Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence**, which is based in Montréal. Working with the Department of National Defence, we will also **leverage the centre's expertise to promote research and knowledge sharing on climate security threats** in the Arctic and elsewhere.

Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

## ii. The Arctic Ocean

Canada's exclusive economic zone in the Arctic Ocean comprises more than 3 million square kilometres. This imposes a responsibility on Canada to ensure that the area is well managed. Canada is collaborating closely with fellow Arctic Ocean coastal states and other interested parties to implement the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement, which established a precautionary 16-year ban on commercial fishing on the high seas of the Arctic Ocean, as well as a program for joint scientific research and monitoring that includes Indigenous Knowledge as a vital component to ensure that the best available knowledge is used in decision making. Canada is also ensuring that Inuit in Canada continue to be part of this process.

Canada is also prioritizing the protection of the marine environment in the Arctic Ocean in cooperation with its like-minded international and Indigenous partners. Canada maintains an indefinite moratorium on offshore oil and gas development in its Arctic waters. Canada also supports, in the absence of both a comprehensive understanding of seabed mining's environmental impacts and a robust regulatory regime, a moratorium on commercial seabed mining in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including in the central Arctic Ocean.

Canada is committed to **reinforcing rules-based approaches in the Arctic Ocean.**

In support of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, we undertake to **advocate for the development of marine protected areas and other effective conservation measures** in the central Arctic Ocean under the Arctic Council, thereby enabling Arctic states to lead by example in implementing the UN agreement on marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

We will work with other departments and agencies to **continue to develop and implement international measures to promote safe and responsible shipping in the Arctic**, including by supporting efforts at the IMO and the Arctic Council that complement the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (known as the "Polar Code") and the ban on heavy fuel oil in Arctic waters.

Across all areas of Canada's multilateral cooperation in the UN system, at the Arctic Council and under the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement, it is imperative that Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples be meaningfully engaged in discussions when their rights or interests could be potentially impacted.

We will continue to **provide funding** to Indigenous Permanent Participant organizations in Canada to engage in this work. We will also advocate, alongside Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples, for the **equal treatment and inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge and science.**

# Adopting a more inclusive approach to Arctic diplomacy

## 1. Ensuring Arctic diplomacy is informed by and benefits Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples and other northerners

The Arctic is home to more than 4 million people, including Indigenous Peoples who have inhabited the region for thousands of years. Canada is committed to a more inclusive approach to this foreign policy that ensures people living in the North, including Indigenous peoples, can participate in international decision making on matters that affect their rights or interests.

Arctic diplomacy should be informed by and benefit Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples and other northerners. We remain committed to this goal and will strengthen our efforts in this area, building on the approach adopted in the ANPF to remain open to holding discussions within more appropriate distinctions-based frameworks, like the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee.

To move forward, Canada acknowledges the damaging impacts of colonialism on the Indigenous Peoples of Canada's Arctic and North. Grounded in a commitment to reconciliation, this policy seeks to build in the Arctic foreign policy space a renewed Inuit-Crown and nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

Our work on this foreign policy will be guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; treaties, including land claims agreements; self-government agreements with Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples; and the Inuit Nunangat Policy.<sup>7</sup> Canada's Arctic foreign policy will also be guided by respect for territorial and provincial jurisdiction, including the devolution agreements with the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon.

<sup>7</sup> The Inuit Nunangat Policy recognizes Inuit Nunangat as a distinct geographic, cultural and political region that forms 40% of Canada's land area, nearly three-quarters of its coastline and significant offshore areas. It also acknowledges Inuit Treaty Organizations' right to represent themselves nationally and internationally and that structurally they may choose Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Inuit Circumpolar Council to represent Inuit at the national and international levels respectively.

## i. Arctic ambassador

The geopolitical landscape in the Arctic has become increasingly complex and competitive. To ensure that the Canadian Arctic remains a region that is stable, prosperous and secure, we need to deepen our engagement with like-minded states, as well as with territorial and provincial governments, Indigenous Peoples and other domestic partners.

To lead this effort, we will **establish the position of Arctic ambassador**.

The ambassador's responsibilities will include making linkages between domestic issues and those relating to Canada's foreign affairs; serving as Canada's Senior Arctic Official and advancing Canada's polar interests in multilateral forums; engaging with counterparts in Arctic and non-Arctic states, as well as with Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic; and raising awareness internationally of Indigenous rights in the Arctic context. The ambassador will also support the work of Global Affairs Canada and other departments on Arctic research security. In carrying out these duties, the ambassador will work closely with Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples, territorial and provincial governments and other northerners.

The ambassador will serve as a representative in our diplomatic corps and distinguish himself or herself by ensuring that the Arctic Foreign Policy remains connected to the reality of Canadians living in the Arctic. The ambassador will also play an important role in Canada's broader efforts toward reconciliation. The ambassador will have an office in Canada's North.



Photo Credit: Arctic Council Secretariat / Linnea Nordström

## ii. Northern and Indigenous diplomacy on the world stage

Canada remains committed to providing international platforms for northerners, including territorial, provincial and Indigenous partners and youths, to engage in and to represent their own international Arctic views, especially on issues that impact their rights or jurisdiction. Canada also welcomes made-in-the-North initiatives to support homegrown policy development that enhances northern and Indigenous diplomacy on the world stage.

### a. Sub-national governments

Arctic and northern public governments play a strategic role in Canada's Arctic diplomacy efforts. Canada remains committed to including territorial government officials in the Canadian delegation to Arctic Council meetings.

### b. Arctic and northern Indigenous diplomacy

The Arctic Foreign Policy recommits to enhancing the representation and participation of Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples in relevant negotiations and international forums, such as the Arctic Council and the United Nations, including the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and all other bodies that Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples judge to affect them.

We have heard clearly from Arctic and northern Indigenous partners that they are looking for more than a platform where they are only one voice consulted among many. Instead, Indigenous partners require and demand meaningful continuous engagement to actively partake in and shape decision making at the international level that reflects their roles as rights holders. **We will uphold the role of Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples as active partners in the conduct of international relations in the Arctic and support their efforts to advance this goal.**

The Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International and the Inuit Circumpolar Council currently sit at the Arctic Council as Permanent Participants with membership from Canada.

Since 2020, Canada has increased funding to the 3 Permanent Participants in Canada, allowing each of them to receive up to \$650,000 each year. This support is strengthening Indigenous voices in international Arctic matters, particularly at the Arctic Council.

With Transport Canada, **we will support opportunities for the Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada to represent Inuit Knowledge and perspectives in international forums, including on Arctic shipping and environmental matters at the IMO.**

Canada will also **support similar efforts by other Arctic and northern Indigenous Peoples to increase their representation at relevant international forums** to ensure their rights and perspectives inform decision making at the global level. Canada will work with Indigenous partners to identify possible ways of improving the capacity and role of Indigenous Peoples in international Arctic affairs.

Canada remains strongly committed to the ANPF's objective of providing Arctic and northern youths with additional opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, Canada's international Arctic agenda. We have leveraged support for UArctic (an international network of universities, colleges, research institutes and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the Arctic) to provide opportunities for Canadians to study in different parts of the circumpolar Arctic, to generate regional solutions and to support collaboration in Indigenous research and education.



### iii. Northern and Indigenous representation at Global Affairs Canada

Indigenous Peoples and northerners are underrepresented at Global Affairs Canada, and sustained efforts are needed to boost recruitment and retention.

In line with the Future of Diplomacy, the department is developing a new external recruitment strategy that will be launched in 2025. The strategy will support outreach across Canada to identify Canadians with the skills needed to deliver on our various mandates and will include specific outreach to under-represented communities, including among Indigenous Peoples and northerners.

To support our recruitment efforts and increase Indigenous perspectives in the department, **we will establish a paid Arctic and northern Indigenous youth internship program** that will consider the need of Arctic and northern Indigenous youths to remain close to their families and communities and ensure that appropriate support is in place.

We will also work with partners to identify other avenues for increasing the representation of Indigenous Peoples and northerners at Global Affairs Canada.



## 2. Advancing Indigenous and northern foreign policy priorities

Broadening Canada's international engagement to contribute more directly to domestic issues, such as closing socio-economic gaps, supporting infrastructure development, enhancing knowledge of the North, protecting the Arctic environment and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, remains a priority. Key issues include those described below.

### i. Cross-border mobility

First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in Canada's Arctic and North share long-standing spiritual, cultural, political, economic, social and family connections with Indigenous communities in the United States and Greenland. The introduction of modern international borders and the associated controls on **cross-border mobility** have negatively impacted Indigenous Peoples' ability to maintain familial, economic and cultural ties and traditional practices.



Canada has been **working with Indigenous partners and the United States, Denmark and Greenland** to find solutions to address border crossing and migration challenges faced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

This commitment is reflected in Action Plan Measure Shared Priorities 52 of the Action Plan to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

To address border mobility challenges faced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples who live in the United States, including Alaska, **Canada intends to bring forward legislation and regulatory measures.**

## ii. Market access

Indigenous Peoples also face unjustifiable barriers to trade—barriers that also restrict international **market access to Indigenous-harvested and -produced goods, such as seal fur and ivory products.**

The traditional harvesting of seals and other species by Inuit and other Indigenous Peoples of Canada is both a sustainable and a valuable contributor to Arctic and northern communities. Trade barriers by key partners, such as the United States, the European Union and other countries, have a broad detrimental impact on life in Canada's remote Arctic and northern communities.

In August 2024, Canada submitted a response to the European Commission's review of its regulation on the trade of seal products. **Canada requested that the European Union repeal its regulations and replace them with rules that offer access to ethically and sustainably harvested products.**

Canada will continue to advocate for a repeal of the seal product ban. We will also promote awareness of sustainable seal products and harvest management by hosting officials-level dialogues with Arctic countries and Indigenous partners at our missions to the European Union and the United States.



Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

### iii. Indigenous Knowledge and participation

Canada supports Indigenous advocacy against pervasive colonial approaches to Arctic science and research, which marginalize and discredit Indigenous Knowledge and participation.

We will continue to **support equitable research partnerships at the international level between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers**, such as the Canada–Inuit Nunangat–United Kingdom Arctic Research Programme.

### iv. Indigenous languages

Indigenous languages such as Inuktitut<sup>8</sup> are essential to the preservation of Indigenous culture and the well-being of Indigenous Peoples and communities. Canada will therefore enhance its efforts to work with its Arctic and northern Indigenous partners to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices related to Indigenous language assessment, monitoring and revitalization.

Looking forward, we will continue to contribute to federal efforts on a broader range of northern and Indigenous priorities, and **we will collaborate with Arctic and northern Indigenous partners, territorial and provincial governments and other northerners on international advocacy as appropriate**. This includes promoting investment in critical minerals development; transportation; energy and electrification; broadband connectivity; cultural diplomacy; and the conservation of the Porcupine caribou herd. We will also work with Indigenous partners, Canadian Heritage and other relevant government departments to advocate for the repatriation from across the globe of artifacts originating from First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities.

<sup>8</sup> Inuktitut is the first language used in Inuit Nunaat, and the majority of Inuit Nunaat residents continue to speak Inuktitut as their first, only or preferred language. Therefore, to uphold the inherent dignity of Inuit, supporting Inuktitut in this context as a first or later language aligns with the broader purposes of, among other things, working in partnership to demonstrate and promote shared respect for the history and importance of Inuktitut and for socio-economic and cultural development.

## v. Supporting northern and Indigenous trade and export

In line with Canada's inclusive approach to trade and its Export Diversification Strategy, we are committed to supporting northern and Indigenous exporters in accessing global markets.

The Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) recognizes that building strong relationships with our northern and Indigenous partners is key to this mission. Dedicated trade commissioners, based in regional offices for British Columbia and the Yukon; Alberta and the Northwest Territories; Quebec and Nunavut; Manitoba and Saskatchewan; and Atlantic Canada, work closely with Canadian businesses in the Arctic and northern regions to support their global expansion. The TCS network also continues to actively support and develop tailored programming for northern and Indigenous exporters, including through business delegations and export training and accelerator programs, among other ways.

Attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) into northern and Indigenous communities will also play a vital role in economic and infrastructure development in the region. Through our increasing engagement with Northern and Indigenous communities via the CanExport Community Investments program, we will continue to support municipalities and economic development organizations in seeking and retaining FDI in the North while ensuring that Canada's environmental and national security interests are protected.

## 3. Transforming Global Affairs Canada's domestic engagement processes

We are committed to pursuing an ongoing collaborative approach to domestic engagement that is informed by early, sustained and meaningful engagement with territorial and provincial governments, Arctic and northern Indigenous governments and organizations and northerners more generally.

The Arctic Cooperation Advisory Committee is a Canadian forum for the engagement of relevant federal departments, territorial and provincial governments and Permanent Participant partners on the development and implementation of Canada's international Arctic policy, including Arctic-Council-related matters. It will remain an important mechanism for dialogue and engagement on the development and implementation of Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy.

We are committed to exploring distinctions-based engagements with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Modern Treaty and Self-Governing Partners from Canada's Arctic and North.

For example, we are committed to engaging directly with Inuit through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee as we apply the Inuit Nunangat Policy to our programs, policies and services.

In addition, we will **expand opportunities for territorial and provincial governments and Arctic and northern Indigenous partners to join or support Canadian delegations at bilateral or international Arctic meetings and treaty negotiations** if, in such meetings and negotiations, their rights or interests could potentially be impacted.

We will also continue to **provide a critical coordination function for multi-stakeholder Arctic events** to support a strong Canadian presence.

# CONCLUSION

The Arctic is a region of tremendous opportunity thanks to its plentiful resources and resilient people.

However, Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, rapidly advancing climate change and increasing interest in the Arctic from non-Arctic states has led to increased competition and geopolitical tension in the region.

To ensure that the Arctic remains stable, prosperous and secure and to fully implement the objectives laid out in the International chapter of the ANPF, Canada needs a diplomatic strategy that responds to this evolving geopolitical context.

The Arctic Foreign Policy reorients Canada's approach to the Arctic based on a clear-eyed assessment of the threats Canada faces today, and those it anticipates in the future. It aligns Canada's foreign and defence policy to ensure the security of Canadians and ensures that together with its allies, Canada can guard against and defend itself against threats from its adversaries in the Arctic.

By reinforcing the pillars of Arctic governance and the principles of the rules-based international order, this policy will help to safeguard the collective interests of the peoples of the Arctic from those who would seek to impose their wills.

This policy will strengthen our relationships with territorial and provincial governments, Arctic and northern Indigenous governments and organizations and other northerners. It will produce new and more effective ways of working together on Arctic diplomacy that will transform Canada's approach to international engagement.

Canadian diplomacy has a role to play in building renewed relationships with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Modern Treaty and Self-Governing Partners; relationships that are based on the recognition of rights, respect and partnership.

The Arctic Foreign Policy is built on a vision of shared cooperation and prosperity for all the peoples of the Arctic who are committed to peace and stability. Together, we can realize this future and ensure Canada's place as a leader in the Arctic for generations to come.



Photo Credit: © Global Affairs Canada

# Annex: Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy development process and Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF), published in 2019

## Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy development process

In the spirit of the principle of "nothing about us without us," the Arctic Foreign Policy was developed on the basis of extensive and distinctions-based engagement and on collaboration and cooperation with domestic rights holders from Canada's Arctic and North, including First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Modern Treaty and Self-Governing Partners and organizations; the territorial governments (the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Yukon); and provincial governments (Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec). We engaged partners in a variety of formats, including bilateral meetings, regional round-table discussions and ANPF governance mechanisms.

The Arctic Foreign Policy is guided by all relevant treaties and self-government agreements with Arctic and northern Indigenous partners, including obligations Canada has to Indigenous Peoples under those treaties and agreements, and the rights recognized and affirmed under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. It is further guided by the Yukon Northern Affairs Program Devolution Transfer Agreement (2003), the Northwest Territories Devolution Agreement (2014), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (endorsed by Canada in 2020), the Inuit Nunangat Policy (2022) and the Nunavut Lands and Resources Devolution Agreement (2024).

The policy development process was also informed by engagement with like-minded Arctic states; specifically, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the United States.



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## Canada's ANPF

Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy complements and supports the implementation of the ANPF, which was published in 2019. The ANPF was co-developed with over 25 First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments and organizations, as well as with territorial and provincial governments.

The ANPF sets out a common vision of a future where Arctic and northern peoples are thriving, strong and safe. The framework includes a co-developed policy statement and the whole-of-government International chapter, which articulates Canada's goals and objectives for the circumpolar Arctic in 3 key areas that remain in effect:

- 1. Strengthening the rules-based international order in the Arctic**
- 2. More clearly defining Canada's Arctic boundaries**
- 3. Broadening Canada's international engagement to contribute to the priorities of the Canadian Arctic**

The implementation of the International chapter has been supported by Global Affairs Canada's Global Arctic Leadership Initiative **with an annual budget of \$7 million each year** to strengthen Canada's global leadership in the Arctic.

The ANPF's Safety, security and defence chapter also underlines the importance of strengthening cooperation with international partners on safety, security and defence issues.

Canada remains committed to strengthening Arctic and northern infrastructure and to closing infrastructure gaps with other regions of Canada to forge opportunities for economic development, to address reconciliation, to increase resilience and to contribute to Arctic defence and security.



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