

The Honourable Dennis Patterson  
Senator - Nunavut

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**DEFENCE POLICY REVIEW, 2016  
OFFICIAL SUBMISSION – SENATOR DENNIS PATTERSON, SENATOR FOR  
NUNAVUT**

On February 24, 2016, the Honourable Harjit Sajjan, Minister of Defence, took part in Senate Question Period, and I had the opportunity to ask him some questions about Arctic security. During our exchange, I was able to ask him about the increasing Russian activity in the Arctic and about a potential expanded role for the Rangers that could include maritime capabilities. Minister Sajjan, while answering my questions, invited me to make a submission to the Defence Review.

In his mandate letter from the Prime Minister, Minister Sajjan was asked to conduct this review and to, “Renew Canada’s focus on surveillance and control of Canadian territory, particularly our Arctic regions, and increase the size of the Rangers.” On April 6, 2016, the Minister announced that he was launching public consultations and that he, personally, would be hosting 6 in the different regions of Canada. Other jurisdictions not visited by the Minister, were encouraged to hold their own roundtables or town halls. As the Senator for Nunavut, I wanted my submission to reflect the values and the priorities of Nunavummiut.

Nunavut has an important voice that needs to be heard. Operation NUNALIVUT, an annual sovereignty operation, has been conducted every year in Resolute Bay since 2007. The operation is designed to help the Canadian Armed Forces assert Canada’s sovereignty over the north; demonstrate the navy, army and air force’s ability to operate in the harsh winter environment of the High Arctic; and to enhance the armed forces’ capability to respond to any situation in Canada’s North.

Our territory is also home to 31 of the 50 radars that make up the North Warning System, an intricate 4800 km long and 320 km wide “tripwire”, designed to alert Canada and the US of potential incursions or attacks on North America’s polar region.

Inuit and local Nunavummiut play key roles in maintaining this security infrastructure so it is only right that they be properly consulted and represented in this review process.

On July 20, 2016, I hosted a Defence Policy Review Roundtable during, which, I heard from many people who live and work in the Eastern Arctic and are involved with Arctic security and defence. I was particularly happy to welcome Nunatsiavut President, Johannes Lampe, who eloquently presented the Inuit perspective on all

the topics discussed. The Roundtable focused primarily on Arctic Search and Rescue (SAR) and a potential expanded role for Rangers.

Roundtable participants acknowledged that climate change is opening up the Arctic at an alarming rate. Human activity is noticeably increasing - polar flights; increased and prolonged shipping through the Northwest Passage; and an observed rise in adventurers and pleasure crafts in the Arctic are among some of the activities mentioned. Steps must be taken to respond to the anticipated number of accidents in the Arctic.

Currently, the closest air dedicated SAR assets are located in Winnipeg. The option of deploying air SAR assets to the Arctic was discussed in depth. The Department of National Defence currently has assets and infrastructure in Yellowknife and Iqaluit that would allow for quicker response times and more efficient use of fuel for SAR activities in the Arctic, while also providing coverage to the west coast from Yellowknife and the eastern Arctic from Iqaluit. Cambridge Bay was also explored as an option due to the increased activity from the Canada High Arctic Research Station and its positioning in servicing the High Arctic.

Locally-based, private companies in the Arctic could also provide ready support. In a written submission to the Roundtable, the Northern Air Transport Association (NATA) indicated that commercial operators capable assisting with SAR and, potentially, sovereignty patrols and surveillance initiatives are currently based in Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit, Inuvik, Cambridge Bay, Hall Beach, and Resolute Bay. NATA has offered to assist with a cataloguing of potential civilian SAR assets that could be contracted on an as-needed basis. This model could be based on examples such as the service provided by private companies to the oil and gas industry of Newfoundland or “[the] successful partnership in offshore environmental and fishery patrols that are conducted by commercial air operators off Canada’s Atlantic and Pacific coasts.”<sup>1</sup>

Using the strait baseline method connecting the farthest points of land surrounding the Arctic Archipelago, Canada defines the enclosed waters as internal over which 100% of Canadian laws and standards apply. However, the international community does not recognize this claim and challenges Canada’s sovereignty over those waters persists.

The airspace above and the waters below routes through the Northwest Passage could be argued by some countries to be part of the international strait and, thus, provide the right of transit to foreign vessels and aircraft. Increased transit could lead to increased accidents and spills.

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<sup>1</sup> NATA written submission, “Northern Canada Focus on Canada’s Defense Policy Review”, July 18, 2016.

All this points to a need for more resources to monitor, protect, defend and enforce Canadian sovereignty.

The Canadian Rangers are in the Arctic and therefore do not need to be deployed at great costs.

Their motto is “Vigilans” – “the Watchers”. They know their environment and can detect changes that southern-based soldiers cannot identify. They have vested interest in making sure that activities conducted in the Arctic will not mortgage their future.

Providing the Rangers with a maritime mission would create jobs in Canada, increase the capacity of Arctic communities, increase the Search and Rescue assets in the Arctic and reinforce our sovereignty position. Col. (Ret’d) Leblanc added that enhancing the role of Rangers in the Arctic could lead to better situational awareness in that region.

Charlie Lyall, a prominent Inuk businessman and activist promoting Inuit rights from the Kitikmeot region in Nunavut, explained the benefit of using the Rangers to assert Canada’s sovereignty during his 2010 appearance before the Standing Senate Committee on National Defence, “The Rangers are a flexible, inexpensive and culturally inclusive way for Canada to show the flag in the North in a relationship that has been forged over half a century. The Rangers also encourage local leadership and capacity building in our community.”<sup>2</sup>

Johannes Lampe, President of Nunatsiavut, also told Roundtable participants that, “[p]eople are flown in at more cost to do work...Inuit can be trained and given jobs to enhance their community...entrench Inuit content. It would give Inuit from all regions the opportunity to pass on that spirit...Inuit have traditionally been hunters, gatherers and fishers, but times are changing. Labrador Inuit would like to get on that ship.”<sup>3</sup>

The recommendations that follow are based on the summary of the Roundtable proceedings and the recommendations put forth by two Senate committee studies, that I was honoured to be a part of. The Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans in their December, 2009 report, “Controlling Canada’s Arctic Waters: Role of the Canadian Coast Guard” recommends addressing concerns of increased activity in the north, the need for more SAR assets in the region, and unresolved claim disputes over the Northwest Passage.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the Standing Senate

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<sup>2</sup> Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence. Proceedings. (Issue No. 10, December 13, 2010, p. 34).

<sup>3</sup> Defence Policy Review Roundtable, July 20, 2016. (Summary, page 14)

<sup>4</sup> Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. “Controlling Canada’s Arctic Waters: Role of the Canadian Coast Guard”. December, 2009.

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/sen/committee/402/fish/rep/rep07dec09-e.pdf>

Committee on National Defence, in 2011, released its report, “Sovereignty and Security in Canada’s Arctic”. The report calls on the Government to expand the role of the Rangers and relocate SAR assets to the north.<sup>5</sup>

I believe these issues are important considerations when discussing security and defence in the Arctic and I am grateful for the opportunity to present the Minister with my thoughts and recommendations, as Senator for Nunavut.

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<sup>5</sup> Standing Senate Committee on National Defence. “Sovereignty and Security in Canada’s Arctic”. March, 2011. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/403/defe/rep/rep07mar11-e.pdf>

## **Recommendations**

### **Search and Rescue**

1. That the Government of Canada consider contracting or sub-contracting locally-based private aviation companies to provide ready support for Search and Rescue.
2. That DND consider repositioning assets further north to significantly improve response times and service quality specifically exploring the options of Yellowknife, Iqaluit, and Cambridge Bay.
3. That DND ensure that all SAR aircraft, current and future, have improved capability such as forward-looking infrared conducive to SAR activities in the Arctic.
4. That the National Search and Rescue Secretariat be requested to compile the statistics on all SAR incidents and all assets available to assist in SAR in one, easily accessible database so as to ensure that future decisions can be evidence-based

### **Rangers**

1. That DND ensure that money be used for the expansion of the Rangers is well-targeted to ensure proper training, equipment, and support staff (such as those required for processing damage claims and instructors/Junior Ranger instructors)
2. That the Government of Canada and territorial/provincial governments provide the necessary support to Rangers including making proper time allowances for training exercises for territorial/provincial government employees
3. That the Coast Guard and DND explore a potential MOU with the Rangers to provide additional support to marine SAR services as exists with the Government of Northwest Territories and the RCMP in NWT to complement the Coast Guard's welcome initiative to expand the Coast Guard Auxiliary in the Arctic.

### **Security/Sovereignty**

1. That the Minister of Defence work with the Minister of Transport to implement Transport Canada regulations that could include the following in order to respond to observed and expected increases in marine traffic in Arctic waters, and to enhance security and sovereignty:
  - The requirement for vessels under 300 tonnes to file a sail plan
  - The requirement for vessels under 300 tonnes to report to local authorities daily
  - The requirement for individuals/organizations attempting to traverse the Northwest Passage to assume liability by being required to deposit a bond with the government of Canada and provide sufficient insurance to cover the impact of their activities