Arctic Cooperation: Past, Present, and Future

- Focus: military and diplomatic cooperation
  - 3 eras: 2 of the past, 1 of the present and future
    - Pre-1930s – the longest era but the era of least activity by Europeans and/or the Canadian government and military
    - 1930s through the Cold War – the bulk of this presentation
    - Present and future cooperation – I will leave this to others on the panel

Canada’s complicated relationship with its North

Claims of sovereignty; an indigenous population who have lived there for millennia; an emotional attachment; a reflection of nationalism and national myths; a region of many responsibilities; the challenge of the harsh climate; the realities of budgetary constraints and competing priorities, both regionally and nationally …

Claims:
“True North Strong and Free”
“The Idea of North”
A “Northern Vision”
“Overtly nationalistic”

“The one pure sovereignty issue of truly major proportions”
“Arctic waters are Canadian waters …
“Use it or Lose it”

Presence:
“The North is part of us, part of our self-definition …. Most often, though, we simply forget about it”
The Arctic has been “governed in a fit of absence of mind.”
“I am not so critical of United States action [in the Arctic] as I am of our own inaction.”
What’s in a word? What does it mean?

• Two recurring words in Canada with regard to the Arctic:
  – Sovereignty
  – Security
• Sometimes separated by “and”
• Sometimes separated by “or”
• It’s an important (and telling) distinction

• The recurring word in the USA with regard to the Arctic:
  – Defense
• Sometimes accompanied by “continental”
• Sometimes not
• It’s an important (and telling) adjective

• Since the 1930s (at least) to the end of the Cold War, military concerns in the North were of paramount importance to the United States; diplomatic channels and Canadian sovereignty sensitivities were secondary.
• To Canada, recognition of its sovereignty and the use of proper diplomatic channels were of paramount importance; American ignorance and/or insensitivity of these was a constant irritation.

Effective Cooperation: An operating framework of boundaries (both literal and figurative) and communication (both public and private) is best for effective cooperation.
• Respect for boundaries and sensitivities yields results and enhanced security.
As early as 1937, FDR turned his attention to continental security

Meeting between President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Mackenzie King

- Ogdensburg, NY, Aug 1940
- “strictly the Franklin-Mackenzie axis at work” and “a masterpiece of political timing” - C.P. Stacey

Ogdensburg Declaration

- Established the Permanent Joint Board on Defense

“A Grand and Glorious Thing … the Team of Mackenzie and Roosevelt” – FDR to King 1941; not as close a relationship as either presumed, but a mutually beneficial partnership nonetheless.
The Permanent Joint Board on Defense: 1940-present

- Established by no more than an executive order and an order-in-council.
- Mandate: to “consider in the broad sense the defense of the north half of the Western Hemisphere.”
- Forum: 6 members from each nation; functioning as equals, recommendations reached by consensus; each country’s team had a direct line of communication to the PM and the President.
- 31 of 33 wartime recommendations were accepted by both governments.

The Board served as “an early instance of effective inter-Allied military co-operation which was encouraging as an example and valuable as a model.” – CP Stacey
Northern Cooperation: The Alaska Highway: 1942-43
A small but important theater of WWII defense cooperation:

- **Northwest Staging Route**
  
  Other air routes with their requisite bases included the Mackenzie River Route and Crimson Project.

- **Meteorological and communication stations**: crucial for trans-Atlantic flights

- **1st Special Service Force, 1942-44**
  A joint US-Canada commando unit. Invaded Kiska to eject the Japanese, but they had already left the island. Unit later served in Italy and France.

- Generally with projects in the North, the Canadians provided the land and paid for the permanent buildings; the Americans paid for the temporary facilities, facilities utilized just by Americans, and the cost differential between what the Canadians believed was sufficient, and what the Americans decided to build.
“...this trying period between a war that is over and a peace that is not yet secure.”  
- President Harry Truman in speech to the Canadian Parliament, June 1947

Early post-WWII Defense Projects: Joint Endeavors

Early Detection Warning Systems:
- DEW Line Radar Stations (largely paid for by US)
- MID Canada Line Radar Stations (joint project)
- Pinetree Line Radar Stations (paid for by Canada)

Resolute Weather Station: 1 of the Joint Arctic Weather Stations

Collaboration on re-supply missions of DEW Line and JAWS: Initially USN-led, later Canadians took over.
## Post-WWII: Solo Initiatives

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<th>Canada</th>
<th>United States</th>
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<td>Sovereignty:</td>
<td>DEW Line and weather station re-supply missions, the USA asked the Canadians for permission to transit the Northwest Passage</td>
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<td>◦ Necessitates presence and effective</td>
<td>By end of 1950s: USA did not ask permission and did not always inform Canadians of northern transits</td>
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<td>occupation</td>
<td>USACGS Storis, Spar, Bramble in Northwest Passage, 1957</td>
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<td>The 1948 Northern Cruise (between the end</td>
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<td>of WWII and the creation of NATO).</td>
<td>USA CGS Storis, Spar, Bramble in Northwest Passage, 1957</td>
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<td>◦ 27-day trip; the destroyers went further</td>
<td>By end of 1950s: USA did not ask permission and did not always inform Canadians of northern transits</td>
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<td>north than any RCN vessel to that date</td>
<td>USACGS Storis, Spar, Bramble in Northwest Passage, 1957</td>
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<td>(with American &amp; British observers aboard).</td>
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<td>RCN Arctic presence could not be sustained</td>
<td>USS Nautilus, Skate, Seadragon at North Pole and in Northwest Passage 1958-1960</td>
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<td>◦ Too expensive and insufficient personnel</td>
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<td>◦ NATO commitments were priority</td>
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<td>◦ Labrador (1954-57) transferred to Dept of</td>
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<td>Transport; since 1958 the Canadian Navy has</td>
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<td>not operated year-round in the Arctic waters</td>
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<td>that Canada claims today.</td>
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The Northwest Passage(s):
5 routes (3 below and 2 variations of these); 2 are suitable for deep draught ships

First transit of NWP: Norwegian Roald Amundsen 1903-06
First transit by a Canadian: RCMP Capt Henry Larsen 1940-42
First transit of NWP in a single season: RCMP Capt. Henry Larsen 1944
Canada’s only all-season icebreaker transited NWP in 1954: HMCS Labrador
First submarine to transit NWP: USS Seadragon 1960
First tanker to transit NWP: (American) SS Manhattan 1969
Canada’s attachment to the North in general and NWP in particular:
Perception, Reality, Commitment, Delivery

- **Transit:** 1969 US tanker, SS *Manhattan* transited NWP to evaluate feasibility of tanker delivery of oil; permission given by Canadian government.
- **Backlash:** by Canadian public and press led Trudeau government to issue Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (AWPPA) – regulating shipping in arctic waters; “functional, not sovereign jurisdiction” over waters of the Arctic.

- **Transit:** 1985 USCGC *Polar Sea* transited NWP; informed Canadians of passage but did not request permission.
- **Backlash:** by Canadian public and press led the Mulroney government to promise to end the “commitment-capability gap” with a myriad of projects ... all of which were scrapped on the federal budgets’ cutting room floor (though some have been revived by the Harper government).

- **2 important initiatives effected:**
  1) Straight baselines in the Arctic waters,
  2) Negotiated an agreement w/ USA.
Future of cooperation in NWP?

1988 Canada-US Arctic Cooperation Agreement: pragmatic agreement in NWP.
- The USCG will ask permission to transit the Passage.
- The Canadians will grant permission for the transit.
- As Christopher Kirkey called it – an example of distributive bargaining, in which both sides benefit.

Future of similar “win-win” cooperation?
- NWP needs to be secured against those who would use it to threaten the security of the continent (terrorists, smugglers of drugs, arms, etc).
- NWP needs to be secured against those whose transits might threaten the environment and fragile ecosystem.
- Clearly in the best interest of both nations to find a way to truly secure the Passage, even if it means compromising on potential precedent issues (USA) and embracing cooperative arrangements (Canada).
- As recently as last month, the Harper government announced that it had to scale back plans for Naval station at Nanisivik; realities of tight budgets and expensive projects point to the advantage of sharing costs in the Arctic. If not with the USA, then with whom?
Status of Northwest Passage today

- **Canada**: NWP is internal waters
  - by virtue of a historic title

- **United States**: international strait
  - water corridor linking two open seas and used for maritime navigation.

- **EU**: contests length and direction of some of the straight baselines.

- **Crux of the issue**: If the strait was an international strait prior to straight baselines, ships have the right to transit passage (permits submarines to transit under the surface); if it was not an international strait prior to straight baselines, the Passage is Canadian internal waters.
Arctic Sea Routes: extant and developing
United Nations and the Law of the Sea

Law of the Sea Convention
Negotiated 1973-1982
Came into force 1994
Today: 162 states have ratified
Canada has ratified
EU has ratified
Russia has ratified
USA has not ratified.

• States may establish outer limits of their continental shelf as specified by the Convention.
• Submission to be made to the Commission on the Continental Shelf
  Canada: submit by 2013
  USA does not have a “seat” at the table to review claims or formally submit its claims at this time.
The future of Arctic cooperation

- Certainly there is merit to continued bilateral cooperation
  - Examples:
    - NORAD to include a maritime mission
    - Joint Arctic surveys of the continental shelf

- Certainly there is merit to utilizing mechanisms established by UNCLOS III
- Enhancement of these traditional models: circumpolar cooperation
The Circumpolar North - new paradigms in cooperation: multilateral forums, declarations, participation by non-state actors

- Arctic States: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, USA

- Arctic Council formed 1996: intergovernmental forum of the 8 Arctic states, Working Groups, Permanent Participants (indigenous peoples) and Permanent Observer States (non-Arctic states).

- Ilulissat Declaration May 2008: commitment to responsible management of Arctic Ocean and using existing international legal frameworks and international law for cooperation.