

Summary of the official position of Canada on the presented draft by the Forum 21st Century

PREFACE

The ongoing transformation of the Arctic is both alarming and unprecedented. Global warming is having a dramatic impact on the Arctic environment, resulting in warmer temperatures, melting ice and the opening of previously ice-covered waterways. Consequently, the Arctic is becoming increasingly accessible to a number of different actors who are descending upon the Arctic with varied, and not mutually beneficial, agendas.

NOTES

Control of the Arctic will yield significant benefit to the country wielding this control. Numerous Arctic states now assert their Arctic interests. Other countries, including the United States, Russia, Denmark, Japan, and Norway, as well as the European Union, have expressed increasing interest in the region and differing claims in relation to international law. Even non-Arctic states such as China, Japan and South Korea have become active in the region. Their claims vary from resource exploitation and development, to division of the Arctic seabed, right of transit in the Northwest Passage and interests in the Arctic. As the various actors advance their claims, the potential exists for a serious challenge to emerge for Canada's sovereignty and security as well as concerns over environmental degradation, control and regulation of shipping activities, and protection of northern inhabitants.

Given the circumstances of the Arctic issue, and the consequent challenges to Canadian Arctic sovereignty, the protection of the environment is as essential as the Canadian Arctic sovereignty and security. Other nations have openly sought to advance their Arctic claims, hence Canada is willing to prevent a territorial violation of any kind, and will not tolerate such occurrence.

PROPOSALS

In order to enforce and ensure the environmental protection and its sovereignty and security in the Canadian Arctic, the government initiates the following positions:

- First, Forum for 21st Century shall establish its decision-making process on Arctic affairs regarding the major concerns introduced hereinbefore.
- Secondly, all of the Arctic nations shall prevent military actions in the Arctic area. Military occupation shall be authorized by the Arctic Council and shall only be temporary.
- Regarding the natural sources exploitation, Canada encourages its interest in investing in the Arctic infrastructure and opening the Arctic to the capitalist development while enhancing safety and protection of life, health, property and marine environment.
- Pursuant to the background paper Military Capabilities in the Arctic littoral states remain committed to follow existing legal frameworks, policing and protecting of recognized natural territories.
- Canada reaffirms its commitment to the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act and ensures the protection and safety of the marine environment. Canada duly observes the aerial surveillance in order to prevent frequent and deliberate oil discharges.
- Tourists, tourist agencies shall present themselves with a valid license and a letter of support while travelling.
- Littoral states shall provide written confirmation of a legally binding agreement concerning all the hereinbefore mentioned issues.