

Environmental Conservation in Northern Canada: Policy Needs in a Time of Climate Warming and Shifting Political, Cultural and Economic Realities.

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Introduction

When Bob Scace approached me to prepare a paper for this conference my response was that I did not have much to say about parks and protected areas; certainly nothing new. My last significant foray into the parks agenda was more than fifteen years ago when, as Research Director of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN), I was involved in negotiating the parks and conservation areas provisions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. I reminded Bob that I was not an academic, rather a consultant, advocate and “policy wonk” who had worked with the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee (CARC), TFN, and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) before becoming an independent consultant. I would also add that I have never worked for government. Bob persevered and I agreed to contribute a piece, not on parks, but on environmental conservation in northern Canada.

I want to begin my remarks with a thank you to Gordon Nelson. Gordon was my de facto PhD supervisor at the University of Waterloo. His energy, commitment and achievements are well known. Perhaps Gordon’s most enduring legacy is the large number of graduate students he has inspired and shepherded, including me.

This conference is being held forty years after a path breaking parks conference organized in 1968 by Gordon and Bob Scace. I was not at that conference but as a graduate student and rapporteur I did attend in 1978 the 10 years after conference at the Banff School of Management. I remember very well the presentation at that conference by Milton Freeman, now Professor Emeritus at the University of Alberta. Milton spoke about the then recently completed Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project he had co-ordinated—a superb piece of work—which documented and elaborated the use and occupancy of approximately 3.8 million square kilometers of land, ocean and wildlife in the Northwest Territories by Inuit. More than 80 percent of Inuit hunters resident in the Northwest Territories—this was 25 years before the creation of Nunavut—were interviewed and the resulting maps were instrumental in the Inuvialuit and Nunavut land claims negotiations which culminated in agreements—modern treaties—with the Government of Canada in 1984 and 1993 respectively.

Milton was asked by representatives of Parks Canada or the Canadian Wildlife Service, I don’t remember which, why Inuit should be believed when they talked

about using the land and whether the maps were accurate. This line of questioning was paralleled by statements by federal civil servants to the effect that parks and conservation areas in the North were the property of these agencies. Quietly but with firm authority Milton answered that Inuit were honest and their recall was accurate, but I sat in the back row stunned by the presumption that lay behind the question. It struck me that if parks and conservation areas were to be modeled as property they belonged not to federal agencies but to the aboriginal people who had for millennia lived in the North. There and then I determined to do what I could in my career to bridge the goals, values, knowledge and rights of northern aboriginal peoples with the advocacy of environmental and conservation non-governmental organizations. My presentation today continues in this vein.

Political Changes in the Canadian North

Before he left Canada in the 1980s to take up residence in Australia, Peter Jull, a close friend and colleague, wrote convincingly that environmental conservation in northern Canada was the core stuff of politics, of north-south metropolis-hinterland relations, and of competing visions of what the North is all about. This is still the case. Peter was batting off Justice Thomas Berger's 1977 report of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry which contrasted the north as the "homeland" of aboriginal peoples and the industrial "frontier" of the mineral and oil and gas industries. The North as "wilderness" to be preserved—the viewpoint of some conservation organizations—might be added as a third organizing metaphor. Essentially, the future of northern Canada lies in how and how well these three metaphors are reconciled and reflected in law and public policy.

In his 1941 essay **England Your England**, George Orwell wrote that the more England changed the more it stayed the same. Perhaps the same is true of northern Canada over the last 30-40 years. Far reaching political and constitutional changes have taken place but the flavor of the region is essentially unchanged and so are many of its social and economic challenges. Nobody in the 1970s foresaw diamond mines on the tundra, but northerners still talk about pipelines and caribou, and the territorial governments are still trying to wrest authority and money from Ottawa.

Gone are the days when the Government of Canada appointed representatives to govern the North; northern interests protested loudly and successfully against the

Meech Lake constitutional accord which required provincial governments to agree if territories were ever to become provinces; the NWT has been divided to create Nunavut, the first time that a public jurisdiction has been created in Canada in which aboriginal people are a majority; with the exception of the southern portion of the Mackenzie Valley, aboriginal land claims have been settled, and the rights defined in modern treaties have constitutional protection. Inuit now own in fee simple more land than any other aboriginal people or private interest worldwide. Following adoption by the Government of Canada in 1995 of the Inherent Right Policy, aboriginal self-government in the North is taking hold; Yukon has assumed provincial-type responsibilities devolved from Ottawa, and both the NWT and Nunavut are pressing the Government of Canada for similar powers and responsibilities.

Many participants at this conference have noted how much has changed in the parks and conservation areas world in the last forty years. I don't dispute this, but aboriginal peoples in Canada and particularly those in northern Canada have during the same period experienced political and constitutional changes of extraordinary consequence. Forty years ago the Government of Canada published a white paper that proposed aboriginal peoples abandon their special status for wholesale assimilation within the greater Canadian polity. Exactly the opposite has occurred. In the last 40 years the land claims and aboriginal self-government "movement" has changed the political and constitutional face of northern Canada with profound consequences. Rather than assimilating, aboriginal peoples have negotiated their way as collectives into the Canadian polity and they have become important actors in decision-making on economic development and environmental conservation. Those who want to promote parks and conservation areas in the North must understand and tailor their activities to this reality.

Climate Change and Energy Potential: Changing the Canadian North in Future Years

Among many factors, two now propel change in northern Canada: rising world prices for oil, gas and minerals; and the growing and projected impacts of climate change. That oil sells on the world spot market for more than \$130 per barrel and that futures are selling for more than this compels transnational corporations to look again at the Arctic for hydrocarbons. So does the conclusion of the US Geological Survey that up to 25 percent of the world's remaining hydrocarbons

are located in the circumpolar Arctic, primarily the offshore in Russian waters. Speaking in London England in 2006, Prime Minister Harper characterized Canada as an emerging energy superpower. His vision rests, in part, on developing frontier hydrocarbons as well as further development of the Alberta tar sands. The talk in the North is of physical infrastructure—roads and ports—to support and stimulate energy and mineral exploration and development.

Fifteen years ago very few people spoke of climate change and northern Canada in the same breath. In 2007, however, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded:

*Average Arctic temperatures increased at almost twice the global average rate in the past 100 years;

*Satellite data since 1978 show that annual average Arctic sea ice extent has shrunk by 2.7 [2.1-3.3]% per decade, with a larger decrease in summer of 7.4 [5.0-9.8] % per decade;

*Temperatures at the top of the permafrost layer have generally increased since the 1980s in the Arctic (by up to 3° C). The maximum area covered by seasonally frozen ground has decreased by about 7% in the Northern Hemisphere since 1990, with a decrease in spring of up to 15%.

The IPCC projected warming globally of 0.2° C per decade for the next two decades but, as a result of amplification in the Arctic, noted: “Warming is expected to be greatest over land and at most high northern latitudes...” So what do these projections portend, particularly for the peoples of the Arctic and for wildlife and wildlife habitat? Forecasting is a very inexact science but the 2005 Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) and the northern chapter of Canada’s 2008 national climate change assessment provide comprehensive and detailed projections. Both conclude that massive environmental change will occur in northern Canada in coming decades and that the process of change is already underway.

The ACIA projects major northward shifts of wildlife and vegetation, increased forest fires and insect infestations, and significant declines in species both terrestrial and marine, specifically adapted to the arctic climate. Changes in

natural systems are projected to result in numerous impacts on the health, culture and society of people resident in the Arctic. For example, for Inuit “warming is likely to disrupt or even destroy their hunting and food sharing culture as reduced sea ice causes the animals on which they depend to decline, become less accessible, and possibly become extinct.” Similarly, Athabaskans and Gwich’in will have to deal with potentially significant changes in the migration routes and calving grounds of barren-ground caribou.

Northern Indigenous Peoples face difficult adaptive challenges, but it is the impact of climate change on economic activity in the circumpolar Arctic that has attracted attention worldwide. The ACIA concludes:

Expanding Marine Shipping. Shipping through key marine routes, including the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage, is likely to increase. The summer navigation season is projected to lengthen considerably as the century progresses, due to the decline of sea ice. Expansion of tourism and marine transport of goods are likely outcomes.

Increased Access to Resources. Marine access to some arctic resources, including offshore oil and gas and some minerals, is likely to be enhanced by the reduction in sea ice, bringing new opportunities as environmental concerns. Increased ice movement could initially make some operations more difficult.

By promoting access to natural resources and doing so at a time of buoyant and rising world prices for energy and minerals it appears that climate change is emerging as the key driver of social, economic, and cultural as well as environmental change in the circumpolar world. Clearly the ecological context for environmental conservation in the North is changing.

What I want to do now is to sketch four political, legal and constitutional developments in the Canadian North that may be characterized as responses to existing and projected impacts of climate change. My point here is that climate change will have important political, legal, and policy ramifications in the northern world that will determine the success or otherwise of efforts to conserve, protect and generally manage the natural environment, including establishing and managing parks and conservation areas. I am going to end with a more detailed look at the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement as a vehicle to

conserve the natural environment and suggest that “parkies,” a term I have heard repeatedly in the last few days, look at the Nunavut Agreement and other modern treaties in this light.

I am inviting you to think “outside the box” and to assess whether and how responding to climate change might strengthen the role of northerners and their regional governments in conserving the North’s natural environment. Conversely, you may conclude that climate change will increase the role of national and/or federal governments in these endeavours. So, we are looking that the “big picture.”

Response to Climate Change in Northern Canada

I have chosen four responses to climate change: sovereignty, devolution, northern foreign policy, and implementation of comprehensive land claims agreements—modern treaties—to illustrate the way in which climate change is altering the political and legal context in which the northern natural environment will be managed and conserved.

Arctic Sovereignty

Prime Minister Harper has invested heavily politically and financially in asserting Canada’s Arctic sovereignty—an issue of the legal status of the Northwest Passage. Is it now or might it become an international strait or is it “internal waters” over which Canada has full ownership and control? The lead item in last Autumn’s Speech from the Throne, it is perhaps ironic that the disappearance of multi-year sea ice as a result of climate change has raised this issue. Until recently the Prime Minister was firmly in the camp of the climate change deniers.

Be that as it may, the Government of Canada has announced its intention to construct ice-strengthened navy patrol vessels and a deep water port at Arctic Bay on Baffin Island, an icebreaker capable of all-year round deployment in the Arctic, an Arctic warfare training centre at Cambridge Bay, strengthening the Rangers, a part-time Inuit force attached to the military, the development of a world class high Arctic research facility, and an Integrated Northern Strategy to tie it all together. In April 2008 the Government of Canada disallowed the sale of MacDonald Dettwiler Associates (MDA), a Vancouver-based defense contractor,

to the American firm Alliant Techsystems in large measure to protect Canada's control of RadarSat 2 developed by MDA and used to monitor activity in the Arctic as a sovereignty support measure. This decision illustrates well the political attention that Arctic sovereignty assertion is attracting in Ottawa.

All of these initiatives are prompted by the projected opening of the Northwest Passage to Arctic shipping between industrial areas in Asia, North America and western Europe. While the Government of Canada stresses a military and hardware response to perceived threats to Canada's Arctic sovereignty, Inuit organizations have taken an environmental and wildlife conservation perspective grounded in Inuit land use and occupancy in Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait that support Canada's claim of historic title to the area. Indeed, the Department of Justice consulted Inuit use and occupancy maps when it drew "straight baselines" around the Arctic Archipelago in 1986 and declared water within to be "internal" to Canada.

The nightmare of many Inuit is to see a rusty, convenience-flagged, single-hulled, inadequately crewed oil tanker laboriously navigating the Northwest Passage. The Exxon Valdez casts a long shadow. Full Canadian sovereignty and jurisdiction over the waters of the Canadian Archipelago and full implementation of the monitoring and environmental management provisions of the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, discussed below, would go a long way to ensuring that the most stringent environmental and safety procedures will be applied to shipping in the passage. Parks and conservation areas proponents might conclude that it is worth supporting the Inuit approach to Arctic sovereignty assertion as a means of promoting environmental protection and conservation.

Devolution to the Territorial Governments

The Yukon Territory was created in 1898 but it was not until 1967 that the Government of the Northwest Territories was based in Yellowknife. Nunavut was created in 1999, less than a decade ago. Creatures of the Parliament of Canada rather than the Canadian Constitution, the territories continue to argue for the transfer to them of provincial-type responsibilities exercised by the Government of Canada, primarily through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). As a result of 2003 federal legislation devolution is virtually complete in Yukon, and both the NWT and Nunavut continue to press

Ottawa for similar arrangements. Nunavut even aspires to assume control over Archipelagic waters.

Demands for devolution are increasingly the result of the projected impacts of climate change. The prospect of significant climate change-related development of energy and mineral resources in the offshore and coastal areas encourages the territorial governments to seek additional powers to manage the impacts of development and to intercept tax and royalty revenues that currently flow to Ottawa. Climate change appears to be fueling and accelerating the political and constitutional evolution of the territories toward provincehood, although this status is likely still many years away. Politically, however, the three territories are treated by their provincial counterparts as though they are provinces, and the Government of Canada now treats these governments as partners in governing the North. The growing political authority of the territories suggests that conservation organizations with aspiration and interests in the North learn more about the way in which the territories are governed.

Territorial Involvement in Canada's Northern Foreign Policy

Canada was very actively engaged in negotiations that resulted in the eight nation Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy in 1991 and championed the expansion of the strategy into an Arctic Council, established in 1996. An Arctic Ambassador was established in 1994 and in 2000 the Government of Canada formally adopted a Northern Dimension to Canada's Foreign Policy. These initiatives reflect the fact that transboundary issues such as climate change, long-range transport of contaminants and management of migratory species of wildlife are of increasing importance in northern Canada and that the circumpolar Arctic is of increasing geopolitical importance.

While the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) was actively engaged in these initiatives the territorial governments were little involved. The ACIA was instrumental in persuading the territorial governments to explore whether and how they should become more involved in circumpolar matters. In May 2007 Yukon, NWT and Nunavut released a joint policy paper that promised increased territorial involvement in the Arctic Council and in promoting adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and in asserting Canada's Arctic sovereignty. Climate change is driving the territorial governments to become more engaged on foreign

policy issues, the core jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. It would appear that in future discussion to regulate and allocate international Arctic fisheries or to manage international Arctic shipping Canada will have to include the territorial governments as partners. Perhaps the lesson here for conservation organizations is to think in circumpolar and international terms when advocating environmental conservation initiatives, including parks and conservation areas.

Modern Treaties in the North

The Government initiated comprehensive land claims negotiations in 1973 prompted by a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada into the rights of Nisga'a in British Columbia. The resulting modern treaties which now apply to most of northern Canada are of central importance in managing and conserving the natural environment and the rights they defined for aboriginal peoples are protected by Canada's constitution. Unfortunately these treaties are inadequately understood by civil society and there is much evidence that they are not being used to full advantage to conserve the natural environment.

Modern treaties are long, detailed, comprehensive, and broadly similar having been negotiated under the Government of Canada's 1986 Land Claims Policy. The 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is typical of modern treaties. It provides for land ownership; rights to harvest terrestrial and marine wildlife; new Institution of Public Government (IPGs) on which Inuit are represented to plan for, manage and regulate use of land, water, wildlife and to conduct environmental assessments of proposed development of natural resources both offshore and onshore; cash compensation; various economic development measures including a share of royalties resulting from development of federal Crown land; establishment and management of parks and conservation areas; and social and cultural development. In some respects, however, the Nunavut Agreement is unlike other modern treaties because of the sheer size of the settlement area—more than 20 percent of Canada—the considerable offshore component of the settlement area, and the promise, fulfilled in 1999, that the Parliament of Canada would establish the Territory of Nunavut with its own territorial government with responsibilities and jurisdiction similar to Yukon and the NWT.

Climate change is undercutting the value and utility to Inuit of some of the rights defined in the Nunavut Agreement. This is most obviously the case with hunting and harvesting rights. The ACIA projects particularly severe impacts in the

offshore including the virtual disappearance of some harvested species. As these species dwindle we can predict very difficult debates about harvest allocations. This is already happening in the United States with the ongoing debate that has pitting Inuit against conservation organizations on listing polar bears as “threatened” under endangered species legislation.

This divergence of opinion and political positions between Inuit and conservation organizations is most unfortunate. In the broader scheme of things, specifically in relation to mitigating and adapting to the projected ravages of climate change there should be close agreement and mutual support between the conservation community and northern aboriginal peoples. The rights-based agenda of aboriginal peoples and the environmental conservation agenda of conservation organizations should be increasingly compatible in the context of climate change, but increasingly this not the case.

Environmental Conservation and the Nunavut Agreement

Land Ownership

Many provisions of the Nunavut Agreement are important for environmental conservation purposes. For example, Inuit own in fee simple slightly more than 350,000 square kilometers of land of which more than 36,000 square kilometers includes rights to the subsurface. This represents about 16 percent of the Nunavut Settlement Area and is significantly in excess of the 275,000 square kilometers of land that is included in Canada’s national park system. Not revealed through these figures are some important points. Unlike the 1984 Inuvialuit Final Agreement which provides Inuvialuit with a small number of very large land parcels, the Nunavut Agreement provides the Inuit of Nunavut with more than 1,000 discrete parcels of land, some large but many quite small. In light of the limited land quantum, the Inuit negotiating strategy was to get the “best” land and, with exceptions, they were successful.

The extent of their success is revealed by overlaying a map of Inuit Owned Lands (IOLs) with the 71 biologically important areas—proposed ecological sites—in northern Canada identified through the International Biological Programme (IBP) in 1975 and the map of 136 “special places” in the North published approximately 10 years later by the Department of the Environment. Inuit own the many of

northern Canada's most biologically productive sites. How these areas are managed and used is of considerable public importance.

There is also an interesting story regarding Inuit selection of subsurface lands relevant to future conservation initiatives. The subsurface quantum defined in the 1990 Nunavut Agreement-in-Principle was relatively small so it was important to maximize economic potential for Inuit by selecting lands with proven mineral potential. The Government of Canada refused, however, to allow Inuit to select lands to which third parties had permits, leases or other rights—the areas Inuit assumed to be of greatest economic potential. Following very tense negotiations in Resolute Bay a gentlemen's agreement was struck between Bob Kadlun, the Inuit Chief Negotiator, and Tom Molloy, the Government of Canada Chief Negotiator, enabling Inuit to apply up to one-third of their subsurface quantum to which third party rights and interests were attached, with a minimum of argument by federal negotiators. Definition of land parcels within the remaining quantum would be subject to case-by-case negotiations but could also provide for Inuit owning lands to which third parties had legal rights and interests. This arrangement—nowhere referenced in the final agreement—enabled Inuit to obtain ownership of excellent base and precious mineral prospects, particularly in the Kitikmeot region. Surface title in this region and also the Kivalliq region was also selected strategically to maximize Inuit involvement in future decisions regarding provision of infrastructure to support mineral development. The geographical pattern of IOLs south of Bathurst Inlet and south and west of Rankin Inlet reflect this strategy.

Parks and Conservation Areas

In the context of the 1990 Nunavut Agreement-in-Principle and the 1990 national Green Plan which promised the establishment of additional national parks in the north, Inuit suggested that the Nunavut Agreement be used to complete the national park establishment agenda in Nunavut and commit to establishing a system of marine protected areas. Federal negotiators refused saying that the Cabinet mandate to establish national parks in the Nunavut Settlement Area was not “transferable” to the Cabinet mandate to negotiate the Nunavut Agreement.

Generally Inuit favored the establishment of national parks in Nunavut—in the 1970s they had proposed huge areas of the Arctic be included within parks reminiscent of the game preserves established in most of the Arctic in the 1920's

and 1930's and disestablished in the 1950's and 1960's. With a limited land quantum Inuit would have concentrated their selections elsewhere if the Government of Canada had used the Nunavut Agreement to guarantee completion of the national park system in the Nunavut Settlement Area. As a result of the refusal to do so, Inuit insisted on owning land in Auyuittuq national park reserve which could only become a full-fledged national park following ratification of the Nunavut Agreement, and in areas scheduled to become national parks on Bylot Island, Wager Bay and Bluenose Lake. It is also worth noting that Inuit proposed that the Nunavut Agreement guarantee the continuation of existing migratory bird sanctuaries and wildlife areas. While these conservation reserves are listed in the agreement the Government of Canada refused to use the agreement to provide such a guarantee.

Establishment of new parks and conservation areas is very much tied to processes defined in the Nunavut Agreement the purpose of which is to ensure that Inuit receive benefits from these designations. The text of the agreement ensures that Inuit are fully involved in co-operatively managing these areas.

Resource Management

Much of the text of the Nunavut Agreement deals with institution of public government (IPGs) to plan for and to regulate and manage use of land, water, wildlife and to conduct environmental assessments of proposed development. When this system was negotiated in the 1980s the federal government was implementing a purely reactive approach to land and water use under the Territorial Lands Act and the Northern Inland Waters Act in response to industry's needs and wants. The intent of Inuit negotiators was to design a system of connected agencies and processes that would treat the area in a more comprehensive and ecosystem-based fashion and require a forward looking management perspective that would guide regulations and permitting. Land use plans, including provision for conservation areas were to be developed as the context in which the needs of industry would be evaluated and accommodated.

Wildlife Provisions

The wildlife provisions of the Nunavut Agreement was the first component of the resource management system to be tabled, and it took more than five years for Inuit negotiators and the Government of Canada to come to an agreement. Inuit

are able to hunt according to their needs in both the terrestrial and marine environments within limits to conserve species and to provide for public safety. The Nunavut Wildlife Management Board is established with a very wide mandate to manage harvest allocations, to undertake research, to approve habitat designations and generally to be the main instrument of public administration in relation to wildlife management.

Implementation Prospects and Problems

It should come as no surprise that many problems have been reported by all aboriginal peoples trying to implement modern treaties. While many articles, particularly the relatively simple “one off” provisions have been implemented and implemented well, more challenging provisions that require creativity and co-ordination among and between agencies of the Government of Canada and co-operative decision-making with aboriginal peoples have not been well or fully implemented. DIAND’s Deputy Minister admitted as much in his February 2008 appearance before the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples when he said that he was having great difficulty getting departments other than DIAND to implement modern treaties, notwithstanding their constitutional status.

In 2003 every modern treaty organization formed the Land Claims Agreements Coalition (LCAC) to press the Government of Canada to adopt a policy to ensure the full and complete implementation of modern treaties. In December 2006, following four years of frustrating and unsuccessful negotiations the Tunngavik Federation of Nunavut launched a suit to sue the Government of Canada for \$1 billion dollars for failing to carry out its duties and obligations defined in the Nunavut Agreement. NTI’s Statement of Claim is posted on their web site. The Government of Canada’s Statement of Defense is a blanket denial of NTI’s claim.

NTI’s statement of claim should be required reading to all with an interest in northern conservation, if only because your preferred agenda—parks and conservation areas—is being held up by the Government of Canada’s refusal or inability to fulfill its duties and obligations. Indeed, the refusal of the Government of Canada to fund Inuit Impact and Benefits Agreements (IIBAs) for territorial parks, the Thelon Game Sanctuary and National Historic Sites as required in the agreement is one of the grievances in the statement of claim.

This state of affairs should be of concern to all attending this conference, for as I have already said, conserving the natural environment in northern Canada is tied up with implementation of modern treaties. I am not aware, however, that any of Canada's major conservation organizations has inquired of NTI or the Government of Nunavut what the court case is about, what the coalition is trying to achieve and whether political assistance would be welcome to ensure full implementation of modern treaties. Yet, and let me be very clear about this and in so doing open myself to accusations of mixing apples and oranges: in the context of climate change and accelerating development of hydrocarbons and minerals, implementing fully and completely the Nunavut Agreement and other modern treaties is a surer means to conserve the natural environment than focusing on geographically limited national parks and marine conservation areas.

I am aware that I have only scratched the surface of conservation policy and planning in northern Canada and that I have greatly oversimplified what is happening in the region. But my purpose is to urge the conservation community to support implementation of modern treaties as key mechanisms to conserve the natural environment. Moreover, I am convinced that this route to protect the North will grow in importance as climate change accelerates, northern development proceeds, devolution moves to completion, and the circumpolar North's emerges as a geopolitical region of global importance.