Nilliajut
Inuit Perspectives on Security, Patriotism and Sovereignty
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Thank you for your interest in Inuit perspectives on Arctic security, patriotism and sovereignty. Although these terms are never far from one another in a debate, the meanings for Inuit can be vastly different from that of our fellow Canadians.

In order to understand what sovereignty means to Inuit one must take into consideration the history of contact and government interventions used to assert sovereignty in the Arctic. The deployment of Canadian and American soldiers to install the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line System and the relocation of Inuit to ‘occupy’ inhospitable regions as human flagpoles are two that come immediately to mind. Paradoxically, Inuit tend to be very patriotic.

What does security mean to Inuit? Security doesn’t come from the comfort that some find in icebreakers, sonar detectors and Arctic military capabilities. Security from our societal perspective comes from access to the basic essentials of life – food, shelter and water.

How can we as a nation fully grasp the concept of Arctic sovereignty without first fully understanding and appreciating what security means to its stewards?

How can we claim to provide security as a sovereign country without first defining what the full list of real threats is? For many Inuit families these threats are still very basic. The inability to provide accessible, affordable and safe food, water and housing is more real and immediate than any threat from outside our borders.

This edited volume asks Inuit for their definitions and perspectives of security, patriotism and sovereignty. And although the answers may be difficult to insert and process in the national dialogue, they are very important components and perhaps the crucial missing elements of any meaningful discourse.

It is our hope that, through edited volumes such as this one, genuine Inuit perspectives and knowledge will inform and promote more inclusive academic, policy-making, government, and think tank debates.

The pursuit of a comprehensive and relevant debate starts by connecting the dots from North to South and between security, patriotism and sovereignty.

We are grateful to the Canada Centre for Global Security Studies, the Munk School of Global Affairs and the ensuing partnerships that enabled the contribution of Inuit voices you find here.

Udloriak Hanson, Co-Chair, Arctic Peoples and Security Research Pillar, Munk-Gordon Arctic Security Program
I am proud to present to you the first of what I hope will become a series of publications devoted to Inuit knowledge on a variety of subjects coming from Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland in Canada.

Inuit Qaujisarvingat: Inuit Knowledge Centre envisions a world in which Inuit and Inuit knowledge advance sustainable Arctic science and policy. We are based at Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national organization in Canada representing Inuit from Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. The overarching direction of Inuit Qaujisarvingat is provided by the Inuit Qaujisarvingat National Committee with representation from the four Inuit Land Claims Organizations, the National Inuit Youth Council, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, and the Inuit Circumpolar Council-Canada.

Our involvement in this Arctic Peoples and Security Research Pillar, as in all projects we engage in, focused efforts to ensure an increasingly active role for Inuit leading to the generation of innovative knowledge for improved research, science, and policy decision making within a Canadian, circumpolar and global context. Throughout this project, the Inuit Qaujisarvingat team explored the multifaceted views of security, patriotism and sovereignty in the Arctic by providing a forum to share Inuit perspectives, understandings, and reflections.

It is well known that the Arctic is an important global player, and soon the Canadian government will take over as Chair of the Arctic Council. Issues of Arctic sovereignty, security, and militarization have attracted surging interest in the Arctic, creating increasing demands for the best available information. There is a need to understand and include the diverse and unique perspectives of Inuit, as citizens of Canada and stewards of the Arctic.

Articulating Inuit-specific perspectives on security, patriotism and sovereignty supports and contributes to our intent to broaden the current understanding and discourse for consideration in policy development from the community to the international levels.

Throughout these pages you will find the voices and views of 13 authors, ranging from personal narratives to academic research papers, and available in both English and Inuktitut. It was important for us to allow each author the freedom to determine their own writing style and area of focus so that we may demonstrate the breadth of Inuit knowledge on the subject at hand.

While this edited volume does not necessarily represent the views or policies of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Inuit Qaujisarvingat: Inuit Knowledge Centre, the Walter Duncan Gordon Foundation, or the Canada Centre for Global Security Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, it will nonetheless be beneficial to policymakers, academics, think tanks, industry, decision makers, northern organizations, and students. This volume, and its complementary film, is a considerable contribution to knowledge that cannot be found elsewhere.

To view the film Nilliajut: Inuit Voices on Arctic Security, please visit www.inuitknowledge.ca

Enjoy reading and learning.

Scot Nickels, Director Inuit Qaujisarvingat: Inuit Knowledge Centre and Chair of the Inuit Qaujisarvingat National Committee
For centuries, even thousands of years, Inuit had words for everything around them. Everything that existed had its own distinct word. There were words for every aspect of life, a system of justice, a way of teaching and learning, a way of healing, maintaining relationships, and connecting to the unknown universe. These words were perfectly adequate to articulate how early Inuit understood the world.

Things began to change when people of other cultures started arriving. They came with their own understanding of the world, and brought with them the morals and values of their societies, often completely new to Inuit. They arrived with their own ways of justice, education, and social relations.

For those early Inuit, survival dictated their daily activities and decisions. But these new visitors were concerned not about survival, but industrialization, colonization and conquering vast lands. Their wardrobes were designed more for fashion than any real practical function. They enjoyed the luxuries of life, such as fine china.

It has been many decades since Inuit have been learning to live with the tools and ways of other cultures; learning to live with foreign ideas, morals and values. But we have found a way to understand through words.

It is no wonder that today’s governments seem so disconnected with the people of the Arctic. We understand their language, but few of them understand ours. And yet, it is we who continue to play catch-up.

Arctic Sovereignty is one of those concepts that reveals this disconnectedness. Here in Canada, Inuit will often use aulatsigunnarniq to mean sovereignty. The word, as Rachel A. Qitsualik explains in her piece, quite literally means “the ability to make things move,” in the context of being able to control something.

Aulatsij is a term that has been adopted by the Government of Nunavut to mean “manager.” It is very similar to aulatsigunnarniq as it uses the same first syllables (aulatsi-) but ends with –ji, meaning “one who controls.” In this way, Inuit who are less proficient in English and thus less familiar with governments, will hear the term Ukiuqtaqturmik Aulatsigunnarniq and think “the ability to control the Arctic.”

As an Inuktitut and English reporter and broadcaster for CBC North in Iqaluit, I often found it difficult to articulate the meaning of Arctic Security in Inuktitut. My colleagues and I would discuss possible terms, but I always felt that those words were inadequate. There is sapummiijauniq, meaning “to be protected.” And Ukiuqtaqturmik Sapumminiq means “protecting the Arctic.” The meaning here refers to the Coast Guard, deep sea ports that can accommodate naval ships, and the Canadian Rangers.

In small Arctic communities, residents beam with excitement and curiosity when a military Hercules or Coast Guard ship arrives. There is a sense of great pride and familiarity in one’s country when one sees the Canadian flag on these mighty vehicles that are “protecting the Arctic.”
Inuit are a proud people. We know true pride when our sons and daughters come home from the land with an abundance of food for our families and communities. We are full of pride when we see our children walk across the school stage to collect their diplomas. We call this sarimasungniq, meaning, “to feel proud.”

Of course, sarimasungniq was in the hearts of Inuit long before someone drew an imaginary line on a map, signed a piece of paper, and called it Canada. And no matter the history and experiences of Canadian Inuit, we have come to be very proud of our country, of being Canadian. And yes, in English, we know this is patriotism, but if you ask me what this word is in Inuktitut, I have to pause and think about it for a minute.

I could say that patriotism is nunagijarmik sarimasungniq, meaning, “to feel proud of one’s land.” But, it doesn’t seem to cut it. It doesn’t include the meaning of fighting wars and drawing borders — the notion that you would die for your country. Inuit have not had to develop armaments to protect the land from invasion. The natural cold did that for us.

Next time I sit with my grandfather, I will ask him Kanatamiutauniqnik Sarimasukpit? “Are you proud of being Canadian?” He will undoubtedly give an enthusiastic “Yes!” He will not completely have understood what I have asked him. But when Canada wins gold in Olympic hockey, and I see the joy in his eyes, I know that’s patriotism. That is why it’s so important to spend time with Arctic people. Even when there are no words to adequately articulate an idea, you can always see it in our eyes.
Inuit and Arctic Security
Terry Audla

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1976) supplies the following definition for ‘security’:
“...confidence; thing that guards or guarantees; (organization for ensuring) safety of State, company, etc., against espionage, theft or other danger...”.

Perhaps it is the concept of ‘danger’ that is the simplest and most compelling part of this definition. Making use of that concept, it is possible to address Inuit and Arctic security by asking the following question: What dangers do Inuit face in Inuit Nunangat (our traditional Arctic homeland in Canada)?

Throughout pre-history, and during recorded history, Inuit have not been removed from dangers.

For many outside the Arctic, particularly those living in contemporary urban consumer societies, many of those dangers would have seemed elemental and exotic.

Inuit relying on hunting and gathering to sustain themselves and their families faced the uncertainties and risks that accompany such a way of life — a single miscalculation as to the weather, or the geographic location of a food cache, or the strength of an ice surface, could have fatal consequences.

Inuit living on the land faced the dangers posed by predators. Factors far outside human control — the migrations of animals and swings in the size of wildlife populations and the cycles of seasonal thaws and freeze-ups — brought the dangers of want and, not infrequently, starvation.

Awareness, and respect for, such dangers shaped Inuit culture and outlook from the beginning of our history. They made us tough. They made us patient. They made us practical.

The dangers of living on the land have not disappeared, of course, even if they have been modified by access to modern technologies.

But traditional dangers posed to Inuit are now accompanied by newer dangers.

At the broadest level there are the dangers that accompany our living in an ever-shrinking world, with ever-evolving military, communications, transportation, and other technologies; and the dangers that exist in a world still built largely around the solitudes and self-interests of sovereign nation-states who have still not found the formula to secure global peace.

Beginning in the middle of the last century, the Arctic has been at the very centre of the nuclear threat and deterrent calculations that defined the Cold War.

Throughout the Cold War, the Arctic was the place where the bomber fleets from the USA and Soviet Union would stand ready to cross, where fighter jets patrolled air space, where nuclear submarines could hide under ice cover, and through which intercontinental missile would fly in the event of the unthinkable.

Those Big Picture military dimensions of the Cold War were accompanied by the less dramatic, if still pressing
issues associated with unresolved sovereignty issues among Arctic countries, particularly sovereignty issues associated with offshore boundary delineations and transit rights. Notwithstanding the adoption of a very helpful rule book in the form of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, some of those sovereignty rivalries continue today. Fortunately, rivalries have not resulted in actual conflict, and there is reason to be optimistic that the rule of law, and the capacity of human beings to find progress within law, will prevail.

The Inuit of Inuit Nunangat are proud Canadians. We have played our part, and will continue to play our part, in asserting the sovereign rights and interests of Canada in the Arctic, sovereign rights and interests that are founded on the bedrock of Inuit use and occupation of Arctic lands and seas. We accept that military activity is a part of life in the Arctic, and that international stability and harmony are generally well served when nation-states tend to their own fundamental responsibilities for monitoring and surveillance, for the enforcement of international law, and for the constructive and creative promotion of collective and individual security.

Meeting such fundamental responsibilities does not require a blinkered over-emphasis on military infrastructure and other forms of military investment, or an unwillingness to seek common approaches and compromises across international boundaries. But history teaches that conflict has been an abiding feature of human history, and that global peace is a long-term project that is best built carefully and incrementally.

In more recent years, the broad international challenges to fundamental security in the Arctic in the form of underlying global military tensions has been accompanied by another formidable threat that confronts all of humanity, but with particularly dire challenges to Inuit: accelerating global climate change, as fuelled by the overproduction of greenhouse gases resulting from human industrial and other activities.

For complex reasons, an upwards spike in global average temperatures has an even sharper spike at high latitudes, and the shrinkage and possible disappearance of multi-season ice cover over the central Arctic Ocean could trigger collateral consequences of still unknown dimensions and risks.

The forward modeling that has been done around the likely course of climate change is enormously worrisome. In the Arctic, our physical security has already been challenged by such things as changes to wildlife patterns, unreliable wind and temperature patterns and associated thawing and freezing cycles, rising sea levels, and shifting building foundations due to permafrost variation. Nature is never stable, and life close to nature always brings its own insecurities, as well as its benefits. Climate change at a rate and of an intensity that appears unprecedented, and well outside Inuit cultural memory, creates insecurities of an entirely new nature, generating concerns about the sustainability of large aspects of our inherited and acquired patterns of life... our very sense of who and what we are as Inuit.

Any analysis of security in the context of modern Inuit life must also acknowledge the insecurities that Inuit face as a result of our living, over three or four generations, in what has been a firestorm of cultural change. Not that long ago Inuit lived, as our ancestors had for thousands of years, a nomadic life built around hunting, gathering, and the seasonal migrations of animals. While we have not broken our links to that past, contemporary Inuit live in settled communities, with both the attractions and the hazards of an Internet and consumer goods world.

We have put some of the insecurities of our past way of life behind us: short and abrupt average life spans; vulnerability to death from what would now be easily treated illnesses and injuries; the privations and isolation resulting from the obstacles of extreme distance and difficulties of communications.

But while some insecurities have abated, new ones have arisen and some old ones have taken on new forms.

Some of these insecurities are the price of life in a technologically advanced, industrialized world: the often excessive competitiveness for status and material goods; the
inequalities and marginalizations that accrue in monetarized economies; the dizzying and sometimes disorienting pace of change.

Some of these insecurities are the result of our experiencing such a rapid shift from living in a traditional culture to constantly trying to balance that culture with the demands on a new and powerful culture: the gaps and alienations between young and old, and between those comfortable only in one language, those comfortable in two, and those comfortable in neither; the legacy of the residential schools and forced relocations; the self-doubts and sense of powerlessness that came about from colonization from outside, and the struggle to confront and reverse that colonization.

Some of these insecurities flow from our place in the day to day life of contemporary Canada. Inuit are at or near the bottom of a very large number of indicators of core socio-economic well being. Many insecurities result: the insecurity that takes the form of a majority of pre-school children in Inuit regions living in households where daily access to adequate food is not a given; exposure to tuberculosis and others diseases and problems that ensue when people live in the most over crowded housing in Canada; the confidence lacking in parents, and in young people, that educational success is in store for most students; the knowledge that, for those who suffer mental illness of substance dependency, qualified help is very unlikely to be there, whatever the need.

We have lived with insecurity in the past. We are living with new forms of insecurity now. We will no doubt face other forms of insecurity in the future.

Like all peoples who have been, and remain, close to the land, Inuit are an optimistic and persistent people. We are also mindful of, and grateful for, the great joys and compensations of life, and the mysteries that mix together hardships and comforts.

With that awareness, Inuit are committed to making Inuit Nunangat, all of Canada, and our world, a more secure place for all of us. We seek to work closely and productively and respectfully with all others who share that goal.

Terry Audla is the President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national organization representing 55,000 Inuit across Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador) and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories. He was born in Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit), and raised in Resolute Bay, the son of High Arctic Exiles relocated from Inukjuak, Quebec, in the early 1950s. Terry has dedicated his career to the implementation of Inuit land claims agreements and the growth of economic opportunities for Inuit.

References:

“Our footprints are everywhere.” (Gordon, 1981)¹

**Inuit Sea**

The Inuit Sea is once again discussed in Canada and in the global community in the context of sovereignty and security and in the absence of Inuit.

Canada, the United States of America (USA) and European countries are vying for and proposing jurisdictional status of the Northwest Passage in Canada. Canada’s position is that the Northwest Passage belongs to Canada, while the USA and the European countries argue that the Northwest Passage is international waters.

The current discussion of arctic sovereignty and security lies in the realm of mythology and the exclusion of Inuit with regard to the Inuit Sea discussions, both by Canada and players from abroad, is not only an immoral and shameful exercise of out-dated and discredited colonialism but also illegal in light of the contemporary developments in law.

The Northwest Passage is part of the Inuit Sea by virtue of its use and occupancy for millennia by the Inuit — a use necessary for the survival of the Inuit as a people. Copper Inuit occupied and used the sea ice and sea water in the Prince of Wales Strait for seal harvesting in the winter and for fishing, whaling, and bird hunting in the spring. These practices have existed, as the saying goes, from “time immemorial”. This knowledge comes from my mother and grandmother who passed on the stories to me; women in Inuit society are responsible for the transfer of knowledge.²

The Inuit Sea is recognized now in a number of legal instruments. The Inuit Sea is documented in the Inuvialuit Final Agreement 1984, through the *Land Use and Occupancy Study* conducted by Peter Usher (1974). During the course of his research he interviewed people from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, some of whom are still living in Nunakput (Our Land). Further, Canada is legally required to consult Inuit on all matters affecting Inuit, including arctic sovereignty and security.³

Within Canada, Inuit and Inuit Rights are explicitly recognized and guaranteed under the *Canadian Constitution Act*, 1982, s. 35 (1), (3); these provisions explicitly recognize the land claims agreements now and in the future.

The *Migratory Birds Convention 1994*⁴ between Canada and the USA is the only international legally binding instrument which explicitly recognizes the guaranteed Canadian Inuit Land Claims Agreements with respect to Inuit hunting rights and the use and sale of the by-products of birds such as feathers and down for indigenous economic opportunity.

Internationally, Inuit fundamental human rights have been expressed as a result of hard work of people like

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¹ Late Great Inuit Leader from Nunavik statement on the question of Arctic Sovereignty.
² Inuvialuit Final Agreement 1985 (IFA); James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement 1975 (JBNQA); Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act 1993; Labrador Inuit Lands Claims Agreement 2005 (LILCA); Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement 2006 (NILCA).
³ See Article II, 4. a), (i) and (ii).

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The Inuit Sea
Rosemarie Kuptana

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³ See Article II, 4. a), (i) and (ii).

Another UN instrument that may well be drawn on in the debate is the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (1982) as it relates to the issue of sovereignty over arctic waters and ice. UNCLOS does not address use and occupancy as a way of life on the water as the UNCLOS states that it is impractical for humans to occupy the sea... This omission in its analysis is faulty given the Inuit occupation and use of the Inuit Sea, both as water and as ice.

The occupation and use of the Inuit Sea is a matter attested to by my own life. I was born in the Prince of Wales Strait in March 1954 while my parents were seal hunting. They were simply following the timeless traditions of our Inuit clan in the pursuit of daily survival.

A Debate without Inuit

The consequences of discussions on arctic sovereignty and security without Inuit could be wide-ranging, politically, legally and administratively.

First, the lack of effective and meaningful Inuit participation in the sovereignty debate could trigger the constitutional and legal mechanisms already mentioned to resolve the issue of consultation and participation.

Second, the current positions of Canada, USA and the European countries are disrespectful, to say the least, and harkens to earlier and discredited European colonial practices. Canada is required to consult and its course to date has been, and is, in violation of its agreements with Inuit which are protected under s. 35 of the Constitution Act 1982. Inuit in this case have the option of invoking the non-derogation clause of the Constitution Act 1982. As well, Inuit can have recourse to the arbitrations and court processes to resolving outstanding legal issues.

Third, the position of the USA and the European countries that the Northwest Passage be designated as international waters is either ignorant of, or an exercise of faulty judgment with respect to Inuit participation on sovereignty and security. Inuit have Aboriginal and inherent rights to not only the Inuit Sea but also to all its resources. The impact of USA/Europe position may result in (bring about) the opposite effect for that position and could very well open the so-called international waters to many unwanted guests. The current situation affords de facto measures for the USA with the rules governed by Canada.

Inuit are suffering from a want of dialogue with Canada, even though this dialogue is constitutionally mandated. The current Canadian government is moving toward more central power in the executive structure of parliament and in regulation-making as a way of governing Canada. First Ministers meetings have become a thing of the past. This imperial form of governance is out of step with the democratic principles upon which Canada was founded, disrespectful of ordinary Canadians and the Parliament which is responsible for speaking for them. The current situation is only cloaked in the guise of democracy; it is not democracy in action. This manner of governing Canada is not working for Inuit in Canada, particularly on the issue of arctic sovereignty and security. Hush! Quiet! Canadians are not to be critical of the government of Canada. Alleged threats to funding agreements often impose the silence of the Inuit accentuating the current deep-freeze of today’s political climate.

The experience of Inuit in Canada in nation-building has been a positive one. In the span of fifty years Inuit have adapted from being a nomadic people following the age-old traditions necessary to its survival to a society completely at home with the iPhone. This period has seen the advance of the rights of Inuit, nationally and internationally. And the adaptability of Inuit is a testament to not only the mettle and character of Inuit society but also to the Inuit themselves.

My experience is that Inuit prefer negotiation over litigation in achieving Inuit goals and aspirations.

Inuit Security

Security is more than about arms build-up. Security is about ensuring that Inuit are equal members of the human
family and have the economic basis to ensure a reasonable life-style as defined by contemporary Canada.

“Kabloonaks talk a lot and we have to take care of them when we are out on the land.” Susie Tiktalik (1957), my grandmother was referring to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Ministry of Transport (MOT) personnel who were transferred to Banks Island to ensure Canada’s sovereignty over the arctic islands. Many misadventures and accidental tourists came from the outside claiming Inuit land, and Inuit seas as “theirs”. Non-Inuit academics reinforced this false notion through the doctrine of Terra Nullus — that the land and seas were vacant of human occupation. Am I not human? Were my forbearers not human? We have lived in and on, and have reaped the resources of, Inuit lands and the Inuit Sea for millennia. We lived in an organized society, with customs and traditions that had the weight of law in that society.

Security to Inuit was, and is, having food, clothing and shelter. This definition is relevant today in the context of the right to life, liberty and security of the person guaranteed to all Canadians by s. 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.5

The Charter and the rights contained therein cannot be removed except by due process of the law. Therefore, I raise the following question: is the omission to act to guarantee elements necessary to life, such as food, housing, medicine and schooling for Inuit, a removal by Canada of this fundamental human right without due process of law?

Some in authority have argued that security of food is a non-issue for the Inuit: the Inuit simply take a rifle and hunt. This argument is absurd in its simplicity and not all based on today’s reality. The settlement of Inuit in hamlets has resulted in many people being unskilled in hunting and the ways of life on the land. And this settlement was government policy. This policy has resulted in a society which is resettled with some of the amenities of the south but also in a society devoid of the economy which sustained it.

Although resettlement occurred before the institution of the Charter and its rights, the on-going results of this government policy have robbed the Inuit of a viable economy. The government policy of residential schools too worked to this end: it ensured, as best it could, that the traditional ways would not be transferred to a new generation. It can be argued, therefore, that on-going government policy and actions are working to deprive the Inuit of a basic right to life.

Traditionally, security to Canada meant an arms build-up or militarization in a region. One cannot discuss sovereignty without security. The core issue of Canadian Arctic sovereignty is control and the core issue of Canadian Arctic security is about responding to threats. The non-Inuit views to threats to Canadian Arctic security are nebulous, multi-dimensional and evolving (Huebert, 2011).

The right of Inuit to our land and seas has never been nebulous. We have used and occupied both the land and sea for our very survival as a people and for millennia. The rest of the world, if it has the courage to look beyond its colonial mentality, must know and recognize that jurisdiction over the Inuit Sea continues to lie with the Inuit who have been the stewards of the arctic for a very long time.

Rosemarie Kuptana is a writer and former broadcaster. Ms. Kuptana headed the IBC, ITC and ICC from 1982 to 1997. In the early 1990s Ms. Kuptana along with Franklyn Griffiths conducted the groundbreaking research that led to the establishment of the Arctic Council. She spearheaded a video about climate change and has authored “No More Secrets”, a book about child sexual abuse in the Arctic, published by Pauktuutit and “What is a Canadian?”, 50 recipients of the Order of Canada wrote essays on what it means to be Canadian, published by McLelland & Stewart.

Security

References:


The Decimation of Inuit Security
Zebedee Nungak

Back in time, Inuit were once independent, and not subservient to others. Their greatest challenge in life was the pursuit of food and sustenance from their Arctic environment. This they did for millennia, by ways and means suited to the climate in which they lived. The Arctic’s seasons and resources ebbed and flowed in cycles of plenty and famine, with inherent hardships that often resulted in death by starvation. But Inuit survived and thrived in these cycles from time immemorial: Inuit were once secure, not in quotation marks, in their homeland!

When outsiders of whatever origin first came upon Inuit in their natural state, they discovered them to be living adequately in surroundings, which seemed quite impossible for human beings to conquer. To the first non-Inuit who encountered them, their existence appeared to be precarious. But had Inuit not succeeded in beating the odds of making a living in the Arctic, outsiders would not have had any Inuit to “discover”. Inuit had mastered their environment!

Inuit sovereignty in the Arctic started being systematically undermined long before there was regular, sustained contact with civilization. This is a brief story of the resulting decimation of Inuit security, which exists to this day…

On June 8, 1576, three ships under the command of Martin Frobisher departed from England on a voyage that would reach southern Baffin Island. Queen Elizabeth I is said to have waved from a window to convey her good wishes to the expedition. It is certain that those good wishes did not include formal instructions to Frobisher to secure all relevant permissions and licenses from local Eskimos before proceeding with any mining venture on their lands.

This colonial “oversight”, we know, was no accident. The pattern of behavior of European monarchs and their successor governments would use such “oversights” down through the centuries to assault and decimate the security and wellbeing of indigenous people, including Inuit, the world over.

The British legal system, as used by its Monarchs and colonial/post-colonial governments, is the single most lethal weapon used to eradicate Inuit sovereignty over Arctic homelands in Canada. There’s no room in this system for indigenous oxygen. It was, and still is, utterly foreign to Aboriginal life. The system has built-in absolute superiority over lesser beings not descended from Europeans. No defense against it has ever been discovered, and its effects reign to this day.

On May 2, 1670, King Charles II of England issued a royal charter to his cousin Prince Rupert, granting him title to vast areas of the future Canada. “Rupert’s Land” was established as the private domain of the Hudson’s Bay Company. A telling feature of this act was the King not even bothering to first claim “ownership” of these lands before signing them over to his cousin: The King believed
that the land was his to give because no other Christian monarch had claimed it.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763, issued by King George III, might have been useful to define a more equitable relationship between the Crown and indigenous people. It established the constitutional framework for the negotiation of Indian treaties with the Aboriginal inhabitants of large sections of Canada. This document is even referred to in section 25 of Canada’s Constitution Act, 1982. But it has never resulted in a more equitable definition of securing a place for Aboriginal people in the country’s legal and constitutional structure.

Canada’s history is littered with land and real estate/jurisdictional transfers, made with total abandon by kings, queens, and later, post-colonial governments. After 200 years, the Rupert’s Land of King Charles II was transferred to the new Dominion of Canada, and transformed into the Northwest Territories in 1870. Such acts transpired without anybody considering what the original inhabitants of these territories might think of these arbitrary dealings.

For Inuit in Nunavik, the northern landmass of Quebec, such dealings included the transfer of Ungava District of the Northwest Territories to the Province of Quebec in 1912. My great-grandfather, Patsauraaluk, born prior to 1870, was first a citizen of Rupert’s Land. Then for most of his life, forty-two years to be exact, he was a citizen of the Northwest Territories. He died in the years after 1912, a citizen of Quebec; all without having moved anywhere!

Post-colonial governments eagerly took over what had previously been the realm of kings and queens, in the application of legal brute force to change and determine the status of vast stretches of the Inuit homeland. One further arbitrary act was a legal decision, made in 1939 by the Supreme Court of Canada, called In Re: Eskimo. That decision, made without its subjects’ participation, declared that Inuit (Eskimos) in Quebec were “Indians” for purposes of legal definition.

Given this sort of history, it’s no wonder that governments have governed the Inuit homeland in ways that have required formal apologies for residential school abuses, forced relocations from traditional lands, and slaughter of sled dogs, the primary means of Inuit mobility. Inuit have been treated in many ways like “chattel”, as former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker once said.

Canada and its provinces and territories had an opportunity to correct and reset its relationship with Inuit and other Aboriginal people in the First Ministers’ Conferences on the Constitution in the mid-1980’s. The primary objective of those conferences was the search for the recognition of the Aboriginal peoples’ right to self-government within Canada. Unfortunately, attitudes borne from colonial history were still too strong among the governments of the land to facilitate the ungrudging recognition of such a right in Canada’s Constitution.

So the First Ministers’ Conferences failed, and inclusion of the rights of Aboriginal people remain as major unfinished business in Canada’s structure as a nation. Canada continues to exist on the perpetual fiction of being made up of “Two Founding Nations”, the English and the French. Until this deficiency is corrected, Canada will continue to be an incomplete nation, with its Aboriginal elements on the outside periphery of its nationhood.

Inuit have yet to find true security in Canada...
Sarimasuktitigut: Make Us Proud

Pujuut Kusugak

Patriotism is defined in Wikipedia as “devotion to one’s country”. The questions then goes to us Inuit: “Are you patriotic? Are you devoted to Canada? Are you dedicated to Canada?”

First, we can go back and say this; Inuit did not pick Canada. Canada picked the Arctic and Inuit happened to live there and therefore gave weight to Sovereignty.

*Sovereignty:* having supreme, independent authority over a geographic area, such as a territory. It can be found in a power to rule and make law that rests on a political fact for which no pure legal explanation can be provided. (Wikipedia)

This last definition tells me that Canada needs Inuit. Inuit represent the Canadian Arctic and this representation, this political strength is the claim that the Arctic is occupied by Canadians.

Don’t get me wrong, many Inuit are patriotic. Have you ever seen an Inuk cheer for a Canadian hockey team at the World Junior Championships and Olympics? The sound produced by these Inuit speaks volumes!

Inuit have been living in Inuit Nunaaq for generations. I don’t need to get into dates and archaeology. Its been proven already.

Inuit have been living in settlements or permanent homes for about 70-80 years now. Compare this to *Qablunaat* (Southern people) who have been living in their type of culture for generations. This is a huge difference in adjusting to the change. We are forever trying to “catch up” with the times. We just got cell phones and our internet is worse than any 3rd world country. Really! Who still uses dial-up? We do! We do! So we have gone from our parents being born in an iglu in May to having children born in a regional hospital in just over 50 years. Also, Inuit have moved from tents, iglus and sod houses to actual houses. And my grandparents told me these houses looked huge! They would clear out houses to hold square dances in them. And this is amazing to imagine. If you don’t know what a square dance is, check out a local square dance in the Kivalliq region one time.

As we are trying to catch up we are trying to do this with sticks and strings while our *Canada-miuqatit* are using fiber-optics and graphite. Does this sound right?

This paper is not to cry foul. This is to give facts of the Arctic and its peoples struggles to keep up with the changing times that are changing even before we can make the 1st jump. Inuit have advanced and adjusted more quickly than many other cultures and people. We went from living in shelters made of snow to tweeting about polar bears running through town. Even some elders are carrying cell phones these days. They grew up having rocks for toys to cell phones that can reach anywhere on earth. Except when our cell service is down and we can’t call our neighbours.

Patriotism is strengthened when the people feel they are appreciated and taken care of. How well are Inuit taken care of and how well are Inuit recognized for their
uniqueness? The Liberals supported Multiculturalism and the Tories love their symbols. Inuit don’t want to just be symbols. Inuit want to be contributing individuals to the Canadian society. Contribute to the betterment of our country, and hockey teams of course. Dodos are symbols of extinction. Inuit don’t want to be in that category of “extinct” species. We want our language and culture to live and thrive. So, help us do that. Inuit are not pawns in a chess game of strategically placing each piece to gain ground and position (even though it seems this is what happened to the relocation victims of Grise Fiord and Resolute). What’s done is done. Inuit have been given an apology and we are very grateful for it. Thank you, Canada. Now what we need is the support to catch up with education, training and development and infrastructure. Education will help Inuit to continue being contributing Canadians (yes, we pay taxes and this helps pay for everyone’s education too). Long are the days gone of quitting school to work. Everyone needs an education to get good jobs and hopefully move up and help run the Territory. Training will allow Inuit to gain employment and necessary skill to look after their families. After all, most people take pride in being able to do just that; be the ones to nurture and support their children. Development and infrastructure will house and support growth of the Arctic. The more developed, the more area “occupied” for Canada. So in the end, Canada investing in the Arctic means everyone wins. Inuit get the much needed support to catch up in all areas of society and Canada gets its Patriotism.

I also want to point out that the Arctic supports many ‘Southern’ families. Their family members will go to the Arctic to work. They will make a great living on jobs that hopefully will one day go to a local Inuk. The worker takes his/her wage to pay for their mortgage, groceries, children’s education etc… back in the south. The south needs to recognize that what is good for the Arctic is great for the families of the south. The Arctic has supported southern economy for a few generations already with much more development and jobs on the way.

So, from the past we can see that Inuit became Canadians all of a sudden one day. But it wasn’t all of a sudden their communities were Patriotic. Patriotism happened because people like the RCMP helped Inuit survive during starvation periods and times of sickness. RCMP can also thank Inuit for guiding them to find areas where Inuit needed help. Inuit like Johnny Karetak of Arviat (formerly Eskimo Point, NWT) did this work and kept Inuit and RCMP alive in the Arctic. Mr. Karetak, but I like to call him Ataatatsiaq (Grandfather), like many Inuit was a Special Constable. He served for 25 years. He helped guide RCMP through blizzards and rough waters to help Canada serve its people. Many people are still grateful with my Ataatatsiaq and thank him for his tireless work. He recently received a Queens Jubilee Award for his work in the past. Atatatitsiaq is also always associated with the RCMP who are forever very Canadian.

We grew up knowing we lived in Canada and engrained with the words “Free” and “Lucky”. TV and great Canadian speakers have convinced us all to feel these. Free to live and decide how we want to live and lucky to have all the opportunities like education and healthcare available. It also helped that we had heroes who were Canadian i.e. Terry Fox. They showed us what being a Canadian meant. Helpful, considerate and modest. Always told to help others in need. Growing up with reminders of being considerate to other people and their needs. Especially to be modest as you are part of a whole group and everyone is just as important as you. Or, wait... those are my dad’s and grandfather’s words. I meant humble and un-American, caring and thoughtful so other people can be comfortable. Comfortable so they also can learn the value of a good deed will be returned one day. That’s as Canadian as you can get and also values that Inuit have passed on. So it is natural for us to be Patriotic in values we believe and live by. Like Jose Kusugak said “First Canadians, Canadians First.” To me this quote says it all. Inuit are the original Canadians who live in the most harsh but beautiful part of the world. Inuit are also proud to be

Patriotism
Canadian. In a way, I guess we are lucky to have settled here way before anyone else. And we happen to be part of one of the greatest societies in the world. Canadians are respected all around the globe. Inuit are part of that image of Canadianess.

So Canada; are you devoted to Inuit? Are you dedicated to Inuit?

Inuit will stay patriotic as long as we are looked after and helped to succeed in Canada. And, as long as Canada keeps winning hockey games we will cheer and let everyone know we are Canadian. By the way, nice goal Crosby. Thanks for keeping us patriotic.

**Acknowledgements**

I want to thank my parents for their continued love and guidance. My Ataatatsiaq for showing me perseverance and my family for my foundation.

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Pujjuut is from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. He is married to Adriana and has two beautiful children, son Qaritaq (12) and daughter Piunnguallaq (3). He loves spending time with his family at the cabin, hunting and fishing. Pujjuut is a graduate of Nunavut Sivuniksavut and the Nunavut Teacher Education Program through McGill University (B. Ed). He has taught Inuktitut in elementary and high school and is also a former Hamlet councilor and Mayor for Rankin Inlet.
As a young child growing up in Eskimo Point, where I was born in 1957 with an Inuk midwife attending to my mother, this was the only world I knew. Gradually, I became aware of other events happening outside of this comfortable environment and being impacted by “the government’s actions”, realizing we were part of a bigger picture.

I grew up without much outside influence as this was before telephones and television. We did not have much contact with other people except those around us. I don’t think we even had more than a few flights a month coming into our community. I did not know I had relatives other than those living in Eskimo Point with us. The population was probably even less than 400. We knew everyone and everyone knew us. I could visit around anywhere and be safe. Other adults looked out for other people’s children. It was like a cozy cocoon for me and my nine siblings. Our world was small.

First of all, when I was born, my father was already working for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) as a special constable and required to uphold the laws of Canada that we did not really understand. He and my mother were not even registered voters in this country until the 1960’s but were very loyal to the RCMP. We lived in an RCMP staff house duplex alongside my father’s brother, our uncle, Jimmy Gibbons, who was also a Special Constable. Their father, Joe Gibbons, had worked with the RCMP too so it was expected that his sons would also work for the RCMP.

My father retired in 1983 with 25 years under his belt but we think it was longer as he did work for them before he officially became a constable.

Their role was mainly as guides, interpreters and taking care of the transportation plus anything else that needed taking care of, whether it was maintaining all the equipment, hunting for dog food or getting the wives to sew all the winter caribou clothing. I remember my dad taking care of the RCMP dog team and I especially liked the one dog with one brown eye and the other was blue. He had to take his fellow policemen to outpost camps to check on the Inuit that had not yet been relocated to Eskimo Point, where they did census, recording all the people, who had passed away and any new babies that were born.

He talks about the police being very reliant on him while on the land and traveling in extreme cold conditions and then becoming more assertive and back to being the commander as they get closer to the community. My father was truly their link to the people. I don’t think I really knew where these RCMP people ‘disappeared’ to when they left our community until I got older.

He worked diligently day after day, wearing the special constable uniform, year after year, transitioning with them from dog teams to police trucks. He represented the law
Patriotism

and order of the RCMP and was very well respected by the people even if they did not necessarily like who he represented. He taught us great work ethics, to withhold judgment on others when we haven’t walked in their shoes, to treat people well and with kindness no matter who they are and what nationality or race, especially those less fortunate than us, and to be proud of who we are as Inuit, that we have as much right as the next person to pursue our dreams. When I think back, he never once hinted that I could not do something because I was a girl. My father was so ahead of his generation in his thinking.

There was some awareness that our family had a different role in the community as many of the members had recently moved to Eskimo Point off the land. Some were still out at camps and sent their children to the local hostel to attend school. In our household, there was always someone employed with steady income.

Because my mother and three siblings had tuberculosis and were sent away to a sanitarium for over a year, my oldest sister Charlotte and I were the only ones left with my father at home. I was four but went to the playground with Charlotte when she went to school and Mrs. Davis, the principal’s wife, eventually just put me in school. I don’t think I was registered at first, but this started my lifelong learning curve.

One significant day that stands out for me was when Canada received a new flag. We stood outside in the cold to hang up the beautiful Maple Leaf flag. I have loved this flag from that moment on. As a seven year old, I was struck by this symbol and maybe realizing I was a Canadian. This was February 15, 1965. I am not sure we had our ceremony that particular day but my teacher, Mrs. Smith, was wearing a skirt and froze her legs!

The red and white flag is, for me, a symbol of freedom and represents my country as the best one to live in. It is a symbol of a country that recognizes my aboriginal rights in our constitution. It is a symbol of security, where each citizen is protected no matter where they live in this vast land. I love the colours and many of my family and friends know that and give me many gifts and souvenirs with the flag on it as they remember me as soon as they see them. It is my symbol.

Another striking moment for me was the day we went to class and there were three names written across the blackboards in big letters. Pierre Elliot Trudeau. I looked up the date and it was April 20, 1968. I was ten years old. We were told this was the name of our new prime minister. I don’t think we knew what that was, but we were starting to understand we lived in a country called Canada and were part of this great land.

I don’t know when this happened but Bud Orange, who was the NWT Member of Parliament, came to visit our Federal Day school. He was a Liberal Member of Parliament from 1965 to 1972. I remembered his name as I love oranges! Never in a million years did I ever think I would have his job someday.

These events in my childhood seem to have raised my awareness of our nation and what a great country we live in. As I continued on with my education with residential school in Yellowknife and later in Ottawa, I became even more of a nationalist. I lived in Ottawa with my uncle Tagak Curley when he was the first president of Inuit Tapiriit of Canada. I did not fully understand what he was doing (I was 16!) but I realize now the tremendous work he and others were doing on behalf of Inuit. He brought many of the forefathers of the Inuit movement to his house in Ottawa where I lived. I was in the midst of great thinkers and knowledge holders!

In May 1975, I represented the NWT in a program called ‘Adventure in Citizenship’. It is similar to the one called ‘Encounters with Canada’ that brings young people from across Canada to Parliament Hill and to the House of Commons.

Adventure in Citizenship Program is hosted by the Rotary Club of Ottawa and brings 220 students leaders together each year from across the country to explore; what it means to be a Canadian, democracy, and responsible citizenship, which today I fight for in everything that I do.
We sat in the House of Commons in the MP’s seats to get a feel for the work they do. I sat in Seat #112. I know this as I had written it in the program we were given. That particular seat eventually became my seat as a Member of Parliament for Nunavut. I still have the seating arrangement with my name attached to that seat, as a reminder that our horizon can be as broad as we make it, that the opportunities are there for us as Canadians to take advantage of, if we have the desire to pursue them.

As a young mother, I made sure my sons knew our national anthem and about our great country. I watch the Olympics dedicatedly and cheer for my fellow countrymen every time. We celebrated Canada Day religiously in our family and participated in all the activities held in our community of Arviat. I was even appointed to the Canada Day Committee to represent Northwest Territories. I am a very patriotic Canadian and my family has been immersed in the Canada flag as it is everywhere in our home and on me.

I have moccasin slippers my mother made for me with the flag beaded on the front and knitted slippers a friend gave me. My niece gave me an apron with the flag on it, my granddaughter gave me a soft blanket with maple leaves all over it, my daughter-in-law found small towels with the flag, another niece a small wooden clock shaped like the maple leaf and I give a flag to one of my neighbours all the time so I can look out my window to see it blowing in the wind.

One incident in particular that sticks out in my mind is the Quebec referendum in October 1995. I was a young mother, not yet that involved in politics, and I remember seeing a large Canadian flag going through the streets in the Unity Rally being held by people supporting Canada being one whole country and against Quebec separating. Then a few days later, I was practically holding my breath watching the votes coming, so close and the sigh of relief when the final count showed 50.58% to 49.42%. I vowed to fight for a whole country at that time, but not sure how I was going to do it. Maybe that was one factor the Canadian flag played such a role in my life.

As I think back, I lived in the midst of many great events that shaped me and my thoughts and beliefs and steered me to the work I eventually did and continue to do. I don’t think these are coincidences but stepping stones to enable me to be a voice for people who have been left out of many conversations that profoundly affect their lives, whether it was the residential schools or the rapid changes to our communities as well as the erosion of our languages and culture. To be the voice for people like my parents and their generation that did not question any policy or law but were expected to be loyal Canadians at any price.
Since I left politics, I keep trying to find ways to work with others so they may recognize their potentials to the fullest. I am convinced there are many different ways of passing on knowledge and our education system has not, unfortunately, mastered the optimum learning environment. I look for ways to help in that role so we have more Inuit and Northerners taking part in our communities in different ways, whether encouraging more young people to finish high school and pursue secondary education, volunteer to help others, learn more about our culture and traditions plus how our governance system can incorporate Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and exercise their rights, to speak out and question our leaders and most of all defend their views and ideas to make our communities better places to live in and raise our children and grandchildren.

Because I am someone who loves her country and believes the opportunities should be equal to all Canadians, I want Canada to invest in the North in a way that fosters healthy communities. The Inuit that live in Nunavut and other Northerners that occupy our vast pan-northern lands have so much to offer this country. If we do strategic investments that enables full participation of our people, be part of the decision making processes and decide our own future, Canada would be so much richer for it. The knowledge is within us and we can be the deciders of our own destiny. We can make those policies and laws to exercise and defend our rights.

Let us be active in the sovereignty cause, that we have ‘grown’ into, more so by osmosis over time than by direct input. We can change that and directly input our views and solutions today.

Canada, we need you and you need us!
In unpacking the aforementioned, we can extract the supposition that sovereign, as well as its variant sovereignty, is an inherently polyvalent term. In its first, or overt, level of meaning, the word implies absolutism — a rule that is not only heritable, but beyond question. The term’s second level of meaning goes even further, implying the divine right of rule, thereby drawing the word into a numinous or spiritual sphere.

When I bear this definition in mind, while at once contemplating sovereignty in the context of Inuit culture, I am reminded of recent political rhetoric; discussions that have resurrected a famous quote by George Bernard Shaw: “The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

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It is no accident that I began this essay with mention of natural phenomena, pointing out the absurdities of borders and boundaries proximate to animals and weather; for too-often are we today deluded into weighing Humanity’s issues by a solely human standard. We adore our myth of the human species as independent of the earth; and when
circumstances, such as territorial conflict or climate change, terrify us, we go running to our own peculiarly human mirror.

Yet it is not a mirror!

What our species flees to, instead, is a portrait of us in our Sunday best, propped up and posed as though it were a perfect reflection. Do we not harvest or hunt, ingesting the yields of the earth? Do we not gather and build, wielding the material substance of the earth? Do our borders, in the majority of cases, not conform to the pattern of rivers, mountain ranges, coasts, tree-lines, lakes, and other geographical formations? I am left wondering, then, how we can possibly expect to find an accurate reflection — the truth of our species, whether repellent or majestic — via any device through which we hold ourselves apart and independent of the earth. As a concept, true independence denotes that which is non-associated and changeless (Blackburn, 1994: 182), since its being relies upon no exterior circumstance for definition. In truth, independence remains a concept alone, since we have yet to locate one independent phenomenon in our vast cosmos.

For readers who, in chewing on the paragraph above, wonder if I am already stampeding into so-called deep ecological (Fisher, 2008) statements (a label often used to characterize the ways in which Aboriginal Peoples regard ecology), the answer is a soft no. The negative is soft simply because I do respect, as most Inuit would, deep ecological statements such as those of Chief Seattle:

“What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to the man.... The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family.”

(Fisher, 2008: 482-483)

However, the Inuit perspective, rather than running along anthropomorphic lines (the earth as mother, animals as brethren, etc.), tends toward a less poetic yet equally cautionary lens through which to view the Land [Nuna]. As a result of this worldview, which I will expand upon in the following, Inuit are able to feel inextricably linked to the Nuna, even while exercising a particular sense of sovereignty free from the possessiveness and minacious defensiveness traditionally characterizing the term in international relations. One cannot fail to see some irony in the fact that, although the Inuit-derived super-culture spans the circumpolar world, Inuit themselves present a minimal profile in international sovereignty talks. If one were clever, however, one might stop to ask: How have Inuit survived for so long and so well, without industrialization, ringing ‘round an Arctic free (up until now, anyway) of traditional sovereignty definition?

The answer lies not in simple, anthropological generalizations (e.g., “There simply weren’t enough Inuit to bother fighting over anything...”), but in the arguably existential way by which Inuit view reality. In the anthropogenic world — that is, the world insofar as it is affected by and resulting from Man’s influence — the impossibility of actual independence exists as a philosophical concept. Inuit, however, have traditionally expressed their own awareness of this fact by characterizing the Nuna as nalunagtuaq (Griffiths, 2008: 75-82). As with many Inuktitut terms, the word is difficult to directly translate, literally meaning “that which causes confusion,” but subsuming that which is implied by “uncanny” or “ineffable.” The basic gist is that, for each iota of what one believes to be known about the Land (i.e., nature), there is a great deal more; surprises that have yet to trip us up. An age-old caution is further implied in this term: For it is not to say that there is nothing one can learn about the Land; but only that there is no end to what can be learned. Thus, Inuit are concerned as much with what they do not yet know, as with what they know for fact.

(Oh, I almost forgot to mention: Terms such as “sovereign” may have more than one meaning, but Inuit are the masters of multiple meanings. Many of their words
are not only polyvalent, but have dozens of senses in which they are used.)

Neither is it by accident that I followed mention of natural phenomena with the definition of sovereign, with special emphasis upon the numinous or supernatural implication behind the word. If I had one grain of rice for every time that authors, myself included, have emphasized the fact that Inuit have a presence in the Arctic dating back thousands of years, I would be able to make up a nice banquet of sushi. Regardless, the Inuit relationship with the Land, especially as one refers to the pre-colonial era, is frequently diminished in literature by pointing out shamanistic beliefs and/or traditional cosmology. Far from respecting Inuit for their knowledge of the Land and its trends — with sheer survival over millennia as proof of their capability — the majority of writers (all non-Inuit) tend to dismiss the culture as overly mystical and prone to supernatural hysteria. At best, Inuit are regarded as naive children of the snow, with a charming tendency toward “animism” (the belief that all natural objects possess a life of their own); always fearful and wary of a spirit or two hiding under their beds. In such thinking, Inuit are painted as having disqualified themselves from any arena wherein they might offer a mature opinion, since their relationship to the Land is superstitious; numinous; neither objective nor empirical.

For those who missed it, though, please recall that the Oxford definition of “sovereign” links the word not only to highest authority, but to God. So it seems that, since sovereignty harkens to the divine, Inuit are not the only ones who access numinous conceptualization in regard to the Land. Why, then, are the usages of “sovereign” and “sovereignty” not dismissed as superstitious terms? Indeed, the weed of unconscious hypocrisy too-often invades the garden of intellectual endeavour, especially when a dominant power — believing in its own myths, such as that of objectivity — sets cultures on the scale for comparison. One of my personal favourites, in thinking of examples of such probably-unconscious hypocrisy, is Asen Balikci’s The Netsilik Eskimo. The book’s epilogue discusses the ebb in what were deemed to be “devilish” (1970: 250) activities (e.g., shamanism [angakkuuniq], traditional prohibitions [pittaliniit], drum-dancing [qilautjat]) among the so-called Netsilik Eskimos, adding:

“Although the Netsilik were unable to grasp the deep significance of Catholic dogma and ritual, the intellectual atmosphere in the community became gradually and rigidly enframed by the periodicity of Catholic ritual.”

(1970: 250)

The author, in soon after discussing the school system, goes on to state:

“It should not be forgotten... that the school was responsible for unveiling [sic] the mysteries of civilization.”

(1970: 253)

Unveiling? Mysteries? Yet, were we not to suppose that an “intellectual atmosphere” had been brought to the community? The poetry of mysteries being unveiled constitutes no less than religious, therefore numinous/supernatural, language. I am left wondering, then, why the numinous poetry of a continent’s multi-millennial occupants — Inuit — is discounted as “devilish,” while that of visitors who count their occupancy in mere centuries is considered “intellectual.”

But then, perhaps one of us is sovereign; that is, ruling by the will of God.

Nalunaktuq, indeed.

This is the stage, I suppose, wherein I should plunge into an examination of the Inuit concept of sovereignty; and I will — at least, to the extent to which I am able. Let us begin with the simple question: “Do Inuit have a word for sovereignty?” The answer, depending on how we look at it, is a tenuous “yes.” Yet, that answer lies in immediate peril upon deconstruction of the terminology upon which it is based.
Sovereignty

If one undertakes the simple exercise of going online, to the Public Works and Services Canada website, specifically to the Translation Bureau’s “Archived Land Claims Glossary — English-Inuktitut-French Glossary”¹ (prepared with the assistance of Nunavut Arctic College), one will find a pseudo-official term for sovereignty. The term happens to be aulatsigunnarniq. Now, before I go further, you need to know some things about me. I am almost sixty years of age. I have been interpreting and translating since I was a teenage girl. I have been publishing in Inuktitut for some decades. I have taught interpretation-translation for NAC. I am neither all that wise, nor some shining thread in the tapestry of Humanity, but I can say one thing about translation: Never before now, in this complex sociopolitical milieu, have interpreter-translators been so required to invent Inuktitut terminology. The great problem, for interpreter-translators, is the typical client assumption that all languages have equivalencies in vocabulary. In other words, if a word for “apple” exists in X culture, then Y culture on the opposite side of the earth should possess an equivalent term. But what if Y culture simply does not have apples? It is then up to an unenviable interpreter-translator to invent such a term, generally via a strange amalgamation of pre-existent words (this explains oddity-terms in Inuktitut; such chimeras as aqiggirjuaq, or “huge ptarmigan,” to describe a chicken) (Spalding, 1998: 11).

The term aulatsigunnarniq, for sovereignty, is just such a chimeric, make-do word. Let us bless the interpreter-translator who invented it, for doing his or her best with a concept that is, as we can see above, strange even in its English usage. Nevertheless, the literal meaning of aulatsigunnarniq is a far departure from either the overt or subtextual meaning of sovereignty. Firstly, the root of the word is aulajuq: in the finest tradition of the quite action-oriented Inuktitut language, “that which moves.” The modified aulatsi is “making things move.” The latter half of our pretend-sovereignty word is gunnnarniq, literally “ability to do so.”

As a whole, then, aulatsigunnarniq actually means “the ability to make things move.”

Does this denote any of the absolutism or divine right of rule connoted in sovereignty? Obviously, it does not; so where, then, is the traditional Inuktitut term for sovereignty? How did the ancestors of Inuit denote sovereignty at all; and is sovereignty, as understood by their descendants, an inherited or newly-learned concept?

Before we can explore such questions, we must lodge firmly in mind that aforementioned fallacy in the assumption of terminological equivalencies. Armed with this fact, we may further bear in mind that, like whales, birds, water, air, Inuit once expanded unchecked across the northern curve of this continent, including what is now Greenland, with no concept of boundaries. Based on archaeological evidence in tandem with oral tradition, this period of explorative dynamism is thought to have been most vibrant around 800-1200 C.E. This generalized super-culture (often termed Thule by archaeologists) seems to have settled into patterns of tradition that remained concrete over at least the next four centuries, surviving with little change into the 20th Century (Dickason, 2002: 67-92). The millennia have seen Inuit further develop into diverse subcultures, having various styles of subsistence, resulting in numerous variant dialects of Inuktitut. How is this possible, though, without the concept of political borders — and subsequent sovereignty — that wide-ranging and varied populations might seem to demand?

The answer is that, in a world of shifting ice and capricious weather patterns (Asimov, 1991: 129-161), in which the movements of animals with no regard for borders determined where and when one might eat, Inuit substituted cosmological and existential factors for political boundaries. Or, as one might alternately see it, they simply recognized such factors for their present relevance, giving

little thought to concepts that were of no use to them. There was no need to partition or fence in that which was *nalunaqtuq*; nor would such an idea have seemed, to pre-colonial Inuit (indeed, to some modern ones), like other than sheer absurdity. Man, as previously stated, was not viewed in separateness from the Land. Rather, the factors present in the *Nuna’s* existence, Man being but one, was viewed as a continually flowing system; and it was assumed that a disruption in this system, the loss or inability of any given factor to harmonize adequately with other factors, could educe catastrophe characterized by the Land’s typically *nalunaqtuq* nature. In what form, exactly, would such catastrophe manifest? No one could guess — though famine and disease were looming possibilities. That was the point: Inuit had lived long enough with the *Nuna* to know that, for everything they had learned about it, there was much more that could turn around and surprise them. Time and again, colonial newcomers have dashed themselves against the Land’s *nalunaqtuq* nature over a few short centuries, their journals recording curses in harshest invective against what is apparently perceived as a refusal of the *Nuna* to submit (to what, they never exactly say; perhaps they mean divine right). By contrast, over *thousands of years*, Inuit have come to respect every aspect of the Land, including its *nalunaqtuq* nature. Indeed, despite a reticence to perceive it as a place of boundaries and borders, they have come to love it, referring to the *Nuna* as though it were home beyond home.

The key to such thinking lies in the difference between anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic patterns. Many might argue that people are people ("folks is just folks," as one Mountie I knew used to say), though this supposition could not be further from the truth. Large urban environments, as opposed to fluid “wilderness” or “nature,” engender radically different expectations from the world; different realities, so to speak. Among peoples of anthropogenic bent — let us resort to AN, for short — there grows the expectation that an environment is responsive to the human will. AN peoples, for example, may not have actually constructed the walls under which they shelter at night, though they trust that a larger human will is responsible for doing so. They may not have personally ordered their city into tidy blocks and neighbourhoods, but they have faith that such man-made geometry is reflective of a greater natural order (i.e., Euclidian geometry or *logos*). The roads they travel on follow principles that must be observed, for the sake of their existence, and so such patterns become lauded with terms such as “disciplined,” “tidy,” “orderly,” etc. The ANs can even become so used to such patterns that they no longer bother with other than internal observation. The AN geometry becomes self-reflexive; so, that which is disciplined, tidy, orderly, even *perfect*, is declared via the unconscious assumption of an AN standard. The AN standard may be further extended to assess all of nature, known or imagined, so that that which does not conform to the expected geometry is simply deemed undisciplined, untidy, disorderly, and imperfect. Heaven itself is envisioned as a place of ideal structure, reflecting the AN-standard geometry. Hell is a violation of such. Indeed, that which lies too far afield of the AN is dismissed altogether as “chaos” or “evil.”

(As with the assumption that Netsilik practices were devilish.)

Compare the aforementioned with what we might term the NAN — non-anthropogenic — worldview, including that of the Inuit. Unlike the AN mind, in which human will almost exclusively shapes reality, the NAN mind relies upon responsiveness to a reality outside the human condition. The NAN mind cannot expect to impose geometry upon the world, since it is the world itself dictating all conditions. NAN prosperity, then, becomes contingent upon observation and adaptation to exterior, non-human trends, rather than to interior ones established by a collective human will. The overt geometry of the AN is therefore absent in the NAN, who resorts instead to an implied necessity dictated by the non-human world; the fractal geometry, we might say, that is inherent in actual.
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nature. The NAN, therefore, possesses neither the inclination nor need to extend such responsive, adaptive geometry to the cosmos, since implied necessity is learned from the cosmos itself. In this sense, the NAN may at first seem like a passive player, at the mercy of a capricious world — though this is but an AN way of perceiving the NAN. In truth, the NAN is an active participant in a dynamic system; and therefore not striving against any perceivable chaos, but rather working with and within an acceptable whole that has little to do with human absolutism.

The two mindsets can be summarized as follows:

In the AN worldview, absence of manmade order equals chaos.

In the NAN worldview, absence of manmade order equals default to universal (i.e., natural) order.

Inuit have traditionally expressed their own NAN experience, their participation with the world’s whole, through cosmological symbolism; a traditional philosophy, we might say, that manifests their particular perspective toward sovereignty. Yet, since we have already demonstrated the mysticism inherent in sovereignty — even in its English usage — why should we now sneer at Inuit symbolism?

Four Greco-Roman elements (fire, earth, air, water) recur as powerful symbols (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1996: 379-382) throughout Occidental history; five, if we are to think of Asia. In Inuit culture, only three elements serve to symbolize the aforementioned “universal” order, the NAN experience of Inuit, albeit so pervasively that they affect the subtle structure through which one relates to the world. We might anticipate non-Inuit answers to the aforementioned, such as: “The Western world has moved on and elemental symbolism is relevant only in non-empirical forums; so, why would we care about Inuit symbols?”

However, we must bear in mind that any such questions, as well as their subsequent assumptions, are culturally biased and oriented toward an assumed supremacy/standard impelled by post-colonial dominance (e.g., the Oxford-defined sovereignty). If we are to demonstrate either interest or respect toward a culture that is neither defined nor bound by an AN standard (e.g., Inuit), we must show regard for that culture’s preferred symbols of definition.

If we are to advance in our understanding of Inuit-defined sovereignty, the first important symbol we must register is that of Water [Imaq; alternately, Tariaq (“Sea”)]. Most cultures associate Water with life, though Inuit associate this element with a quite specific kind of life. A sufficiently large selection of primary Inuit unipkaartuat (traditional tales combining ethical didacticism with cosmological and anagogic insight) will eventually evince repetitive, elemental motifs. One of the most common motifs, that of Water, is associated with the raw and basic qualities of animal life — the source of sustenance itself; and by extension, appetite. At the heart of this Water element is the foundation of life: the animals that are of the Water, which must give of themselves in order that human life endures (their seat, or centre of power, is symbolized by the anagogic figure of Nuliajuk (Qitsualik and Tinsley, 2008: 27-35), a wrathful figure who is the very progenitor of sea mammals). Via

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3 Nuliajuk was easily the most important supernatural figure in pre-colonial Inuit cosmology (and, to an arguable degree, remains so even in the face of Abrahamic influence). She has been termed a “goddess”, though she is more properly a “demigoddess”; having, in myth, been a headstrong girl forced into a bad marriage [with an evil spirit], prior to brutal betrayal by her father. As a result of the latter event, her fingers were chopped to pieces before she sank to the ocean floor. With the segments of her fingers having transformed into the various sea mammals upon which Inuit yet depend, and with Nuliajuk [mistakenly termed Sedna (from sanna, “below”) by missionaries] subsequently despising treacherous humankind, she reserves the power to “withhold” or “hide” her “children” [the sea mammals] from communities in which many pittailinit (“taboos”) have been broken. It is up to the camp angakkuaq [shaman, or “ecstatic one”], at such dire times, to bodily bind himself, spiritually descending [in nakkaaniq, “submergence”] to Nuliajuk’s watery court, where he may appease her by combing her hair (and, in occasional cases, sleeping with her). Should the angakkuaq please Nuliajuk [doing so quickly, while his ikajurtit (“spirit helpers”) fight off Nuliajuk’s hostile court of spirits], she will release the sea mammals from her grasp, allowing the angakkuaq’s community to once again hunt with success.
this symbolism, by implication, Water is at once primal passion and the very twitch of life. In the human being, those various facets that make up an entire person, Water’s symbolic statement is reflected in the uumaniq, the simple stuff of life common to both animals and humans. This is the very presence of life and the passion for continued living. By extension, it is animal instinct — an acceptable fact and necessity for living existence, bearing none of the shame or vileness with which it is traditionally viewed in Abrahamic thought.

The second element (if we were to number them) is the Land itself, the Nuna. In classic Inuit thought, the Land is presented as a middle-point of cosmological structure, a partition between the first and third elements (see below). Animals, for example, that typically stride the Land, such as polar bears, are seized upon as important symbols of balance and awareness. As human beings also occupy the Land, it is no accident that, in symbolic thought, the Land is typically associated with the aware or “human” essence itself, known as inua [alternately, innua]. While inua is a root used extensively in denoting anything human (hence Inuit, or singular Inuk), it is also a significant factor in Inuit philosophy, being the human potentiality that may manifest or lie latent in all of existence, dependent upon related human awareness directed at a given aspect of that existence. An egg, for example, may possess inua, but only insofar as it is lent inua by an awareness (e.g., humanness or inua) that is regarding it. Inua is therefore transitory and relative, though powerful. It is the key to Inuit anagogic thought, so that one accident that one must be careful of how and where one directs one’s mind; so that a weak or undisciplined awareness (inua), enslaved to passion (uumaniq), does not stimulate the Strength inherent in the Land [Nunaup Sanngininga] in a negative manner (Tinsley and Qitsualik, 2011: 5-6).

The third element is Sky [Sila, alternatively, Hila], arguably the most important concept in classic Inuit thought. Simple access to Alex Spalding’s wonderful Inuktitut: A Multialectal Outline Dictionary reveals this term to possess 96 variant meanings; occurring in senses that are intellectual, biological, psychological, environmental, locational, and geographical. Its most basic meanings include: “air”, “atmosphere”, “sky”, “intellect”, “wisdom”, “spirit”, “earth”, “universe”, and “all” (Spalding, 1998: 133-134). I might add that Sila can also denote God (and let us be reminded, at this point, of the implied divinity in our Oxford definition of sovereignty). Sky or Sila, then, is therefore a super-concept, both immanent and transcendent in scope. As such a panentheistic concept, it is therefore linked to the human facet of anirniq [“breath”]. Anirniq, like uumaniq, is life. However, while uumaniq is temporary and specific to animation of a given animal/human body, anirniq is the impersonal and imperishable aspect of life; symbolically, a life-breath that is merely borrowed from the Sky (in concordant symbolism, that Highest of Breaths) for a period of time. The anirniq-Sila relationship is therefore one of part-whole, with the notions of separation and distinction, in this matter, rendered a matter of perspective alone, and questions of true birth or death rendered faulty. While some deep symbolism of the anirniq-Sila relationship can be found in Neoplatonic and mystic Abrahamic thought, it might be best compared to the atman-Brahman relationship (Mascaro, 1965: 61-96) found in Hinduism.

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5 This is an impersonal power, responsive to will and emotion, that finds variable expression in the oral lore of Inuit. Inuit did not believe in magic, as per the common definition, though they did believe in what we might term a subtle ‘psycho-mechanics,’ normally latent in nature, which could find exterior expression when the human microcosm stimulated the macrocosm of the Water-Land-Sky complex. To the author’s knowledge, Nunaup Sanngininga was first phrased, as such, by the late Gideon Qitsualik of Pond Inlet, Nunavut.

6 This is not to say the orthodox or normative expressions of the Abrahamic religions (i.e., Christianity, Islam, Judaism), but rather the anagogic/esoteric traditions, representative studies of which can be found, respectively, in Bernard McGinn’s The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism, John Baldock’s The Essence of Sufism, and Adin Steinsaltz’s The Thirteen Petalled Rose.
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The triune complex of Water-Land-Sky urges, then, is not only accessed by Inuit as a way to view relation between environmental forces, but also psychological and spiritual ones; hence, the complex of Water-Land-Sky is reflected in the human condition as **uumaniq-inua-anirniq** (e.g., life instinct — awareness — higher potential). The balance and interaction between these urges creates what is known as a “person” (actually, these urges are found everywhere in different admixtures, but Inuit focus on how they manifest in the human). The interaction between Water and Land (in the human, **uumaniq + inua**), may therefore be said to result in isuma: the personal thoughts and feelings unique to an individual. On the other side — though not in conflict, but balance — the interaction between Land and Sky (in the human, **inua + anirniq**), may be said to result in tarniq: the subtle selfhood or “soul” of an individual. Thus, in each case, is the midpoint, individually **inua**, cosmologically **Nuna**, the urge that is refined and defined by oscillation between infra- and ultra-personal aspects of selfhood. Further, we can now observe that — just as it is the substance of the Land, modified by the accidents of Water and Sky interplay, that must preoccupy Inuit for the sake of workaday subsistence — it is the substantial humanness, modified by the accidents of uumaniq and anirniq interplay, that must remain of interest to Inuit on psychological, spiritual, and social levels.

In the aforementioned context of what we might term “Inuit urgist philosophy” (though it has never been systematized until perhaps now), we can easily identify NAN tendencies; that is, the Inuit trend toward assumption that a non-human, pre-existent, oftentimes uncanny (**nalunaqtuq**), geometry suggests interior structure for the human. Indeed, if there is any natural mirror in which Humanity may view itself, according to Inuit understanding, it is that very cosmological reflection of **inua**: the **Nuna**. The concept is well-conveyed in the words of Mohandas K. (“Mahatma”) Gandhi:

“One should see oneself in the whole world and the whole world in oneself, and act toward others accordingly. The idea of nonviolence had its origin in this realization — that when human life is full of suffering, we should cause suffering to none. As a man thinks, so he becomes, and therefore those whose minds are bent on being the same to all achieve that sameness and become one...”

(2009: 83 and 115)

Compare Gandhi’s statements with those of Inuit elders Cornelius Nutaraq, Henry Kablaalik, and Felix Pisuk, respectively:

“You have to know about surviving on the land and you have to know how to live on it... I can say many things about the different things we go through while on earth. There are many things we have to go through while we are on this earth. We are all going to go through different experiences here on earth. I am much older than you but I am still learning new things all the time. We have to protect our own person, our own self, all the time. There are many people on this earth. Some people are not able to forget what they are told; others are able to do so. This inability to live in harmony gets in the way. This comes between them, and they cannot connect mentally or emotionally.”

(Kappianaq and Nutaraq, 2001: 1, 165-166)

“If my mind is good, my soul will be as well. If my soul is more at ease, my body will be more relaxed.”

(Aupilaarjuk et al. 2002: 18)

“...I was told that nothing, not even the smallest little worm, should be caused pain and I believe this. Out here we are listening to each other. We all have power. I was told to take care of others, whether male or female, and whether they were children or elders. I was to take care of them as if they were my spouse or my...”
Yet, what is meant by “well”? As Inuit traditionally acknowledge that the world is transitory, changeful, its forces of change continually undo whatever forces that happen, at a given moment, to collaborate in creating what we term “stability” (really, a very AN concept). Elders have never balked from this realization, since their characteristic NAN attitudes allow them to look toward Water, Land, and Sky for cues as to how human beings may remain healthy. But, now, what do we mean by health? We mean that, since the isuma is prone to the influence of human nature, it can be controlled to a certain extent; hence, it must be very carefully crafted and nurtured so that it may contribute to a larger synergy that is human existence as a whole. Meaning, in this quite NAN philosophy, then becomes as important as law. It is vital that the healthful human pattern cultivates awareness (e.g., inua), rather than mere behaviour. The reason for this is that inua becomes incorporated into the very isuma of an individual, so that, where the individual interacts with society, he/she becomes a new source of inua to other individuals. As this trend compounds, healthful human society becomes an expanding system, recursive and self-perpetuating. Blindness to this philosophy is the reason why so many AN-based scholars have been unable to satisfactorily answer the question: Without the guiding paradigms of either religion or government, how were pre-colonial Inuit able to live healthily and with so little conflict?

Indeed, pre-colonial Inuit have been viewed with some suspicion in the past, their lifestyle compared even to communism; though, in truth, classic Inuit society is more akin to the opposite of communism (by that, I do not mean capitalism). In the communist model, individuality defers to the supposed whole (Farb, 1988: 34-54), whereas the goal of Inuit philosophy is to strengthen — indeed, celebrate — individuality, in surety that larger systems are reflective by nature; that the health of society will iterate the health of its individuals; that in a changeful world, the human being must never cease to develop. By contrast, mere behaviourism is bound to break down, since behaviours

own children and I have always followed this. That is all I have to say.”

(Aupilaarjuk et al. 2002: 26-29)

It is of further importance to note that not one aspect of our triune cosmological structure, nor its evolutes as they occur in the human worldview, is shamanic in nature. Over many years of exteriorized Inuit study, angakkuit [“shamans”] have too-often been mislabelled as leaders, priests, even keepers of sacred knowledge. Factually, they served in no such dedicated capacity, but were an esoteric trade apart from and, at times, overlapping with normative Inuit society. We must remain mindful that the aforementioned worldview, complete with its powerful and polyvalent symbolism, was accessible to all Inuit.

We have already noted the isuma [loosely, “personality”] and tarniq [loosely, “soul”] that spring from variant interactions between the aforementioned urges, edging us closer to the basis for a particularly Inuit view of sovereignty. The evolutes of isuma and tarniq come closest, perhaps, to qualifying as sacred concepts in Inuit belief, and are continually mentioned in language of deepest respect. This is unsurprising, considering that both concepts define human individuality, very much as if they were crafted to express the phenomenal and numinous facets of a given selfhood. We cannot concern ourselves overmuch, in this work, with the numinous side of the human (tarniq), though the phenomenal (isuma) concerns us greatly. As the facet that is phenomenal and therefore accessible to human will, concern for isuma becomes, for Inuit, the psycho-technology through which one may move the human impulses toward health: of the human; of the society; of the material world; even of the spiritual sphere. Allow me to repeat the words of Henry Kablaalik above, with appropriate terms inserted:

“If my mind [isuma] is good, my soul [tarniq] will be as well.”

(Aupilaarjuk et al. 2002: 18)
reflecting blind obedience are not guided by healthy awareness. As such behaviours are not impelled by the synergy of meaning and will, they are too-easily hijacked by raw uumaniq (with its characteristic fear, hunger, and wrath), and are thus destined to become discordant.

Here, at last, we have it: Isuma is significant because it is the result of uumaniq-inua interaction, for good or ill. This, at last, must suggest to us our Inuit-based definition of sovereignty. For we have already established that it is absurd, in the NAN understanding of classic Inuit thought, that a human may possess any level of supreme or divine control over the shifting Land (not to mention Water and Sky). Independence — that is, changeless and ultimate existence — has been and ever will be the great fantasy of the phenomenal mind; a ghost-concept that always seems superficially plausible, while dancing just out of reach. In truth, the Oxford definition of sovereignty is a paradox: the suggestion that changeless conceptualization can apply to changeful phenomena. Inuit thought, rather, rejects this paradox, insisting upon its own changeful conceptualization relative to the one changeful phenomenon within its influence: namely, the human condition.

This is sovereignty, by the Inuit definition: the True Human [Inummarik], spoken of with highest regard in Inuit culture; the Inummarik, clutching at courage and freedom, as a falcon grips its prey; the Inummarik, whose inua blossoms within like summer flowers; the Inummarik, whose summer thaws the winter of ignorance.

The Inummarik, too, is a ghost-concept, a model alone, though it is one toward which Inuit have aspired since ancient times. This model is the free human, sovereign over the self, respectful of the self-sovereignty of others. It is the human whose awareness not only renders self-sovereignty possible, but comprehends how self-soverieties — those of others in society — synergize toward a system of self-perpetuating health.

The Inummarik believes that:

1. what one truly owns in the world is his/her own isuma;
2. the purpose of reaching the True Human state is to build upon ancestral teachings;
3. authority is commensurate to the degree to which one builds upon ancestral teachings;
4. ancestral knowledge was based upon a web of experiences gained from observation of Water, Land, and Sky;
5. observation and subsequent awareness provides the only firm basis for thought and action;
6. the human being is never a finished object, but a manifestation of constant potential;
7. the human mind, with its multi-dimensional capacities, is always the best repository for knowledge;
8. as truth is elusive and never satisfactory, the True Human mind must never become complacent in a given belief;
9. the True Human is at all times responsible for his/her own knowledge, as well as how he/she perceives the knowledge of others;
10. there is no idea or concept without potential value; but...
11. ideas and concepts gain value only as they achieve utility; and...
12. there is no time in which ideas and concepts should cease to be tested;
13. the universal geometry of nature is pattern within pattern, so that one can never focus on a given pattern to the exclusion of neighbouring ones;
14. ownership is only of significance if it denotes permanence; and...
15. since permanence is conceptual, the True Human cannot achieve actual ownership; but...
16. the True Human endeavours to be harmonious with the Land; since...
17. the Land (i.e., the entirety of nature and its trends) is nalumaqtoq;
18. as harmony naturally arises from collaborative awareness, disharmony results only from lack of awareness;
19. the Land is a pattern, both graspable and subtle in nature;
20. the True Human is a pattern, both graspable and subtle in nature;
21. society is a pattern, both graspable and subtle in nature;
22. there is Water, and there is life in the True Human;
23. there is Land, and there is awareness in the True Human;
24. there is Sky, and there is spirit in the True Human;
25. Water, Land, and Sky are changeless as concepts;
26. Water, Land, and Sky are changeful in fact;
27. the True Human’s potential is unlocked by adaptation to Water-Land-Sky, whether in concept or fact; for...
28. Water-Land-Sky interaction, as a fact, is the source of life; and...
29. Water-Land-Sky interaction, as a concept, is the source of awareness;
30. there is no perfect True Human, but there is no human who is not strengthened by trying to become a True Human.

Sovereignty, then, is truth. For Inuit, it is the self-maintained right to define themselves, mind and soul: by the Water; on the Land; under the Sky. Inuit, who know the Nuna so well, cannot define sovereignty via mastery of their home, but rather of their own hearts. For they never owned the Nuna — not in the sense of apportioning or weighing its utility — but were blessed with enjoyment of it; with wisdom gleaned from it; healthful lives modelled from it. It is tragic that we must now speak in terms of mastery, rather than joy or wisdom or healthful existence. The Nuna is like a patient teacher, voice never heard amid the squabbles of angry children.

As for whatever human power claims its Oxford definition of sovereignty over the Land, I wish it the very best, and hope that it will at least consider the concepts of stewardship and responsibility in maintaining its presence. After all, when one runs downhill very quickly, one has less time to watch for stones that turn underfoot.

It comes down to awareness.

I will simply end with a few words from the Bhagavad-Gita, which the aforementioned Gandhi loved so dearly, and I think most Inuit elders would agree with:

“The Self cannot be pierced by weapons or burned by fire; water cannot wet it, nor the wind dry it. The Self cannot be pierced or burned, made wet or dry. It is everlasting and infinite, standing on the motionless foundations of eternity. The Self is unmanifested, beyond all thought, beyond all change. Knowing this, you should not grieve.”

(Easwaran, 1985: 91)

“They are forever free who renounce all selfish desires and break away from the ego-cage of ‘I,’ ‘me’ and ‘mine’ to be united... This is the supreme state. Attain to this, and pass from death to immortality.”

(Easwaran, 1985: 97)

Pijariiqpunga [“All I have to say”].

Rachel A. Qitsualik was born on the northern edge of Baffin Island, before the establishment of Arctic communities. With her husband Sean, she has published many hundreds of articles on pre-colonial culture, as well as several books for adult and youth readers. Many of her publications are accessed as university course content worldwide; in 2012, she received a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal in recognition of her work.
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References:


Sovereignty and Citizenship: Inuit and Canada, 1670-2012

Alastair Campbell

“It is difficult to describe what colonialism feels like to people who have never experienced it. I am almost 65 years old. All my life, I have lived under Canada’s colonial regime. I attended residential schools. I experienced forced relocation. My team of husky dogs was slaughtered by the RCMP. I have witnessed the destruction of the environment and the endangerment of wildlife in my homeland. I have lived under governments with policies to assimilate my people, to destroy our language and culture. I have lived under governments that insisted I must ‘surrender’ any other rights to my homeland before they would agree to a land claims settlement. In the past, my people have been considered as ‘something less than human beings’. The media, in the early days described the Arctic as a ‘wasteland where nobody lives’. What about the Inuit who have occupied the Arctic for millennia?” (Amagoalik, 2012).

Colonialism, as described above by John Amagoalik, characterizes the relationship of Inuit to the state structures into which they have been incorporated, for a period of more than three hundred years. For those who are subject to it, colonialism is a relationship of disempowerment. Its features change: it is sometimes visible only in the highest state actions, but in other aspects it can determine the minutiae of daily life. Ultimately, it is not a constant. In the last third of the Twentieth Century Inuit have, as individuals, gradually acquired the rights of other citizens; as collectivities they have negotiated new relationships with the Canadian state. They have undertaken, in small and in large ways, to unravel the colonial domination to which they have been subject: ultimately the challenge is to complete this process.

Generally European colonialism dates from the expansion of the Atlantic European nations, beginning in the Fifteenth Century. As they discovered new lands, the various European powers asserted interests in them and sovereignty over them, against their rivals and irrespective of the local inhabitants. In 1979 Justice Mahoney put it plainly when he said:

“History around Baker Lake began with Henry Hudson’s voyage into Hudson and James Bays in 1610 and 1611. That voyage constituted the basis for England’s claims to that part of Canada.”

(Hamlet of Baker Lake, 1980: #26)
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Mahoney was well aware that Aboriginal history in the area extended back through the Thule, Dorset and Pre-Dorset cultures. However, he was seized with the question of Aboriginal rights in the “Baker Lake Area”, and in that context one of his essential criteria was:

“That the occupation was an established fact at the time a sovereignty was asserted by England.”

(Hamlet of Baker Lake, 1980: #96)

Thus, in the Baker Lake Area:

“time immemorial’ runs back from the date of assertion of English sovereignty over the territory which was probably no earlier than 1610 and certainly no later than May 2, 1670.”

(Hamlet of Baker Lake, 1980: #92)

May 2, 1670 was when King Charles II granted a Charter to Prince Rupert and seventeen other noblemen and gentlemen, comprising “the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudsons Bay.”

Over a vast area encompassing all of the rivers, streams and lakes flowing into Hudson Bay, the Company was granted enormously broad powers. These included a trade monopoly, exclusive fishing rights, all mineral rights, and appointment as the “Absolute Lordes and Proprietors” of the territory. As well, the Company had conferred on it the right to make “peace or Warre with any Prince or People whatsoever that are not Christians” and to “recompense themselves upon the Goodes Estates or people of those partes.” In essence, the Company was made “virtually a sovereign state subject only to the supreme authority of the Crown of England” (Ray and Freeman, 1978: 13). The domain was named “Rupert’s Land”.

The Charter, asserting sovereignty over barely known territories, is a vital document for the understanding of later Canadian events. Three centuries later, its basic meaning for Aboriginal peoples was argued before courts. Did the Charter extinguish Aboriginal rights and title throughout the vast area to which it applied? Did it mean that mineral exploration or massive hydro developments could be undertaken without regard for the land use of the Crees and Inuit? In the James Bay context, Justice Turgeon, of the Quebec Court of Appeal, overturned an injunction against the James Bay Development Corporation and Hydro Quebec in 1973 with the remark that “All Aboriginal right in the territory, if it ever existed, was extinguished by the decision of the King” (La Société de Développement de la Baie James, 1980-1991: 386).

Both the federal government and the mining companies echoed Turgeon’s conclusion in the Baker Lake case, referred to above, but Justice Mahoney did not find for them in this regard:

“The presence in Rupert’s Land of aboriginal inhabitants with aboriginal property rights was contemplated. The Charter did not purport to supersede, with English law, the laws by which the aborigines governed themselves, nor did it authorize the Company to legislate in respect of aborigines nor to adjudicate in respect of them or their laws”


Further:

“the Company, in its ownership of Rupert’s Land, aside from its trading posts, was very much in the position of the Crown. Its occupation of the territory in issue was, at most, notional.”

(Hamlet of Baker Lake, 1980: #102).

The Company’s presence in the North was indeed restricted. In 1682 it had only about thirty employees and officers scattered around Hudson Bay. By 1749, almost eighty years after the Company’s establishment, there were only four or five forts on the coast and about one hundred
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and twenty regular employees (Smith, 1952: 324-5). Trading with Inuit, along the Arctic coast, was primarily with whalers and the Company’s trade in this area did not become significant before the first quarter of the Twentieth Century.

Notional as the Company’s presence may have been, its Charter served it well in 1870, when Rupert’s Land and the North-western Territory was transferred, by the British government, from the Company to Canada. For the surrender of its Charter of two centuries, the Company received a payment of £300,000 from the Canadian government, up to 50,000 acres\(^2\) around its fur trade posts, and other land provisions that allowed it to benefit enormously from the agricultural development and settlement of the prairies. Finally, the Company was relieved of any responsibility to deal with “Indian claims” (Cameron and Gomme, 1991: 29-33).

Canada’s main interest, at the time of this transfer, was in the prairies and British Columbia. At the time of confederation:

“For the first time, both Maritimers and Canadians were becoming excitedly aware of the enormous inheritance of property which was still left to Great Britain on the new continent”

(Creighton, 1957: 271).

The goal was extension to the Pacific Ocean, and in this regard the Arctic was incidental.

The 1867 Address to Her Majesty from the Senate and House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada therefore petitioned the British government for the transfer of Rupert’s Land and the North-western Territory. Yet, although incidental to the petition, the Aboriginal peoples were referred to in the Address. In 1763, through the Royal Proclamation, Great Britain had placed “the several Nations or Tribes of Indians” under her protection, and had provided for a process of formal land surrender to the Crown, prior to settlement. Such land-ceding treaties had been negotiated in parts of Ontario and, through the Address, Canada promised that:

“Upon the transference of the territories in question to the Canadian Government, the claims of the Indian tribes to compensation for lands required for purposes of settlement will be considered and settled in conformity with the equitable principles which have uniformly governed the British Crown in its dealings with the aborigines”

(Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985a).

The British North America Act provided in section 91 (24) that the federal government had jurisdiction over “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians”, and treaties with the First Nations in the prairies immediately followed.\(^3\) These were extended northward as gold, oil and other resources became known. From 1870 to 1929, eleven “numbered treaties” were signed from northern Ontario, across the prairies to northwestern British Columbia, and down the Mackenzie Valley. No attempt was made to negotiate treaties with Inuit apart from some peripheral discussions with Inuvialuit in the Mackenzie delta.

The North, for the time being, was not included in this process. It was not suitable for agriculture, and the fur trade required the continuation of the Aboriginal relation to the land, simply to function. Matthiason comments that, for Inuit, the transfer of Rupert’s Land and the North-western Territory was “nothing more than a formality... and would remain such for the remainder of the nineteenth century” (Matthiason, 1992). The same may be said of Great Britain’s transfer to Canada of all the Arctic Islands that had not formed part of Rupert’s Land.

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2 Approximately 20 hectares.

3 In 1939 the Supreme Court of Canada found that the term "Indian," as used in the British North America Act, 1867 included Inuit, since Inuit were called Indians when the Act was passed. See Re Eskimos, Canadian Native Law Cases, eds. Slattery, B and Stelck, S.E. (1980-1991). Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Native Law Centre, Vol. 5, Pp.123-149.
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The Arctic Islands, now part of Canada, were incorporated into the “North-West Territories” (N-W.T.). This comprised all the lands which were not included within the existing provinces. It was a vast territory from which provinces, or new territories were formed — sometimes described as “carved out” — or from which land was transferred to existing provinces.\(^4\) Thus, Manitoba, in 1870, and Alberta and Saskatchewan, in 1905, were all formed from the N-W.T. Manitoba was extended into the Territories in 1877, in 1881, and in 1912; Quebec was extended northwards in 1898 and 1912; and Ontario in 1889 and 1912. The 1912 extensions moved the three provinces to the shores of Hudson Bay, and this was the last provincial adjustment into the Territories. Yukon was established as a separate territory, on the heels of the gold rush, in 1898.

Though much affected by some of these adjustments, particularly the northwards extension of Quebec, it was only in the creation of Nunavut, in 1999, that Inuit had a voice.

Indeed, from 1905 to 1951 there were no representative political institutions in the Northwest Territories (NWT). It was only in 1951 that three elected members were added to the Territorial Council (later, the Legislative Assembly), and these were all from the Mackenzie Valley, and initially all non-Aboriginal. Technically, Inuit could vote in territorial elections, but as there no seats in their areas, the right was purely formal.

Given later developments, it is ironic that it was western Territorial Councillors who first proposed division of the Territories in 1960, a proposal that made its way into a federal Bill but which had no support from the Central or Eastern Arctic, and which died on the Order Paper upon the dissolution of Parliament in 1963.

The Canadian Bill of Rights, enacted in 1960, marked an important change. It recognized certain basic rights “without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex,” including “the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law,” (Revised Statues of Canada, 1985b) Inuit had secured voting rights in federal elections in 1950, though polling stations were not established for all communities before the 1962 federal election.

In 1965, Abraham Okpik had been appointed to the NWT Council, the first Inuk member, and Simonie Michael became the first elected Inuk on the Council in 1966.

A.W.R. Carrothers, reporting on the constitutional future of the NWT, in 1967, recommended against dividing the Territories, for the present, and emphasized the importance of building institutions of representative government, at both the territorial and the local level. Movement in this area gradually took place. By 1975, the NWT Council was fully elected, and began to term itself the Legislative Assembly, with responsible government introduced in 1986. Nellie Cournoyea was, from 1991-95, the first Inuvialuk Premier of the NWT.

Other critical changes occurred at an institutional representative level.

In 1971, Inuit Tapirisat of Canada\(^5\) was formed to represent Inuit as a national organization. Regional organizations were formed at various times, most notably the Committee for Original People’s Entitlement in 1970,\(^6\) the Northern Quebec Inuit Association in 1971,\(^7\) the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut in 1982,\(^8\) and the Labrador Inuit Association in 1973.\(^9\) Recognition of Inuit land rights, and political self-determination, were central to these organizations from the time of their formation.

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\(^4\) A federal “District of the Keewatin,” distinct from the N-W.T., was also established in 1876 and was not reincorporated back into the N-W.T. until 1905.


\(^6\) Replaced by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation in 1984.

\(^7\) Replaced by Makivik Corporation in 1975.

\(^8\) Replaced by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated in 1993.

\(^9\) Replaced by the Nunatsiavut Government in 2005.
In 1927 — just before the conclusion of the last major adhesions to the numbered treaties — the Government of Canada took the repressive step of amending the *Indian Act* to make the raising of money to pursue Indian land claims illegal. This provision of the *Indian Act* remained in place until 1951 and is indicative of the repressive treatment of Aboriginal peoples through this period. Moreover, while this section of the Act was repealed in 1951, the federal government still did not accept the need to deal with Aboriginal rights and title in areas where no treaties had been signed. In 1969 the government issued a White Paper on Indian Policy, stating:

“Aboriginal claims to land... are so general and undefined that it is not realistic to think of them as specific claims capable of remedy except through a policy and programme that will end injustice to Indians as members of the Canadian community”

(DIAND, 1969: 11).

In the United States, Alaskan Aboriginal claims were settled by legislation in 1971. In Canada, 1973 was the landmark year in the consideration of Aboriginal rights. In the Calder case, concerning Nisga’a land rights in British Columbia, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized Aboriginal rights, while dividing on the immediate issue of whether or not these rights continued in British Columbia. This prompted Prime Minister Trudeau to remark to the Nisga’a “You have more legal rights than I thought you had,” (Manuel and Posluns, 1974: 225) and the Government of Canada subsequently adopted a comprehensive land claims policy, to settle claims arising from Aboriginal rights and title.

The first modern Aboriginal treaty in Canada, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, was signed by the Crees and Inuit of Northern Quebec in 1975. This was followed by the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in 1984, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in 1993, and the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement in 2005. A further agreement, to cover the islands and marine area adjacent to Northern Quebec, the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement, was signed by Makivik Corporation in 2006. Northern Manitoba now remains the one area where Inuit claims, based on Aboriginal rights and title, remain to be dealt with.

Besides dealing with Canada’s concern to secure the settlement of claims based upon Aboriginal rights and title (“certainty”), modern treaties have reshaped the political landscape in the Arctic. In this respect, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement is remarkable, in that it achieved the partition of the NWT, and the formation of a new government with powers similar to those of a province. Since Riel and the Metis negotiated the formation of the Province of Manitoba, this was the first time that an Aboriginal people was able to restructure the basic political configuration of the country.

Further, in stark contrast to the Metis experience in Manitoba after 1870, Premiers Okalik and Aariak, and a majority of members of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly since 1999, have been Inuit.

At a national level, Willie Adams in 1977, and Charlie Watt in 1984, became Inuit Senators, initially for the NWT and for Quebec, respectively. Peter Ittinuar was elected to represent Nunatsiaq, the predominantly Inuit riding in the NWT, as Canada’s first Inuit Member of Parliament, in 1979. He used his position to lobby for the establishment of Nunavut, joining the Liberal government in 1982, when Minister John Munro announced support for division of the NWT provided certain conditions were met. Currently Leona Aglukkaq, the M.P. for Nunavut, sits as Minister of Health in the federal Cabinet.

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10 Modern treaties are made between an Aboriginal people and the Crown, represented by the federal government. The provincial Crown, and territorial governments, may also be signatories and parties. The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the 1978 Northeastern Quebec Agreement, made with the Naskapi, are unusual in that the James Bay Energy Corporation, the James Bay Development Corporation, and Hydro Quebec are all signatories to these agreements.

11 Article 42 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement exempted lands and waters in Manitoba from the cession and surrender provisions of Article 2.
On the issue of international sovereignty, a remarkable reversal of argument has occurred. In the 18th Century, the doctrine of discovery was used by the colonial powers to assert sovereignty over areas of “the New World”, regardless of the Aboriginal inhabitants. In the 20th Century, Aboriginal occupancy came to be seen as supportive of state claims to sovereignty, rather than as incidental and irrelevant. In particular, the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement recognizes “the contribution of Inuit to Canada’s history, identity and sovereignty in the Arctic” (1993: preamble). Article 15 more specifically recognizes that “Inuit are traditional and current users of certain marine areas, especially the land-fast ice zones,” that “there is a need for Inuit involvement in aspects of Arctic marine management,” and that “Canada’s sovereignty over the waters of the arctic archipelago is supported by Inuit use and occupancy.”

Inuit have thus asserted their presence within Canada and in the international domain. They have shaped political institutions and formed political associations through which to meet their shared objectives. From subjects, they have become citizens. From irrelevancies on basic issues of sovereignty, they have become players, whose traditional way of life now counts in the international arena.

The process is incomplete. Social, economic and health conditions among Inuit show marked disparities from the Canadian average. The modern treaties Inuit have signed are not fully implemented, and in 2003 Inuit and other Aboriginal modern treaty signatories formed a Land Claims Agreements Coalition to pursue the full and timely implementation of these treaties. The Coalition represents all modern treaty signatories and has found support from the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and in reports of the Auditor General.

At an international level, Canadian Inuit joined with those from Greenland, Alaska and Siberia to form the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) in 1977. ICC has permanent participant status in the international state-level forum, Arctic Council.

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Much remains to be done. An unqualified commitment from government, to fully implement land claims agreements, and to deal with the very real social, economic and health concerns in Inuit communities, is required. Nonetheless, the basis for a more cooperative future has been laid and the challenge for the future is to build upon it.

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alleging numerous major breaches of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.\textsuperscript{14} This suit began in 2006 and is still before the courts. In 2012 NTI won an important summary judgment on the failure of the federal government to implement the provisions of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement providing for a Nunavut General Monitoring Program, one aspect of the lawsuit. (NTI, 2012).\textsuperscript{15}

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\textsuperscript{14} On implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement see Alastair Campbell, Terry Fenge and Udlokiak Hanson, \textit{Arctic Review on Law and Politics}, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2011, 25-51.

\textsuperscript{15} The Crown has appealed this decision.

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Inuit Use and Occupation

Aaju Peter

My first lesson was about the caribou migration we hope for each spring. We inland people were sometimes short of meat... so we were keen to approach the caribou, but our elders would say, “Wait until the lead animals have gone by — tomorrow you will go caribou hunting.” I was young and the wait would seem so long. When it was time to hunt them we were also told, “You may take only the caribou you need, just the meat you can cache and the skins you can carry.” ...it is part of Inuit traditional knowledge, that when we get an animal of any kind, whether seal or caribou, fox or whatever, especially a kind we have not killed for some time, it must be treated like the first we caught of its kind, and given a drink of water. That is an ancient law derived from Inuit knowledge. It is said that the reason for giving water was so animals would return in greater numbers (Tookoom, 2004).

In this article, I wish to talk about sovereignty from an Inuit perspective and how this concept is the best suited to exercising sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic. The concept of sovereignty from an Inuit perspective is that of my own. It derives from personal collections of traditional Inuit law from the descendants of those who lived it. There are many more capable Inuit to explain these concepts and understandings and I welcome further learning in this area. My concepts come from trying to make sense of multiple worlds and how they can co-exist. Our laws in Canada are the product of a dance that we do, as Canadians, where we explore better ways, together. For that reason, I love Canada and I think Canada is a fantastic place as it is open to evolve continually.

I look forward to see how we can best traverse in the Inuit Nunaat, the land of the Inuit, the way it has been done for thousands of years.

Sovereignty in international law is explained as a nation state’s “supreme decision-making authority within its borders and acknowledging no higher authority outside those boundaries” (Pearson and Rochester, 1992: 649).

The western concept of sovereignty is a difficult word to explain because we don’t have a word for it in Inuktut. It is not that we don’t exercise sovereignty or are sovereign, it is that our concept of sovereignty is different. The idea of a border to keep non residents out is foreign. Inuit travelled huge distances to other inhabited areas without ever being borders. The concept of an arbitrary line on a map is unknown to us and very recent. Trying to explain to an elder that the concept is, “to keep out or disallow entry”, makes little sense. Contrary to how sovereignty is exercised by westerners, sovereignty from an Inuit perspective is welcoming; it is open and sharing, based on laws that enabled Inuit to survive in the Arctic.

Likewise, the law of the sea from a traditional Inuit perspective starts with Nuliajuaq — the sea goddess — who
demands that you treat animals with respect, that you share your catch and that you not have ill feelings amongst each other when it comes to the animals on which you depend for your survival.

Our laws came from living in the Arctic. The laws are about the interaction and respect of the people, the spiritual beliefs, the environment, the universe and the animals. In fact, Inuit were at the mercy of the animals that would only present themselves to the hunters who showed them respect and followed the laws about sharing. Our traditional laws reveal that we did not consider ourselves greater than the animals we hunt nor that we were greater than the environment. We only need to look at the many environmental disasters that have happened to realize that we are indeed at the mercy of nature.

When you come into a community, the inhabitants welcome you and wish you a good visit. The community wishes you to have a good visit so that when you leave, you will leave with good memories and think fondly of the place and the people you visited. The mind is very powerful and plays a very important role in how we interact with each other and all our surroundings. For instance, Lucienne Ukaliannuk, who was our professor of Inuit law, told us about a lake close to Igloolik that had arctic char. One person was speaking ill of another because he thought that the other was taking too much fish. Because of these ill feelings, the char went some other place. It was not until decades later that the char came back to that same lake.

An elder welcomes the visitors by singing ancient songs that tell about awareness, hunting, the environment and respect. These songs confirm Inuit use and occupation of the land and waters uninterrupted for thousands of years. You see evidence of this occupation at every bay, fiord and inlet all across the Arctic carrying an Inuit name, passed down for generations.

As guardians and as representatives of a region, we wish for those coming to the area to have good experiences and have good thoughts about the place. By our actions we wish to show our gratitude for the area, for the land, the game, etc. thereby ensuring that the land will continue to provide for our needs and that when we go to the area of those who visited, we will be treated in like manner. The feeling is positive, that of gratitude, respect and sharing.

Sharing with other Inuit in other regions
It is true that as human beings we have been able to develop many things, including new sciences, new forms of communications, etc. We have cameras that will take underwater pictures and even man made space ships that will fly to the moon and jets that will bomb and kill millions of people at once... Since 9/11 it has become very difficult for Inuit from one country to visit others in another country, as nation-states have tightened security. The ancestors of north Greenland residents traveled from north Baffin in Canada to Greenland. They maintained the contact. These new sets of arbitrary borders have made it very difficult to visit Inuit Nunavut as southern ways of exercising sovereignty is unwelcoming. As an example, this summer, as we were sailing from Greenland to Canada, we were unable to land in Clyde River, as was the plan. The reason for this was because Canadian customs officers, coming from southern Canada were unable to fly to Clyde River from Pond Inlet due to bad weather. Both our passengers, who were mostly Canadian and the residents of Clyde River who had made arrangements to showcase their community lost out. It is no longer possible for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to clear our ships. The ability of the community to exercise its sovereignty has been taken away.

We have shared our lands and game with Inuit, irrespective of where they are coming from or where they are going. As we are all Inuit and as we follow our traditional laws, our priority has always been the respect and gratitude we show to the land, waters, animals and the people. We show respect to the people who live there because they are the guardians of their regions, as they have done for hundreds, even thousands of years. For Canada’s claim of sovereignty to work in the Canadian Arctic, Canada has to recognize the authority of the residents of the Arctic. Therefore, I ask, why are the Northern Rangers, who patrol the Arctic not given the authority to clear entry to the Arctic?
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What does sovereignty mean to you as an Inuk?

An elder who welcomes visitors to a community by offering to share a seal is a true exercise of sovereignty. He is exercising authority that has been bestowed upon him following traditional laws from his ancestors for thousands of years.

During the summer months, I had the privilege to sail with Adventure Canada in the Canadian Arctic and Greenland with tourists on cruise-ships. In one of the stops, in Kimmirut, we were gathered outside the elementary school. Simionie Aqpiq, one of the elders, welcomed everyone to his community. He was standing beside a ringed seal which he had caught earlier that day. Following ancient welcoming traditions he expressed his gratitude to the seal, to the visitors and to the sharing of the gift of the seal.

After he finished flenching the seal he cut off a piece of the seal meat which he held in his hand. He then requested one person representing the group to step forward. I stepped forward. He gave me the piece of seal meat which I took and ate. At that point it was open to everyone to eat the seal meat, including the liver, brain, blood, fat, and kidney.

As the longtime resident and elder of Kimmirut, Simionie exercised his authority to extend a welcome on behalf of his community, into their territory. He did this first by standing on the shore as the zodiacs were landing visitors, shaking their hands and extending a welcome and then later by sharing in the consumption of the seal.

Likewise, today, when you visit a community, people welcome you. It is the desire of the descendants of those who lived before them to extend this welcome. It is done out of respect for the visitor, done out of gratitude for the land, and the sharing of game is done to fulfill the traditional requirement, to show gratitude for the game. This tradition is continued because the people occupying an area do not wish to come across as unwelcoming or hostile. During her visit to Rankin Inlet, in the Canadian Arctic, the then Governor General of Canada, Michelle Jean accepted this welcome extended to her by eating a piece of seal heart. The European’s called her barbaric and her actions too bizarre to acknowledge, a notion that would be totally foreign to Simionie and elders like him.

What role do Land Claims Agreements and Organizations play in sovereignty?

In September of 1969, an American icebreaking oil tanker, the Manhattan, successfully completed a crossing of the Northwest Passage. In western law, this transit was noticed and Canadian title to the waters became important. Inuit have transited these waters and ice for thousands of years. Title was never in question. This is Inuit homeland. When the American icebreaker Polar Sea also crossed the NWP in 1985, the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark stated in the House of Commons:

Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic is indivisible. It embraces land, sea and ice. It extends without interruption to the seaward-facing coasts of the Arctic islands. These islands are joined, and not divided, by the waters between them. They are bridged for most of the year by ice. From time immemorial Canada’s Inuit people have used and occupied the ice as they have used and occupied the land.

The policy of the Government is to maintain the natural unity of the Canadian Arctic archipelago and to preserve Canada’s sovereignty over land, sea and ice undiminished and undivided

(House of Commons Debates, 1985).

In 1953, John Amagoalik recalls how his family who had lived in northern Quebec was relocated to the high Arctic. Inuit families were moved to far northern most locations in the Arctic and it was later said to have been done as a means of securing Canadian sovereignty.

The preamble to the NLCA (1993) recognizes, “the contribution of Inuit to Canada’s history, identity and sovereignty in the Arctic” and article 15.1.1 in the Agreement recognizes that...” Canada’s sovereignty over the waters of the arctic archipelago is supported by Inuit use and occupancy;” ...Canada has and is basing its sovereignty claim on “Inuit use and occupation” past and current. It is my contention that Canada not only recognizes “Inuit use and occupation” but Canada also recognizes how Inuit use and occupy their land. This is very important — to live here or to traverse through here, you have to follow Inuit traditional practices! You have to
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show the utmost respect and gratitude for the land, the water, the animals and the people, the way that it has always been done for thousands of years.

In April, 2009, the Inuit Circumpolar Council representing Inuit from Greenland, Canada, Alaska and Chukotka adopted a declaration that demands Inuit involvement. It states in part:

As states increasingly focus on the Arctic and its resources, and as climate change continues to create easier access to the Arctic, Inuit inclusion as active partners is central to all national and international deliberations on Arctic sovereignty and related questions, such as who owns the Arctic, who has the right to traverse the Arctic, who has the right to develop the Arctic, and who will be responsible for the social and environmental impacts increasingly facing the Arctic. We have unique knowledge and experience to bring to these deliberations. The inclusion of Inuit as active partners in all future deliberations on Arctic sovereignty will benefit both the Inuit community and the international community (ICC, 2009).

Canada is really big and all peoples who occupy Canada have a long established internationally recognized understanding of being a fair, understanding and accepting people. Again, this makes me very proud to be part of the Canadian family. So arctic sovereignty is a big question and requires big thinking.

The Inuit who have occupied the Arctic for thousands of years are the only ones who can best define what “use and occupation” of Inuit Nunaat is. We are still occupying our land. It is time to fully put into action the assertion of “Inuit use and occupation” in a way it has been done occupied and used by the Inuit and since Canada is basing its claim on Inuit use and occupation then Canada has to fully involve Inuit when dealing with the Canadian Arctic.

It has been 20 years since the NLCA was signed. The federal government secured its title to most of the land but has not lived up to its part of the contract. The agreement is not being implemented, as promised. Inuit had no choice but to take the Government of Canada to court for not implementing the Agreement. For instance, the objective of the Inuit Employment Plan, article 23 of the Agreement, “is to increase Inuit participation in government employment in the Nunavut Settlement Area to a representative level” (1993). It is recognized that the achievement of this objective will require initiatives by Inuit and by Government. This article provides for special training opportunities to ensure that Inuit will be educated, trained and employed at a representative level. Today, 20 years later, Inuit employment is below 50 per cent. Inuit make up more than 80 per cent of the population. Once Inuit are full participants and are employed in all sectors at a representative level, then we can say that we are exercising sovereignty.

With the melting of the ice and as travel and access to non-renewable resources becomes easier in the Arctic, nation states are keen to extract these resources. Extraction will bring many jobs and a lot of money. But, who will make this money and who will benefit from this extraction?

Because Nunavut is a territory and not a province, we are not entitled to resource royalties as the provinces are. The royalties Nunavut is entitled to are capped at a miniscule amount. Article 25 of the NLCA spells out what Inuit will be entitled to:

In each year, Inuit have the right to 1 million dollars of the first 2 million dollars received by the federal government and an additional 5 per cent of any additional resource royalty received by Government in that year. If there is to be 100 million in resource royalties, 1 million goes to Nunavut and 1 million goes to the federal government, and of the 98 million left, less than 5 million goes to Nunavut and more than 93 million goes to the federal government.

So, why are we in such a rush to develop if we are not going to benefit from it? Why not wait until we become a province and we can benefit fully from the royalties? Why not wait until we have the capacity and when Inuit will benefit fully? After all, we have been here for thousands of years. Why not wait till we are ready? I contend that no mining or exploration proceed in Nunavut until Nunavut...
becomes a province or until Nunavut is entitled to the same or similar resource royalties as the provinces. Anything less is irresponsible.

The Inuit in Nunavut do not yet have the training nor the education to take full advantage of the development of non-renewable resources. As was stated by Simon Tookoome of Baker Lake, you have to let the first caribou pass and wait for the herd to come before you harvest. What is the rush to develop mines and extract resources? Who is benefitting from all this? Who will collect the money? Our ancestors have always taught us to be wise and exercise patience. We have to train and educate Inuit and make them full participants as is the practice in the rest of Canada. We have to train Inuit first so that they can take full advantage of these opportunities. We demand to be full participants because this is where we live and we want to leave something good for our children and grandchildren. We are in no rush and it is our duty to do it right for our grandchildren.

As a territory, we would see billions of dollars going to the federal government in royalties and even more to the companies extracting these resources and nothing but bread crumbs going to Nunavut. It does not matter how much mining or extraction was being done in Nunavut in a year. As it is now Nunavut, as a territory, is entitled to one million dollars in resource royalties in one year. In addition, because Inuit in Nunavut don’t have the training or the education, we will be looking at everyone else employed while we sit idly by. It is time for Inuit and Canada to work together to define and fully implement the “Inuit use and occupation” claim.

The federal government and the territory of Nunavut are not on a level playing field. We will engage fully once the playing field is level. There is so much more work that has to be done before we can claim that we are participating fully. We have to train and educate Nunavummiut, so that we can all proudly claim Canadian sovereignty over the arctic waters. There is nothing we want more than to respect the contributions Inuit have made to the Canadian sovereignty claim, knowing that it is done with the full approval and participation of the Inuit. Our elders tell us to be patient and to wait for when the time is right.

How then do we exercise sovereignty of Inuit Nunaat the way it has been done by Inuit for thousands of years? We do that by showing gratitude to all that our land and waters offer to us. We do that by showing respect to the land, the animals and the people that live there. If we have to allow ships to traverse, it has to be done with the full consent of the inhabitants and be done in a way that is the least harmful and disruptive. If we have to extract resources it has to be done in consultation and full participation of the Inuit. When Inuit, who are using and occupying the Arctic are full participants and beneficiaries of the developments in Inuit Nunaat, and when Nunavut will benefit on the same level as any other province does in Canada, then Canada’s claim to sovereignty of the Canadian Arctic will be complete.

Qujannamiik, thank you.

Aaju Peter was born in Arkisserniaq, a northern Greenland community, in 1960. At age eleven, Aaju left Greenland to attend school in Denmark where she learned to read German, French, English, Latin and speak Danish. In 1981, Aaju moved to Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada where she has taken up residence. Aaju has travelled to Greenland, Europe and throughout Canada performing modern drum dance, traditional singing and displaying sealskin fashions. In 2005 Aaju graduated from Akitsiraq Law School and was called to the bar in 2007. Currently Aaju has a homebased sealskin garment business, translates, volunteers for the music society, and collects traditional law from elders. These days Aaju is advocating for Inuit rights to seal and sealskin products as well as the Inuit right to be involved in issues related to Arctic waters. On December 30, 2011, Aaju received the Order of Canada.
Sovereignty

References:


Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. (1993). *Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada*.


Asserting Sovereignty in the Arctic: Inuit and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement

Terry Fenge

The Inuit of Canada have negotiated, signed and ratified five comprehensive land claims agreements — modern treaties — with the Crown (the Government of Canada).¹ In Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, the provincial governments are also signatories to these agreements. In a general sense each of these agreements is an example of Canada asserting and exercising Arctic sovereignty, but alone among these modern treaties, the 1993 Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) explicitly includes sovereignty asserting language.² This short paper suggests that the Government of Canada should use the NLCA as a component of its legal, political and public relations strategy to assert Arctic sovereignty. To do so effectively, however, would be markedly assisted if the Government of Canada actively engaged Inuit on this file and ensured the Nunavut Agreement is fully and fairly implemented, which currently is not the case (Campbell et al., 2011: 25-51).

Arctic sovereignty is a much used term which means somewhat different things to different people, and is sometimes used to justify initiatives that have a tenuous connection with the actual issue at hand. With the exception of the legal status of Hans Island in Nares Strait between Ellesmere Island and Greenland, and the offshore boundary dispute in the Beaufort Sea between Canada and the United States, there are no legal disputes regarding sovereignty over Arctic lands or ocean in areas claimed by Canada. Moreover, the legal status of the Northwest Passage is not a question of underlying sovereignty per se — the international community recognizes it to be part and parcel of Canada. At issue is whether the passage is or could become an international strait under international law — the position of the United States³ and the European Union⁴ — or is “internal waters”

¹ These agreements include the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1975), the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (1984), the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (1993), the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2005) and the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement (2006). Negotiations are underway to define Inuit rights in northeastern Manitoba. If and when ratified, this agreement will be the final modern treaty in Canada to which Inuit are a party.
² Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, published under the authority of the Tungavik and the Hon. Tom Siddon, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa, 1993.
⁴ Byers notes, “Canada’s straight baselines were protested by the European Commission on behalf of the members states of the European Community (now the European Union). For this reason, Denmark is on record as opposing the very same baselines that the Mulroney government drew in 1986 to strengthen Canada’s Northwest Passage claim” (2009: 107).
Furthermore, Article 15 dealing with marine areas states:

“Canada’s sovereignty over the waters of the arctic archipelago is supported by Inuit use and occupancy”

These provisions reflect the results of a comprehensive study of Inuit land use and occupancy in the NWT and the north slope of Yukon carried out in the mid 1970s and published in 1977 in preparation for negotiation of the NLCA (Freeman, 1976). Based on map biographies prepared by more than 85 percent of Inuit hunters resident in the NWT, this study showed definitively that Inuit used and occupied nearly 4 million square kilometers of land and ocean, including Lancaster Sound, Barrow Strait, and Viscount Melville Sound — the eastern and central portion of the Northwest Passage within Canada.

While not referred to by name, the fortuitous findings of this study formed the essential context to the 1985 statement in the House of Commons by Joe Clark, Minister of External Affairs, announcing “straight baselines” from the outer edge of the coast and fringing islands enclosing the Arctic Archipelago, declaring all enclosed waters to be internal to Canada. Drawing upon Inuit use of sea ice as a highway for snowmobile travel, Minister Clark said:

“Canada’s sovereignty in the Arctic is indivisible. It embraces land, sea and ice. It extends without interruption to the seaward facing coasts of the Arctic islands. These islands are joined and not divided by the waters between them. They are bridged most of the year by ice. From time immemorial Canada’s Inuit peoples have used and occupied the ice as they have used and occupied the land”

(Byers, 2009:53).

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5 Emphasis added.
6 Emphasis added.
The connection between Inuit land use and occupancy and Canada’s assertion of Arctic sovereignty predated this statement, having been stressed when the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act* was passed by Parliament in 1970 in response to the 1969 and 1970 voyages through the passage by the American supertanker *Manhattan*. Most recently, this connection was reiterated in the Government of Canada’s 2011 statement on Arctic Foreign Policy:

“Canada’s Arctic sovereignty is long-standing, well established and based on historic title, founded in part on the presence of Inuit and other indigenous peoples since time immemorial”

(Government of Canada, 2012).

Legal scholar Michael Byers (2009) stresses the importance of the NLCA as a vehicle to strengthen Canada’s assertion of Arctic sovereignty. He notes that in 1975 the International Court of Justice in the Western Sahara case affirmed the ability of nomadic peoples to acquire and transfer sovereignty rights — arguably what happened through the NLCA. But he also notes that “any argument based on a transfer of rights is weakened if the recipient fails to uphold the bargain” and this, unfortunately, is also the case. Michael Mifflin expands this point to encompass the Government of Nunavut, created through the NLCA, arguing:

“In failing to provide Nunavut all the means to ensure its economic, social and cultural development, Canada weakens the most compelling legal argument to support its claim: that of historic title based on Inuit occupation”

(Mifflin, 2008: 86-90).

In December 2006 NTI launched a comprehensive lawsuit alleging widespread failure on the part of the Government of Canada to fulfill its obligations and duties defined in the NLCA. Sixteen contractual breaches of the agreement, in addition to numerous breaches of fiduciary duties, are detailed in NTI’s Statement of Claim including systemic failure to fund implementation, to arbitrate disputes, and to take initiatives to boost Inuit employment in government to a “representative” level. This case continues to move toward trial. In June 2012, Justice Earl Johnson of the Nunavut Court of Justice issued summary judgment in favour of NTI vis-a-vis the federal government’s refusal for many years to implement the general monitoring provisions of the agreement, a component of the lawsuit. In damning fashion, he characterized as “indifferent” the Government of Canada’s attitude to implementation of this provision of the agreement and awarded NTI damages of almost $15 million (NTI, 2012).

This judgment is under appeal, but what might be the impact on public opinion in Canada and abroad should the trial judge’s decision be upheld and should his reasoning and findings be extended to the additional and larger alleged breaches of the agreement? Conceivably, such a situation might prompt onlookers to suggest that the Government of Canada had effectively repudiated the agreement perhaps stimulating a debate on the at least theoretical ability and/or advisability of Inuit, in response, to rescind it, and reassert their aboriginal title. NTI’s court case is framed as a breach of contract, and rescission of agreements is part and parcel of the Law of Contracts. In relation to a modern treaty this would be uncharted and dangerous political and legal waters, but even the threat of rescission might hinder the ability of the Government of Canada to use and cite internationally the NLCA and the historic land use and occupancy of Inuit to assert Canada’s Arctic sovereignty.

It is difficult to understand or appreciate why the Government of Canada has put itself in this vulnerable position. The Land Claims Agreements Coalition of which

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8 The Statement of Claim and supporting documents are posted on NTI’s web site; www.tunngavik.com
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NTI is co-chair has offered a compelling critique of Ottawa’s rigid, narrow and unimaginative approach to implementation of modern treaties.\(^9\) Many in Ottawa, the coalition suggests, assume that modern treaty implementation is the responsibility of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development rather than the Government of Canada as a whole. In short, federal agencies including the departments of transport, environment, fisheries and oceans, and others don’t focus on modern treaties because they don’t think they need to.

As well, the federal government’s budgetary system which deals with annual expenditures by individual agencies has huge difficulty providing implementation funds for multi-year, interagency activities in support of modern treaty implementation. Recently the Government of Canada published guidelines, years in the making, rationalizing and elevating to official policy its refusal to arbitrate modern treaty disputes of a financial nature.\(^10\) Many, likely most modern treaty disputes, have such a component. Current efforts by the Government of Canada to define and apply a formula to fund implementation of land claims and self-government agreements will likely breach the procedural provisions and commitments in many agreements to negotiate funding, and can only further worsen the deteriorating relationship between the federal government and modern treaty organizations.

Little of the coalition’s critique of current implementation challenges or suggested policy and institutional changes to improve the situation seem to have registered in Ottawa. Appearing before the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development on November 30, 2011, Minister John Duncan had this to say about implementing modern treaties:

“We’ve made enough serious progress over the last three years really that most of the issues have gone away. Our implementation has been done very well. I may hear of some specific items today, but my understanding is that, for the most part, we’ve really addressed the whole implementation issue very well.”

Problems with implementing modern treaties predate the assumption to power in January 2006 of Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Conservative Party. Be that as it may, the disbandment of the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and the Secretariat in the Privy Council Office which served it within months of the election, was the writing on the wall. The secretariat had been facilitating negotiations between the Land Claims Agreements Coalition and federal agencies of a formal policy to improve implementation of modern treaties, but this effort came to an abrupt halt.

It might be that the current Government of Canada’s difficulties with implementing modern treaties and using the NLCA for sovereignty assertion purposes reflects a deeper, ideological aversion to the place of collective rights in Canada. The Northern Strategy (Government of Canada, 2009), released with considerable fanfare in 2009, reveals this to be at least a plausible explanation. The strategy fails to mention implementation of modern treaties — the very embodiment of collective rights — and instead stresses a “northern vision” of “self-reliant individuals”. It is, perhaps, this misperception and misunderstanding of the very nature of northern Canada that enabled Prime Minister Harper in 2007 to say:

“Canada has a choice when it comes to defending our sovereignty in the Arctic: either we use it or we lose it” (Byers, 2009: 109).

This quite extraordinary statement repeated by the Prime Minister and his ministers over the next two years provided a political justification for a “hardware” and “military investment” approach to sovereignty assertion.

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\(^9\) See documents posted on the coalition’s web site: www.landclaimscoalition.ca.

In so doing, the Prime Minister stepped back from the long-standing sovereignty supporting “historic title” position of previous federal governments. Some commentators suggested that the “use it or lose it” aphorism actually weakened rather than strengthened Canada’s Arctic sovereignty (Fenge, 2011: 17-22). After all, what other leader of a G8 country would suggest or admit that how territory is used has any bearing on the position of other states about sovereignty over that same territory? Does the Prime Minister truly believe — and does he expect the Canadian public to believe — that minerals and hydrocarbons in the Canadian Arctic have to be developed in order to ensure that other countries will acknowledge our Arctic sovereignty and jurisdiction?

Perhaps Franklyn Griffiths, an early exponent of international co-operation in the Arctic should have the final word for he has come to realize and write about the sterility of a debate that focuses on a narrow interpretation of national sovereignty in the Arctic. As Canada moves to assume in May 2013 the Chair of the eight-nation Arctic Council, he suggests that Arctic states:

“adopt a multilateral and region-wide approach to Arctic affairs. Besides seizing opportunities as they arise, the ice states would orchestrate joint actions so as to shape the region’s development according to a common strategic design”

(Griffiths, 2011:184).

Within this framework he recommends an approach that binds sovereignty with stewardship — something about which the NLCA and other modern treaties in northern Canada also have a great deal to say.

Terry Fenge is an Ottawa-based consultant specializing in aboriginal, Arctic and environmental issues. From 1985 to 1993 he was the Research Director of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, the Inuit organization which negotiated the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. He can be reached at tfenge7006@rogers.com.

References:


The North is Like an Igloo
Myrna Pokiak

_Uvunga atira Myrna Pokiak, my Inuvialuktun name is Agnaviak. Tuktuuyaqtuqmiuyungrunga. I am a mother of two beautiful girls, a daughter of an Inuvialuk and a non-Inuvialuk, a common-law of a Métis, and a teacher and an anthropologist. With all of my personal and work experiences combined, I have one characteristic that has remained with me since a child, my culture. I am Inuvialuk, born and raised in Canada’s most Northwestern community of Tuktoyaktuk. I am first and foremost Inuvialuit, but I am also Canadian, both of which I am very proud._

Sovereignty, as a resident in Northern Canada, means that Canada not only offers protection for me, but also represents me both nationally and internationally. Canada and the Inuvialuit share authority for the region into which I was born. Under the protective arm of Canada I want my heritage, the land, and people to be protected on a global scale. Educating the world on a global scale cannot be done solely by the aboriginal organization of which I am a part, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, or by the cultural group with which I identify myself, the Inuvialuit. I have the right to be represented by Canada and also for Canada to show the world that northerners respect and honour the north because it is our home. The Inuvialuit Settlement Region has been my home since birth. It has been my father’s home since birth. It was my grandfather’s home from birth to death. It was my great grandfather’s home from birth to death and for many generations before him the story has been the same.

In addition to the current interest in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, there is the future probability of the region being used internationally on a larger scale than it is today. When considering the possibility of our home, the land, the waters being showcased to visitors, adventurers, or developers for economic purposes, it is important for these visitors to understand that when they pass by the land and sea within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, that this land has a voice, the sea around the land has a voice, and the resources within have a voice. The voice comes from the people who live off of the land and sea; the people whose ancestors fought to ensure that the future generations would have a place to call home, as well as the resources they would need for survival. These are the voices of Inuvialuit.

My ties to the north go back to a time and a place that remains vast and seemingly untouched, though that is far from the truth. I never had the opportunity to know my Daduck Bertram Pokiak, my grandfather, but because I have heard stories and experienced cultural activities like running dogs, fishing, hunting, and spending time with the extended family, I believe we crossed paths many times. I have been on some of the same trails he used for hunting and trapping. I have traveled on the Arctic Ocean, on water and ice in search of polar bears, beluga whales, and seals. My connection to my Daduck is through the land and sea, where our ancestors have lived for thousands of years and places that he and the generations before him
envisioned would remain as providers for thousands of years to come.

It is because of the knowledge he passed on to my father and the knowledge my father passed on to me that I am living proof of the history engrained in this part of the world. I believe it is Canada’s responsibility to ensure not only the safety of the individual Inuvialuk, but also the safe keeping of the Inuvialuit as a distinct group of people. Basic to this is the safe keeping and preservation of our lands and waters. It is because of this belief that I feel it is through education that the rest of Canadians and the international world will begin to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of our culture.

I have found it very valuable to understand my ties to our land through research with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. Some of the first recorded Inuvialuit stories and mapping was done in the 1970s when Inuvialuit were asked to show the Government of Canada and Canadians the land used by our people over past generations. Figure 1 illustrates one of the first maps created to demonstrate the use of the land and sea in some areas of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. The dots indicate the areas used by many individuals and families prior to 1975 and my Grandfather was a part of this documentation.

To show the continuation of land and water use today, I have illustrated my own personal map showing my cultural trails and trips of importance in Figure 2 and Figure 3. Figure 2 illustrates both trails that I have traveled on once and areas that my family continues to use year after year like Husky Lakes, Anderson River, Toker Point, Hendrickson Island, and Baillie Island. Figure 3 illustrates the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and the areas I have been to within, including Aulavik National Park on Banks Island, Ulukhaktok on Victoria Island, and Tuktut Nogait National Park near Paulatuk.
I value every single trip which I have been on; from the first polar bear hunt to McKinley Bay, to the furthest north I have been on the rough and mountain like Arctic Ocean ice, northeast of Baillie Island, to the longest trip I had participated in by dog team and snow machine from our cabin at Anderson River Forks to Tuktoyaktuk; a five day journey with my family. Every single trip has been special and unique: opportunities to learn age old skills; to follow old trails; to practice skills already learned; to see our history in the artifacts that remain; and to experience the thrill and serenity of travelling across the vast expanses of our home. It is my hope that my daughters, as Inuvialuit and Canadians, will be able to reflect on the ancestral places which they travel and feel as close a connection to the land and sea as I do.

The land and sea are my connection to my ancestors and what shapes my culture. Ensuring its protection ensures our way of life and the future for children. As a recognized Canadian aboriginal group, who have received title to land and water within Canada’s Arctic, through the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, Inuvialuit should have a direct voice in discussions of Canadian sovereignty and other issues that face the circumpolar regions. Our concerns must be recognized by Canada and Canada needs to be our voice to educate the rest of the world on who we are, where we live, and our rights to the land and sea we call home.

Unlike many of the future visitors of the north, particularly visitors sailing through the Northwest Passage, I am not just passing through an area of interest; the north is a place I call home. Every single individual should be aware, even before arriving, that the north is “our home and native land” and we are “strong and free”. The words in our national anthem ring true to me. As an Inuvialuk, I have seen and heard of decades of change and of people who have come and gone. Time has proven that the Inuit
have survived in the Arctic for thousands of years and we continue to remain and adapt to new and challenging changes. Throughout time Inuit have shared the land and sea with visitors in hopes that our home will be valued and protected and that our future and our history will be respected as we respect it.

The north is like an igloo; it is fascinating and interests people from all walks of life, but it is also a home. The rest of the world needs to respect this. The north is fragile but the people are not, we are strong, we are free, we are determined, and we are Canadian.

Myrna Pokiak, B.A., B.Ed., is founder and President of Alappaa Consulting. Myrna was born and raised in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Since 2010 Myrna has worked with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, various departments for the Government of the Northwest Territories, and Museums and Cultural Centres, Colleges/Universities, and Private Sectors incorporating culture, research, and education. Myrna has also worked as a Teacher and Aboriginal Educator in Yellowknife, as well as being involved in a variety of archaeological surveys in Aulavik National Park and Tuktut Nogait National Park. Myrna wrote a Teacher Guide for Taimani At That Time, a document produced by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Most recently, Myrna has developed an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness E Training package for the GNWT to educate its employees on aboriginal people of the NWT.
Inuit Involvement in the Canadian Arctic Sovereignty Debate: Perspectives from Cape Dorset, Nunavut

Karen Kelley

Historic efforts to assert Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic

Historically, Canada maintains sovereign title over the Arctic islands and some Arctic bodies of water. Canada obtained sovereignty over the Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait from the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1870, and ten years later over the Arctic islands from Great Britain (Denhez, 1984; Schledermann, 2003; Pharand, 2007). Canada’s main interest in the Arctic region has revolved around asserting or defending sovereignty and developing natural resources (Duffy, 1988; Purich, 1992). Upon gaining administration over the Arctic region, Canada’s focus was on asserting sovereignty over the new territory, paying little attention to the Inuit population who resided there and were not yet part of Canada (Purich, 1992). This significantly changed with southerners moving north as fur traders, missionaries and military personnel (Bankes, 1987; Duffy, 1988; McElroy, 2008). The Arctic was then viewed as a “strategic location” (Bankes, 1987: 286) based on the placement of airfields, personnel, and access to resources and remote areas. Historically, Canada is said to have “ignored one of its strongest claims to sovereignty, the fact that much of the Arctic was occupied by its Inuit people” (Purich, 1992: 34). Overall, Canada’s exertion of sovereignty in the Arctic is characterized as reactive, focusing on a response to threats rather than proactively engaging with northern communities as a different way of bolstering sovereignty (Bankes, 1987; Simon, 2007).

Current Sovereignty Issues

It is accepted that the Arctic Archipelago and mainland are Canadian, but Canada’s claims of sovereignty over marine regions are being questioned by other countries. There has been a long history of debate regarding any claim of sovereignty over Arctic waters, including — and especially centered around — the Northwest Passage (Bilder, 1970; Birchall, 2006). With the combination of declining sea ice extent due to climate change, and increasing interest in use of the historically significant Northwest Passage as an international strait (tied to resource development interests), there has been a strong reemergence of sovereignty debates and concern over the Canadian arctic.

Skeptics suggest that Canada’s claim to Arctic waters and the Northwest Passage are not backed by the ability to defend, patrol, or provide escorts through this region on a year round basis (Elliot-Meisel, 1999). Some examples highlighting this claim include a surprise visit to...
Inuit Perspectives on Security, Patriotism and Sovereignty

Sovereignty

As the Canadian government emphasizes the links between Inuit long term use and occupation and asserting Arctic sovereignty, one must ask: what is the current thinking of Inuit about these sovereignty debates and discussions, and how are (or aren’t) Inuit being involved? Using the 20 interviews conducted with community residents of Cape Dorset, Nunavut, as part of my master’s fieldwork in 2008, the remainder of this paper highlights what Inuit know and think about Arctic sovereignty and whether Inuit feel they have actually been a part of this process.

What did Inuit in Cape Dorset have to say about Arctic Sovereignty?

Ownership

In order to better understand community perspectives on notions of sovereignty, community members in Cape Dorset were asked to identify who they felt arctic waters belonged to, or who had control over these waters. It is important to note that some individuals were hesitant to put a label such as ownership on waters. For example, Pootoogook (2008) emphasized that there is no way to control/own the sea ice, and the government “can’t tell the ice to stop growing or break up.” Ownership is not a traditional Inuit concept (Anonymous, 2008c). As a result, for some people, the meaning of ownership was in fact connected to having rights to the water and being able to have a say in what is happening to the waters. Overall the responses to the open-ended question of ‘who owns the arctic waters’ included:

- The Canadian federal government (5 references)
- The communities that are located by the waters (4 references)
- The world (2 references)
- Inuit, the people who use it (2 references)

As the Canadian government emphasizes the links between Inuit long term use and occupation and asserting Arctic sovereignty, one must ask: what is the current thinking of Inuit about these sovereignty debates and discussions, and how are (or aren’t) Inuit being involved? Using the 20 interviews conducted with community residents of Cape Dorset, Nunavut, as part of my master’s fieldwork in 2008, the remainder of this paper highlights what Inuit know and think about Arctic sovereignty and whether Inuit feel they have actually been a part of this process.

1 Cape Dorset was selected as a relevant case study because: (1) I could build on a previously established research relationship, with an ongoing sea ice project being conducted there since 2003; and (2) located on the Hudson Strait, both changing ice conditions and shipping practices are currently impacting the community of Cape Dorset (see Kelley, 2009 for more details).
Sovereignty

- Nunavut (1 reference)
- God, and therefore the waters are for everyone (1 reference)
- No one because it is constantly moving and circulating (1 reference)

(Anonymous, 2008c; Ashoona, 2008; Elee, 2008; Etidlouie, 2008; Etungat, 2008; Ezekiel, 2008; Manumee, 2008; Mikigak, 2008; Oshutsiaq, 2008a; Oshutsiaq, 2008b; Pootoogook, 2008; Ragee, 2008a; Ragee, 2008a; Saila, 2008; Shaa, 2008; Tatiasuk, 2008)

Boundaries

Sea ice poses a unique challenge to the legal and relatively static identification of boundaries. In Cape Dorset, community members expressed their perspectives that boundaries change as a result of seasonally variable sea ice extents (Mikigak, 2008; Shaa, 2008). In the summer when there is no sea ice, the boundary rests along the shoreline; however, when the winter ice has formed, the boundary extends to the edge of the ice (i.e. the floe edge) (Etidlouie, 2008; Shaa, 2008). Therefore, there was some discrepancy in responses related to whether or not tying boundaries to sea ice extent is a good thing. One community member believed that this was a representation of reality (i.e. sea ice being an extension of the land); while others felt that the boundary should be avoided to prevent complications and conflict (Mikigak, 2008; Shaa, 2008). While looking at the ocean, and at the sea ice, there is also the underlying emphasis on interconnection, whereby the sea ice enables all nearby lands and communities to become connected, no matter what government boundaries are drawn (Etidlouie, 2008).

Regulations

The majority of community members interviewed were not familiar with who regulates shipping in the arctic waters (Alasuaq, 2008; Etungat, 2008; Ezekiel, 2008; Mikigak, 2008; Pootoogook, 2008; Ragee, 2008a; Ragee, 2008b; Saila, 2008; Shaa, 2008; Tukiki, 2008). Responses to the question about who regulates arctic waters included:

- No one, ships do whatever they want (1 reference)
- The Federal government (1 reference)
- The Department of Oceans and Fisheries Canada (1 reference)
- Customs Canada (1 reference)
- Transport Canada (1 reference)

(Anonymous, 2008a; Anonymous, 2008b; Anonymous, 2008c; Elee, 2008; Mikigak, 2008).

On the other hand, it was identified that in the case of Nunavut, both the Government of Nunavut and the federal government are actively involved in search and rescue in the Arctic, depending on the location involved. If someone is lost while they are in open water (i.e. on the ocean), it is the federal government’s responsibility. However, if someone is lost while on landfast ice it is the territorial government’s responsibility (i.e. treated similarly to search and rescue on land) (Anonymous, 2008a).

International waters and shipping

There is an understanding among the community members interviewed that there is a demand for ships to use arctic waters as a shortcut to save money and time (Etidlouie, 2008). However, reservations exist in Cape Dorset regarding the Arctic becoming an international waterway (Elee, 2008; Manumee, 2008; Ragee, 2008a; Shaa, 2008). There is concern that ships would be able to go in and out as they please, for whatever purpose (Anonymous, 2008c; Mikigak, 2008; Oshutsiaq, 2008b; Shaa, 2008), and thus potentially lead to the development of a sense of ownership and rights to use the waters to do as they please (i.e. leave garbage) (Alasuaq, 2008). As a result, there is strong local support for the Canadian Government to control and regulate arctic waters at the federal level (Oshutsiaq, 2008a; Ragee, 2008a). However, it is also believed that in the future arctic waters will inevitably become an international waterway as demand and accessibility increase (Etungat, 2008). Ultimately, economic development and financial profit are seen locally as the “bottom line” that will dictate who is
able to transit arctic waters, for what purpose, and under what restrictions (Saila, 2008). It is hypothesized that early on there will likely be few negative impacts associated with shipping in the Arctic; there is, however, consensus among interviewed community members that problems will inevitably arise in the near future as shipping increases (Elee, 2008; Saila, 2008).

**Media Influence**

Media exposure on the Canadian sovereignty issue in the Arctic tends to be sensationalized and exaggerated. It is difficult to evaluate the broad public impact of such portrayals, but in Cape Dorset this sensational media coverage had raised concerns among community members regarding potential conflict over the Northwest Passage and arctic waters (Alasuaq, 2008; Oshutsiaq, 2008a; Ragee, 2008b; Shaa, 2008). The references to the 'Cold War' in the media have been taken literally by individuals in the community, raising past memories of the Cold War militarization of the Arctic (e.g. DEW line construction) (Lackenbauer and Farish, 2007), and future concern that a war may in fact break out over control of arctic resources and ownership (Alasuaq, 2008; Shaa, 2008). Fighting over Inuit homeland (including land, water and ice) is not acceptable to community members (Oshutsiaq, 2008a; Ragee, 2008b; Shaa, 2008), and they expressed having a hard time understanding why other countries, such as Russia and the United States, would fight over the land and waters Inuit have been using long before those states were established.

**Inuit Involvement**

As discussed, the Canadian government has moved towards a position that uses Inuit occupancy and use of the land and sea to support its sovereignty claims. Among the Inuit of Cape Dorset who were interviewed, there are mixed reactions to this. Some participants find it acceptable as long as it is agreed upon and beneficial to both parties as equals (Elee, 2008; Etidlouie, 2008; Pootoogook, 2008). In addition, it is also seen in a positive light because “it acknowledges the people around [the Arctic]” (Ragee, 2008a). These positive responses seem to be contingent on the statements and actions of the government in some way benefitting the communities of the North. It is also viewed as a “smart” decision for the Canadian government to use the Inuit in this way (Anonymous, 2008c). People can understand why the Canadian government would be using Inuit to support its claims; however, they want to make sure that they have some form of participation in, and control over, the situation. Meanwhile, there are also strong local sentiments that “the government shouldn’t even be interfering with our waters or our land... [that were] already claimed by the people in the area” (Takiasuk, 2008). Some people feel that using Inuit occupancy to support national sovereignty claims will translate into northerners having no say about what goes on in arctic waters, effectively infringing upon the rights they negotiated within the land claim agreement (Takiasuk, 2008). Despite the range of responses, it is clear that community members do not want to lose control over their lands and environment. They want to protect their way of life, within the context of the current federal government’s actions on sovereignty. Community members want to be informed of what the government, and other organizations, are saying and doing — especially when it involves them and their homeland.

At the community level, specifically in Cape Dorset, interviewed residents were not aware of any local consultations or meetings that have been held to discuss sovereignty issues, particularly the publicized use of Inuit occupancy of the arctic region to support Canada’s sovereignty claims in arctic waters (Alasuaq, 2008; Anonymous, 2008b; Anonymous, 2008c; Ashoona, 2008; Etidlouie, 2008; Oshutsiaq, 2008b; Ragee, 2008b; Shaa, 2008; Takiasuk, 2008). For the most part people at the local level are not aware of what is taking place. That being said, it is clear from Inuit organizations’ publications, speeches and lobbying (ICC, 2009; Simon, 2007; Kaludjak, 2006), that
Inuit interests are central and broader consultations are taking place in order to effectively represent a collective Inuit voice while maintaining public support and political impact.

**Working Together — Making sovereignty claims in a changing context**

The Canadian federal government acknowledges that Inuit "are entitled to participate in the decision-making process in the North" (Johnston, 2002: 150). The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act* (NLCAA) states that the Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen and the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area is "to provide for certainty and clarity of rights to ownership and use of lands and resources and of rights for Inuit to participate in decision-making concerning the use, management and conservation of land, waters and resources, including the offshore" (NLCAA, 1993: 1). The NLCA also emphasizes that "there is a need for Inuit involvement in aspects of Arctic marine management, including research" (NLCA, 1993: 135). Given Inuit occupancy and use of the sea ice, it is Canada's responsibility to protect the waters and regulate shipping so as not to adversely affect its citizens.

There appears to be a disconnect between what is taking place at the government level and what is seen, heard, and communicated in the communities directly affected. All of the coastal communities of Canada's arctic region are likely to be affected by shipping in the Arctic and arctic sovereignty either directly or indirectly. However, the information obtained in Cape Dorset indicates that there is a lack of involvement and inclusion of Inuit in decisions regarding sovereignty. Community members in Cape Dorset highlight the importance of local involvement in these processes, and emphasize their interest in being involved in the discussions regarding shipping and sovereignty in the Arctic — especially in their surrounding area (Alasuaq, A., 2008; Anonymous, 2008b; Anonymous, 2008c; Ashoona, 2008; Elee, 2008; Manumee, 2008; Mikigak, 2008; Oshutsiqaq, 2008a; Ragee, 2008a; Saila, 2008; Shaa, 2008; Tukiki, 2008). Inuit community members have important and unique knowledge to add to the discussions and debates. They have intrinsic knowledge of the marine environment, and their opinions and knowledge could help improve the current situation. For example, with regards to the Northwest Passage, based on interviewees' knowledge of sea ice conditions and safe travel in the Arctic, the local opinion exists that:

"[I'm] not quite sure why anyone would want to be traveling through there anyways because there's too much ice… a ship will definitely be damaged because there's so much broken ice in the area, there's more ice than what [is around Cape Dorset], there's more icebergs in that area, there's more chances of a boat sinking because there's too much ice through there."

(Etidlouie, 2008)

This is valid and important information relating to the safety of ships, people and the environment of the Arctic. Combining community awareness with community participation in the process would allow for more informed decisions to be made. Community members understand that Inuit in the Arctic will be the ones greatest affected if any accidents or issues arise in the arctic region regarding sovereignty, control, and access (Ezekiel, 2008; Takiasuk, 2008). As a result, it is felt that the communities should be involved in forums and discussions so that they can contribute as well (Anonymous, 2008c).

There has been little acknowledgement of the impact the loss of Canada's sovereign control over arctic waters would have on Inuit. If the Arctic Ocean and areas surrounding Canada's arctic islands were deemed international waters (i.e. if the Northwest Passage was classified as an international strait), challenges would arise for Inuit use of these regions. For example, the waters might be transited with the assistance of icebreakers throughout the year, destabilizing the sea ice platform. Similarly, Inuit traveling throughout their traditional homeland (in the marine...
environment) would be hunting and traveling through different jurisdictions, regulated under different political institutions. Although the visible changes to the region are related to sea ice extent, there may also be political changes that result in an impact on Inuit hunting and traveling in the arctic region.

Cooperation and coordination in the arctic regions of Canada is essential. As Mary Simon and Duane Smith, former president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and current Inuit Circumpolar Council-Canada president respectively, state: “Inuit of the Arctic regions are permanent residents of the Arctic and we are proud Canadians” (Simon and Smith, 2009: 1). It is important for all communities, and all Canadian citizens, to be well informed and involved in the issues directly affecting Canada. Arctic sovereignty is of national interest and is therefore important for all Canadians. Not everyone will be interested or want to be informed and involved; however, it is the responsibility of the Canadian government along with journalists, researchers, and Inuit organizations, to provide an opportunity for the public to be informed of — and involved in — decisions impacting national sovereignty. It is important for there to be “equal partnership between the federal government and the Inuit regarding a future northern strategy” (Charron, 2005: 843) which includes sovereignty, shipping, development, and use of the arctic marine environment.

“Inuit who live in the Canadian Arctic are proud Canadians, and we invite the government of Canada to engage with us to protect the Canadian Arctic” (Kaludjak, 2006: 1).

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An Arctic Inuit Union: A Case of the Inuit of Canada, Greenland, United States and Russia.

Kirt Ejesiak

“...by now the Inuit have had enough and are taking things into their own hands, not an easy task when you consider just how few they are compared to the countries (not one but four) they are subject to. But they are getting on, somewhat better than might be expected, although with a lot further to go” (Stern, 2004).

Section 1. Brief History of the Inuit Homeland.

Indeed, the Inuit have a lot further to go, to reach their goals. Canadian, American, Greenlandic and Russian Inuit hope to unite in a formal framework where they can work more closely together than they have in the past; where they can freely move, hunt in the lands their ancestors hunted, study, work and trade without restrictions and cease to fight over lands that have been theirs for generations.

Will this take the shape of an Inuit State? Perhaps this would be in the form of an Inuit Union where each country agrees that Inuit have an unbreakable historical connection through the sharing of culture, language and way of life. Inuit are a threatened peoples if you consider the history of each of the four Inuit nations. The survival of the Inuit language, culture and way of life hinges on each of the sympathetic majority of each of the four countries the Inuit reside in. It is only the Inuit themselves that can ensure the survival of their ancestors’ ways for future generations. Living in one of the world’s harshest climates, the Inuit have the innate strength and identity to unite for a common cause, however they must begin to debate how that will happen and what the next steps will be. Their national governments have concerns over sovereignty, trade agreements with North American and European partners and security concerns about threats from other countries. They cannot understand the value of the common linkages that unite the Inuit historically and will not initiate such a cause. A formal framework will only be achieved by Inuit coming together in a formal setting to ensure their future is determined by themselves and not some distant central government whose priorities do not match those of the Inuit.

Inuit — Broken Apart.

Inuit have been an accepting and welcoming people. From the first contact with outsiders in the 1400-1500’s, they have been open and sharing. The Inuit culture has survived assimilation, forced relocations, slaughtering of their dogs and the imposition of the residential school system on their children. These human rights violations against the
Survival and Adaptability — the Inuit Way of Life.
To maintain the legitimacy of the borders separating the Inuit, states must ensure that the Inuit have a stake and are partners in determining what activities happen within their homelands. More and more Inuit are questioning the legitimacy of these artificial borders: whose interest are they serving? Do the Inuit have the right to self-determination? Could the Inuit join as one state as other threatened peoples have done in recent times? The claims for Inuit self-determination have been considered mostly in a national context, within their own countries but perhaps self-determination as a collective group may be where the Inuit should go.

Sovereignty Concerns — the Inuit’s Interest or the States’ Interest.
In Grant’s book, she describes Canada’s interest in the arctic and how there were questions as to Canada’s claim to the Arctic islands and the decision to set up police detachments in the Arctic, the official responses from the Canadian Government were often to save the Inuit from harm but the fact was that they had concerns related to sovereignty, which were never revealed to the Inuit;

“This time the government decided that the symbolic gesture of “raising the flag” was insufficient and ordered the establishment of North West Mounted Police (NWMP) detachments at Fort MacMurray and Herschel Island in the western Arctic and at Fullerton Harbour on Hudson Bay, with a mandate to collect customs duties and issue whaling licenses. Sovereignty concerns were downplayed. Instead, the public were told that police were required to prevent exploitation of “Canadian” Inuit by foreign whalers”
(Grant, 2002).

Section 2. Rise in Inuit Political Activities and Organizations.
Inuit in Canada were permitted to vote in federal elections in 1950 (Stern, 2004) however prior to that time, the Inuit were full Canadians without access to benefits available to
other Canadians. In Greenland, Inuit were only permitted to elect representatives to the Danish Parliament in 1953 (Stern, 2004) but prior to that they were considered Danish Citizens without a political voice. Only recently have the Inuit become able to participate in democracy within their states and they have accomplished much in such a short time. However, because of the changes that have happened in such a short period many Inuit have had their lives turned upside down with the westernization of their daily lives and dramatic shift to a wage economy.

In Canada, residential schools were also responsible for pervasive sexual and physical abuse, isolation, neglect and servitude (Blackstock et al. 2004). Among the Inuit children forced to go to residential schools many of them are now only beginning to deal with the trauma that occurred at the hands of the state. Many of them have committed suicide and many have died tragically.

The damage caused by forced relocations in 1953 of Canadian and Greenlandic Inuit (Stern, 2004) and slaughter of the Inuit sled dogs (at that time the only method of travel by Inuit) by the Government are visible even today. This history has resulted in open wounds and deep resentment in Inuit of their state governments. In 1953 the Canadian Government reversed its Arctic policy and encouraged Inuit to settle in permanent communities (Stern, 2004). What more effective way to keep the Inuit in one place than to have their dogs killed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The official reason was rampant disease within the Inuit sled dogs. However most Inuit remember their dogs were healthy and productive members of the families (Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 2010).

The Russian Inuit have had to live without state assistance and with near starvations even in the 21st century because of neglect. Hunting was the only way to supplement their food source. However some of the state sanctioned hunting grounds were areas near nuclear waste sites. The Inuit Circumpolar Council was able to provide food, medicine and hunting supplies to assist their fellow Inuit from starving in 2001 by ship (Rideout, 2001:2).

How was it possible that any trust was built up enough to negotiate any type of agreement? Over the past 30 years agreements between the Inuit and their states over land and harvesting rights have been developed. At the same time the Inuit became aware of the need to organize at the international level. This was due mainly to combat industries that were wanting to take control of the wealthy mineral rich lands occupied by the Inuit in the circumpolar world. Neglected by a seemingly ignorant central government they recognized the need to work together to meet the needs of the Inuit.

**Inuit Circumpolar Council.**

In 1977, the Inuit Circumpolar Council was formed as part of the natural history of the Inuit people and of the land they have occupied for centuries (Lynge, 1993). The Inuit of Greenland, Canada, Alaska and Chukotka united together because of the importance of international cooperation on issues and interests in national and international fora (Lynge, 1993). The Inuit Circumpolar Council is an NGO that represents 150,000 Inuit in the four countries (Greenland, Canada, Alaska and Chukotka) (Lynge, 1993).

In 1983 the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (the name was changed to the Inuit Circumpolar Council in 2006), recognized there were problems with the movement rights of Inuit of Alaska, Chukotka, Canada and Greenland. They passed a resolution requesting that each of the governments remove all restrictions and provide free and unrestricted travel. Resolution 83-30, section 7 stated:

“**THAT the Inuit Circumpolar Conference initiates and supports exchange programs among the Inuit, and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference requests from the governments of Canada, the United States of America and Denmark that all restrictions for a free and unrestricted travel throughout the Inuit homeland be removed; further that the Inuit Circumpolar Conference be the initiator of establishing central education and”**
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The Inuit had proposed the idea of an Inuit Passport in Greenland. The Inuit should review this method collectively. The passport could be used when traveling within the Inuit homelands, and entitle the holders access to educational and cultural centres within the Inuit homeland. More importantly, the holder of the Inuit passport should have unrestricted employment and residency within the Inuit homelands.

The example of the Haudenosaunee/Iroquois Confederacy (composed of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora Nations) whose land crosses the border of Canada and the United States can be reviewed to see how the Inuit passport could be initiated. The common sense approach to setting up a framework would be for the Inuit to approach their state governments and negotiate a formal state-to-state arrangement on behalf of the Inuit. This would not be an easy task as each government has different rules and regulations when it comes to trade and travel. The issue of other citizens wanting to partake in such agreements will need to be addressed, and will be a sticking point when looking at equality rights with respect to travel and trade. One example that should be considered would be the European Union model. Each state has formalized an agreement with the other states on trade, travel, education and residency. It may be the model to use with some adaptations that suit the Inuit.

Options for Inuit to Consider.

The Inuit can decide to keep the status quo, however this will eventually lead to what Rasmussen described as the complete conquering of the Inuit until “their religion will be extinct, and the white man will have conquered all, the country and its people; their thoughts, their visions and their faith” (1999). It is only a matter of time until this happens, and time is not on the Inuit’s side. The volumes of traditional knowledge from the elders are passing on as they are slowly dying off. There is a concerted effort to capture much of that knowledge of the ways Inuit lived.
and stories passed down for generations, however, the gap between the old traditional ways and the younger generation is widening. The states do not have adequate protections in place to ensure the Inuit way of life will continue on for future generations.

The ultimate conquering of the Inuit will be when the states have the remnants of Inuit knowledge and artifacts in museums for many to see through a glass case. Many languages of indigenous peoples are at the brink of being lost and it’s too late for their people. Let’s hope it’s not too late for the Inuit.

**Conclusions.**
The future of the Inuit is in their hands. Whether they decide to keep the status quo or they decide to form a circumpolar Inuit union is entirely up to the younger population in the Inuit homelands. They will have a bigger view of the world than their parents had and it will be more evident that their land and resources will be used for the states’ purposes and certainly under their rules. The Arctic is a bountiful place where the Inuit are struggling to keep their way of life alive. Despite having been conquered by four separate states, their strength and patience have brought them to a turning point in their history as a peoples. Will they survive the westernization of their culture, will their children prefer to pursue lifestyles of their majority citizens, forgetting what their ancestors carried forward for generations? Or will they join together and strengthening their resolve as one people to make sure their culture and language are kept strong and they are able to share and adapt as their ancestors did.

As Jon Woronoff commented in the book Historical Dictionary of the Inuit (Stern, 2004), the Inuit are getting on and have succeeded in many ways in a rather short period of time, “although they have a lot further to go”. ■

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