



dead—of Canadian public affairs,” highlights the trend in which Canada only takes in interest in the Arctic when it perceives sovereignty to be threatened. Once the crisis passes, Canadians tend to return to complacency and resume ignoring the North. Thus, the authors assert that the current issues of Canadian sovereignty and security are not new, but that global warming and energy needs have now made them urgent—an urgency which highlights Canada’s unpreparedness to respond to the emerging challenges in the North in the 21st century. Global warming and the race for resources have opened the Arctic front, which has local, global, and circumpolar implications.

Arctic Front is not a collection of essays, but a collective compilation of expertise representing the coordinated effort of four Arctic experts with individual backgrounds in northern politics, security and defence, and history. Specifically, P. Whitney Lackenbauer is notable among the list of authors, as he represents one of the foremost experts on Canadian Arctic defence and security. He is known within the academic and defence communities for

his publications on the Canadian Rangers and their role in providing a northern presence as Arctic sovereignty patrols.

In their evaluation of the historical and contemporary political aspects of Canada’s role as an Arctic nation, the authors consider northern social issues in conjunction with defence requirements. Notably, *Arctic Front* represents a departure from conventional Canadian thinking about Arctic sovereignty and security, imploring Canadian citizens and leadership to move away from the myth that sovereignty is at risk, and to pay more attention to taking responsibility for defence and providing a sustainable social infrastructure for northern communities. The stated objective is to change the national debate on Arctic sovereignty with respect to Canadian control over the Arctic and national responsibilities in the North. In presenting the background of Canada’s Arctic sovereignty debate, which dates back to the 1880s, the authors demonstrate that Canada has a history, which Canadians seem to forget and repeat the same old pattern with each new challenge to the same old question. Therefore, the authors hope to “challenge Canadian assumptions about its northern role and commitments.”

This work is an impressive attempt to combine all the issues pertaining to Canada’s interest in the Arctic, namely legal disputes, security and defence requirements, sovereignty challenges, scientific research, and social development. The discussion provides a unique, and probably unpopular, but well-documented perspective on the controversial voyages of the U.S. in the Northwest Passage (NWP)—demonstrating that the voyages were taken with full consultation and cooperation with Canada. The authors explain the difficult U.S. position indicating that if they were to acknowledge the NWP as internal Canadian waters, then this assertion could affect the status of passages elsewhere in the world, which in turn would challenge U.S. access and operation within international waterways, such as the Panama Canal or Suez Canal.

The plight of northern communities is considered in the authors’ comparison of the Arctic with certain African countries (such as Chad) where Canada has never completed nation building and has relied heavily upon the U.S. for defence in responding to threats in the North. Notably, the authors state that Canada has a greater capacity for working in desert environments than Arctic ones—a reflection of Canada’s global strategic interests and commitments.

Future concepts groups might disagree with the first line in the conclusion that “only a fool would try to predict where Canada will stand in the Arctic in 2028.” However, the conclusion is hopeful that Canada might assert itself as a northern nation and commit the assets required for an effective defence and sovereignty presence. Yet, the authors also acknowledge that the current interest could diminish with a few cold winters, which would weaken global warming related concerns.