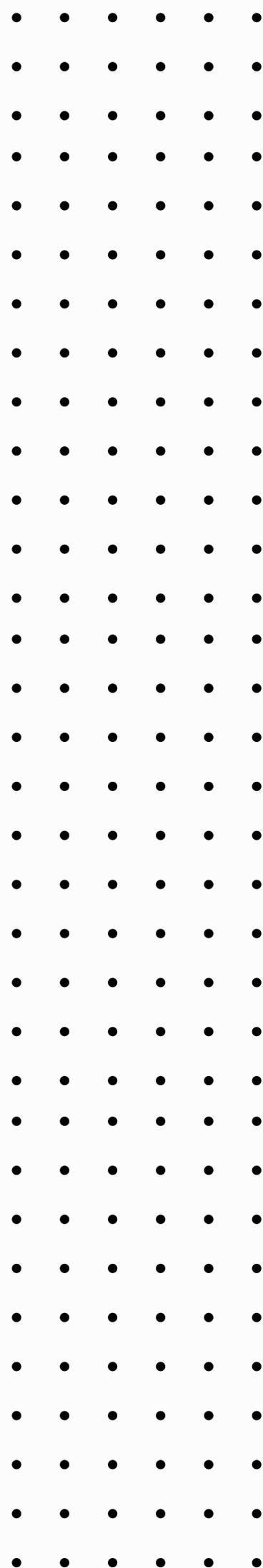


CANADA AS THE EMERGING LEADER IN THE ARCTIC



Zsanett Gréta Papp

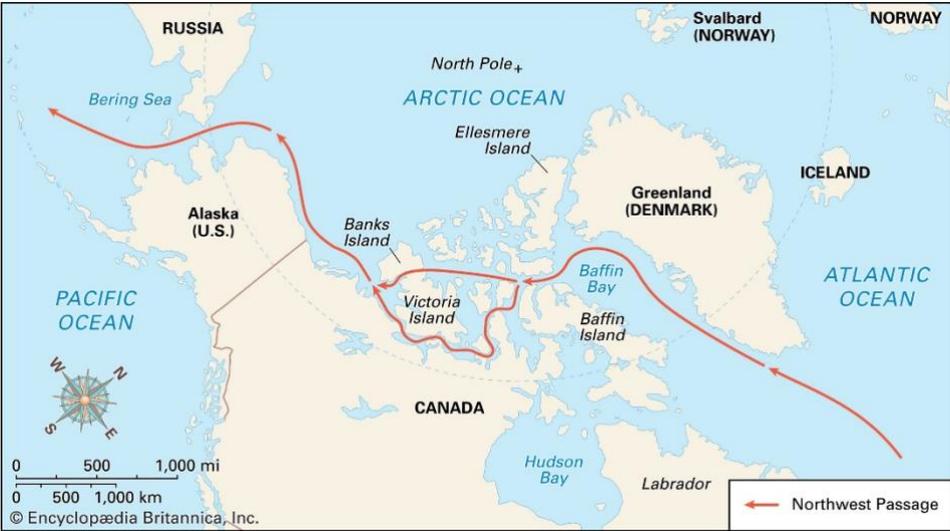


The [Arctic is central to Canada's national identity](#), prosperity, security, values and interests. The Canadian Arctic covers 40% of Canada's territory and is home to more than 200,000 inhabitants, more than half of whom are Indigenous. [The sovereignty](#) over the Northern part of the Arctic territories remains a national priority for the [Canadian government](#) in the 21st century.

Due to climate change, Canada has to make sure that its [sovereignty is still secured in the Arctic](#). Due to climate change, its sea-level rise increases the risk of flooding and erosion on Arctic coasts and may exacerbate other coastal hazards, such as ice ride-up and pile-up. In the Canadian Arctic, sea-level rise and coastal erosion also threaten cultural heritage sites and pose an existential threat to Canadian indigenous societies. The [intensification of extreme snowfall](#) across large areas of the [Northern Hemisphere under future warming](#) prompts discussions about adaptation options.

In addition, climate change opens up the Northwest Passage and access to transportation routes. There has been growing international interest in the Arctic, the resource development put pressure on Canada to control the Northern part of the Arctic. To maintain its sovereignty in the Arctic, Canada needs to counterbalance Russia and [China's great power aspirations](#) by improving its capabilities in the High North. However, the Canadian critical infrastructure is only a persistent but not [a permanent presence](#) in the Arctic.

Regarding the high political and economic tensions, the indigenous communities and multiple levels of the [Canadian government](#) and its institutions, including the



Canadian Armed Forces, share the commensurate task and responsibility of responding to, tracking, [monitoring](#) and adapting to rapid climatic changes and impacts associated with [climate change in the Arctic](#).

Firstly, given the growing international interest and competition in the Arctic, continued security and defence of the North American homeland require effective safety and security frameworks, national defence, and deterrence. In this regard, the Canadian government has already promised to [spend \\$4.9 billion](#) over the next six years to modernize continental defence since the military needs to [increase its transport capacity](#) to quickly move troops into the region and sustain them. As it is also an integral part of the U.S.'s Arctic Strategy, Canada's share of the cost of overhauling [NORAD](#), the decades-old bi-national air defence command designed originally to watch out for Soviet bombers. The United States, which is the main Arctic ally of Canada, covers about 60 percent of [the bill for NORAD](#).

Moreover, to [support the modernization](#) of NORAD and continental defence, Canada is establishing an undersea network of surveillance sensors to be able to detect and identify those threats earlier and respond to them faster and more decisively, including [aerospace](#) threats transiting our northern approaches.

Moreover, in alliance with the U.S., Canada is also willing to contribute to the [green defence idea](#), which is one of the most significant aims of the European Green Deal as well. Therefore, the Arctic could easily emerge as a key region between the U.S., the EU, and Canada for building the vision of 'Sustainable Energy in the Defence and Security Sector' to enforce green energy security.

Secondly, as a response to climate change, Canada released the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework which provides overarching direction to the Government of Canada's priorities, activities, and investments in the Arctic to 2030 and beyond. Under the [Joint Arctic Leaders' Statement since 2017](#), they collaboratively work with territories, provinces and Indigenous groups to identify and build a long-term vision for 2030 for the Canadian and circumpolar Arctic. To address specific international outcomes, Global Affairs Canada will implement an International Arctic Policy, that sets out priority areas for Canada's international Arctic engagement including strengthening the rules-based international order; increasing engagement with Arctic and non-Arctic states; and more clearly defining Canada's Arctic boundaries.

In opposition to the U.S., Canada indeed takes steps to invest in the Arctic states. Canada is one of the world's [producers](#) of oil and natural gas and has the world's [fifth-largest capacity for renewable energy](#) and is the third-largest generator of hydropower in the world, as well. It's also exceptionally well-positioned to meet demand across the circumpolar Arctic, Europe and Asia. These elements are supposed to [secure Canada's economic advance](#) in the region and globally. This is the advantage that gives the reason for the aim of [controlling](#) the more accessible [commercial sea routes and Arctic transportation](#) are part of Canada's Arctic ambitions.

About the author

Zsanett is a Research Assistant at EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy. As part of EUROPEUM's climate team, her research focuses mainly on raw materials, European green energy security, and the geoeconomic implications of climate change. She has a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Eötvös Loránd University, during which she also gained experience at Sciences Po Lille, where she studied European Studies. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Geopolitics at Charles University while participating as an Analyst for the Arctic Region at the Prague Geopolitical Collective (PGC). Since Zsanett has long-term research activity in the field of Circumpolar geopolitics and contributes to conferences and political debates about how place matters in geopolitics and the Contemporary World Order.

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