

Canadian NATO  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
canadienne de l'OTAN

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## **Report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association**

### **Joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation and the Sub-Committee on Resilience and Civil Security**

**Copenhagen, Denmark and Nuuk, Greenland**

**From September 12 to 16, 2022**

## Report

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (CANA or the association) has the honour to present this report on its participation in the joint visit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly Defence and Security Committee's Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation (DSCTC) and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) Committee on Democracy and Security's Sub-Committee on Resilience and Civil Security (CDSRCS) to Copenhagen, Denmark and Nuuk, Greenland from September 12 to the 16, 2022. The association was represented by Senator Jane Cordy, chair of the CDSRCS and one of CANA's counsellors.

### THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Established in 1955, the NATO PA is an interparliamentary organization that brings together legislators from the national parliaments of the 31 member countries of NATO<sup>1</sup>, as well as 10 associate member countries<sup>2</sup>. It is institutionally separate and independent from the official NATO structure but serves as a liaison for NATO and member parliaments<sup>3</sup>. The NATO PA aims to strengthen parliamentary awareness, understanding and oversight of defence and security issues, while also enhancing the transparency of NATO policies. The Assembly also plays a significant role in deepening the transatlantic relationship that underpins the NATO Alliance.

The NATO PA has five thematic Committees:

- Defence and Security Committee
- Political Committee
- Committee on Democracy and Security
- Science and Technology Committee
- Economics and Security Committee

Each of these committees has one or two sub-committees. NATO PA committee members hear from defence and security experts and conduct fact-finding missions throughout the year, which culminate in the drafting of reports and resolutions. The draft reports and resolutions are considered during NATO PA Sessions.

Originally known as the Military Committee, the broader mandate of the Defence and Security Committee (DSC) addresses the military aspects of Alliance security. In general,

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<sup>1</sup> The 31 member countries of NATO are: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States.

<sup>2</sup> The associate delegations are from: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, and Ukraine.

<sup>3</sup> See NATO PA website: ["Our Mission"](#)

the Committee examines Alliance transformation, capabilities, ongoing operations, near and long-term threat perspectives, as well as partnerships and programs to find how NATO can continually improve its readiness, effectiveness, and interoperability.

The Committee on Democracy and Security was first established as the Cultural Committee in 1956 and has undergone several name changes, the most recent being in 2021 when the present one was adopted. Despite the changes in title, this Committee has maintained a consistent focus on the aspects of Euro-Atlantic security which, directly or indirectly, relate to the responsibilities, protection and welfare of civilians.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Between 12 and 16 September 2022, two NATO PA sub-committees (Defence and Security Committee Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation and the Committee on Democracy and Security Sub-Committee on Resilience and Civil Security) visited Copenhagen, Denmark and Nuuk, Greenland. The delegation consisted of 18 parliamentarians from 11 different NATO member states. Senator Cordy was delegation lead in her capacity as Chair of the Committee on Democracy and Security's Sub-Committee on Resilience and Civil Security.

Climate change and the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine have increased global attention to the Arctic. Understanding these geopolitical and climate changes and their impact on the Kingdom of Denmark was the focus of the joint visit.

The delegation's visit to Denmark and Greenland was hosted by the Danish Parliament in Copenhagen and the Naalakkersuisut (Government of Greenland) in Nuuk. Over the four-day visit, the delegation met with officials, parliamentarians and experts from the Danish Meteorological Institute as well as the Universities of Copenhagen and Greenland.

Topics of focus during the visits were:

- The Changing Arctic
  - Danish Security Priorities
  - Evolving Security Challenges on NATO's Northern Flank
  - Russian Regional Revisionism
  - Militarization of the Arctic
- Nordic Defence Efforts and Evolving Cooperation
  - NATO and the Arctic: Exercises, Training, and Future Policy

- Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF)CO)
- Scandinavian Military to Military Cooperation
- Relations with Russia
- Search and Rescue Coordination
- Cooperation with the US in Arctic Securitye
  - Climate Change and Security
- Climate Change and Arctic Security
  - The Impact of Climate Change on the Security and Resilience of Allied Societies
  - Adaption to Climate Change in the Arctic
    - The Nexus Between Development and Security
    - Danish Approach to Cybersecurity

## **COPENHAGEN, DENMARK**

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2022**

Prior to the start of the official programme, Senator Cordy met with Denis Robert, Canada's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark (which includes Greenland and the Faroe Islands).

The discussion focused on Greenland and the pressures on the nation to develop mineral extraction. Greenland is rich in desirable mineral deposits and as global warming accelerates, it is becoming easier to access these deposits. China, in particular, has shown interest in having access to these resources.

The Arctic Council, the disruption of the Russian war on Ukraine has had on the work of the Council, and Arctic security were also discussed.

The Arctic Council is the leading multilateral forum for circumpolar cooperation and where Canada advances its Arctic interests internationally<sup>4</sup>. It was established in Ottawa in 1996 by the Ottawa Declaration. The Arctic Council comprises the eight Arctic states: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark (which includes the autonomous constituent countries of Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the

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<sup>4</sup> See Government of Canada website: ["Canada and the Arctic Council"](#)

United States and six international Indigenous peoples organizations as Permanent Participants.

Canada was the first chair of the Arctic Council, serving from 1996 to 1998, and served again from 2013 to 2015.

The Arctic Council is committed to the inhabitants of the Arctic, including Indigenous peoples and their communities, who make unique contributions and bring unique knowledge to the council because of their special relationship with the Arctic. The council works to promote sustainable development, including economic and social development, and cultural well-being. The council is equally committed to the protection of the Arctic environment, including the health of Arctic ecosystems, maintenance of biodiversity in the Arctic region and conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

The involvement of six international Indigenous peoples' organizations as Permanent Participants is a unique feature of the Arctic Council. They sit at the table in their own right. Three of the six organizations have Canadian constituents.

At the time of the visit, the Arctic Council was chaired by Russia. As the other council nations are strongly opposed to Russia's military action in Ukraine, relations between council nations and Russia are strained. Because of this, the Arctic Council had not been meeting in an official capacity. Members had, however, been meeting without Russia's involvement.

The delegation heard that Russia's aggression against Ukraine has caused relations between Russia and fellow Arctic Council member nations to deteriorate. While some Arctic Council members have only limited co-operation with Russia, it was noted that it is impossible to ignore the strong presence of Russia in the European Arctic and the willingness on its part to be a disruptive force within the Arctic Council.

In May 2023, Norway took over the Chair of the Arctic Council.

During the visit, the importance of preserving the Arctic Council was emphasized, as was the necessity for strong and responsible multinational governance of the Arctic.

Historically, the Arctic has had unique co-operation to ensure that development is peaceful. The global security situation has changed with the war in Ukraine and global warming has increased international interest in the natural resources of the Arctic.

The delegation heard that China is showing increased interest in the Arctic. While China's presence in the region is mostly scientific and economic at this time, the delegation was told, it is likely this will be followed by a strategic military presence in the near future.

And while experts told the delegation China has no military interests in the Arctic yet, Russia's recent efforts to increase its military capabilities across its Arctic region have, by contrast, been significant, with Moscow re-activating or building over 50 new bases and installations. While the new Arctic investments have been mostly defensive, recent years have seen advanced air and missile systems deployed to the region. Russia's national Arctic strategy makes it clear Moscow aims to exert significant economic and political influence in the region.

Ultimately, the common goal for Denmark and Greenland is to ensure that the Arctic develops in a way that is both responsible, prosperous and secure.

In terms of climate change and Arctic, the message was clear that climate change and global warming is affecting the Arctic in drastic ways. Evidence is showing that the Arctic is warming several times faster than the global average. This results in reduced, thinner ice cover, shortened snow covered season, increased melting from glaciers flowing into arctic waters, thawing permafrost and changing ecosystems.

All of this presents Arctic nations and those peoples who inhabit the Arctic with challenges to their way of life and persevering the ecosystem. It also presents opportunities, such as the aforementioned access to natural resources.

## **NUUK, GREENLAND**

### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 AND THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2022**

Following the visit to Copenhagen, the delegation travelled to Nuuk, Greenland for two days of meetings with Government officials and officials at the Joint Arctic Command (JAC) Denmark.

JAC Denmark is a joint operational territorial command comprised of personnel from all services in the Royal Danish Armed Forces; Navy, Airforce, Special Forces and Army. It also employs civilians from Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. It has its headquarters in Nuuk.

The command's main task is surveillance, assertion of sovereignty and military defense of the Kingdom of Denmark including Greenland and the Faroe Islands<sup>5</sup>. This massive area of responsibility, spanning five time zones, includes contributing to the security of NATO sea lanes of communication across the North Atlantic by monitoring the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap. In addition, the JAC assists with search and rescue operations, pollution monitoring, scientific research efforts, fishery control and policing support.

Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands have a unique governing relationship. The Act on Greenland Self-Government was granted to Greenland on June 21, 2009<sup>6</sup>. Under the Act, Greenland has the right to elect its own parliament and government. While Greenland has sovereignty and administration over areas such as their fisheries, environment and climate and natural resources, Denmark retains jurisdiction over some responsibilities, such as national defence.

As climate change warms the Arctic allowing for increased access for commercial ships, cruise liners and military vessels and international tensions continue to be strained between NATO and Russia, China increases its presence in the region. The Kingdom of Denmark has a significant responsibility for the security of the Arctic.

Officials in both Copenhagen and Nuuk were clear on the shared interest in a joint policy in the Arctic that not only ensures their respective interests, but also considers the impact

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<sup>5</sup> See Joint Arctic Command Website: <https://www.forsvaret.dk/en/organisation/joint-arctic-command/about-us/>

<sup>6</sup> See Government of Greenland website: <https://english.stm.dk/the-prime-ministers-office/the-unity-of-the-realm/greenland/>

of climate change in the region and weighs the evolution of growing global interest in regional development.

Delegates heard that increased militarization of the Arctic with fewer mechanisms for dialogue presents a growing security dilemma. As a result, NATO's Arctic Allies have issued new Arctic strategies in recent years, stepped up their patrols and exercises in the Arctic and increased investments in their ability to have better situational awareness across the region.

In line with its NATO Allies, Denmark is also increasing its focus on the Arctic. Danish officials told the delegation of Denmark's recent commitment, in agreement with Greenlandic and Faroese authorities, to up its Arctic capabilities to have a better view of activities across the Danish Kingdom's massive Arctic area of responsibility. The agreement will result in the allocation of approximately US\$250 million to invest in long-range drones, radar systems, and satellite monitoring. In the agreement, authorities in Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland noted their special responsibility for defence and security in the European Arctic and the North Atlantic.

Greenland Foreign Ministry officials indicated the importance of Arctic capabilities investment, and stressed continued dialogue and cooperation with the United States and other Allies is essential.

One official stressed that Russia is well aware that Greenland is part of NATO and has a special relationship with the US and noted that though there is no real threat of war in the Arctic, the region is increasingly reflecting global security politics.

Greenlandic officials stated that the heightened tensions in the Arctic pushed the Government of Greenland to advocate for a better seat at the table when it comes to security matters in the region. Recently Greenland was successful in their bid to post an official inside the Danish mission to NATO in Brussels. Further, Greenland has taken a public stance against Russia's aggression in Ukraine and, though not a part of the European Union (EU), is cooperating with Denmark to implement EU sanctions on Russia.

The delegation heard that while Greenland does not generally take positions on international conflicts, Ukraine's struggle for independence has garnered significant sympathy.

## **SUMMARY**

Increased tensions between NATO and Russia are being felt in the Arctic. Russia's re-activating or building of over 50 new bases and installations across the Arctic is reason to be concerned. Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has tensions with Russia strained to a point not seen since the Cold War. Security in the Arctic is of serious concern as Russia have shown its willingness to be a disruptive actor as chair of the Arctic Council.

These factors all contribute to creating a complex security environment that can too easily lead to a dangerous situation. The Arctic will continue to be a place of increased military competition in the years to come and as a member of NATO, Canada has an obligation

to work with our international partners to protect the sovereignty and security of those nations with whom we share the Arctic.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, M.P.  
Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

### **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation and the Sub-Committee on Resilience and Civil Security
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Copenhagen, Denmark and Nuuk, Greenland
<b>DATES</b>	From September 12 to 16, 2022
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Jane Cordy
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	5,435.82 \$

<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	1,361.42 \$
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	0.00 \$
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	1,245.88 \$
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	0.00 \$
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	0.00 \$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,043.12 \$</b>