

Security challenges and legal capacity of Greenland and Nunavut jurisdictions

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Abstract

The emergence in 1999 of the new public government of Nunavut and the continuing evolution of Greenland's self-governance raise the issue of the legal capacity of these Arctic regions in security matters regarding their homelands. Traditionally, jurisdiction in defence and military security policies is the domain of national states. However, significant changes in approaches to security and growing interest of Greenland and Nunavut in participation and involvement in missile defence and other activities make questionable absolute 'non-transferability' of security to the jurisdiction of these sub-national entities. Employing the examples of Greenland and Nunavut, this paper aims to address the role of law in measures that secure the legal scope of governance in the Arctic in dealing with security challenges. It addresses the questions: whether citizens of sub-national (self-governing) entities should have some legal capacity in national defence/security policies when it concerns or affects their lands. Should security matters become a legitimate part of Nunavut or Greenland governance systems or are informal methods sufficient? Should the fate of the Inuit homelands be in the hands of southern alliances and politicians, or should the northern communities be entitled to decide for themselves? By examining the current and potential security interests of Greenland and Nunavut, it is argued that activity of these governments in the security matters regarding their lands should be legally recognized. Inuit should take a leadership role together with

national governments over the assertion of sovereignty and the future of the Arctic.

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Introduction

Representatives of the Inuit see their people as the Arctic's legitimate spokespersons for their homelands.¹ Practice shows, however, that Inuit livelihood and lands, being sandwiched between strategic military interests of superpowers, are vulnerable to the efforts of militarization, missile defence plans and other security-defence doctrines of their mother and other states.

Traditionally, jurisdiction in defence policies is the domain of national states. Significant changes in the approaches to security caused

¹ Mary Simon. "Security, Peace and the Native Peoples of the Arctic." In T. Berger, A. Radionov, D. Roche and 21 other speakers. *The Arctic Choices for Peace and Security. A public inquiry. The true north strong and free inquiry society, proceedings of a public inquiry.* (Vancouver-Canada, Seattle-USA: Gordon Soules Book Publishers Ltd., 1989) at 32-33.

by the end of the Cold War, technological developments and the appearance on the map of politically evolving Arctic entities, like Nunavut and Greenland call into question an absolute 'non-transferability' of security jurisdiction to sub-national units where the legitimate interests of those units are concerned.

Looking at this issue in terms of the competence of the Greenlandic and Nunavut governments, the following questions emerge: Is the fate of the Inuit homelands in the hands of Southern alliances and politicians, or should the Northern communities and governments decide for themselves? Should citizens of the sub-national entities of Greenland and Nunavut have some legal capacity in the national defence and security policies when it concerns or affects their homelands? Should security matters become a legitimate part of Home Rule or Nunavut jurisdictions or can they be regulated by informal methods of consultations, shared advisory councils or meetings? These questions are linked to the issue of how far can we have special considerations for Northern indigenous peoples in the framework of public governance systems of Nunavut and Greenland.

Greenland Home Rule is evolving towards more independence in foreign affairs and security policies. One may argue that Nunavut has little interest in this area because of the changed strategic significance of Canada's Eastern Arctic after the end of the Cold War and 'building' of a Nunavut government. However, the geo-political importance of the Eastern Arctic and consequently Nunavut's role as an international actor may change. The Nunavut system will eventually develop towards greater involvement in international relations. This phenomenon is akin to the possible jurisdiction in security matters.

This paper looks at the security challenges and legal capacity of Greenland and Nunavut. At the outset, it presents a brief overview of Greenland and Nunavut interests in defence matters. It is argued that in light of the principal elements of evolving Greenland/Nunavut security policy interests, the governments of Greenland and Nunavut should have greater opportunities for participation and partnership in the security agenda of their national states when it concerns the Arctic region. This activity of Nunavut or Greenland authorities should be legally regulated. Further, the paper traces the new security challenges for Arctic homelands. It

points out that the potential strategic-political importance of Greenland and Nunavut entitles authorities of the latter to more cooperation with national agencies on security matters. There is no challenge to the Canadian or Danish sovereignty caused by Nunavut or Greenland representation in the security decision-making process regarding their lands. The idea of Greenlandic or Nunavut jurisdiction in security issues has to be reassessed in light of new international political realities. The viability and effectiveness of Nunavut and Greenland governance are challenged by the lack of sufficient powers or legitimate competence on the part of local authorities with regard to security matters in the territories.

Greenland and Nunavut interests in defence matters

This section does not aim to include or apply to Greenland or Nunavut the wide range of security matters elaborated by prominent scholars within the last decades.² By security policies it means to concentrate on defence issues that affect the development and livelihood of citizens of Greenland and Nunavut.³ Accepting the multiple views on security, an attempt is made to define why it is of vital importance that Greenland or Nunavut have some jurisdiction in defence policies regarding their regions. In so doing, a brief overview of these Arctic territories' interests in defence matters is appropriate.

In practice, Greenland and Nunavut had to face similar challenges connected with militarization of their regions.

² As F. Griffiths notes, "As of the late 1990s Canadians speak with varying degrees of knowledge ability and frequency about civil, collective, common, comprehensive, cooperative, cultural, demographic, ecological, economic, energy, food, global, human, military, national, personal, political, regional, shared, and sub regional as well as environmental security." Franklyn Griffiths. "Environment and Security in Arctic Waters: A Canadian Perspective." in Willy Østreg ed. *National Security and International Environmental Cooperation in the Arctic-the Case of the Northern Sea Route*. (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers Environment & Policy No 16, 1999) at 104.

³ Security policy is included in international affairs. To emphasize the importance of defence issues as a part of security matters, it was decided to look at them as a separate issue.

First, both Greenland and Nunavut are part of NATO member states. As Canada and Denmark are sandwiched between the superpowers' politics, Greenland and Baffin Island were regarded through the lenses of security interests of the Alliance.⁴ To date, Greenland has far-going interests in security policies of the Alliance including the possibility of the Home Rule's representative to the NATO headquarters and obtaining first-hand information on the work in NATO.⁵ Second, modest Canadian and Danish defence/military abilities led to the extensive 'military discovery' of Greenland by the USA. That also provided a long term American presence in the Canadian Arctic and Canada's quasi dependency on the military potential of the United States. Both Greenland and to a lesser extent Baffin Island have become integrated in the defence plans of America. This "overwhelming" forced marriage posed challenges to the Canadian sovereignty in the North,⁶ and was regarded as a threat to Inuit sovereignty over their lands. Third, the evolving security perspective in Greenland and Nunavut is formed by the Inuit tradition which demands cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution rather than military actions. It is underscored by several observers that a military culture is alien to the Inuit. Therefore security interests and policies are shaped by civility in utilization and the Inuit tradition.⁷ Consequently, as Greenland and Nunavut are not sovereign, there is no conscription or military service in these Arctic jurisdictions. However, this situation might change for Greenland.⁸

⁴ Nikolaj Petersen. "Denmark, Greenland, and Arctic Security." In Kari Möttölä ed. *The Arctic Challenge: Nordic and Canadian approaches to security and cooperation in an emerging international region*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988) at 39.

⁵ The Commission on self-governance- a presentation. 2003 at 11.

⁶ On historical account see: Shelagh Grant. *Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North 1936-1950*. (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988). Regarding the sovereignty concerns in the High Canadian Arctic – the Ellesmere Island, see: Richard Langlais. *Reformulating security. A Case Study from Arctic Canada*. Ph D Thesis (Sweden: Humanekologiska

13, G tenborg University, 1995) 97-102 at 110-115.

⁷ N. Petersen, *supra* note 4 at 63. W. Østreng (1999) *supra* note 2 at 221-223.

⁸ The Commission on Self-Governance recommends that "a combination of compulsory military service and a civilian society duty should be introduced for the Greenlandic youth." At 10.

Greenland and Nunavut, having experienced the consequences of World War II and the Cold War, should have developed some 'immunity' against militarization. Greenland's experience shows that there is the fundamental question of an external military threat to the Island,⁹ and Greenland has to be involved in security policies. Finally, the development of Nunavut and evolution of Greenland Home Rule towards taking more responsibilities for their homelands, with growing concerns on security issues, becomes a natural constraint for national defence policies which cannot ignore opinions of Greenlanders or Nunavummiut.¹⁰

Thus, Greenland and Nunavut have common grounds for the possible involvement of local authorities in the security agendas of their national states regarding the Arctic. The Inuit Circumpolar Conference has elaborated a wide range of measures to advance security and peace objectives in the Circumpolar North.¹¹ Representatives of the Inuit have developed a concept of sustainable security as an alternative.¹² These measures correspond to Greenland and Nunavut interests in security policies and could be summarized as:

- The right of Greenland and Nunavut authorities to be informed about all questions relating to the security policies regarding their homelands, waters (including off-shore) air space and ice;
- The protection of game and other limited, vulnerable renewable/non-renewable resources from any sort of military activity or its consequences;
- Security for human factor development from any future, present or past results of military actions on the Inuit territories (e.g. the crash of a US nuclear bomb carrier in Greenland in 1968; forced relocation of Inuit and expropriation of hunting lands for purposes of the US military bases);
- The right of Nunavut and Greenland authorities to participate and make decisions regarding national defence

⁹ The Commission on Self-Governance underlines this element of security policies. *Supra* note 5 at 10.

¹⁰ Some may argue, however, that in practice they are ignored.

¹¹ M. Simon, *supra* note 1 at 35-36.

¹² Dalee Sambo. "Sustainable security: an Inuit perspective." In Jyrki Käkönen ed. *Politics and Sustainable Growth in the Arctic*. (Aldershot/Brookfield/USA: Dartmouth Publishing, 1993) at 62.

policies related to the Arctic and territories of Inuit homeland; and

- The possibility of changes in the legislation to enable Greenland and Nunavut to influence Denmark and Canada's security policy, where relevant.¹³

In the light of forthcoming changes to the Home Rule structure, the Commission on Greenland's Self-Governance (2003) has stressed that "Greenland's security policy must be evaluated based on the geographical position of Greenland" and includes military aspect and soft security policy.¹⁴ The success of the Greenlandic and Nunavut systems of governance does not depend on their possible jurisdiction in defence matters, as economic viability is a more important kind of security than the military one. In the meantime, further economic development of Greenland and Nunavut is linked to defence/security policies. There is an interdependence of local economies on any fluctuations in the Arctic environment, employment opportunities for Northern residents, game profits, hunting, fishing, climate change, the prices on renewable/non-renewable resources and the consequences of military activity in these regions. The scope of Nunavut or Greenlandic jurisdiction in matters related to the security of the territories is thus important. Are there any grounds for legitimating the voice of Nunavut and Greenland in security issues related to their territory?

A historical retrospective on the role of Inuit homelands in the defence strategies of superpowers and their national states shows that there is. Greenland's long-term negotiations and concerns with revision of the 1951 USA-Denmark defense Agreement, the upgrade of the only remaining military installation - the Thule base¹⁵ - and the related

¹³ Greenland's Commission on Self-Governance 2003 considered this element extremely important. *Supra* note 5 at 11. It is also relevant for potential Nunavut interests.

¹⁴ The Commission on Self-Governance 2003, *supra* note 5 at 10.

¹⁵ Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Denmark, including the Home Rule Government, to amend and supplement the Agreement of 27 April 1951 pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark concerning the defense of Greenland (Defense Agreement) including relevant subsequent agreements related thereto. May 25, 2004 www.nanoq.gl On the 6th of August 2004 an

forced relocation of 27 Inughuit families in 1953, and radioactive pollution caused by the crash in 1968 of an American B-52 carrying four hydrogen bombs,¹⁶ form the crux of Greenland-Denmark-USA security policy interests today. Tacit Danish-American relations and the manipulation of the 'Thule card' to please US military interests with the evident and grave consequences of that¹⁷ prompted Greenland authorities to seek participation in security issues without the intervention of Denmark. The 'Thule issue' and the US strategic interests in Greenland show how vulnerable Greenland's position is and how fragile the Home Rule system can be in challenging the superpower's policies.¹⁸

U.S. military 'discovery' of Canada's Eastern Arctic caused a threat to Canadian sovereignty in the North. It was similar to what Denmark had to face with the presence of the US military bases in Greenland. There were also similar military activities, like the construction

agreement to modernize the 1951 Defence Agreement; a declaration on environmental cooperation in Greenland; and a declaration on economic and technical cooperation were signed in Iqaliku (Greenland) by representatives of the USA, Danish and Greenlandic authorities. "Historic Day for Greenland in Iqaliku." August 6, 2004 www.dk.nanoq.gl The Joint Committee met in Nuuk on the 6th of October, 2004 to work on further cooperation and concrete results in the framework of signed agreements. All these show that Greenland is taking an active step towards more independence in security and foreign affairs. Opening Statement. October 6, 2004 www.dk.nanoq.gl

¹⁶ On that account see: *Greenland during the Cold War. Danish and American Security Policy in 1945-68* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Affairs, 1997); T. Jorgen & J. Hansen *Security Perspectives* (Fairbanks-Alaska: Arcus 2001); A. Lyng *The Right to Return. Fifty Years of Struggle by Relocated Inughuit in Greenland* (Nuuk: Forlaget Atuagkat, 2002).

¹⁷ Among numerous complaints, there are concerns about the control exercised by military authorities over the traffic in the Thule area. This blocks the development of tourism and mineral resources.

¹⁸ It is admitted by some Greenlandic authorities that Greenland had no choice but to support the modernization of the 1951 Defense Agreement allowing the upgrade of the radar at the Thule air base. Greenland's hope is that the USA would eventually support Greenland's independence. In words of Greenland's deputy minister of foreign affairs Mikaela Engel, "if Greenland had opposed the Thule upgrade, then the U.S. might have closed down the base entirely and headed off to Canada...an we would lose any interest for the Americans." Jane George. "Thule base key to Greenland's independence." Nunatsiaq News. September 10, 2004 www.nunatsiaq.com

of the Distant Early warning line¹⁹ (DEW) stretching into Northern Alaska, Canada's High Arctic and included Eastern Greenland.²⁰ The DEW Agreement, signed between the USA and Canada in 1955, in many ways paralleled the Denmark-USA Agreement of 1951. In the meantime, the US threats to Canada's sovereignty did not boost the necessity of Nunavut government involvement in security issues to the extent that it did in Greenland.

The Nunavut authorities are still developing their new governance system, and are not at the same stage as Greenland with its demand for more "say" on security issues. However, this might be the challenge for the Nunavut government in the future. Ottawa's possible commitment to missile defence talks²¹ and agreement to link the U.S. missile defense system with NORAD²² causes concerns between the Nunavummiut, the Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI)²³ and other Canadians.²⁴ Greenland allowed the US to upgrade its Thule air base.²⁵ That means that most likely Canadian Arctic and Nunavut in particular would not play host to U.S. missile shoot-down sites. The Northern premiers, including

¹⁹ See: Establishment of a distant early warning system. Agreement between Canada and the United States of America. Effected by Exchange of Notes signed at Washington May 5, 1955. Canada. Treaty Series 1955 No. 8 at 2-15.

²⁰ For details of location of DEW line in Greenland see: C. Archer. "The United States Defence Areas in Greenland." (1988) 23:3 Cooperation and Conflict Nordic J. of Int'l Politics at 131-133. N. Petersen, *supra* note 4 at 43-49.

²¹ Jane George. "Ottawa affirms commitment to missile defence talks" *Nunavut high on list of possible missile, radar sites*. Nunatsiaq News. February 27, 2004. www.nunatsiaq.com

²² In August 2004 Ottawa agreed to link the proposed U.S. missile defense system with NORAD, the two countries' joint air defences. Sean Gordon. Ottawa to co-operate on shield. *Canada agrees to link NORAD to missile plan*. National Post No 241. August 6, 2004 at A1-A2.

²³ Jim Bell. "NTI wants in on missile defense shield talks. *Ottawa breaking land claim promises, Kaludjak says*." Nunatsiaq News. May 7, 2004 www.nunatsiaq.com

²⁴ "Prominent Canadians protest missile defence" *Susan Aglukark signs open letter to PM*. Nunatsiaq News. March 26, 2004. www.nunatsiaq.com The protesters are deeply alarmed that the Federal government continues to pursue Canada's involvement in the development of the US missile defence system. They believe that such involvement will cause "negative consequences for global security, and for Canadian sovereignty over future foreign affairs and defence matters." *Ibid*.

²⁵ See *supra* note 15.

Nunavut's asked for a voice in any missile defence developments.²⁶ However, as Paul Okalik has stressed, the Ballistic Missile Defense debate is "not a question for the government of Nunavut...it is a national issue. Nunavut only wants "a positive role" in any projects such as the BMD that take place in or affect Nunavut."²⁷ That what is called a "true partnership." In other words, Nunavut is not asking for jurisdiction in security matters regarding the missile defence, as it's best left to the federal government but "Inuit have a role to play in northern projects that require an understanding of the Arctic."²⁸ As the Premier further noted, the NLCA and the Nunavut government serve as some guarantee that future development projects take into consideration the potentially positive and negative impacts on the Inuit.

The Home Rule Act of 1978 and the Nunavut Acts of 1993 do not list defence policy issues as a subject of gradual transferral to the Greenland or Nunavut authorities. The liability and responsibility held by the governments of these Arctic regions for sustainable development, economic prosperity, preservation of Inuit culture and *de facto* involvement in security matters particularly by Home Rule authorities encourage citizens of Greenland and Nunavut to insist on a share of jurisdiction in this field without threat to the national defence/security policies of Canada or Denmark.

New security challenges and Inuit of Greenland and Nunavut

With development of the Nunavut system of governance and the evolution of self-government in Greenland, Inuit will face newer challenges related to security matters in their homelands. Where do these challenges come from? The end of the Cold War brought greater opportunities for Inuit participation in the security policies of their national states. At the same time it reduced the potential geo-

²⁶ Jane George. "Northern premiers want involvement in missile defense. *Premiers hope second co-operation pact will avoid past failures*." Nunatsiaq News. September 12, 2003. "Canada, United States near missile defence pact" *Northern premiers seek voice in developments*. Nunatsiaq News. January 16, 2004 www.nunatsiaq.com

²⁷ Jane George. "Nunavut stays out of ballistic missile debate. *Territory desires "positive role" in massive projects, Okalik says*." Nunatsiaq News. April 23, 2004.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

political importance of the Circumpolar North. However, current US missile defence plans show that it is of the utmost importance for northern citizens to be informed of any future military activities in their territories and to be ready for any new security challenges.

The scope of Greenland and Nunavut security interests will evolve with any new strategic-military significance of the Arctic lands, connected for example, with a threat of terrorism. This is already the reason for US interest in upgrading the Thule radar system. Furthermore, Greenlandic and Nunavut interests in security policies may be prompted by exploration and mineral resources development by non-native or foreign investors. Security interests may be advanced by changing the political configuration in the local governments (December 2002 elections in Greenland) or by global challenges to the 'sovereignty' and viability of Home Rule and the Nunavut systems in the areas of their jurisdiction. These challenges are real and caused by possible Inuit interests in the off-shore waters, global warming, climate change, the increased feasibility of transport in the Northwest Passage and the consequent environmental impact on traditional Inuit livelihoods, dietary habits, hunting and fishing possibilities, etc.

Is there a challenge to Canadian or Danish sovereignty in the Arctic caused by the possible involvement of representatives of Greenland and Nunavut in national security decision-making regarding Inuit homeland? Arguably, there is not. However, there are challenges to the Nunavut and Home Rule authorities in the abovementioned areas as they develop their governance systems in the scope of their jurisdiction. Thus, the absence of sufficient powers on the part of Nunavut and Greenlandic authorities with regard to security issues related to their lands poses a challenge to the effectiveness of these governance systems in modern conditions. For example, the possible melting of the Northwest Passage and opening of Arctic waters to sea-transportation will pose a number of challenges to the Nunavut and Greenland governments in the future. These challenges reveal that the policies regarding the Northwest Passage and Arctic navigation have to be reconsidered in the eyes of northern residents and their needs.²⁹ The opening of the

29 F. Griffiths notes that there are wider ways of understanding the Northwest Passage, "... a new circumpolar culture and desire appear to be taking shape in which world-wide entitlements of states

Northwest Passage as a 'Panama canal North,'³⁰ climate warming and resultant changes will affect Inuit traditional hunting and cultural survival³¹ and entail substantial challenges for the Nunavut³² and Greenlandic authorities. These will include:

Illegal poaching, fishing, trapping, hunting and crossing of the waters by foreign vessels;

- Increased traffic of cruise ships, oil tankers and possibly the US warships;
- Toxic and oil pollution;
- Change in traditional diet, habits and hunting patterns;
- Security challenges to Inuit homelands because of possible increased military construction and activities;
- Accommodation of needs caused by new economic development;
- Increase of trade and commercial navigation in the waters between Nunavut and Greenland;
- Influx of outsiders and newcomers to the regions;
- Infrastructure challenges;
- Increased extraction of current or potential non-renewable/renewable resources;
- Employment opportunities;
- Enacting Nunavut and Greenland legislation in conformity with new challenges.

It will be important for the Nunavut and Greenlandic governments to develop a better partnership with federal and central authorities and to have 'a say' in security matters while facing these challenges. Greenland proved to be quite successful in fostering its role, more independence and direct involvement in security issues (see the May 2004 amendment and supplement to the Defence Agreement of 1951). The Nunavut Land Claim Agreement of 1993 reserves some Inuit rights in decision-making concerning the use, management and conservation of land, water and resources,

yield some ground to regional and ultimately to the local needs of aboriginal peoples and other northern inhabitants for adapted collective action." Franklyn Griffiths. "The Northwest Passage in Transit." (1999) LIV:2 Int'l J. at 201-202.

³⁰ The term is used by Usha Lee McFrling. "Melting ice, winds of change: The Northwest Passage is thawing, which carries major implications for shipping, the environment and the Inuit way of life." Los Angeles Times, Jan. 19 2003.

³¹ Terry Fenge. "The Inuit and the Climate Change." (2001) 2:4 Isuma at 79-85, Table 1. Regional Environmental Changes Observed by Inuit and Cree in the Hudson Bay Bio-region shows drastic changes in atmosphere, sea level, fish and animals patterns caused by climate change. At 83-84.

³² Usha Lee McFarling, *supra* note 30.

including the offshore. However, it does not provide sufficient mechanisms to deal with above noted challenges. Needless to say there is a necessity for the greater involvement of the Inuit of Greenland and Nunavut in issues determining the politics of the Eastern Arctic or Greenland security development and water utilization. As it was put by F. Griffiths, “it’s time instead for Inuit to take on new, forward-looking responsibilities in the design and management of Canada’s High Arctic activity in an era of global change.”³³ In his opinion, it is important to build a stronger capacity for collective choice in the Canadian Arctic. That could be done by establishing a new Arctic consultative process by creating a consultative committee on the future of the Archipelago. This body could establish enduring coalitions in support of priority measures and occupancy of the high Arctic. That could be done on the basis on the new partnership between the government of Nunavut and the Federal government. Inuit of Nunavut would have a larger representation in the Arctic workforce. Their familiarity with the area and sensitivity to the local conditions would provide the best results.³⁴

It is important to recognize that Inuit participation in security policies is not a challenge to the sovereignty of Canada or Denmark. Danish-Greenlandic cooperation on the Thule issue and other initiatives taken by Denmark/Greenland authorities for consultation over security matters show that, compared to Nunavut,³⁵ Greenland is in a better position in this respect because of direct USA engagement.

³³ F. Griffiths. “The shipping news: Canada’s Arctic Sovereignty Not On Thinning Ice.” (2003) 52:2 Int’l J. at 20.

³⁴ F. Griffiths. “Pathetic Fallacy: That Canada’s Arctic Sovereignty Is on Thinning Ice.” 2004 forthcoming chapter in the book. At 16-17.

³⁵ Professor Griffiths points out that the Federal Government makes use of Inuit in arguing the case for historic title but it made clear that Nunavut has little to say in the status of Canada’s Arctic waters. “It is hypocritical to rely on Inuit in making a claim for exclusive jurisdiction while excluding them from the exercise of that jurisdiction. It shows lack of respect and incivility when Canada’s ability to act as steward in the Arctic requires a partnership between the Federal government and Inuit. It is also foolish in that Inuit have it within their power to embarrass and shame the Government of Canada, internationally as well nationally, on the two-facedness of its approach to Arctic sovereignty.” *Ibid.* at 21-22.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to show that the Inuit of Greenland and Nunavut should become the legitimate *de facto* spokespersons for their homelands. There should be some legal jurisdiction of the Greenland and Nunavut governments over security policies related to their homelands. The concept of Arctic self-governance is a dynamic and evolving issue with flexible development which is not fulfilled until it provides local authorities with a proper mechanism for participation and decision-making in national defence agendas concerning the Circumpolar North. Jurisdiction of Greenland and Nunavut in security matters is becoming more transferable in practice. To ensure more responsibility and liability on the part of the Arctic governments there should be some flexibility in the scope of their competence when it concerns indigenous peoples’ interests and the specifics of Northern geography. Some may argue that it is not essential that Greenland and Nunavut should carry a legal capacity in defence or security jurisdiction, as there are informal ways of conflict resolution and involvement in security/defence/foreign affairs matters. It is true that many such issues can be resolved by means of joint committees, consultations, advisory boards or conferences. The experience of Greenland with working groups, seminars and the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign and Security Policy shows that informal methods are not sufficient. Alongside informal ways, which might be working well in Canadian practice, as mentioned earlier, the Greenland Commission on Self-Governance has underscored the importance of changes being made to existing legislation that would allow Greenlanders to influence the security policy of Denmark. The role of law should not be undermined as a possibility for the adequate regulation of these issues.