

Comment

Facing the cold truth in our Arctic

The happy little barque of Canadian leftism, its crew of Liberals and NDPers cheerily chorusing socialist ditties, has just run into the sharp, cold iceberg of reality in the waters of the Northwest Passage.

News that an American icebreaker is defiling Canada's pristine northern waters has caused our politicians to produce a hurricane of air so superheated that, properly directed, it could have melted a channel through the ice for the miscreant Yankee ship. All of a sudden, Liberals and NDPers, erstwhile champions of unilateral disarmament and international amity, are heard fiercely, nay belligerently, demanding that Canada defend its territory.

Curious to say, these now clarion voices have remained mute to widespread and mounting intrusions by Soviet submarines in our northern waters. An American icebreaker is, for our leftists, quite another matter, one demanding immediate action. *Aux armes, mes Canadiens!*

Remember last year when the wicked CIA mined communist Nicaragua's ports, so blocking the delivery of Soviet arms to Central America? The NDP's Pauline Jewett rose valkyrie-like, demanding that Canada send minesweepers to clear the ports. Poor Pauline and the NDP were so enraptured by the thought of making Nicaragua safe for socialism that they forgot one key point: Canada has not a single minesweeper. Never mind Corinto, Canada could not even sweep Halifax.

And why, Pauline, do we own no minesweepers? Because the NDP and Liberals have, over the past two decades, virtually disarmed Canada.

Zesty irony, then, to hear the very people who des-



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troys our military in favor of the baby bonus and Canada Council grants, now yelling that the nation must defend its northern sovereignty. With what, may we ask? Neither questions in Parliament nor the World Court will stop Soviet submarine incursions or convince the world that those northern waters are Canadian. Only power will.

The traditional three-mile territorial limit was precisely the effective range of a 24-lb. cannon. Rude shock: Sovereignty extends only so far — and no further — than a nation's ability to enforce it. Other countries don't sail ships through the Soviet Arctic because the Russians would blast such interlopers out of the water. *That is sovereignty.*

To effectively enforce Canadian claims to the Arctic would require at least six new airbases, three naval bases, communications and radar stations, defence of the Davis Strait, more troops, aircraft and ships. The cost: \$5 billion for the first year; \$2.5 billion for the five ensuing years. Are Canadian taxpayers who now clamor for action ready for a 57% increase in the defence budget? More important, the Arctic rumpus shows just how impotent and defenceless Canada has

become. The cold truth: None of the nation's borders can be protected.

When we listen to Lloyd Axworthy or Pauline Jewett cry out for enforced sovereignty, we should recall that the funds to do this have already been spent on grants to peace groups, aid to Tanzania, government office buildings and private jets for bureaucrats.

Having disarmed and devoted the money saved to vote-buying schemes, our politicians have had to rely for defence on the USA and its taxpayers. The Arctic is vital to the defence of North America — the U.S. and Canada. As Washington has been saying for years, if Canada won't defend its own territory then the U.S. will be forced to do so. This is the real and very sharp point of the American icebreaker's mission.

Brian Mulroney, for all his good intentions, has shown he cannot summon the will to cut Canada's ruinous deficit spending; accordingly, there will be no extra funds for defence. Who, then, will react to the increasingly bold penetration of Canada's Arctic waters by the Soviet fleet? We should be deeply concerned; instead, many people here are more worried about Arctic ecology than national integrity.

If Canadians want sovereignty over the north, then they must pay for it by creating forces capable of enforcing national authority. Sovereignty costs money. Protests, hot air, appeals to the World Court, and diplomatic notes are no more than pitiful charades designed to make us feel better. We live in a tough world filled with rapacious wolves. The only way we are going to hold on to the Arctic — an area twice the size of Europe — is by defending it with troops, ships and aircraft, not by empty words.