Along the western end of the Northwest Passage stretches the low-lying Beaufort coast of Alaska, the North Slope. At the eastern end are the great fiords and ice cliffs of Greenland. Between the two are the islands of the Canadian Arctic archipelago and the mainland north coast. This is the homeland of Inuit, a people of Siberian origin who from the shores and islands of the Bering Sea came in successive migrations across the top of North America after the conclusion of the last Ice Age.

Inuit or Eskimo society has undergone greater transformations in recent years than perhaps any on earth. Left for so long to pursue their characteristic life-style of hunting sea mammal, polar bear, and caribou, moving in winter from place to place and quickly building the famous domed snow-house, clad in clothes of furs and skins, they established a remarkable rapport with the natural environment, symbolized perhaps by the image of the smiling Inuit as known to us all. There was some truth in the image. But in a few short decades, most notably since the end of the Second World War, everything has changed.

Now the Arctic seems to be a land of airplanes and empty oil drums, the litter of industrial projects, jerry-built homes, and disoriented individuals. But if that is what the visitor may see from a window in a creaking or modern Arctic hotel, he is missing the continuity. Every community except transient bases or camps for outside labour is still pervaded by extended family kinships, ancient sharing patterns of food gathering and consumption, the presence of children — an apparently endless stream of children, with all the wants and demands and whimsy of children anywhere — and by expressions and habits of mind and language that are the keys to a rich and ancient world-view.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Alaska

Some of the most dramatic contrasts may be seen on the North Slope of
Alaska. In Barrow, new bungalows with clean lines, complete with garages, have driveways often shared by a station wagon and umiak whale-boat with a creamy walrus-hide stretched tight over its wooden frame. The hide has certain valuable qualities, including silence, in closing on the whale. Whaling is a near obsession on the North Slope and the object of the year's great festival. But the whalers may have university degrees and may have worked in southern nuclear industries, as well as holding major public offices in the North Slope Borough. Homes blend many traditions — evidence of the whaling culture of the New Englanders who exploited the area in times past — while whale ribs and other bones litter a site that has recently been dug up for archaeological surveys and reveals an endless cycle of lives reaching into the distant past. At this point of land, which separates what maps call the Chukchi Sea from the Beaufort Sea, all the jarring elements of the Inuit present and future are available.

On this cold and windswept shore which marks the northernmost point of the United States, community living conditions were dismal a few years ago. But the strength and determination of young leaders, and some older ones of whom the late Eben Hopson is always most honoured, have changed everything. A land claims settlement, improved at the last minute by a brilliant North Slope political effort, benefited all Alaskan natives. It also saw the creation of the North Slope Borough, which proceeded to lay its hands on all available revenue, to apply it to social, housing, and community services of every description, and thus to turn the local life-style upside down. Job creation and training have been a main Borough concern, and a success. But not all of native Alaska has been successful under the claims settlement of 1971.

The North Slope Inuit took the lead in setting up the Alaska Native Review Commission in 1983, to study the operation of the claims settlement. The sponsoring agency for the review was the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, which is discussed at length below. Canadian judge Thomas Berger, renowned for his Mackenzie Valley study of development effects on northern peoples, accepted the job of Commissioner. He travelled throughout Alaska's Inuit and Indian villages and held week-long expert panels in Anchorage. His conclusions, published as a best-selling book, Village Journey, contain a powerful indictment of the business corporation model for native development and argue for a more collective and community-based form of self-government. A debate on his findings is now going on throughout Alaska.

Inupiat (as the North Slope Inuit are known) leaders approach issues with great vigour as they seize every legal tool to advance the people's case for more control of the seas offshore and of the resources, living and fossil, that they may yield. As the non-Inuit population grows in certain areas of the Borough — a vast territory that is essentially all of Alaska north of the
Brooks Range — discussion mounts on the risks of the future. The advantages of more traditional structures of Inuit government, allowed for under existing U.S. federal legislation, are being debated, as are other forms of managing and controlling resources and public services.

The traditional and modern synthesis on the North Slope is nowhere better evident than in sea management. While the whale hunt is the main Inupiat cultural, food, and social locus, it has been conducted in the midst of vigorous national and international politics. Protecting the rights of Inupiat to their bowhead whale quotas has challenged many assumptions in international gatherings. At the same time, various agencies in the Borough have used their funds to invest in advanced technology to study, monitor, and develop the economic potential and to protect the environment of the Arctic coastal zone. Given the present level of attention to cultural and heritage values, and to renewable resource harvesting, non-renewable potential, and the entire interaction of natural systems, the Inupiat coastal zone management and its place in the life of the community are probably unique in the world. Bringing in scholars and consultants, the local people also gain access to the best outside knowledge and bolster their own capabilities.

What is most notable about Barrow is the self-confidence and enthusiasm of the people, mingled with their strong sense of tradition. Visitors are shown permafrost cellars full of whale meat and maktaaq and entertained in old ways. But one can never fail to note that this is a dynamic society. The Inupiat are experienced and successful combatants in all levels of politics and may be counted on to be in the forefront of Arctic change.

**Greenland**

Greenland was an isolated preserve when Americans arrived during the Second World War. Demand then grew for a major change of direction, a rethinking of the long isolation of Greenland from the industrial revolution in the world around it. A number of ambitious post-war Danish development plans succeeded one another. They served to concentrate the population in larger centres built around an industrialized fishery. They also provided social and community services and infrastructure in the Scandinavian social-democratic style. The traditional hunting culture continued, however, to thrive in numerous small outposts along the rugged western coast.

From the end of the 1960s, young Greenlanders being educated in Denmark led the way for a movement of national renewal. Then through the campaign for home rule and subsequently the creation of new political parties, they took over direction of the country. In May 1979, home rule came into effect, with Greenlandic Inuit politicians acquiring control from Denmark
of virtually all fields of policy except foreign affairs, defence, and currency. As for on- and offshore resources, Denmark and Greenland each have a veto on policies and projects. In practice, plans are worked out by compromise through a joint administration and a high-level joint Greenlandic-Danish committee.²

Now the hosts of transient outsiders have largely gone. Those who remain often bear a strong commitment to Greenland and its future. The Greenland that remains is also in many ways a European country that requires European techniques and technologies to run. Nevertheless, a resurgence of Inuit culture, and a flowering of new forms of art and music, theatre and poetry, provide compelling examples for Inuit in Canada and Alaska. Co-operation among all the Inuit regions of North America through computer and telecommunication lines also promises to have a profound impact.

Ocean issues are the most active topics in Greenlandic politics, along with the national question itself. When Canadian tankers seemed set to sail through west Greenland’s iceberg-laden waters in what appeared as the beginning of a new era of Arctic hydrocarbon transport, Greenland rose to the challenge together with the Canadian Inuit, and the Arctic Pilot Project was eventually halted. More on this and related marine political issues appears in chapter 7.

Greenland’s population of 50,000 has challenging years ahead as it seeks national consensus on the issues of development for the sake of revenue versus environmental protection, relations with Denmark and other countries, and a form of economic management to succeed the largely Danish-run, centralized state enterprise that has long controlled most of Greenland’s economy. Meanwhile, Greenland plays an active role in international affairs, notably in ocean-related forums³ and through the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, whose Greenlandic president and staff were for some years headquartered in Nuuk. An Inuit country proud of being the first aboriginal society in recent times to acquire self-rule, Greenland is also capable of being flexible when seeking, as a government among governments, the full prerogatives and dignities of statehood.

Labrador

Labrador Inuit and their forerunners once lived along the north shore of the St Lawrence, as well as on the northern portions of the island of Newfoundland. They also moved north and around the coasts of Ungava Bay, Hudson Strait, and Hudson Bay. They populate the latter areas to this day, which accounts for the strong linguistic and cultural affinities between Quebec and Labrador Inuit. The present-day Inuit population of Labrador is centred on the north Labrador coast, Nain being the main community.
As one of the most isolated areas of Canada, coastal Labrador is further distinguished by being a poor region in Canada's poorest province. Without benefit of federal public services received by Inuit elsewhere in Canada, Labrador Inuit now are preparing to negotiate their claims with Ottawa and Newfoundland as a first step in establishing collective status. Marine issues will be an important subject in these talks.

With characteristics common to many maritime areas around the North Atlantic, as well as the Inuit tradition, and with a larger supply of skilled and educated individuals than other Inuit regions, Labrador could in principle provide leadership within the larger Canadian Inuit movement. However, local problems and preparation for claims negotiations have to date preoccupied the Labrador leadership. Organizationally the Labrador Inuit have largely kept to themselves. However, in one area, protection and management of Arctic seas, the Labrador Inuit Association and its ocean science consultants have played a major role. They have been leaders in Inuit work before regulatory and environmental impact bodies, notably the Arctic Pilot Project hearings and the Beaufort Sea assessment panel, as well as in Inuit constitutional staff work relating to ocean matters.

Quebec

Quebec Inuit, partly because of their negotiating experience with the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (Canada's first land claims settlement), and partly because of their insecurity in a province that had a separatist government, have consistently displayed leadership on national constitutional issues among Canadian Inuit. A major element of their proposals has been the readiness to link the basic definition of Inuit interests to questions of marine management of and Inuit benefit from the sea. This theme has been raised repeatedly in briefs and letters relating to Inuit national constitutional work (conducted formally by the Inuit Committee on National Issues in Ottawa). The interest of Quebec Inuit is not abstract. Like all Canadian Inuit, they live largely from the sea. But their rights to the islands and waters offshore — which formally lie within the Northwest Territories — have yet to be negotiated with Ottawa. Federal officials have privately encouraged the Inuit to expect a major settlement, but other priorities and disagreement on the funding of the negotiation process have impeded progress. All Inuit, but especially Quebec Inuit, became alarmed in 1979 when the federal government was preparing to transfer offshore jurisdiction to the provinces, at a time when Inuit and other aboriginal peoples had unsettled coastal claims. Prime Minister Joe Clark responded that aboriginal interests would be taken into account in any such transfer.

Quebec Inuit were an administrative responsibility of Ottawa until
increasingly nationalistic Quebec governments began to replace federal services. The long presence of Anglican missionaries and Hudson’s Bay traders, plus an essentially anglophone federal administration in the region, left Inuit a Quebec minority by virtue of their second language, English, as much as by their first, Inuktitut. This has had unfortunate consequences for the Inuit, who have found themselves pawns in struggles between Ottawa and Quebec. In the last several years, however, Inuit initiatives, coupled with more responsiveness, first by the Quebec Liberals and then by the Parti québécois government, have improved communications and relations greatly.

When Quebec Inuit, acting with Quebec’s Cree Indians, made use of court action to halt the initial phase of the province’s James Bay hydroelectric power development, they precipitated Canada’s first serious land claims negotiation. The resulting package, agreed to in 1975, provided an Inuit school system, an Inuit-run regional government (albeit open to non-Inuit, of whom very few live in the region), and considerable financial compensation. The latter is administered by a corporation, Makivik, which is collectively owned by Quebec Inuit and works for economic development and the representation of Inuit interests. As well, various categories of reserved lands were set aside, and commitments were made to processes and structures in handling development, development effects, and public services. Regional government has been slow to develop, owing to limited funds and delays on the part of the Quebec government and an initial lack of attention from Ottawa, which is now partly corrected as the result of an all-party parliamentary demand in 1981. Nevertheless, the visible services and infrastructure that Inuit had expected to result from the agreement have been slow to appear, while Makivik has devoted itself to fighting for further benefits and for the letter and spirit of the agreement to be implemented.

The federal intention to decentralize administration to aboriginal peoples collided, in Quebec, with a relatively dirigiste provincial government trying to establish a presence strongly throughout its territory. This resulted in a basic division between the province and Inuit. Although the climate has improved, it remains to be seen if provincial and Inuit interests travel much further together under the current Liberal government in Quebec. The various Inuit organizations have established a task force that is touring the communities and developing plans for a new and stronger regional government serving Inuit interests. Community services in Quebec have lagged far behind those of Inuit communities in the neighbouring Northwest Territories, since Ottawa and Quebec began to bargain over their respective roles in the early 1960s. This has necessarily fuelled frustration among Quebec Inuit.

Controversial as the first Quebec-Inuit land claims agreement was, the
boost to Inuit morale and self-confidence, so evident in a community like Kuujuaq (formerly Fort Chimo) where outsiders used to dominate and treat the local Inuit with condescension, is indisputable. The imagination with which Quebec’s Inuit leaders are approaching their people’s problems and developing new approaches to collective and individual well-being represents a significant new contribution to Canadian society and political life. Even though some three-quarters of Canada’s land area will eventually be dominated by majority Inuit, Indian, and Metis political authorities at local and regional levels, with communal ideals of economic and social life and dramatically atypical interpretations of the fairness and course of Canadian law and history, this revolution in Canada’s northern identity and make-up is barely perceived in the urban culture to the south.

Northwest Territories (Nunavut)

It is the central area of the Canadian Inuit that embraces the most constricted portion of the Northwest Passage. In this large area the culture and life-style of the Inuit have been less affected by change. The Inuit of the eastern parts of the Northwest Territories have, however, seen a major upheaval.

Nunavut means “our land” and is an unexceptional term used by Inuit of many regions. But in the eastern regions of the Northwest Territories (NWT) – Keewatin, Baffin, and Kitikmeot (or central Arctic, including the communities from Pelly Bay in the east to Holman Island in the west) – Nunavut is a special term for an Inuit-dominated government now being developed actively by the federal and NWT governments along with Inuit associations in the area.6 Plans for this new government and its boundaries are the subject of much discussion and delay. As well, fluctuating reactions by people in the southwestern NWT who have never had much enthusiasm for the scheme – after all, it would divide an NWT that they now quite dominate – create uncertainty and delay. Nevertheless, the concept of Nunavut is so strongly rooted among the Inuit of the eastern Arctic that delays and obfuscation only hamper a project that will succeed sooner or later, but succeed surely.7 A 1982 plebiscite throughout the NWT found that 80 per cent of voters in Keewatin, Baffin, and the eastern half of Kitikmeot, in a very high voter turnout, favoured creation of Nunavut.

From a life of scattered hunting camps, where individuals had only their own resources and a material culture of their family’s manufacture, Inuit since the 1950s have been concentrated by government in villages with modern prefabricated bungalows complete with furniture and federal advice on homemaking. In these villages the full range of Canadian public services and facilities have been provided – schools, nursing stations, social assistance offices, recreational and social centres, and locally run co-
operatives to compete with Hudson’s Bay Company trading and retail shops. This form of social organization has not been optimal for the traditional economy of the Inuit – hunting on land and sea, trapping, fishing. Nor have technical, organizational, or productivity changes been such as to improve the renewable resource harvest. Material change has been followed by a welter of local advisory and decision-making bodies. By their very limitations, these have served to remind Inuit forcibly that they have little political control over what matters most to them: the offshore, wildlife generally, protection of their land and sea environment from use and degradation by outsiders, development and use of their Inuktut language, the content of schooling, economic development, or important decisions about their future and the future development of their homeland, now marginalized as a minority region in the vast context of Canada and its Northwest Territories.

In terms of material commitment, Canada’s investment in improvements for people in the NWT can hardly be faulted. Many painful, even tragic mistakes have been made, but the aims and the persistence of government have been clear and well-intended. Nevertheless, in the vital matter of enabling men and women to take charge of their lives – a prerequisite for mental and social well-being – delay has been recognized as the most effective form of denial. Village powers of little interest to a hardy outdoors population – for example, street-lighting where there are no streets – were extended to Inuit to practise on. The idea here, urged in the Carrothers Report of 1966, was that by first developing local political skills and experience, Inuit would progress up a hierarchy to full political citizenship as Canadians. Whether the powers extended were or are relevant, and whether the theory has worked, are open to doubt. But Inuit in the scattered villages of Nunavut – every one of them on tide water – have become frustrated.

A major theme in this search for renewed control has been the ocean and its management. At the first meeting of the Nunavut Constitutional Forum with leaders of the regional councils to discuss powers for a Nunavut government, in Cambridge Bay on 9 September 1984, only one specific jurisdictional subject was raised, the meeting otherwise devoting itself to principle. On several occasions the participants voiced the complaint that Inuit needed powers relating to vessel operations and offshore resource development, that the NWT government had no powers in that regard, and that a Nunavut government must be able to represent Inuit interests strongly on marine matters. During earlier rounds of community hearings on the Nunavut proposals, many individuals spoke of the importance of marine management, powers, and benefits for Inuit. The Nunavut Constitutional Forum has committed itself to seeking an arrangement whereby a Nunavut government can participate effectively in
maritime matters, while not demanding a transfer of federal jurisdiction that has been denied even Canada’s provinces to date.  

In the NWT Legislative Assembly, Inuit control the largest block of votes. The Nunavut caucus (which now includes three white politicians elected by Inuit) has worked effectively and consistently to promote Inuit interests. The assembly has powers similar to those of a provincial legislature in Canada, and in practice a large say in the administration of the NWT. But Inuit remain alienated culturally and politically from the NWT government, and seek the greater responsiveness to their interests that a Nunavut government is expected to bring. The only doubt in the eastern Arctic is the frequently noted lack of education and training of Inuit on a scale adequate to the staffing needs of a new Nunavut government, a problem to be solved rather than taken as an excuse for postponement. While Inuit reiterate that they do not wish to drive out all the whites, they see Inuit staff as a necessary part of Nunavut both for reasons of administrative responsiveness to local culture and for providing meaningful work to the large population of un- and under-employed Inuit youth.

Canada has no positive reason to maintain outside control in Nunavut, only a series of negative ones: the local people must not get control of too much wealth, they might not be favourably disposed to resource development, the Inuit may not be ready for their own government, the population is not very large, a new territory must not become ethnocentric, etc. Despite all the fuss over them, the Inuit of Nunavut are mostly unaware of these concerns. They take it for granted that they are ready to run their lives — which they did successfully for many thousands of years without federal administrators and social scientists. They believe they cannot reconstruct their families and their personal lives until they are in charge of their own communities. While every other part of Canada developed politically for what were ultimately self-centred local reasons of convenience and commerce, the native north has apparently to meet purer standards of political virtue for Ottawa to give the go-ahead for Nunavut.

**Western Arctic**

Within the NWT also, but constituting a dramatically unique region, is the western Arctic, with its handful of Inuit communities in the Mackenzie River delta and around the Beaufort Sea. Represented by the oldest Inuit organization, **COPE** (Committee of Original Peoples Entitlement), the people of this region — the Inuvialuit — have suffered the most tremendous jolts of Canadian Inuit in recent years. First the site of the model town of Inuvik, a model to be avoided from the viewpoint of Inuit, the region then became the focus of large-scale oil and gas exploration and now is the centre of the efforts of Dome, Gulf, and Esso Resources to develop production...
from drill-ships, rigs, and artificial islands offshore. Using pipelines, and/or tankers sailing westward through the Beaufort and Chukchi seas and Bering Strait, or eastward through the Passage and Davis Strait, oil and natural gas would be shipped to continental or world markets. COPE concluded a land claims settlement with the federal government early in 1984 but still faces considerable uncertainty in relation to the region's political destiny.

The proposal of COPE for a Western Arctic Regional Municipality (WARM) raises various complications for political development in the NWT. Although COPE states that it hopes to include its area within a new Nunavut territory, the powers it would give WARM are rather more than those envisaged for regions by the Nunavut Constitutional Forum (NCF). Indeed, in some of its particulars it would allow for an overriding of territorial government powers, which is foreign to local government practice in Canada. However, using a model based on federal proposals for Indian self-government in southern Canada, acceptable arrangements might yet be worked out. Until the future place of WARM is settled, i.e. whether it is to be included in the eastern territory (Nunavut) or to form a separate western territory, the Nunavut boundary cannot be drawn. This uncertainty has inhibited progress to date on creation of Nunavut. The issue has yet to be faced squarely: NCF and COPE continue to talk at cross purposes; neither side apparently chooses to notice.

Although COPE did not specifically claim the offshore in its negotiations with Ottawa, many of its proposals were contingent on marine issues. The final settlement provides for preferential harvesting of sea mammals by Inuit.

Overview

A number of points may be made about the overall situation of Inuit today. Subjected to rapid and crushing changes in their homelands, Inuit in all areas except perhaps Labrador have had their lives, individually and collectively, turned upside down in the period since the Second World War. They have experienced extremes of dislocation and hardship while the most modern of technology has reshaped their lives. They have been humiliated and have responded aggressively by using the political weapons of the white man to fight back. Now they are seeking to regain control of their lives and to restabilize their society. In reaffirming their traditional culture and mastering the latest methods of development, they are striving to create a balanced and agreeable future.

Like any society, any civilization, created in a hurry, the Inuit north is bound to have some rough edges. What seems miraculous is that the Inuit regions have reconstituted themselves so well after such great upheaval. Greenland seems to have taken the lead in artistic and intellectual life,
Alaska in the spirit of enterprise, and Canada in the maintenance of inherited cultural values. Such generalizations are not absolute or altogether accurate, but they are roughly correct. All Inuit regions use modern technology comfortably; all have a strong corps of young nationalist politicians and, behind them, a less visionary and better educated managerial and professional corps. The greatest threat to evolutionary progress may not be radical young leaders but young leaders hanging on to positions and remuneration that they could not expect to obtain outside the established structures of regional and ethnic politics.

Marine policy and politics are critical elements in the volatile mix of Inuit life. The sea is, after all, the centre of Inuit livelihood. In attempting to sum up the basic Inuit concern here, we may cite the proposals of the Canadian Inuit to the Macdonald Royal Commission on Canada’s economic and political future: “Recognise the importance of the Arctic seas to the economy of Inuit, and to the potential economy of Canada and the world; highlight the importance of Canada first securing its own sovereignty and then developing its policies and programs for the intelligent and productive management of Arctic waters; and recommend that governments move to provide for formal Inuit participation in marine decision-making through public bodies (e.g. a Nunavut government), special purpose authorities set up under land claims settlements, or other regional or functional mechanisms as may be appropriate.” In this context we should also be aware of the role that Inuit use of the sea and of the sea ice could play in establishing Canada’s claim to full sovereignty over its Arctic waters by virtue of historic occupancy.

THE INUIT CIRCUMPOLAR CONFERENCE (ICC)

Thanks to the drive and vision of Eben Hopson of the Alaska North Slope, the man who more than any other built the North Slope Borough, a gathering together of Inuit from the circumpolar north took place in Barrow, Alaska, in 1977. This meeting left an indelible impression on all who attended. Feeling was high as a long-scattered civilization regrouped amid celebration of traditional songs and dances, urgent discussion of political and legal struggles of all the member groups, and an exchange of ideas on the rebuilding of an ancient culture. But environmental worries, notably those centred on offshore development in the Beaufort Sea and other Arctic waters, had perhaps been the main motive for gathering at that particular time. As Mayor Hopson said in his welcome, “The defense of the world’s Arctic environmental security must rest upon the strength of local home-rule government. The motivation behind the North Slope Borough’s work in the planning and conduct of this conference should be clear to all.
The environmental security of our long municipal coastline depends upon
the strength of home-rule government in Canada and Greenland.1 This
was the beginning of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (icc).16

The Inuit of Canada, Greenland, and Alaska share many concerns, not
least their interest in the situation of the Inuit in a fourth state, the Soviet
Union. Repeated attempts to make contact with Soviet Inuit have been
rebuffed by Moscow. As Soviet Ambassador A.N. Yakovlev told Canada’s
Inuit leaders in Ottawa before the third icc general assembly in July 1983,
the Soviet Union views internationalization of the Arctic as undesirable.
Since 1985, some progress has been made on bilateral cultural contacts
between Soviet Inuit and Inuit elsewhere. For now the icc keeps an empty
chair in its executive council as a symbol of the Soviet absence.

The first icc assembly, in Barrow, was followed by a difficult period
during which there was confusion about the nature, structure, and
operations of the body. At this stage the icc was still more an ideal than a
growing concern. Financed by North Slope interests and driven by Alaskan
enthusiasm, it still required organizational and policy development. The
difficult work began in earnest in the six months leading up to the second
ccc assembly in Nuuk, in the summer of 1986. Welcomed by Greenland’s
new Home Rule government leaders, notably Premier Jonathan Motzfeldt
and his Cabinet, the setting was auspicious for the future of Inuit and their
political objectives.

A charter was adopted, with a preamble stating what Inuit collectively
hope for and can agree upon across great distances, national boundaries,
and long separation from one another. To quote in full:

Recognizing
That we, the Inuit, are an indigenous people, with a unique ancestry, culture and
homeland;
that the world’s Arctic and sub-Arctic areas which we use and occupy transcend
political boundaries;
that due to our historical inheritance and use and occupancy of our homeland we
enjoy cultural rights unique to indigenous peoples and share common traditions,
values and concerns;
that the Inuit homeland and its resources are of critical importance to the
international community;
that renewable and non-renewable resources of the Inuit homeland are essential to
the present state and future development of Inuit economies and cultural identity;
that international and national policies and practices should give due consideration
to protection of the Arctic and sub-Arctic environment and to the preservation and
evolution of Inuit culture and societies;
that our right to self-determination must be confirmed and Inuit participation in
policies and activities affecting our homeland assured;
That in furtherance of our spirit of co-operation with the international community, we seek to promote world peace and the objectives of this Charter;
That an international organization of Inuit, known as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference dedicated to protect and advance Inuit rights and interests on the international level, has been created by a resolution unanimously adopted on June 15, 1977 in Barrow, Alaska;
Therefore:
A formal charter for the Inuit Circumpolar Conference is necessary in order to continue the endeavours initiated by the conference and to implement its resolutions and we, the Inuit of the circumpolar region, in accordance with the principles of equality, friendship and respect, hereby accept and agree to this charter, the provisions of which are set forth below.

The charter had great appeal from the moment of its adoption. It also lent strength to the organization that now proceeded to take shape.

The Canadian delegation at Nuuk was particularly anxious that the ICC not be empowered to take positions on or enter into national controversies too readily, certainly not without the agreement of executive members from the country involved, and the charter reflects this concern. On balance, however, Canadian Inuit have been able to influence ICC activities in only a limited way because of their inability to make financial contributions. While supporting certain ICC activities in Canada, and now a Canadian ICC office in Ottawa, Canadian Inuit, apart from Quebec's Makivik Corporation, have not had the funds to do more. Makivik has, however, contributed financially through the years and has provided both staff and executive time for ICC work. In 1985, the Canadian government provided initial funding for the ICC's Canadian operations. At present, about three-quarters of the international budget is provided by the North Slope Borough, and the other quarter by the Greenland Home Rule government. From the beginning, the North Slope has carried the ICC. Contributing much energy and inspiration, the Alaskans have been discreet to a fault about the fact they are ICC's paymaster.

Apart from the limited Canadian financial contribution to the ICC, another problem that has faced the organization is the diffuse nature of its concerns and administration. Cultural and social issues, environmental and economic development problems, political hopes and the special interests of women, youth, and the aged— all these and more are on the ICC's agenda for action. Specific resolutions have been passed at each of the three assemblies, but implementation has been spotty. Particular concern has been voiced on the subject of nuclear power in the Arctic and, of course, nuclear weaponry. In practice the issues most effectively dealt with have been those already the province of existing bodies, which can therefore be
pursued outside the small ICC administrative structure—for example, Inuit broadcasting and language development.

With its executive members scattered across the Arctic and more than fully committed to pre-existing leadership roles, with its administrative and financial and co-ordinating centres widely separated, and with no clear division of administrative responsibilities, the ICC functions thanks to the closeness of the handful of executive and staff members who make up its permanent core. Experienced and sympathetic observers have recommended that the priorities of the organization be narrowed, but other voices would like to maintain the full eight or nine working commissions.

The ICC is very different from other international organizations of minorities, for example the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. The work is close to home, involves familiar issues, and can in large part be carried forward by the lobbying, political, legal, and communications techniques that are employed by its members on a daily basis in the liberal democracies where they live. Indeed, this consideration was cited by former Canadian ICC executive member Mary Simon, now President, on behalf of the Canadian delegation at Nuuk in 1980, as favouring the restriction of ICC interests to the Arctic world instead of venturing prematurely into international human rights politics.

The members of the ICC begin with the assumption of a unity of purpose whose celebration in cultural and social events is an important part of all ICC get-togethers. But time and space, history and different economic cultures have provided Inuit with a variety of outlooks. Inuit unity underlies many of the hopes and sentiments of the ICC’s work, but the reality of unity is elusive. The relative lack of experience in international relations of many ICC personnel and delegates, and the consistent “family feeling” that is the hope of Inuit groups long subjected to condescending alien majorities in their own homelands, place great demands for high achievement on the ICC. A shrewd observer has suggested that the ICC be more relaxed about the differences that have grown up across the Inuit north.

Having noted some of the difficulties that accompany creation of an effective international vehicle for Inuit co-operation, we should make clear the basic political thrust of the ICC. The stated priority of the organization during the period leading up to the fourth assembly in Kotzebue, Alaska, in the summer of 1986, was the elaboration of an Arctic policy. Through Inuit groups and their academic friends in the three member countries, ideas on public policies that should be pursued across the Arctic by individual states and states collectively are being brought together. Many of the background data needed for this basic policy project already exist. Once they have been assembled in the form of a policy manual, they should facilitate Inuit co-operation with governments in translating principles into practice.
Clearly the first principle is that Inuit themselves should have the greatest possible control over Arctic policy through public institutions in their homelands. As Mayor Hopson stated in his opening address to the first ICC meeting, the development of self-governing or home rule authorities across the Arctic was a fundamental goal of Inuit.

The ICC has proved most comfortable, directed, and passionate when involved in questions of the Arctic seas. The great early project of ICC was its opposition to Petro-Canada's Arctic Pilot Project, which would have used the Northwest Passage to transport liquefied natural gas as a test scenario for later transport in greater volumes of all forms of hydrocarbons. Greenland and Canadian Inuit worked together through a joint secretariat in Ottawa, supported by the Alaskans. The dramatic intervention by non-Canadian Arctic peoples in a Canadian regulatory board setting in 1983 made a significant impression in official Ottawa, and Inuit leaders may be forgiven for taking much credit for the ultimate defeat of this project, which is discussed at length in chapters 7 and 8.

**Inuit Political Objectives**

Political, social, economic, and cultural upheaval and reconstruction are the characteristics of the international Inuit world today. Regardless of nuances, the common features are the most striking. These include: the rapid development of new forms of self-governing structures with increasingly wide powers; the establishment of clear rights vis-à-vis lands, waters, and resources traditionally used and occupied; and active interest and demands for participation in marine management and development.

Inuit are pushing energetically for changes that their national governments have not been ready to make. Institutional forms that give Inuit control, now and in future, are preferred to ad hoc one-time solutions (although in Canada Inuit are lucky enough to get even these in relation to major developments). The reasons are obvious. If one reads the Beaufort Sea environmental assessment panel report, the product of one of the biggest and most costly exercises in “government responsiveness,” one finds that the summaries of Inuit community hearings give a very simple and clear picture of Inuit concerns, but that the report itself simply does not reflect them adequately. Another reflection on the ad hoc approach is given in the fine and perhaps final Lancaster Sound report, which saw studies of the studies, and hearings on the hearings, to make up for the inability of officialdom to come to grips with Inuit interests in that region.

Even when Canadian Inuit are invited to participate or comment on processes under way, the amount of paper, the number and location of meetings, and the limited staff available mean that only the topmost
priorities can be dealt with by Inuit organizations at any one time. The
invitations to participate get governments off the hook – they have, after
all, offered Inuit a chance to be involved. Freedom-of-information
procedures, streamlined government administrations, and predictable
regulatory and decision processes are of assistance in that they could give
small Inuit organizations a fighting chance to track the issues if not to
respond to all of them. But it is hard to see how major issues can be
adequately dealt with until a Nunavut government can do the staff work
and representation on behalf of the people in its area, or until some similar
structure is created, for example a body like Quebec’s Makivik, set up under
a land claims settlement.

While ultra-sensitive to the natural environment, especially the Arctic
seas, Inuit are also painfully aware of the disparities in living standards
that their people have suffered in comparison with the white majorities of the
United States, Denmark, and Canada. Inuit leaders, mostly in their thirties,
were often brought to political action in the first place by their awareness of
social ills, including ills wrought by change managed by whites. In schools
and training centres they experienced humiliation or condescension by
whites who felt they had a superior culture to bestow. That culture, as
experienced on the “frontier,” was typically the gadgetry and accumulation
of material items. Material equality is a matter, therefore, of sensitivity.

The seas, long the source of most Inuit well-being, now appear to be the
source of new riches. Inuit see themselves threatened in their basic
livelihoods by others coming to scoop up the living species or to take away
the undersea hydrocarbons with the attendant dangers of pollution. They
have felt first helpless, and then robbed. Inuit, new to legal theories about
the open seas, simply regard their ocean environment as theirs as much as
the familiar hunting lands. They have also seen that governments – and
the industrial interests governments seem so assiduously to support and
protect in the Arctic – take too little into account, do not understand the
consequences of their proposals, and return little to the local people. Quite
understandably, Inuit believe that they themselves would be wiser and
not only better protect their locales and ocean economy but would also know how to balance such interests with new wealth-generating
activities at sea.

Whether this hope is sanguine or not, Inuit clearly cannot look on idly
while the seas of their homeland are used for the benefit of others. Nor can
they be expected to let others take risks with their livelihood and source of
food. Many regimes for Inuit participation in ocean matters may be
contemplated. Ownership or exploitation rights, guaranteed revenue
shares, the jurisdiction of Inuit-run governments (e.g. Nunavut) or land
claims bodies, guaranteed representation in decision-making bodies, joint
management and revenue agreements with higher levels of government—the possibilities and combinations are almost endless.

As well, Inuit have new problems to contend with. The possibility of oil exploration in the Jameson Land area of east Greenland has become what former ICC president Hans-Pavia Rosing termed a "hot issue."\textsuperscript{29} There is vigorous debate over hydrocarbon exploitation and environmental conservation within Greenland itself. And in Canada, oil company personnel who suffered at the hands of the ICC's campaign against the Arctic Pilot Project have pointed out that the same people in Greenland who defended the environment now seem ready to risk it for new wealth.\textsuperscript{30} Rosing replied that the "economic benefit" of development to Greenland could not be ignored.\textsuperscript{31} While such developments will make for major difficulties in Inuit public relations, and obscure the image of stalwart Inuit environmentalists, they are consistent with the desire of Inuit no longer to accept a sideline status in their homelands. Given the political ambitions of Greenland's government and its current severe deficit position vis-à-vis Denmark, the attractions of a major new revenue source and the freedom it could confer are obvious.

In Canada, Inuit have shown a sophisticated regard for the institutions and traditions of the state. They have made proposals that would fit with prevailing political practice while giving Inuit greater powers and benefits in relation to the offshore. If Canadians consider these proposals carefully, they may well conclude that having vigorous indigenous northern partners in development, who know the Arctic environment and what protections are needed, is a happy prospect. They would also find that predictability and equity would satisfy all those involved in northern development and would offer an end to the repeated conflicts that are the main outcome of the current emphasis on ad hoc economic and political development.

A recent publication, capping many years of research and discussion on the eastern Arctic, would seem to discount the possibility that Ottawa can continue to deny institutional change. The cost of denial in dollars, federal credibility, and obstacles to resource development, as well as the problems created for Inuit and other northerners, will be truly exceptional. Regardless of what Ottawa policy-makers may say, the study concludes, resource development, progress on self-government, and settlement of claims are inextricably intertwined in the Inuit north.\textsuperscript{32}

There is at present no prospect of a political realignment of the Inuit areas of the Arctic into a pan-Inuit state, or of any degree of Inuit political integration. Of course, major revisions of the map do occur, so one should "never say never." Alaska and its native peoples were bought and sold a century ago, from Russian to American sovereignty. And during the Second World War Greenland saw its Danish kingdom disappear into
Nazi occupation while it remained free. The twentieth century could yet surprise cartographers.
existing constituency along east-west lines, with the boundary between the two constituencies running from south to north. The boundary was changed to run approximately along the tree line as a result of the firm opinions expressed by the Inuit to the Electoral Boundaries Commission. A tentative agreement reached early in 1985 on the boundary between the two parts into which the Northwest Territories is to be split indicated that the east-west division had prevailed over the treeline concept, but the agreement was subsequently rejected by the Inuit.

CHAPTER THREE

4 The author was made aware of this when working for the Quebec Inuit in Makivik Corporation.
5 Communiqué, Office of the Prime Minister, 3 October 1979.
6 The work to create Nunavut is being carried on by the Nunavut Constitutional Forum (NCF), with offices in Yellowknife and Ottawa. The forum is made up of members of the NWT legislative assembly elected in Nunavut, including the NCF chairman, Dennis Patterson; the national president of the Inuit and the head of the Nunavut land claims negotiating body; and the president and a second representative of CIRT, the Mackenzie Delta/Beaufort Sea Inuit organization. NCF is funded by federal and territorial governments and by Inuit organizations. It carries on its work through public meetings, liaison, research, and publications. Its major publications include *Nanavut* (a political history of the Arctic), *Building Nanavut* (a discussion of the nature of a Nunavut government and constitution, now being revised and expanded for a second edition), and two studies by S.M. Malone, *Nunavut: The Division of Powers* and *Nunavut: Financial Perspectives*. A similar body, the Western Constitutional Forum, represents the people of the Mackenzie Valley. Together these two forums make up the Constitutional Alliance, which presents a common front on issues such as greater self-government for the north and a territorial share in resources decisions and revenues.
7 The Liberal government announced support in principle for Nunavut on 26 November 1982; thereafter it added a series of limiting conditions. On 28 September 1984, Prime Minister Mulroney told a press conference in Ottawa that his Conservative government had not yet defined its policy ("Constitution to Be Avoided at Meeting," *Globe and Mail*, 29 September 1984). Party spokesmen had earlier offered assurances of Nunavut’s creation as part of a larger furtherance of self-government in Canada’s northern territories. Experience shows that much waffling is to be expected before a Nunavut territorial government assumes responsibility in an Arctic capital with a range of powers equivalent to those of a Canadian province minus non-living resources ownership and the constitutional status of a province.


9 As researchers like McDonald have demonstrated (see "Inuit Nationalism," Master’s thesis by Allysson McDonald, Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1984), the Inuit politicians who have shaped the Inuit political movement were launched before those Potemkin village governments began to function.

10 See Minutes of the Nunavut Regional Workshop, Cambridge Bay, 9 September 1984, available from the Nunavut Constitutional Forum (NCF), Ottawa.

11 For comment on the NCF, see note 6. On the offshore issue, the attitude of the Conservative government in Ottawa is not fully known but is thought to be more open than that of the previous government. The latter had repeatedly refused to yield to coastal jurisdictions seeking more power offshore. The offshore position of NCF is presented in *Building Nunavut*, first issued in May 1983.

12 An example is Bill C-52, introduced in the House of Commons by John Munro in the dying hours of the Trudeau government’s last session of Parliament, in 1984.

13 See, for example, the exchanges of chairman Patterson and cope delegates Haogak and McDaniels in Minutes of the Nunavut Regional Workshop.

14 *The Western Arctic Claim: The Inuvialuit Final Agreement*, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, 1984.


16 A recent book, *Sikumit*: "The People Who Use the Sea Ice" (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, 1984), brings together a number of excellent...
papers on this subject. See also David VanderZwaag and Donat Pharand, "Inuit and the Ice: Implications for Canadian Arctic Waters," Canadian Yearbook of International Law, 21 (1983), 75–8.


18 The founding and subsequent history of the ICC are discussed in Philip Lauritzen, Oil and Amulets (St John’s: Breakwater Press, 1985). This book surveys changes and issues in the circumpolar Arctic today.


20 This office was opened in late November 1983, in the suite of offices where Canada’s national Inuit organizations are located.

21 See, for example, Samuel E. Fry, Native Arctic Peoples: A Growing Political and Economic Identity, 26th Session, Executive Seminar in National and International Affairs, Foreign Service Institute, u.s. State Department, 1983–4, 34, and note 6, 35.

22 In Greenland, where functional organizations already exist, this makes good sense.


24 See Fry, Native Arctic Peoples.

25 The Soviet Inuit homeland is excepted, although one may assume that there, too, change is dramatic and perhaps traumatic. A disturbing article indicates that removal and dispersal may be the lot of these Inuit: B. Chichlo, "Les Nevukaghmiit ou la fin d’une ethnie," Etudes Inuit Studies (Laval University, Quebec) 5, no. 2 (1981), 32–46.

26 Beaufort Sea Hydrocarbon Production and Transportation, Final Report of the Environmental Assessment Panel, Federal Environment Assessment Review Office, Ottawa, July 1984. The report is diverse and has many interesting and useful aspects. Although disappointing on the needs of the living, it is remarkably bold and progressive about dead Inuit, as per the archaeology proposals on 99. Some of the best recommendations, for example on resources revenue sharing (97), do not appear in the formal list of recommendations.

27 Peter Jacobs and Jonathan Pulluq, Public Review: Public Prospect (The Lancaster Sound Regional Study), Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, November 1983. Known widely as "the Peter Jacobs report," this paper is as concise and clear as most others are inaccessible; pp. 9–16 are particularly useful.

28 For example, during the NCTR workshop on regional government, held in Cambridge Bay on 9 September 1984, Peter Katorka addressed the need for greater powers offshore for a Nunavut government. Citing the activity of an exploration vessel in Hudson Bay and the lack of information provided by
government or industry to Inuit, he stated simply, "Hudson Bay is ours." See Minutes of the Nunavut regional workshop, NCTR, Ottawa, 15.
29 CBC Northern Service Radio news, Yellowknife, 2 October 1984.
31 CBC news, 2 October 1984.
32 Katherine Graham et al., A Climate for Change: Alternatives for the Central and Eastern Arctic, Final Report of the Eastern Arctic Study, Centre for Resource Studies, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. This is perhaps the most detailed, and certainly the most neutral, study of northern political development in Canada.

CHAPTER FOUR


3 In addition to published sources and press accounts, this article is based largely on confidential interviews and colloquia on Canadian-U.S. relations, involving both authors, extending over the past decade, supplemented more recently by selective documentary and interview evidence dealing with the Manhattan case. Standards of reliability meet those specified and employed in John Kirton, "The Conduct and Co-ordination of Canadian Government Decisionmaking toward the United States, 1970–1975," PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1977.


5 In legal and geographical terms, the more precise distinction is that between "territorial" and "internal" waters, both of which give the coastal state exclusive jurisdiction, but only the latter of which allows it to control rights of passage.