

With regard to Arctic waters, Canada controls all maritime navigation in its waters. Nevertheless, disagreements exist between the United States and Canada regarding the maritime boundary in the Beaufort Sea (approximately 6,250 square nautical miles) and between Canada and Denmark over a small part of the maritime boundary in the Lincoln Sea. All disagreements are well managed, neither posing defence challenges for Canada nor diminishing Canada's ability to collaborate and cooperate with its Arctic neighbours. Canada will continue to manage these discrete boundary issues and will also, as a priority, seek to work with our neighbours to explore the possibility of resolving them in accordance with international law.

On the second priority, Canada will secure international recognition for the full extent of our extended continental shelf wherein we can exercise our sovereign rights over the resources of the seabed and subsoil. Most known Arctic natural resources lie within the exclusive economic zones of Arctic states—200 nautical miles extending from the coastal baselines. States have sovereign rights to explore and exploit living and non-living marine resources in their respective exclusive economic zones. Arctic coastal states also have existing rights to resources on their extended continental shelves beyond their exclusive economic zones.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) explicitly recognizes the rights of coastal states such as Canada over the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil beyond 200 nautical miles from their coastal baselines and sets out a process by which a state may determine the limits within which it may exercise those rights. Canada will make its submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in December 2013 and is currently engaged in the scientific, technical and legal work needed to delineate the outer limits of its continental shelf. Autonomous underwater vehicles—with Canadian technology at their heart—are being used to collect some of the needed data. Canada is investing significantly to ensure that Canada secures international recognition for the full extent of its continental shelf in both the Arctic and Atlantic oceans.