

could go on claiming exclusive jurisdiction while the US submarines went freely (and secretly) to and fro. Canada would have sensors at chokepoints to monitor what was around, and would have barriers of some sort ready to stop "hostile submarine activity in crisis or war."

The Canadian government has fallen short of even this position. In the agreement signed in mid-January Washington does not acknowledge Canadian sovereignty even over the surface waters, but will merely seek Canada's consent for any transit by its ice-breakers. In fact, that is almost identical to practice in any so-called "international straits" or, in UNCLOS parlance, "straits used for international navigation" where the passage runs between two or more states (Malacca, Gibraltar, Tiran or wherever). So, in preparing for the commercial use of the Northwest Passage, Joe Clark appears simply to be turning it into an international strait. His first "broad theme" of affirming Canadian sovereignty is therefore being discarded in the very part of the Arctic most likely to be visited frequently by foreign vessels (or any foreigners).

At least, Joe Clark is discarding it as far as the Americans are concerned. My own idea would be to pick up from his apparently "continentalist" stance and make it truly internationalist.

I SUGGEST THAT WE OFFER TO THE United Nations all of the Arctic archipelago north of the Parry Channel (a sea channel that bisects the Arctic from east to west at about 74 degrees north) to be International Territory, just as Antarctica has always been. This is the ultimate gesture in co-operation, to give up claims of sovereignty while assuring everybody that we will take part in positive activities of scientific research, environmental protection and ecologically sound development.

The friendlier critics will say: why not bargain with other countries to do something similar at the same time? Why throw away a strong card in the diplomatic game? Well, it would be great if

some other country were inspired to make a similar move – but we could also just wait forever, and miss the opportunity. The fact is, we can *do* something about this archipelago and we cannot expect to achieve a demilitarized zone over other peoples' territory by drawing circles and making nice speeches. Demilitarization has to start somewhere, and why not with us, who happen to be blessed with a big enough chunk of terri-



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tory we can "give away" to make a splash in the world?

To address the critics who think always of "bottom lines," what actually do we lose by offering it to the United Nations? Of course, there are minerals in the High Arctic – we have (at enormous cost) extracted some oil, and there is the Polaris lead-zinc mine, and the town of Resolute (now called Qausuittuq). And we would lose the right to draw a 200-mile economic zone around the whole archipelago. But why do we feel the need to claim all this sea-area? Again, in 1920 Norway signed a treaty with eight other countries allowing them (and the Soviet Union after 1925) to exploit minerals on Svalbard (formerly Spitsbergen). We would just be going one step further than Norway, in disclaiming sovereignty.

On the other side of the ledger, we would not feel obliged to defend it militarily against any invader or encroacher. We could share other costs – such as environmental protection measures – with a group of states interested in the area.

The important advantages, however, are not cuts in the budget of DND or Environment Canada.

Here are a few of the real gains:

- The move would strengthen the position of internationalists when the Antarctic Treaty comes up for review in 1990 and that continent is in danger of a carve-up.

- It would present the United Nations with a splendid problem: how to maintain as demilitarized a zone which is under its own con-

trol and is much more strategically located than Antarctica? Is it so unlikely that the two superpowers would decide it was in their mutual interest to devise a set of measures for verifying that it continues to be demilitarized? Could this also include the Northwest Passage? Why ever not? Disarmament Ambassador Doug Roche has been talking about an International Verification Organization. Maybe this new UN territory of (let's call it) Arctica could provide the start of his IVO.

- It would give the United Nations a kick-start in the business of co-operation over an area of "commons." We all thought the Seabed in "the area beyond national jurisdiction" was going to be the part of the globe where this would begin, but the International Seabed Authority is still waiting in the wings (or on the Jamaican waterfront). The Seabed Authority will not come into being until after sixty countries have ratified the Law of the Sea Convention and, after five years, only thirty-five countries have done so. Canada can give a deadline to co-operation over Arctica simply by announcing a handover date. Of course, we could add a "fail-safe" device: if

the United Nations proved to be hopelessly disorganized or unready, we could withdraw the offer just before the date for handing over.

Pessimists will say: "Well, obviously the UN can't handle it. Look what happened over Namibia." It's true that 112 countries, including Canada and the United States, voted in 1966 to terminate South Africa's mandate over South West Africa and make it the "direct responsibility" of the UN to lead that country to independence. But it was a quite different line-up then from today on Arctica: South Africa was determined to remain in possession, Britain was preoccupied with the Rhodesian rebellion and the United States and Canada soon cooled off the issue and refused to become members of the United Nations Council for Namibia.

- We might, just might, start a fashion for handing over bits of territory, which could then be demilitarized. Denmark might quickly follow with northern Greenland. More fanciful are thoughts about the United Kingdom shedding Northern Ireland... or the Falklands.

HOW, FINALLY, WOULD THE UNITED Nations administer Arctica? Well, there still exists the underemployed Trusteeship Council, comprising all member states. Or it could have a special trusteeship committee of a smaller number of states. These could be the seven states with territory north of the 60th parallel, or the seven member states with the highest population density (Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Malta, Mauritius, the Netherlands and Singapore, since you ask), or any appropriate mixture.

So that's it: I suggest that Canada, with its long-held commitment to internationalism, should be the first country to offer to the United Nations a substantial part of its territory. (I don't count the US gift of the property now occupied by UN headquarters on Turtle Bay in Manhattan. Maybe I should. So we would be the second.) I believe I have made my point. □