

to the southern border with the United States. Vast regions in the centre and north, although potentially very rich in resources, are inhospitable and almost uninhabited. Strategically, one could class the southern strip of Canada 200 km wide and stretching from east to west along the United States border as the inhabited area, with the remaining 90% of the area nearly unoccupied territory<sup>18</sup> over which missiles and aircraft would have to fly in order to reach valuable strategic targets in Canada and the USA.

However, in spite of demographics, a central authority claiming sovereignty over all of this vast territory has an obligation for surveillance of activity, as well as for development of what may prove to be valuable resources. And, apart from considerations of security, which may not prove serious in the next few years, there are other responsibilities of government which extend beyond the land and territorial seas. These include search and rescue following maritime or air accidents, protection of environmental assets, including wild life in the Arctic, and policing of fishery and prospecting regulations. Thus, for civil as well as defence considerations there is need for extensive surveillance over very large areas of uninhabited and inhospitable territory. Some of these requirements represent international legal obligations, others are simply the normal responsibilities of a sovereign state.

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<sup>18</sup> In fact, only 0.3% of the population of Canada, or approximately 77,000 people occupy the northern territories. The population density of the entire country is about 10% of the world average - 2.8 persons per square kilometre. Population figures extracted from the *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year - 1990*.