

## OPERATION NUNALIVUT 09

Thanks to being a Fellow of the CDFAI – and also thanks to my paper, *Canada-U.S. Relations in the Arctic: A Neighbourly Proposal* that was published by CDFAI in late 2008 – I was invited to go to Camp Eureka – located just below 80 Degrees North – on April 17<sup>th</sup> to meet the Canadian Rangers as they returned from their patrols of key areas of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago (Ellesmere Island). These patrols were designed “to project sovereignty in the uninhabited Canadian High Arctic.” The Premier of Nunavut and Brigadier-General David Miller, head of the Joint Task Force North, took the salute when the Rangers arrived at Camp Eureka. There were other invited guests including a number of members of the media, two senior American military officers from the American Embassy in Ottawa, the American Consul-General from Montreal, author-academic Ken Coates from Waterloo University and two people from Arctic institutes at the University of Calgary.

We assembled initially in Yellowknife on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April where we collected our cold weather gear and were briefed about where and how the Nunalivut operation stood at that stage. We then flew to Resolute, via Cambridge Bay, and were put up at the South Camp Inn at Resolute. We stayed at the same Inn on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup>, after the visit to Camp Eureka.

We were given extensive briefings again on the 17<sup>th</sup> at which we were advised that, currently, there is “no conventional assessed threat to the JTFN AO during the March and April timeframes.” While in Camp Eureka, we had the opportunity to meet, and speak with, the Canadian Rangers. The Inuit Rangers are chosen by their respective communities, not by the Canadian Army, a feature that both they and their military commanders believe to be a key reason for the success of the Ranger program. I was certainly impressed by what they’d achieved in extreme circumstances during some of their patrols. There is no question that the Rangers provide important “eyes and ears” on the ground in the vast territory that is the Canadian High Arctic. The American observers were impressed by their dedication and by the scope of their patrolling: the Rangers covered more than 4000 kilometres in about three weeks.

Plans are moving forward for an Operation next year that will combine both the Canadian Forces and the Rangers with similar people from Greenland. There is already a great deal of cooperation between those in the Canadian High Arctic and those in Greenland’s High Arctic so next year’s Operation will expand the cooperation between Canada and Denmark/Greenland in our respective territories.

The cost of this year’s operation was \$1.2 million.

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26 April 2009