



Newsletter – July 2025

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From the Project Lead

Colleagues -

The Canadian Institute for Arctic Security (CIAS) has entered its ninth month of operation with ongoing development of its governance and administration, and increasing momentum on the programming that makes the CIAS valuable to Northerners and to Canada. Recent announcements on Canada's domestic and international commitments to security and defence – which always underscore the Arctic as a critical space – continue to prove the utility and need for the CIAS.

The Institute's three public-facing pillars – events, commentary and research – are now rolling out in force. Over the last few months, commentaries from renowned experts in Arctic security have been published weekly on the [CIAS website](https://arcticsecurityinstitute.ca), the CIAS has hosted and attended multiple events with a wide range of stakeholders in Arctic security – including an epic expedition to Inuvik – and innovative reporting and research projects commissioned by CIAS are starting to move ahead. More details on all these developments below.

As ever, we hope to gain further momentum by forging new partnerships and hosting events for local, national, and international audiences. Find out more about where the CIAS will be at the bottom of the newsletter and never hesitate to connect with the Institute – whether we're in your neighborhood or from afar.

-Andrew

Yukon First Nations Defence and Security Industries Conference

The Assembly of First Nations – Yukon Region, in partnership with the Yukon First Nations Chamber of Commerce, held an outstanding event in Whitehorse on April 22-23 that brought Yukon First Nations, Development Corporations, other governments and individuals together to explore the history and future of First Nations involvement in the security and defence sector. The conference urged for lessons to be learned from the historical impacts of previous military activity in the territory. It aimed to develop readiness for Yukon First Nations businesses to participate in new procurement, and how to work with First Nations governments in planning for a more secure future.



Panelists (L-R) Aiden Kindopp (Cando), Antoine am Rhyn (Defence Construction Canada), Cmdre. Jason Armstrong (Royal Canadian Navy), David Carrière-Acco (Acosys Consulting), and Philip Ducharme (Canadian Council for Indigenous Business) discuss facilitating First Nation and industry collaboration at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre in Whitehorse. Photo: CIAS



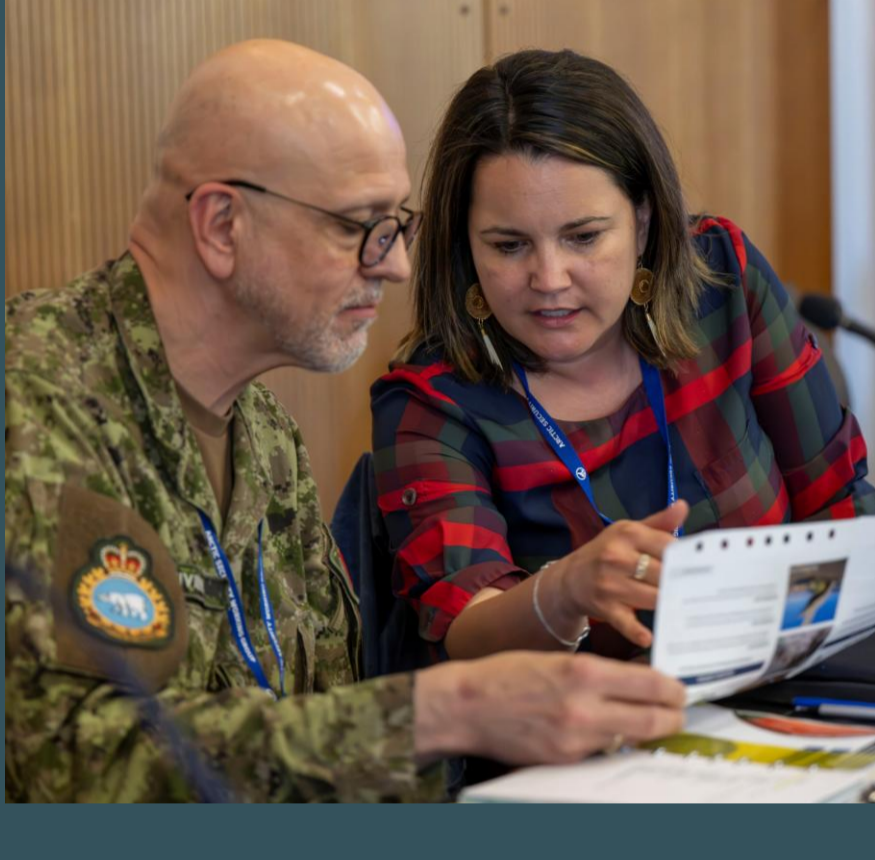
Arctic Security Working Group attendees at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre in Whitehorse. Photo: CAF/JTFN

Arctic Security Working Group

Co-chaired by Joint Task Force North and the Government of Yukon, the Arctic Security Working Group (ASWG) took place in Whitehorse on May 28-29. This biannual gathering brings together federal and territorial departments, the Canadian Armed Forces, Indigenous leaders, the Canadian Coast Guard, scientists, academics, and international partners to discuss pressing issues in Arctic security.

This session's theme was dual-use infrastructure, with participants discussing its potential to contribute to shared resilience in Canada's North by satisfying both civilian and military needs.

ASWG Co-Chairs BGen Dan Rivière, Commander of JTFN and Carleen Kerr, ADM of Corporate Services and Intergovernmental Relations for Government of Yukon. Photo: CAF/JTFN



Arctic Development Expo

On June 17-19, CIAS took part in the annual Arctic Development Expo, 200 km north of the Arctic Circle in Inuvik, Northwest Territories. The Expo has for many years been bringing together various Arctic stakeholders to discuss natural and renewable resources, climate and energy innovations, Indigenous leadership and circumpolar governance, sovereignty, and the knowledge economy. With high levels of local community engagement, the Expo also sees a trade show, tours and cultural showcases.

This year's thematic focus was on security. Sessions from locals and invited guests painted a clear picture of the state of the North and what opportunities and threats exist. A highlight was a very practical session on the types of cyber threats that attack Northerners with shocking frequency.

The CIAS was invited to present the vision and status update to the plenary and had a booth at the trade show. Our thanks to the Town of Inuvik for the invitation and opportunity.

Inuvik provided the midnight sun and glorious clear days to attendees from near and far. To get there, the Institute was very fortunate to be able to drive the entirety of the Dempster Highway and the Inuvik-Tuk highway to get an on-the-ground look at the landscapes and communities all along the way. Building this kind of practical familiarity is extremely important for the CIAS – we can't really know the places we aim to serve and connect to without being on the ground. This experience is critical to building our credibility and profile.



Ice continues to break up in the upper reaches of the North Klondike River, Tombstone Territorial Park, Yukon. Photo: CIAS



Descending into the MacKenzie River valley at Tsiigehtchic, NWT. Photo: CIAS



Canadian Satellite Ground Station Inuvik. Photo: CIAS



Dr. Heather Exner-Pirot (off camera to the right) presents on the nexus of Arctic security and resource development. Photo: CIAS



All the way to Tuktoyaktuk, NWT – via Canada's only all-season road access to the Arctic Ocean. Photo: CIAS



The Mount Leotta fire in its early hours near the intersection of the Dempster Highway and the Klondike Highway, Yukon. Photo: CIAS

New Canadian Commitments to NATO

Canada and other NATO nations have committed to a significant increase in defence and security spending, amounting to 5% of GDP by 2035. Prime Minister Mark Carney's announcement, made alongside other leaders during the annual NATO summit in The Hague, noted the increasing amount of security threats facing Canada and the transatlantic military alliance at large.

This funding increase, comprised of 3.5% of GDP for core military spending and 1.5% of GDP for critical infrastructure and civil resilience, will certainly bring large opportunities for investments in Canada's northern and Arctic flank.

The CIAS will continue to monitor these developments, their implications and their opportunities for the people, communities, businesses and governments of Canada's Arctic and North.



Commentary

The commentary series is now rolling out regularly on the [CIAS website](https://arcticsecurityinstitute.ca). With new commentaries being published weekly throughout the summer, this series is living up to the Institute mission of providing clear, relevant, and timely information to help people understand Arctic security in the Canadian Arctic and North.

As part of our ongoing communications strategy development, the CIAS will continue to target social media across the North to get more eyes on the work of our contributors and spread information and ideas in new ways.

Do you have ideas for written commentary or multimedia information sharing? The CIAS wants to help amplify voices that have the knowledge of the North but may not be heard on other platforms. For more information, start with a look at CIAS's [Written and Multimedia Series Guidelines](#) and get in touch.

Have a look at some of the Institute's recent commentaries:

- [Avoiding Confusion in Canada's Arctic Sovereignty, Security, and National Defence](#) - Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer
- [Through, To and In – Part 1: Threats Through the Arctic](#) – Dr. P. Whitney Lackenbauer
- [A Strategic Case for Integrating the Canadian Coast Guard Under the Royal Canadian Navy](#) - Arjun Grewal

Research

The CIAS is on track to publish new reports on Arctic security. Alongside the commentary series and events, the research series is another public-facing pillar of the Institute's work to amplify and present solutions to important issues that matter in the North.

Upcoming work will investigate gaps in defence infrastructure in Canada's North, the risks of foreign interference in elections for territorial and Indigenous government, and the future of the Canadian Rangers. These products are expected in the early fall and will be published on all CIAS platforms.

The CIAS is open to amplifying research from different points of view and backgrounds. Please connect with CIAS to discuss your research ideas.

CIAS Near You

Upcoming events:

- Arctic Security Conference (September 22, 2025; Whitehorse, Yukon)
 - Join CIAS, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Canada, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, and the Macdonald-Laurier Institute for a one-day conference focusing on the energy and defence sectors, Indigenous perspectives, and an Asia-Pacific focus of Arctic security. Register for the conference [HERE](#)

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