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**MPs must debate plans for Arctic Sovereignty says NWT MP**  
**Conservatives quietly deciding fate of one third of Canada**

**OTTAWA** – Parliament is being sidelined as the Harper Government carries out its plans for Canada's Arctic Sovereignty, charged the NDP's Northern Development Critic.

"We must have a full debate in the House of Commons," said Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic). "We are talking about more than a third of Canada and the spending of billions of dollars and yet there has been no discussion in the House."

On July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Prime Minister Harper announced a \$7.4 billion plan to purchase Arctic Patrol ships which may not be capable of operating all year in the North and will soon make an announcement on the selection of a site for an Arctic naval station. The rumoured site for this station is Resolute Bay, Nunavut.

"In his statement the prime minister went on about the commercial potential of a naval station and how it will benefit Northerners, but Northerners are saying Resolute Bay is the wrong place," said Bevington. "For 20 years or more the Northerners have called for a port at Bathurst Inlet to help develop the enormous mineral potential of the Slave Geological Province. Other places I've heard Northerners say they want a port are Tuktoyaktuk, Cambridge Bay and Iqaluit. No one I know has called for a port at Resolute Bay."

Bevington has long said any plan for Arctic Sovereignty must benefit Northerners first. The development of such a plan must not only involve MPs but the Aboriginal people of the North who, through their land claims, are the regions largest land owners.

"I'm not saying there isn't a role for the military," said Bevington. "The military is just one part of an approach which protects the Arctic through stewardship rather than confrontation. Unfortunately, without any debate in Parliament all that is being heard is the military option. When the House of Commons resumes this fall I will be putting as much pressure as I can to have a full debate on Arctic Sovereignty."

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