

# Canada won't be 'bullied' over Arctic, Cannon tells Russians

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*Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon speaks to the International Relations Council on Arctic sovereignty in Montreal on Friday. (Ryan Remiorz/Canadian Press)*

Canada "will not be bullied" by Russia when it comes to staking claim over the Arctic, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon said Friday.

His remarks in Montreal came the same day as Russia said it would amass an army dedicated to protecting its interests in the Arctic.

The plan, revealed in a document released by the presidential security council in Moscow this week, was reported in the Russian media on Friday.

Speaking to the International Relations Council on Arctic Sovereignty, Cannon said he will make Canada's position clear to the Russian foreign minister at a meeting next week.

Canada is among several countries in the world, including Russia, the United States and a number of Nordic European nations that are seeking to assert jurisdiction in the disputed territory because it holds many untapped natural resources.

The dispute has intensified as shrinking polar ice has allowed the opening of new shipping lanes to those natural resources.

While sovereignty over the Arctic is of "uppermost" importance, Canada is committed to working with other countries on issues like environmental protection and economic development in the region, said Cannon.

The Arctic issue was highlighted when two Russian bombers were turned away from Alaska and the Yukon about 200 kilometres from Canadian and U.S. airspace on Feb. 18.

A spokesman for Canadian Defence Minister Peter MacKay said Friday the government is considering several options to improve surveillance and response capabilities in the North, including more patrol ships and training exercises.

*With files from The Canadian Press*