

# Chapter 4

## Arctic Regional Security

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter examines an emerging regional security system in the Arctic. There was a significant shift in the Arctic powers' threat perceptions and security policies in the High North. In contrast with the Cold War era when the Arctic was a zone for the global confrontation between the USSR and the U.S./NATO, now this region is seen by international players as a platform for international cooperation. The Arctic countries now believe that there are no serious hard security threats to them and that the soft security agenda is much more important. The military power now has new functions, such as ascertaining coastal states' sovereignty over their exclusive economic zones and continental shelves in the region; protecting the Arctic countries' economic interests in the North, and performing some symbolic functions. The Arctic states believe that the regional cooperative agenda could include climate change mitigation, environmental protection, maritime safety, Arctic research, indigenous peoples, cross- and trans-border cooperative projects, culture, etc.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are two contradictory trends in the contemporary scholarship as regards an emerging Arctic regional security system. One strand, dominated by the traditional geopolitical and realist ways of thinking, prefers to represent the High North as a region of growing confrontation between major world players because of the competition for the Arctic's rich natural resources and control over maritime routes. This group of experts predicts remilitarization of the Arctic and arms race in the region, not excluding the possibility of armed conflicts in this part of the planet (Blunden, 2009; Borgerson, 2008; Huebert, 2010; Huebert, Exner-Pirot, Lajeunesse, & Gullede, 2012; Indzhiev, 2010; Khramchikhin, 2013; Kraska, 2009; Lukin, 2010).

The Western experts are especially critical about Russia's Arctic policies portraying it as expansionist, aggressive, and an example of "gunboat diplomacy" (Kraska, 2009, p. 1117; Lakshmi, 2015; Schepp & Traufetter, 2009; Smith & Giles, 2007; Stratfor, 2015; Willett, 2009, p. 53; Zysk, 2008). According to Western analysts, due to Russia's economic weakness and technological backwardness, it tends to

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-6954-1.ch004

emphasize coercive military instruments to protect its national interests in the Arctic which sooner or later may lead to a direct military confrontation with NATO member-states. China is also mentioned as another potential regional spoiler because, on the one hand, it is interested in the Arctic natural resources but, on the other hand, Beijing has no proper legal and political representation in the region to ensure a reliable access to the local resources (Flake, 2013; Struzik, 2013; Wishnick, 2017).

Another extreme school believes that the Arctic is an exceptional “zone of peace” and a “territory of dialogue”. Today’s exceptional political vision of the Arctic emerged with the end of the Cold War. The end of superpower rivalry meant that the region lost most of its geostrategic and geopolitical relevance, even though strategic military assets, such as nuclear capabilities, remained in the region. In fact, the geopolitical dynamics of the Arctic had already started to transform in the latter years of the Cold War. In the famous 1987 Murmansk speech, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev laid down the vision of the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation and initiated the gradual process of “desecuritization” of the Arctic as an element of the broader Soviet reorientation (Atland, 2008).

In this sense, the Arctic has become understood as a “distinctive region in international society” (Young, 2009); a region detached from world politics and characterized as an apolitical space of regional governance, functional cooperation, and peaceful coexistence (Heininen, Exner-Pirot, & Plouffe, 2013, p. 25).

The most radical version of this school believes that an international legal regime similar to the Antarctic Treaty should be established in the Arctic to make it a “region of peace and cooperation” (Dodin & Kovalev, 2003; Perelet, Kukushkina, & Travnikov, 2000). The proposed new Arctic regime should prohibit any economic and military activities in the region. Only subsistence economies of indigenous peoples of the North and research activities should be allowed in the High North. Some globalists suggest establishing a UN-based governance regime in the Arctic which should replace the existing national sovereignty-oriented model (Kharlampieva & Lagutina, 2011).

However, other authors argue that, as the contemporary Arctic is becoming increasingly global, it may face similar geo-economic and politico-strategic dynamics as other regions. This point has been recently highlighted by various spillover effects of world politics into the region, such as the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria or the United States’ withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement.

That’s why along with two extremes – pessimistic/alarmist and optimistic strands – there are numerous hybrid/moderate schools that share some common principles with regards to the existing and emerging security system in the Arctic (Sergunin & Konyshev, 2016; Vylegzhanin, 2003).

These moderates argue that all regional players should act as responsible international actors who behave in the international arena in line with international law and commitments. According to this school, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Ilulissat Declaration (2008), AC-sponsored agreements, particularly, on search and rescue (SAR) operations (2011), oil spill response (2013) and Arctic science cooperation (2017), International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) Polar Code, etc. should be the legal basis for international relations system in the High North. Although the moderates do not believe that the institutions engaged in the Arctic affairs – the UN (and its specialized bodies, such as the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), IMO, UN Environmental Program (UNEP), etc.), AC and BEAC – will be able to exercise real supranational governance in the region in the foreseeable future, they think that some institutional reforms are possible. They suggest, for instance, empowering the AC with more rights, including the right to conclude binding agreements (similar to the SAR, oil spills response and science cooperation documents) and further institutionalization of the

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Council with the aim to transform it from a discussion forum to a full-fledged intergovernmental international organization (Sergunin & Konyshv, 2016; Vylegzhanin, 2003).

However, they argue that each Arctic actor has legitimate rights to defend its national interests in the region, including the definition and expansion of the outer limits of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean; control over the maritime routes; fighting poaching and smuggling in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF); and modernizing the armed forces deployed in the High North.

The moderates seem therefore to favor creating a flexible regional governance system in the Arctic based on the pragmatic combination of hard and soft law. They even open for establishing some elements of supranational governance in the region, but only in this part – the Central Arctic Ocean – which is currently beyond the national sovereignty jurisdiction and where any economic activities – be it extraction of hydrocarbons or fishery – are presently impossible because the local environment is extremely fragile and vulnerable. The moderates' pressure on the coastal states' governments resulted for instance in the signing of a declaration on fishing ban around the North Pole in 2015, and in a binding agreement on this issue in 2017.

To summarize the present-day Arctic security discourse, it should be noted that regardless of its strong polarization represented by the pessimist–optimist dichotomy in which the Arctic is read either as an area of potential interstate conflict or an area of mutually beneficial cooperation involving a whole host of actors, the mainstream has been strongly influenced by the hybrid approaches proposed by experts combining some elements of the above extreme schools. This eclectic mainstream approach has managed to avoid xenophobic/extremist views on the state of international relations in the Arctic and develop moderate and well-balanced concepts that seem to still guide Arctic powers' security policies in this region with its focus on common challenges rather than more contentious issues.

This chapter aims to examine an emerging regional security system in the Arctic. Particularly, this study discusses how threat perceptions of major Arctic players have been changed in the post-Cold War era. Moreover, the changing role of military power in the Arctic politics is analyzed. Finally, a new emerging security agenda in the region – both its hard and soft aspects – is discussed.

## **BACKGROUND**

In the Cold War era, the Arctic region was part of global confrontation between the USSR and the USA/NATO; it was a home for strategic nuclear forces (especially Soviet ones) and an important area for significant military activities. Both the United States and the Soviet Union pursued containment strategies, with mutually assured destruction doctrine at their cores.

In the post-Cold-War world, however, the roles of military power and the nature of military strategy have been radically transformed because of the global geopolitical changes and revolution in military affairs (RMA). The recent international developments have repeatedly cast doubt on the efficacy of military force and the ability to achieve political objectives by military methods. The decision to use force has frequently been based on incorrect calculations or on ideological arguments (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and the former Yugoslavia), which had nothing to do with the real national interests of the countries involved.

There is a new phenomenon in international relations: present-day wars no longer aim to acquiring enemy's territory and wealth. Now we see wars unleashed with the aim of changing political regimes

or under the banner of “human rights” protection (the doctrines of “humanitarian interventions” and “responsibility to protect”). Armed forces have new, non-traditional roles, such as fighting terrorists, piracy, policing conflict zones, protecting a country’s economic interests, conducting search and rescue (SAR) operations, and coping with natural and man-made catastrophes.

The RMA has changed the nature of war as well. The use of precision weapons, unmanned aerial vehicles, hybrid tactics, and strikes against information infrastructure are now the most popular methods for waging wars. The supremacy in military technologies became a crucial factor in achieving regional or world military hegemony. For this reason, the competition between major powers has moved to the technological sphere and to equipping armed forces with advanced weaponry.

The RMA has also changed the nature of war, in the sense that it made the concept of territorial defense obsolete. In the age of non-contact and network-centric warfare, there is no need to deploy massive land forces close to the national borders in order to prevent a potential enemy’s invasion. The world’s major powers’ current focus regarding military reform is on making armed forces more compact, mobile, and better armed and trained for multipurpose missions. The same trends can be identified in the Arctic as well.

## **MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER**

### **Changing Roles of Military Power in the Arctic**

Along with the above traditional functions, such as protection of national territory, power projection, deterrence, containment, etc., the modern military has new roles in the High North. Among the relatively new roles that armed forces acquired in the post-Cold War era, the mission to ascertain coastal states’ sovereignty over their exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and continental shelves in the Arctic Ocean should be mentioned first and foremost. This mission has emerged only in the post-Cold era when the major polar players have signed and ratified the UNCLOS<sup>1</sup>. All littoral states have special sections on this issue in their Arctic strategies.

For example, the Norwegian Arctic strategy says: “Importance is also attached to maintaining a visible military presence that has the relevant capacity to exercise sovereignty, safeguard our sovereign rights in our 200-mile zones, exercise authority, and carry out surveillance, intelligence and crisis management” (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009).

The Canadian Arctic doctrine echoes the Norwegian one: “The Government of Canada is firmly asserting its presence in the North, ensuring we have the capability and capacity to protect and patrol the land, sea, and sky in our sovereign Arctic territory. We are putting more boots on the Arctic tundra, more ships in the icy water and a better eye-in-the-sky” (Government of Canada, 2009).

Former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has repeatedly noted that the first rule of Arctic sovereignty is “use it or lose it” and his government “intends to use it” (as cited in Chase, 2014). To this end, Canada has begun annual summer military exercises entitled Operation Nunavut in its northern territories, which are explicitly designed to protect Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic.

The U.S. national strategy in the Arctic region has the same postulate: “Our highest priority is to protect the American people, our sovereign territory and rights, natural resources, and interests of the United States” (President of the United States, 2013).

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No surprise that the Kremlin aims "...to ensure the sovereign rights of Russia's Arctic and features the smooth implementation of all of its activities, including the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf of the Russian Federation in the Arctic..." (Government of the Russian Federation, 2013).

Denmark has a specific situation with enforcing its sovereignty rights in the High North. Being represented by Greenland in the Arctic, the Kingdom of Denmark still retains its prerogatives in the defense area regardless the self-rule status of the island. According to the Danish Arctic strategy, "Sovereignty enforcement is the primary task of the Danish Armed Forces in the Arctic and the level of presence in the area is determined accordingly. Units from the army, navy and air force carry out tasks in the Arctic. They undertake surveillance and enforcement of sovereignty of Greenland and Faroese territorial waters and airspace, as well as the Greenland exclusive economic zone and the fishing zones to ensure that no systematic violations of territory can take place. Likewise, the Sirius Patrol oversees the National Park in Northeast Greenland and enforces sovereignty there" (Government of Denmark, Government of the Faroes, & Government of Greenland, 2011, p. 21).

In contrast with the coastal states, Finland, Iceland, and Sweden do not push forward sovereignty-related issues in their Arctic strategies and do not mention their armed forces in this context. They prefer to focus on issues, such as climate change's implications, environment, indigenous peoples, the prospects for multilateral cooperation in the Arctic, etc. The Finnish Arctic strategy of 2013 barely mentions the need to monitor security developments in the High North, maintain the Finnish armed forces' preparedness at high level and Nordic defense cooperation in the NORDEF framework (Government of Finland, 2013, pp. 40-41).

Another "new" mission of the armed forces is to protect the Arctic countries' economic interests in the High North, including mineral and bio-resources, fighting smuggling, and poaching. The melting of the northern polar ice has dramatically altered this once static geographic and oceanic region and is responsible for the new-found profitability and geostrategic/geoeconomic relevance of the region. Access to oil, gas, minerals, fish, and transportation routes, formerly locked in by thick ice, are for the first time becoming accessible and viable sources of profit. These resources include an estimated 13% of the world's undiscovered oil, 30% of undiscovered gas, and some \$1 trillion worth of minerals including gold, zinc, palladium, nickel, platinum, lead, rare-earth minerals, and gem-quality diamonds (U.S. Coast Guard, 2013, p. 7).

In addition to mineral reserves, the Arctic possesses abundant bio-resources. More than 150 fish species can be found in Arctic waters, including important varieties for international commercial fishing, such as herring, cod, butterfish, haddock, and flatfish. It should be noted that the AZRF produces 15% of Russia's seafood (Kochemasov, Morgunov, & Solomatin, 2009). The Bering Sea and adjacent waters provide for a half of the U.S. fish catch (Conley, 2013, p. 61; U.S. Coast Guard, 2013, p. 7). The region is also populated by some unique animal species such as the polar bear, narwhal, walrus, and white whale.

With greater accessibility to the Arctic region and its abundant resources come both new opportunities for multilateral cooperation and the potential for regional competition and dispute, particularly conflicting territorial claims and managing maritime resources. Protracted disagreement among the Arctic littoral states could cause individual Arctic nations to become increasingly assertive in their resource and territorial claims, which has the potential to lead to the militarization of the Arctic. Although this scenario would appear to be unlikely, many coastal states believe that it is critical to articulate their strategic interests in the Arctic region, develop a sufficient military potential and plans of action to ensure their leadership in this evolving region to both anticipate challenges and offer multilateral and transparent resolution to these challenges (Conley & Kraut, 2010, p. 3).

Some Arctic states elevated the armed forces' mission to protect their economic interests in the High North to the level of their national doctrines. For example, both Russian Arctic strategies of 2008 and 2013 set a goal to make the AZRF a strategic resource basis which should be protected from foreign powers' encroachments (Government of the Russian Federation, 2008, 2013). The Russian Security Council's Secretary Nikolay Patrushev explained the need to tighten control over the AZRF and its external borders by other polar players' increased activities in the region (Dni.ru, 2008).

As far as the problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is concerned its volume has reached a significant scale in the region. It amounted to about 1.3 million tons in the Bering Sea enclave (Zilanov, 2016, p. 48). It is estimated that the fish caught in Russian waters exceeds the official quota by at least 150% (International Bering Sea Forum, 2006). Overfishing creates numerous ecological problems in the region. According to some accounts, as a result of intensive trawling, species such as crab and perch are in serious decline in the entire Bering Sea, while the stocks of pollack fluctuate in an unpredictable manner from year to year. The once-plentiful pollack have had especially dramatic declines on the Western (Russian) side of the Bering Sea because of illegal fishing. In the Eastern (U.S.) Bering Sea, harvests of snow crab have declined by 85% since 1999 (International Bering Sea Forum, 2006). This is because poaching is rampant, and the Russian organized crime is heavily involved in the fish trade. The Russian "fish, crab, and caviar mafias" not only aim at expanding its commercial activities and sidelining their foreign rivals but also at establishing control over the regional governments and federal agencies in the Russian Far North and East.

Illegal fishing in the Barents Sea constituted at least equal threat to fish stocks, although the scale of IUU fishing there was lower than that in the Bering Sea. Norway continues to object to Russian fishing around Spitsbergen. Since Norway introduced a 200-mile economic zone around the archipelago, it has regarded such fishing as poaching. Forcible arrests of Russian trawlers by the Norwegian navy have become more frequent. As Russia does not recognize the aforementioned decision by Norway and considers this area open to international economic activity, in 2004 Russia's Northern Fleet started regular patrols of the waters around Spitsbergen. Norway particularly objected to this move, viewing it as a sign of Russian imperial ambitions and of Moscow's unwillingness to cooperate with Oslo to settle maritime and economic disputes.

Given continuation of ice melting in the High North and opening of the Arctic maritime routes for navigation for several months a year, Canada and Russia are concerned with the possibility of the growth of smuggling activities along their Arctic Ocean's coastline and Northern Sea Route (NSR) and Northwest Passage (NWP). Both Canada and Russia have plans to further develop their border and coast guards in the region.

The Arctic states are concerned about smuggling not only from outside of the region (the threat which remains hypothetical for the time being) but also between the Arctic nations themselves which is already a reality. For example, in 2012, a narwhal smuggling ring was disclosed by the Canadian and U.S. law enforcement agencies. Between 2000 and 2010, an American family purchased the tusks legally in northern Canada and then used the Internet to find buyers in the USA. This family is estimated to have sold between \$400,000 and \$1 million worth of tusks to as many as 150 buyers (McGwin, 2015, January 12). It should be noted that Narwhals are protected under various national and international treaties. The Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora bans their hunting in Canada and Greenland by anyone other than the Inuit. Canadian tusks may be sold domestically or shipped abroad to countries where their sale is legal. Imports of tusks to the USA are banned under the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act.

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To prevent or reduce poaching, overfishing, and smuggling in the region an Arctic Coast Guard Forum was established in October 2015. The Joint Statement formally established the operationally-focused, consensus-based organization with the purpose of leveraging collective resources to foster safe, secure, and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic (Fonseca, 2015).

On July 16, 2015, the so-called “Arctic five” countries (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the USA) signed a Declaration Concerning the Prevention of Unregulated High Seas Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean in Oslo. The agreement came at a time when there was no commercial fishing in international waters in the CAO and was presented as a precautionary measure. The idea behind the agreement, including its focus on need for further scientific research and its application of international law, are in line with what most Arctic fisheries stakeholders agree on. The negotiations on a mandatory agreement with some other countries with global fishing interests and capabilities (China, Iceland, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the EU) resulted in a final accord on this issue. Again, Arctic nations’ coast guards are in charge with enforcing the IUU fishing ban regime in the CAO.

Illegal migration is one more security challenge for the Arctic states. Over the last decade, Canada registered several cases of illegal migration. For example, Romanian citizens traveled from Greenland to Canada’s Ellesmere Island by a motorboat trying to fly to Toronto. Several Turkish sailors have illegally left their ship in the Canadian port of Churchill in attempt to travel by train to Winnipeg (Gudev, 2014).

The case of the Arab refugees to the Nordic countries via the polar routes is much more serious security threat. Since the beginning of 2015, at least 29,000 people, mostly from Syria, have used various routes to seek asylum in Norway. The number of asylum seekers arriving plummeted by 95% in 2016 (Osborne, 2016). The refugees being bussed to Russia had taken the so-called “Arctic Route” through Russia crossing the Norwegian border by bike as Russia does not allow anyone to cross by foot. In November 2015, Oslo announced it would deport people who had arrived from a safe country. The government considers Russia as safe but has not given the refugees opportunity to appeal the decision. The Norwegian authorities have begun sending the first of around 5,500 mainly Syrian refugees who have been housed in a transit camp in the north of the country, back to the Russian border they crossed in 2015 (Euronews, 2016). Critics of the government have said the attempts to return refugees to Russia put them at risk and contravene European human rights. Although Norway is not an EU-member, it is in the border-free Schengen zone.

In addition to deportation, in 2016, Norway started to build a steel fence at its border with Russia to prevent further influx of refugees.

As far as Finland is concerned, about 32,500 refugees came to the country in 2015, mostly natives of Iraq (TASS, 2016). Most of them arrived through the Swedish-Finnish border in the north of the country, but many others chose other routes, such as traveling by ferry from Germany and across the border with Russia in northern Lapland. The Russian-Finish border has become one of the main routes used by refugees to get to Finland. The influx of refugees from Russia to Finland increased after Norway tightened security measures on its borders and hardened the procedure of asylum application in late 2015, prompting migrants to seek alternative paths to enter the EU’s borderless Schengen area and to get asylum there. In January 2016, Finland registered 500 asylum seekers arrivals from Russia against 700 border crossings throughout 2015 (Sputnik, 2016b).

In March 2016, Russia and Finland agreed to introduce temporary restrictions at two checkpoints on their border, Salla and Raja-Jooseppi, for citizens of third countries. Similar to Norway, the asylum seekers were sent back to Russia, where they have valid residence permits. The Finnish Ministry of Interior

said that the measures have aimed to curb undocumented migration and related threats and enhance the effectiveness of measures taken by both Helsinki and Moscow to combat illegal migration.

A threat of international terrorism, including the nuclear one, is seen by the Arctic states as a real danger. For example, the U.S. Coast Guard's Arctic strategy aims – among other goals – to preventing terrorism although it does not specifies the source and nature of a terrorist threat (U.S. Coast Guard, 2013, p. 34).

As some experts believe, a temporarily ice-free Northwest Passage during the summer will expose Canada to new vulnerabilities. Increased commercial and tourist traffic may also increase illicit transportation of drugs and terrorists, requiring robust patrolling, monitoring, and emergency response capabilities. Many Canadian experts recommend establishing new rules to require all ships to register their presence in northern Canadian waters. “We are saying that all vessels – no matter what size and what they carry – should have to report to Canadian authorities”, said one Canadian senator. “The threat is not just oil spills and not just commercial vessels moving through. The threat is drugs and the threat is terrorism. And we’ve got to counteract that” (as cited in Conley & Kraut, 2010, pp. 17-18).

The Canadian government has made significant commitments to acquire urgently needed equipment to prepare the Coast Guard for any threats that may arise. The Canadian government has promised to spend billions of dollars building six to eight offshore patrol vessels capable of breaking up first-year ice; the construction of a new icebreaker (\$675 million) John G. Diefenbaker, which was scheduled to replace the aging Louis St. Laurent in 2017; a new Canadian Forces winter fighting school at Resolute Bay in the Northwest Passage; and an estimated \$100 million to build a new naval base at the existing deep-water port Nanisivik on Baffin Island (Government of Canada, 2010, pp. 8-11). Canada First Defense Strategy proposed the acquisition of 10 to 12 maritime patrol aircraft to replace the Aurora fleet starting in 2020 to become part of a broader surveillance system, which will include sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles, and satellites (National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, 2008, p. 17). But critics have argued that neither the pledged icebreaker nor the promised Arctic patrol ships have progressed much beyond the announcement phase (Conley & Kraut, 2010, pp. 17-18; Lasserre, Le Roy, & Garon, 2012, p. 46).

Russia shares the same security concerns with other Arctic nations. According to a statement in 2010 by the head of the FSB's Border Service, Vladimir Pronichev, the main challenges for the Russian Border Service were the unauthorized presence of foreign ships and research vessels in Russian Arctic waters, illegal migration, drug smuggling, and poaching (Kulikov, 2010). Terrorist attacks against oil platforms were also seen as a potential threat to security in the Arctic (Vasiliev, 2012, p. 14). Based on these perceived security risks, Russia again began to prioritize the protection of Arctic borders and the strengthening of the Border Service in the region. This return to a focus on Arctic border protection was reiterated by presidents Medvedev and Putin on a number of occasions (Naumov & Kulikov, 2011).

An Arctic border guard unit was created as early as in 1994. Its aim was to monitor the circulation of ships and poaching at sea. The unit was reorganized in 2004-2005. In 2009, it was announced that new Arctic units had been established in border guard stations in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk. Furthermore, the FSS has established two new border guard commands: one in Murmansk for the western AZRF regions, and one in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky for the eastern Arctic regions. Now the border guards assigned with the task to deal with the new – soft security – threats and challenges such as the establishment of reliable border control systems, the introduction of special visa regulations to certain regions, and the implementation of technological controls over fluvial zones and sites along the NSR. It is currently controlled from the air by border guard aircrafts and on the land and sea by the North-Eastern Border Guard Agency; the Russian border guards further plan to establish a global monitoring



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network from Murmansk to Wrangel Island. All in all, Moscow plans to build 20 border guard stations along the Arctic Ocean's coastline (Klimenko, 2016, pp. 14-15; Zagorsky, 2013).

Another interesting structural change is an ongoing reorganization of the Russian Coast Guard (part of the Border Service). Now the Coast Guard has a wide focus in the Arctic: in addition to the traditional protection of biological resources in the Arctic Ocean, oil and gas installations, and shipping along the NSR are among the agency's new top priorities. There are plans to equip the Coast Guard in the AZRF with the brand-new vessels of project 22100. The Okean-class ice-going patrol ship, the Polyarnaya Zvezda (Polar Star), is currently undergoing sea trials in the Baltic Sea. Vessels of this class can break up to 31.4-inch-thick ice. They have an endurance of 60 days and a range of 12,000 nautical miles at 20 knots. They are equipped with a Ka-27 helicopter and can be supplied with Gorizont UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles).

Some Arctic nations (especially Russia) are seriously concerned with the threat of nuclear terrorism. Russia is afraid that not only the industrial infrastructure or oil platforms, but also nuclear power plants and nuclear waste storages can become potential targets for terrorists. There are two nuclear plants – Kola and Bilibin – in the AZRF. Most notably, more than 200 decommissioned nuclear reactors from submarines and icebreakers from the Soviet period are stored on the Kola Peninsula from the Soviet period. In 2016, Russia launched a large-scale program for removing nuclear waste from the former Soviet submarine base in Andreev Bay in Murmanskaya Oblast. There were a total 22,000 containers of spent fuel from nuclear submarines and icebreakers stored in three storage tanks. There were also approximately 18,000 cubic meters of solid waste and 3,400 cubic meters of liquid radioactive waste, which, according to Norwegian sources, are collectively as radioactive as 5,000 Hiroshima bombs (Sputnik, 2016a). These nuclear facilities must be reliably protected to prevent potential terrorist attacks.

One more trend is the development of the dual-use potential of the military, including SAR operations, monitoring air and maritime spaces, providing navigation safety, mitigating natural and man-made catastrophes (such as, for instance, response to oil spills), etc.

For instance, American experts acknowledge that building U.S. military capacity in the Arctic reaches beyond pure acquisition and procurement. The U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard have recognized certain capability gaps that must be filled, chief among them search and rescue. The sudden and substantial increase in Arctic commercial shipping and tourism poses significant challenges to the existing SAR infrastructure. Given the location of current U.S. Coast Guard operating bases, it could take coast guard aircraft several hours, and coast guard cutters a few or several days, to reach a ship in distress in Arctic waters. To enable specialized training for enhanced SAR capabilities, the U.S. Coast Guard would need to improve or create new operating bases in the region; procure additional Arctic-capable aircraft, cutters, and rescue boats; and add systems to improve Arctic maritime communications, navigation, and domain awareness (Conley & Kraut, 2010, p. 10).

To increase SAR and monitoring capabilities Canada decided to go ahead with Radarsat Constellation Mission (RCM) which will see the launch of at least three satellites by 2018. All three satellites will be designed to gather radar-imaging data. At present, Royal Canadian Air Force operates a single radar-imaging satellite, Radarsat-2, which provides certain maritime surveillance data, but it is insufficient to give a complete picture in the region. According to the Colonel Andre Dupuis, the Department of National Defense's director of space requirements, "Three satellites will give us a complete picture every single day of every ship in our area of responsibility, all the way out to about 2,000 nautical miles" (United Press International, 2013).

Canada's Department of National Defense is also funding an Automatic Identification System (AIS) package for installation on the RCM. For navigational safety, the IMO requires ships larger than 300 tons to carry an AIS beacon, which allows other ships or land-based receivers to track a vessel's identity, speed, and course. The Department of National Defense is funding the AIS sensor design and its integration into RCM, currently estimated at \$55 million.

The five Nordic nations decided to create a joint maritime monitoring system in the NORDEFECO (Nordic Defense Cooperation) framework. A Nordic system should be established for monitoring and early warning in the Nordic sea areas (Stoltenberg, 2009, pp. 12-14). The system should in principle be civilian and be designed for tasks such as monitoring the marine environment and pollution and monitoring of civilian traffic. The existing military surveillance systems are not particularly designed to carry out these tasks. Nevertheless, the military systems collect a great deal of information that is relevant for civilian maritime monitoring, and an overall Nordic system will therefore only be truly effective if it is coordinated with and can exchange data with military systems. Once a Nordic maritime monitoring system is in place, a Nordic maritime response force should be established, consisting of elements from the Nordic countries' coast guards and rescue services. It should patrol regularly in the Nordic seas, and one of its main responsibilities should be SAR operations (Stoltenberg, 2009, pp. 15-16).

By 2020, a Nordic polar orbit satellite system (with no less than three satellites) should be established in connection with the development of a Nordic maritime monitoring system. Such a satellite system could provide frequently updated real-time images of the situation at sea, which is essential for effective maritime monitoring and crisis management (Stoltenberg, 2009, pp. 17-18).

As for Russia, this country believes that by improving NSR infrastructure and safety, this maritime route will be attractive not only for Russian business but also for foreign shipping companies. The construction of 10 search and rescue centers along the NSR by 2018 (with three SAR centers already operational) will be helpful in promoting this route internationally. And as the Yamal LNG (liquefied natural gas) plant which has become operational in 2017, LNG shipments from Sabetta to East Asia, Europe, and North America were facilitated.

It should be also noted that Russia's modernized military infrastructure in the Arctic, including the Soviet air and naval bases which have been reopened over the last years, is of dual-use nature. Such an infrastructure can be used not only for military but also for civilian purposes, including SAR operations.

In general, all the power structures of the Arctic nations (army, navy, border and coast guards, and agencies dealing with emergency situations) are charged with implementing the AC agreement of 2011 on the creation of a Maritime and Aeronautical Sea and Rescue System. Each country is responsible for its sector of the Arctic and Russia has the biggest one. The SAR agreement's signatories undertake joint exercises on the regular basis. As many experts believe, the SAR activities are a clear sign of the shift from the armed forces' purely military functions to the soft security missions.

Arctic research has become one of the important missions of the military as well. For example, the Russian Navy was very helpful in preparing Moscow's second submission to the UNCLCS in 2015. The Russian Navy sent several expeditions to Franz Josef Land, Severnaya Zemlya, the Novosibirsk Islands archipelago, and Wrangel Island over the last decade. For example, the objective of the Russian Navy's mission within the framework of the expedition Arktika-2012 was to prove that its landmass extends to the North Pole by drilling into the sea floor (2.5-3.0 km depth) to collect rock samples for scientific analysis. In September 2012, the Kalitka, a Losharik class nuclear-powered auxiliary submarine, was used to guide the Kapitan Dranitsyn and Dickson icebreakers in drilling three boreholes at two different sites on the Mendeleev Ridge, collecting over 500 kg of rock samples (Mikhailov & Voloshin, 2012).

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The Navy has also shared the bathymetric data with civilian scholars to substantiate the Russian submission to the UNCLCS.

The declassified bathymetric soundings acquired by U.S. Navy submarines from cruises between 1993-2005 helped in creating an International Bathymetric Chart of the Arctic Ocean (Jakobsson, Mayer, & Coakley, 2012, p. 3). This data was later used by the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland to prepare the 2014 Danish submission to the UNCLCS because Copenhagen lacked technical capabilities of its own to make bathymetrical research for these purposes.

The military power carries out some symbolic functions for the Arctic nations. For example, for the five Nordic countries, the above mentioned NORDEF project symbolizes their Nordic solidarity. To demonstrate such solidarity these countries decided to take the responsibility for air surveillance and patrolling over Iceland after the U.S. withdrawal from Keflavik airbase in 2006.

Thorvald Stoltenberg even suggested that the Nordic governments should issue a mutual declaration of solidarity in which they commit themselves to clarifying how they would respond if a Nordic country were subject to external attack or undue pressure. In other words, such a declaration should contain a security policy guarantee (Stoltenberg, 2009, p. 34). This initiative, however, was not supported by non-NATO and non-aligned Nordic countries, such as Finland and Sweden which did not want to put themselves in an awkward position between NATO and Russia.

For Sweden, its armed forces and a rather developed military-industrial complex are symbols of self-sufficiency and self-reliance in security affairs, the guarantee of its non-aligned status.

For Russia, deployment of significant forces in the region and development of the military infrastructure in the High North is a demonstration of the fact that it still retains its great power status and still has world-class military capabilities.

Some nationalistic authors put forward a more spiritual view of the role of the High North in the construction of Russian identity and the pursuit of its traditional messianism. For instance, Dugin (1991) elaborates a cosmogony of the world in order to make Siberia, the last “empire of paradise” after Thule, the instrument of his geopolitical desire for a domination of the world, justified by Russia’s “cosmic destiny”. This group of theorists claims that the North is not only Russia’s strategic resource base (as stated by the Kremlin) but also its territory of the spirit, of heroism, and of overcoming, a symbolic resource of central importance for the future of the country (Laruelle, 2014, pp. 39-43). The Arctic is presented as Russia’s “last chance”, and as a possible way to take “revenge on history”. The Arctic is portrayed as rightful compensation for the hegemony lost with the disappearance of the Soviet Union.

## **SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A Cooperative Security Agenda?**

Given that the “hard” security situation in the Arctic is relatively benign, serious threats and challenges such as WMD (weapons of mass destruction) proliferation, large-scale terrorist attacks, or military conflicts are hardly probable in the region – at least in the foreseeable future.

However, it should be noted that the Arctic lacks a special arms control regime. Only two international arms control regimes have been applicable to the area. The first was a system of the US-Soviet/Russian strategic arms control and reduction agreements that regulated a number of launchers and nuclear warheads on the Russian strategic submarines based on the Kola Peninsula.

The second regime was the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, which was concluded between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in 1990 and adapted in 1999 under the aegis of the OSCE. However, the Baltic States refused to abide by the treaty because it was concluded when they were still part of the USSR. Finland and Sweden have also refused to sign the treaty referring to their neutral (now non-aligned) status. In addition, none of the Western signatories of the 1999 Adaptation Treaty ratified it. As a result, Russia suspended its participation in the treaty in 2007.

However, Russia hopes that the CFE process can be reanimated in the foreseeable future. Drawing lessons from past negative experiences, Russia believes that there are two preconditions for resumption and successful continuation of the CFE process. Firstly, a new treaty should be fully ratified by all signatories. Secondly, all countries of the Arctic region should partake in this arms control regime.

It should also be noted that the CFE treaty was applicable only to land forces. Naval armaments were (and are) mainly excluded from any arms control regime. Unilateral measures were taken by some countries (including Russia) in the 1990s for the reduction of naval armaments and naval activities, but they related only to obsolete weapons and cannot be a substitute for a real arms control regime. According to some assessments, the basic hesitancy of the EU and NATO nations regarding naval armament limitations in the High North seems to be that if you initiate naval arms control in one of the seas within their zone of responsibility, this could also lead to restrictions on maritime flexibility in other seas as well. However, these parties should initiate negotiations on naval arms control if they are serious about further improvement of the security environment in the region.

It should be noted, with concern, that the Arctic region currently has no confidence and security-building measures regime; this gap should be filled with great urgency because CSBMs development is a very important element of any regional security system. The regional CSBMs could be based primarily on the 1994 OSCE Vienna Document, which proved to be efficient in Europe. In addition, the following measures could be suggested:

- Given the specifics of the region, CSBMs should cover not only land but also naval military activities.
- Along with spatial limitations, temporal limitations on Russian, NATO, and EU military activities in the region could also be established.
- Military-to-military contacts, joint exercises, exchanges, and visits should be further encouraged. Since the eruption of the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, however, Russian representatives have no longer been invited to the meetings of the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable. Joint military exercises such as Northern Eagle – an operation involving US, Russian, and Norwegian forces – have been canceled. Cooperation in military affairs has been disrupted almost entirely.
- The countries of the region should intensify exchange information on their military doctrines, defense budgets as well as on major arms export/import programs.
- Not only regional but also bilateral CSBMs should be further encouraged.
- The establishment of a limited nuclear weapon-free zone in the Arctic (say, in Central Arctic) could be discussed. For example, Russia and the USA could consider Canada's initiative to ban nuclear weapons in the region. Russia has been positive about such ideas in the past (Russia raised a similar idea under Mikhail Gorbachev) but has questions about the geographical scope of such a zone. Russia supports making the Arctic a nuclear weapon-free zone, provided this would not affect the Kola Peninsula, which is a home to two-thirds of Russia's strategic nuclear submarines.

## **Arctic Regional Security**

Moscow also considers the field of civil protection as a promising venue for the Arctic regional cooperation. For example, according to the EU-Russia 2005 roadmap to the Common Space on External Security, one of the strategic objectives of Brussels-Moscow cooperation is to strengthen EU-Russia dialogue on promoting common ability to respond to disasters and emergencies, specifically including crisis management situations (Commission of the European Communities, 2005). The positive experience accumulated in this area could be replicated to the Arctic regional cooperation. The priority areas for such cooperation could be as follows:

- Strengthening coordination of the Arctic states' agencies responsible for civil protection. This requires hard work in terms of implementing the existing arrangements between the Operations Centre of Russia's EMERCOM (Ministry for Emergency Situations) and its foreign counterparts. More specifically, this means exchanging contact details for keeping in touch on a 24-h basis; exchanging templates for early warnings and requests/offers for assistance; exchanging information during an emergency, where appropriate; conducting communications exercises on an agreed basis; and enabling operation staff to spend time at the operational center of the other partner's service in order to gain practical experience.
- Exchanging information on lessons learned from terrorist attacks.
- Inviting experts, on a case-by-case basis, to specific technical workshops and symposia on civil protection issues.
- Inviting observers, on a case-by-case basis, to specific exercises organized by the partner countries.
- Facilitating mutual assistance in search and rescue operations for submarines, ships, and aircraft in emergency situations.

Hopefully, a steady implementation of this rather ambitious agenda could substantially change the security environment in the Arctic region in a positive way.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

The implications of global climate change for the Arctic security system should be further explored. Particularly, it is unclear whether the growing accessibility of the Arctic national resources and maritime routes will be conducive to further international cooperation in the region or inspire competition between the regional and non-regional powers?

It is also unclear whether the Arctic states undergoing military modernization will limit themselves to the reasonable sufficiency principle or they can slide to the new round of arms race in the region? The U.S. plans to deploy the elements of a sea-based ballistic missile defense system to the Arctic seas (if the polar ice cap retreat continues) are of particular concern.

The priorities for a future cooperative agenda should be better identified. Should the Arctic players focus on climate change mitigation and environmental issues or should they be concentrated on the development of transport infrastructure and extractive industries – these issues are still open to discussion.

## CONCLUSION

The general security situation in the High North is gradually changing in a positive direction. To a greater extent, it depends on the radical changes in the nature and roles of military power in the region which took place over the last quarter of the century. In contrast with the Cold War era, when it was a coercive instrument in a global military confrontation between two superpowers and capitalist and socialist systems, now military power has principally new functions.

First and foremost, its mission is to ascertain coastal states' sovereignty over their EEZs and continental shelves in the region, including disputable areas. Although the probability of an armed conflict between Arctic and non-Arctic players because of maritime disputes is not very high, the military power is still viewed as a proper tool to prevent such disputes' escalation to a dangerous phase.

Protection of the Arctic countries' economic interests in the North, including mineral and bio-resources, fighting smuggling and poaching, is also seen as another important mission of the armed forces.

Recently, illegal migration became one more security challenge for the Arctic states which can be effectively met with the help of not only police but also border and coast guards.

Moreover, the present-day military structures should be prepared for preventing potential terrorist attacks against critical industrial and infrastructural objects, including oil and platforms, nuclear plants and nuclear waste storages.

The military should be also ready to fulfill some dual-use functions, such as SAR operations, monitoring air and maritime spaces, providing navigation safety, mitigating natural and man-made catastrophes, etc.

Interestingly, Arctic research has become one of the important missions of the military because the Arctic states' air forces and navies have unique technical capabilities for doing this.

Finally, the military carry some symbolic functions. For example, in the case of the Nordic countries, military power can symbolize their Nordic solidarity (NORDEFECO project). For Sweden, its armed forces and a rather developed military-industrial complex are symbols of self-sufficiency and self-reliance in security affairs, the guarantee of its non-aligned status. For Russia, deployment of significant forces in the region and development of the military infrastructure in the High North is a demonstration of the fact that it retains its great power status and still has world-class military capabilities.

The changing nature of military power entails its new uses and roles which should be reflected in military/security doctrines and taken into account by the expert/academic community. In general, these changes are conducive to the regional cooperation between the military, especially in areas, such as SAR, emergency situations, air and maritime safety, charting safe maritime routes, cartography, etc.

In their foreign policy, the Arctic states clearly demonstrate that they have a preference for soft power instruments (diplomatic, economic, and cultural) in the Far Northern theatre, as well as activity and discourse via multilateral institutions. They develop quite pragmatic international strategies which aim at using the Arctic cooperative programs and regional institutions for solving their specific problems rather than addressing some abstract challenges. The regional players are quite clear about their intentions saying that they do not want to be revisionist powers or troublemakers in the Arctic.

The Arctic states believe that the regional cooperative agenda could include the following areas: climate change mitigation, environmental protection, emergency situations, air and maritime safety (including the Polar Code implementation, charting safe maritime routes and cartography), search and rescue operations, Arctic research, indigenous peoples, cross- and trans-border cooperative projects, culture, etc.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was supported by the Research Council of Norway (grant number 257638), Norwegian Institute of International Affairs GPARC project (17/2200), and the Russian Science Foundation (grant number 16-18-10315).

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## **KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**Arms Control:** The international restrictions upon the development, production, stockpiling, proliferation and usage of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Arms control is typically exercised through international treaties and agreements, although it may also comprise unilaterally imposed restrictions and efforts by a nation or group of nations to enforce limitations upon a non-consenting country.

**Confidence and Security-Building Measures:** The actions taken to reduce fear of attack by both (or more) parties in a situation of tension with or without physical conflict; measures taken to increase mutual trust between various nations.

**Hard Security:** A freedom from the military-related threats, dangers, and risks.

**NORDEFCO (Nordic Defense Cooperation):** A collaboration among the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) in the area of defense. The aim of this arrangement is to strengthen the member countries' defense capabilities by identifying areas for cooperation and to promote effective solutions. The memorandum of understanding was signed in Helsinki on November 4, 2009.

**Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone:** Defined by the United Nations as an agreement which a group of states has freely established by treaty or convention that bans the use, development, or deployment of nuclear weapons in a given area, that has mechanisms of verification and control to enforce its obligations, and that is recognized as such by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

**Security Regime:** A set of formal and informal principles, rules, and norms that regulate state behavior in the field security.

**Soft Security:** A freedom from non-military threats, challenges, and risks, such as environmental, economic, societal, information and other problems.

**Revolution in Military Affairs:** The radical change in military doctrines, strategies, tactics, and methods of warfare under the influence of new military technologies (especially modern information technology, telecommunication, space technology and high-precision weapons).

## ENDNOTE

- <sup>1</sup> The USA has signed but not ratified the UNCLOS although Washington *de facto* observes most of the Convention's rules