Vol. 7 Issue 2

Conference Proceedings: Regional Security in the North, Nuclear Risks and Possible Solutions

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies

Acknowledgement
The Åland Islands Peace Institute is grateful for the support from the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

Publisher
Åland Islands Peace Institute (ÅIPI)
http://www.peace.ax

Published at http://www.jass.ax

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies
ISSN 2489-4265

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The Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies (JASS) is a peer-reviewed, open access e-journal published by the Åland Islands Peace Institute (AIPI), Mariehamn, Åland, Finland. The journal addresses its overarching theme of peace and security from the perspectives of autonomy, demilitarisation, and minority protection. Each issue of JASS will include scholarly articles that in some way deal with the subjects mentioned above. Before being accepted, all articles have been subject to a double-blind peer-review process. JASS issues may also include other types of contributions such as research notes, book reviews, and information on pending conferences. JASS is normally published twice a year. JASS is included in the Directory of Open Access Journals, see www.doaj.org.

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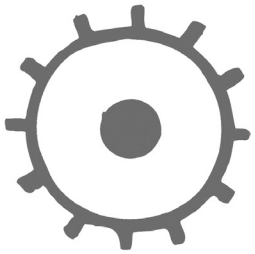

Foreword

For this Issue of Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies (JASS) we have the pleasure to have Dr Katariina Simonen as guest editor. Her solid anchoring in the international Pugwash Movement is the foundation upon which this Issue rests. JASS is grateful for the cooperation and we look forward to contributions from the Pugwash Movement in coming Issues as well.

Kjell-Åke Nordquist
Editor-in-Chief

Introduction

Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and the Åland Islands Peace Institute organized in January 2023 consultations on regional security in the north from the Baltic Sea region to the Arctic. Pugwash Conferences is a network of high-level scientists and policy-makers, established in 1957 by eminent scientists such as Albert Einstein and Joseph Rotblat, which promotes a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Pugwash's long-standing tradition of "dialogue across divides", that also earned it the Nobel Peace Price in 1995, aims to develop and support the use of scientific, evidence-based policymaking focusing on areas where nuclear and WMD risks are present. By facilitating track 1.5 and track II dialogues, Pugwash fosters creative discussions on ways to increase the security of all sides and promote policy development that is cooperative and forward-looking.

These January consultations were deemed timely by Pugwash, due to the strongly deteriorated security environment between the west and Russia. The signs of such deterioration were already perceptible since the early 2000s in the field of arms control, when arms control and disarmament treaties fell like dominoes. Such developments were coupled with massive nuclear weapon modernization programs by all nuclear weapon states. Even more, many European States, including Finland, Sweden and the Baltic States, neglected to ensure that their national arms control expertise was up to date. Priorities were elsewhere in distant wars against terrorism, crisis management, migration flows, media and think tanks echoing national priorities. Nuclear weapons were forgotten.

It goes without saying that comprehensive, high-quality situational awareness is a necessity for risk management and arms control. These January 2023 consultations were organized to help with recreating arms control expertise in our northern region. Presentations were made by different Pugwash groups and NGOs from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Russia and Sweden. Most of these are now published here as conference proceedings.

The focus of the articles follows the scheme of the original consultations, which were divided between the Baltic and the Arctic regions. Three articles discuss NATO´s post-Cold War approaches to Russia in NATO´s eastern flank countries, territorial disarmament issues from an international lawyer´s perspective, and the feminist approach to Sweden´s sudden change of mind towards NATO. The other three full articles discuss thoroughly the

Arctic, thereby developing situational awareness for risk management. In addition, there are two commentaries on concrete Baltic Sea security concerns as well as on nuclear risks, treaties and disarmament advocacy.

To end, Albert Einstein, one of the founding fathers of Pugwash, was famous for his many quotes. One of these quotes captures aptly the dire necessity to understand nuclear risks of the current era where one of the key nuclear weapon states is engaged in armed conflict: "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."

Guest editor
Katariina Simonen, LL.D.
(juris doktor) international law (Univ. of Turku), Adjunct Professor
(National Defence University), Visiting Scholar (Department of World Cultures,
Univ. of Helsinki) and Pugwash Council Member (2013-)

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The Unsettled Alliance: Risk, Fear and Solidarity in NATO

Gry Thomasen

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
7(2) 2023, pp. 82 – 99

Abstract

NATO never managed to settle how the Alliance should manage Russia post-Cold War. Consequently, the Alliance is still experiencing an internal dichotomy. This article explores the Alliance dynamics since the end of the Cold War and argues that the North-eastern flank countries' perceptions of Russia and Russian intentionality appear to be based on fear which lead them to pursue an ever-strengthened forward defence. Moreover, this is seen by the flank to be at odds with their Western allies that are willing to pursue a more cooperative approach to Russia. Risk reduction policies therefore become a potential point of contention between the allies, however also a vehicle for the North-eastern flank to boost the forward defence in the region.

Keywords

NATO, NATO-Russia, North-Eastern flank, risk reduction, deterrence, post-cold war

About the author

Dr Gry Thomasen is a Senior Policy Fellow at BASIC (British American Security Information Council) and Programme Manager of BASIC's programme on risk reduction. She holds a PhD in Cold War history from the University of Copenhagen. Prior to joining BASIC, she did her Postdoc at the Danish Institute for International Studies, was Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Cold War History Research Centre in Budapest and a Visiting Researcher at the Centre for Science and Security Studies, King's College, London. Dr Thomasen has published in Marine Policy, the International History Review and is the co-editor of The Palgrave Handbook of Non-State Actors in East-West Relations (forthcoming). Dr Thomasen's research primarily focuses on NATO-Russia relations and the Arctic.

Acknowledgements

For invaluable feedback the author thanks the anonymous peer reviewers and Marion Messmer for their insightful comments.

1. Introduction

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, NATO appears to be grasping for a joint position on NATO's role during the armed conflict in Ukraine, despite the much celebrated 'European unity' that emerged at the beginning of the Russian invasion. This article seeks to answer why NATO allies find it difficult to arrive at a joint position.

In the article, I explore the alliance dynamics since the end of the Cold War and I argue that NATO has been riddled by an internal dichotomy since the first NATO enlargement in the 1990s, and that this is the starting point of the Alliance's inability to arrive at a joint position towards Russia today. Essentially, NATO never managed to solve the question of the post-Cold War settlement internally. More specifically, I show that NATO's North-eastern flank countries have a different understanding of security than their Western allies and I argue that the North-eastern flank understanding of security is a result of fear manifested in a drive to physical protection. This explains why there is a significant focus on physical security on the North-eastern flank, such as advancing forward deterrence, a drive towards a continued arms build-up on the Eastern flank, and a rejection of pursuing a risk reduction agenda towards Russia.

The article is partly based on the findings from two workshops with national experts from universities or think tanks, and government officials from both ministries of defence and foreign affairs from NATO's North-eastern flank countries, as well as a final conference with Track 1 and 2 participation from Western allies. At each workshop there were approximately 20 participants split evenly between Track 1 and 2. The workshops were held as the armed conflict in Ukraine unfolded.[1] The purpose of the workshops was to identify risk reduction measures, including the potential of de-escalation, and the future relationship between Russia and NATO.

The article falls in three sections: I first introduce the concept of fear. This is followed by an analysis of the evolution of the Alliance dichotomy; I then proceed to an analysis of the findings from the workshops. The article ends with concluding remarks.

2. Fear

What can explain this markedly different perception among the North-eastern flank countries of deterrence, risk reduction, and how to manage the relationship with Russia? Clearly the historic experience the flank has had with the Soviet Union or even Imperial

1 The project "Applying a Systematic Approach to NATO-Russia Risk Reduction" was undertaken in the period September 2021 to October 2022. There was a total of six workshops, of which participants from the North-eastern flank took part in three. For all publications from the project see https://basicint.org/portfolio/risk-reduction .

Russia is one reason that may explain their understanding of Russian intentionality, however, geopolitics and analogical reasoning influence most states' perceptions and policies. Instead, I argue that on the North-eastern flank fear is part of the equation. But what is fear?

Fear is usually in realist thought defined as a defensive reaction that creates an urgent desire to physically protect the state from the perceived threat and danger. States' self-protection can be pursued through aggression or restraint, but when fear is the starting point urging states to self-protect, states usually turn to restraint rather than aggression. Yet, at times when circumstances are not allowing states to act in restraint, fear can result in an aggressive reaction towards the perceived danger in order to self-protect. The end goal of self-protection sets defensive aggression apart from offensive aggression; mostly states turn to fear-based offensive aggression to reach specific political goals, such as territorial expansion. Fear can have many root causes, such as being on the brink of nuclear war.[2]

Two premises have to be met for fear to exist in this school of thought – capabilities and security. This means that for fear to emerge in a state, the opposing state must first be perceived to have the necessary capabilities to attack and the will to use these, and second, states must be concerned about their own security which provides the incentives to defend themselves against the perceived threats.[3] In this conception, fear is understood to be concerned with the physical security of the state – the state's survival.

Fear however can also be seen to be an effect of anxiety, and not necessarily a response to a physical threat or danger. Most notably and inspired by existentialist thought, Rumelili takes the concept of anxiety to international relations (IR) and argues that 'anxiety is constitutive of the pervasive fear of other states in IR because the power competition in the state of nature can be ultimately traced to the human desire to know and shape the – ultimately unknowable – future. Consequently, the effects of anxiety are manifest as the effects of fear.'[4]

As such, fear is an effect of anxiety because fear, unlike anxiety, has an object which can both be managed and countered often through securitisation, and crucially anxiety is a constitutive 'background condition of the egoistic power struggle that makes up the state of nature'.[5] In her reading of Hobbes, Rumelili also establishes that the desire for power

2 Arash Heydarian Pashakhanlou, 'Realism and Fear in International Relations', in Realism and Fear in International Relations: Morgenthau, Waltz and Mearsheimer Reconsidered, ed. Arash Heydarian Pashakhanlou (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 1–21, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-41012-8_1.

3 Ibid.

4 Bahar Rumelili, '[Our] Age of Anxiety: Existentialism and the Current State of International Relations', Journal of International Relations and Development 24, no. 4 (1 December 2021): 1020–36, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-021-00226-y.

5 Bahar Rumelili, 'Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory: Hobbes, Existentialism, and Ontological Security', International Theory 12, no. 2 (July 2020): 257–72, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971920000093

emanates from anxiety about the future 'because the future can only be known to those that have the power to shape the future'. This means in turn that there will be a never-ending race for more power, because there will never be certainty around how much power is necessary to uphold existence, and crucially, this leads to fear of others that are engaged in same pursuit of power.

Uncertainty is therefore an important denominator for anxiety, and uncertainty about the future or in the state of nature is amplified, according to Rumelili, by the lack of a shared understanding and moral standards.[6]

The tendency of states to contain anxiety through fears (by adding an object) shows how ontological security produces concerns about physical security through the 'attribution of threat and danger'. Rumelili argues further that ontological security concerns can override physical concerns, indeed in this sense, 'it also becomes possible to conceive the relentless pursuit of absolute physical security in the face of ever-present threats as a response to anxiety, rather than the independent primal motive. This is how ontological security concerns override physical ones in contexts such as protracted conflicts.'[7]

However, since fear is but one outlet for anxiety, anxiety can also manifest itself in the pursuit of, for instance, cooperation, status, and peace building.

3. The evolution of alliance dichotomy

When applying Rumelili's premise that anxiety is a constitutive element of IR to the history of the North-eastern flank countries and NATO, anxiety is arguably manifested periodically as a fear-based quest for securitisation on the Eastern flank. At the same time, this is not necessarily shared by their Western allies, suggesting that these allies after the end of the Cold War were ontological secure actors that unlike the former Warsaw Pact members chose a different approach to the new Russian Federation. This internal dichotomy in the approach to Russia highlights a lack of shared understanding of the international in the Alliance. Crucially this, according to Rumelili, amplifies the uncertainty amongst the North-eastern flank.

3.1 The 1990s and 2000s

When looking closer at the developments in the 1990s and 2000s when Poland and the Baltic countries became members of NATO (and the EU), the dichotomy between an Eastern and Western approach to security and Russia is clear and reflects how one actor (the West[8])

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 The West is understood to be the founding members of NATO, led by the United States.

displays signs of an ontological secure actor, in contrast to the North-eastern flank. Thus, while the Western members of the Alliance attempted to establish a closer NATO-Russian relationship whilst moving the Alliance 'out of treaty area', Eastern Europe attempted to escape the new Russian Federation by improving their territorial defences and embedding their political future and security in the West.[9]

Notwithstanding the entrepreneurship of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in enabling the West to embark upon the enlargement process in the early 1990s, a decision to enlarge the Alliance took place in Washington as early as the Bush administration (1989-1993) in connection with German reunification. Although President Bush lost the elections to Bill Clinton in 1993, the political calculation to enlarge had developed in Washington as the Soviet Union formally broke down.[10] Already as the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union began crumbling, Washington was fearful that their European allies in NATO would take matters into their own hands and carve out a distinctive European security organisation in the European Community (EC) or revive the Western Union (WEU) as the primary organisation handling security on the continent. In this scheme it was evident that the US would play a limited and insignificant role in the long term. The problem with that was that the US would not be able to hedge against a possible resurgent Russia, because a European security structure would undermine NATO as well as the US position in Europe. The WEU's decision to invite CEE to its ministerial meeting in Bonn in 1992 probably caused a certain unease in Washington.[11] Consequently, or so the argument went in Washington, NATO had to expand eastwards to secure the US position in Europe.[12]

9 There is limited commonality of the Polish accession and the three Baltic states accession.

10 Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson, 'Eastbound and down: The United States, NATO Enlargement, and Suppressing the Soviet and Western European Alternatives, 1990–1992', Journal of Strategic Studies 43, no. 6–7 (9 November 2020): 816–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1737931; M. E. Sarotte, 'How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993–95', International Security 44, no. 1 (2019): 7–41, https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00353.

11 It is not a new phenomenon in transatlantic relations that the US reacts out of fear of losing its position as a European power. See Gry Thomasen, 'Lyndon B. Johnson and the Building of East-West Bridges', in The Long Détente, Changing Concepts of Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1950s–1980s (Central European University Press, 2017), 255–80; Gry Thomasen, Between Involvement and Detachment: The Johnson Administration's Perception of France, West Germany, and NATO, 1963-1969., Unpublished PhD dissertation (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University, 2013); Vojtech Mastny, 'Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership: Ending the Cold War in Europe', Cold War History 9, no. 2 (May 2009): 203–21, https://doi.org/10.1080/14682740802170834.

12 In addition, the administration was driven by an imperative of expanding the global economy for US prosperity, and in this sense a peaceful and stable Europe was indispensable for further economic globalisation as was the openness of the European economy. In this sense NATO and NATO enlargement became instrumental for the US's economic ambitions as well. Shifrinson, 'Eastbound and Down'; Liviu Horovitz and Elias Götz, 'The Overlooked Importance of Economics: Why the Bush Administration Wanted NATO Enlargement', Journal of Strategic Studies 43, no. 6–7 (9 November 2020): 847–68, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1819799; Sarotte, 'How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993–95'; Mastny, 'Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership'.

This is not to deny that the CEE played an important part in bringing on NATO's enlargement, however recognising that the enlargement was part of a bigger ploy of the United States to maintain and secure its position as a European power as the Cold War ended is important when discussing the enlargement.[13] This means that when the CEE joined NATO it was as much about enrolling these new countries into a US conception of security (and US global economic aims), and crucially into a European order that featured the United States in a prominent position. In fact, the Bush administration mused that the CEE would be useful allies as Western Europe were reluctant to host US forces and bases, and were not feeling the same acute need for security as the CEE allegedly would, which would make CEE fundamentally more supportive of the US in alliance matters and thus reduce the influence of sceptical Western European security partners.[14]

Despite the importance Washington attached to their ability to hedge against a possible resurgence of Russia, the US slowly contemplated how the relationship with the new Russian Federation should be. Arguably, as the Bush administration and later the Clinton administration (1993-2001) witnessed the Soviet Union disintegrating and new states emerging, perceptions of the new Russian Federation were of course not entirely detached from its Soviet legacy – especially not as the Soviet Union cracked down on moves towards independence in Latvia and Lithuania in January 1991. However, early on in the immediate post-Cold War era, the US administration realised that embarking upon a policy that would isolate Russia from European matters was a no go. Rather, creating a shared understanding of security in Europe became the prerogative of especially the Clinton administration, but also the George W Bush administration (2001-2009). This is underscored by their somewhat close relationships with Yeltsin (1991-1999) and later Putin I (2000-2008) that arguably aimed at creating a shared understanding of security in Europe.

Thus, the establishment of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and the so-called Partnership for Peace programme (PfP) in 1994 although reflecting a cautious approach to Russia, both and especially the PfP offered an opportunity of 'practical bilateral cooperation' for Eurasia, including Russia. [15] As the then US secretary of defence allegedly put it, the main accomplishment of the PfP was to 'put NATO enlargement in the end, rather than the beginning of a process'.[16] The PfP, however, did not rule out eventual

13 On the CEE role in orchestrating the enlargement see Maria Malksöo, The Politics of Becoming European: A Study of Polish and Baltic Post-Cold War Security Imaginaries, The New International Relations (London ; New York: Routledge, 2010); Maria Malksöo, 'Enabling NATO Enlargement: Changing Constructions of the Baltic States', Tames 3, no. 8(58/53) (2004): 284–98.

14 Horovitz and Götz, 'The Overlooked Importance of Economics: Why the Bush Administration Wanted NATO Enlargement'. Indeed, a range of Western European NATO members had set conditions for joining, ultimately restricting US room of manoeuvre on their territories. See Sarotte, 'How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993–95'.

15 See NATO, The Partnership for Peace Programme.

16 Sarotte, 'How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993–95'.

Russian membership of NATO. Further, in the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement, NATO declared that:

> A stronger NATO-Russia relationship should form anther cornerstone of a new, inclusive and comprehensive security structure in Europe. NATO-Russia cooperation can help overcome any lingering distrust from the Cold War period, and help ensure that Europe is never again divided into opposing camps.[17]

This was followed in 1997 with the so-called 'Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security' between NATO and the Russian Federation. With the Founding Act they both declared an end to the adversarial relationship and established the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council to hold regular consultations and develop joint initiatives, essentially opening for future joint operations under the UN Security Council or the OSCE. On top of that, the Act also established a mechanism for closer military-to-military liaison by establishing military missions on both sides.[18] The Founding Act was followed by the 2002 Rome summit that declared a new 'qualitative' relationship and established the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) that 'was established as a mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision making and joint action'.[19]

These developments can be seen as evidence of an Alliance feeling ontologically safe, in particular after Washington secured its position as a European power when deciding to expand NATO membership to former Warsaw Pact countries. In the first decade of the post-Cold War era, creating a shared understanding of security in Europe with Russia arguably became an outlet for the still present anxieties surrounding the new Russian Federation.

3.2 North-eastern flank accessions

Thus, when Poland joined NATO in 1999, NATO had already moved the Alliance closer into a cooperative relationship with the Russia, and arguably Polish perceptions of Russia and the Russian threat were at odds with NATO.

17 NATO, 'Study on NATO Enlargement' (NATO, 1995) para 26.

18 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France, 1997. See sections II Mechanism for Consultation and Cooperation, the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council and IV Political-Military Matters especially, see https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm

19 Statement: Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at the level of Ministers of Defence NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 1 December 2003. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_20277.htm?selectedLocale=en last accessed 28 October 2021; Chairman's Statement. 2 April 2004 https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_21032.htm?selectedLocale=en last accessed 28 October 2021; NATO-Russia Council https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50091.htm

The Polish accession, driven by a strategy to embed Poland and its defence in the collective West through NATO and EU membership, was based on an existential concern with territorial integrity and a sense of geostrategic vulnerability sparked by uncertainty around the new Russian Federation's intentionality. This sense of vulnerability and uncertainty about the future was arguably more acute in Poland than elsewhere within the CEE area, as Poland's unique experience of partition underscored this concern for territorial integrity. The fact that Imperial Russia was part of all three partitions probably exacerbated the Polish sense of vulnerability, and it is hardly surprising that when the attempted 1991 coup against President Mikhail Gorbachev appeared to succeed, Poland prepared to mobilize its army.[20]

The Polish existential concerns were something the US State Department was acutely aware of. Already in 1992 a State Department official assessed that a unified Germany would no longer host '95% of our military presence in Europe' and that the old Soviet facilities in Poland would be a bargain investment, and a US brigade of military personnel would be treated as 'local heroes'.[21]

In addition, the Polish quest to embed itself into the Western architecture was evident immediately after the end of the Cold War. Unlike the rest of the former Warsaw Pact countries, Poles did not favour neutrality, and the Polish president Lech Wałęsa (1990-1995) proposed NATO II (and EU-2) that envisaged CEE's quick admission into NATO in 1992.[22] Likely, the sense of territorial vulnerability and uncertainty around Russian intentionality and the future led Poland to undertake heavy investments in its national defence capabilities (also to court NATO), which after NATO membership resulted in Poland reaching NATO's 2% target early.[23] Today Poland is well beyond the 2% target. That capabilities and improved territorial defences are crucial to Poland is highlighted by that since entering NATO in 1999 Poland have worked to move NATO towards territorial defence and promoting the principle of indivisibly of security. Arguably this continued focus on capabilities reflects a fear-based urge to self-protect via a continued bolstering of the forward defences on the Eastern flank.

And the State Department official was right, Poland considers the US the most important ally for a credible deterrence and defence posture. As such, Warsaw developed its foreign and defence policies around the US in a near unconditional support for Washington's

20 Mastny, 'Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership, p 213'; see also Andrew A. Michta, Poland, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198790501.003.0007; Gry Thomasen, Applying a Systematic Approach to NATO-Russia Risk Reduction: Perspectives from the North East Flank (London, United Kingdom: BASIC, 2022).

21 Quote from Sarotte, 'How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993–95'.

22 Mastny, 'Eastern Europe and the Early Prospects for EC/EU and NATO Membership'.

23 Mathilde Stronell, 'Poland Unveils Record 2023 Defence Budget', Janes, 1 September 2022, https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/poland-unveils-record-2023-defence-budget.

policies and did indeed invite stronger US presence into the region, including invitations to place launchers for NATO's missile shield in Poland. The importance of the US and US presence cannot be underestimated. As one Polish government official recalled at one of our workshops:

> In 2012 when the first US soldiers were arriving in Poland for their rotational … attachment, and that was less than 30 US soldiers arriving in Poland, we greeted them with a ceremony that lasted three hours, and with I believe over 300 of our soldiers, four generals and a few ministers being there.[24]

A similar sense of territorial vulnerability and uncertainty of the new Russian Federation's intentionality immersed the three Baltic countries following the breakdown of the Soviet Union. The Baltic countries are of course three different countries, but they share some similarities in foreign and defence policy. Their newly reclaimed statehood, near vicinity to the Russian Federation, and a complete lack of domestic defence capabilities led to a magnified preoccupation with territorial defence, for instance the so-called 'indefensibility' of the region became an important part of the negotiations for NATO accession in the early 2000s. It is therefore not surprising that all three Baltic countries embarked upon a process of modernising and rebuilding domestic defence and that territorial defence was prominently featured in the subsequent defence policies and doctrines.[25]

However, the defensibility of the region coupled with their status as former Soviet republics was as much as problem for the Baltic states as it was for NATO. This reflects how NATO's mission to create a shared understanding with Russia collided with the Baltic states' drive to improve their defences in the wake of uncertainty around Russia.

According to Malksöo, the Baltic countries were creating rather than solving the geopolitical problems NATO was facing after the Cold War. Having a 'constructive' relationship and creating a shared understanding of security in Europe with Russia was as mentioned above of prime importance to NATO, and admitting the Baltic countries into the Alliance was seen as alienating Russia and jeopardizing the relationship that the Alliance wanted to build with Russia as outlined in the 1995 Study. Allowing Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia into the Alliance would confirm Russian suspicions that NATO was in fact an aggressive body, and by admitting that NATO would not allow the Baltic countries into the Alliance out of fear of Russia would 'have ultimately amounted to admitting that Russia's

24 Polish government official 1, September 2021.

25 Masha Hedberg and Andres Kasekamp, Baltic States, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198790501.003.0012; Thomasen, Applying a Systematic Approach to NATO-Russia Risk Reduction: Perspectives from the North East Flank; Andres Kasekamp and Viljar Veebel, 'The Baltic States and ESDP', in The North and ESDP: The Baltic States, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, European Foreign and Security Policy 7 (Gütersloh, 2007).

fear of NATO's expanding to the region were justified – that NATO really harboured aggressive imperialist anti-Russian intentions.'[26] The solution to the puzzle was to reinforce the cooperative sentiments towards Russia by formulating the CEE enlargement less in terms of defence against Russia than as an anchor of stability in Europe, and crucially to build a new Europe with Russia and not against or without it.[27]

Like Poland, the Baltic countries attach significant importance to the US and US presence in the region. As one Estonian expert explained Estonia's relationship with the US at one of our workshops:

> Estonian foreign policy [is] built around defence policy which is built around full support from the United States. So, whatever happens, Estonia is always happy to choose the position of the US, and especially when it's different from the Russian position. And it does not matter if we go to conflict with you about new security initiatives, or if it has some concerns about international law.[28]

3.3 The North-Eastern flank's NATO policies

Seen in this light, it is hardly surprising that Poland and the Baltic states since their entry into NATO have worked at moving NATO towards territorial defence and significant presence of NATO, in particular a stronger US presence along the North-eastern flank. However, it was not until the 2016 Warsaw summit that they managed to significantly move the Alliance towards a greater presence along the flank, which in turn reveals how fundamental the post-Cold War cooperative approach, that is, creating a shared understanding with Russia, was in the Alliance.

Indeed, while NATO and Russia did not manage to institutionally bind together following the US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 or the Russian-Georgian war in 2008 amongst other things, NATO continued to pledge a cooperative approach towards Russia in its 2010 NATO Strategic Concept.[29] This continued to leave the North-eastern flank without, in their perception, sufficient territorial defence. Only at the 2014 Wales Summit did the North-eastern flank succeed when NATO committed to territorial defence with the establishment of amongst others, The Very High Readiness Joint Task Force.[30] The Russian invasion and illegal occupation of Crimea in 2014, however, strongly

26 Malksöo, 'Enabling NATO Enlargement: Changing Constructions of the Baltic States'.
27 Ibid.
28 Estonian expert 2 September 2021. Similar statements were made by Lithuanian government official 2 September 2021; Lithuanian expert 2 September 2021; Latvian government official 2 September 2021.
29 NATO: Active Engagement, Modern Defence, 2010, November 2010; Andrej Krickovic, 'When Ties Do Not Bind: The Failure of Institutional Binding in NATO Russia Relations', Contemporary Security Policy 37, no. 2 (3 May 2016): 175–99, https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2016.1198077.
30 Wales Summit Declaration 5 September 2014; Wales Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond, 5 September 2014; NATO: NATO's Readiness Action Plan, October 2015.

condemned by NATO, also terminated cooperation with Russia and introduced a range of sanctions. NATO remained in theory in support of a cooperative approach to Russia.[31]

The lack of adequate attention to the Eastern flank's defence needs following the Russian annexation of Crimea, led to the establishment of the so-called Bucharest 9 (B9) in November 2015 as a platform for dialogue and consultation between the members on NATO matters. Unsurprisingly, the group has continuously called for a greater military presence along the flank.[32]

Only at the 2016 Warsaw Summit, when NATO adopted the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) to strengthen NATO's presence on the Eastern flank and simultaneously declared that this was to 'unambiguously demonstrate… Allies' solidarity, determination, and ability to act by triggering an immediate allied response to any aggression', did the North-eastern flank to a large extent succeed in moving NATO towards a territorial defence and bolstered deterrence posture.[33]

The sense of being vulnerable frontline states remained in place past the 2016 Warsaw Summit and was reinforced following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In fact, the invasion has to a large extent reinforced old perceptions and is seen as proof that the North-eastern flank's immediate post-Cold War assessment of both Russian intentionality and NATO's need of a bolstered forward defence and deterrence posture is indeed correct.[34]

At the same time, the North-eastern flank countries continue to believe that within NATO there is still a cooperative sentiment in place, meaning that the flank experience a lack of shared understanding of the international between the Allies – which in turn increases uncertainty about the future and thus paves the way for fear-based polices. When consulting NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept there is indeed a co-existence of the immediate post-Cold War strategy to create a shared understanding with Russia and simultaneously a recognition of the Russian threat:

> The Russian Federation has violated the norms and principles that contributed to a stable and predictable European security order. We cannot discount the possibility of an attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

31 Wales Summit Declaration 5 September 2014.

32 As the Russian invasion has unfolded the group has become more prominent, hosting among others NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and President Zelenskiy in their meetings.

33 Para 40, Warsaw Summit Communique.

34 Robyn Dixon, 'Baltic Nations Long Warned about Russia. Now, Maybe the West Is Listening.', The Washington Post, 12 October 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/12/baltics-poland-russia-warnings-nato/; Stuart Lau, '"We Told You so!" How the West Didn't Listen to the Countries That Know Russia Best', Politico, 9 March 2022, https://www.politico.eu/article/western-europe-listen-to-the-baltic-countries-that-know-russia-best-ukraine-poland/.

Followed by:

> However, we remain willing to keep open channels of communication with Moscow to manage and mitigate risks, prevent escalation and increase transparency. We seek stability and predictability in the Euro-Atlantic area and between NATO and the Russian Federation.[35]

4. Conceptions of security

Although the Russian war against Ukraine to some extent has brought NATO members closer together, the findings from our workshops reveal that the dichotomy continues to exist in the Alliance – at least in the perception of the North-eastern flank countries.[36] It underscores that despite the alleged unity there is no shared understanding of Russia's intentionality (or Russian threat) and how the Alliance should manage the relationship with Russia between the allies. This is particularly evident when looking at how the North-eastern flank asses risk reduction, deterrence and alliance cohesion in the context of NATO-Russia relations.

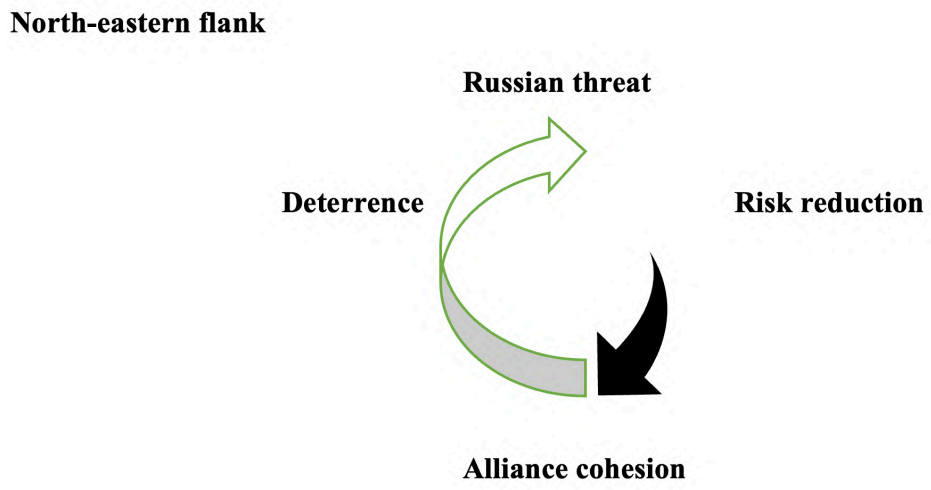


Figure 1. North-eastern flank security concept

4.1 Deterrence

The North-eastern flank countries believe that the main purpose of NATO's deterrence is to stabilise NATO's relationship with Russia, and that the risk of conflict between Russia and NATO depends on NATO's ability to strengthen and adjust its deterrence posture and

35 NATO, 'NATO 2022 Strategic Concept' (Brussels: NATO, 29 June 2022), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_210907.htm

36 Chatham House, 'Seven Ways Russia's War on Ukraine Has Changed the World', 20 February 2023, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/02/seven-ways-russias-war-ukraine-has-changed-world.

forward defence. The North-eastern flank believes that the only way to manage Russia is from a position of strength, and they make no bones about the Russian threat.[37] For example, Russia was described as a 'challenger to the system, which has the political will and intent to use force', and participants spoke about the Baltic countries being next on Russia's list.[38]

In this light, it is hardly surprising that workshop participants underscored continuously both prior to and after the invasion that there is no room for a cooperative approach to Russia. Rather, there are risks associated with 'overdoing stability with Russia', as some of their Western allies were seen to be doing when they attempted to discuss the European security architecture 'directly' with Russia. The North-eastern flank fears that the CEE's assessment of Russian intentionality is overlooked by their allies and that the risk reduction the Western allies were attempting 'may mean that we are weakening our deterrence at the same time where the Russians are doing nothing or doing kind of token or symbolic measures'.[39] After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this assessment was dramatically reinforced. A Polish government official commented in their personal capacity that:

> … deterrence must be credible, and NATO posture in that regard must be … coherent. NATO is not a place for diplomatic compromises [between West and East NATO members], like the OSCE is. NATO is not a place for constructive ambiguities.[40]

But also, and reflecting on the acute sense that their Western allies are not in agreement with the North-eastern flank's assessment of the necessity of a position of strength and ultimately, the Russian threat, a Polish expert explained:

> we [NATO] need to have a strategy on how we want to deal with Russia from the position of strength. … we need to have a really strong and credible defence and deterrence. We need to think about defence and deterrence not only about limiting the risk of conflict, being able to defend ourselves, and to respond to different scenarios, but our territory is sacrosanct.[41]

Thus, a position of strength is primarily – if not exclusively –from their perspective reached by reinforcing NATO's forward defence and deterrence posture along the Eastern

37 Lithuanian government expert 2, September 2021; also Polish government official 1, September 2021.
38 Polish government official 1, September 2021; Estonian expert 2, March 2022; Lithuanian expert 4, March 2022; Latvian expert 1 online 2021.
39 Polish expert 2, September 2021.
40 Polish government official 2, March 2022; Polish expert 1, March 2022.
41 Polish expert 4, March 2022; Lithuanian expert 1, March 2022.

flank. However, the North-eastern flank countries face two issues with this in their understanding. One is to define what a 'position of strength' is, and the other is to actually get the necessary reinforcements from their allies.

In terms of the latter, the North-eastern flank countries see alliance cohesion as the starting point of a sufficient deterrence posture, essentially making alliance cohesion a vehicle for delivering the forward defence capabilities. Alliance cohesion is understood to be a shared understanding of Russian intentionality, i.e., the Russian threat, and how the Alliance should manage this threat. The idea is that if the Western allies can be brought to a greater sense of solidarity with the North-eastern flank by getting closer to a shared understanding of Russian intentionality, the necessary capabilities will arrive. However, there is a clear perception that their current (and past) deterrence needs extend beyond what their Western allies are willing to deliver, and that the war against Ukraine has only opened a small window of opportunity for the flank to capitalise on their allies' so-called 'enthusiasm for beefing up NATO capabilities'.[42] As one Polish expert explained it:

> the support for a bigger allied presence [in the region] will not be there forever. So that's … more the reason that we should try to capitalise on this now as much as we can.[43]

This quote seems to underscore the clear perception that the regional assessment of the North-eastern flank's deterrence needs is far from shared by their Western allies, and that there is no expectation that the Alliance can in fact arrive at a shared understanding, thus increasing uncertainty about the future and the international in the region. In fact, it was questioned if the North-eastern flank's partners can be trusted 'about deterrence', which is a 'very important question' that 'we ask … daily in Brussels'.[44]

So, what is a position of strength in the North-eastern flank perception? There is no clear idea 'of an end state in terms of this posture'. Participants asked 'Do we just increase? Where do we want to get? I'm not sure that I know the answer',[45] reflecting that the North-eastern flank may very well be in a constant pursuit of physical security because, as Rumelili explains, ontological security concerns can override physical concerns, making this constant pursuit 'a response to anxiety, rather than the independent primal motive'.[46] As a Polish expert explained it when asked how NATO's deterrence and defence has to evolve with the situation in Ukraine:

42 Polish government official 2, March 2022.
43 Polish expert 1, March 2022.
44 Lithuanian government official 1, March 2022; Lithuanian expert 4, March 2022.
45 E.g. Polish expert 4, March 2022; Lithuanian expert 1, March 2022
46 Rumelili, 'Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory'.

> it is fine to have these channels of communication so that if there is some kind of accident, again intentional escalation, not accidental one is the main worry for me, so deterrence comes first … So forward defence is one. The other one in the nuclear domain, it might be very well that the modernisation programme NATO countries have right now will be completely sufficient for deterrence, but for somebody [that] comes from a frontline state I'd just say that I'd always feel better with more deterrence and more capabilities, not less.[47]

4.2 Risk reduction

Thus, the best risk reduction measure is widely believed among the participants to be a stronger deterrence posture, simply because it will stabilise the deterrence relationship between NATO and Russia.[48] This also means that NATO's engagement in different risk reduction measures towards Russia in general terms is seen as misplaced (as it reflects the cooperative approach towards Russia), or it is indeed silly to think 'risk reduction measures can be designed and can even be introduced between the nuclear weapons states at the P5 framework, also in the bilateral relations between the United States and Russia'.[49] After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the 1997 Founding Act and its principles of cooperation is seen as long gone, having no relevance 'whatsoever' on the current situation. Keeping the diplomatic channels open is more a formality 'just in case'.[50] However, risk reduction measures such as transparency, arms control and hotlines serve different purposes than actually reducing risks.

Transparency around exercises and deployments for instance is not intended to reduce any risks, mostly because it is strongly believed that Russia is not inclined to reciprocate. Instead, transparency is a means to gain the moral high ground, i.e., almost the opposite to a cooperative approach. Indeed, transparency is:

> our big asset, because that's one area where we can say that our record is consistently better than the Russian one. Of course, we won't be transparent in everything … I'm happy to have transparency about the Cold Response exercises, because that is clearly our way to say that we are different and we are better than the Russians.[51]

47 Polish expert 1, October 2022.
48 Polish expert 2, September 2021; Estonian expert 1, September 2021; Polish government official 1, September 2021; Polish expert 1, October 2022.
49 Polish expert 2, September 2021.
50 Polish government official 2, March 2022; Estonian expert 2, March 2022.
51 Polish expert 2, March 2022; Polish expert 1, October 2022.

Arms control is similarly not about reducing risks and enhancing cooperation, rather it is about enhancing the deterrence posture. As one Polish government official outlined it, the divergent views within the Alliance on arms control and 'how to use arms control in our general approach towards Russia' were causing problems internally, because the Western allies failed to see that arms control is solely a tool to enhance the deterrence and defence posture, and failed to see that there is a risk that arms control will limit NATO's posture, thus reflecting how the flank is constantly chasing an ever-stronger posture of more physical security.[52]

However, at the same time, arms control is about accommodating the Western allies to enhance alliance cohesion and thus increase the probability of their willingness to deliver the necessary reinforcements.[53] A Polish expert explained this instrumentality of arms control:

> it is very often not well understood how important it [arms control] is for keeping the NATO cohesion, that you really need to have the second track and you need to demonstrate that not only you strengthen your defence and deterrence, but you also try to de-escalate tensions and … this is our homework that we should do in our region.[54]

Much along the same lines, having some sort of communication with Russia is not about Russia-NATO relations because Russia will 'not respond', rather it is because 'some of our [Western] allies would insist'.[55] Risk reduction is thus more – if not exclusively – about accommodating the Western allies to facilitate an open-ended delivery of reinforcements.

52 Polish government official 3, March 2022; Polish government official 1, September 2021.

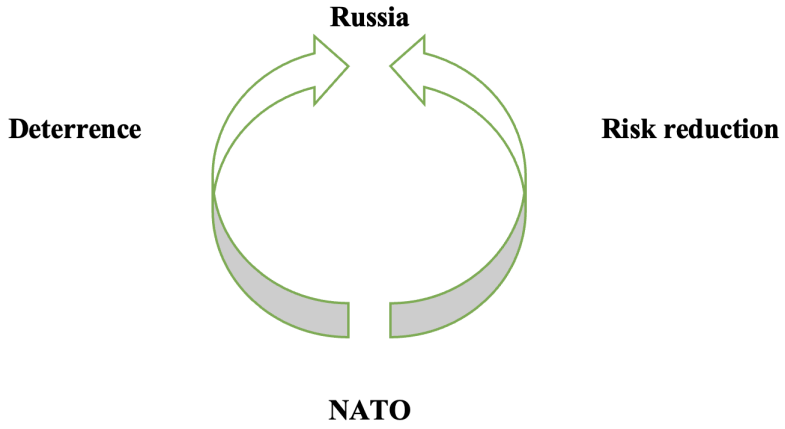
53 Lithuanian government official 1, March 2022; Polish expert 2, March 2022; Polish government official 1, March 2022; Polish government official 1, September 2021; Polish government official 2, March 2022; Lithuanian government official 1, September 2021; Lithuanian expert 2, March 2022; Polish government official 3, March 2022; Polish expert 1, September 2021; Polish government official 3, March 2022; Polish government official 1, September 2021.

54 Polish expert 2, September 2021.

55 Polish expert 2, March 2022; Polish government official 1, March 2022; Polish expert 2 September 2021; Estonian expert 1 September 2021; Polish government official 1 September 2021; Polish expert 1 at Helsinki 2022.

Figure 2

Western flank conception of security



The concerns of the North-eastern flank countries around their allies' solidarity with the region is increasing the uncertainty about the future and the international – that is, a shared understanding of the extent or nature of the threat from Russia, and therefore how the Alliance must manage Russia. For instance, there are concerns that the principle of indivisibility of security is not understood by their Western allies, and crucially a sense that the allies are not aware or willing to acquire the political understanding of the sensitivity of the North-eastern flank countries.[56] Instead, there appears to be an understanding among the North-eastern flank countries that their Western allies remain inclined to a more cooperative approach to Russia and display a willingness to employ various risk reduction measures as well as a concern that their allies may return to a more cooperative approach once the armed conflict in Ukraine is over.[57]

5. Conclusions

I have shown in this article that NATO never managed to settle how the Alliance should manage Russia in the post-Cold War era. I have also shown how an internal dichotomy that evolved from the very beginning of the era still exists in the Alliance today. The Western allies appear to behave like ontologically secure actors that embarked upon

56 Polish government official 1, September 2021; Latvian expert 1, September 2021; Estonian expert 2, March 2022, Polish expert 1, September 2021.

57 Polish government official 1, September 2021; Polish expert 1, September 2021; French expert 1, October 2022; Polish expert 1, October 2022; Latvian expert 1, October 2022.

a strategy to create a shared understanding of security in Europe with Russia through various cooperative mechanisms, such as the NRC and the Founding Act. I have shown how NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept still entailed this cooperative approach, despite the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, alongside a recognition that Russia is a threat to NATO.

In contrast, the North-eastern flank countries were and remain primarily concerned about physical security and identify Russia as a threat both prior to entering the Alliance and after. The uncertainty surrounding Russia's intentionality has resulted in a quest to secure absolute physical security both prior to alliance membership and after, and I show how their quest to secure reinforcement of the Eastern flank has been ongoing especially after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, and perhaps more importantly their inability to define when enough is enough reflects how they are caught in a pursuit of absolute physical security that appears to be response to anxiety.

Research note

On Body and Soil – The Potential of Territorial and Environmental Dimensions of Disarmament

Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
7(2) 2023, pp. 100 – 115

Abstract

If territory is part of the problem in the quest for peaceful relations, it should also be part of the solution. This is the core argument in the present text, where the work of international lawyer Louis Sohn during the Cold War and efforts towards territorial disarmament across time and space are used as starting points for the exploration of possibilities today, including in the global commons and other territories beyond the jurisdiction of individual states. I explore a range of experiences of territorial disarmament already in operation alongside the opportunities currently offered in the nexus between protection of the environment and armed conflicts. Finally, the recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework and the UN Principles on protection of the environment in armed conflict developed by the International Law Commission are looked at as opportunities for the successive protection of territories through various forms of disarmament and neutralisation.

Keywords

Disarmament, demilitarisation, neutralisation, international law, global commons, biological diversity, armed conflict

About the author

Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark is associate professor of international law and Director of the Åland Islands Peace Institute. Her work focuses on the role of international law in containing armed force as well as on the legal tools in matters of diversity and minorities.

1. Introduction - Armament and Disarmament Today

While modern technology is sometimes said to have made war fully digital, a fact that may well become true in the future, wars of today are still fought over territory, on the ground, with real bodies bleeding real blood on real soil. Wars are still fought over body and soil, even if the politics of war also include efforts of winning "body and soul". More frequent and more severe famines, as well as shortages of water, which we now see increasingly as outcomes of bad policies, climate change and violent conflict, make people more desperate and aggravate the effects and risks of war even further, thus accentuating the "body and soil" connections of war for regions and people situated also further away from the sites of climate disasters and war.

Focus within large parts of disarmament and arms control discussions and efforts of today is on arms and weapons and their manifold categories and usages, e.g. nuclear weapons, conventional weapons, chemical & biological weapons, anti-personnel mines, small arms and light weapons, illegal weapons, missiles, drones, kinetic weapons with strong effects etc.[1] A result of such mono-dimensional focus and a lack of interest in similar attention to the effects of various weapons, as well as on the need for diplomatic and trust-enhancing tools, is that rather than looking into the problems of the increase and threats posed by weapons and by militarisation overall, as well as into the solutions needed to minimize them, we end up studying and discussing mainly about weapon functionality and their respective "advantages and disadvantages", thus assuming that having more refined weapons is an adequate response. As it happens, we are confronted with a normalization of discussions on weapons, rather than focusing on the limitation or even elimination of them and on the development of other non-violent tools for the handling of the multiple threats and problems plaguing our world. Disarmament discourses risk feeding into the militarisation trend.

Furthermore, our attention both in the field of disarmament as well as in the field of arms control has been on the technical aspects of weapons. Needless to say, technical knowledge is highly important and needed, not least when deciding how weapons should be controlled, abolished and destroyed. However, it is not technical knowledge which seems to be the core problem in such efforts to limit the grip of global armed violence.[2]

1 See e.g. Casey-Maslen, Stuart (2021). Arms Control and Disarmament Law. Oxford University Press; UN Office on Disarmament Affairs https://www.un.org/disarmament/, accessed 28.02.2023.

2 The SIPRI Yearbook 2021 reports a continued increase in military spending and in the number of armed conflicts. While the global total of fatalities in war fell in 2020 below the level experienced at the height of the Syrian war, war deaths regionally have showed great variation, and in Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, they increased by about 40 per cent. SIPRI yearbook 2021: armaments, disarmament and international security (2021). Oxford University Press. In the Military Expenditure report published by Sipri in spring 2023, it was found that European military spending surged, with Finland standing for one of the sharpest increases (+36%). The report is found here: https://www.sipri.org/media/press-

If we only focus on technical knowledge, we mask the political nature of the choices involved in prioritising among societal needs and problems as well as choosing between the tools available to us when dealing with such global or local problems. This is perhaps the most drastic form of militarisation we may observe, i.e. the "militarisation of the mind".[3]

So, discussions on other aspects or elements of disarmament have been marginalised in this post-Cold-War discourse of disarmament, which focuses mainly on types and effects of weapons and their containment. Confidence building measures, the role of diplomacy and its relation to military security, democratic control of armed force, as well as forms of territorial disarmament and demilitarisation or neutralisation are other such avenues we could be contemplating as alternatives or complements to the weapons-focused mode of disarmament. In the present article I focus on territorial disarmament as one such tool in the spectrum of alternatives to militarization and armed conflict. Under all circumstances also in technical arms controls treaties enhanced attention should be directed in the future to matters of societal, economic and environmental implications and consequences.

The result of the above trends is that many technical experts as well as politicians and decision makers seem to take the abundance and spread of weapons as a natural law, and as a necessity without which we shall either be in a state of total, anarchic war or subordinated under a unilateral global government. Perceptions about the risk of anarchic war as well as the risk of unilateral global government trigger a wide range of arguments of self-defence. Those who argue in favour of investing further in weapons argue mainly along these two lines for the sake of self-defence, rather than arguing in favour of wars of aggression or imperialist ambitions.[4] The humanitarian justificatory ground seems at the moment to have fallen into disrepute, as a consequence of the failures for instance in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq, and even though president Putin tried to justify the aggression against Ukraine partly on the basis of humanitarian arguments referring to the need of protection of Russian speakers in the eastern parts of Ukraine.[5]

If we want then to avoid the risk of anarchic wide-spread war, as well as prevent unilateral global government, what do we need to do in terms of limiting arms and weapons?

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release/2023/world-military-expenditure-reaches-new-record-high-european-spending-surges (24 April 2023). The arms transfers reports indicate that the United States remains the global superpower in arms exports, having increased its share from 33% of global arms exports to 40% of global exports in the period 2018-2022, followed by Russia (16%) and France (11%). See "Trends in International Arms Transfers 2022", Fact Sheet, Sipri, March 2023 https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/2303_at_fact_sheet_2022_v2.pdf (accessed 26.06.2023).

3 On the concept of militarisation see the introductory chapter in Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Sia et al., (2018), Demilitarisation and International Law in Context, Routledge, and several chapters in Stearns, Peter N., (2013) Demilitarisation in the Contemporary World, University of Illinois Press.

4 Chinkin, Christine & Kaldor, Mary (2017). International law and new wars. Cambridge University Press, pp 129-174 on self-defence.

5 "Russia recognises independence of Ukraine separatist regions", 21.02.2022, https://www.dw.com/en/russia-recognizes-independence-of-ukraine-separatist-regions/a-60861963 (accessed 29.03.2023).

It would be hard for anyone to argue successfully that a state of total or global war is opportune. If wide-spread long-lasting war prevails then there is no global peace, in which case we are operating far beyond the framework of the vision of the UN Charter which pronounces peace and security as its paramount goals. An anarchic state of comprehensive war is of course conceivable, but in fact not very useful to states who are keen to protect their sovereignty, territorial integrity, prosperity, and markets relying on stability, and in some cases, therefore, realise that they need healthy populations to cater for all the above. The failure of efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq by western powers, but also in Chechnya and Afghanistan by the Soviet Union/Russia, shows further that also unilateral global government, global empire, is highly fragile and unattainable at least through traditional military means.

In spite of the advancements in the field of technology, wars today are still fought territorially and at least superficially for territory, on the ground, even when coupled to cyber- and communication dimensions or have emotional or domestic political reasons behind them. If territory is a reason for and immediate target of most wars, then territory must also be included in the efforts to limit the use of armed force for war. This is a core argument in the present text.

Furthermore, one clear sign of militarisation is not simply the increase of numbers and power of arms and weapons, but also the expansion of military presence in geographical areas where such presence was earlier absent. This trend continues today and shall be explored further on in this text. Inspired by the core ideas and tradition carried on the one hand by the status and the experience of the Åland Islands as a demilitarised and autonomous region, as well as through efforts until the 1970s globally and later on regionally, I explore whether a territorial approach to disarmament can be a useful complement to the weapons-oriented approaches and methods of disarmament. A territorial approach focuses on establishing a particular territory as free from all or specific kinds of weapons (demilitarisation), alternatively aiming at maintaining a particular territory outside the conduct of armed activities (neutralisation), occasionally combining these two tools.[6]

Before looking closer at these tools, I shall revisit some arguments by international lawyer and professor Louis Sohn during the Cold War in order to explore the continuity in the efforts to limit the spirals of militarisation then and now.

Thereafter, I shall turn towards efforts and experiences of limited territorial disarmament and demilitarisation. Finally, I shall explore the potential existing in the linkage of environmental protection, in particular in the field of biological diversity, with the new principles on protection of the environment in armed conflict, which both include territorial dimensions of regulation and protection.

6 Ahlström, Christer (2004), Demilitarised and Neutralised Territories in Europe, The Åland Islands Peace Institute.

2. The legacy of Louis Sohn

International lawyer Louis Sohn published some sixty years ago, in 1961, in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists a short article entitled "Disarmament and Arms Control by Territories" in which he summarised what he saw as the stumbling blocks of disarmament negotiations between the West and the Soviet Union.[7] The situation is reminiscent of today's stagnated mentalities. According to Sohn, the West envisaged then strict controls from the very beginning, while Soviet proposals envisaged limited controls at the beginning which would grow into full controls at the end of the disarmament process. It was a discussion about percentages of disarmament vs controls. What percentage of disarmament and what percentage of control.

Louis Sohn was born in Lviv in 1914, in today's Ukraine, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, later on part of Poland. He gained his basic law degree in 1939 at John Casimir University, leaving with a scholarship at Harvard University two weeks before Poland was occupied by Nazi Germany. The Second World War forced him to stay on in the United States, where he taught at university, but was also highly involved in the efforts to make the United Nations Charter a viable reality, including as counsellor to the Legal Adviser of the US Department of State during part of Richard Nixon's mandate as President of the United States, as well as in the role of US delegate to the negotiations ahead of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (finally adopted in 1982).[8] Louis Sohn was thus familiar with the importance of geopolitical considerations, while maintaining a firm confidence in the role of international law and institutions.

Sohn hoped for a compromise which would permit disarmament and degree of control to go hand in hand. According to Sohn a "compromise would permit disarmament and degree of control to go hand in hand. Each cut in armaments could be accompanied by the extension of control to a specified part of a nation's territory, proportional to the total arms reduction at each step". In other words, Sohn triangulated an issue which was until then polarised between control systems and arms reductions by bringing in territory in a most realist manner. Focus should not only be in reducing particular kinds of weapons, but successively ensuring trust in relation to increasing parts of territory on each side.

7 Sohn, Louis, "Disarmament and Arms Control by Territories", (1961) Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Vol 17, Issue 4, pp 130-133. It was followed up in his 1962 article "Zonal Disarmament and Inspection: Variations on a Theme", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol 18, Issue 7, pp. 4-10.

8 Among the vast authorship of Louis Sohn see e.g. Sohn, Louis & Noyes, John (2004). Cases and materials on the law of the sea, Transnational Publishers; Basic Documents of the United Nations (1956), Foundation Press; Rights in Conflict – The United Nations and South Africa (1994), Brill; World Peace through World Law (1960, with Clark, Grenville), Harvard University Press (a book in which disarmament holds a core position) and several journal articles on matters of arms control and disarmament.

At that time the vision was that of bilateral disarmament, US-Soviet Union, with the territory of both countries being divided following Sohn into six regions, and disarmament successively covering one region at a time. Instead of dividing each country into regions, all the territories of NATO on the one hand and of the Warsaw Pact on the other could be lumped together for the purpose of division into regions, Sohn argued. The core goal of such efforts would be to ensure that available armament was only for defensive purposes and some measure of trust could be ensured between the parties. The right to self-defence would be respected for all.

It could perhaps be argued that in some respect the 1992 Open Skies Treaty signed in Helsinki and creating a confidence building system of mutual aerial observation was a reflection of the ideas expressed by Louis Sohn thirty years earlier. However, the United States withdrew from the Open Skies treaty in November 2020, followed by Russia shortly thereafter. The important thing here is though that the focus at that time was not simply on weapons and their manifold sorts and effects, but rather on ensuring disarmament on the ground in particular locations and on enhancing mutual trust. In a somewhat similar manner, Pope Francis argued recently, more than 60 years after the arguments put forward by Louis Sohn, when addressing the diplomats accredited to the Vatican, that "there is a need to change this way of thinking [note by the author: on balance of power] and move towards an integral disarmament, since no peace is possible where instruments of death are proliferating".[9]

3. Limited territorial disarmament

A different kind of disarmament on a territorial basis, much more limited compared to the ambition of Louis Sohn's thoughts and to the League of Nations' and UN efforts for General and Complete Disarmament (GCD), is that of limited demilitarised zones. Such solutions are different from general, state-wide disarmament as a result of post-conflict settlements covering an entire state and its constitutional status.[10] But they protect what are considered to be key territorial zones where interests are complex and where trust needs to be ensured and conflict should be avoided. Furthermore, while there are specific demilitarisation treaties such as those pertaining on the Åland Islands, there are also specific provisions concerning historic straits and the right to innocent passage in international straits in the law of the sea[11]. This is a long tradition, going back to the Middle

9 Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, 09.01.2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/january/documents/20230109-corpo-diplomatico.html (accessed on 29.03.2023).

10 Cf cases discussed in Stearns, loc. cit. note 3 above.

11 Parts II and III of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982)

Ages, which continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries but is much less regarded today. Demilitarisation has been chosen as an avenue for the regulation of the following territories in the past 150 years.

Among the many examples that could be mentioned here, we can follow the historical evolution and continuity throughout the demilitarisation regime for Hüningen 1815, Spitsbergen/Svalbard 1920, Åland Islands 1856 and 1921, Corfu and Paxos 1863-1864, Aegean islands (Lemnos, Mytilene, Chios, Samos, Ikaria, Dodecanese) in 1914, 1923, 1936 and 1947, the Greek – Bulgarian border 1947, and islands and territories mentioned in the Peace Treaty with Italy after the Second World War, such as Pelagosa.[12]

As can be easily seen in the list above, demilitarisation is prevalent on islands. Earlier many other islands have been demilitarised, including Sardinia and Sicily, but also coastal areas around Europe, including the northern side of the Black Sea in agreements between the Russian and Ottoman empires in the 18th century. In addition, Corfu and Paxos had gone through the experience of the Septinsular Republic in the early 19th century, i.e. as an autonomous entity, before becoming demilitarised in the middle of the same century.[13] Here we also find a connection between autonomy and demilitarisation, as well as in several other cases of cities and limited territories such as the highly complex and tense solution of the Free City of Danzig after World War I (involving mainly Polish and German relations) and Trieste (see provisions on neutrality and demilitarisation in the Treaty of Peace with Italy, 1947).

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan proposed a demilitarisation for Cyprus as part of the comprehensive plan for the island (2002) and this was perhaps the last major (failed) effort for a conflict settlement including comprehensive demilitarisation for a (limited) territory.[14]

All the above regimes that have been in place have been security oriented, geopolitical compromises. When they have failed this has been so because of the failure of actors to stick to agreements, not because of a failure of the idea of territorial disarmament as such.

12 Ahlström, loc. Cit., note 6 above; Heraclides, Alexis. (2010). The Greek-Turkish conflict in the Aegean - Imagined enemies. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 201-208.

13 Spiliopoulou Åkermark, Sia (2019), "The Multiple Paths to Territorial Autonomy – Examples and Conceptual Underpinnings", in O. Akbulut & E. Aktoprak (red), Minority Self-Government in Europe and the Middle East, Brill, pp. 62-82.

14 Comprehensive Plan for the Settlement of the Cyprus Problem, 31.03.2004, so called "Annan Plan" named after UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Annan_Plan_MARCH_30_2004.pdf (accessed 20.03.2023).

4. The battles over the global commons

There also other kinds of territorial provisions and concepts found in agreements aimed at reducing arms and weapons. In this category we find what has been called the "global commons", where the principle of the "common heritage of mankind" applies, i.e. the Earth's resources which are beyond national jurisdiction, in particular high seas, atmosphere, the polar regions, and outer space.[15] It is therefore not surprising that that there are demilitarisation treaties and provisions covering some forms of militarisation for the following areas.

The Antarctic Treaty (adopted in 1959, in force since 1961) was the first treaty to include a general prohibition on testing of all weapons, including nuclear tests. Article I(1) provides further that Antarctica 'shall be used for peaceful purposes only', prohibiting 'inter alia, any measures of a military nature, such as the establishment of military bases and fortifications, the carrying out of military manoeuvres, as well as the testing of any type of weapons'. Article V of the treaty prohibits all nuclear explosions in Antarctica and the disposal there of radioactive waste material. However, the treaty does not prevent 'the use of military personnel or equipment for scientific research or for any other peaceful purpose', so its disarmament ambition is limited. In spite of this fact, the Antarctic Treaty was used as a source of inspiration and point of reference for later agreements, such as the Treaty on Outer Space and the Moon Agreement.[16] It was originally negotiated and signed by twelve state parties and today has nearly sixty member states.[17] In the recent Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting held in Helsinki in June 2023, emphasis was indeed put on the environmental aspects of the regime.[18]

The Outer Space Treaty was negotiated within the UN system and was opened for ratification in 1967 after having been endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 1966. According to the treaty's first operative article 'the exploration and use of outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind'. Furthermore, outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, shall be 'free for exploration and use by all States without discrimination of any kind, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law, and there shall be free access to all areas of celestial bodies'.

15 For many of the treaties and documents referred to in this section, see Disarmament Treaties Database, UN Office on Disarmament, https://treaties.unoda.org/ (accessed 29.03.2023).

16 Casey-Maslen, Stuart & Vestner, Tobias (2019). A Guide to International Disarmament Law, Routledge, p. 95.

17 See the website of the Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty, https://www.ats.aq/index_e.html

18 'Helsinki Antarctic Meeting culminates in climate declaration', Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, https://um.fi/current-affairs/article/-/asset_publisher/iYk2EknIlmNL/content/helsingin-etelamanner-kokous-huipentui-sopuun-ilmastojulistuksesta/35732 (14.06.2023).

Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty sets out in more detail the disarmament provisions of the agreement. States Parties to the Treaty undertake not to place in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner. The moon and other celestial bodies shall be used by all States Parties to the treaty exclusively for peaceful purposes. Finally, the same provision explains that 'the establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies shall be forbidden'. However, and similarly as we have seen in the previous treaty, 'the use of military personnel for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes shall not be prohibited. The use of any equipment or facility necessary for peaceful exploration of the moon and other celestial bodies shall also not be prohibited'. In fact, the prohibition of testing nuclear weapons in outer space was already in place through the so-called Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 (Treaty banning Nuclear Weapons Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water).

It took only a few years before the treaty had to be broadened as regards the moon. The Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies was endorsed by the UN General Assembly through resolution 34/68. The Moon Agreement entered into force in 1984 after a slow ratification process. Article 3 outlines the main disarmament framework established by the treaty, following the mode found in previous similar agreements (see above):

ARTICLE 3

1. The moon shall be used by all States Parties exclusively for peaceful purposes.
2. Any threat or use of force or any other hostile act or threat of hostile act on the moon is prohibited. It is likewise prohibited to use the moon in order to commit any such act or to engage in any such threat in relation to the earth, the moon, spacecraft, the personnel of spacecraft or man- made space objects.
3. States Parties shall not place in orbit around or other trajectory to or around the moon objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction or place or use such weapons on or in the moon.
4. The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on the moon shall be forbidden. The use of military personnel for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes shall not be prohibited. The use of any equipment or facility necessary for peaceful exploration and use of the moon shall also not be prohibited.

Finally, the Seabed Treaty (in full: Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Seabed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil thereof) entered into force in 1972. It provides as follows in Article I:

1. The States Parties to this Treaty undertake not to emplant or emplace on the sea-bed and the ocean floor and in the subsoil thereof beyond the outer limit of a sea-bed zone, as defined in article II, any nuclear weapons or any other types of weapons of mass destruction as well as structures, launching installations or any other facilities specifically designed for storing, testing or using such weapons.
2. The undertakings of paragraph 1 of this article shall also apply to the sea-bed zone referred to in the same paragraph, except that within such sea-bed zone, they shall not apply either to the coastal State or to the sea-bed beneath its territorial waters.
3. The States Parties to this Treaty undertake not to assist, encourage or induce any State to carry out activities referred to in paragraph 1 of this article and not to participate in any other way in such actions.

It is notable that, as far as we now have seen, the Arctic is not considered to be among the list of global commons and that the seabed treaty for instance only covers weapons of mass destruction and not any kind of weapons.

The recent treaty on the high seas confirmed the idea of global commons and common heritage of mankind and recognised the importance of contributing to the realization of a just and equitable international economic order which takes into account the interests and needs of humankind as a whole and, in particular, the special interests and needs of developing States, whether coastal or landlocked (see preamble). The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction was adopted on March 4th, 2023 after nearly twenty years of negotiations.[19] While the treaty established a global system of management and an 'access and benefit-sharing committee' it was not possible to regulate to any larger extent the effect of military activities. Namely, this agreement does not apply to any warship, military aircraft or naval auxiliary. Except for Part II in the agreement (which includes also the creation of a monitoring system), this agreement does not apply to other vessels or aircraft owned or operated by a Party and used, for the time being, only

19 The advance, unedited final text was made available by UN General Assembly here: https://www.un.org/bbnj/sites/www.un.org.bbnj/files/draft_agreement_advanced_unedited_for_posting_v1.pdf (accessed 04.03.2023).

on government non - commercial service. However, according to the same provision, each Party shall ensure, by the adoption of appropriate measures not impairing the operations or operational capabilities of such vessels or aircraft owned or operated by it, i.e. including military vessels and aircraft, that such vessels or aircraft act in a manner consistent, so far as is reasonable and practicable, with the agreement. So, the treaty does not contain any disarmament provisions, but its implementation may have consequences for the conduct of military activities in the future. At any rate, the exception itself reveals the tension existing between biological diversity maintenance and restoration efforts on the one hand and military activities in general on the other, as well as the particular difficulties in this regard in areas falling beyond national jurisdiction.

In view of the above it may therefore be seen as problematic that the latest 2022 NATO Strategic Concept envisages the expansion of military activities in areas beyond the national jurisdiction of states under the idea of "cooperative security", a concept which includes matters of civilian crisis management, countering terrorism, hybrid operations and non-military threats and challenges, including climate change.[20] The Concept, which is not legally binding but which is negotiated and carries considerable weight in the development of NATO activities, announces:

> Maintaining secure use of and unfettered access to space and cyberspace are key to effective deterrence and defence. We will enhance our ability to operate effectively in space and cyberspace to prevent, detect, counter and respond to the full spectrumof threats, using all available tools.

We see this trend already being materialised in Finnish legislation in amended legislation concerning international assistance according to which military force can be used even with no request for assistance for reasons of self-defence and also outside regions falling into the territorial jurisdiction of a state.[21] The scope of application of the Act goes now far beyond situations of collective self-defence and includes "cooperative action" with another state, the European Union or another organisation "within our outside Finnish territory" when such action serves the interests of Finland and "takes note of the goals and principles of the UN charter and of international law in situations of assistance or other activity". This seems to leave open the potential participation of Finland, including by use of force in the global commons, without a situation of collective self-defence or authorisation by

20 Nato Strategic Concept 2022 https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/ (as of 29.03.2023).

21 Amendments to Finnish Act on the Making of Decisions Concerning the Provision of and Request for International Assistance, Act No 418/2017 as amended by Bill 193/2022, in force since January 1st, 2023. While the basis of self-defence remains article 51 of the UN Charter, such recent expansions seem to go beyond the immediate self-defence needs of states victims of aggression.

the United Nations Security Council. The Draft Bill 193/2022 makes clear already on its first page that the omission of a geographical delimitation is an important element, as is the omission of the prerequisite of a request for assistance. Bill 72/2016, which introduced the relevant legislation, informed that the Act on international assistance could apply outside territories under the exclusive jurisdiction of a state, including in economic zones, the high seas, and international airspace. However, such action would require a request for assistance following mainly the EU rules on mutual assistance or the solidarity clause. What exactly the notion of "cooperative action" entails and what kind of other "international activity" is considered remains open. The so-called 360 degrees approach by NATO (NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, see above) seems thus to entail that all kinds of threats, anywhere in the world, should be dealt with within the framework of the military and "cooperative security" of the alliance. It seems rather clear that these efforts of a military nature take place under other conditions than self-defence and collective self-defence as we know it under international law. There is in other words a risk of a further militarisation of the areas described as the global commons, where the principle of the common heritage of humankind applies.

This line of thought is at odds with the efforts promoted within the United Nations by those working inter alia with environmental and development matters who have put forward proposals for the future governance of the global commons. The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda has addressed the problem in its think piece entitled "Global governance and governance of the global commons in the global partnership for development beyond 2015". It was coproduced by several UN agencies and organs (OHCHR, OHRRLLS, UNDESA, UNEP, UNFPA) in 2013, and explained:

> Lastly, there is growing interest, in particular amongst regional economic and military alliances, in access to the global commons from a trade, security and critical resources perspective. A global governance regime, under the auspices of the UN, will have to ensure that the global commons will be preserved for future generations.[22]

22 Global governance and governance of the global commons in the global partnership for development beyond 2015, available at: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/thinkpieces/24_thinkpiece_global_governance.pdf (accessed 20.03.2023)

5. Territorial disarmament through Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and local initiatives

Finally, there are the considerable efforts of smaller countries through the establishment of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZ) around the world: the Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967) prohibits nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean; the Treaty of Rarotonga (South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone) was signed in 1985 and entered into force in 1986, so nearly twenty years after the previous one; the Treaty of Bangkok created the South East Asia Nuclear Free Zone in 1995 (in force since 1997) and currently has ten states parties; the Treaty of Pelindaba was signed in 1996 but entered into force only in 2009, creating an African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. The Treaty of Pelindaba has today 43 states parties and three additional protocols. The Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia was opened for signature in 2006 and entered into force in 2009. It has five states parties. For many of those treaties there are additional protocols whereby other states (great powers and former colonial powers) undertake not to use nuclear weapons against states parties to the NWFZ agreement, and, in some cases, also not to test nuclear weapons in this NWFZ territory while at the same time safeguarding their interests in overseas territories.[23]

The existence of special cases of countries without armies (or, no standing armies), including Liechtenstein, Tuvalu, Dominica, Grenada, Andorra, the Vatican, Costa Rica and Iceland illustrates the contingency of options concerning military spending. Iceland illustrates well the difficulties of small countries at times of global militarisation with a US base that was closed in 2006 and reopened in 2015, and with NATO Air Policing to which other Nordic states have also contributed.[24]

At the very local level there are limited territorially based demilitarisations, at least at the level of rhetoric, for instance in the Mayors for Peace initiative. In recent years membership has expanded fast to over 8,200 cities in 166 countries.[25] Mariehamn prides itself on being a member, but this has not been a profile used actively and concretely in recent years. A similar initiative is the Cities Appeal of the International Campaign to

23 UN Office on Disarmament, Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/nwfz/ (accessed 29.03.2023).

24 Thorhallsson, Baldur (2018), A small state in world politics: Iceland's search for shelter, Icelandic Review of Politics and Administration (Stjórnmál & stjórnsýsla), Vol 14, No 1, https://doi.org/10.13177/irpa.a.2018.14.1.3. Barbey, Christophe (2015), Non-militarisation – Countries without Armies, Working Paper by the Åland Islands Peace Institute, https://peace.ax/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Arbetspapper-Barbey.pdf (accessed 28.03.2023)

25 Mayors for Peace https://www.mayorsforpeace.org/en/ (accessed 29.03.2023).

Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). So far, Helsinki in Finland and Gothenburg in Sweden are two cities that have endorsed the appeal.[26] However, these are political pronouncements rather than legally binding undertakings. They document though the wish of a considerable number of citizens towards the limitation and abolition of weapons of mass destruction, and in particular nuclear weapons.

6. New opportunities stemming out of the nexus of war and environment?

In December 2022, the Kunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework was the result of a cooperation between Canada and China, the two countries that headed the negotiations concerning efforts to safeguard and restore biological diversity. The Framework was adopted at the meeting of the Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (which had been adopted in 1992).[27] The new Kunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework (GDF) sets four goals and 23 targets to ensure the maintenance of biological diversity on our planet. It includes a (voluntary) commitment to protect 30% of Earth's lands, oceans, coastal areas, and inland waters.

In another initiative and direction of developments, in August 2022 the International Law Commission, an expert organ of the UN, adopted its principles on protection of the environment in armed conflict.[28] These so called PERAC principles developed by the International Law Commission were also endorsed in November 2022 by the UN General Assembly's Sixth Committee, which deals with legal matters.

According to Principle 4:

> States should designate, by agreement or otherwise, areas of environmental importance as protected zones in the event of an armed conflict, including where those areas are of cultural importance.

26 Cities Appeal of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) https://cities.icanw.org/ (accessed 20.03.2023).

27 Kunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework (22.12.2022) available at the website of the Convention on Biological Diversity https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222

28 International Law Commission, Draft principles on protection of the environment in armed conflict, https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/draft_articles/8_7_2022.pdf; UN General Assembly, Sixth Committee, Draft Resolution on protection of the environment in armed conflict A/C.6/77/L.22 (11 November 2022). This resolution was adopted without a vote by the UN General Assembly on December 7, 2022.

> Principle 18 - Protected zones
> An area of environmental importance, including where that area is of cultural importance, designated by agreement as a protected zone shall be protected against any attack, except insofar as it contains a military objective. Such protected zone shall benefit from any additional agreed protections.

Whether the ILC Principles evolve into a separate binding instrument remains to be seen, however many of its principles rely on existing legally binding humanitarian and environmental rules, as well as customary law.

It would be opportune at this time of history when both peace and the environment are at a most vulnerable condition to couple those two normative potentials and explore further at least three aspects:

- that the 30% of lands, oceans, coasts and inland waters that our states restore and protect on biodiversity grounds under the Global Diversity Framework (GDF) could be designated *simultaneously* as protected zones in the event of armed conflict as envisaged under the voluntary mechanism of the Principles on the Protection of the Environment in Armed Conflict (PERAC);
- that the 30% of lands, oceans, coasts and inland waters are furthermore considered as *worthy to be demilitarised and neutralised* since armed activities and war are a large part of the 'human induced extinction of species' that our environmental efforts try to limit. Such an approach would reverse the frequent exceptions included in environmental agreements, whereby military activities, facilities and tools are exempted from environmental obligations;
- that the *coasts* of the Baltic sea, which are the home of more than 80 million people and which is one of the most nuclear energy plant dense places on Earth, is designated by all states around the Baltic Sea as *an area of environmental importance and a protected zone in the event of armed conflict*, according to the Kunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework and the ILC PERAC principles respectively. Many states around the Baltic Sea have already adopted Maritime Spatial Plans according to the requirements of EU Directive 2014/89 and have thus explored and documented the diversity values of their coasts and waters. The Åland Government has done the same since it has competence in

environmental matters and is bound by EU law.[29] Such designations can be made unilaterally as well as multilaterally, and rather than creating new institutional systems of supervision could be made using existing structures, for instance those in the EU as well as in the work of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, so-called HELCOM, which was established in 1974 by the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area.[30]

7. Final reflections

The current focus on rearmament and militarisation of territories, minds and societies has increasingly meant a focus on weapons and their dangers and potential. There are, however, other ways of approaching disarmament and the need for de-escalation and promotion of confidence-building internationally. One of them could be a renewed emphasis on limited territorial demilitarisation and neutralisation in its multiple modes (demilitarised zones, nuclear weapons free zones, and rules on demilitarisation in global commons). A further possibility is linking recent environmental protection tools of specific geographic zones, rules such as those found in the principles for the protection of the environment in armed conflict (the so-called PERAC) to such methods of territorial disarmament. The legacy of Louis Sohn points both to the importance of the law of the sea as well as to the need for proactive disarmament. All these impulses together should give us enough food for not only thought, but also action.

29 Åland Government, Havsplanering, Ålands havsplan (22.03.2021) https://www.regeringen.ax/demokrati-hallbarhet/hallbar-utveckling/marin-kustomradesplanering-havsplanering (accessed 29.03.2023).

30 On HELCOM see https://helcom.fi/about-us/ including the Baltic Sea Action Plan https://helcom.fi/baltic-sea-action-plan/ (adopted in 2007 and updated in 2021).

Research note

Gender, Sexuality and Emotion in Visual Representations of Sweden Joining NATO

Emma Rosengren

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
7(2) 2023, pp. 116 – 127

Abstract

This research note introduces gender and feminist theory as important tools for understanding international relations (IR), and uses snapshots from my ongoing research project on gender and disarmament in Swedish security policy during the post-Cold War period to exemplify what feminist contributions to the field can look like. Analyzing media visuals about Sweden's relationship with NATO during 2022–2023, I argue that such sources draw on well-known societal stereotypes about, for example, gender to make sense to their audiences. The visuals included in this study contribute to destabilize associations between security policy, national identity and masculinity from Cold War Sweden by portraying Swedish politicians as female brides ready to marry male NATO representatives and thereby gain protection within what has previously been conceptualized as a gendered NATO family. Both human bodies and emotions related to fear contribute to make meaning about such representations.

Keywords

Gender, NATO, feminist IR, media visuals

About the author

Emma Rosengren (PhD) is a researcher in international relations at the Department of Economic History and International Relations at Stockholm University, Sweden. She is also an affiliated researcher at the Hans Blix Centre for the History of International Relations at Stockholm University. Her research interests include historical and contemporary disarmament, historical perspectives in IR, and feminist and intersectional theory.

1. Introduction

This research note provides observations and reflections from my ongoing research about gender and disarmament in Swedish security policy during the post-Cold War period. Departing from feminist theory in international relations (IR), my research project elaborates on the interrelation between two key features of Swedish foreign and security policy from a feminist perspective: policy on disarmament on the one hand, and gender equality on the other. In this note I focus on how gender was a key feature of media visuals about Sweden applying for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, an alliance reliant on nuclear weapons.

In the aftermath of Russia's full scale military invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Sweden, together with its Nordic neighbor Finland, applied for membership in NATO. This constitutes the most fundamental security shift in the Baltic Sea region since the end of the Cold War. Sweden's eventual membership will put an end to its historical policy of armed neutrality and military non-alignment, a central feature of Cold War security policy and national identity in Sweden.[1] Furthermore, joining an alliance reliant on nuclear weapons has been argued to challenge Sweden's historical legacy as an advocate for nuclear disarmament.[2] In my previous research I have analyzed how Swedish national identity, the policy of armed neutrality, and nuclear disarmament advocacy during the Cold War were co-constructed with societal notions of masculinity.[3] The decision to apply for NATO membership thereby opens up the re-negotiation of how national identity has been gendered as masculine in the past. In this research note, I analyze comics and other visuals published in Swedish media during 2022–2023 to show how gender, sexuality and emotion contribute to make meaning about NATO membership at the societal level.[4]

1 On Swedish neutrality and national identity, see Bjereld, Ulf, Johansson, Alf W. & Molin, Karl. *Sveriges säkerhet och världens fred: svensk utrikespolitik under kalla kriget.* Stockholm: Santérus, 2008; Lundin, Per & Stenlås, Niklas. "Technology, State Initiative and National Myths in Cold War Sweden. An introduction". In *Science for Welfare and Warfare. Technology and State Initiative in Cold War Sweden*, Lundin et al (ed). Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, 2010; Cronqvist, Marie. "Survival in the welfare cocoon: the culture of civil defense in Cold War Sweden". In *Cold War cultures: perspectives on eastern and western European societie*s. Vowinckel et al (ed). New York: Berghahn, 2012.

2 This was raised as an argument against Swedish NATO membership by, for example, former disarmament diplomats such as Rolf Ekéus. See "Ett Nato-medlemskap kan bli en historisk tragedi för Sverige". *Dagens Nyheter*, 2022-05-10 https://www.dn.se/kultur/rolf-ekeus-ett-natomedlemskap-kan-bli-en-historisk-tragedi-for-sverige/

3 Rosengren, Emma. *Gendering nuclear disarmament: identity and disarmament in Sweden during the Cold Wa*r. Diss. Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2020; Rosengren, Emma. "Gendering Sweden's nuclear renunciation: a historical analysis". *International Affairs.* Vol. 98, No. 4, July 2022b: 1231–1248.

4 Preliminary analysis of such sources has been made in Rosengren, Emma. "Sweden is ready to marry into NATO –but at what cost?". *International Affairs blog.* 2022c https://medium.com/international-affairs-blog/sweden-is-ready-to-marry-into-nato-but-at-what-cost-8f318cbab817

Since the research is at an early stage, I have only studied a small sample of visuals collected from some of the larger newspapers in Sweden, and Swedish state television.

As a genre, comics and media visuals often draw on simplified notions of what they are addressing. By turning complex and often serious topics into something laughable, this genre also exposes power relations in various forms. The context in which such sources are published is crucial to their interpretation. If the audience does not understand or relate to what is depicted in the image, it becomes rather pointless. This kind of material is therefore likely to draw on well-known societal stereotypes to make sense. Such stereotypes in turn reflect widespread assumptions about gender, nation, and sexuality, among other things, in the context in which they were published. Hence, media visuals are likely to draw on, and thereby reproduce, well-known societal stereotypes to make sense to their audiences, while also probably going slightly to the extreme.[5]

The following section introduces feminist theory in IR, followed by a background section introducing gender dimensions of Swedish security policy during and after the Cold War. Then follows an analysis of media visuals and a concluding discussion of the findings. The paper introduces work in progress, and only includes a limited number of visuals and preliminary analysis. A more in-depth study of additional sources will eventually shed further light on the topics discussed.

2. Feminist IR

Feminist and gender approaches to international security include a broad spectrum of research agendas, ranging from empirically oriented investigations of women as actors and collectives, to deconstruction of key concepts such as security and protection. Early feminist work challenged a preoccupation with men in traditional approaches to IR. Arguing that a single-handed focus on powerful elites and state leaders brings about a biased focus on men as actors, feminist scholars called for a research agenda which took the lives of women seriously. While women have been engaged in a variety of activities in IR, their work has often been overlooked and/or dismissed. For example, feminist IR pioneer Cynthia Enloe has shown that while international diplomacy has historically been marked by an overrepresentation of men, women have made crucial contributions in the field of diplomacy in reproductive capacities (as wives, hostesses for private dinner parties, and caregivers to the children of male diplomats), but such work has rarely been recognized as of political relevance.[6] An explicit focus on women makes it possible to gain a richer understanding of that which has previously been ignored, and about the contributions of both men and women.

5 Rosengren, Emma. "På bar gärning". *Historisk tidskrift,* nr. 2 2022a, 213–217.

6 Enloe, Cynthia. *Bananas, beaches and bases: making feminist sense of international politics*. London: Pandora, 1989.

While feminist IR has evolved since the early feminist critique of the discipline, and while important gender history has been written about the diverse contributions of women in international politics, more recent feminist work has had an increased focus on the analytical concept of gender rather than an empirical focus on the categories men and women. Gender refers to the socially constructed and perceived differences between the sexes, the various meanings associated with femininities and masculinities in specific contexts.[7] What it means to be masculine or feminine, or to deviate from this binary distinction, varies across time and space. When masculinity is constructed in a certain manner, it is simultaneously differentiated from the characters of its opposite Other(s), from femininity or from other forms of masculinity.[8] That means that gender is relationally constructed, constantly in the making, and (re)constructed in social relations and historical processes.

Gender is also a central category for understanding social hierarchies and power relations. For example, characteristics such as strength, rationality, production, and the public have historically been associated with certain masculinities and privileged over assumed feminine characteristics, such as weakness, emotion, reproduction, and the private.[9] Gender also serves as a symbolic system which shapes our understandings of phenomena beyond male and female, masculine and feminine.[10] Furthermore, gender intersects with other societal power relations, such as ethnicity and sexuality. For example, western representations of nations often resemble descriptions of a conservative and heterosexual nuclear family ideal, involving active men as protectors of caring women in need of protection. This traditional representation of collective national identity relies on the intersection of gender, nation, and sexuality as manifest in the nuclear family ideal.[11] Hence, there is a need to investigate how masculinized and feminized meanings, as well as other power relations, have in fact been at the heart of things that are conventionally thought of as 'neutral'[12], such as security and nuclear alliance politics.

7 Scott, Joan Wallach. *Gender and the Politics of History.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
8 Rosengren, 2020.
9 Särmä, Saara. *Junk feminism and nuclear wannabees: collaging parodies of Iran and North Korea*. Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2014.
10 Cohn, Carol. "Sex and death in the rational world of defence intellectuals". *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society.* Vol. 12, no. 4, 1987; Cohn, Carol. "War, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War". In *Gendering War Talk*. Cooke Miriam G. & Wollacott, Angela, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
11 Collins, Patricia Hill. "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, and Nation". *Hypatia*. Vol. 13, no. 3, 1998; Nagel, Joane. "Masculinity and nationalism, Gender and sexuality in the making of nations". *Ethnic and Racial Studies.* Vol. 21, no. 2, 1998; Young, Iris Marion. "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State". *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society.* Vol. 29, no. 1, 2003.
12 Wendt, Maria & Åse, Cecilia. *Gendering Military Sacrifice.* London: Routledge, 2019.

The analysis in this research note draws on literature which shows how gender is an integral feature of both security policy and national identity. For example, a fundamental logic in international security concerns how the security-seeking behavior of states has privileged military strategies and armament. Feminists have shown how such policies can be understood in terms of a gendered, and sexualized, nation-family analogy. In her study of the "logic of masculinist protection", political scientist Iris Marion Young shows that both family ideals and militarized security policies in the US after 9/11 have reproduced heterosexual stereotypes about masculine protection and feminine vulnerability.[13] In the past, the NATO alliance has frequently been described in language that resembles a gendered nuclear family, with the US as the male protector and the allies as women or children.[14] Such representations rely on the intersection of gender and heterosexuality as manifest in the nuclear family ideal.[15] Within the logic of masculinized protection, the "good man" uses weapons to secure both women in his family and national territories marked by female bodies, such as "Mother Svea" in Sweden and the Finnish Maid "Suomineito" in Finland.[16] Furthermore, emotion is a necessary but often neglected component of the protection myth. Without representations of fear of a threatening other, there is no one to protect/be protected from. Without notions of national pride and honor, there is little to protect. Hence, both human bodies and emotions contribute to the manifestation of collective communities, and thereby identities.[17] This theoretical departure suggests an analysis of how gender, sexuality and emotion contribute to make meaning in visual representations of Sweden's relationship with NATO.

3. Background

Swedish national identity after the Second World War rested on neutrality and non-alignment, on the one hand, and the welfare state and modernity, on the other.[18] For example, the Swedish state sought security in external relations through the neutrality

13 Young, 2003.

14 Costigliola, Frank. "The Nuclear Family: Tropes of Gender and Pathology in the Western Alliance". *Diplomatic History.* Vol. 21, No. 2, 1997.

15 Collins, 1998. See also Nagel, 1998; McClintock, Anne. "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family". *Feminist Review.* No. 44, 1993: 61–80; Yuval-Davis, Nira. "Women, Citizenship and Difference". *Feminist Review.* No. 57, 1997: 4–27.

16 On Mother Svea, see Eduards, Maud. *Kroppspolitik. Om moder Svea och andra kvinnor.* Stockholm: Atlas, 2007. On the Finnish Maid, see Valenius, Johanna. *Undressing the maid: gender, sexuality and the body in the construction of the Finnish nation.* Diss. University of Turku, 2004.

17 Ahmed, Sara. *The cultural politics of emotion.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.

18 af Malmborg, Mikael. *Neutrality and state-building in Sweden.* Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001; Agius, Christine. *The social construction of Swedish neutrality: challenges to Swedish identity and sovereignty.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006; Lundin & Stenlås 2010.

policy in combination with comparatively large national armed forces, and security in internal relations through a strong welfare state infused by modernistic ideals.[19] Swedish military expenditure was among the highest per capita in Europe, considerably larger than in most NATO member states.[20] The armed dimension of neutrality was a central feature of Cold War nation building and relied on a conviction, and practice, that it was a masculine duty to protect the nation through the policy of male conscription.[21] Hence, while Sweden remained outside of military alliances, its security policy relied on notions of masculinized military protection in a classical – yet defensive – sense.[22]

The post-Cold War period is characterized by parallel tracks in both Swedish and international security. After the end of the Cold War, Sweden decreased its military expenditure, initiated women's voluntary conscription, and advocated a broadened approach to security in international affairs. During the 1990[s], gender equality evolved as a central pillar of Swedish foreign policy and national identity,[23] and the Women, Peace and Security agenda, which took form at the international arena from 2000, received strong support in Sweden.[24] In 2014, the Swedish government declared a feminist foreign policy which lasted until 2022 when it was abandoned by the present government.[25] Hence, a broadened approach to security, including gender equality, was a central feature of security policy and national identity.

In parallel with the above, however, Sweden increased its military cooperation with NATO and its allies. By signing a cooperation agreement with NATO in 1994 (Partnership for Peace), and joining the European Union in 1995, Sweden embarked on a path towards increased military transatlantic cooperation and western European integration.[26] A renewed focus on military security in the 21[st] century, including the US led war on terror after the 9/11 attacks, and Russia's military interventions in neighboring countries, weakened a more

19 Cronqvist, 2012.

20 Agrell, Wilhelm. *Fredens illusioner. Det svenska nationella försvarets nedgång och fall 1988–2009.* Stockholm: Atlantis, 2010.

21 On the historical roots of male conscription in Sweden, see Sundevall, Fia. *Det sista manliga yrkesmonopolet: genus och militärt arbete i Sverige 1865 – 1989.* Stockholm: Makadam, 2011. On post-Cold War developments, see Kronsell, Annika. *Gender, sex and the postnational defense: militarism and peacekeeping.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

22 On armed neutrality and gender, see Rosengren, 2020: Chapter 3.

23 Towns, Ann. "Paradoxes of (in)equality: Something is rotten in the gender equal state of Sweden". *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association.* Vol. 37, No. 2, 2002.

24 Holvikivi, Aiko & Reeves, Audrey. "Women, Peace and Security after Europe's 'refugee crisis'." *European Journal of International Security.* Vol. 5, No. 2, 2020.

25 Aggestam, Karin, Bergman Rosamond, Annika & Kronsell, Annika. "Theorising feminist foreign policy". *International Relations.* Vol. 33, No. 1, 2019; Aggestam, Karin & Bergman-Rosamond, Annika. "Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy in the Making: Ethics, Politics, and Gender". *Ethics & International Affairs.* Vol. 30, No. 3, 2016.

26 Rainio-Niemi, Johanna. *Routledge Studies in Modern History: Ideological Cold War: the Politics of Neutrality in Austria and Finland*. Taylor & Francis, 2014.

comprehensive approach to security. After Russia's military annexation of Crimea in 2014, both Finland and Sweden signed a comprehensive defense agreement (Värdlandsavtalet) with NATO.[27] Shortly after Russia launched its full-scale military intervention in Ukraine in 2022, both countries applied for full NATO membership. Before this, public opinion polls favored sustained non-alignment and there was no parliamentary majority for NATO membership in either country.[28]

4. Gender, sexuality and emotion in media visuals

Following Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Swedish politicians increasingly questioned the policy of non-alignment, arguing that the war in Ukraine demonstrated the urgent need for Swedish NATO membership.[29] Ulf Kristersson, then leader of the conservative opposition in parliament, and now Prime Minister of Sweden, said: "No one doubts for a second where we belong. But we do not have NATO protection if things would go bad".[30] While not explicitly stated in this quote, he argued that Sweden belongs with the western group. Previous research has shown how identity has indeed been a central feature of Finnish and Swedish debates about NATO after Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, and how the belonging to the western sphere was a core element of arguments in favor of NATO.[31] Hence, Kristersson's positioning of Sweden as part of the western group was not a new feature of identity representations.

While conservatives in Sweden argued in favor of NATO membership, the ruling Social Democrat government was not yet convinced. In March 2022, former Social Democrat Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said: "If Sweden would choose to submit a NATO application in these circumstances we would further destabilize the situation in Europe."[32] The historical tradition of non-alignment was represented to serve Swedish, and international, security interests well. Shortly thereafter, however, on the 16th of May 2022, Andersson and her Social Democrat government had changed position. Standing side by side with Ulf Kristersson at a press conference, Andersson declared that Sweden–together

27 Engelbrekt, Kjell, Holmberg, Arita & Ångström, Jan (ed.). *Svensk säkerhetspolitik i Europa och världen.* Stockholm: Norstedts juridik, 2015; Forsberg, Thuomas. "Finland and NATO: Strategic Choices and Identity Conceptions". In *The European Neutrals and NATO: Non-alignment, Partnership, Membership?* Cottey et al (ed). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

28 Rainio-Niemi, 2014.

29 Moderaterna, "Ukrainas sak är även vår", https://moderaterna.se/nyhet/ukrainas-sak-ar-aven-var/

30 "Nato-medlemskap en fråga på liv och död", *Dagens Nyheter,* 2022-02-27, https://www.dn.se/sverige/kristersson-nato-medlemskap-en-fraga-pa-liv-och-dod/

31 On Sweden, see Hagström, Linus. "Text and body in the Swedish NATO debate". *Cooperation and Conflict.* Vol. 56, No. 2, 2021. On Finland, see Aunesluoma, Juhana & Rainio-Niemi, Johanna. "Neutrality as Identity? Finland's Quest for Security in the Cold War". *Journal of Cold War Studies.* Vol. 18, No. 4, 2016.

32 "Nato-medlemskap skulle destabilisera säkerhetsläget", *Sveriges Television,* 2022-03-08, https://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/andersson-om-nato-medlemskap-skulle-destabilisera-sakerhetslaget

with Finland–intended to apply for NATO membership.[33] A majority in parliament, including the populist right wing Swedish democrats who had been against NATO membership until recently, supported this decision. Only the green and the left parties were against joining NATO. While both Finland's and Sweden's decisions to apply for NATO membership can be understood as hasty, a closer look at continuities and changes over a longer time period shows that they are, in fact, the continuity of a security policy path which evolved during the mid-1990s. In this process, national identity representations in both Finland and Sweden have been increasingly associated with notions of belonging in the western group.[34]

While Sweden's ties with NATO have been strengthened over a longer period of time, the decision to apply for membership last year still appeared as sudden and perhaps somewhat dramatic. Such events are often the theme of visual media representations such as satire sketches and comics, and such images often draw on gendered stereotypes to make sense to their audiences.[35] A closer look at visual media representations of Sweden joining NATO shows how Swedish politicians were represented in a feminized position. Shortly before the Swedish government announced its intention to join NATO, one of the largest newspapers in Sweden described how the country was "being prepared for 'NATO's wedding vows'":[36]

Image 1. NATO's wedding vows

Source: Krutmeijer, Malin. "Sverige är alltså en rodnande brud, redo att ge upp sin oskuld för den virile herr Nato?". Sydsvenskan. 2022-05-12, https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2022-05-12/sverige-ar-alltsa-en-rodnande-brud-redo-att-ge-upp-sin-oskuld-for-den-virile-herr-nato

33 "Klart Sverige ska söka medlemskap i NATO", *Dagens Industri,* 2022-05-16, https://www.di.se/nyheter/klart-sverige-ska-soka-medlemskap-i-nato/

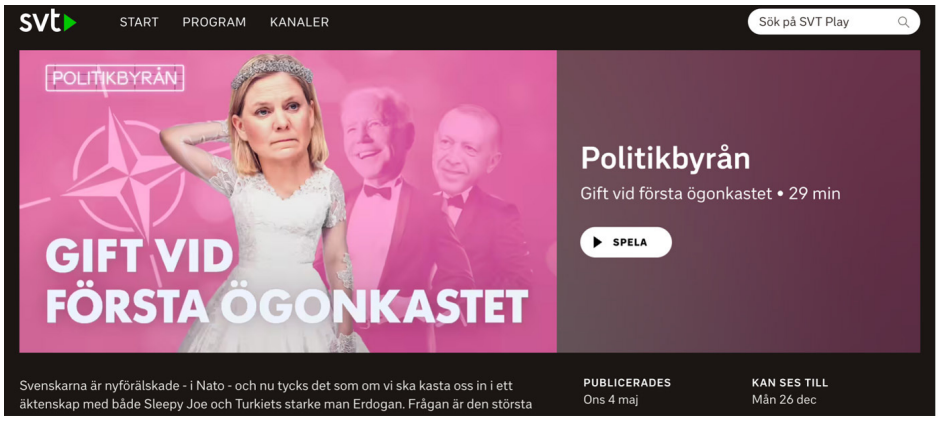
34 Jonter, Thomas and Rosengren, Emma. "Advocating nuclear disarmament as NATO members. Lessons from the past and possible routes ahead for Finland and Sweden". Forthcoming.

35 Rosengren, 2022a.

36 Krutmeijer, Malin. "Sverige är alltså en rodnande brud, redo att ge upp sin oskuld för den virile herr Nato?". *Sydsvenskan*. 2022-05-12, https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2022-05-12/sverige-ar-alltsa-en-rodnande-brud-redo-att-ge-upp-sin-oskuld-for-den-virile-herr-nato

The above image portrays a heterosexual bridal couple in front of former Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. By positioning a bridal couple in the middle of this collage, Sweden's NATO application is represented as a personal relationship, where Sweden is a woman and Stoltenberg, a symbol of NATO, is a man. Domestic imagery, gender and sexuality are key in such representations. Similar representations were made elsewhere. One talk show from Swedish state television described the issue thus: "The Swedes are newly in love—with NATO—and now it seems like we will throw ourselves into a marriage both with Sleepy Joe and the strong man of Turkey, Erdogan".[37] The screenshot below displays the Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson in a white wedding dress in front of the US President Joe Biden, Turkish President Recep Erdogan, and the NATO logo.

Image 2. Married at first sight



Source: Screenshot from Sveriges television. Politikbyrån. Gift vid första ögonkastet. 2022-05-04, https://www.svtplay.se/video/35174147/politikbyran/politikbyran-gift-vid-forsta-ogonkastet

With a humorous undertone, the above descriptions also point to one of the key barriers to joining NATO for Sweden—the Erdogan dilemma. With the signing of NATO's wedding vows in his hand, Erdogan has repeatedly threatened not to approve Sweden's NATO application if certain criteria, including the extradition of 73 people blacklisted by the Turkish regime, are not fulfilled.[38] While Swedish politicians have continually

37 "Politikbyrån. Gift vid första ögonkastet". *Sveriges television*. 2022-05-04, https://www.svtplay.se/video/35174147/politikbyran/politikbyran-gift-vid-forsta-ogonkastet

38 "Erdogan warns Turkey could still block Finland and Sweden's accession to Nato", The Guardian, 2022-06-30, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/30/erdogan-warns-turkey-could-still-block-finland-and-swedens-accession-to-nato

declared their willingness to follow the demands of the Turkish president, traveling to Ankara to ensure their best intentions, Erdogan does not seem to be convinced. Recent protests in Sweden against Erdogan's regime, including the hanging of an Erdogan doll outside Stockholm city hall by pro-Kurd Rojava committees, caused strong reactions in Turkey.[39] The burning of a Koran outside the Turkish embassy in Stockholm by right-wing extremist Rasmus Paludan added fuel to the fire. Following these protests, on the 23rd of January 23, 2023, Erdogan declared that he will not support Sweden's NATO application.[40]

During the Cold War, Swedish politicians associated non-alignment and neutrality with a responsibility to criticize other states for violations against human rights and other behavior deemed wrong by Swedish decision makers. Olof Palme's critique of the US during the Vietnam War, which led to tense diplomatic relations between Sweden and the US, is perhaps the most well-known example.[41] While Palme was criticized by US elites and their allies, he received strong support at the national level, and he paved the way for a new era of active Swedish foreign policy. Nuclear disarmament engagement was a core feature of this policy direction.[42] This historical context is important for understanding contemporary media representations of Swedish politicians and their position vis-à-vis Erdogan. Shortly after the Erdogan doll was hung outside the city hall in Stockholm, it was condemned by conservative Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson. According to Kristersson, it should be understood as an act of sabotage against Sweden's NATO membership.[43] His reaction caused strong critique in Sweden. For example, the left-wing newspaper Flamman announced a call and competition for the best satire sketch of Erdogan. The winning contribution was displayed not only in Flamman, but in several other magazines, including liberal ones, acting in solidarity with the initiative.[44] In a comic in Aftonbladet, one of the largest newspapers in Sweden, Kristersson was represented in a rather disgraceful position:

39 "Turkiet kallade upp Sveriges ambassadör efter dock-protest", *Aftonbladet,* 2023-01-12, https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/3E5P7L/turkiet-kallade-upp-sveriges-ambassador-efter-erdogan-docka

40 "Erdogan: Sverige får inget stöd från Turkiet", *Aftonbladet,* 2023-01-23, https://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/a/8J9bxG/erdogan-sverige-far-inget-stod-fran-turkiet

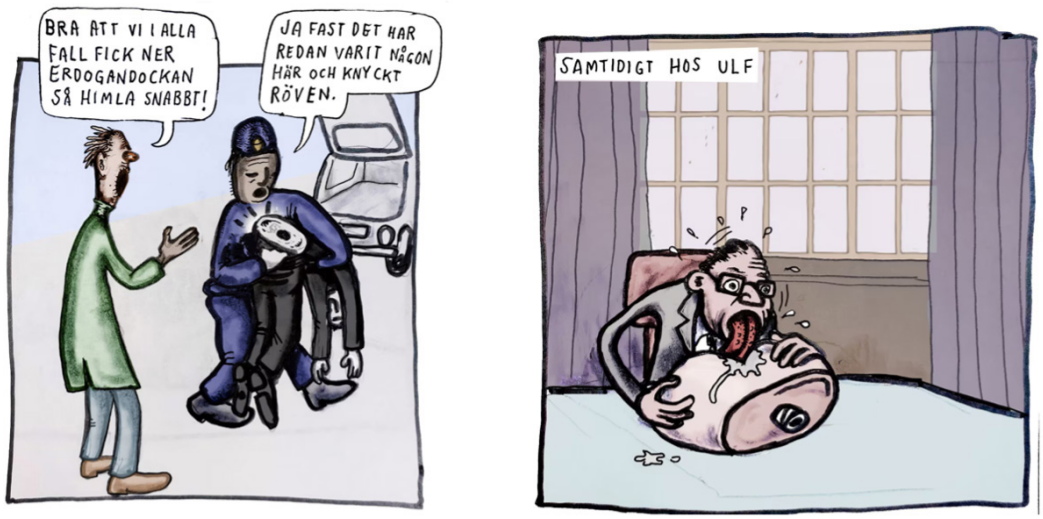
41 Östberg, Kjell. *I takt med tiden: Olof Palme* 1927–1969. Stockholm: Leopard, 2008

42 Jonter, Thomas. *The key to nuclear restraint: the Swedish plans to acquire nuclear weapons during the Cold War.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016; Rosengren 2020.

43 "Otroligt grovt – ett sabotage", TV4, 2023-01-13, https://www.tv4.se/artikel/zo8ZX5pIBEypGDAQMvUV1/otroligt-grovt-ett-sabotage

44 "The winner of Flamman's satire competition: 'Erdogan devours his own people'", *Flamman*, 2023-01-24, http://flamman.se/a/the-winner-of-flammans-satire-competition-erdogan-devours-his-own-people

Image 3. Ulf Kristersson and the Erdogan Doll



Source: Lundkvist, Pontus, "Vad hände egentligen med Erdogan-dockan?", Aftonbladet 2023-01-20. https://www.aftonbladet.se/kultur/a/xgOnV8/pontus-lundkvist-om-erdogan-och-kristersson

In the image to the left, the man to the left tells the police officer: "Great that at least we managed to get the Erdogan doll down so quickly." The police officer replies: "Yes, but someone has already been here stealing his butt". The caption in the image to the right reads as follows: "Meanwhile, at Ulf's place". In this image, we see the Swedish Prime Minister Kristersson licking Erdogan's butt, drawing on the Swedish expression for kissing up (slicka röv). Kristersson and other Swedish politicians were repeatedly accused of kissing up to the Turkish President in the interest of NATO membership. In these illustrations, Kristersson is represented in a demasculinizing manner, and notions of shame contribute to make meaning about Sweden's relationship with the Turkish regime. Eager to please Erdogan and thereby convince him to let Sweden into the NATO family, Swedish decision-makers are represented in a disgraceful position.

On the 24th of January the prime minister, foreign minister and defense minister held a joint press conference. The prime minister stressed that while freedom of speech gives everyone the right to express their opinions, he also urged everybody to consider that Sweden now faces the most serious security challenge since the Second World War. Furthermore, getting Sweden's NATO application approved together with Finland's was described as the most important task of the government.[45] With Erdogan approving

45 Regeringen, "Pressträff med statsminister Ulf Kristersson, utrikesminister Tobias Billström och försvarsminister Pål Jonson", 2023-01-24, https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2023/01/presstraff-med-statsminister-ulf-kristersson-utrikesminister-tobias-billstrom-och-forsvarsminister-pal-jonson/

Finland's application on the 30th of March 2023, this task was not fulfilled.[46] Continued analysis of media representations following this announcement remains to be made.

5. Conclusions

This research note has introduced feminist theory and gender analysis as important tools for understanding various dimensions of topics related to international security. In the above media visuals, gender, sexuality and emotion clearly say something about Sweden's relationship with NATO, and with the Turkish regime. While previous research has shown how Swedish non-alignment and nuclear disarmament advocacy was co-constructed with notions of masculinity in the past, Sweden is now represented in a feminized/demasculinized position, either as a heterosexual female bride about to marry a male protector, or as a male politician kissing up to the Turkish president with homosexual undertones. NATO representatives are relationally represented as men. Hence, conservative symbols and metaphors about heterosexuality and gender contributed to make meaning about Sweden's relationship with NATO.

Although seemingly remote from security policy, symbols and metaphors from the private sphere, such as the heterosexual marriage analogies above, are often used to describe complex issues, such as NATO membership, in international security. In 1997, historian Frank Costigliola showed how the NATO nuclear alliance has been described in language that resembles a gendered nuclear family in the past, with the United States as the male protector and the allies as women or children.[47] As a non-aligned state, Sweden was not part of the NATO nuclear family. In media descriptions of Sweden joining NATO, however, it seems like Sweden is a woman about to marry into the western nuclear family. Notions of fear and shame, the need for masculine protection from international allies, and belonging to the western sphere are central features of such representations.

While the above analysis shows how gender, bodies and emotion have contributed to make meaning about Sweden's relationship with NATO in a limited set of media visuals, it does not explain the various processes that led to Sweden's decision to apply for NATO membership, nor the consequences NATO membership will have for Sweden's possibility to advocate for nuclear disarmament in the future. Those are the topics of another study.[48] Nevertheless, it provides a snapshot of how national identity is being renegotiated in the present.

46 Gardner, Frank & Durbin, Adam. "Turkey approves Finland Nato membership bid". https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65132527 available 2023-03-31

47 Costigliola, 1997: 163–183.

48 These issues are explored in Jonter and Rosengren, forthcoming.

Commentary

Destabilization of the Arctic

Adele Buckley

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
7(2) 2023, pp. 128 – 143

Abstract

The Arctic region is warming four times faster than the rest of the planet, with the inevitable result that the economy, natural resources, ocean and land sustenance and all human security factors now require rapid adjustment by both government and population. The circumpolar nations have taken pride in an era of peaceful cooperation. Working together for the common good is a deliberate choice of the circumpolar nations but also a necessity because of the extremely harsh climate that prevails in the Arctic lands and waters. Over the past decade Russia has developed many military bases, extended over the whole of its lengthy northern seacoast. The Arctic is a major economic base for Russia. Undersea, the submarine patrols of the Cold War, by both Russia and the United States, had been drastically reduced. Now military exercises in and near the Arctic are extensive; Chinese military vessels have entered the North Pacific. While military resources of individual countries have occasionally entered the Arctic area, there formerly was genuine support for the ideal of a demilitarized Arctic.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a clear indication that Russia is unpredictable and aggressive. Russia could choose aggressive action in the Arctic. The entire Arctic region is thus destabilized while it waits for the future to unfold. This is a brief review of the current situation of Arctic organizations and countries that intend to benefit by the opening of the Arctic. The composite situation provides a way to discern the ongoing destabilization of the Arctic.

Keywords

Arctic cooperation, NATO, Arctic governance, Russian military, United States military

About the author

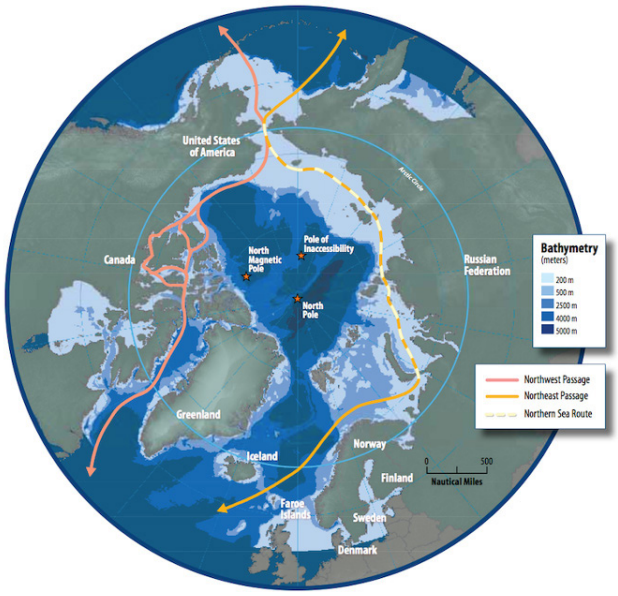
Adele Buckley Canadian Pugwash past Chair; Pugwash Council; M.Sc.,Ph.D., D.Sc.(hon);
physicist, engineer and environmental scientist

1. Introduction

Elements that contribute to destabilization in the Arctic are considered, beginning with institutional and military factors and then the situation in individual countries. Climate change is the original factor leading to instability; the Arctic is transitioning from being inaccessible to relatively accessible. The geopolitical landscape of Arctic affairs is in a state of flux. For example, the shipping lanes, Figure 1, will eventually be in active use. The necessary supporting infrastructure will transform these shorelines. The Northern Sea Route, adjacent to the shoreline of Russia has occasional users. The Northwest Passage, which would greatly shorten the shipping distance between Asia and eastern North America is not yet commercially viable.

Figure 1 – Map of Arctic Navigation Routes

(Arctic Council, Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment 2009 Report, 2009)



2. Arctic Council

Formed in 1996, with significant assistance from Canada, the Arctic Council (https://www.arctic-council.org) had the function of providing a formal framework for intergovernmental activity on economic and environmental matters. Exclusion of military matters[1] was a deliberate choice at the formation. Indigenous groups from all circumpolar countries were given a seat at the table, as Permanent Participants. Allowance was made for entry of

1 The annual Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR) was held for the first time in the United States – May 2022 https://www.northcom.mil/Newsroom/News/Article/Article/3021154/nato-allies-partners-promote-arctic-security-military-cooperation/

Observers, who could contribute and participate but not vote. The number of Observers continues to grow and includes China, India and South Korea. The Secretariat is housed in Tromsø Norway. Governance is provided by a rotating two-year Chairmanship, taken in turn by the member countries. Russia's two year term as Chair went from 2021 to 2023, but early in its term, Russia invaded Ukraine. By March 3, 2022 the non-Russian members' statement[2] announced to the world that the they would temporarily pause participation in all meetings of the Council. The situation has caused distress in the international community because the Ukraine war has ended "…decades long collaboration in the Arctic".

On March 3, 2022 the Barents Euro-Arctic Council strongly condemned the Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. The Joint Statement of Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the European Union regarding Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation says " (we) have no other choice than to suspend activities involving Russia in the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation. We remain convinced of the enduring value of Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation, and reiterate our support for this institution and its work".[3]

There has been speculation that Russia might leave the Arctic Council. By 2023, both the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council had resumed work, in whatever manner possible, between the remaining members. As Russia is the largest member country (by geographic land mass, and Arctic coastal length) of both organizations, there will be a significant drop in achievement of needed discussion and work. No resolution has come forward at this writing.

2 "Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United States condemn Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and note the grave impediments to international cooperation, including in the Arctic, that Russia's actions have caused.

We remain convinced of the enduring value of the Arctic Council for circumpolar cooperation and reiterate our support for this institution and its work. We hold a responsibility to the people of the Arctic, including the indigenous peoples, who contribute to and benefit from the important work undertaken in the Council.

The core principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, based on international law, have long underpinned the work of the Arctic Council, a forum which Russia currently chairs. In light of Russia's flagrant violation of these principles, our representatives will not travel to Russia for meetings of the Arctic Council. Additionally, our states are temporarily pausing participation in all meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, pending consideration of the necessary modalities that can allow us to continue the Council's important work in view of the current circumstances." https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-arctic-council-cooperation-following-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/

3 Barents Euro-Arctic Council Statement https://barents-council.org/news/joint-statement-of-finland-denmark-iceland-norway-sweden-and-the-european-union-regarding-barents-euro-arctic-cooperation

3. Climate Change in the Arctic

Recent and ongoing geopolitical changes in the Arctic are not independent of the rapid climate change in the Arctic. Until recent decades, little attention was paid to potential economic resources of the Arctic because the vast frozen icecap of the north was mainly inaccessible. By the 1980s, scientists were warning of the signs of major climate upheaval and were largely ignored (for example – the Dagomys Declaration, USSR 1988, issued at a Pugwash meeting in Moscow). Natural species of both land and sea are enduring changes that are bringing about major declines in populations; indigenous peoples cannot rely on their traditional food sources.

Methane, a greenhouse gas many times more powerful than CO2 is being released from melting permafrost on land and methyl hydrates on the ocean floor, thus exacerbating climate change. Ocean communities are threatened with loss of property and livelihood because of rising seas and severe storms. There are major collapses in the built infrastructure, such as highways, bridges, buildings, because the frozen underground supports have melted. This is clearly destabilization of the Arctic; at the same time newly available economic opportunities in land and sea are recognized. The international community has indicated that they intend to access hydrocarbons and minerals that were previously inaccessible. Fortunately, the rights to the coastal waters, extending as far as the continental shelves are protected by UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea), and there continues to be an international will to adhere to this. The shipping industry is awaiting the opportunity to transport goods across the significantly shorter Arctic routes. Predictions of an ice-free Arctic in summer have suggested 2050 as the potential for relatively easy passage of cargo ships.[4] In May 2023, a publication from the University of Exeter presented new findings regarding the role of the now-recovered ozone layer. The ozone layer has protected the ice and delayed melting by up to an estimated fifteen years. The authors "estimate that each 1,000 metric tons of ODS (Ozone Depleting Substance) emissions prevented saves about seven square kilometers of Arctic sea ice".[5]

There is apparent consensus that the newly accessible, most rapidly changing parts of the Arctic lie north of the Arctic Circle (60 degrees latitude). Still in the Arctic, but in the lower latitudes, there is vast poorly accessible land in Siberia, and the Canadian North. Norway, Sweden and Finland have utilized their northern territory, and enabled access. Thinly populated lands await development as the Arctic climate warms. Population

4 The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2021) stated that Arctic sea ice area will likely drop below 1 million km2 in at least some Septembers before 2050.

5 England, Mark R. et al, The Montreal Protocol is delaying the occurrence of the first ice-free Arctic summer, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (2023). DOI: 10.1073/pnas.2211432120 https://phys.org/news/2023-05-ozone-treaty-delaying-ice-free-arctic.html

density and developed settlements vary widely, with Russia having the largest population, including cities with population over one million. Alaska (United States) has several cities and military bases, and a mountainous, mostly inaccessible, interior region. Canada, the coldest land mass, has the smallest population north of the Arctic Circle. Iqaluit (population about 10,000) is the largest settlement.

In summary, climate change is the overarching factor for destabilization in the Arctic. This is accompanied by the ongoing destabilization of the geopolitical environment.

4. NATO

During the Cold War, both Russia and United States had frequent Arctic 'patrols' of their SSBN fleet. (SS denotes submarine, the B denotes ballistic missile (nuclear), and the N denotes that the submarine is nuclear powered). By the time the Arctic Council was formed, the number of patrols were significantly less in number. In this context it should be noted that Russia's main submarine base is in the Arctic, near Murmansk. In keeping with the goal of a demilitarized Arctic, NATO and the naval armaments of its member nations had largely remained absent from the Arctic. Military vessels were occasionally present for civilian purposes, such as search and rescue.

The GIUK [6] gap is strategically vital to the naval alliance partners in NATO. Normally absent, Russian submarines (probably originating from Murmansk) have recently been detected in this area. These occurrences contribute to destabilization of the Arctic.

NATO has sponsored annual military exercises in the High North for many years, involving tens of thousands of personnel and at least fourteen active days. By 2018, the exercises[7] had participation from the military forces of Sweden and Finland, which sparked Russian objections. Exercise Cold Response typically involves both land and sea; in 2020[8] activities in the Norway included the Finnmark territory adjacent to the Norway-Russia northern border. In February 2023,[9] U.S. forces participated in land-based training exercises with the Jaeger Brigade of Lapland. In recent months, NATO exercises at sea extended northward into the Barents Sea.

6 GIUK represents the geographic north Atlantic region that is near Greenland, Iceland and UK, and leads north to the Norwegian Sea into the Barents Sea.

7 Atle Staalesen https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2018/10/these-13000-soldiers-show-our-joint-commitment-regional-defense-nordic-ministers "These 13,000 soldiers show our joint commitment for regional defense, Nordic ministers say as NATO drills Trident Juncture kick off"

8 Michael Klare https://www.nationalmemo.com/amid-climate-change-dangerous-war-games-in-the-arctic/?cn-reloaded=1

9 Thomas Nilsen US solders to train Arctic warfare in Lapland https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/2023/02/us-soldiers-train-arctic-warfare-lapland-monday

As NATO departs from its previous Cold Response deployment pattern, Russia responds.[10] Russia's annual military exercises, particularly for the Russian navy, have been re-located toward the western end of the Northern Sea Route.[11] In 2022, the exercises moved to the eastern Barents Sea and infantry brigades from the Kola Peninsula were training in Arctic warfare. The Russians intended this show of strength to be geographically near the NATO exercises. These training exercises had an effect of escalating tension, which was not allayed by the Norwegian Prime Minister's speech at the UN Security Council, responding to the Moscow's allegations that Russia is being threatened by the West, stating "These allegations are simply not true. There is no military threat against Russia."

In the post-Cold-War period, NATO members were encouraged to recognize the Arctic as demilitarized, and while military elements were not entirely absent, there was near-compliance. Planning for increased economic activity has proceeded with this understanding. However, by 2023, possibly the only restriction to NATO operations is that the Arctic still offers an extremely forbidding environment. Because the Arctic Ocean is of great strategic and economic importance to Russia, it has built dozens of new and/or renewed military bases and airfields since 2007. The 2022 Russian Naval Doctrine[12] confirms its offensive capabilities in the High North. Foreign navies exercising in the area are seen as a challenge to Russian security. A recent Russian move that could be counterproductive to the Russian economy is the restriction of naval movement on the North Sea Route.[13] The new law allows only one foreign vessel to pass at a time and requires notification three months in advance. Submarines must surface.

Until recently, the West/NATO was willing to view these massive Russian developments on and near the Arctic Ocean as partly economic in nature, with potential for dual civilian/military use. Now, this former place of peaceful collaboration has joined the remainder of the militarized global geography.

10 NATO allies wake up to Russian supremacy in the Arctic https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/nato-allies-wake-up-russian-supremacy-arctic-2022-11-16/

11 Thomas Nilsen https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2022/09/russia-shows-arctic-military-drill-amid-ukraine-war

12 Control over Arctic Ocean Top Priority of New Russian Naval Doctrine https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/control-over-arctic-ocean-top-priority-new-russian-naval-doctrine

13 Francesco Bussoletti Russia restricts naval circulation on the Northern Sea Route 6 December 2022 https://www.difesaesicurezza.com/en/defence-and-security/ukraine-russia-restricts-naval-circulation-on-the-northern-sea-route

5. Is there a possibility to form an Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone?

By the early part of the 21st century, it seemed possible that the circumpolar countries might consider forming a nuclear-weapon-free zone encompassing the northern territory of the circumpolar nations. Since all of these countries except Russia and the United States were already free of nuclear weapons it seemed possible that some governments would take an interest in the concept. Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, former United Nations Under-Secretary for Disarmament, requested that Canadian Pugwash take this cause as one of their projects and that has been ongoing since 2013. Presentations of the topic have been made in nine countries; two Canadian Pugwash members presented the concept to senior staff at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Ottawa. Two policy conferences, jointly with two Ontario universities, reviewed various aspects of Arctic security. An online discussion group exists, with membership from over twenty countries. In recent years, the focus of this project has shifted to general aspects of Arctic security.

There was a moderate support for the Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone idea under Holger Neilsen, a cabinet minister in a previous government of the Kingdom of Denmark. There had been attempts to gain support for a Nordic nuclear-weapon-free-zone. In the parliament of Iceland, the second attempt succeeded in passing a motion making Iceland a nuclear weapon free country. These efforts did not lead to further parliamentary motions in other Arctic non-nuclear-weapon states, even in a period when the Arctic was considered non-militarized. Now, the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free Arctic is dormant. Keeping the Arctic nuclear-weapon-free-zone (NWFZ) on the geopolitical agenda would also keep a focus on the benefits of existing NWFZs. Discussion of any form of nuclear disarmament should not slip from the international agenda. Non-Nuclear weapons states of the Arctic (Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Sweden, Finland, Canada) do not consider a nuclear-weapon-free declaration for all or part of their territory because the perception is that NATO would object.

6. Arctic Nations

Figure 2 Map showing the Arctic circumpolar nations below. The blue line is the Arctic Circle. The red line is the 10°C July mean isotherm (the terminology which indicates a constant temperature).

The following sections cover each of the Arctic nations, briefly examining the conditions giving rise to destabilizing change in the Arctic.

Figure 2 Map showing the Arctic circumpolar nations

(CIA World Fact Book, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.)

6.1 Russia

Since its invasion of Ukraine, Russia has seen the largest upheaval in its Arctic affairs. The Arctic Council has refused to convene under Russia's chairmanship. Many vital environmental and economic endeavours have been 'on hold'. Years-long programs of scientific research have stopped, while others have continued, handicapped without Russia's contribution. Re-opening of some programs is likely, without Russia. Fortunately, vital fishing agreements between Russia and Norway have not been affected.

Russia's oil and gas resources, a major support for the economy, are mainly located in the Arctic. European countries, refusing to buy from Russia, have scrambled to obtain alternate energy sources. Russia is selling its fossil-fuel product in Asia and operating joint projects with China. It is seeking, and will find, countries that will continue development work and purchase these climate-change-inducing hydrocarbons.

There are many restored or new military bases across the huge length of the Russian Arctic coastline that are capable of serving both military and civilian needs. For example, support for shipping along the Northern Sea Route and support for extensive development of oil and natural gas as Liquid Natural Gas(LNG), thus defying the need to slow climate change by reducing oil and gas use.

Figure 3 Locations of military outposts Russia has in the far north (Office of Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan, 2017)

Major land and sea forces[14] have been sent from the Arctic to the Ukraine war. Decimating personnel and equipment located in the high north was necessary, because in-place Russian forces were poorly equipped and trained and had sustained heavy casualties. In early 2022, Russia had a large strategic nuclear missile drill and tested a Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile.[15] Geography dictates that Russia must have its major submarine base in the Arctic. The base is placed near the Kola Peninsula. Russia's only ocean coastlines are either on the Arctic Ocean or the North Pacific. For important strategic access to the Atlantic Ocean, Russian naval vessels can transit though the Barents Sea to the north Atlantic. Russian military bases in the north Pacific Ocean have recently received[16] four Borei-class nuclear-powered submarines, its newest ballistic missile submarines. Though this is very important to Russian naval strategy for its eastern Arctic and east Asia, it is not the major submarine base as the Atlantic Ocean is not accessible from there.

In recent months, there has been a deliberate display of naval submarine power – part of Russia's demonstration that it could choose to make good its threat to deliver a nuclear weapon attack to Ukraine. There are no nuclear weapon attack targets in the Arctic, but Russia has the capability to deliver a nuclear weapon to Ukraine from its northern military operations.

14 Lee Mottola NATO's Arctic Command A Case for the Expansion of NATO's Mission in the High North https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/nato-arctic-command-case-expansion-nato-mission-high-north/

15 Thomas Nilsen https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2022/11/us-special-forces-will-showcase-first-ever-live-fire-rapid-dragon-airdropped-cruise

16 Jeff Schogol , How much of a threat does Russia s fleet in the Pacific pose? https://taskandpurpose.com/news/russia-pacific-fleet-challenge-united-states/

6.2 United States

The United States has two roles in Arctic affairs, the first being as the lead-nation in NATO; the second is as the national government of a large resource-rich state, Alaska. It is separated from eastern Russia only by the relatively narrow Bering Strait.

For years, the United States treated Alaska as a state requiring little military protection, and even the Coast Guard could only offer two aging diesel-powered icebreakers. There has been an awakening, particularly since the Biden administration took over. Troop training exercises are frequent and substantial. As recently as October 2022, US Air Force Gen. Van Herck expressed a concern[17] about the current readiness of United States armed forces to operate in the Arctic. However, he continued by noting that he was encouraged about the progress the Army was making in Arctic preparations.

The National Strategy for the Arctic Region, the first since 2013, was released by the Biden Administration[18] In October 2022. Defining its strategy in terms of Security, Climate Change and Environmental Protection, Sustainable Economic Development, and International Cooperation and Governance, it is evident that competition with Russia and China has influenced the policy.[19] There is a goal to continue international cooperation without Russia, because of its war in Ukraine. This is new ground for the United States, which is notifying the world that it will supply greatly increased resources to its northern territory and making sure that there is an emphasis on military readiness. The circumpolar nations watched while Russia established a comprehensive string of military bases in the Arctic and the United States did not respond in kind. Now, as a result of the destabilization caused by the Russian war in Ukraine, the U.S. is equipping its land, sea and air forces for homeland defence. Homeland defence has received new emphasis because the most likely attack route would be across the Arctic Ocean. NORTHCOM and NORAD will receive new funds. (See further discussion in the section on Canada.)

The United States is aware of Russian nuclear submarines patrolling near to both its East Coast and its North Pacific Coast and is probably responding 'in-kind'. However, the U.S. response to an actual nuclear attack on Ukraine would likely avoid the use of nuclear weapons from its Arctic-based SSBN submarines, and instead would employ conventional weapons.

17 Homeland Protector Calls for Revamped Force Arrangement https://www.afcea.org/signal-media/homeland-security/homeland-protector-calls-revamped-force-arrangement

18 New Arctic plan warns of growing strategic competition from Russia, China https://insidedefense.com/insider/new-arctic-plan-warns-growing-strategic-competition-russia-china%C2%A0By

19 Barry Zellen Russian aggression gives US excuse to focus military and more on Arctic https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/10/29/new-us-arctic-strategy-focuses-on-climate-and-indigenous-perspectives/

6.3 Greenland (Kingdom of Denmark)

The military dimension of Greenland's national security is provided by Denmark. Danish naval vessels protect its coasts. Greenland wishes to handle its own foreign affairs but is not yet ready to do so. In view of international tensions, this goal may be moving further into the future. Climate change is Greenland's most important destabilizing factor.

Greenland is a member of the ICC (Inuit Circumpolar Council), along with Canada, Alaska and Russia. This has always been an active collaboration for common interests, but now the connection with the Russian segment of ICC is 'on hold'. ICC is a Permanent Participant at the Arctic Council, sends delegates to the COP meetings, and participates internationally at the United Nations where it draws attention to the need to limit climate change. Greenland is thought to have substantial mineral resources (including rare earth elements and uranium). China seeks access, but Greenland has been wary. For example, China wanted to build a major airport in Eastern Greenland, but Greenland refused (fearing a loss of sovereignty). Ever since World War II, the United States has had a major base at Thule in northern Greenland, which has always employed native Greenlanders. Recently, the United States has formally agreed to cede management of the base to Greenland.

6.4 Denmark

Denmark is an active participant in NATO exercises in the GIUK gap as well as the annual NATO Cold Response exercises in the Arctic. All the Nordic nations have shorelines on the Baltic Sea and the Arctic Ocean. On both coasts, these shorelines are also accessed from Russian territory. That geography gives rise to a need for security measures on both fronts. These regional issues were explored in the January 2023 expert seminar "Regional Security in the North, Nuclear Risks and Possible Solutions".

6.5 Norway

Norway, a NATO member, has ongoing formal and informal contact with Russia. It has a land border with Russia in its northern region of Finnmark. There is civilian and military activity on the Barents Sea which is a major fishing and commercial location for both countries. The Norwegian-Russian Joint Fishery Commission[20] is still operating. Svalbard, Norway's northern island, is host to a major Russian coal mining industry.

20 Victoria Herrmann November 3, 2022, The US Comes in From the Cold with New Climate-Focused Arctic Strategy
https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/us-comes-cold-new-climate-focused-arctic-strategy/

The western countries' isolation of Russia because of its war in Ukraine has disrupted daily life of some northern citizens and their commercial enterprises and increased the scope of defence exercises. Norway's land, sea and military assets have always participated in the annual 'Cold Response' exercises sponsored by NATO. A recent training exercise[21] in Norway has shown the need to add planning for combat situations in a warmer Arctic (near to 0 degrees C) adjusting for variations that require different equipment and clothing.

Norway raised its military alert level[22] in October 2022. In early November 2022, Norway hosted a U.S. missile launch[23] at its Andoya Space range. However, there is no change in Norway's nuclear weapon policy, which requires that no nuclear weapons be stationed on Norwegian territory.

6.6 Sweden

Sweden has, for 200 years, been militarily non-aligned. Now, to preserve the security of its citizens, and with agreement from most of them, Sweden has applied to join NATO.[24] Serious opposition continues to exist, but others argue that existing bilateral agreements do not provide sufficient protection from Russian threats. This is a very significant shift in geopolitical alignment. Sweden is likely to continue to be a facilitator for nuclear disarmament efforts, including hosting international meetings.

It is clear that neither Sweden nor Finland will follow the lead of some European countries that have continued to allow the U.S. to base nuclear weapons there. Sweden will continue, as it has for years, to assist NATO to hold military exercises in its remote Arctic lands.

6.7 Finland

Finland, with its 1340 km border with Russia, needs a stable and peaceful relationship with Russia. Nevertheless, Russia's invasion of Ukraine convinced a majority of the population that Finland must apply to join NATO. In recent years, NATO exercises on Finnish territory have been welcomed and Finland has provided support with personnel

21 Daniellle Bochove & Natalia Drozdiak A Warmer Arctic Challenges Troops Training for Subzero Warfare https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-03-14/military-forces-training-in-arctic-face-new-foe-warmer-weather

22 Gwladys Fouche Norway raises military alert in response to Ukraine war https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/norway-military-sharpens-security-response-ukraine-war-2022-10-31/

23 John Vandiver Unconventional delivery of US airpower in Arctic tailored to serve notice to Russia https://www.stripes.com/branches/air_force/2022-11-09/red-dragon-missile-norway-russia-7986361.html

24 Why Sweden is moving away from its 'non-aligned' status and towards NATO https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-friday-edition-1.6452438/why-sweden-is-moving-away-from-its-non-aligned-status-and-towards-nato-1.6452991#content

and other resources.

With the inclusion of Finland and Sweden, a possibility of a collective Nordic defense approach within a NATO framework, has been suggested by Maj. Gen. Folland, Royal Norwegian Air Force.[25]

6.8 Iceland

Iceland, in an isolated location east of Greenland and at the Arctic Circle in its northern territory, has required the protection offered by its membership in NATO, a nuclear alliance. Nevertheless, stationing nuclear weapons in the country would be unacceptable to its citizens. There have been several attempts to declare the country as a nuclear-weapon-free territory, by means of passage of legislation in the Althingi, the Iceland parliament. The most recent motion [26] passed in 2016. Nevertheless, all NATO members subscribe to a doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

6.9 Canada

Canada has lengthy coastlines on three oceans, and a small population. [27]The scattered northern communities, population a few thousand or less, are accessible by plane or boat only. For remote communities, supplies of fuel, goods and food arrive annually by boat prior to the onset of winter. Medical treatment is available for minor ailments, but serious cases require a plane trip to a far away hospital. Indigenous hunters can no longer rely on traditional trips on the ice to acquire food. Ice roads that carry trucks are only safe for shorter periods. Thus, climate change is identified as the most significant cause of destabilization.

Military exercises in the Arctic by Canadian forces (Operation Nanook) are held each summer, but year-round military services, including search and rescue are supplied from bases in southern Canada that are 3 – 4 hours distant by plane. Canada has not provided a robust defence for its Arctic territory. General Wayne Eyre, Chief of the Defence Staff, recently warned [28] that Canada needs an increased capacity to move troops to the Arctic as

25 Arctic Strategy: Deterrence and Détente https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3173373/Arctic Strategy: Deterrence and Détente

26 "That Iceland and its economic zone be declared a nuclear-free zone, taking account of international obligations, with a view to contributing to disarmament and peace." Parliamentary resolution on a national security policy for Iceland, Adopted by the Althingi (Iceland Parliament), 13 April 2016

27 Population of Canada is over 38 million https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/canada-population/ The Canadian Arctic covers 40% of Canada's territory and is home to more than 200,000 inhabitants, more than half of whom are Indigenous.Oct 11, 2022 https://www.international.gc.ca

28 Steven Chase Top soldier warns Canada's 'tenuous hold' on Arctic will come under challenge in decades ahead https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-canada-arctic-territories-russia-china/

well as better underwater presence to track foreign activity entering the Canadian Arctic region. The protection of remote geography is waning when it should be increasing. While there is no immediate threat, Gen. Eyre recognized that significant lead time is required to add capacity. Both China and Russia have clear intentions of increasing their presence in the Arctic regions for economic benefit and political influence. For Canada, this could pose a threat to sovereignty. There is, to date, no indication of increased spending on military support for the Arctic.

Canada has a new multibillion dollar agreement with the United States to modernize NORAD, where the technical capability is out-of-date. It requires capability to track foreign flights and incoming hypersonic missiles over the Arctic. NORTHCOM,[29] a U.S. military division, is mandated to include awareness of threats to Canadian territory. These defence programs recognize that a route over the Arctic Ocean is the way to deliver a missile or bomber attack to North America.

7. China, a "Near-Arctic Nation"

China published a policy paper in 2018 in which it declared itself to be a "near-Arctic nation". By 2013, it had obtained Observer status at the Arctic Council. Its Snow Dragon nuclear powered ice breaker was the first to cross the Arctic via the North Pole, and now several new icebreakers continue to be active in the Arctic, for 'research'. China is preparing to take advantage of the economic opportunities offered by shorter-route shipping and overall Arctic resources. It intends to establish a 'Polar Silk Road'. China's aspirations in the Arctic are also political and military. A Sino-Russia Arctic Research Center was created in 2019.

The Peoples Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) submarines, aircraft carriers and surface vessels have been noted in the north Pacific, [30] presumably to monitor U.S. military activity near Alaska. There have been extensive additions to all segments of China's naval fleet, making that country the possessor of the most modern ships globally.

China seeks to shape domestic politics in Arctic nations, where possible establishing a base of land operations. China operates a research station in northern Iceland. Chinese companies [31], using Chinese workers, have been involved in Greenlandic mining projects,

29 Eyeing Russia and China NORTHCOM head frets over US ability to respond to Arctic threats https://breakingdefense.com/2022/10/eyeing-russia-and-china-northcom-head-frets-over-us-ability-to-respond-to-arctic-threats/?utm_campaign=BD%20Daily&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=229501174&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8Pckxmh8MA-rH3oCcz8Z5PlAOY4Nx19t6a9fa6cVXayzN7A6hq3YIHjVAFqMtetvne2LtfGoD-LocMKYGhHFeFETfOAA&utm_content=229501174&utm_source=hs_email

30 China s counteraction sends warships into US waters https://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/nov/9/chinas-counteraction-sends-warships-into-us-waters/

31 Gad, U. P., Graugaard, N. D., Holgersen, A., Jacobsen, M., Lave, N. & Schriver, N., 2021, China's Arctic Engagement: Following the Polar Silk Road to Greenland and Russa - Selected Articles from the Arctic Yearbook. Barnes, J., Exner-Pirot, H., Heininen, L. & Lackenbauer, P. W. (eds.).Peterborough, Canada: NAADSN, p.136-168 .

but a proposed airport was rejected. China recently pursued a takeover of a zinc and gold mine in Canada with an inlet bordering on the Northwest Passage, but a Canadian Government review of the project refused the Chinese takeover. In the last few months Canada has ordered divestment [32] in three Canadian critical minerals companies owned by Chinese companies.

A summary [33] of China's Arctic activities and ambitions was recently published by the Brookings Institution. Since the start of the Ukraine war, Russia has relied on China [34] for cooperation in the Arctic. China and other Asian customers buy hydrocarbon products originating in Arctic Russia, thereby contributing to destabilization of the climate.

8. Cybersecurity

In recent years, Arctic communities have added communications capability, even in remote areas. Malicious cyberattacks are a possibility. Cyberattacks on infrastructure, for example, could have severe consequences compared to such events in the rest of the world. Equipment and/or expertise for recovery may not be available locally, resulting in significant delays in recovering vital services. In the pre-cyber period, communities had to be more self-sufficient; adding modern capability also introduced a new dependency.

An extensive network of undersea cables is the backbone of global communication. When a cable to Norway's Svalbard territory was cut, a backup cable was used until a repair could occur. However, it is still not known whether this was an accident or sabotage. A joint venture[35] has been concluded that will lay a cable on the Arctic seabed from Europe to Japan, speeding transmission. While benefits to Arctic communication will accrue, there is no assurance of outage protection or security measures to protect sensitive data.[36] In a very difficult physical environment, construction delays, cost overruns could be anticipated for over 20,000 km of cable, with estimated cost of $1.2 billion.[37]

32 Ottawa orders Chinese divestment in three Canadian critical minerals companies https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-sinomine-chengze-lithium-zangge-foreign-critical-minerals-divestment/

33 Northern expedition – China's Arctic activities and ambitions https://www.brookings.edu/research/northern-expedition-chinas-arctic-activities-and-ambitions/

34 China Russia Quietly Expanding Arctic Partnership https://news.usni.org/2022/10/11/china-russia-quietly-expanding-arctic-partnership-says-panel

35 Arctic data cables linking Europe to Japan secures first investment https:www.reuters.com/technology.arctic-data-cable-linking-europe-japan-secures-first-investment-2022-12-02/

36 Underneath the Ice Undersea Cables the Arctic Circle and International Security https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/underneath-ice-undersea-cables-arctic-circle-international-security/

37 What Will It Take to Connect the Arctic? $1.2 Billion, 10,000 Miles of Fiber-Optic Cable and Patience https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-will-it-take-to-connect-the-arctic-1-2-billion-10-000-miles-of-fiber-optic-cable-and-patience-2af75543

9. Conclusion

What happens in the Arctic does not stay in the Arctic – the reverse is also true. The present instability in the Arctic regions has been and continues to be caused by global geopolitics. Even climate change, more rapid in the Arctic, has its origins outside the Arctic.

The Chairship of the Arctic Council moves from Russia to Norway in May 2023, and two years later to the Kingdom of Denmark. Although Russia will still be excluded, the Arctic Council under Norway provides the opportunity to restore as much as is feasible of the pre-war work of the Arctic Council. Restoration of scientific collaboration could and should be a first step toward restoring stability.

The Permanent Participants (indigenous groups) could be a focal point for new and ongoing work. The Inuit Circumpolar Council includes a Russian group from the far northeast region of the country – perhaps informal inclusion might be feasible.

Some international agreements have continued in spite of the Russia -Ukraine conflict; the Search and Rescue Treaty, international Fishing Agreements are examples. This type of continuation may offer an opening to informally collaborate with some ongoing work of the Arctic Council.

The natural resources of Russia's Arctic region continue as a major economic support for the country. If Russia perceives that source of revenue is being limited by its war in Ukraine, then one might speculate that Russia would seek a negotiation to end the conflict.

Nordic countries, at Arctic conferences, were accustomed to describing the region as one of low military tension, but now that frequent military exercises are noted. [38]; multi-nation negotiation might be required. It is the responsibility of the international community to work together to restore the peaceful cooperation of the Arctic.

38 Arne Holm Mar 17 2023 Barely Anyone Talks of Low Tension in the Arctic Anymore https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/barely-anyone-talks-low-tension-arctic-anymore

Commentary

Strategic Nuclear Patrols and an Arctic Military Code of Conduct

Ernie Regehr

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
7(2) 2023, pp. 144 – 157

Abstract

While rising northern tensions clearly challenge notions of the Arctic as a durable zone of peace, current tensions are rooted in fears of a European conflict spilling northward, not in conflict endemic to the Arctic. Two decades of high north military expansion have certainly added to the region's strategic uncertainty, but more consequential are the currently increasing levels and pace of competing strategic patrols in the Arctic, especially those that undermine basic nuclear deterrence. Proposals for an Arctic code of conduct, designed to avoid provocative behaviour and reduce risks of accidental encounters escalating, seek to preserve the Arctic as a low-tension security environment, and proposals to constraint strategic patrols rest on the same principle. In particular U.S. anti-submarine warfare operations aimed at Russia's sea-based nuclear deterrent forces threaten the latter's second-strike forces and thus destabilize mutual strategic deterrence. Strategic ASW operations have been of enduring concern and have led to a succession of proposals to constrain such deployments. Those ideas, however, have never been elevated to sustained exploration or drawn into formal arms control negotiations. Early 2023 may not seem a propitious time to revive ideas of anti-submarine warfare constraint, but in the long term, strategic stability and resumed arms control and disarmament will require attention to them.

Keywords

Anti-submarine warfare, militarization, nuclear deterrence, strategic stability, zone of peace

About the author

Ernie Regehr is Senior Fellow in Defence Policy and Arctic Security with The Simons Foundation Canada, Research Fellow at the Centre for Peace Advancement, Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo, Ontario. He is co-founder and former Executive Director of Canada's Project Ploughshares.

1. Still low tension in the high north?

In the years immediately following the end of the Cold War, with the sharp decline in East-West tensions accompanied by significant declines in Russia's economic and military capacity in the north, the Arctic had essentially achieved Mikhail Gorbachev's vision of a high north zone of peace.[1]

It was a geopolitical calm that lingered for a decade and more, but by the early 2000s relations between Russia and the West had begun to fray. Even after Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, however, it was possible to still see the Arctic as a region of low-tension, owing largely to shared economic, scientific, and basic public safety interests.

Then came February 24, 2022 and the West vs Russia dynamic came to dominate all Arctic security questions. And yet, the spectre of the region falling into overt military conflict remains low. As recently as October 2022, eight months into Russia's escalated war on Ukraine, London's International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) still considered Arctic military conflict unlikely, though it did warn that "any clash between Russia and NATO [in Europe] would quickly spread northwards."[2]

The key point to acknowledge is that current Arctic tensions are a spillover from conflicts elsewhere, they are not the product of Arctic-specific issues or concerns. But in early 2023, the world is dangerously close to that spillover point. A direct NATO-Russia armed conflict in Europe is still unlikely, or at least avoidable, but it is clearly possible. And in that dangerous event, NATO would have powerful incentives to spread its attacks into the Arctic and Russia's Barents Sea bastion to try to inhibit the movement south of Russian forces into the North Atlantic to join the fight. At the same time, Russia could expect to be bent on denying NATO forces access to Russia's traditional Arctic operational zones and to try to drive into the North Atlantic to disrupt NATO in its traditional operational zone.

But absent all-out East-West war, Arctic security cooperation remains the ideal. There remains a broad sense that current efforts towards the political isolation of Russia in the Arctic will at some point have to give way and allow for all eight Arctic states to again convene around the Arctic Council table and for the region's military forces to once again be in dialogue and operationalize some measure of cooperation. Reaching that point is obviously not imminent, but the US Arctic Coordinator James DeHart has made the

1 Duncan Depledge, Mathieu Boulègue, Andrew Foxall, and Dmitriy Tulupov, "Why we need to talk about military activity in the Arctic: Towards an Arctic Military Code of Conduct," Arctic Yearbook, 2019. https://arcticyearbook.com/arctic-yearbook/2019/2019-briefing-notes/328-why-we-need-to-talk-about-military-activity-in-the-arctic-towards-an-arctic-military-code-of-conduct

2 "Arctic cooperation after Russia's break with the West," International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Strategic Comments, Volume 28, 20 October 2022. https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/2022/arctic-cooperation-after-russias-break-with-the-west#:~:text=Arctic%20cooperation%20after%20Russia%E2%80%99s%20break%20with%20the%20West,since%20-the%20invasion%20of%20Ukraine%20in%20February%202022.

essential point that the Arctic Council "holds its greatest value as a circumpolar forum including all the eight Arctic states."[3] And the post-invasion analysis by the IISS also remains encouraging: "…while cooperation may give way to greater competition, the overall strategic stability of the Arctic is likely to remain."[4]

The Arctic itself is not now a zone of peace, but neither is it a zone of endemic conflict.

2. Military infrastructure and regional tensions

The tensions that have bled into the Arctic are obviously not eased by Russia's decades-long revival of military facilities along the full length of its extensive Arctic coast and on its Arctic Ocean archipelagos (Figure 1). But attitudes towards those installations are heavily influenced by the global strategic climate. In a stable, low tension strategic environment, new Russian installations were broadly accepted as the expected expansion of military capacity commensurate with the region's rising commercial activity, population, accessibility (Figure 1 identifies, for example, designated emergency response centres), and Russia's recognized interest in demonstrating an intention to reclaim its role as a significant global player, not least in the Arctic. Now that global tensions have dramatically risen, perceptions of Russia's Arctic militarization as relatively benign have shifted to suspicious and threatening. Of course, there is a welcome corollary to those shifting perceptions – when tensions in the rest of the world ease, so too will they in the Arctic. In other words, the Arctic is not burdened by the kinds of deep political, economic, or military conflicts that would sustain Cold War-style dynamics after the rest of the world returned to a saner equilibrium.

Russia's Arctic remilitarization outside the Kola Peninsula is prominently a response to domestic requirements and focused on sovereignty protection and frontier patrols, emergency responses and public safety, managing the expanding local and intercontinental transportation through its Arctic Ocean exclusive economic zone, and improved domain awareness. Such facilities, as the IISS notes, are "primarily designed to protect military and economic infrastructure, provide search and rescue and establish control and presence along the increasingly ice-free Northern sea route." [5]

It is the kind of aid to civilian authorities that is a key feature of all northern military forces. As the Arctic Yearbook puts it, "…the logistical difficulty and expense of operating in the Arctic is such that there is an even greater need for armed forces to provide 'soft' security services in the region than elsewhere." [6]

3 "USA's Arctic Coordinator: 'We Do Not Want to Change the Structure or Membership of the Arctic Council'," High North News, 18 May 2022. https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/usas-arctic-coordinator-we-do-not-want-change-structure-or-membership-arctic-council

4 "Arctic cooperation after Russia's break with the West," IISS. October 2022.

5 "Arctic cooperation after Russia's break with the West," IISS. October 2022.

6 Depledge, et al, 2019.

Figure 1. Russia's decades-long revival of military facilities along the full length of its extensive Arctic coast and on its Arctic Ocean archipelagos.

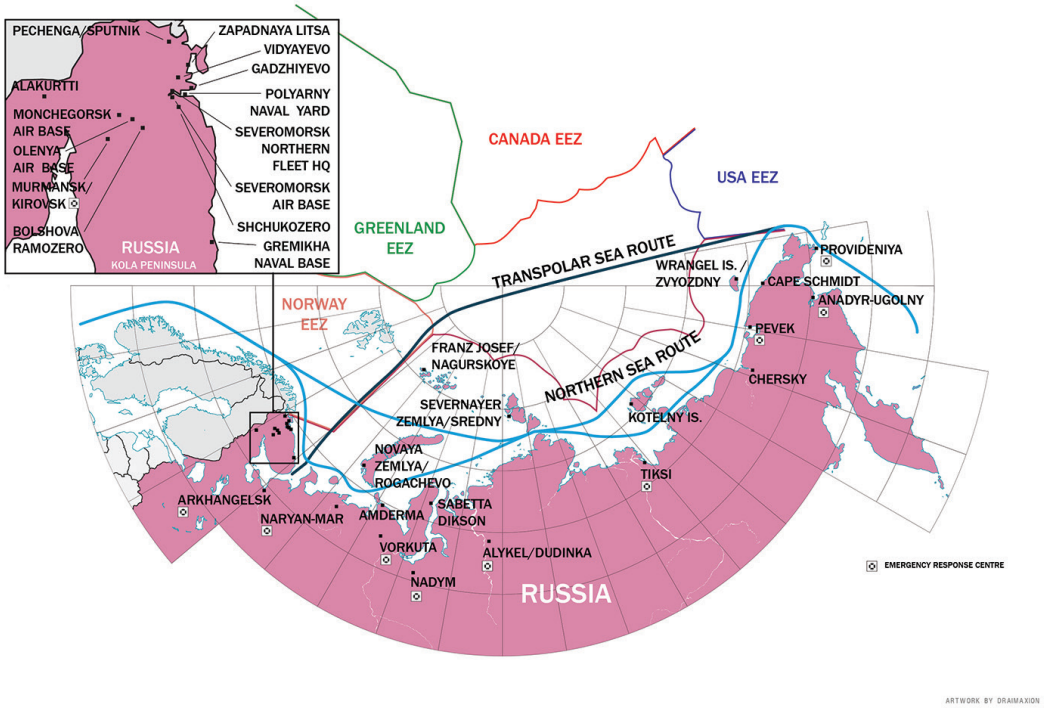


Figure 2. Continually staffed military facilities throughout the Arctic region.

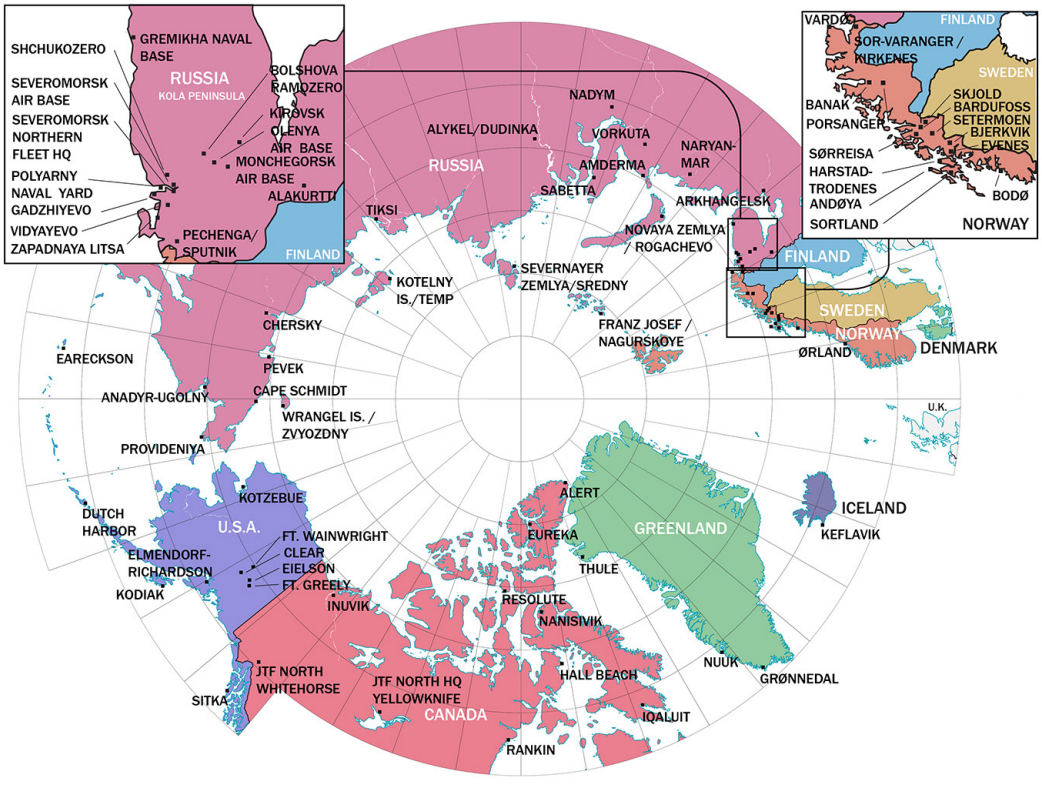


Figure 2 shows some 70 continually staffed military facilities throughout the Arctic region. While there are some variations in facilities listed, most reporting and analysis arrives at similar numbers. There are hundreds more unstaffed sites (radars, storage sites, communication nodes, etc.), but existing staffed facilities include: Canada 9, Greenland 3, Norway 15, Russia 32, US 10, Iceland 1. These are all northern sites, though some, like most Alaska sites, are below the Arctic Circle.

Russian and American strategic forces are clearly capable of projecting power into international waters and air space and for Russia there is a particular interest in asserting its access to the North Atlantic. The Kola Peninsula-based Northern Fleet and air bases are joined by the non-Kola bases of Nagurskoye, Rogachevo, and Sredny Ostrav with air defence and anti-ship systems intended, as noted above, to support operations southward into the North Atlantic and beyond and to intercept NATO advances northward in the event of a Russia/NATO war.

The non-Russian Arctic is also on a militarization trajectory that both responds to and feeds growing perceptions of threat and insecurity – the classic security dilemma by which military reinforcements to enhance one side's defences lead to an increased sense of threat in the other, which in turn leads to further military build up. It's a cycle of reciprocal military moves that fuel a mutually reinforced sense of vulnerability. As a Chatham House analysis concludes, "the military activity of the US and its allies is feeding Russia's sense of encirclement, 'justifying' the expansion of the Kremlin's own militarization efforts, which in turn informs Western policy decisions to further toughen posture, increase numbers, and grow presence."[7]

3. Military conduct and strategic tensions

While expanding military installations can and do escalate tensions, actual military operations send more immediate and, in the present circumstances, threatening signals. UK analysts Mathieu Boulègue and Duncan Depledge, call for an Arctic code of military conduct and point out the kind of Russian conduct that should be regarded as "unacceptable" in peacetime, including, "simulated airstrike formation against Norwegian military assets, and GPS jamming in northern Finland and Norway." [8] At the same time Russia has reacted strongly to US patrols into the Barents Sea close to its Kola Peninsula stronghold.[9] In their proposal, included in the 2019 Arctic Yearbook, Boulègue and Depledge elaborate two

7 Mathieu Boulègue and Duncan Depledge, "New military security architecture needed in the Arctic," International Affairs Think Tank. Chatham House, 4 May 2021. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/05/new-military-security-architecture-needed-arctic

8 Boulègue and Depledge, 04 May 2021.

9 David B. Larter, "The US Navy returns to an increasingly militarized Arctic," Defense News, 12 May 2020. https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2020/05/11/the-us-navy-returns-to-an-increasingly-militarized-arctic/

main elements of a code of conduct – defining "the red lines of military activities in the northern high latitudes," and creating "a dialogue mechanism that would promote greater transparency and lay the ground for a less conflict-prone relationship between NATO and Russia in the region"[10] – the broad objective being to preserve the Arctic as a low-tension security environment.

Military conduct code proposals necessarily address day-to-day operations that can create irritants and lead to mishaps and perceived provocations that risk igniting clashes when competing or hostile forces operate in close proximity in climates of high tension. Strategic patrols are focused less on the regional environment and more on strategic impacts well beyond the region, and thus have major implications for geopolitical stability and should be similarly guided by normative rules of the road. Naval freedom of navigation operations, competing operations regarding the North Atlantic, and threats to second strike deterrent forces are three kinds of strategic operations to be reined in.

3.1 Freedom of navigation patrols

Arctic "Freedom of navigation" (FON) patrols are actually an important example of one kind of conflict spillover into the Arctic from disputes and insecurities faced elsewhere. Worried about attempts to claim international waters as territorial waters in places like the South China Sea and the Strait of Hormuz, the US is bent on having the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route recognized as international waterways, not because they are of direct vital interest to the US, but to prevent any precedent that could restrict operations elsewhere. Thus, Arctic Today reports that the US National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 requires the US Coast Guard to report to Congress in the next years "on the feasibility and timeline for Northern Sea Route transit, as well as 'periodic transits' of the Northwest Passage."[11] The report indicates it is unclear whether an NSR voyage would be under Russia's rules or would be a FON operation. If the latter, it would be politically provocative and a challenge to a new Russian law that seeks to prevent FON exercises along the Northern Sea Route. The Russian law would require advance notice of trips, and prohibit more than one state-owned vessel at a time.[12]

The US Navy's January 2021 "strategic blueprint" for the Arctic[13] proposed that the Navy "operate more assertively across the Arctic Region to prevail in day-to-day competition"

10 Depledge, et al, 2019.
11 Melody Schreiber, "Latest US defense bill considers a Northern Sea Route transit," Arctic Today, 22 December 2022. https://www.arctictoday.com/latest-us-defense-bill-considers-a-northern-sea-route-transit-more-icebreakers/
12 Melody Schreiber, 22 December 2022.
13 A Strategic Blueprint for the Navy. https://media.defense.gov/2021/Jan/05/2002560338/-1/-1/0/ARCTIC%20BLUEPRINT%202021%20FINAL.PDF/ARCTIC%20BLUEPRINT%202021%20FINAL.PDF

and to "keep Arctic seas free and open." Earlier, the Navy explained that as an Arctic nation, the US "has enduring security interests" there, and that includes a perceived need "to ensure an open Arctic by continuing freedom of navigation and overflight through the region."[14] But in fact, the American interest is more in pressing the "principle of freedom of navigation in all areas of the oceans"[15] than it is in any practical access to the Northern Sea Route waters, which are now used primarily for shipments from Russia's northern gas and oil fields, and not in any urgent sense vital to US commerce or security.[16]

Furthermore, not all are convinced that FON patrols are the appropriate means by which the principle can be upheld. Such operations could trigger more assertive Russian behavior in the region generally. Sending warships is excessive inasmuch as they signal a willingness on the part of the US to tolerate higher risk.[17]

In any event, neither the US Navy nor the Coast Guard now have the icebreakers for such FON voyages along the NSR through large sections of Russia's exclusive economic zone. In the event of an emergency, the American vessels would probably find themselves facing the embarrassing irony of having to turn to Russia for help.[18] Any American ship trying to sail the Northern Sea Route would find it "a long voyage through hazardous conditions," says Rebecca Pinkus, director of the Wilson Center's Polar Institute, "especially on the eastern part of the route – with unpredictable ice conditions, bad weather, and close proximity to Russian forces during a time of extremely high tensions."[19]

The prominent American foreign policy academic and analyst Stephen Walt has observed that the US can't stop doing "stupid" things even if it wants to[20] because its bloated military establishment always gives it the capacity to get involved in one way or another, making imprudent actions inevitable. But in the case of its temptation to conduct freedom of navigation voyages along the Northern Sea Route, the dearth of American

14 Harry Lye, "US Navy returns to the Barents Sea," Naval Technology, 05 May 2020. https://www.naval-technology.com/features/us-navy-returns-to-the-barents-sea/

15 Pavel Gudev, "China, USA, Russia and the Code of Conduct in the Arctic," Valdai Club. 11 June 2020. https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/china-usa-russia-and-the-code-of-conduct/

16 Arild Moe, "A new Russian policy for the Northern sea route? State interests, key stakeholders and economic opportunities in changing times," The Polar Journal, 2020, Vol. 10, No. 2, 209–227. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/2154896X.2020.1799611?needAccess=true&role=button

17 Joshua Tallis, "The future of US Arctic interests will be written in its naval movements," Arctic Today, 26 May 2022. https://www.arctictoday.com/the-future-of-us-arctic-interests-will-be-written-in-its-naval-movements/#:~:text=The%20future%20of%20US%20Arctic%20interests%20will%20be,future%20U.S.%20security%20policy%20in%20the%20Arctic.%20By

18 Pavel Gudev, 11 June 2020.

19 David B. Larter, "The US Navy returns to an increasingly militarized Arctic," Defense News, 12 May 2020. https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2020/05/11/the-us-navy-returns-to-an-increasingly-militarized-arctic/

20 Stephen M. Walt, "The United States Couldn't Stop Being Stupid if It Wanted To," Foreign Policy, 13 December 2022. https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/12/13/the-united-states-couldnt-stop-being-stupid-if-it-wanted-to/

icebreaking capacity may well protect it from itself for some time to come – perhaps even enough time to pursue other solutions, like the Canada/US agree-to-disagree arrangement for the Northwest Passage.

3.2 North Atlantic operations

Competing operations in the North Atlantic were dramatized in 2019 when a fleet of 10 Russian submarines headed from their Kola bases into the North Atlantic on an exercise described by The War Zone[21] as including the testing of new weapons, demonstrating the capabilities of the various submarines involved, and testing the abilities of U.S. and NATO to track the Russian forces in the GIUK Gap – the strategic bottleneck between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom. The extent to which Russian subs can break through that gap undetected is the degree to which they can operate freely in the Atlantic against Europe/North American shipping routes and directly threatening land targets on both sides of the Atlantic.[22]

In 2022, the Russian frigate Admiral Gorshkov patrolled along the Norwegian coast from the Barents Sea to the North Sea, the Russian missile cruiser Marshal Ustinov along with a frigate and helicopter conducted anti-submarine warfare training in the Norwegian Sea, and Russian forces test-launched a Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile from within the Norwegian exclusive economic zone and the White Sea.[23]

Since Arctic approaches to the North Atlantic are similarly a key focus for NATO navies, "the potential for miscalculation, accident, and confrontation"[24] in what has again become one of the more hotly contested of maritime regions has once more become significant. NATO countries with relevant capabilities carry out anti-submarine warfare operations in the region. In mid-2021 the US and four allied navies sent surface combatants, submarines, and amphibious vessels on North Atlantic anti-submarine warfare patrols and practiced amphibious landings. In November 2022 the US tested long-range cruise missiles in Norway and the North Atlantic, in August the UK flew electronic surveillance aircraft over the Barents and in March a UK aircraft carrier conducted cold weather tests in the Norwegian Sea.[25]

21 Tyler Rogoway, "Russia Sends Ten Subs Into North Atlantic In Drill Unprecedented In Size Since Cold War," The War Zone, 29 October 2019. https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/30728/russia-sends-ten-subs-into-north-atlantic-in-drill-unprecedented-in-size-since-cold-war

22 PO. Peter Ong, "US Navy Reports on Arctic and North Atlantic," Naval News, 20 February 2021. https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2021/02/u-s-navy-reports-on-arctic-and-north-atlantic/

23 Operations listed in the CSIS Arctic Military Tracker. https://arcticmilitarytracker.csis.org

24 Boulègue and Depledge, 04 May 2021.

25 Operations listed in the CSIs Arctic Military Tracker. https://arcticmilitarytracker.csis.org

3.3 Threats to second-strike deterrent forces

Threats to second strike deterrent forces are a third and particularly egregious way in which strategic operations in the Arctic are destabilizing. The Barents Sea is broadly seen by Russia as a bastion (Figure 3), its core stretching into the Kara and Norwegians Seas, within which its forces operate under the protection of heightened perimeter and internal defences. Russian naval forces based at the Kola Peninsula also rely on the Barents Sea for mustering naval forces assigned to press southward into the North Atlantic, seeing the waters of the Barents and Norwegian seas as a forward defence zone against NATO, and most importantly as the primary operational zone for Russian nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). The key mission of the latter is to steer clear of the West's attack submarines and provide Russia with a guaranteed second-strike or retaliatory nuclear capability in the event of a nuclear attack on Russia.

Russia's strategic objectives for the Barents thus mean it has a significant interest in building up defence capabilities linked to the Barents Sea as a bastion defence zone – meaning that in a crisis, Russia could be expected to "quickly seek to dominate its immediate vicinity, including the Barents and Norwegian seas, and establish a protective perimeter through sea and air denial,"[26] with the ambition of extending that perimeter all the way to the GIUK gap.

Since the end of the Cold War the US and its allies had not operated into the Barents Sea, by implication respecting the Russian bastion. David Larter, a former US submarine officer who is now a senior fellow with the Hudson Institute in Washington, says the Americans had stayed away long enough for the Russians to consider that the Barents, Kara, and White Seas had become a kind of "free zone for Russian submarine operations."[27] Despite now expecting incursions, Russia retains a primary strategic interest in maintaining a defendable zone or bastion in those seas where its second-strike retaliatory forces will not be threatened – just as the US has an interest in sheltering its SSBNs from attack by Russian/Chinese attack subs and uses both the vastness of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, as well as some heavily protected areas closer to home bases, to that end.

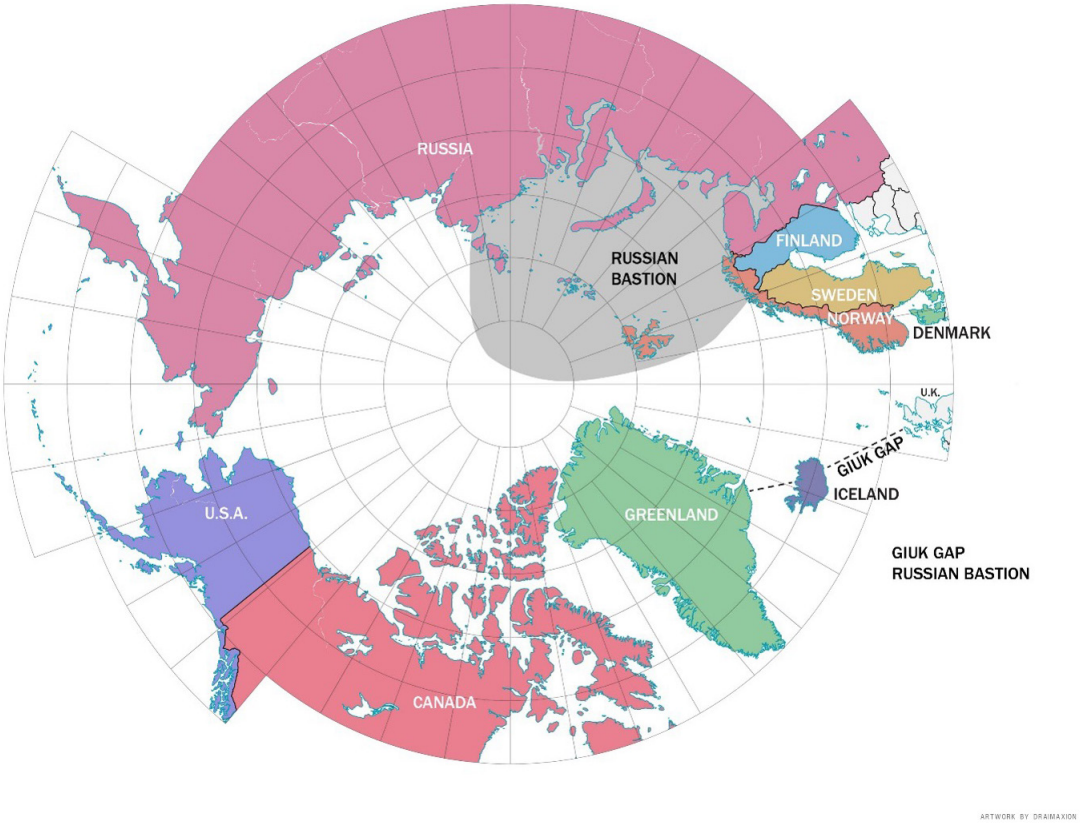
So when in May 2020 US and UK ships entered the Barents Sea, it was taken by Russia as a Western incursion into "Russia's backyard,"[28] and a signal that Barents Sea incursions would now "become a habit."[29] Also in 2020, NATO hosted the major Cold Response exercise with a maritime force presence off the coast of Norway, and Iceland hosted a US-

26 "Arctic cooperation after Russia's break with the West," IISS. October 2022.
27 David B. Larter, 12 May 2020.
28 Harry Lye, 05 May 2020.
29 David B. Larter, 12 May 2020.

planned multilateral exercise in the North Atlantic (Northern Viking).[30] The US Navy carries out submarine patrols into the Arctic through the biannual ICEX operation, and in March 2022 the attack submarine, the USS Pasadena, surfaced in the Beaufort Sea, far from the Russian bastion, but still sending a message.[31]

Then there is China. In the late summer of 2021 four Chinese military vessels ventured to within less than 50 miles of the Aleutian Islands. The Chinese ships, while observing international law and norms, were identified as a guided missile cruiser, a guided missile destroyer, a general intelligence vessel, and an auxiliary vessel.[32] Waters off the Aleutians are not a bastion, but they are regarded as familiar and basically secure waters by the US that should be navigable and free from military harassment. Making them a contested zone does not advance strategic stability.

Figure 3. Russia's operational bastion and the Greenland-Iceland-UK Gap.



30 Joshua Tallis, 26 May 2022.

31 "Navy launches Ice Exercise 2022 in the Arctic Ocean," US Navy Press Office, 06 March 2022. https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2956507/navy-launches-ice-exercise-2022-in-the-arctic-ocean/

32 Melody Schreiber, "A US Coast Guard patol unexpectedly encountered Chhinese warships near Alaska's Aleutian Islands," Arctic Today, 16 September 2021. https://www.arctictoday.com/a-us-coast-guard-patrol-unexpectedly-encountered-chinese-warships-near-alaskas-aleutian-islands/

4. A military code of conduct for strategic patrols

Proposals for an Arctic Military Code pre-date February 24/22, and while the idea is now obviously a much harder sell, it is hardly less relevant or urgent.

The basic principle of developing rules of conduct for military patrols has relevance for freedom of navigation voyages, patrols to penetrate naval bastions and air defence identification zones, and strategic anti-submarine patrols targeting Russian SSBNs.

The latter missions are particularly reckless efforts to undermine nuclear deterrence. Nuclear deterrence is obviously a high stakes strategy of threatening devastating nuclear attacks on an adversary to deter it from resorting to devastating nuclear attack in the first place. For nuclear abolitionists that is hardly a compelling foundation for global security, but as long as it is the system that prevails, it is in no one's interest to destabilize it.

Stable deterrence depends on nuclear adversaries having the capacity to retaliate after suffering an initial nuclear attack. No matter the extent of the destruction that could be inflicted, the potential attacker has to expect an equally devastating retaliatory attack. That familiar deterrence formula is of course mutually assured destruction that is intended to remove any incentive to initiate nuclear attack. But if either side's capacity to launch a devastating retaliatory attack, or a second strike, is threatened or undermined, then instead of being deterred, it may conclude that if it cannot deter through its own assured counter-attack, it would have to seek advantage in either building up its nuclear arsenal of second strike forces or by adopting a strategy for using its nuclear forces first, before they could be attacked and taken out (the use 'em or lose 'em logic).

The United States and its Western allies should thus see that the logic of deterrence is for Russia to have an assured second-strike capability. Nevertheless, and inexplicably so, the Pentagon is now committed, as it reiterated in a 2018 Navy report, to deploying attack submarines, including to the Arctic, so as to "hold the adversary's strategic assets at risk from the undersea,"[33] explicitly including SSBN forces. That, in combination with the nascent US strategic missile defence deployments, leads Russia to increased worries about the vulnerability and effectiveness of its sea-based second-strike forces.

One way to preserve deterrence stability would thus be to establish zones free of anti-submarine warfare operations (ASW-free zones) as a means to limiting threats to second-strike forces. While such proposals have never been a prominent focus of arms control talks, the idea nevertheless emerges from time to time.

33 "Commander's Intent for the United States Submarine Force and Supporting Organizations," Commander, US Submarine Forces, March 2018. https://www.csp.navy.mil/Portals/2/documents/about/Commanders-Intent-201803.pdf#:~:text=This%20Commander%E2%80%99s%20Intent%20is%20addressed%20to%20submarine%20crews,and%20direction%2C%20and%20their%20role%20in%20achieving%20them.

Canadian analyst Ron Purver's 1983 essay[34] reviewed four possible types of limits on ASW operations or capabilities. The options included prohibitions on active trailing and continuous tracking of SSBNs, establishing SSBN sanctuaries, inventory limits on the number and capabilities of ASW vehicles (particularly nuclear-powered attack submarines), and limitations on detection devices. He concluded, after investigating the details of each option, that "pessimism about the prospects of negotiated restraints in this field" was warranted, but he did consider that, of the four options, ASW-free zones did have the most promise.

He considered verification of ASW-free zones to be broadly feasible. In ASW-free zone discussions, proposed locations tended to focus on the Barents Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk for the then USSR, and the Gulf of Alaska one such zone for the United States. Locations in coastal zones made defence more practical. While the USSR was more oriented toward and dependent on such SSBN sanctuaries, Purver concluded that "mutual sanctuaries might be envisioned in conjunction with a drastically revised United States strategy of concentrating its own SSBNs closer to home waters."

A similar proposal to limit strategic offence against sea-based second strike deterrent forces was a feature of the well-known Murmansk Initiative put forward by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987.[35] He proposed that NATO and the Warsaw Pact pursue a general posture of "scaling down naval and air activities in the Baltic, Northern, Norwegian and Greenland Seas," and he particularly advocated mutual "arrangements on the limitation of rivalry in anti-submarine weapons."[36]

A 1992 paper for the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies explored mutual US/Russia reductions in attack submarine inventories as a way of reducing US/NATO threats against Russian SSBNs and Russian threats to North Atlantic sea lanes.[37] The authors emphasized the complication particular to the Barents bastion, since agreeing to a sanctuary for SSBNs would give the same sanctuary to Russian SSNs and related naval forces from which to threaten the North Atlantic. Then in 2009 a joint paper by two well-known Russian and American academic arms control experts, Anatoli Diakov and Frank Von Hippel, proposed but did not elaborate on an arrangement whereby Russia would confine its northern SSBN

34 Ron Purver, "The Control of Strategic Anti-Submarine Warfare," International Journal, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Summer 1983). https://www-jstor-org.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/stable/40202159?seq=23

35 Kristian Åtland, "Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic," Cooperation and Conflict, September 2008 43: 289-311. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45084526

36 Text of Gorbachev's 1987 speech in Murmansk. https://vdocuments.mx/mikhail-gorbachevs-speech-in-murmansk-at-the-.html?page=1

37 Tonne Huistfeldt, Tomas Ries, Gunvald Øyna, "Strategic Interests in the Arctic," Institut for Forsvasstudies (Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies), 4/1992. https://fhs.brage.unit.no/fhs-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/99709/FS0492.pdf

fleet to the Barents Sea and the US would not operate attack submarines on the Russian side of the Arctic.[38]

In 2020 Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda of the Federation of American Scientist considered the possibility of "drawing up operational norms" through which adversaries could agree "not to harass or trail SSBNs." They pointed to the Incident at Sea Agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States that sets limits on dangerous operations. An agreement not to trail SSBNs would involve essentially the same principle taken further.[39]

Bradford Dismukes, a retired U.S. Naval Reserve officer, wrote in Naval War College Review that "the United States should avoid threatening Russian SSBNs in almost all conceivable circumstances." He called on the Navy to set out a strategy regarding adversary SSBNs that would "paradoxically" seek to minimize, not maximize, "the threat that U.S. forces may pose."[40] The Australian scholar on Indo-Pacific affairs, Benjamin Zala, has also explored "restraint in the deployment of ASW capabilities" as one way to increase strategic stability.[41]

Limiting ASW operations has been a persistent, though not prominent, nuclear arms control and disarmament theme – suggesting it is time to explore the idea further. One inevitable response to proposals to place geographic or other limits on strategic anti-submarine warfare operations or capabilities is that superpowers simply aren't inclined to accept limits on their capacities – they go where they want to go and don't put arbitrary limits on their actions. But of course, they do accept limits on their actions and capacities. That's the point of any arms control agreement. As well, the US has to date notably limited the number of ballistic missile defence interceptors it deploys in its homeland ground-based mid-course interception missile defence system (GMD). The 2022 Missile Defense Review[42] repeats earlier explanations that the GMD system is there to provide protection

38 Anatoli Diakov and Frank Von Hippel, "Challenges and Opportunities for Russia-U.S. Nuclear Arms Control, A Century Foundation Report," The Century Foundation (New York, Washington, 2009), pp. 15-16.

39 Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, "Arms Control and Sea-Launched Nuclear Weapons," The Future of the Undersea Deterrent: A Global Survey, February 2020. Edited by Rory Medcalf, Katherine Mansted, Stephan Frühling and James Goldric (National Security College, The Australian National University). https://nsc.crawford.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publication/nsc_crawford_anu_edu_au/2020-02/the_future_of_the_undersea_deterrent.pdf

40 Bradford Dismukes (U.S. Naval Reserve Ret.), "The Return of Great-Power Competition—Cold War Lessons about Strategic Antisubmarine Warfare and Defense of Sea Lines of Communication" (Naval War College Review, Volume 73, Number 3, Summer 2020. https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=8127&context=nwc-review

41 Benjamin Zala, "Strategic Non-Nuclear Weapons, SSBNs, and the New Search for Strategic Stability," The Future of the Undersea Deterrent: A Global Survey, February 2020. Edited by Rory Medcalf, Katherine Mansted, Stephan Frühling and James Goldric (National Security College, The Australian National University). https://nsc.crawford.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publication/nsc_crawford_anu_edu_au/2020-02/the_future_of_the_undersea_deterrent.pdf

42 The National Defense Strategy, Nuclear Posture Review, and Missile Defense Review are combined into a single publication in 2022. https://media.defense.gov/2022/Oct/27/2003103845/-1/-1/1/2022-NATIONAL-DEFENSE-STRATEGY-NPR-MDR.PDF

only from North Korean and Iranian missile threats. The point is to assure Russia and China that the US is not trying to develop the capacity to intercept Russia or Chinese second strike retaliatory or deterrent forces – and that the US response to those forces/threats relies on established deterrence arrangements.

That of course begs an obvious question. Given the voluntary limits on strikes against Russian strategic missile attacks, why should similar limits on strikes against their Arctic-based submarine nuclear forces be regarded as ideologically or strategically unacceptable?

It obviously has to be acknowledged that the early 2023 context of rising tensions is unlikely to be conducive to an outbreak of the level of strategic sanity that ASW limits require. But it is those very tensions and the logic of their own respective deterrence requirements that should move the US and Russia to explore alternatives to their dangerous military maneuvering in the North Atlantic and Barents Sea. Furthermore, and importantly so, their respective friends and allies should, as a matter of some urgency, be prodding them to rethink and shift course.

In a climate that is not currently conducive to official progress, Benjamin Zala proposes "both Track II and eventually Track 1.5 talks on practical confidence-building measures in this area." Such engagements, he adds, should include "discussions around ASW, SSBNs, and strategic stability."[43] While his focus is the Indo-Pacific, the point applies as readily to the Arctic, the Baltic Sea, and the North Atlantic.

More than 50 years ago, in the context of Cold War arms racing and the search for restraint, the venerable Canadian historian James Eayrs insisted that while the major powers may have a monopoly on sheer force and destructive power, they "enjoy no monopoly over ideas." And, he concluded, though "the foreign minister of a small state may not be able to summon a gunboat in aid of …diplomacy, to carry a big stick let alone to brandish it, [he/she] can carry a briefcase well enough, and stock it with proposals."[44]

A perilous international security environment impacts the Arctic, but that doesn't mean the Arctic is the source of that peril. Indeed, the Arctic could yet be a positive force for stepping back from the current divides. "Given the shared interests in the area," says the 2022 IISS analysis, "if there is to be any thawing in relations with Russia – albeit probably not for quite some time – the Arctic may be a space to watch"[45] – and a place to act.

43 Benjamin Zala, February 2020.

44 James Eayrs, Fate and Will in Foreign Policy (Toronto: Seven Talks for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1967), p. 84. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Fate-and-will-in-foreign-policy-Eayrs/37bf273c462a7265fca3a43b364ce8396b4cf4f0

45 "Arctic cooperation after Russia's break with the West," International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Strategic Comments, Volume 28, 20 October 2022. https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/2022/arctic-cooperation-after-russias-break-with-the-west#:~:text=Arctic%20cooperation%20after%20Russia%E2%80%99s%20break%20with%20the%20West,since%20-the%20invasion%20of%20Ukraine%20in%20February%202022.

Commentary

A Cooperative Regime for the Arctic: Addressing Sea Lines of Communication and Nuclear Weapons

Sverre Lodgaard

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
7(2) 2023, pp. 158 – 164

Abstract

The UN Convention on the Law of the Seas has established a solid legal foundation for Arctic activities, but it does not prevent the geopolitical rivalry between the USA, China and Russia from extending into the region. Joint action to alleviate upcoming tensions are presently on hold because of the war in Ukraine, but in the meantime, cooperative approaches are worth exploring. Two interrelated issues merit particular attention: how to protect sea lines of communication (SLOCs) without triggering big power conflict, and how to deal with the problems posed by nuclear weapons.

Keywords

Arctic, geopolitics, sea lines of communication, nuclear, regime

About the author

Sverre Lodgaard, Senior Research Fellow and former Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

1. A virgin area turning crowded

A new ocean is emerging in the Arctic. Forecasts indicate that by 2040, the Polar Basin will be completely free of summer ice except for Northern Greenland and the Ellesmere islands, providing access to resources and opening new lines of transport amid a range of serious environmental concerns.[1] The two biggest trading blocs – China and the EU – may benefit greatly from transport routes between Asia and Europe that are much shorter than the current ones, and many nations will be keen to exploit natural resources in the area.

Russia has positioned itself for years. It possesses a formidable body of knowledge about Arctic matters; its Northern fleet is conducting frequent patrols along the Siberian coast, and a separate combined arms unit has been established to protect its political and economic interests. It has an impressive fleet of icebreakers and is about to introduce nuclear-propelled coast guard ships tailored to Arctic conditions.[2]

The United States has been a slow starter but is waking up to the economic prospects and geopolitical challenges. In October 2022, the US Government released a new National Strategy for the Arctic. Driven by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the growing rivalry with China, security is the number one concern and the means are primarily military. The Arctic Council is still seen as the premier forum for discussion of Arctic affairs, but it is unlikely to be the preferred forum for high table diplomacy on security affairs.

The Chinese navy has undergone an unprecedented build-up and has arguably become the second most powerful in the world. Naturally, China takes a growing interest in the resource potentials of the Arctic, and an Arctic silk-way may emerge in the not-so-distant future. So far, however, China has been content to let Russia do the groundwork for realization of the resource and transport potentials north of Siberia.

The EU has great stakes in Arctic affairs. It is one of the largest markets in the world and is close to the Arctic, with three member states (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) being Arctic States. The 2021 strategy for the Arctic emphasizes sustainable use of resources and is well integrated with the Union's goal of zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In disputes of resource exploitation versus preservation it promises to be a strong voice for preservation, but it has neither membership nor observer status with the Arctic Council. The Union is no effective geopolitical actor, but big member states may see fit to engage militarily in the High North.

The new ocean may therefore be a crowded one before long.

1 World Economic Forum, 2017. "The Artic could be ice free by 2040", https://www.weforum.org/.../2017/05/the-arctic-could-be-ice-free …Last updated 07-02-2023.

2 Berg, John. 2023. "Putin vil eie Arktis." Oslo: Aftenposten, 4.January. The first one, Ivan Papanin, is supposed to be ready in 2023 and the second, Nikolai Zubov, in 2024. They are to be equipped with Kalibr cruise missiles.

2. Geopolitics in the Arctic

The world is transitioning from one order to something else we do not yet know. Existing rules, norms and institutions are eroding, and new ones emerge. In the process, much is at stake – much more than usual. A handful of big powers are doing their very best to defend and promote their interests and shape a new order to their liking, and the rivalry between them is intense. In the past, world orders were established after major wars, during short periods of opportunity.[3] Now, the transition is a protracted one that may last for decades.

In this turbulent and conflict-ridden process, a rapidly growing number of states take a keen interest in the potentials that an open Arctic Ocean offers. The risk is that the Arctic, too, will become a geopolitical battleground.

The global geopolitical competition centers more and more on the relationship between the USA and China. Generally, the US advantage is its unprecedented military power and its control of the international financial system. The latter enables it to impose sanctions on friends as well as foes. In addition, it has 35 allies in NATO and East Asia. Translated to the Arctic, the ambition is to regain military dominance in the region.[4] Nothing less would do for a nation bent on full spectrum superiority in military high technology.

China is making great strides on the World Island (Asia, the Middle East and Africa)[5] by economic means, taking advantage of the fact that the US has become protectionist. Previously, US national security documents always emphasized that free trade was key to the maintenance of US hegemony. Now, that field has been left for China to exploit. China is at the center of the largest multilateral free-trade agreement in the world[6], seeks participation in others, and in the period 2013-2021 a total of more than 1,500 billion dollars has been invested in Silkroad projects.[7] Also, the Chinese state is rich while in the US the fortunes are in private hands, meaning that China's maneuvering capability surpasses that of the US. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which is centered on China, has become the common institutional denominator for a growing number of members, observers and dialog partners in Asia and the Middle East.

3 Usually lasting a few years only. These are periods that allow the parties to move ahead in new and more constructive directions because the war rendered previous practices irrelevant.

4 US Army Arctic Strategy, 2021. "Regaining dominance in the Arctic". https://sof.news/defense/army-arctic-strategy.

5 Mackinder, Halford John. 1904. "The Geographical Pivot of History", London: Royal Geographic Society.

6 The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

7 Biden's Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity hardly deserves the label 'free-trade agreement' but was as far as he dared to go given the protectionist sentiments at home. The China-centred Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership is the largest free-trade agreement in the world, and China has applied for membership in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Transpacific Partnership, the successor to Obama's Transpacific Partnership agreement, which Trump torpedoed (the US has not). For an excellent article on what this means for the rivalry between the USA and China, see Bildt, Carl. 2022. «How China Will Achieve Hegemony». Project Syndicate (November 17).

One part of the rivalry in the Arctic is therefore likely to be a military competition between the USA and Russia. Today, the US profile in the region is lagging in relation to Russia's, but the gap in military funding and available technologies is such that the relationship can be turned around rather quickly. If so, the Russian retaliatory capabilities on the Kola peninsula may be more exposed to US horizontal escalation strategies, affecting the Nordic countries as well.[8] Another part, not imminent, may be about Chinese exploitation of the resource potentials. To contain and prevent it, the US is in a position to impose sanctions on Chinese firms and foreign partners. So far US sanctions are biting, but their effectiveness is on the decline.[9]

3. Sea lines of communication

The big maritime powers have always tried to control the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs). They have done so for more than 200 years – first the British and then the Americans. There have been four main objectives: to create respect for international rules and conventions; to keep the SLOCs free from pirates and other minor disturbances; to enforce blockades; and to cut the adversary's supply lines in times of war and secure one's own. The latter are wartime tasks while the former are assumed to be in the global common interest. However, the big powers are themselves the most likely violators of the rules, and we are still waiting for the USA to ratify the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas.

By 2040 if not before, three large navies may be sailing in the Arctic under the pretense of protecting the SLOCs. Other countries will also extend their activities toward the Polar basin as the ice is melting, using naval units and coast guard vessels.

4. Nuclear issues

The US and Soviet/Russian Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNIs) of 1991/1992 removed all nuclear weapons from surface ships, attack submarines and land-based naval aircraft. Approximately half of the total US tactical nuclear stockpile was destroyed, the remainder being kept in storage. Some of the Soviet weapons were slated for elimination, and the rest were placed under centralized control.[10]

8 In such strategies, escalation may not be confined to the original area of conflict, but planned in other regions where the adversary has important assets being vulnerable to counter-attack. For the US, the Kola peninsula is of special interest in this connection.

9 Lodgaard, Sverre. 2022. "Skumringstid for det amerikanske sanksjonsregimet». Oslo: Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift, Nr. 3

10 Probably under the control of the 12th Main Directorate of the Ministry of Defence, rather than the navy or air force. Koch, Susan J. 2018. "The Presidential Nuclear initiatives of 1991-1992", Tokyo: Toda Peace Institute, Policy Brief No.23 (October).

No verification provisions were attached. In the beginning, the two sides exchanged implementation reports, but the Russian submissions became progressively less informative and after a while, the exchanges ceased. The unilateral reciprocal declarations never had any legal status, and the Russian political commitment to them faltered over time. Thirty years later, under entirely different political circumstances, the status of the PNIs is therefore hard to ascertain, but many provisions may still apply.

5. An international regime for the Arctic

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which introduced 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zones (EEZ), was "a revolutionary form of geopolitics (established) through peaceful negotiations".[11] Circumpolar nations extended their rights into the Polar Sea. Russia, which borders more than 1/3 of the Polar Sea, benefitted more than others.

Four major territorial issues remain unsolved. Russia claims that the Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges are extensions of the European and Siberian continental shelves right up to the North Pole, which is contested by others; Canada claims that the North West Passage is Canadian territory while the USA considers it to be international waters; sovereignty over the ocean floor in the Beaufort Sea and parts of the Polar Sea is also disputed; and so is the interpretation of the Spitsbergen Treaty. Norway claims that the Treaty limits the archipelago to 12 nautical miles territorial waters, leaving Norway with a continuous shelf up to 86 degrees (where the Polar basin becomes deep), while the other countries that have expressed an opinion on the matter claim that Spitsbergen is entitled to an economic zone and a continental shelf of its own.

UNCLOS established a UN Commission to assess national claims for continental shelves, which may extend beyond the EEZs. The claimants were invited to submit all relevant information, and the Commission would make recommendations on that basis. So far, the recommendations have been accepted by the states concerned.

Building on the law of the sea, how could an international regime for the Arctic, instituting a cooperative arrangement for the protection of SLOCs and limiting the presence of nuclear weapons, look? Tough climatic conditions and long distances to support facilities on land – longer than for much of the current SLOCS – call for big ships, and these are military rather than civilian vessels from the coast guards. A purely civilian regime to sustain and protect economic activities therefore seems impractical. It is easier to contemplate a regime where big powers and circumpolar nations coordinate their military and civilian capabilities to safeguard SLOCs and related economic activities. The regime would define the rules, norms and standards to be applied and update them as activities expand.

11 Østerud, Øyvind. 2021. "Geopolitikk. En nøkkel til storpolitikken». Oslo: Dreyers Forlag: 83. Translation by the author.

Naval units patrolling in the Arctic should not be allowed to carry nuclear weapons. Duplicating the PNI provisions, surface ships, attack submarines and land-based naval aircraft would bring conventional arms only. The fact that such restrictions have been entertained and agreed in the past makes it easier to contemplate reconfirmation of them in the Arctic context. The strategic capabilities on the Kola peninsula would not be touched: they are items for discussion in future START talks (if they come about), but not in the regime context.

Would these restrictions be more than symbolic reassurances of a confidence-building nature? Would they affect military preparations in any significant way and so require changes in current force postures? The answer may not be the same for the nuclear powers involved. It would matter less for the United States, which is known to substitute conventional weapons for nuclear ones in a growing number of roles, than for the Russian Federation, which has used nuclear weapons to compensate for conventional inferiority in its military planning.

The uncertain status of PNI restrictions aside, the required adaptations seem marginal. Still, in a cooperative setting which is likely to be fragile in the beginning, such measures would be important. Just consider the alternative – a cooperative arrangement for protection of SLOCs where one day, nuclear weapons are discovered on board one of the participating naval units. The signal effect of such an incident could be detrimental for the regime. By their very nature, they would trigger special concerns. People would ask what is so cooperative and wonderful about a regime that allows nuclear weapons to be deployed under its umbrella. Better then to establish a non-nuclear norm from the beginning.

Mindful of the delicate security relationships between the big powers, the measures have to be modest and exploratory in the beginning. Fortunately, the law of the sea presents a comprehensive legal basis to build upon. So far, all parties involved have followed its rules, but in the turbulent transition from one world order to something else, rules are not written in stone. Something more is needed to shield the region from the virulent geopolitics of world affairs, but will the leading powers be willing to entertain the suggested regime components? What could be the starting point?

The first step may be a study of the maritime strategies and activities of circumpolar states and others who take an active interest in Arctic affairs, to be done by a multilateral inter-disciplinary group of researchers from among these countries. For instance, national academies of science may act as initiators and core participants in the exercise. As a follow-up, the UN Secretary General could be asked to take it to the governmental level by commissioning a study of regime elements and how best to promote them. During the

Cold War, the Secretary General initiated such studies on many occasions when strained big power relations prevented him from taking direct action. He might act in a similar way now in order to encourage cooperation and avoid conflict in the Arctic.

The new ocean emerges gradually and so do the activities. It is early days in the Arctic, so why bother now? The answer is that it takes time to develop an international regime, and for the provisions to take hold and be effective they should precede the activities, not trail them.

Speech

INF v. missile defence confrontation and vulnerability of logistics across the Baltic Sea

Matti Vuorio

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
7(2) 2023, pp. 165 – 168

Abstract

Three types of problems are discussed in this speech: nuclear missile confrontation, logistics risks across the Baltic Sea as well as communication and electricity undersea networks.

Keywords

INF Treaty, nuclear confrontation, undersea networks

About the author

Matti Vuorio is a doctor of technology from Helsinki University of Technology. He is retired Secretary General of Scientific Advisory Board for Defence at Finland's Ministry of Defence.

1. Nuclear Confrontation

The nuclear related risks are presently most serious in the southern Baltic region, where Russia has deployed in Kaliningrad medium range Iskander missiles. There they are directly opposite to the still not operable ballistic missile defence system Aegis Ashore situated in Poland's Pomerania.

The missile confrontation started to worsen in the early 2000's, while the situation had been calm and stable for two decades after the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) in 1987.

The Americans say that the Aegis system was built against the scenario of just a few Iranian missiles attacking Europe. And since Aegis missiles are non-nuclear, and hence they cannot be used either in a first strike or even a counterstrike, they should therefore not have raised such a problematic situation.

But the Russians never believed an Iranian attack as the real rationale for Aegis deployment, and interpreted the system to be also against their own medium and even longer range missiles.

The situation became acute when the U.S. and Russia, after failed diplomacy, withdrew from the INF treaty in 2019, and Russia started to deploy in Kaliningrad two types of missiles, ballistic and cruise Iskanders, potentially also with nuclear warheads.

Presently the situation resembles superficially a classic Cold War nuclear confrontation of threat and counterthreat. It is not however an analogous repetition of the Euromissile Crisis of the 1980s, when there was an unstable configuration in respect to a surprise first strike, with SS-20s on one side and Pershing IIs and GLCM cruise missiles on the other. But, because as mentioned before, the Aegis missile defence system is not nuclear, and in fact those missiles do not even have a conventional explosive, but rather amazingly their destuctive effect is due to a direct hit of a terminal homing projectile in a kinetic collision. Hence, they are not useful in offensive strikes against land targets.

An obvious way to try to repair the serious damage to the regional nuclear balance would be to return back to the original INF treaty, possibly modified by ways that might either lessen or remove the underlying reasons for the withdrawal from the treaty. Alterations could be (1) to limit the treaty validity only to European territory, or (2) to be valid only concerning nuclear warheads, rather than all medium range missiles. The latter proposal would however require a reliably arranged intrusive verification, which is politically quite difficult.

President Obama's INF answer to the problem in 2009 was to deploy the regional missile defences on Aegis cruisers on the sea, but that was not in practice a good enough permanent

solution. American missile cruisers in the southern Baltic Sea were considered intrusive by Russia, and they were often threateningly approached by Russian fighter aircraft. Any positive developments are presently only future hopes, and are at least waiting first for a Ukrainian peace treaty.

2. Logistics across the Baltic Sea

The main military logistics problems in the Baltic Sea area worry both the West and the East: NATO airborne and maritime logistics transport from the West across the sea to the three Baltic countries and Finland, and also Russian logistics to Kaliningrad.

The Baltic Sea creates a logistical problem to all eastern coast littoral countries. That has been well known about the three NATO Baltic countries which all need support and material supplies across the sea from the West.

But the same is true also for Finland, whose few land connections to Sweden and Norway through Lapland are not nearly strong enough for the volume. Unfortunately Finland also has a different railway gauge from Sweden.

To guarantee reliable seaborne and airborne logistics transport the sovereign control of the two Baltic islands, Gotland and Åland, is of crucial importance. Otherwise, the opponent's anti-air and anti-ship missile systems could jeopardize both essential cargo flights and ships bringing in necessary supplies.

Those two island groups should be defended effectively already from the first moments of any escalating crisis, first against paratroopers and helicopters possibly trying to take a bridgehead, and then later against amphibious landing crafts or heavy transport aircrafts, bringing in stronger occupation forces that could be very difficult to eliminate.

One can keep in mind as a forewarning example the failed attempt of Russians to take Kiev's Hostomel airport by an air assault of helicopters and paratrooper special forces, with stronger forces to follow. That attempt was unsuccessful because it was possible to very quickly deploy local defensive forces to supplement those few that were there at the airport originally.

The Russian garrison in the Kaliningrad semi-exclave has a somewhat similar supply problem, as its rail connection through Lithuania is not meant for military transport, and anyway would not be operable during war times. The air and sea routes from St. Petersburg are lengthy and unreliable. From a purely military view point one can thus well understand Russia's strong motivation to wish to connect Kaliningrad oblast by land route to Belarussian territory through the Suwalki area.

Similarly, any Russian plan to try to protect their naval and airborne transports from the St. Petersburg area would be militarily understandable, even by trying to take control of the Baltic islands. Trying to break the land encirclement by military attack could be an answer, but it is easier said than done.

The Kaliningrad logistics problem does not have a neat solution in war time.

3. Undersea networks

Another kind of logistics risk in the Baltic Sea concerns hybrid warfare against foreign connections of critical infrastructure of the eastern shore countries already during the gray period before any actual fighting has taken place. It is mainly a question about energy supplies and telecommunication connections. As we saw from the recent explosions of the Nordstream natural gas pipes, sabotage against such connections is neither easy to prevent nor is it easy to find out later who was the perpetrator. There are also numerous electric power connections between Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Finland, and Estonia, and also from mainland Finland into the Åland islands.

The undersea telecommunication connections from Finland to Sweden and Germany are vitally important to Finland. One cannot avoid an assumption that some of the excessively large Russian owned "private" resort hotels in Finland with practically no visitors in them (like the well-known Airiston Helmi in the Turku archipelago) were built there to be ready to house special troops to do crucial damage to critical networks during the gray period of serious international crisis. Also, the present Russian operational mode of attacks against Ukrainian electric power stations and transformer infrastructure indicates that Russia has taken those civilian structures as part of their target list.

The relevant question is then, what one could do about those threats. There are no easy concrete answers. The long-term political answer of trying to create mutual political trust does not help soon enough when the trust has already disappeared. An obvious thing to do would be to prevent conditions where perpetrators can do their damages at leisure and without resistance. Hence, a short term answer is to try to prevent intentional damage by patrolling the routes. One can also alleviate the consequences of damage by technical means and by having alternative, redundant routes. The many risks existing in the Baltic Sea area have been ignored for decades. It will also take a long time to repair the situation, but the repair work should start as soon as possible.

Speech

Nuclear Risk in the Arctic and Further – a Peace Movement's Perspective

Kati Juva

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies,
7(2) 2023, pp. 169 – 172

Abstract

This speech gives a short overview of the existing risks of nuclear war and of the catastrophic humanitarian and climate consequences of even a regional nuclear war.

Keywords

Nuclear weapons, nuclear winter, ICAN, IPPNW

About the author

Kati Juva is a Finnish Medical Doctor, who has been active in the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) from 1983 and is currently one of the Co-Presidents of IPPNW.

1. Introduction

IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) was founded during the height of the Cold War and has worked against nuclear weapons for over 40 years. ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) was founded in 2007. I have been working in both organisations from their respective beginning, so I have a long perspective on peace work.

IPPNW and ICAN have emphasized the catastrophic humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and also their devastating effects for the climate. Recent studies show that even a regional nuclear war, e. g. between India and Pakistan, with 50-100 nuclear detonations (0.8 % of the world's current nuclear arsenal) would cause firestorms raising enormous amounts of soot and debris in the stratosphere, fading the sunshine all over the northern hemisphere. Temperatures at the ground level would drop drastically for 10 years and agriculture and food production would diminish everywhere, causing nuclear famine. This would threaten 1-2 billion people with starvation. This nuclear winter would be especially harsh in the Nordic and Baltic countries. It is probable that it would take several years to succeed in cultivating anything here.

The change of focus in nuclear discourse from megatons and ballistic trajectories to humanitarian consequences is one of the reasons these organisations received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 and 2017, respectively. Knowing the consequences helps the actions to diminish the risk. Former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev has said that the message of the physicians' movement (which was also very active in the Soviet Union) made him understand the urgency of nuclear disarmament. In the modern world one problem is that current politicians have not lived through the Cold War and the existential threat of nuclear war. Many of the leaders do not realise the total destruction that would follow a nuclear war.

After the Cold War the world's nuclear arsenals have gone down, but the "overkill" capacity is still manifold. In the 2000's many nuclear weapon states have begun to modernise their nuclear weaponry and begun to conceive deterrence as a persisting, permanent condition.

When nuclear weapons states had not been able to meet the obligations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) which entered into force 1970, in promoting nuclear disarmament up to the end, many non-nuclear countries and NGOs begun to advocate for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. This Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted at the UN in 2017 and entered into force January 22nd 2021.

None of the nuclear weapon states nor NATO countries have signed it. They claim they have to keep these weapons because of deterrence. They argue that according to the NPT they have a legal right to possess these doomsday weapons indefinitely. It is very unfortunate that NATO has taken such a hostile attitude against TPNW. Originally NATO's strategy was not based on nuclear weapons, only from 2010 it has defined itself as a nuclear alliance.

Deterrence has been the policy of nuclear weapon states for 70 years. It is based on the idea that no-one can use nuclear weapons as the consequences would be mutual destruction. Reagan and Gorbachev declared in 1985 that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. But deterrence is very fragile – nuclear war can begin by accident or by mistake. There have been several near-miss situations (false alarms for approaching missiles, defective chips in the airspace defence command centre, nuclear bombs dropped due to aircraft accident). We have been lucky so far, but as the secretary general of the UN António Guterres has said, luck is not a strategy.

Also, the decision to launch a nuclear attack is very centralised. In the US it is solely the President who can decide this, in Russia we do not know the actual procedure of decision making, but probably it is not the responsibility of the president alone. There is always a possibility for a leader to be off balance due to mental illness (psychosis, delirium), extreme stress or wrong and malign influence. No person in the world should have a right to exterminate billions of people and put an end to our civilisation.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has proved that deterrence does not prevent wars, as its defenders proclaim. Actually, deterrence has enabled Russia to attack Ukraine. Knowing the reluctance of the US and NATO to join the war because of the threat of it escalating to a nuclear war, Putin is shamelessly using deterrence to keep the West out of Ukraine.

2. How to diminish the nuclear threat?

In the Nordic and Baltic NATO and future NATO countries is seems that promoting TPNW is not a fruitful strategy just now. The resistance is very strong within NATO, although Norway has shown there is no legal hindrance for a NATO country to join TPNW. The discussions on TPNW will of course continue especially after the war, and when Finland and now has and Sweden probably soon will become full members of NATO.

Another possible goal could be promoting nuclear free zones. There are several of them in the world including Latin America, most of Africa, and Antarctic. The principle of nuclear free zones is that besides prohibiting nuclear weapons in their own areas, the nuclear weapon states would also recognise this and guarantee not to attack them with nuclear weapons.

Finland and Sweden are now landing under the "nuclear umbrella" of the US and NATO. In the peace movement and in ICAN we actually call it a nuclear shadow, because it does not give any protection against nuclear weapons and can even increase the tension. Current Nordic NATO countries and Lithuania do not allow nuclear weapons in their territory. It also seems that Finland and Sweden are not wishing to have nuclear weapons, although our governments are reluctant to make any preconditions for the membership. It would strengthen the security of Nordic countries and also the whole world if we could unequivocally declare Finland and Sweden as non-nuclear countries also within NATO. So far at least the Finnish nuclear security law prohibits nuclear explosives in Finnish territory. We need to keep it that way. Establishing at least an unofficial nuclear-free Scandinavia could help us to question the principals of deterrence and demand guarantees from nuclear weapon states never to use nuclear weapons against us.

Other security building measures could be declarations never to use nuclear weapons first. Only India and China have this no-first-strike policy. NATO should also declare this. Also, nuclear weapons should be taken off high alert (launching within 15 minutes).

And we have to continue our work on trust building and reconstructing the system of international agreements and treaties. We have a lot to do, but the existence of humankind depends on this.

Journal of Autonomy and Security Studies
Vol. 7 Issue 2 (2023)

Journal of
Autonomy and
Security Studies