

## SUGGESTED READINGS

# Russia and Arctic Security

P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Kari Roberts

At a time when many of us find ourselves working from home in social isolation, NAADSN has invited various Canadian academic subject matter experts to suggest core readings on topics related to North American and Arctic Defence and Security.

The internet is filled with perspectives and opinions. These lists are intended to help direct policy shapers, practitioners, and academics to credible open access sources, available online free of charge, that reflect leading-edge research and thinking. The compilers of each list have been asked to select readings that are accessibly written (ie. they are not filled with excessive jargon), offer a diversity of viewpoints, and encourage critical thinking and debate.

## International Commentaries

**Ekaterina Klimenko.** [Russia's new Arctic policy document signals continuity rather than change.](#) *SIPRI Commentary*, 6 April 2020.

This short commentary outlines the '[Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic to 2035](#)' (Basic Principles 2035) decreed by Russian President Vladimir Putin in March 2020, which defines Russia's Arctic interests, goals, and implementation plans for the next 15 years. By comparing the new policy document with Russia's previous strategic document on the Arctic (Basic Principles 2020, adopted in 2008), Klimenko discusses what it might reveal about the future of Arctic cooperation.

**General Terrence O'Shaughnessy, USAF.** [NORAD and USNORTHCOM Commander Testimony to the SASC Strategic Forces Subcommittee Hearing](#), NORAD Speeches, 3 April 2019.

**General Terrence O'Shaughnessy, USAF.** [Statement of NORAD and USNORTHCOM Commander Before the Senate Armed Services Committee](#), 13 February 2020. [Or [video of his testimony](#) in question and answer format.]

As the Commander of USNORTHCOM and NORAD, General O'Shaughnessy explains why "the homeland is not a sanctuary." He highlights how "revisionist powers Russia and China have changed global strategic dynamics by fielding advanced long-range weapons systems and engaging in increasingly aggressive efforts to expand their global presence and influence, including in the approaches to the United States and Canada." He provides an overview and interpretation of Russian military investments in the Arctic, why "the Arctic is no longer a fortress wall," and why the "Arctic Northern Approaches" to the continent requires an

enhanced “ability to detect and defeat threats operating both *in* the Arctic and passing *through* the Arctic.”

**Pavel Baev.** [Russian Strategic Guidelines and Threat Assessments for the Arctic](#). Marshall Center *Security Insights* (March 2019).

Russia has declared its commitment to international cooperation in the Arctic, but it has invested massively in the modernization of its nuclear arsenal concentrated on the Kola Peninsula and has consolidated its military positions in the Barents region and along the Northern Sea Route. The growing need to gain political advantage from this investment leads to escalation of risk in several areas.

**Valery Konyshov and Alexander Sergunin (2019).** [Forging Russia’s Arctic Strategy: Actors and Decision-Making](#). *Polar Journal*.

This study examines how Arctic policies are being made in present-day Russia, focusing on the roles and functions of various governmental and non-governmental actors and institutions participating in the decision-making process. The authors conclude that a rather stable decision-making machinery on Arctic policy has been created within the executive branch of the Russian government, as well as elements of parliamentary control over the decision-making process. Furthermore, the role of the Russian regional and local governments has become more salient in Arctic policy-making. Despite shortcomings, the authors suggest that Russian Arctic policy-making system has evolved to become more democratic and efficient way.

**Matthew Boulegue.** [Russia’s Military Posture in the Arctic: Managing Hard Power in a “Low Tension” Environment](#). NATO Defence College Research Paper No.4 (July 2019).

Russia’s military posture in the Arctic is informed by the changing geopolitical environment, Boulegue suggests, and can no longer be considered in isolation from the country’s growing tensions with the West. In this sense, the period of “Arctic exceptionalism” (in which the region has been treated as a zone of depoliticized cooperation) is coming to an end. Russia acts as a status quo power and a reluctant rule-follower in the Arctic, partly because international law there plays in its favour, and partly because it is in Russia’s interest to do so. Despite growing tension, cooperation between Russia and other Arctic nations is likely to endure. (Or you can watch a [YouTube video of the author explaining the basics of his argument](#).)

**Heather Conley and Caroline Rohloff.** [The New Ice Curtain, Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic](#). Washington: Center for Strategic & International Studies (2015).

*The New Ice Curtain* explores Russia’s strategic ambitions for its Arctic region—an understudied and underappreciated area that encompasses nearly the entire northern coast of Eurasia. As the Russian Arctic produces 20 percent of Russian

GDP, 22 percent of its exports, and is home to nearly 2 million of its citizens, Russia's economic future will increasingly depend on robust Arctic development.

**Ekaterina Klimenko. [Russia's Arctic Security Policy: Still Quiet in the High North?](#) Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2016.**

Even as Russia was strengthening its military and civil emergency forces in the Arctic over the past few years as part of a wider programme of military modernization, many experts and policymakers continued to view the region as a benign security environment. However, against the background of the conflict in Ukraine and growing tensions between Russia and the West, Russia's military build-up in the Arctic has become a trigger for renewed concern regarding the potential militarization of the region. The changing security landscape in the Arctic raises key questions, including the following: What are Russia's security concerns in the Arctic region? How has Russia's rhetoric regarding the Arctic evolved in recent years? What is Russia's rationale for the military build-up in the region and is it changing? What are the links between the Arctic security agenda and the broader relationship between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community? Can Arctic cooperation survive the consequences of the cooling relationship between Russia and its Arctic neighbours? This Policy Paper discusses these and other issues and attempts to provide some answers.

**Alexander Sergunin and Valery Konyshev. [Russia in the Arctic. Hard or Soft Power?](#) Stuttgart: IbidemVerlag, 2016.**

This book by Russia's foremost scholars on Arctic policy provide a detailed analysis of that country's national interests in the Arctic region. They assess Russia's domestic discourse on the High North's role in the system of national priorities, Moscow's bi- and multilateral relations with major regional players, as well as energy, environmental, socio-cultural, and military policies in the Arctic.

## Canadian Commentaries

**P. Whitney Lackenbauer, [Why Fear Russia in the Arctic?](#) North American and Arctic Defence and Security *Quick Impacts*, 5 May 2020.**

While most of Lackenbauer's publications emphasize opportunities for circumpolar cooperation and downplay the probability of conventional armed conflict in the Arctic, he notes that messaging from Russia combines elements of strategic deterrence and the idea that the region should retain its status as a "territory of dialogue" and cooperation – or, at the very least, non-conflict. For military and security analysts, the assessment of *threat* factors in both capability and intent. How and why might Russia's interests, actions, and intentions represent risks or threats to Canada now and in the future? He offers a series of considerations as part of ongoing exercises to encourage a more fulsome range of thinking on this subject.

**Ryan Dean and P. Whitney Lackenbauer. [Blackjack Diplomacy](#), North American and Arctic Defence and Security *Quick Impacts*, 18 March 2020.**

Russian bomber flights into the Canadian Air Defence Identification Zone (CADIZ) are a form of strategic messaging that signals to the international community that the Russian Federation is still a great power that can project force into the Arctic and elsewhere in the world. The authors suggest that NORAD's public identification of Russian bomber flights in the Arctic as an existential threat to North America also represents a form of strategic messaging intended to justify funding to modernize continental defences.

**Ron Wallace. [The Arctic is Warming and Turning Red: Implications for Canada and Russia in an Evolving Polar Region](#). Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI) Policy Paper (2019).**

A more bellicose, self-assured Russia has demonstrated a willingness to achieve its political ambitions and defend territorial ambitions with military force. It remains for policy analysts and defence planners to monitor and determine whether Russia's actions in the Arctic signify potential aggression or are policies designed to express aggressive isolationism. Through a Canadian lens, Wallace builds a case of why we must pay attention to Russian activities, and suggests that Russia's determination to integrate its Arctic resources into the economic fabric of the European Union and Asia may serve as a useful guide for Canadian northern economic development policies aimed at bolstering our country's sovereignty and providing secure futures for northerners.

**P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Suzanne Lalonde, eds. [Breaking the Ice Curtain? Russia, Canada, and Arctic Security in a Changing Circumpolar World](#). Calgary: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2019.**

Canada and Russia are the geographical giants, spanning most of the circumpolar world. Accordingly, the Arctic is a natural area of focus for the two countries. Although the end of the Cold War seemed to portend a new era of deep cooperation between these two Arctic countries, lingering wariness about geopolitical motives and a mutual lack of knowledge about the other's slice of the circumpolar world are conspiring to pit Canada and the Russian Federation as Arctic adversaries. Are Russian and Canadian Arctic policies moving in confrontational direction? Can efforts at circumpolar cooperation survive the current crisis in Russian-Western relations, or does an era of growing global competition point inherently to heightened conflict in the Arctic? Various Canadian and Russian authors offer their perspectives:

- [Introduction: Russia, Canada, and the Ice Curtain](#) by P. Whitney Lackenbauer
- [Russian Arctic Policy](#) by Viatcheslav Gavrilov
- [Canada's Emerging Arctic and Northern Policy Framework](#) by P. Whitney Lackenbauer
- [Arctic Security Perspectives from Russia](#) by Alexander Sergunin
- [A Tale of "Two" Russias?](#) by Troy Bouffard, Andrea Charron, and Jim Fergusson
- [The New Arctic Strategic Triangle Environment \(NASTE\)](#) by Rob Huebert

- **Concluding Reflections: Russia, Canada, and the Circumpolar World**  
by P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Suzanne Lalonde

**Michael Byers. Cold, Dark, and Dangerous: International Cooperation in the Arctic and Space. *Polar Record* 55 (2019): 32–47.**

In this article, Byers compares Russian–Western cooperation in the Arctic and Space, with a focus on why cooperation continued after the 2014 annexation of Crimea. On the basis of this comparative approach, continued cooperation is linked to the following factors: the Arctic and Space are remote and extreme environments; they are militarised but not substantially weaponised; they both suffer from ‘tragedies of the commons’; Arctic and Space-faring states engage in risk management through international law-making; Arctic and Space relations rely on consensus decision-making; Arctic and Space relations rely on soft law; Arctic states and Space-faring states interact within a situation of ‘complex interdependence’; and Russia and the United States are resisting greater Chinese involvement in these regions.