

Regehr

DETERRENCE, ARMS CONTROL, AND COOPERATIVE SECURITY

NAADSN Engage Series

DETERRENCE, ARMS CONTROL, AND COOPERATIVE SECURITY

Ernie Regehr

NAADSN

North American and Arctic Defence
and Security Network



DETERRENCE, ARMS CONTROL, AND COOPERATIVE SECURITY

Selected Writings on Arctic Security

© Ernie Regehr, 2020

North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN) /
Réseau sur la défense et la sécurité nord-américaines et arctiques (RDSNAA)
c/o School for the Study of Canada
Trent University
Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
K9J 7B8

All rights reserved.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA CATALOGUING IN
PUBLICATION

Deterrence, Arms Control, and Cooperative Security: Selected Writings on Arctic Security / Ernie Regehr.

(NAADSN Engage Series no. 1 / RDSNAA série d'engage no. 1)

Published in print and electronic formats.

ISBN: 978-1-989811-06-1 (e-book)

978-1-989811-07-8 (print)

1. Canada—Arctic Security. 2. Arctic regions—Defence and Security. 3. Arms Control and Disarmament—Canada. 4. Nuclear arms control—Arctic regions. 5. Arctic regions—Strategic aspects. I. Regehr, Ernie, author II. Title: *Deterrence, Arms Control, and Cooperative Security: Selected Writings on Arctic Security*. III. Series: NAADSN Engage Series / RDSNAA série d'engage; no. 1

Designer and layout: P. Whitney Lackenbauer

Cover design: Jennifer Arthur-Lackenbauer

Cover images: P. Whitney Lackenbauer

Distributed by the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN)

Distribué par le Réseau sur la défense et la sécurité nord-américaines et arctiques (RDSNAA)

Deterrence, Arms Control, and Cooperative Security

Selected Writings on Arctic Security

Ernie Regehr

Senior Fellow in Arctic Security and Defence, The Simons Foundation
Canada

Network Member, NAADSN

Table of Contents

FOREWORD BY P. WHITNEY LACKENBAUER	i
Introduction	iv
1. Replacing The North Warning System.....	1
2. The North Warning System (NWS) and “What We Cannot Defeat”	9
3. America’s Arctic Security Strategy	18
4. Nuclear Submarines in the Arctic	31
5. Conjuring Chinese Nuclear Weapons Submarines in the Arctic	45
6. Russia, NATO, and Baltic Vulnerability	53
7. Gunboat Diplomacy to Air Power Diplomacy	61
8. Cooperative Security and Denuclearizing the Arctic	65
9. Re-Visiting Missile Defence Cooperation.....	89
10. The “Rogue” Missile Threat: Getting from BMD to NPT	94
11. Cruise Missiles: When Defence is Not an Option	104
12. Arctic Security and the Canadian Defence Policy Statement.....	113
13. From Defending to Exercising Arctic Sovereignty	127
14. Operation Nanook 2016 and DND Aid to Civil Authorities	137
15. The Ilulissat Declaration: Ten Years Later.....	147
16. Close Encounters with the Russian Military.....	156
17. Shielding the Arctic from NATO’s Return to Territorial Defence.....	166
18. NATO’s Brussels Summit and the Arctic.....	177
19. Arctic Coast Guard Forum – Cooperative Security under Construction.....	184
20. Can a Fisheries Agreement Help Forestall Militarization?.....	189
21. Pan-Arctic Military Cooperation	194
Index	204

Foreword

Ernie Regehr, a distinguished peace researcher and commentator, has been shaping Canadian discussions on security and disarmament for decades. When he was invested into the Order of Canada in 2004, the citation aptly described him as:

one of Canada's most prominent and respected voices on international disarmament and peace. Executive Director and co-founder of Project Ploughshares, Ernie Regehr is known for his sound judgment, balanced views and integrity. Canadian and foreign governments as well as the United Nations call upon him as an expert on disarmament. Organizations such as the World Council of Churches, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation and the Africa Peace Forum also benefit from his knowledge and insight. A dedicated humanitarian, he has made a significant contribution to Canada's international reputation as a leader in peacemaking.¹

Amongst his many awards, he became the 26th recipient of the Pearson Peace Medal in 2011. He has served as a representative and expert advisor on numerous Government of Canada delegations to multilateral disarmament forums, has traveled frequently to conflict zones, contributed to Track II diplomacy efforts, and as former Commissioner of the World Council of Churches Commission on International Affairs was active in developing that organization's position on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as adopted at the 2006 World Assembly. He is a tireless advocate for a just and peaceful global community, and longstanding proponent of the need to reverse the militarization of the Arctic and promote a zone of peaceful cooperation.

As the Senior Fellow in Arctic Security and Defence at the Simons Foundation Canada, Ernie has contributed an ongoing series of Arctic Security Briefing Papers that offer critical reflections on military policies and practices in the region. He emphasizes that "Arctic 'security' is ultimately about the safety and well-being of the people of the Arctic – a human security agenda that necessarily engages a broad range of social and economic conditions and policies." By focusing on military aspects of this broader security agenda in the Arctic, he poses the overarching question: "What are and should be the roles, and limits, of military forces in supporting human security, in strengthening the rule of law nationally and internationally, and in promoting efforts towards a cooperative security regime within the Arctic region?"² His reflections, grounded in decades of

careful observation and analysis of the evolving regional security environment, offer a robust and nuanced understanding of international, regional, and domestic dynamics and drivers that shape contemporary Arctic defence and security and the academic and policy debates about it.

The North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN) Engage series is intended to inspire timely discussion on topics related to North American and Arctic defence, security, and safety issues. The various chapters in this important book provide critical reflections on the security implications of technology and climate change, international strategic drivers (such as evolving Russian and Chinese Arctic interests), and the roles of military institutions such as NORAD and NATO. Arctic and North American defence cannot be isolated from global dynamics, and Ernie's clear and poignant analysis of the capabilities and intentions of Arctic and non-Arctic states lays an important foundation for rational, evidence-based debate and discussion.

Many chapters grapple with the defence of North America, and what roles and postures the Canadian Armed Forces should adopt (and avoid) in the face of renewed strategic competition, emerging technologies, and shifting defence priorities. If Canada is to remain strong at home and secure in North America, analysis of new threat vectors must be matched by a concerted effort to educate Canadians and Americans about NORAD and the multifaceted solutions needed to address complex security challenges. The chapters in this book go a long way towards doing so, critically examining actions and proposed plans related to the evolution of continental defence, NORAD modernization and the future of the North Warning System, missile defence, anti-submarine warfare, and many other topics. By adopting a nuanced and multifaceted definition of security, chapters also provide sober explanations of dual-use infrastructure and the military's responsibilities for search and rescue, response to major transportation and environmental disasters, and recovery when communities lose essential services.

Consistent with his longstanding advocacy for disarmament and peace, Ernie explains that "the challenge is to advance the kinds of national policies and international rules and initiatives that honor, in the context of the Arctic, the UN Charter's Article 26 pledge to 'promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources.'"³ His writings promote a sophisticated understanding of deterrence and strategic stability, and why arms control measures – both Arctic-specific and global – remain

an important consideration for Canadian defence policymaking. In his 1989 articulation of “A Framework for Canadian Security Policy in the Arctic” (written when increasing submarine activities, cruise missiles, and expanded strategic air and missile defence systems marked a trend toward heightened militarization and confrontation in the Arctic), he highlighted that “Canada must re-examine how it can govern the use of its Arctic territory in such a way as to reduce the risk of confrontation and war between the nuclear belligerents.” He concluded that “Canadian security policies related to the Arctic obviously cannot be separated from global measures to prevent nuclear war and reduce levels of armaments,” calling for new Canadian approaches to strategic deterrence and disarmament, and “decisive and internationally significant national initiatives to prevent the deployment of destabilizing strategic defence systems.”⁴ The chapters in this volume affirm, three decades later, his ongoing commitment to these ideas.

Today, with NORAD emphasizing that our North American “homeland is no longer a sanctuary,” Ernie’s insights on major power competition, the interplay between deterrence and stability, and how strategic messaging can help avoid unnecessary military confrontation, provide essential context, careful analysis, and relevant options to consider as Canadian leaders contemplate how best to anticipate and deal with situations across the full spectrum of military operations. We are honoured to have this selection of important essays by a distinguished Canadian thinker launch the NAADSN Engage series, and we hope that it inspires and fosters further debate on how Canada can and should defend its interests, preserve peace, and uphold rights in the Arctic, in North America, and globally.

P. Whitney Lackenbauer
Network Lead, NAADSN
June 2020

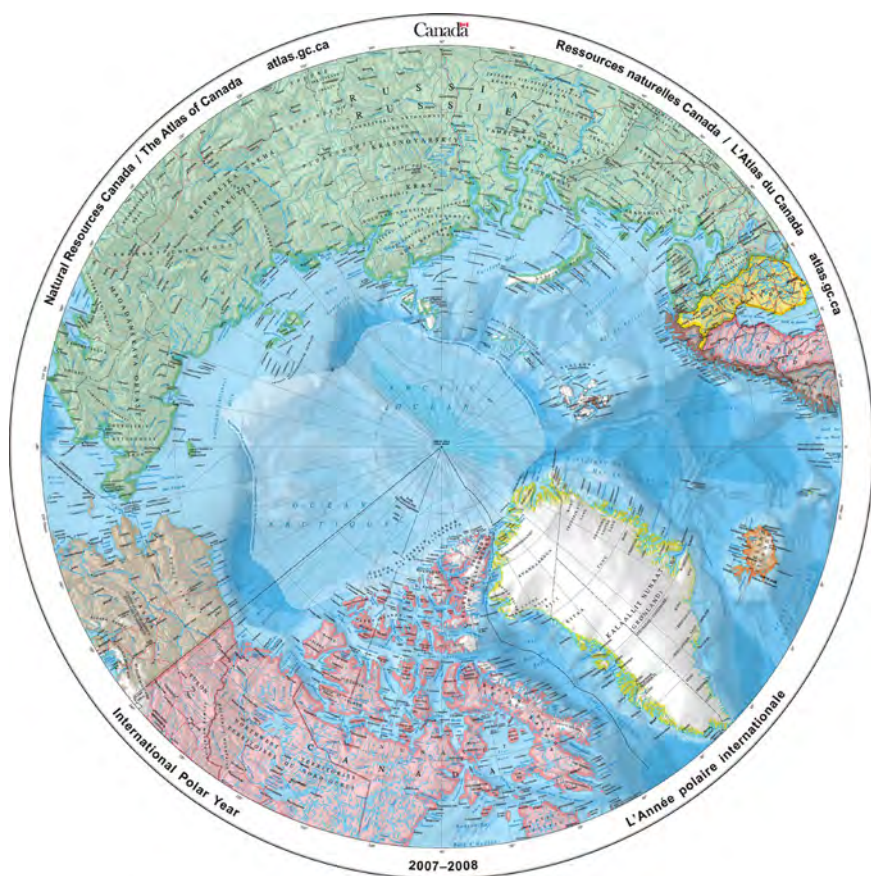
Notes

¹ Order of Canada, “Mr. Ernie Regehr,” <https://www.gg.ca/en/honours/recipient/146-484>.

² The Simons Foundation, “Arctic Security Briefing Papers,” <http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/projects/arctic-security-briefing-papers>.

³ Simons Foundation, “Arctic Security Briefing Papers.”

⁴ Ernie Regher, “A Framework for Canadian Security Policy in the Arctic,” in *Polar Opposites: Ensuring Peace in the Arctic* (Waterloo: Project Ploughshares Working Paper 89/1, April 1989), 4, 8.



Introduction

As this is written in early June 2020, the scale of the danger and disruptions let loose on the world feels genuinely unprecedented – certainly since 1945. The coronavirus pandemic is literally global, a present danger to the most technically advanced societies and the economically most disadvantaged. In the United States, which encompasses elements of both, there is the added rage against systemic racism that has challenged stay-at-home orders and filled its streets with demands for urgently needed change. This rage too has gone viral and spread to the streets of major and not-so-major centres in Canada, Europe, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia.

Indian and Chinese troops have chosen this moment to “engage in scuffles and shouting matches” along their disputed Himalayan border. China and the United States continue to escalate threats and counter-threats over the status of Taiwan. Chinese vessels in the South China Sea have sailed into the multiple territorial disputes with and among a host of Asian states in the region. Russian and American forces have engaged in competing Mediterranean patrols, and their legacy of stabilizing arms control agreements continues to be dismantled. And the list could go on.¹

Through it all, the Arctic has remained an oasis of relative geo-strategic calm and stability. The calm is only relative inasmuch as strategic patrols and manoeuvring were certainly present, as was some sharp rhetoric, but nothing happened to intra-regional relations to seriously undermine the credibility of the Ilulissat Declaration’s affirmation of Arctic cooperation and commitment to a rules-based regional order. Nothing happening in the Arctic in the Spring of 2020 is likely to lead Canada to question the assertion in its current “Arctic and Northern Policy Framework” that “the circumpolar Arctic can and should continue to benefit from a deeply ingrained culture of international cooperation.”²

Of course, that is but one perspective. When it comes to the Arctic there are certainly counter-perspectives, one such being assertively argued in a paper published by Ottawa’s Macdonald-Laurier Institute amid these Spring 2020 global troubles. It reminds readers of “the largest military build-up of Russian military power in the Arctic in recent decades,” and concludes: “So much for this being a zone of cooperation.”³

It is a debate that needs to, and will, continue. And one development that will help to enrich and deepen that debate is the emergence of the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN). An extraordinary network of scholars, from seasoned experts to young scholars pursuing ambitious new research agendas, NAADSN will be a major impetus to engagement on Arctic security questions that “test core assumptions and prompt policy innovation.”

I deeply appreciated NAADSN’s willingness to make this collection of essays available as one contribution to the Arctic Security debate. And special thanks go to Dr. Jennifer Simons and the Simons Foundation Canada for commissioning and supporting the original production of these briefings – initially published, along with others, on the Foundation’s website at <http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/>. Many thanks also to Elaine Hynes of the Simons Foundation Canada for managing the original website publication of these briefings, and to Corah Hodgson of NAADSN for editing them for publication here. Most especially, I am grateful to Whitney Lackenbauer, a foremost Canadian and internationally recognized scholar on the Arctic, for his many hours of work and careful attention in spearheading the production of this volume.

If this collection helps in any way to advance discussions that test assumptions and prompt constructive policies in support of Arctic peace and security, my purpose and hope, and that of the Foundation, in producing each of these pieces will be more than vindicated.

Ernie Regehr

Notes

¹ The list does go on in: David E. Sanger, Eric Schmitt, and Edward Wong, “As Virus Toll Preoccupies US, Rivals Test Limits of American Power,” *New York Times*, 1 June 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com>.

² Government of Canada, “Arctic and Northern Policy Framework: Safety, security, and defence chapter,” <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1562939617400/1562939658000>.

³ Aurel Braun and Stephen J. Blank, “The Cold Reality Behind Russia’s Charm Offensive: Why Canada needs a realistic Arctic Policy,” Macdonald Laurier Institute, April 2020, <https://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/russias-arctic-strategy-requires-realistic-response-canada-new-mli-report-aurel-braun-stephen-j-blank/>.

List of Acronyms

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile	CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
ACGF	Arctic Coast Guard Forum	CCGS	Canadian Coast Guard Ship
ADIZ	air defence identification zone	CGAI	Canadian Global Affairs Institute
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty	CRS	Congressional Research Service
ASW	anti-submarine warfare	CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
AWACS	American Airborne Warning and Control System	DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council	DEW Line	Distant Early Warning Line
BMD	ballistic missile defence	DND	Department of National Defence (Canada)
BMEWS	Ballistic Missile Early Warning System	DOD	Department of Defense (United States of America)
CADIZ	Canadian Air Defence Identification Zone	DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces	DRDC	Defence Research and Development Canada
CAO	Central Arctic Ocean		

EEZ	exclusive economic zone	GOS	Government Operations Centre, within Public Safety Canada
EU	European Union		
FAAE	House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development	HMCS	Her Majesty's Canadian Ship
		HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
FIIA	Finnish Institute for International Affairs	IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
FLQ	Front de libération du Québec	ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
		ICC	Inuit Circumpolar Council
FRUKUS	France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States military exercise	ICEX	Ice Exercise (United States Navy)
GAO	United States Government Accountability Office	IDP	internally displaced person
		IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
GBI	Ground Based Interceptor		
GIUK Gap	maritime area between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom	IMO	International Maritime Organization
		INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
GMD	Ground-based Midcourse Defence	JRCC	Joint Rescue Coordination Centre

JTFN	Joint Task Force North	NDP	New Democratic Party
km	kilometre	New START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
LRA	long-range aircraft	NNWS	non-nuclear-weapon states
LRSO	Long Range Stand Off Weapon	NORAD	North American Aerospace Defence Command
MAD	mutually assured destruction	NORDREG	Northern Canada Traffic Services Zone Regulations
MIRV	multiple, independently targeted, re-entry vehicles	NORTHCOM	Northern Command
MP	Member of Parliament	NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
MSOC	Marine Security Operations Centre	NSA	Negative Security Assurance
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime	NSR	Northern Sea Route
NAADSN	North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network	NWFZ	nuclear-weapon-free zone
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	NWS	North Warning System
NDDN	House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence	NWS	nuclear-weapon state
		OCHA	United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police	SSN	nuclear-powered general-purpose attack submarines
ret.	retired		
RIAC	Russian International Affairs Council	THAAD	US/NATO Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
RUKUS	Russia, United Kingdom, United States military exercise	UK	United Kingdom
		UN	United Nations
		UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
SAR	search and rescue		
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute	US	United States
		USCG	United States Coast Guard
SLBM	submarine-launched ballistic missile	USNORTH-COM	United States Northern Command
SLCM	sea-launched cruise missile	USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
SSBN	nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines	VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force
SSGN	nuclear-powered attack submarines carrying conventionally-armed land-attack cruise missiles		

1 Replacing the North Warning System: Strategic Competition or Arctic Confidence Building?

March 1, 2018

Canada and the United States have begun planning a replacement for the North Warning System, the network of air defence radars across the top of the continent. Jointly funded and operated through the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), though located primarily in Canada, the system's renewal comes in the context of a persistent Cold War revivalism that presages a preoccupation with national defence and geostrategic competition. But another feature of the current context is broad recognition that the changing physical environment and increasing access to and activity in the Arctic drive a priority need for enhanced domain awareness within the region to support public safety, law enforcement, and sovereignty protection, while also serving national defence and strategic stability.

Replacing the North American Arctic's North Warning System (NWS) will be an extended and expensive process, with construction unlikely to be completed before the mid-2030s. The chain of Arctic radar stations monitors air approaches to the northern mainland territories of Canada and the United States (US). It came on line in the early 1990s as a replacement for the Cold War-inspired Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line of northern radars built in the mid-1950s when the Soviet bomber threat loomed large. The DEW Line never had, and the NWS does not now have, any capacity to monitor hostile aircraft over extended distances; the idea was and is to draw a line in the snow to serve as a tripwire signalling an attack from the north and heading south.

In those early Cold War years Canada shared US concerns about the bomber threat (the Canadian Arctic being the route by which the Soviet aircraft would head to the US heartland), but a major factor in building the DEW Line was the recognition that the Americans required it and would not, and could hardly be expected to, tolerate a blind spot in the Canadian north that would deny them early warning of an attack en route to the lower

American mainland – in other words, if Canada would not cooperate in building a line of radars, the US would find its own ways of monitoring Canadian territory for signs of Soviet attack, with major implications for Canadian sovereignty.

Canada understood that in order to avoid that kind of American “help,” it would have to support and be part of a credible system to monitor Canadian territory on behalf of both countries (hence, the frequently noted “defence-against-help” reality for Canadian defence policy). It is a condition that also applied when the NWS was built, and it still applies. Canada shares a continent with the Americans and is simply obliged to make a credible contribution to its defence – and the American definition of credible is the one that counts.

Soon after the DEW Line was built in the 1950s, the Soviet bomber threat was much degraded, with attention turning to the post-Sputnik Soviet missile threat. By the mid-1980s the old Soviet bomber threat was certainly not a central concern in the minds of North American defence planners, but the Soviet Union did continue to maintain a substantial strategic bomber capability that regularly, even if infrequently, patrolled within range of North America. Added to that, cruise missiles capable of being fired from those bombers were emerging. Thus, by the early 1990s, the DEW Line was replaced with the NWS radars, supplemented by American Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft that were permitted to operate in Canada, and long-range radars on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts.¹

That was more than two decades ago, and now the Government’s June 2017 Defence policy document describes the NWS as approaching “the end of its life expectancy from a technological and functional perspective,” and reports that bilateral efforts are already underway to develop a successor early warning system.²

The cost is unknown, but given that the cost of the NWS ran into the billions, its replacement promises to cost many billions more.³ The replacement timeline will extend over at least two decades: research and analysis into options to be completed by 2020; the chosen system to be approved in 2021; from that is to follow a request for proposals from industry to be completed by 2023; with the final contract to be awarded in 2024 (the Canadian procurement record might suggest that is an optimistic timeline). Delivery or installation of the system is expected to take at least a decade, with completion anticipated for the mid-2030s or beyond.⁴ The plan is for a “system of systems” designed to integrate radars, maritime sensors, satellites, drones, and other technologies.

The All Domain Situational Awareness Science and Technology Program managed by Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) includes plans to spend \$133 million over five years on research and analysis in support of enhancements to monitoring the air and maritime (surface and sub-surface) approaches to Canada, with a particular emphasis on the Arctic. The effort will include international cooperation with the Five Eyes states (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the US),⁵ with a focus on four areas:

- Strategic surveillance of airborne traffic and aerospace warning;
- Awareness of maritime traffic in Canadian approaches and Arctic littoral regions;
- Awareness of sub-surface activity approaching or in Canada's North; and
- Analysis of sensor mixes and information integration and sharing for all domain awareness to enable detection of modern threats beyond the threshold of the current systems.⁶

The Impetus for NWS Replacement

The need to overhaul Arctic monitoring and surveillance systems responds to both public safety and national defence imperatives. Climate change, as is now routinely noted, means continued expansion of activity in the region, and that in turn requires a constantly improving ability to maintain credible awareness of events and conditions, especially in the air and maritime domains. Domain awareness is obviously essential (though not sufficient) for mounting the full range of effective and timely emergency response, search and rescue, disaster relief, and defence operations. With increased access to and activity within the Canadian Arctic and the entire pan-Arctic region, the capabilities and intentions of both state and non-state actors warrant increased attention.⁷ And taking advantage of evolving surveillance technologies is an important part of that process.

The current NWS consists of 11 long-range and 36 short-range radar sites forming a line across Alaska, Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Labrador (with three of those sites located in Alaska).⁸ Overall, the coverage area is a swath about 5,000 kms long and just over 300 kms wide. Those radars track all air traffic within their coverage area and send data via satellite to the Canadian Air Defence Sector at the 22 Wing Base at North Bay, Ontario. Coastal air defence radars on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts also transmit data to North Bay, part of the bilateral NORAD aerospace command. Unauthorized military traffic along or through the NWS corridor is rare, and the coastal radars further south have drawn

NORAD into a significant drug interdiction role – identifying unauthorized aircraft and assisting law enforcement agencies in tracking suspected contraband runners.

The NWS, like its DEW Line predecessor, is also a Cold War installation, and its primary strategic role has been to pay attention to long-range Russian military aircraft (primarily bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons). Interceptions are rare because Russian military flights near Canadian airspace are only occasional, not regular, and because much of the NWS is far from international airspace. Roughly, from Tuktoyaktuk to the eastern shore of Baffin Island above Cumberland Sound, the NWS runs through some 3,000 kms of Canadian territory, where Russian military aircraft never venture. The western end of the line, along the Alaskan, Yukon, and the western Northwest Territories coast in the region of the Beaufort Sea, does run adjacent to international airspace where the Russians do show up from time to time. The eastern end of the NWS runs from the lower east coast of Baffin Island and south along the Labrador coast – also adjacent to international airspace where Russian aircraft can show up. For most of its length, the NWS does not run along Canada's most northerly frontier. It does not cover the outer perimeter of the Arctic Archipelago, or as Joe Clark described the northern coastal border of the Arctic Archipelago, "the seaward facing coasts of the Arctic islands."⁹ As a Cold War installation, the focus of the NWS was not to monitor Canada's territorial frontier, it was to provide the American strategic deterrent early warning of attack – and that required only that the warning radars be well away from the American heartland, and that meant anywhere in the far north would work.

Currently, of course, Russian peacetime patrols and training flights might venture undetected near the "seaward facing coasts of the Arctic islands," but they never come anywhere near the Tuktoyaktuk-to-Baffin Island radars of the North Warning System. If the Russian bombers ever crossed the NWS in that mid-Canada section, they would be very deep within Canadian territory. In other words, much of the NWS is not a frontier system and cannot now monitor and track airborne entries into Canadian airspace around the archipelago.

While Russian bombers still conduct (occasional) flights on the periphery of North America, the larger concern is the growing inventory of cruise missiles capable of reaching targets in North America from ships and aircraft in international territory near North American shores. Such air-breathing missiles have been in the Russian arsenal for a long time, and they are becoming increasingly available to other potential users. Increasingly, states and even non-state groups could develop the capacity to launch, from

ships in international waters, cruise missiles capable of reaching well into North American territory. The current NWS does not have a reliable capacity to detect approaching cruise missiles, whether launched from aircraft or ships in international airspace or waters, largely because they are low flying and approach underneath its radar range, and they employ evasion tactics and technologies. As US NORAD Commander Admiral William Gortney told the US Senate Armed Services Committee in 2015,¹⁰ the international north is viewed as an emerging operating area from which not only the Russians, but other states, “rogue regimes, myriad terrorist organizations, individual violent extremists, and transnational organized crime” groups are likely to be looking for weaknesses to exploit.

The North Warning System also cannot contribute to the detection of ballistic missile launches or to tracking their flight, so American military planners would like to see its replacement become a multi-purpose Arctic sensor system capable of tracking not only aircraft, but also ships and ballistic missiles. Research into “continental surveillance radars” is being pursued through Defence Research and Development Canada.¹¹

If the NWS replacement is to have a capacity to detect aircraft, including cruise missiles, much farther out from North American shores, and have some capacity for ballistic missile detection, experts insist the new northern surveillance/warning system will require a mix of ground, air, space, and sea-based sensors, and will need locations both further north than the present NWS and further south down the Pacific and Atlantic coast lines.¹²

Domain Awareness to Assure Canadians and Neighbours

The importance of comprehensive and timely domain awareness in the Arctic can hardly be overstated – not because of mounting external threats, but because of mounting internal responsibilities. Increased activity in the Arctic will drive greater attention to law enforcement and to ensuring compliance with navigation rules and environmental regulations. Increased risk of disaster will drive the need for timely emergency response and expanded search and rescue capacity. And the constant requirement for any sovereign state to be fully aware of and to regulate all entries into its coastal zones, territorial waters, airspace, and land territory certainly drives a requirement for increasingly sophisticated domain awareness technologies and operations.

Higher or lower levels of threat do not really translate into higher or lower requirements for domain awareness. At lower threat levels, domain awareness is still essential for providing credible assurances to Canadians that those threat levels remain low and that there are no activities or

circumstances in or near Canadian territory that could change that, and to give neighbours credible assurances that there are no activities and no presences within Canadian jurisdictions that could pose a threat to neighbours. Current threat assessments and analyses of geopolitical realities continue to conclude that state-based military threats are not present or likely to develop in the Arctic. Obviously, such threat assessments depend on physical surveillance and detection systems, but also on intelligence and geopolitical analyses.

The point of constant and effective monitoring and surveillance is to aid the rule of law, support public safety, and advance national security, and it is also to support informed threat assessment. The commitment of resources to domain awareness is necessarily ongoing, while the commitment of resources to law enforcement, public safety, and national security necessarily changes in response to changing threat assessments.

That is not to ignore the growing insistence among some analysts that threat levels are in fact dramatically changing, that we are back in a Cold War, and that Russia and China must now be regarded with the same wariness that was accorded them during the Cold War. There is no doubt that the world changed in the wake of Russia's actions towards Georgia and Ukraine, but attempts to make those European-centred concerns the basis for military planning in the Arctic ignore some pretty fundamental realities – namely, that a deeply rooted inclination to cooperate and deflate tensions still pervades the Arctic. Through the recent agreement to collectively control fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean, commitments to cross-border assistance in search and rescue and oil spill prevention and mitigation, operational cooperation among the region's coast guards, and of course the extensive work of the Arctic Council, the Arctic has shown itself capable of resisting the tensions and divisions that now plague Europe.

It is a truth that Cold War revivalists have had trouble hearing. They have urgent warnings to flag, and while those warrant attention, they are not the basis for prudent security planning. The key to understanding public safety and national security vulnerabilities in the Arctic, and thus to security planning, is timely and reliable domain awareness. A North Warning System replacement that focuses on deepening real-time awareness throughout the Canadian and North American Arctic, rather than on frontier trip wires, will not only serve public safety and national security, it can model the kind of transparency that can contribute to region-wide domain awareness and, as a result, build confidence and cooperative security throughout the entire region.

Notes

¹ Philippe Lagassé, "Northern Command and the Evolution of Canada-US Defence Relations," *Canadian Military Journal* 4/1 (Spring 2003).

² Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces, 2017). <http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/docs/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf>

³ Lee Berthiaume, "Radar upgrades raise questions about ultimate cost of Liberal's defence review plan," CBC News, Canadian Press, 30 August 2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/liberals-cost-defence-review-norad-1.4269488>

⁴ "North Warning System Replacement," National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, last modified 30 May 2018. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/business-defence-acquisition-guide-2015/aerospace-systems-960.page>

⁵ Department of National Defence, "DRDC prepares the future of the North," The Maple Leaf - Defence Stories, Government of Canada, last modified 25 November 2016. <https://ml-fd-staging.caf-fac.ca/en/2016/11/1309>

⁶ Department of National Defence, "Government of Canada Announces Contract Awards for All Domain Situational Awareness Science & Technology Program," News Release - Government of Canada, 20 October 2017. https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/news/2017/10/le_gouvernement_ducanadaannoncelescontratsattribuesdanslecadredu.html

⁷ Department of National Defence, "All Domain Situational Awareness Science and Technology Program," Defence Research and Development Canada, Government of Canada, last modified 26 October 2017. <http://www.drdc-rddc.gc.ca/en/partnerships-partenariats/all-domain-situational-awareness-connaissance-situation-domaines.page>

⁸ Department of National Defence, "North Warning System Backgrounder," Government of Canada, 17 December 2012. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=north-warning-system/hgq87x9w>

⁹ Peter Pigott, *From Far and Wide: A History of Canada's Arctic Sovereignty* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2011).

¹⁰ "U.S., Canada eye North Warning upgrade: NORAD," *Nunatsiaq News*, 8 April 2015. https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674us-canada_eye_upgrade_of_north_warning_sites_to_protectairspace_norad/

¹¹ David Pugliese, "Canada examining contributions to US missile defence in the Arctic," *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 September 2017. <https://ottawacitizen.com>

¹² Andrea Charron and James Fergusson, "NORAD and the Evolution of North American Defence," Inside Policy, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 24 May 2017. <https://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/norad-and-the-evolution-of-north-american-defence-andrea-charron-and-james-fergusson-for-inside-policy/>; Andrea Charron and James Fergusson, "Beyond NORAD and Modernization to North

American Defence Evolution,” Canadian Global Affairs Institute, May 2017.
https://www.cgai.ca/beyond_norad_and_modernization_to_north_american_defence_evolution

2 The North Warning System (NWS) and “What We Cannot Defeat”

March 12, 2020

When a Canadian Armed Forces official recently told an Ottawa security conference that “we cannot deter what we cannot defeat, and we cannot defeat what we cannot detect,” his audience may well have heard it as the credible proclamation of a prudent and resolute defence posture. In truth, the statement seems to run counter to decades of defence policy and practice. It ignores the inconvenient reality that there is no defence against a nuclear attack, even though current and planned early warning systems ensure that such an attack would be reliably detected.

That statement, by a Canadian Commodore,¹ is evidently a central NORAD talking point since it was repeated weeks later in two appearances by the NORAD Commander at the US Senate Armed Services Committee.² In each case, the assertion that “we cannot deter what we cannot defeat” has come in the context of urgent calls to modernize the North Warning System (NWS), the network of early warning radars across the US and Canadian north. The need to update the system has been getting prominent attention from Canadian analysts and military planners – but, so far, no attention from budget planners.

The impetus behind the hoped-for modernization is the justifiable concern that the existing warning system has not kept up with evolving technologies and changing security conditions in the Arctic. The most immediate changes follow from the region’s increased accessibility for civilian transportation and resource extraction, bringing law enforcement, emergency response, and public safety requirements into much sharper focus. A critically important dimension of an updated NWS will thus be improved situational awareness in Arctic land, air, and sea domains in support of the day-to-day operations of the relevant civil authorities, assisted by the Canadian Armed Forces.

But the focus of the national security establishment has all along been on changes to the strategic environment – including post-Crimea relations with

Russia, the growing military presence of Russia in the Arctic, and China's Arctic interests. That said, the specific developments most often cited – like Russia's long-range cruise missiles, Russian and Chinese hypersonic glide vehicles, and offensive cyber capabilities – are technology-induced changes in the global strategic environment that have little to do with climate change in the Arctic. NORAD's push to modernize the NWS is more directly driven by the ambition to mount a continental strategic defence initiative against evolving strategic threats³ than by a need for more effective Arctic domain awareness in support of sovereignty patrols, regional maritime and air surveillance and control, and public safety.

If NORAD truly assumes that “we cannot deter what we cannot defeat,” and insists that applies to strategic ballistic and cruise missiles carrying conventional or nuclear warheads, then it stands to reason that strategic missile defences would take on a special urgency. But the result is an aspirational, which in this case means a futile, pursuit of systems designed to defend North America against strategic weapons. Erecting an impenetrable shield against strategic weapons is not a new dream, like the Star Wars scheme imagined by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, but the central dynamic of the East/West confrontation has always been, and remains, the recognition that defending against or defeating a strategic ballistic and/or cruise missile attack is impossible. In other words, the basic response to that threat is in fact not defence but deterrence – the strategy being to deter what cannot be defeated.

Once a nuclear attack is launched, it cannot be stopped, despite the billions spent on trying to devise a defence. Reagan and Gorbachev finally came to the right conclusion: once started, a nuclear war cannot be won and so it must never be fought⁴ – hence the need to deter (prevent) nuclear attack. Given the long-standing acknowledgment that there is no defeating a massed attack by Soviet/Russian strategic nuclear bombers or the cruise missiles they launch, and no defeating Soviet/Russian or Chinese intercontinental ballistic missiles, Canada has for just as long supported the nuclear deterrence strategies of its allies – the operating assumption of that policy being not that “we cannot deter what we cannot defeat,” but that we must deter what we cannot defeat.

NORAD was formally established by Canada and the United States in 1958, when there was still an intention to defend against, to defeat, Russian bombers. But already by the end of the 1950s NORAD did not have, and certainly does not now have, the means to defeat a massed Soviet/Russian nuclear bomber attack on North America – and stopped trying. In that early

post-Sputnik world, intercontinental ballistic missiles had already become the central nuclear threat, and as a result NORAD no longer maintained the numbers of interceptor aircraft that would be needed to mount a credible defence against a massed attack of Russian strategic bombers. Over time, the Russian bomber threat morphed into the air-launched cruise missile threat (missiles that can carry conventional or nuclear warheads), against which there is no credible defence. In the event of an attack, NORAD's air defence forces, to which Canada currently contributes CF-18 fighter interceptors in addition to the coastal radars of the NWS, might well intercept some of the advancing cruise missiles, but many more than enough would get through to visit immeasurable destruction on North America. No impermeable defence shield is possible – preventing attack in the first place is the only realistic security option.

And that same reality applies doubly to intercontinental ballistic missiles. Neither NORAD nor the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have ever had the means or prospect of defending against Russian and Chinese intercontinental or strategic range ballistic missiles. So certain are the western allies of this sobering reality that they, sensibly, do not even try to mount a defence – with both the Pentagon and NATO insisting explicitly that the North American-based strategic ballistic missile defence mid-course interception system and the European NATO ballistic missile defence deployments are intended only to intercept isolated and very limited attacks, of the kind North Korea might one day be able to mount – the defences are not aimed at Russian or Chinese missiles.

Defence against the nuclear forces of major powers is neither possible nor even contemplated. The history of strategic defence has been the pursuit of an impossible mission at the cost not only of vast sums of taxpayer dollars and rubles, but of strategic stability. Any attempt to deploy missile defence systems aimed at an adversary's strategic forces would simply lead to the rapid expansion of inventories of offensive missiles. When it comes to strategic nuclear forces, anything less than 100 percent defence effectiveness spells disaster – and offence will always overwhelm defence. The West cannot beat Russian and Chinese strategic nuclear weapons systems, so, again, the chosen response is to focus on deterring what you cannot defeat.

The insistence that “we cannot defeat what we cannot detect” implies that what can be detected can be defeated. The point however is that attacking missiles and aircraft are reliably detectable, but that does not mean they can be defeated; it means only that deterrent forces can be alerted for immediate counterattack. Attacking strategic nuclear forces simply cannot

be defeated with anything close to what might be credible protection to North American populations, and a modernized NWS will not change that.

The hope for an effective strategic defence shield leads, inevitably it seems, to musings about new technologies and strategies – some of the latter adding more to the dangers than to security. Notably, the hope of developing more effective NORAD air defences drives the pursuit of a modernized North Warning System with a capacity to detect Russian bombers, ships, and submarines much further out in international air and ocean spaces, before they get close enough to North American shores to launch their cruise missiles our way.⁵ The idea is to take out the “archers,” bombers and vessels, to avoid having to face whole quivers of “arrows” in the form of air- and sea-launched cruise missiles that those archers could launch. Of course, it is acknowledged that “there is no guarantee” that all cruise-missile carrying bombers, ships, and submarines could be pre-emptively destroyed⁶ – hence the calls for the new NWS to also have the capacity to identify and track the cruise missile arrows.

Key Canadian academic experts on NORAD thus conclude that “a modernized NWS for the Arctic needs to be capable of identifying and tracking Russian LRA [long-range aircraft] far into the Arctic Ocean and beyond *into Russian territory*” (emphasis added). That in turn would require that forward operating locations of Canadian interceptors be moved further north (e.g. to Alert, Canada’s most northerly base at the northern tip of Ellesmere Island, or even Greenland).⁷

The obvious implication is that NORAD would have to be prepared to launch pre-emptive attacks on Russian aircraft in international air space, or even within Russian air space (or to launch pre-emptive attacks on Russian vessels in international or Russian bastion waters). In an environment of high tension, but before actual military hostilities, such a pre-emptive attack would guarantee the start of war; in an environment of conventional military hostilities, a direct attack on a Russian nuclear weapons capable system would guarantee escalation to nuclear attacks and counter-attacks. The experts thus acknowledge, albeit in rather understated terms, that “there are also political-strategic implications of such deployments being perceived by Russian authorities as a pre-emptive strike posture, and likely Canadian concerns of NORAD ... undertaking an offensive posture.” In other words, preparing NORAD for pre-emptive strikes against Russian national territory would be de-stabilizing and (rightly) regarded as controversial by Canadians.

Not everything that can be detected can be defeated – nor is it always prudent to try. Indeed, proponents of efforts to mount comprehensive

continental defences against strategic weapons betray their lack of confidence in any strategic defence initiative when they, at the same time, propose point defences for key political or military centres in North America – elaborations of the kinds of point defence systems designed to protect forces within operational theatres from tactical attacks.

Improvements to the North Warning System, to coastal air and maritime warning systems in the north, as well as to similar systems on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, are prudent in the interests of sovereignty and public safety, but they will not make it possible to defend against strategic weapons systems.

And, to be clear, it is operations in support of sovereignty and public safety, not defence against Russian or Chinese strategic forces, that are the primary, day-to-day work of NORAD. With the aid of frontier warning systems – the North Warning System and especially Atlantic and Pacific coastal radars – NORAD and Canadian Forces track and identify some 200,000 civilian aircraft that annually approach or enter Canadian airspace.⁸ The key mission is to sort out which of those aircraft represent challenges to Canadian law enforcement, public safety, or security. These are operations primarily to aid civil authorities. As the Arctic becomes more accessible to small aircraft, and as maritime traffic increases, more of those surveillance/interception operations will have to take place in the north, beyond the Atlantic and Pacific coasts where the main action obviously is today.

Of course, as current reports of Canadian and American fighter aircraft escorting two Russian Tu-142 (Bear) aircraft in international airspace over the Beaufort Sea reveal, the NWS does also watch for Russian military aircraft patrolling near, but never entering, North American airspace (since 2007 when regular patrols were resumed, NORAD has encountered an average of about ten such patrols each year).⁹ If small numbers of those bombers were to invade North America, NORAD could muster the means to intercept them – but there is no credible scenario that would see the Russians launch such a limited, readily defeated, attack. The most recent case involved two Russian reconnaissance aircraft on routine training flights, but they were an occasion for Canada's top general to describe Russia as the greatest immediate threat to North America.¹⁰

Russian training missions notwithstanding, the main point of the North Warning System, including a modernized system, is and will remain domain awareness, the better to monitor and control those thousands of civilian aircraft and ships approaching our shores. And such domain awareness in

turn serves civilian law enforcement, public safety, and national security – essentially in that order. The North Warning System can and will contribute to early warning of strategic attack, not because that will make it possible to defeat such an attack, but because its function is to alert deterrent forces for possible counterattack as prescribed under deterrence. So, by all means, Canada will have to modernize the frontier warning system on all three coasts, but that will not enable effective defence against strategic attack.

Reports on Russia's new Arctic strategy¹¹ make it clear that Russia will continue to make the Arctic a centrepiece of its economic development strategy. It calls for a major push to exploit the North's natural resources and expand the Northern Sea Route, with the former being a significant means to the latter. According to a *Barents Observer* report, the protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity also features in the plan, but the focus is on promoting investment (involving extensive tax breaks) in resource exploitation – oil, gas, and more – and developing related industries.

It is a plan that has grave implications for the global climate change crisis, but the military security implications of these Russian ambitions point to its need for stability and an investor-friendly political/strategic environment in the region. But the American position, as articulated by NORAD's General Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, assumes that, when it comes down to it, Russia will ignore its economic development ambitions in the Arctic, and the attendant imperatives of geo-strategic stability, and instead use the Arctic as a launch pad for geopolitical and military adventurism and fomenting global conflict to no discernable end.

Direct military conflict with Russia and/or China that would involve North American territory is not an impossibility, but it remains highly unlikely. Such a conflict is unlikely because it would serve no one's interests. It is another example of the kind of war that could never be won by any party and should never be fought. Any direct combat between or among advanced states involving the modern, hi-tech, highly destructive conventional forces of major powers would so rapidly inflict such massive and unacceptable damage that only losers would emerge. But the truly sobering reality is that direct East-West military hostilities would inevitably escalate to the use of nuclear weapons, and, to repeat, credible defence against nuclear weapons is impossible.

That leaves prevention – with deterrence, arms control, and the pursuit of cooperative strategic security relations being the means to that end. The first of these, deterrence, obviously cannot escape the reality that failure comes with extraordinary consequences – namely, annihilation – while the

other two, disarmament and cooperation, are currently decidedly out of fashion.

The main point about nuclear deterrence is that, contrary to NORAD's talking points, it does not rely on the capacity to defend. In nuclear strategic terms, deterrence rests on the capacity and intent to launch devastating counterattacks after having sustained an attack against which no defence was possible. That is obvious enough, but when senior military officials insist it is not possible to deter what cannot be defeated, the basics of deterrence obviously need to be restated. The irremediable danger, one that has burdened the world since the dawn of the nuclear age, is that when deterrence fails (and human systems are destined to fail at some point) and when prevention fails, the prescribed formula is for a nuclear attack to be followed by nuclear counter-attack, even though the inevitable consequence would be escalating attacks and unprecedented catastrophe – that is, mutually assured destruction (MAD). The hope at the root of this strategy is that the capacity to annihilate is what will prevent annihilation.

It would be hard to design a less rational foundation for global security. Indeed, the international community has, since Hiroshima, agreed, at least in principle, that nuclear arsenals must, for the sake of the planet and the humanity it hosts, be prohibited and eliminated. Even the major states with nuclear weapons are part of this global consensus. They signed on to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to a legal obligation to disarm, though they obviously remain disinclined to meet those unambiguous disarmament commitments – and there is no global cop to make them. So the world is left to rely on international nuclear disarmament diplomacy, and the public pressure and political pursuit of the cooperative security arrangements needed to drive it forward. The 2020 NPT Review Conference, to be held in April¹² [delayed to January 2021] will be the next occasion when the world makes another concentrated effort to nudge states with nuclear arsenals toward behaviour that is more responsible and guided by the detailed disarmament agenda that NPT member states have collectively elaborated over the decades.

That effort is made all the more challenging when the very real limits of defence, the fundamentals of deterrence, and the consequences of failed deterrence are either misunderstood or misrepresented.

Notes

¹ “Senior Canadian military officer warns NORAD needs upgrades as Russian, Chinese militaries advance,” *Globe and Mail*, Canadian Press, 29 January 2020.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-senior-canadian-military-officer-warns-norad-needs-upgrades-as-russian/>

² General Terrence J. O’Shaughnessy, Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 13 February 2020. https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/download/oshoughnessy_02-13-20, and its Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, 3 March 2020. <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/20-03-03-us-policy-and-posture-in-support-of-arctic-readiness>

³ James Fergusson, “Missed Opportunities: Why Canada’s North Warning System is Overdue for an Overhaul,” *Commentary*, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, January 2020. <https://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/canadas-north-warning-system-needs-overhaul-new-mli-commentary/>

⁴ The joint statement was made in Geneva in 1985. George P. Shultz, “The War That Must Never Be Fought,” *Defining Ideas*, The Hoover Institution, 12 March 2015. <https://www.hoover.org/research/war-must-never-be-fought-0>

⁵ Andrea Charron and Jim Fergusson, “NORAD: Beyond Modernization,” Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, 31 January 2019. https://umanitoba.ca/centres/cdss/media/NORAD_beyond_modernization_2019.pdf

⁶ Charron and Fergusson, “NORAD.”

⁷ Charron and Fergusson, “NORAD.”

⁸ The Canadian Forces Base at North Bay, 22 Wing, as NORAD describes it, “is responsible for providing surveillance, identification, control and warning for the aerospace defence of Canada and North America.... This surveillance and identification of all air traffic approaching North America (200,000 flights per year) is accomplished using radar information received via satellite from the North Warning System across the Canadian Arctic, coastal radars on the east and west coasts of Canada, and Airborne Warning and Control System Aircraft. All aircraft penetrating this radar coverage are detected and identified..., 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, [and] unidentified aircraft, aircraft in distress, or aircraft suspected of conducting illegal activities may be intercepted by CF-18 fighters.” “22 Wing North Bay,” Royal Canadian Air Force, last modified 19 July 2019. <http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/22-wing/index.page>

⁹ The average of about ten intercepts annually is suggested by a table by the University of Calgary’s Rob Huebert, in: Charron and Fergusson, “NORAD.”

¹⁰ “Canadian, U.S. fighter jets intercept Russian aircraft off Alaskan coast,” *Red Deer Advocate*, Canadian Press, 10 March 2020. <https://www.reddeeradvocate.com/news/canadian-u-s-fighter-jets-intercept-russian-aircraft-off-alaskan-coast/>

¹¹ Atle Staalesen, “Putin signs Arctic master plan,” *Barents Observer*, 6 March 2020. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2020/03/putin-signs-arctic-master-plan>

¹² At the time of writing there has been announcement of postponement due to the coronavirus pandemic.

3 America's Arctic Security Strategy

May 1, 2015

Few will dispute the observation that the Arctic state least focused on Arctic security is the United States. Alaskan-based forces and Arctic submarine patrols obviously figure into US security operations, but their focus is on Asia and America's strategic nuclear posture, not security conditions in the Arctic. The Arctic is not central to American national mythmaking or identity, to sovereignty concerns, or, since the end of the Cold War, to national security. And none of that is about to change.

The United States obviously conceives of itself as a global power, but not an Arctic power. Not only is the place of the Arctic now much less important in the US security calculus, but only a small portion of Arctic geography is American, and the American Arctic is physically, politically, and psychologically far from the centres of US power and economic interests – certainly no American politician would assign the Arctic the role claimed for it by the Russian deputy prime minister, namely “a Russian Mecca.”¹

A recent EKOS Research survey, undertaken for The Gordon Foundation, polled publics in all eight Arctic states² and found that Americans outside Alaska are the least likely to think there is a rising threat of military conflict in the Arctic – while 24 percent felt the threat of military conflict had increased over the past year, in Canada some 30 percent felt tensions had grown, and in Russia it was 50 percent. Americans were in fact the most likely, except for Swedes, among Arctic state populations to declare themselves unaware of any changes in conflict threat levels in the Arctic. Americans outside Alaska were also the least aware of the Arctic Council. Notwithstanding the fact that when the poll was taken the US was preparing to assume the chairmanship of the Council for two years, only 32 percent of Americans had even heard of it, compared with 70 percent in Iceland and 59 percent in Canada.

There are certainly positive elements to this out-of-sight-is-out-of-mind American posture toward the Arctic. American political culture, which above all is committed to preserving American military pre-eminence, is not

currently adding to militarization pressures in the region. But, at the same time, American economic and technological power is not currently contributing markedly or according to its capacity to a needed Arctic infrastructure for search and rescue and other maritime services. Heather Conley of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a former deputy assistant Secretary of State who has also held a range of other diplomatic and research posts and is now a key American analyst on the Arctic, points out in a 2012 CSIS report that “the United States is the only Arctic coastal state that does not currently have any large-scale economic development plan for the region.” The report laments what it calls “a woeful lack” of American military capabilities in the Arctic and adds the more general point that the US has been willing to “outsource requirements to foreign-flagged commercial vessels or to borrow ice-strengthened vessels from Canada, Russia, or Sweden.”³ A 2014 Senate Armed Services Committee report does assert that “the United States is an Arctic nation,” as have others of course, but the fact that the Committee felt compelled to remind American security planners that they should aim for American national security strategies and capabilities to “keep pace with” growing US interests in the Arctic confirms the sense that neither those “growing” interests nor the pace of developing region-specific capabilities are top of mind in the US outside of Alaska.⁴

Washington having now assumed a two-year stint of Arctic Council leadership, it is a good time to recall the security considerations that inform its Arctic presence. The Arctic Council does not, at the behest of the Americans at its founding in 1996, address hard security or defence issues, but with two former superpower rivals and four other NATO members at the Council table, those issues certainly remain a lingering presence.

The US Arctic Security Posture

A succession of US Government reports⁵ – from the White House, the Department of Defense (DOD), the Coast Guard (USCG), and Congressional Committees – does emphasize the growing importance of the Arctic for the United States, particularly in the context of climate change and receding ice coverage.⁶ The reports call for enhancements in American surveillance and response capabilities generally, but none call for significant changes in short- to mid-term military or Coast Guard infrastructures, equipment, or deployments.

Under a 2009 Presidential Directive, issued in the closing days of the George W. Bush Administration and still the primary policy guidance, US

national security, including homeland security, interests in the Arctic are listed as including:

- missile defence and early warning;
- deployment of sea and air systems (for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations);
- freedom of the seas (linked to the dispute with Canada over the status of the Northwest Passage), both for maritime navigation and overflight;
- homeland security (issues of concern include terrorism and criminal activity);
- piracy;
- border security (particularly coastlines); and
- international law, including the Law of the Sea.

The 2013 DOD National Strategy on the Arctic Region defines the overall goal of this strategy as “an Arctic region that is stable and free of conflict, where nations act responsibly in a spirit of trust and cooperation, and where economic and energy resources are developed in a sustainable manner that also respects the fragile environment and the interests and cultures of indigenous peoples.” Three avenues of activity for pursuing these objectives are described as advancing US security interests in the region, pursuing responsible Arctic stewardship, and strengthening international cooperation.⁷ Notably, DOD situates its approach to the three-pronged goal of security, stewardship, and international cooperation in the context of a “relatively low level of military threat in a region bounded by nation States that have not only publicly committed to working within a common framework of international law and diplomatic engagement [the Ilulissat Declaration⁸], but have also demonstrated the ability and commitment to do so.” Thus, the aim is “a secure and stable region where US national interests are safeguarded, the US homeland is protected, and nations work cooperatively to address challenges.”

These are all the kinds of broad objectives and activities that any state could be expected to set out as a public posture, whatever the true objectives might be, but further indication that the American Arctic seems not to be headed for a significant turn toward further militarization, and that national security and defence are not central to American attention to the Arctic as a region, is available in the January 2014 White House document on the “Implementation Plan for The National Strategy for the Arctic Region.”⁹ It identified 35 task areas, ranging from infrastructure issues to freedom of the

seas, energy security, science, international cooperation, and waterways management. For each task the lead agency is identified, and in only one case is it DOD. And not even that task is directly related to a defence or hard security role, but rather to the development of a “framework of observations and modelling to support forecasting and prediction of sea ice.” Even for tasks related to the advancement of American security interests and freedom of the seas, including domain awareness, the lead agencies are the Departments of Homeland Security, State, and Transport. The Department of Defense roles are secondary, not primary, and focused on supporting civilian authorities and operations. A 36th task is for DOD to urge the United States to become a full party to the Law of the Sea treaty.

In general, the Arctic as a region is not regarded by either the American people or officialdom as a defence problem. There are certainly security challenges, but none in which the military has a primary responsibility.

The DOD Arctic strategy thus acknowledges that a significant element of the northern military mission is to be available to aid civil authorities in their public safety and humanitarian response missions (though to date, it says, it has “seldom” been asked for such assistance). In fact, DOD’s 2013 Arctic Strategy document warns against over-stating the Arctic threat environment. There is the possibility, it warns, that “political rhetoric and press reporting about boundary disputes and competition for resources may inflame regional tensions.” Furthermore, the report notes that “being too aggressive in taking steps to address anticipated future security risks may create the conditions of mistrust and miscommunication under which such risks could materialize.”¹⁰ Too much focus on potential militarization could in fact prompt an arms race. In other words, the focus on threat-centric language about the Arctic could help to prompt a real threat.

Strategic Defence and the Arctic

At the same time, certain “hard security” issues and infrastructure are certainly put prominently into play in the Arctic by the Pentagon – not in the interests of Arctic region security, but in support of a global strategic posture. Somehow, ballistic missile defence (BMD) continues to figure prominently among the leading American perceptions of what makes the United States safe. Despite BMD relying on far from mature technologies, and despite it being aligned against far from mature threats (from the still remote potential for North Korean strategic-range nuclear-armed missiles to the highly unlikely emergence of Iranian nuclear-armed missiles), missile defence continues to earn political, military, and budgetary support far out

of proportion to any practical impact it has on the safety and security of Americans. All that while Washington shows great reluctance to spend significantly lesser amounts on Coast Guard icebreakers or full service search and rescue bases and ports in the Arctic – facilities that would actually have huge impacts on the day-to-day security of people who work in the Arctic and traverse its waters.

There are three US BMD installations in the Arctic region. Fort Greely in Alaska hosts 26 mid-course interceptor missiles, with another 14 planned.¹¹ The Clear Air Force Station manages a phased array radar system designed to detect ballistic missiles launched at sea or on land. Upgrades are underway. The US also operates an Arctic early warning radar at its base at Thule, Greenland.¹²

Air defence has long been prominent in the Arctic, so DOD continues to assert that it will work through the Canada-US North American Aerospace Defence agreement (NORAD) to maintain air tracking capabilities in the Arctic. NORAD was of course initially developed as a strategic defence arrangement during the Cold War, to counter the Russian strategic bomber threat of the early post-World War II years, and still monitors and responds to Russian strategic bombers that still patrol in international airspace in areas adjacent to North America. But NORAD's primary activity is now also to aid civil authorities in the United States and Canada in monitoring air approaches to North America – the focus of which is small, unauthorized civilian aircraft. In 2006, when NORAD was made a permanent bi-national agreement, maritime monitoring and warning were made a NORAD role, but DOD's 2013 report on Arctic strategy has maritime detection and tracking in the Arctic being coordinated through the Department of Homeland Security (the US Coast Guard operates under Homeland Security) and other departments and agencies and public/private partnerships. It promises collaboration with "international partners to employ, acquire, share, or develop the means required to improve sensing, data collection and fusion, analysis, and information-sharing to enhance domain awareness appropriately in the Arctic."¹³ A current series of Canada-US discussions, known as NORAD Next, is aimed at determining the capabilities NORAD will need to confront what are envisioned as emerging challenges in the 2025-30 time frame.¹⁴

Freedom of navigation is obviously accorded high priority by the US, though the US Senate's failure to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), despite being urged to do so by the Pentagon, the State Department, and successive administrations, and despite it being a

primary framework for advancing US interests in the right of free passage through international straits, is, if nothing else, a prime example of the complexities of the US political system.

The Pentagon describes the relevance of freedom of the seas in the Arctic to its overall strategic posture: "Preserving freedom of the seas, which includes all of the rights, freedoms, and uses of the seas and adjacent airspace, including freedom of navigation and overflight, in the Arctic supports the nation's ability to exercise these rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea and airspace throughout the world, including through strategic straits."¹⁵ In other words, this is another example of an Arctic issue for which the American interest is not in the Arctic for its own sake – the focus is the American global power rather than the American Arctic power.

Homeland Security

The Arctic is a maritime region and changing requirements for public safety and infrastructure in the Arctic relate especially to that maritime environment. That in turn means that coast guards, not navies, are the institutions that are most directly challenged. That has led to growing interest in cooperation and burden sharing among the coast guards of the Arctic littoral states. It is a natural development and one of the mechanisms for such cooperation that is getting serious attention and support from the US is the establishment of an Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF). The 2012 CSIS report recommended the creation of such a Forum, consisting initially of the Arctic Council countries – although it noted that other countries willing to commit assets could also be included. The ACGF, which might be headquartered at the US Air Force base at Thule, Greenland, is envisioned as initially focusing on information, with the potential to facilitate international cooperation in implementing the Arctic Council's search and rescue and oil spill response agreements.¹⁶

An April 2015 report from the Canadian Munk-Gordon Arctic Security Program¹⁷ focuses on the development of the ACGF and includes six key recommendations, a central one being that due to important differences in national coast guards – some being explicitly civilian, others military, and still others a mix of both models – the new forum should focus on "soft" security issues such as search and rescue and environmental issues.¹⁸ By keeping hard national security and national defence issues off the agenda, says the report, Russia might be brought into the process more effectively, and there would also be greater scope for non-state actors, notably Indigenous communities, and the private sector to be involved. The report

also encourages continued engagement with Russia, despite what it calls “the current challenges of military-to-military contact in the region.”

The report’s other recommendations, a product of an international seminar on coast guard operations in the Arctic, include: support for information sharing through the ACGF on best practices, operational expertise, real-time data; that the ACGF serve as a platform for exercises related to search and rescue and oil spill recovery, both subjects of international agreements among Arctic Council states; and that the ACGF include mechanisms to facilitate work with local communities, Indigenous organizations, and the private sector.¹⁹

More recently, the US Embassy in Ottawa reported on a two-day ACGF Experts Meeting in Washington and said the member countries of the ACGF, all the members of the Arctic Council, “will formally establish the Arctic Coast Guard Forum at a Summit at the US Coast Guard Academy’s Center for Arctic Study and Policy this fall.”²⁰

In February 2014 the US Navy published an update of its Arctic Roadmap,²¹ reiterating four objectives or activities to guide naval operations in the Arctic Region: sovereignty and homeland defence; respond to crises and contingencies; preserve freedom of the seas; and promote partnerships (with other elements of the US Government and internationally). “Periodic presence” is a primary means by which these objectives are to be advanced and there is a promise to identify the equipment and operational procedures to “facilitate sustained, safe operations in the region.”

Primary responsibility for US maritime law enforcement and safety is with the US Coast Guard. The Coast Guard’s 2013 Arctic strategy document describes the Coast Guard as “the maritime component” of Homeland Security with “specific statutory responsibilities in US Arctic waters.” The Coast Guard “is responsible for ensuring safe, secure, and environmentally responsible maritime activity in US Arctic Waters.”²² CSIS refers to the US Coast Guard’s own assessment of its operational challenges, focusing especially on the absence of readily available fuel, the main fuelling depot being at Point Barrow on the Alaskan North Slope, one thousand nautical miles away from Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians and almost as far from the air station in Kodiak. “Because the Coast Guard is unable to sustain a presence in the Arctic Ocean for more than a few days,” says CSIS, “it must cooperate with the Canadian Coast Guard or rely on capabilities of the private sector,” noting Royal Dutch Shell’s acquisition of ice-capable and spill response vessels.²³ The Coast Guard describes some of the challenges of increased vessel traffic: “A major casualty on board a large modern cruise

ship in the Arctic would pose a significant challenge to responders and stress any one nation's capacity for mass rescue at sea. If an oil tanker were to spill its cargo in Arctic waters the potential impact to the maritime environment would be profound, and removing the oil would be challenging." The US Coast Guard also refers to the increase in small craft traffic in the Northwest Passage, acknowledging the Canadian Northern Canada Vessel Traffic Services Zone, and adds that "increasing vessel traffic requires a commensurate increase in search and rescue capabilities throughout the region."²⁴

A noteworthy element of the US Navy's Arctic Roadmap is a distinct absence of any sense of great urgency. The Roadmap predicts that in the near-term, up to 2020, "there will be low demand for additional naval involvement" in the Arctic and that "current Navy capabilities are sufficient to meet near-term operational needs." Thus, for the near-term, the Roadmap says the Navy's presence will be primarily via "undersea and air assets." Surface ships will operate in open waters, but weather conditions and sea ice will continue to make that hazardous. In the mid-term, 2020 to 2030, it says capabilities will be improved (the "Navy will refine doctrine, operating procedures, and tactics, techniques, and procedures"), with the assumption that the main demands on the Navy will be for assistance to search and rescue and disaster response missions. And the main point the Roadmap makes about the far-term, beyond 2030, is that more open waterways will enable the Navy to undertake more forward operations. These conditions may demand a larger Navy presence, but diminished ice presence will in turn mean more navigable waterways along which existing naval vessels will be able to operate more readily in forward Arctic locations. In the meantime, operational implementation of the Roadmap refers to the intention to identify capability gaps, but there are no references to the acquisition of Arctic-specific equipment.²⁵

The CSIS report raises concerns about current capacity for border security and law enforcement, including countering terrorist threats, throughout the US Arctic region and calls the US Government's capabilities "questionable at best." It points out that the Coast Guard is "struggling to maintain competencies" in key areas of responsibility above the Arctic Circle, like "ice operations (conducting and supporting scientific research), search and rescue (deploying assets to respond to search and rescue incidents), marine environmental protection (responding to oil or hazardous materials spills), and aids to navigations (facilitating navigation and

preventing disasters, collisions, and wrecks, using aids such as buoys, lights, and signs).” Without US Coast Guard operating bases or stations above the Arctic Circle, search and rescue and maritime deployments within the Arctic region are delayed by a minimum of eight hours by air and days by sea.²⁶

Staying the Course

The US security strategy for the Arctic can probably be characterized as staying the course and not veering toward accelerated militarization. As a major power, the US has plenty of means available, including for the Arctic, but remains reluctant to commit major resources on Arctic-specific security measures that would materially affect public safety. Enhanced ice-breaking and search and rescue capabilities, which would immediately impact the security of northerners, are eschewed in favour, it seems, of significant and ongoing spending on strategic nuclear and ballistic missile defence assets that have an Arctic presence but contribute nothing, to understate the matter, to the well-being and safety of Arctic communities. DOD is loath to see more money going to the Coast Guard for icebreakers, for example, seeing such spending as adding to its own claimed budget constraints.²⁷ While DOD’s 2013 Arctic Strategy promises to work with a range of actors to assess continuing developments (climate, ice conditions) to improve forecasting and to inform future equipment needs, it also warns that “premature investment” in Arctic infrastructure “may reduce the availability of resources for other pressing priorities, particularly in a time of fiscal austerity.”²⁸

There is thus no evidence of an impending major shift in Arctic security approaches by the United States. In the near- to mid-term the focus is to be on “strategic partnerships that promote innovative, low-cost solutions,” as the 2013 National Strategy document put it.²⁹ And the focus on cooperation with other government departments certainly implies there is no particular vision of militarizing Arctic security. Instead the focus is to be on “collaborative security approaches as outlined in the 2013 National Strategy for the Arctic Region, and by supporting other Federal departments and agencies where they have leadership roles. Building trust through transparency about the intent of our military activities and participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises and other engagements that facilitate information-sharing will be a key means of addressing this risk.”³⁰

DOD’s policy documents are remarkably forthcoming on the importance of non-military and cooperative elements to Arctic security. A 2010 Report to Congress³¹ refers to the impact of climate change as creating

opportunities for multilateral cooperation in support of “human and environmental security in the region” and, as we have seen, DOD Arctic roles are oriented toward assisting civilian and non-military³² authorities. DOD emphasizes cooperation mechanisms, like the annual Northern Chiefs of Defense meetings and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable workshops, as well as “work with allies and partners within the framework of international institutions, ranging from the Arctic Council to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), to maintain and promote cooperation.”³³

The 2013 Arctic National Strategy report’s³⁴ policy language is heavily infused with references to regional defence cooperation in pursuit of security and public safety: “The Department of Defense will seek out areas of mutual interest to build strategic relationships and encourage operational-level partnerships that promote innovative, affordable security solutions and enhance burden-sharing in the Arctic.” There is emphasis on participation in multilateral exercises, in addition to basic tasks related to sovereignty, homeland security, and domain awareness.

As we have noted here before, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev’s Murmansk Initiative did not try to ease East-West military tensions by focusing on the military relationships. Instead he focused on cooperation in non-military matters that would allow military tensions to be seen in a new light. Arctic cooperation in non-military and human security challenges, of the kind that find their way onto the Arctic Council agenda, is key to building the political and security confidence that will help to ease the resurgent tensions with Russia. The Americans, to their credit, have not responded to those tensions with militarization pressures in the Arctic, and the US leadership of the Arctic Council over the next two years is an opportunity to continue pressing the social, economic, environmental, public safety, and political dimensions of human security for the people of the Arctic which will in turn help to entrench a sense of regional stability and security.

Notes

¹ Ishaan Tharoor, “The Arctic is Russia’s mecca, says top Moscow official,” *Anchorage Daily News*, 20 April 2015. <https://www.adn.com/nation-world/article/arctic-russias-mecca-says-top-moscow-official/2015/04/21/>

² “Rethinking the Top of the World: Arctic Public Opinion Survey, Vol. 2,” EKOS Research Associates Inc., Munk-Gordon Arctic Security Program, 22

April 2015. <https://gordonfoundation.ca/resource/rethinking-the-top-of-the-world-arctic-public-opinion-survey-vol-2/>

³ Heather A. Conley, with Terry Toland, Jamie Kraut, and Andreas Østhagen, *A New Security Architecture for the Arctic: An American Perspective* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 2012). https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/120117_Conley_ArcticSecurity_Web.pdf

⁴ The Senate Armed Services Committee, Report, 2 June 2014 (S.Rept. 113-176).

⁵ A recent background report to the US Congress reviewed security and other reports in anticipation of the US assuming the chairmanship of the Arctic Council (beginning in April 2015 and running for two years). Ronald O'Rourke (Coordinator), "Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service, CRS Report, 17 March 2015.

<http://www.crs.gov>; A 2013 CSIS report also reviewed the policy decisions and documents that form US Arctic policy, as well as the primary US Government Actors in the Arctic with responsibility for implementing US Arctic policy. Heather A. Conley with Terry Toland, Mihaela David, and Natalja Jegorova, *The New Foreign Policy Frontier: U.S. Interests and Actors in the Arctic* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2013). https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/130307_Conley_NewForeignPolFrontier_Web_0.pdf

⁶ Comparative summaries of the Arctic strategies of all Arctic states are offered in Alyson JK Bailes and Lassi Heininen, *Strategy Papers on the Arctic or High North: A Comparative Study and Analysis* (Reykjavík: Alþjóðamálastofnun og Rannsóknarsetur um smáríki / Centre for Small State Studies, Institute of International Affairs, University of Iceland, 2012). http://ams.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/old/arctic_strategies_innsidur.pdf

⁷ Department of Defense, *Arctic Strategy* (Washington: Department of Defense, November 2013). https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2013_Arctic_Strategy.pdf

⁸ Agreed to at the Arctic Ocean Conference of representatives of the five coastal states bordering on the Arctic Ocean – Canada, Denmark, Norway, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America – in Ilulissat, Greenland, 27-29 May 2008, it says in part: "the law of the sea provides for important rights and obligations concerning the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf, the protection of the marine environment, including ice-covered areas, freedom of navigation, marine scientific research, and other uses of the sea. We remain committed to this legal framework and to the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims." Arctic Ocean Conference, "2008 Ilulissat

Declaration,” 28 May 2008. <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2008-Ilulissat-Declaration.pdf>

⁹ National Security Council, “Implementation Plan for The National Strategy for the Arctic Region” (Washington: The White House, January 2014).

https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/implementation_plan_for_the_national_strategy_for_the_arctic_region_-_final.pdf

¹⁰ Department of Defense, *Arctic Strategy*, as quoted in O’Rourke, “Changes in the Arctic.”

¹¹ “Ground-based Midcourse Defence (GMD),” Missile Defense Agency, U.S. Department of Defense. <http://www.mda.mil/system/gmd.html>. Four interceptors are based at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. When the Fort Greely deployment of the additional 14 interceptors is completed, the US will have a total of 44 deployed (40 at the Alaska site and 4 in California).

“Ground Based Interceptor (GBI),” GlobalSecurity.org.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/space/systems/gbi.htm>

¹² These radars are part of the US Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS). The US Air Force also operates BMEWS radars at Beale Air Force Base in California and at the Royal Air Force base at Fylingdales in the United Kingdom, and a Cape Cod, Massachusetts radar is also being upgraded.

“Sensors,” Missile Defense Agency, U.S. Department of Defense.

<http://www.mda.mil/system/sensors.html>

¹³ Department of Defense, *Arctic Strategy*.

¹⁴ Senator Jean-Guy Dagenais, Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Issue 5 - Evidence - Meeting of 7 April 2014.

¹⁵ “The United States Navy Arctic Roadmap for 2014 to 2030,” Chief of Naval Operations, Department of the Navy, February 2014. http://www.navy.mil/docs/USN_arctic_roadmap.pdf

¹⁶ O’Rourke, “Changes in the Arctic,” 63-64.

¹⁷ Andreas Østhagen and Vanessa Gastaldo, *Coast Guard Co-operation in a Changing Arctic* (Toronto: Munk-Gordon Arctic Security Program, April 2015). https://gordonfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2015_Arctic_CoastForum_WEB.pdf

¹⁸ Østhagen and Gastaldo, *Coast Guard Co-operation in a Changing Arctic*.

¹⁹ Østhagen and Gastaldo, *Coast Guard Co-operation in a Changing Arctic*.

²⁰ Arctic Coast Guard Forum, Embassy of the United States in Ottawa, Canada, 27 March 2015. <http://canada.usembassy.gov/news-events/2015-news-and-events>

²¹ “The United States Navy Arctic Roadmap for 2014 to 2030.”

-
- ²² United States Coast Guard, *Arctic Strategy* (Washington: United States Coast Guard, May 2013). http://www.uscg.mil/seniorleadership/DOCS/CG_Arctic_Strategy.pdf
- ²³ Conley with Toland, Kraut, and Østhagen, *A New Security Architecture*.
- ²⁴ United States Coast Guard, *Arctic Strategy*.
- ²⁵ “The United States Navy Arctic Roadmap for 2014 to 2030.”
- ²⁶ Conley with Toland, Kraut, and Østhagen, *A New Security Architecture*.
- ²⁷ Conley with Toland, Kraut, and Østhagen, *A New Security Architecture*.
- ²⁸ Department of Defense, *Arctic Strategy*.
- ²⁹ Department of Defense, *Arctic Strategy*.
- ³⁰ O’Rourke, “Changes in the Arctic,” 63-64.
- ³¹ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington: Department of Defense, February 2010). https://archive.defense.gov/qdr/QDR_as_of_29JAN10_1600.pdf
- ³² The US Coast Guard and Homeland Security operatives are non-military but not essentially civilian.
- ³³ Department of Defense, *Arctic Strategy*.
- ³⁴ Department of Defense, *Arctic Strategy*.

4

Nuclear Submarines in the Arctic: Limiting Strategic Anti-Submarine Warfare

December 4, 2018

The Arctic is the primary home of Russia's nuclear ballistic missile submarine force. That fleet, like its American counterpart, is being "modernized," the subs are patrolling more often, and, inevitably, American attack submarines are paying increasing attention. Four decades ago, in a climate of intense Cold War confrontation and nuclear dangers, when American and Soviet ballistic missile submarines and the attack subs that trailed them roamed the oceans, strategists, peace researchers, and some military planners grew intensely worried about the strategic instability wrought by such dangerous cat-and-mouse manoeuvres. That in turn led to innovative proposals for anti-submarine-warfare-free zones as one way of easing tensions and, especially, as a means of reducing the risks that mishaps, miscalculations, or miscommunications would escalate out of control. The Arctic figured prominently in those proposals – the essential elements of which continue to have merit and, unfortunately, relevance.

Despite today's obvious NATO-Russia tensions, the Arctic, where NATO states and Russia are both prominent presences, remains a region of relative geopolitical calm with all sides still credibly denying the presence of active military threats and insisting that regional conflicts will be resolved through cooperation and international law. It is a welcome and genuine regional reality, one that seems deeply incongruous with the concentration in the Arctic of submarines bearing nuclear-armed intercontinental-range ballistic missiles, along with attack submarines meant to either protect or threaten them.

For now at least, the absence of state-to-state and Arctic-specific military threats is not a case of wishful thinking. It is the considered judgement of both the Kremlin and the current US Government. While Russian Arctic security policies emphasize the refurbishment of its northern military and a

growing role for it in protecting national interests in the region, those policies are also replete with commitments to maintaining stability and military cooperation toward that end.¹ American authorities also continue to affirm the absence of Arctic-specific military threats. The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) has just reviewed the Pentagon's assessment of the Arctic threat level, and both have concluded that the threat "remains low" and that the US Department of Defense has the capabilities that are required to carry out the current Arctic Strategy.² That strategy, established in 2016, is to pursue "two overarching objectives: to (1) ensure security, support safety, and promote defense cooperation and (2) prepare to respond to a wide range of challenges and contingencies to maintain stability in the region." Those two objectives are made realistic, says the GAO, by the "low level of military threat in the Arctic" and by "the stated commitment of the Arctic nations to work within a common framework of diplomatic engagement."³

Sea-based nuclear weapons in the Arctic are strategic – which is to say, they are meant to influence not regional defence dynamics or territorial ambitions, but the global postures and deterrence strategies of the United States and Russia.

Nuclear-Armed Submarines in the Arctic⁴

Russia now operates up to 12 submarines whose sole mission is to carry intercontinental nuclear-armed ballistic missiles (such subs are designated SSBNs). Three of these are the new "Borei" ballistic missile subs. Each Borei SSBN can carry 16 Bulava sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM), each armed with up to six nuclear warheads. And each Borei has six tubes for launching heavyweight torpedoes. The Russian SSBN fleet also includes six Delta VI subs, also with a capacity for 16 missiles, each carrying up to four warheads, plus four tubes each for heavyweight torpedoes. The remaining three boats in the current SSBN fleet are Delta III subs with a capacity for up to 16 missiles (up to three warheads each) and four tubes each for heavyweight torpedoes plus two tubes for lightweight torpedoes. None of the torpedoes are nuclear-armed, while the fleet's ballistic missiles have the combined capacity to launch 768 warheads, although only some of the subs are normally on patrol, and not all missiles will be armed to their full capacity of warheads. The US Congressional Research Service estimates that Russia currently has about 640 sea-launched warheads available for deployment.⁵ At least seven of the Russian SSBNs are assumed to be deployed with the Northern fleet and based on the Kola Peninsula.

The Russian SSBN modernization program is intended to increase the Borei fleet to eight submarines by the mid-2020s, replacing the Delta VI and III subs, thus reducing the overall SSBN force. Hans Kristensen and Robert S. Norris of the authoritative *Nuclear Notebook* note that the future Russian SSBN fleet of exclusively Borei subs will be capable of carrying more warheads than does the current fleet, thus heightening the target value of each SSBN.⁶ More warheads on fewer subs is a destabilizing development inasmuch as the pre-emptive disabling of these second-strike deterrent forces may be viewed as more feasible, and hence more tempting. Largely for that reason, it is anticipated that the Kremlin will order another four of the Borei subs, for a fleet of 12 to be equally divided between the Pacific and the Arctic.

The US has 14 nuclear ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs),⁷ each capable of carrying 24 intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (the Trident II D5), but now, modified to comply with the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) agreement, they carry 20 missiles each. Normally, two of these boats are in overhaul and not considered operational – so the usual count is 12 operational American SSBNs, carrying up to 240 missiles (even though not all 12 are always on patrol, and those on patrol do not necessarily carry the full complement of 20 missiles). Each missile is capable of being armed with eight nuclear warheads, but the average payload is said to be four to five warheads, leading to the current *Nuclear Notebook* count of 1,090 warheads on 12 deployed SSBNs. Each sub also has four tubes for launching heavyweight torpedoes. Eight to ten subs are at sea at any given time, four or five of which are considered to be on “hard alert,” with another four or five capable of being brought to alert status within hours or days. American SSBNs do not patrol in the Arctic.

US nuclear “modernization” of the SSBN fleet includes the upgrading of current missiles with new guidance systems to enhance targeting. The more consequential “modernization” has the Pentagon planning to replace the existing subs with 12 new nuclear weapons submarines and the Congressional Budget Office estimates that development and capital acquisition costs will be in excess of \$80 billion in today’s dollars (or about \$7 billion each),⁸ and that does not include maintenance and operating costs or the cost of their nuclear weapons. Even the Navy is worried that things are getting out of hand, with the SSBNs robbing it of the funds it needs to pay for all the other ships it has planned. So the Navy has come up with a novel solution – create a special and separate “National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund” so that the Navy’s regular budget will not have to cover the SSBNs.⁹

It is worth noting that China is also acquiring a significant fleet, possibly five, of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs).¹⁰ According to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, each of these is designed to carry up to 12 intercontinental ballistic missiles with one nuclear warhead each. The missiles are thought to have a range of 7,000 to 7,400 kms, which means that from patrols in waters near China, the missiles could reach Alaska and Hawaii, but not the continental US. It is not clear whether the Chinese have sent their SSBN on any patrols with nuclear weapons on board. The current Jin-class SSBN is said to be “very noisy,” and analysts assume that China will go on to develop a next generation SSBN.¹¹

The Attack Submarines That Trail the Nuclear-Armed Subs

Attack submarines do not currently carry nuclear weapons. Ever since the US/Soviet 1991 Presidential Nuclear Initiatives,¹² American and Russian attack submarines have not carried tactical nuclear weapons (the strategic nuclear weapons are deployed on the SSBNs). Current attack submarines on both sides are capable of carrying tactical-range cruise missiles with nuclear or conventional warheads, and the current assumption is that only conventionally-armed cruise missiles are now deployed. They have conventional weapons designed to attack other submarines, including SSBNs, as well as surface ships. Stealth in attack submarines is achieved by minimizing noise to avoid detection. Virtually all attack submarines are capable of operating under ice.

Non-proliferation expert Jeffrey Lewis has written in *Foreign Policy* that “the evidence is increasingly strong that not only is Moscow routinely sending submarines within an arm’s length of the United States coastline, but that these submarines are deployed with nuclear armed SLCMs” [sea-launched cruise missiles].¹³ *The New York Times* further reports that Russia is in the process of developing sea drones, which would be launched from the same attack subs, and that would be capable of carrying small nuclear warheads for use against harbours and coastal areas.¹⁴

Russia currently operates¹⁵ 49 attack submarines, 26 of which are nuclear-powered of various classes and equipped with heavyweight torpedoes and anti-ship and anti-submarine missiles, and can be fitted with land attack cruise missiles. The rest are 23 diesel-electric attack submarines (SSNs) with similar armaments. The diesel-electric subs are regarded as among the world’s quietest subs. The US currently operates¹⁶ 54 nuclear-powered attack submarines,¹⁷ all are armed with heavyweight torpedoes, and most also have tactical-range land-attack cruise missiles – all with

conventional, or non-nuclear, warheads. About 60 percent of American attack submarines operate in the Pacific and 40 percent in the Atlantic, with regular forays into the Arctic.

In 2015 an American Seawolf variant of attack submarine (these are said to be quieter and faster than the other attack subs, but they also proved much more expensive, and thus production ended in the 1990s after only three were built) spent two months submerged under the Arctic ice,¹⁸ and in 2013 another Seawolf travelled from Washington State on the American west coast to Norway via the Arctic Ocean.¹⁹ Included in the total inventory of attack subs are 12 newer versions, the Virginia-Class, of which more are being built. They also engage in intelligence gathering and can carry “unmanned undersea vehicles.” Another four Ohio-class, or SSBN ballistic missile submarines, have been converted to attack submarines (SSGNs) carrying conventionally-armed land-attack cruise missiles. The Pentagon is planning to maintain 4,000 conventionally-armed sea-launched cruise missiles (and these, of course, are in addition to air-launched cruise missiles).²⁰

Tracking or chasing SSBNs on patrol is a dangerous but growing focus of attack submarines. A March 2018 Pentagon report, “Commander’s Intent for the United States Submarine Force,” describes “the main role” of US attack submarines as being to “hold the adversary’s strategic assets at risk from the undersea,” notably including SSBNs on patrol²¹ – and those strategic anti-submarine warfare (ASW) patrols include the Arctic.

In other words, the US defines strategic anti-submarine warfare as a priority, the further development of which is taken to be an integral part of its nuclear force’s modernization program. The Pentagon’s 2018 strategy refers to “developing options to counter competitors’ coercive strategies”²² – including sea-based nuclear forces.

Arctic Patrols

Every two years the US Navy conducts an Ice Exercise (ICEX) in the Arctic as part of the US Navy Submarine Arctic Warfare program sponsored by the Chief of Naval Operations, Undersea Warfare Division. This biennial Arctic submarine exercise goes back to the 1940s. In addition to these staged exercises, US attack submarines regularly patrol under the Arctic ice, sometimes surfacing near the North Pole,²³ and this combination of formal exercises and routine patrols is the primary means by which the attack submarine fleet “develops and hones its Arctic operational and warfighting skills.”²⁴

In the 2016 ICEX exercise, a five-week event designed specifically to assess the operational readiness of the submarine force, as well as support research for the Navy's Arctic Submarine Laboratory,²⁵ two Los Angeles-class attack submarines participated in the Arctic operations. The United Kingdom also let it be known in 2016 that it was similarly resuming Arctic patrols.²⁶ In 2018 ICEX involved two attack subs (*Connecticut* and *Hartford*) and the under-ice firing of Mk-48 torpedoes that carried sensors to gather data on their performance in Arctic conditions. The British Navy sent its HMS *Trenchant* attack submarine. The training operations took place in March in the Beaufort Sea.²⁷ The three submarines conducted joint operations in the Beaufort Sea from March 7-21, and then rendezvoused and surfaced at the North Pole on March 27, 2018. Collectively, the three subs carried out 20 through-ice surfacings.²⁸

The *Hartford's* Commander characterized the point of the training as to keep from "falling behind" Russian submarine development. And the squadron commander told reporters that "in every case [the Russians] are trying to get faster and better at what they do and integrating technology into their platforms. It's really sent them on a ramp to where if we don't continue to do the same, we'll find ourselves in a place of falling behind."²⁹

Canadian forces participated in ICEX 2018, but Canada's diesel-powered submarines were not involved.³⁰ Historically, Canada has participated in tactical and some strategic anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations. According to the *Canadian Naval Review*, Canada traditionally contributed primarily to protecting sea lanes of communication from Soviet attack subs. Strategic planning in the Cold War was in part premised on the possibility of a long war in Europe, for which allies would depend on reinforcements from North America. Strategic ASW against Soviet SSBNs was of less direct concern: "the Soviet Union soon had intercontinental sea-launched missiles that could hit targets from submarines based in its home waters." That tactical/strategic distinction in ASW was an important one, according to the *Naval Review* account, but Canada actually developed doubts about the utility of both. Analysts increasingly assumed that any European war would go nuclear early on, rendering conventional reinforcement of Western Europe unlikely and ASW protecting sea-lanes irrelevant.³¹

ASW and Strategic Destabilization

Strategic anti-submarine warfare (ASW) – i.e. sending attack submarines in pursuit of ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) – is a classic

destabilization scenario. Because deterrence is all about a reliable second-strike or retaliation capacity, efforts to render second-strike forces vulnerable inevitably create incentives to expand those retaliatory second-strike forces to overwhelm any threat to them. And, in a crisis, they create incentives for retaliatory forces to launch their weapons early to prevent them from being taken out in an adversary's pre-emptive attack (the use 'em or lose 'em scenario). In any deep political crisis, the definition of instability, and the epitome of danger, is for both sides to become convinced that initiating nuclear attack would be to their advantage.

In the deadly logic of deterrence, the "virtue" (although it is a word that ought not to be used in relation to nuclear weapons) of SSBNs has been that they have represented survivable deterrent forces and thus remove incentives for an adversary to introduce nuclear weapons into a conflict, since any first use of nuclear weapons would with certainty face retaliation. So, the only point of attack submarines tracking and targeting an adversary's SSBNs is to undermine that assured retaliation by threatening a pre-emptive attack – that is, to demonstrate a capacity to destroy an SSBN before it could fire its SLBMs. And if SSBNs were to be rendered genuinely vulnerable to attack submarines, that would generate incentives for the SSBN to fire its missiles early, in the context of a severe crisis, before being attacked.

This danger is growing as both the US and Russia focus on building up their anti-submarine warfare and ballistic missile defence capacities, while also moving to more accurate offensive ballistic missiles. In early November 2018, a US official told a submarine symposium that "the handcuffs are off now" – by which he meant that under a new Administration the Navy is now free to pursue more intensified levels of strategic ASW. He referred to the US as being back "in a great power competition now," in which no adversary will "get a free ticket."³² A particular initiative involves the development of more lethal torpedoes with which to threaten SSBNs.

That does not mean ASW is easy, or that there are imminent prospects for effective pre-emptive attacks to eliminate an entire fleet of SSBNs. Military planners have assumed that the US would need five attack submarines to track a single adversary SSBN (and even more, once an SSBN gets to an open ocean undetected). But instability is still heightened by the threat of vulnerability and the declared intention to escalate SSBN tracking through training and modernization – meaning that an adversary is led to fear that the theoretical vulnerability of SSBNs could one day become real. Thus, states will be more inclined to add more SSBNs so as to outpace anti-submarine capacity. It is what is called an arms race.

Ending the Nuclear Cat-and-Mouse Manoeuvres at Sea

Again within the logic of deterrence, it has long been understood that as long as strategic arsenals face off against each other, sea-based elements of those arsenals are the least vulnerable to pre-emptive strikes and the most survivable second-strike deterrent forces. And as long as SSBNs remain largely invulnerable to pre-emptive attack, they remove any incentive for an adversary to introduce the use of nuclear weapons into a conflict – assuming that retaliation would be certain and devastating. Throughout the Cold War, this was a prominent theme in the arms control community seeking strategic stability – namely, the recognition that as long as a nuclear confrontation exists, stability is reinforced if SSBNs are able to patrol out of reach of an adversary's ASW forces.

Thus, for example, some arms control analysts advocated for SSBN bastions where ASW forces would, by agreement, not patrol.³³ That would be stabilizing in several ways. For example, if Russian SSBNs in their Arctic bastions were reliably free of ASW patrols, they would have no need to head for the open Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, inevitably deploying closer to North American and European coasts. Such deployments would in turn mean reduced warning times and would thus reinforce launch on warning protocols and would further entrench resistance to de-alerting of land intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Being pressed by attack submarines would also incentivize Russia to put submarines on high alert status and to prepare first-strike, pre-emptive strike, protocols.

That begs the question, why, then, would the US consider it to its advantage to step up ASW patrols against Russian SSBNs in the Arctic?

The same question applies to efforts to threaten Chinese SSBNs. Despite the current range limitations of its SLBMs, China is attempting to build a bastion for its SSBNs by building artificial islands, deploying underwater sensors, and investing in improved tactical ASW defence capabilities.³⁴ And according to a new study on the impact of US ASW activity,³⁵ China has called on the US and its allies to refrain from threatening Chinese SSBNs in the interests of strategic stability, inasmuch as threats to the survivability of Chinese SSBN forces undermine stability. The Obama Administration was committed to maintaining strategic stability with China, and while the Trump Administration has not specifically indicated a departure from that posture, a former naval intelligence official recently argued before Congress “that every time a [Chinese] SSBN departs on a strategic nuclear patrol, the [US Navy] must follow closely enough to be ready to sink them if they ever

attempt to launch a nuclear tipped ICBM towards our shores.” China’s small nuclear force is by definition a minimum deterrence force, a strictly second-strike force, and it certainly could not credibly launch a disabling first-strike against US forces. So the Pentagon, in tracking Chinese SSBNs, is really seeking the capability not of preventing a Chinese first-strike, but of nullifying China’s second-strike or deterrent. The implied American concern is that if the Chinese deterrent were left unchallenged, it would “remove the option for the United States to conduct a first-strike against Chinese nuclear forces in a crisis.”³⁶ In other words, American strategic ASW operations against China are about giving the US a nuclear war-fighting option.

Attack Submarine No-Go Zones or SSBN “Sanctuaries”

Arms control and risk reduction measures are available to mitigate these destabilizing trends. Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1987 “Murmansk Initiative” proposed limits on Western anti-submarine warfare patrols in Arctic waters that were the traditional operational areas for the Russian Northern and Baltic fleets. Gorbachev envisioned a no-go area for submarine and aerial ASW operations that would extend south of the Arctic Circle, proposing to exclude surface and subsurface military vessels from “mutually agreed-upon zones of international straits and intensive shipping lanes,” with the precise dimension of these no-go areas to be sorted out at a meeting of experts from interested countries.³⁷

The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), through its President, Mary Simon, responded positively to Gorbachev’s “zone of peace.” The ICC called on the Arctic to be nuclear-weapons-free and encouraged major powers to pursue arms control measures that would reduce the arms buildup on the Kola Peninsula. It called on them to examine limits on naval forces and operations in the Arctic with a view to “advancing arms control and the common security of all nations.”³⁸

Even before the Gorbachev idea of ASW-free zones had been floated, Canadian analyst Ron Purver argued in 1983 that although the feasibility of putting limits on ASW activities was declining (it was the early Reagan era, after all), the desirability of such measures was increasing.³⁹ As land-based missiles in fixed locations became more vulnerable to pre-emptive attack, the deployment of sea-based strategic nuclear missiles would, within the deterrence paradigm, be a stabilizing presence as survivable second-strike or retaliatory forces. That in turn meant that, if the rationale for SSBNs was their relative invulnerability, it would be counter-productive to try to render them vulnerable through ASW efforts. Hence, for some analysts at least, the pursuit of measures to limit destabilizing strategic ASW became a prominent

arms control and risk reduction objective. Proposals involved agreements to curtail the tracking of SSBNs and the establishment of SSBN sanctuaries or ASW-free zones. Such zones were proposed for the Gulf of Alaska, the Sea of Okhotsk, and the Barents Sea, and as Purver pointed out, these zones were all within what were essentially coastal defence areas and thus capable of being patrolled and protected by their respective defence forces, including tactical ASW forces. There were also proposals for negotiated limits on ASW vehicles, the idea being that if attack subs were kept to no more than two or three times an adversary's SSBNs, it would be impossible to track all SSBNs simultaneously. For the same reasons, there were also proposals to confine seabed detection devices to areas near national waters and coasts.

Russian SSBNs can now operate largely within their bastions. They can reach all their targets from there, and thus Russian SSBNs have little need to leave their Arctic bastions in order to perform their deterrence role – provided they are not made vulnerable there by aggressive ASW patrols. This point was made by Major-General William Seymour, Deputy Commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command, to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs:

[T]his is not the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s, when Russian submarines might be lurking behind every corner. These days, based on technological advances, ... the Russians can launch weapons against North America from their home bastions within their territory or slightly outside. The notion that Russian submarines ... would have to travel underneath the ice in Canada's north to do their business is technologically out of date.⁴⁰

The Arctic is thus an obvious candidate for becoming an attack submarine exclusion zone, and reciprocity would require that the US designate an ASW-free zone for its SSBNs and that both the US and Russia refrain from deploying SSBNs close to each other's territories. In a 2009 proposal, the Russian and American physicists Anatoli Diakov and Frank von Hippel called on the two countries to

reduce the launch readiness of their submarine-based ballistic missiles and commit not to deploy ballistic-missile submarines provocatively close to each other's territories. Specifically, the United States could declare that its ballistic-missile submarines would not patrol in the North Atlantic, which drastically reduces Russia's warning time, and Russia could declare that the ballistic-missile submarines of its northern fleet would stay in the Arctic

and not patrol off the U.S. East Coast as they did, on occasion, during the cold war. Russia could extend this ‘de-alerting’ commitment to its mobile missiles. The United States could increase Russian confidence in the survivability of Russia’s ballistic-missile submarines by pledging that it would keep its attack submarines out of Russia’s side of [the] Arctic.⁴¹

Similarly, Russia would also have to respect a stabilizing ASW-free zone in or near US national waters.

The logic of their own deterrence requirements should drive the US and Russia to welcome strategic ASW-free zones – that is, zones in which their own ballistic missile-carrying submarines would be free of threats of pre-emptive attacks from anti-submarine warfare subs (aided by ASW aircraft). And, given the prominent presence of Russian SSBN forces in the Eastern Arctic, the Arctic is a logical location for at least a Russian ASW-free zone.

Notes

¹ See the Arctic Institute’s four-part series on “Russia’s Arctic Strategy.” Part II focuses on the military and security. Pavel Devyatkin, “Russia’s Arctic Strategy: Military and Security (Part II),” The Arctic Institute, Center for Circumpolar Security Studies, 13 February 2018. <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/russias-arctic-military-and-security-part-two/>

² United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Arctic Planning: Navy Report to Congress Aligns with Current Assessments of Arctic Threat Levels and Capabilities Required to Execute DOD’s Strategy*, Report GAO-19-42 (Washington: United States Government Accountability Office, November 2018). <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/695312.pdf>

³ GAO, *Arctic Planning*.

⁴ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, “Russian nuclear forces, 2018,” *Nuclear Notebook, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 74/3 (2018); International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2018* (London: Routledge, 2018). <https://www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance/the-military-balance-2018>

⁵ Amy F. Woolf, “The New START Treaty: Central Limits and Key Provisions,” Congressional Research Service Report, CRS Report (R41219), 27 September 2018. <https://news.usni.org/2018/10/04/report-congress-new-start-treaty>

⁶ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, “Russian nuclear forces, 2016,” *Nuclear Notebook, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 72/3 (2016): 125-34.

⁷ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, “United States nuclear forces, 2018,” *Nuclear Notebook, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 74/2 (2018).

⁸ “US Nuclear Modernization Programs,” Arms Control Association, December 2016. <http://www.armscontrol.org>.

⁹ Aaron Mehta, “Is the Pentagon’s Budget About To Be Nuked?” *Defense News*, 5 February 2016. <https://www.defensenews.com/2016/02/05/is-the-pentagon-s-budget-about-to-be-nuked/>

¹⁰ Patrick Tucker, “China Has More Nuclear Subs Than the West Believed,” *Defense One*, 20 November 2018. <https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2018/11/china-has-more-nuclear-subs-west-believed/152984/>

¹¹ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, “Chinese nuclear forces, 2018,” *Nuclear Notebook, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 74/4 (2018): 289-95.

¹² In separate unilateral statements in September and October 1991, Presidents George H.W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev undertook to stop deploying tactical nuclear weapons on surface ships and attack/all-purpose submarines.

¹³ Jeffrey Lewis, “Led Zeppelin Comes to Washington,” *Foreign Policy*, 5 January 2015. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/01/05/led-zeppelin-comes-to-washington-russia-nukes-putin-arms-control/>

¹⁴ Eric Schmitt, “Russia Bolsters Its Submarine Fleet, and Tensions With U.S. Rise,” *New York Times*, 20 April 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/21/world/europe/russia-bolsters-submarine-fleet-and-tensions-with-us-rise.html>

¹⁵ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance* 2018.

¹⁶ The following is taken from the US Department of Defense, Navy, list of currently operational submarines, “The Submarine,” Department of the Navy. <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/ships/subs/subs.asp>, and “United States Submarine Capabilities,” Nuclear Threat Initiative, 23 July 2013. <http://www.nti.org>

¹⁷ 39 Los Angeles Class, 3 Sea Wolf, 12 Virginia.

¹⁸ Barbara Starr, “U.S. submarine returns from Arctic mission,” CNN, 31 August 2015. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/08/31/politics/uss-seawolf-submarine-navy-arctic/index.html>

¹⁹ David Axe, “The ‘Secret’ Submarines the U.S. Navy Doesn’t Want to Talk About (And Russia Fears),” *The National Interest*, 19 November 2016. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/the-secret-submarines-the-us-navy-doesnt-want-talk-about-18463>

²⁰ Steven Pifer, “Nuclear Arms Control Choices for the Next Administration,” Brookings Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Series, Paper 13, October 2016. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/acnpi_20161025_arms_control_choices_final.pdf

²¹ “Commander’s Intent for the United States Submarine Force and Supporting Organizations,” Commander, US Submarine Forces, March 2018.

www.public.navy.mil/subfor/hq

²² Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America, US Department of Defense. <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

²³ Siemon T. Wezeman, “Military Capabilities in the Arctic: A New Cold War in the High North?” *SIPRI Background Paper* (October 2016).

²⁴ Courtney Callaghan, Theo Goda, Joseph Hardy, and Larry Estrada, “Arctic Exercises,” United States Navy, n.d. <https://www.public.navy.mil/subfor/underseawarfare/magazine/Pages/ICEX-Exercises.aspx>

²⁵ “Navy Submarines Arrive in Arctic for ICEX 2016,” US Navy News Service, 15 March 2016. https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=93648

²⁶ Carol Adl, “British Submarines set to Resume Arctic Patrols,” YourNewsWire.com, 11 April 2016. <http://yournewswire.com>

²⁷ Mark D. Faram, “ICEX gives Navy, Coast Guard divers time under the ice,” *Navy Times*, 20 March 2018. <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2018/03/20/icex-gives-navy-coast-guard-divers-time-under-the-ice/>

²⁸ Callaghan et al, “Arctic Exercises.”

²⁹ Jim Sciutto and Zachary Cohen, “Inside the US nuclear sub challenging Russia in the Arctic,” CNN, 14 March 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/14/politics/uss-hartford-nuclear-submarine-arctic/index.html>

³⁰ Kaila Jefferd-Moore, “Canadian submarines not part of international Arctic under-ice exercise,” CBC News, 11 June 2018. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/canadian-submarines-not-part-of-international-arctic-under-ice-exercise-1.4699208>

³¹ “Debating the Canadian Surface Combatants – Lessons from the Past,” *Canadian Naval Review*, 20 November 2013. <http://www.navalreview.ca/2013/11/debating-the-canadian-surface-combatants-lessons-from-the-past/>

³² Megan Eckstein, “Navy Wants to Use Virginia Payload Module to Deploy New Missiles, UUVs,” US Naval Institute News, 14 November 2018. <https://news.usni.org/2018/11/14/navy-looking-use-virginia-payload-module-deploy-new-missiles-uuv>

³³ Tønne Huitfeldt, Tomas Ries, and Gunvald Øyna, *Strategic interests in the Arctic* (Oslo: Institut for Forsvasstudies (Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies), 4/1992). <https://fhs.brage.unit.no/fhs-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/99709/FS0492.pdf>

³⁴ Christopher Cowan, “Anti-access/area denial: not as new as you might think,” *The Strategist* - The Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 13 September 2016. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/anti-accessarea-denial-not-new-might-think/>

³⁵ “U.S. Anti-submarine Warfare and Its Impact,” Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, 24 October 2018. <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2018/10/24/u.s.-anti-submarine-warfare-and-its-impact-pub-77495>

³⁶ “U.S. Anti-submarine Warfare and Its Impact.”

³⁷ Kristian Åtland, “Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic,” *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 43/3 (September 2008): 289-311.

³⁸ Mary Simon, “Toward an Arctic Zone of Peace: An Inuit Perspective,” *PeaceNews* 5/2 (Autumn 1989).

³⁹ Ron Purver, “The Control of Strategic Anti-Submarine Warfare,” *International Journal* 38/3 (Summer 1983).

⁴⁰ William F. Seymour, Testimony, House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE), 19 September 2018.

⁴¹ Anatoli Diakov and Frank von Hippel, *Challenges and Opportunities for Russia-U.S. Nuclear Arms Control: A Century Foundation Report* (New York/Washington: The Century Foundation, 2009).
<https://www.armscontrol.ru/pubs/en/Diakov-Hippel-Challenges.pdf>

5 Conjuring Chinese Nuclear Weapons Submarines in the Arctic

May 29, 2019

A single provocative sentence about China deploying nuclear-armed submarines in the Arctic led much of the commentary on the Pentagon's May 2019 report on developments in the Chinese military. The reference was obviously meant to stoke alarm, and as long as competitive nuclear weapons "modernization" proceeds apace – especially in the United States, Russia, and China – there is little doubt that China could one day be capable of conducting submarine patrols in the Arctic, but that does not answer the question of why they would want to.

China's Arctic interests and ambitions are not in serious doubt.¹ The development of a reliable trans-Arctic shipping route tops the list, and that in turn shapes an interest in developing a regional maritime infrastructure, echoing its "belt and road" initiatives elsewhere – envisioning the Arctic joining the series of trade corridors being pursued in Africa, Asia, and Eurasia.² Cooperation with Russia in transportation and resource extraction will expand. A Chinese polar research institute has been operating since 2009. Icebreakers are being built. China is investing in Greenland's resource sector, with a particular interest in its rare earth minerals, and is engaged with Iceland, especially in scientific research.

Some see danger in China's infrastructure interests. Civilian facilities like ports are dual-use facilities with obvious military applications. And the scientific research that China conducts in the North could no doubt produce militarily useful information. Among the high-profile worriers is US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who sees the region as "an arena of global power and competition" owing to vast reserves of oil, gas, minerals, and fish stocks, and so he asks the question (without any sense of irony, given US military deployments in the South China Sea): "Do we want the Arctic Ocean to transform into a new South China Sea, fraught with militarisation and competing territorial claims?"³

The Pentagon's provocative sentence that got all the attention warns that "civilian research could support a strengthened Chinese military presence in

the Arctic Ocean, which could include *deploying submarines to the region as a deterrent against nuclear attacks*” (emphasis added).⁴

A submarine “deterrent” weapon means a submarine armed with strategic range ballistic missiles (SSBNs), and that begs the obvious questions: does China have SSBNs capable of Arctic operations, and if it did, what would be the point of operating in the Arctic?

Chinese SSBN Capabilities

China, with global interests that certainly include the Arctic, is in fact acquiring a significant fleet of nuclear-powered submarines equipped with long-range and nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles (by now up to six such SSBNs – referred to as Jin-class, type 094 subs). Each of these subs is designed to carry up to 12 sea-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with one nuclear warhead each.⁵ The missiles are thought to have a range of 7,000 to 7,400 kms, which means that from patrols in waters near China, they could strike targets in Alaska and Hawaii, but not in the contiguous United States. To maximize the deterrent impact of those SSBNs, they would have to be reliably capable of deploying outside the regional bastions of the South China Sea, or the East China and Yellow Sea, to the Pacific to put their missiles in reach of the American heartland. Of course, this nascent SSBN force is not China’s only nuclear deterrent – it has land-based, mobile, nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles with ranges to strike anywhere in the US. Their mobility ensures that enough would survive a first strike to provide an assured second or retaliatory strike capable of doing unacceptable damage in the American heartland – the basic role of a nuclear deterrent force being to dissuade an adversary from launching an initial attack. China also has nuclear bomber capabilities, and is developing a new generation nuclear-capable aircraft, that are within range of American military facilities in East Asia.⁶

China has obviously decided to mimic the US and Russia to pursue a nuclear triad (that is, the capability to launch nuclear weapons from land, air, and sea). It is not known whether the Chinese have to date sent their SSBNs, the sea-based element of the triad, on patrols with nuclear weapons on board, whether in their home waters or beyond. The current six (four available and two being readied for operations) are said to be “very noisy,” and analysts assume that China will go on to develop a next generation SSBN that is quieter and more difficult to detect.⁷ And, to be sure, at some point, China is bound to acquire the technical capability to patrol in the Arctic, and

that would put even its current SSBN-based missiles within range of the American heartland. But, why would they?

Chinese SSBNs in the Arctic?

As noted, the primary requirement of a Chinese sea-based nuclear deterrent force is that it be able to survive a first strike and have the means, in a post-nuclear-attack environment, to launch a retaliatory or second strike. That is most readily accomplished, most analysts agree,⁸ by deploying its SSBNs in regional bastions, where they can be better protected from American attack subs. In their home waters, the Chinese SSBNs can be accompanied by complementary naval forces, and a Reuters special report quotes military and intelligence analysts as observing that when Chinese SSBNs put to sea in the South China Sea they are indeed “flanked by protective screens of surface warships and aircraft on station to track foreign submarines.”⁹

There are really only two reasons why China would want those SSBNs to leave their bastions. The first would be to get their missiles in range of the American heartland, but the urgency of that can be overstated, since China already has survivable land-based systems that can do that. It is also safe to assume that in a world still burdened by nuclear arms racing, China will develop new generations of SLBMs (sea-launched strategic range ballistic missiles) of a sufficient range to reach American heartland targets from within their bastions.¹⁰

The second reason to leave the bastion would be if they became vulnerable there to a concerted offensive by hostile attack submarines – as in a gathering crisis in which American attack submarines and other anti-submarine warfare systems (ASW) were making moves to converge on the Chinese bastion and render the latter’s SSBNs vulnerable. That would signal a possible pre-emptive first strike on China (why else would they threaten pre-emptive attacks on second-strike weapons?) and would prompt attempts by Chinese SSBNs to reach the open Pacific.

The fact that such a scenario seems unlikely does not mean that China regards it as impossible, especially since the Americans have stated directly that Chinese SSBNs must become the focus of American attack submarines (SSNs). Admiral Harry Harris, while head of US Pacific Command, told a Congressional Committee that China’s “SSBN will give [it] an important strategic capability that must be countered,”¹¹ and reports suggest the Americans are in fact pursuing a more aggressive ASW strategy across East Asia.¹²

In other words, the Chinese are being incentivised to develop the capacity for SSBN patrols well beyond the bastions which they fear could be rendered vulnerable and no longer true bastions. Such wider patrols face challenges.¹³ Chief among them is the challenge of getting relatively noisy SSBNs out of their home waters while avoiding the attentive ears of the US and its regional allies at the choke points. If detected while trying to exit the bastion, a sub would then be traceable by American ASW operations and trailed into the vast Pacific. But once through and in the open Pacific without being trailed, the Chinese SSBNs could position themselves well within range to launch retaliatory strikes on the American heartland. To manage all of that, Chinese military commanders would have to be in possession of clear command and control procedures and have confidence in their ability to communicate with subs in a post-nuclear attack environment.

Once in the Pacific, whether hidden or still trailed by American attack submarines, what would be the point of heading for the Arctic? That would set them on a course going through the Bering Strait, which they would definitely not do anonymously. They would enter the Arctic being watched and followed by the Americans. In other words, what possible strategic advantage could there be to entering a hostile region that is difficult to navigate and certain to mean facing intense anti-submarine warfare operations?

Arctic-based attacks on the southern contiguous US would confound American Arctic-based BMD interceptors, but they could also evade the US system with shorter-range attacks from the Pacific. There is no need to go to the Arctic to avoid US BMD. It would be more effective to launch retaliatory strikes from unanticipated parts of the Pacific with unanticipated trajectories that would overwhelm even a functioning BMD system (keeping in mind that the Americans themselves acknowledge that BMD is designed to intercept only isolated attacks – not a coordinated attack from an arsenal the size of China's).

And, by the way, this all also begs the question of why the Americans would find advantage in threatening Chinese SSBNs. They pose no first-strike threat; rather, they are quintessentially second-strike, deterrent weapons that are consistent with a no-first-use policy.

Chinese Nuclear-Powered Conventional Attack Submarines in the Arctic?

Attack submarines are designed to attack both surface and submarine naval operations. According to the International Institute for Strategic

Studies' (IISS) *Military Balance 2019*, China currently operates six nuclear-powered attack submarines. They have a role in escorting SSBNs and are capable of operating in the Pacific in an attack mode against other submarines and surface vessels. China also has an inventory of 48 conventionally-powered (diesel electric and very quiet) attack submarines for operations within China's home region.¹⁴

Lyle Goldstein, writing for the *National Interest*,¹⁵ refers at length to a 2017 paper in a Chinese naval research journal, written by research personnel at the Qingdao Submarine Academy.¹⁶ He describes the paper as providing an authoritative account of Beijing's developing undersea ambitions, quoting the paper directly: "[China's] submarine forces must not only go [to] the Asia-Pacific, [but] they must also go to the Indian Ocean, and then they must go to the Atlantic and to the Arctic Oceans" (emphasis added). Goldstein offers this as a kind of warning, but the enthusiasms of Chinese military academics do not alter the practical realities of Arctic operations.

The Americans do not operate their SSBNs in the Arctic, so strategic anti-submarine warfare would not be the point of China sending attack submarines there. China's attack submarines have land attack capabilities, but there simply are not enough close-range high-value targets in the Arctic to warrant such operations in a physically treacherous and militarily hostile region. It is hard to construct credible scenarios in which Chinese subs would want to attack conventional military forces or civilian shipping in the Arctic. China would have no incentive to disrupt Arctic shipping – their interest is the opposite, to have secure shipping routes through the Arctic. And China would definitely not have the capacity to forcefully protect civilian shipping in the Arctic in the unlikely event that the Russians or Americans or any Arctic states were bent on preventing it.

Arctic Security and China's Presence

The Report of the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE) addresses Chinese ambitions for the Arctic and offers only one recommendation on the matter regarding China – and it is eminently sensible: "The Government of Canada should engage with the Government of China to understand their growing interest in the Arctic." The Parliamentarians show an obvious interest in Canada developing a nuanced understanding of China's interests and actions in the Arctic.¹⁷

The report, in addition to hearing from multiple witnesses, reviews the January 2018 Chinese white paper on the Arctic.¹⁸ The Chinese white paper sees the Arctic in a global, rather than regional, context, and inasmuch as the Arctic affects interests of states outside the region, it has global importance. The FAAE reports that China has pledged to adhere to “rules and mechanisms” and “the existing framework of international law,” including the law of the sea and the relevant rules of the IMO – commitments that echo the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration (reaffirmed in 2018). The FAAE report points to the Chinese assertion that it is committed “to maintaining a peaceful, secure and stable Arctic order.” The basic principles of China’s participation in the Arctic are described as “respect, cooperation, win-win result and sustainability.”

The FAAE notes that the Chinese white paper calls for respect to be reciprocal: “respect the sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction enjoyed by the Arctic States,” while also respecting “the rights and freedom of non-Arctic States to carry out activities in this region in accordance with the law....” It is the kind of reciprocity that was not part of Mr. Pompeo’s vocabulary in his May speech to Arctic Council members in Finland:

Beijing claims to be a “Near-Arctic State,” yet the shortest distance between China and the Arctic is 900 miles. There are only Arctic States and Non-Arctic States. No third category exists, and claiming otherwise entitles China to exactly nothing.¹⁹

The FAAE heard from Jessica Shadian, Chief Executive Officer and founder of Arctic 360, and distinguished senior fellow at the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History, who told Parliamentarians that China’s vision is “based on what it expects the Arctic will look like in the next 20, 30, and even 50 years.” While to date China has been primarily interested in Russia’s Northern Sea Route, Ms. Shadian reminded the Committee of media reports indicating that China has published a 365-page shipping guidebook on the Northwest Passage. The guide “includes charts and detailed information on sea ice and weather as a means to aid Chinese vessels travelling between Asia and the Atlantic through the North American Arctic.”²⁰ China has also traversed the central Arctic Transpolar Route.

None of that leads Major-General William Seymour, Deputy Commander of Canadian Joint Operations Command, to focus on China as a threat. He told the Committee that China’s approach remains “one of participation and co-operation.” Rather than seeing a threat, he said, the Canadian Armed Forces see China “as an aspirant in terms of securing

access to global lines of communication and sea trade, which they're fundamentally interested in." Since China is seeking "access to resources around the world," including in the Canadian Arctic, security concerns should focus on "monitoring inward investment trends with respect to Canadian companies and infrastructure, as well as cyber security."²¹

Canadian academic and Arctic historian and expert Professor Whitney Lackenbauer told the FAAE that "alleged Chinese threats to Canadian Arctic sovereignty are a red herring that should not deflect attention or resources from more important issues." He suggested that China does not present a sovereignty threat or challenge. Instead, he urged that Chinese growing Arctic interests and aspirations "are best considered in the broader context of Canada's relationship with China as an emerging global actor."²²

The most balanced, credible response to the Pentagon's warning that presents itself is that, now and in the foreseeable future, notions of Chinese nuclear weapons submarines operating in the Arctic belong in the red herring category.

Notes

¹ There is plenty of media commentary counselling wariness regarding Chinese aims in the Arctic, for example, this report by Somini Sengupta and Steve Lee Myers, "Latest Arena for China's Growing Global Ambition: The Arctic," *New York Times*, 24 May 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/24/climate/china-arctic.html>

² Chinese officials laud the China/Russia "Ice Silk Road" initiative in the Arctic, as well as the cooperative indications from Finland and Iceland. The Chinese English language newspaper, the *Global Times* (a branch of the *People's Daily*), notes in a laudatory report that "in 2018, China and Russia achieved important progress in their cooperation in the Arctic gas field, and many cooperation agreements were reached on the construction of Arctic waterway infrastructure." Zhang Yao, "Ice Silk Road sets new direction for Arctic cooperation," *Global Times*, 6 April 2019. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1144755.shtml>

³ "Looking North: Sharpening America's Arctic Focus," Remarks by Michael R. Pompeo, US Secretary of State, 6 May 2019, Rovaniemi, Finland. <https://www.state.gov/looking-north-sharpening-americas-arctic-focus/>

⁴ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2019* (Washington: Department of Defense, May 2019). https://media.defense.gov/2019/May/02/2002127082/-1/-1/1/2019_CHINA_MILITARY_POWER_REPORT.pdf

- ⁵ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Chinese nuclear forces, 2018," *Nuclear Notebook, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 74/4 (2018).
- ⁶ Kristensen and Norris, "Chinese nuclear forces, 2018."
- ⁷ Kristensen and Norris, "Chinese nuclear forces, 2018."
- ⁸ Tong Zhao, "*Tides of Change: China's Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarines and Strategic Stability*," Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, 24 October 2018. <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2018/10/24/tides-of-change-china-s-nuclear-ballistic-missile-submarines-and-strategic-stability-pub-77490>
- ⁹ Greg Torode and David Lague, "Special Report: China's furtive underwater nukes test the Pentagon," Reuters, 2 May 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-army-nuclear-specialreport/special-report-chinas-furtive-underwater-nukes-test-the-pentagon-idUSKCN1S80YB>
- ¹⁰ China will likely begin building these next generation SSBNs in the early 2020s, according to the Pentagon report: Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress*.
- ¹¹ Torode and Lague, "Special Report."
- ¹² Torode and Lague, "Special Report."
- ¹³ Zhao, "*Tides of Change*."
- ¹⁴ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2019* (London: Routledge, 2019), 256-65.
- ¹⁵ The National Interest is a US think tank with Henry Kissinger as its Honorary Chairman.
- ¹⁶ Lyle J. Goldstein, "Why the U.S. Navy Should Fear China's Submarine Fleet," *The National Interest*, 26 April 2019. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/why-us-navy-should-fear-chinas-submarine-fleet-54402>
- ¹⁷ House of Commons, *Nation-Building at Home, Vigilance Beyond: Preparing for the Coming Decades in the Arctic - Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development*, April 2019, 42nd Parliament, 1st Session, 36-39. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FAAE/Reports/RP10411277/faaerp24/faaerp24-e.pdf>
- ¹⁸ "China's Arctic Policy," The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, January 2018. http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2018/01/26/content_281476026660336.htm
- ¹⁹ "Looking North," Remarks by Pompeo.
- ²⁰ House of Commons, "Nation-Building at Home."
- ²¹ House of Commons, "Nation-Building at Home."
- ²² House of Commons, "Nation-Building at Home."

6 Russia, NATO, and Baltic Vulnerability

August 31, 2015

The Pentagon is sending state-of-the-art F-22 fighter aircraft to Europe for the first time, further confirmation that NATO and Russia have locked themselves into increasingly provocative military behaviour from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea. Both sides obviously believe demonstrations of intimidating military capacity enhance security, but it is an article of faith unsupported by evidence. In fact, vulnerability to military interference in states small or large owes much more to political weakness than to military weakness or the lack of formidable friends. In other words, preserving national sovereignty and defending against foreign predators – in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, for example – depend much more on the quality of governance than on military preparedness and defence.

When Russian Parliamentarians, demonstrating that the art of provocation in Russia extends well beyond its president, recently questioned the constitutionality of the process by which Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania gained their independence after the fall of the Soviet Union,¹ the Baltics, not surprisingly, became even more nervous than they already were. With their significant Russian-speaking populations (about one-quarter of the populations of Estonia and Latvia, and about six percent in Lithuania), which the Russian President insists are deserving of his protection, the Baltics are looking to NATO for security assurances. Even Russia's only non-NATO Arctic neighbours, Finland and Sweden, are making a show of edging closer to the Alliance.²

NATO's default response is to flex its military muscle. The F-22, primarily an air-to-air fighter, meaning it is oriented toward combat with other advanced fighters, such as Russia's, is thus to be part of the "European Reassurance Initiative" designed, as *Defense News* put it, "to soothe concerns among European allies in the face of increased Russian aggression."³ Canadian naval, air, and land forces have also been deployed under

“Operation Reassurance.”⁴ Of course what NATO and Russia are now doing is anything but reassuring. In this worsening climate of political suspicion, they are jointly preparing to do precisely the one thing they must obviously never do (and which, frankly, they are unlikely to do over the Baltics) – that is, go to war with one another.

War games have once again become a primary means of NATO/Russian communication (the Pentagon having explained that the F-22 mission in Europe is “designed to send a message to Russia”). In June of this year, NATO’s “Allied Shield” exercise involved 15,000 personnel in land, air, and sea manoeuvres along the frontier with Russia, including the first deployment of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force NATO established in the wake of the Ukraine crisis,⁵ simulating responses to everything from large-scale state-to-state attacks to low-level incursions and destabilization tactics. Already in 2014, NATO states conducted more than 200 NATO and national exercises in Europe⁶ and mounted a four-fold increase in air patrols and interceptions of Russian military aircraft in operations from the Arctic to the Black Sea, much of the increase focused on the Barents and Baltic Seas.⁷ In October, NATO will conduct a much larger exercise, involving up to 36,000 personnel.⁸

The Russians, for their part, have doubled their Barents and Baltic patrols and reconnaissance flights and have moved additional combat aircraft into Crimea.⁹ In March Russia launched an exercise in the Arctic involving 80,000 personnel that expanded to include all of Russia, leading a European Leadership Network study to conclude that the scale and scope of the exercise represented a simulated war against the US and NATO.¹⁰ Focused on Eastern Europe, as well as the Arctic, the exercise included operations in Eastern Russia for the purpose of demonstrating that even in the context of all-out war with the West, Russia would still have the means to counter “opportunistic” attacks from the East by China or Japan.

Military exercises do not reflect an *intention* to go to war, but it is not at all surprising that the Nordics and Baltics are nervous,¹¹ or that Russia regards NATO’s heightened operations on its frontier as less than benign and a continuation of two decades of provocative expansion to Russia’s doorstep. With escalating military patrols increasing the risks of direct military encounters between the two sides, the nervousness has rightfully spread far beyond those regions. The European Leadership Network’s study¹² noted two prominent dangers. The first is that military exercises and posturing are themselves dangerous and destabilizing. A *Globe and Mail*¹³ report on the study quotes the independent Russian military analyst, Pavel

Felgenhauer, warning that in the climate of current diplomatic estrangement between Russia and the West, even the smallest, probably unintended, military encounter could quickly lead to direct combat: "The lines of communication are closing and everyone is beefing up for an eventuality that could be very, very unpleasant." The dangers are clear, says Felgenhauer: "posturing is the path to war. It always has been." The second danger owes to the probability, widely acknowledged, that once the line of direct combat between NATO and Russia was crossed anywhere from the Arctic to the Black Sea, it would not remain limited but "would grow into full-scale war sooner or later."

Those are two dangers that make the currently intensified military operations in Europe especially reckless, but more than that, in the context of concerns about the insecurities of the Baltic States, the NATO operations are both ill-suited and ultimately irrelevant to the protection of sovereignty and security in vulnerable states.

They are ill-suited because they risk inflicting a price dramatically out of proportion to any foreseeable outcome. It should be axiomatically understood that no military confrontation that unleashed the advanced and massively destructive conventional arsenals of Russia and NATO against one another, and that risked escalation to nuclear weapons use, could ever be justified by the political, economic, territorial, or moral issues at stake. The destruction that would be wrought within a matter of hours, never mind days or longer, if Russia and NATO were to launch into all-out armed conflict, would be so extensive and so consequential as to mean that it cannot be seriously entertained. NATO nevertheless still assumes that the one true antidote to Baltic vulnerability is to threaten precisely such armed confrontation.

That in turn speaks to the irrelevance of NATO's provocative military posture because Baltic security is most clearly linked to political, not military, strength. That is the story that post-Cold War military intervention, unilateral and multilateral, tells. Invasions occur almost exclusively in contexts of chronic political instability, almost always in and around the world's most intractable trouble spots, against states that are internally divided, and against or in support of governments with little or no internal legitimacy. The context for military interventions is invariably political, not military, vulnerability. Attacks by individual states or multilateral military coalitions of the willing alike are launched into situations of advanced conflict, including levels of violence that equate to war, in which violent conflict is symptomatic of an utter lack of national consensus. Look at these

post-Cold War invasions: multilateral interventions in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Haiti, Iraq, Serbia (regarding Kosovo), and Libya; unilateral interventions by the US in Panama and Somalia, by Russia in Georgia and Ukraine, by Ethiopia in Somalia, by Saudi Arabia in Yemen, and by Iraq in Kuwait. Common to all of the invaded states (with the exception of Kuwait) were conditions of advanced internal division and crisis.

The point obviously is not that internal crises justify invasions – this is not a matter of blaming the victims and justifying the exploits of major powers. Politically chaotic states are still sovereign, and their weaknesses are typically the product of a myriad of forces – some internal but many well beyond their control – and invading any state outside of self-defence or without explicit United Nations Security Council approval is still a flagrant violation of international law. And, by the way, as the record also shows, is much more likely to exacerbate discord than end it.

But what made states vulnerable to invasion was unstable internal political conditions, not a lack of military defence. Most were places of extreme human rights violations and among the world's primary producers of IDPs (internally displaced persons) and refugees, and most showed little prospect for an early return to political stability. The primary lesson to be drawn from the past quarter century of military interventions in unstable states is therefore actually about politically stable states – that is, politically stable states, with national institutions that enjoy the legitimacy that comes from broad public trust and support, are largely immune to military attacks and intervention, regardless of their size or military strength or lack of it. Only one politically stable state was invaded in the past quarter century, Kuwait, and in the end it was the attacker that was destroyed.

It is a lesson that the Baltic States ought to take special note of in the face of their heightened sense of vulnerability with regard to Russia – their current reality is that they are not riven by the kinds of politically chaotic environments that leave them vulnerable to intervention. They are basically well-governed spaces that enjoy political stability. Each sustains a strong national consensus in support of independence and the prevailing political order.

The Global Peace Index,¹⁴ an innovative ranking of the peacefulness of states, ranks all three of the Baltic republics in the top quartile with ratings of “high” levels of peacefulness, while Finland, Sweden, and Norway are obviously rated as “very high” in the peacefulness index (compared, for example, with Ukraine, which was ranked in the lowest quartile of very unpeaceful states well before Russia's annexation of Crimea and accelerated

destabilization in the East). Similarly, the Prosperity Index, a multi-indicator measure of wealth and well-being by the United Kingdom (UK)-based Legatum Institute, places all three Baltic States within the top one-third worldwide.¹⁵

It is the Baltic States' high levels of political stability and prosperity, and the legitimacy of their governments and public institutions, that radically reduce their vulnerability to Russian "help" for their Russian-speaking populations. But, of course, if the Balkan States were to substantially fail in fully integrating and holding the support and confidence of their Russian minorities, then they would indeed become much more vulnerable to interference.

The great folly in the prevailing European/Russian security discourse is the assumption that without demonstrations and threats of NATO military action the Baltics are defenceless. The opposite is true. The Baltic States have ready access to the most effective and proven defence against military invasion – namely, strong and respected governance and a buoyant national consensus in support of the prevailing order. All three Baltic States actively debate and struggle with questions of how best to accommodate their Russian minorities, but a lengthy analysis in Germany's *Der Spiegel* noted earlier this year that they are largely succeeding. The Russian populations in the Baltics are primarily urban and continue to display basic loyalties to their Baltic countries, and while they also maintain distinct identities,¹⁶ *Der Spiegel* painted a picture of Baltic Russians as largely championing democracy. While they enjoy a cultural affinity to Russia, they do not think of Russia as their "home." There are complaints in some instances of the ways Russians are treated, but *Der Spiegel* suggests the Baltics are reasonably effective in integrating their Russian populations, even as the challenges of building stable, inclusive societies are ongoing.

So, if NATO is indeed committed to reducing Baltic vulnerability, Europeans and North Americans will focus their attention on promoting prosperity and political stability by encouraging continued and improved inclusiveness and respect for the rights of minorities, and by helping all segments of the populations to maintain a stake in Baltic independence, identity, and stability – and they will stop risking military confrontations from which no one would escape with anything that could remotely resemble winning.

Even so, military provocations still lead, in part because they are essentially an ideological commitment and partly because both Mr. Putin and the NATO/Pentagon leadership find them useful for reasons other than

the fate of the Baltics. Mr. Putin's own political fortunes, currently riding high, are served by stoking crises – diverting attention away from Russia's faltering economy and focusing instead on populist gestures of defiance of the West – and NATO and the West seem determined to help Mr. Putin by handing him an abundance of pretexts. NATO's expansion has long been more serious than a mere annoyance to Russia, and the latter's response to Finland and Sweden moving closer to cooperation with NATO was predictable. In response to a joint declaration by Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland (almost two-thirds of the states of the Arctic community) that they must collectively prepare for crises or incidents with Russia, the Russian Foreign Ministry drew the conclusion that "unlike in previous years, the Nordic defence cooperation positions itself as a foe with respect to Russia, with the potential of undermining the positive constructive relations established over the last decade."¹⁷ Each such instance, and particularly prominent shows of hostile military force near Russia's borders, is another in a steady stream of opportunities for Mr. Putin to wave the nationalist flag and divert attention away from his own domestic challenges. As a result, NATO's military bravado serves Mr. Putin's interests much more than those of the Baltics.

But NATO and the Pentagon cannot seem to help themselves, being, as they are, heirs to a long tradition of promoting their own interests (namely, their budgets) through the aid of the Russian bogeyman. Despite spending ten times more on the military than does Russia, the Pentagon still argues it needs more to meet the Russian challenge. With an eye focused rather more tightly on Washington budget politics than on security in the Baltics, the Pentagon soberly declares "we're not as ready as we want to be."¹⁸

It is true, the Pentagon is not ready – not because it is underarmed, but because it and NATO both think that the only way to be ready is to be militarily invincible. It is mutual destruction, not invincibility, that is militarily available. Armed conflict with Russia, conventional or nuclear, does not include the possibility of a "win." Direct military conflict with Russia by NATO is in fact out of the question – at least if a minimum of sanity prevails – because there is no political, economic, or security interest that would be advanced or would warrant the cost. For that reason, direct military conflict remains unlikely (and public polling shows that key European populations, like the Germans and the French, increasingly reject military action in response to Russia's provocations¹⁹).

The more likely scenario for European military confrontation would be much less overt, focusing on the kind of low-level destabilizing tactics seen

in Ukraine. But the key point here is that for such a tactic to be available to Russia in the Baltics or the Arctic there would have to be a significant level of discontent in the Baltic republics and Russia's northern neighbours. And if it ever came to active insurgent disturbances, there would be no credible military defence against it. Military actions against dissident insurgents that, with even minimal internal support, reject the legitimacy of their own state and that have the sympathy and concrete help of neighbours and operate in a context of serious political disarray are, to understate it, not promising. From Afghanistan to Ukraine to Syria, it is clear there is no winning against such forces – only insecurity, political disorder, and rapid economic decline are reaped.

That means the front line of Baltic and Arctic security is constructive governance that keeps on winning the support of all segments of their populations. It is the legitimacy of inclusive internal political processes in the Baltics, not military threats that no sane leadership would ever carry out, that will ultimately protect them from the Russian “help” they do not want.

Notes

¹ “Russia examines 1991 recognition of Baltic independence,” BBC, 30 June 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33325842>

² “Russia concerned by Finland and Sweden’s NATO rapprochement,” EURACTIV, 13 April 2015. <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/global-europe/russia-concerned-finland-and-swedens-nato-rapprochement-313709>

³ Aaron Mehta, “US F-22s Deploying to Europe,” *Defense News*, 24 August 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/air-space/strike/2015/08/24/f-22-deploying-europe/32289415/>

⁴ “Operation REASSURANCE,” National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, Government of Canada, last modified 15 November 2018. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad/nato-ee.page>

⁵ “Wales Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales,” NATO, 5 September 2014. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?selectedLocale=en

⁶ “NATO’s Readiness Action Plan,” NATO Fact Sheet, February 2015. <http://www.nato.int/>

⁷ Thomas Frear, Łukasz Kulesa, and Ian Kearns, “Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014,” European Leadership Network, November 2014. <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Dangerous-Brinkmanship.pdf>

- ⁸ David Pugliese, "The coming war with Russia," *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 August 2015. <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/the-coming-war-with-russia>
- ⁹ Frear, Kulesa, and Kearns, "Dangerous Brinkmanship."
- ¹⁰ Thomas Frear, Ian Kearns, and Łukasz Kulesa, "Preparing for the Worst: Are Russian and NATO Military Exercises Making War in Europe More Likely?" European Leadership Network, August 2015. http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/preparing-for-the-worst-are-russian-and-nato-military-exercises-making-war-in-europe-more-likely_2997.html
- ¹¹ Yoel Sano, "Guest post: will Russia make a play for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania?" *Financial Times*, 23 March 2015. <https://www.ft.com/content/c03befc7-67a8-3e91-93c2-72d865ccb42b>
- ¹² Frear, Kearns, and Kulesa, "Preparing for the Worst."
- ¹³ Mark MacKinnon, "Cold War redux: Could war games spark a European conflict?" *Globe and Mail*, 11 August 2015. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/cold-war-redux-could-war-games-spark-a-european-conflict/article25933074/>
- ¹⁴ *Global Peace Index 2015: Measuring Peace, Its Causes and Its Economic Value* (Sydney: Institute for Economics & Peace, 2015). http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/04/Global-Peace-Index-Report-2015_0.pdf
- ¹⁵ *The 2014 Legatum Prosperity Index* (London: Legatum Institute, 2014). http://media.prosperity.com/2014/pdf/publications/PI2014Brochure_WEB.pdf
- ¹⁶ Jan Puhl, "The Baltic Front: Where Putin's Empire Meets the EU," *Der Spiegel Online*, 3 July 2015. <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/concerns-grow-in-baltics-over-resurgent-russia-a-1041448.html>
- ¹⁷ "Russia concerned by Finland and Sweden's NATO rapprochement."
- ¹⁸ Nancy A. Youssef, "Pentagon Fears It's Not Ready for a War With Putin," *The Daily Beast*, 14 August 2015. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/pentagon-fears-its-not-ready-for-a-war-with-putin>
- ¹⁹ A Pew Research Center survey this past June found that "at least half of Germans, French and Italians say their country should not use military forces to defend a NATO ally if attacked by Russia." Quoted in: Pugliese, "The coming war with Russia."

7 Gunboat Diplomacy Turns to Air Power Diplomacy in the Resurgent East-West Divide

January 20, 2015

Fighter aircraft probes of Arctic air defences, expanded surveillance and reconnaissance flights, and long-range nuclear bomber patrols seem once again to be the lingua franca of East-West diplomacy. And “East-West relations” is itself once more a term of art in global affairs as Moscow, Washington, and Brussels take up their quarrels and rely increasingly on military gestures to do the talking for them. The ostensible point is to communicate strength and resolve, but there is an unavoidable subtext of impotence in posing threats you never want to carry out.

Military symbolism is now literally in full flight. In the dominant Western narrative, Russian flights are provocative and dangerous; in the East it is the reverse, with NATO the provocateur. From Europe to the Arctic to North America, over land and sea, air power diplomacy has taken centre stage.

Russian fighters buzz Canadian frigates in the Black Sea and pose dangers to civilian air traffic over the Baltic Sea. Russian strategic bombers patrol the Beaufort Sea, and NORAD jet fighters are scrambled on cue.¹ US reconnaissance aircraft patrol the Baltic Sea and Baltic States in range of Russian borders, jumping from 22 such flights in 2013 to 141 in 2014 according to Russian Air Force officials.² NATO flights near the border of Belarus and near Russia’s Kaliningrad region are said to have doubled over the past year, exceeding 3,000 in 2014.³

In the 1990s a US Naval War College paper hyped air power as “the new gunboat diplomacy,”⁴ arguing it offered greater deployment speed and flexibility and a more credible threat inasmuch as the risk of casualties is kept low for any state wielding the air power. “Gunboat” or any kind of military “diplomacy” is basically the threat, or use, of limited military power in a situation other than war.⁵ Some threats are latent – like peacetime naval deployments to show the flag, routine strategic bomber patrols, or, in the

context of current East-West tensions, the steady eastward expansion of NATO. Others are more immediate and active – like military operations designed not to directly engage, but to intimidate an adversary into changing its behaviour in the context of a particular crisis.

The point of active air power “diplomacy” is to communicate resolve and unwavering commitment to protecting the particular interests deemed to be at stake. There is realist logic to it when the context is a major imbalance of power – when the state threatening the air power can be fully confident that it can make good on the threat without risking any serious retaliatory action. But that is not remotely the case in the new East-West stand-off. Neither side can reasonably expect to take direct hostile military action against the other without retaliation and thus paying a major price. So why threaten to do what you at all costs do not want to do?

It is a small-scale version of the dilemma of nuclear deterrence – which becomes a form of self-deterrence, and thus impotence, because of the certain knowledge that if the threat were ever acted upon, the only guarantee would be of self-destruction because the retaliatory commitment and capabilities of the adversary are beyond doubt. So, the threat of nuclear attack rings hollow, because the only relevant result of carrying out the threat would be one’s own nuclear destruction in response.

Similarly, bravado flights of military aircraft, the purpose of which are to make political points and send messages, also ring hollow, and actually come to symbolize the opposite of what is intended. All rationality says that none of the differences now aggravating East-West relations are amenable to settlement by military means. A European battle employing the weapons systems that are now used as rather un-nuanced messengers of intended intimidation would lead in a matter of days and weeks to consequences so disastrous and destructive that it is impossible to conceive of any political difference that would justify the mutual assaults. Henry Kissinger once made the point with regard to nuclear weapons – “any use of nuclear weapons is certain to involve a level of casualties and devastation out of proportion to foreseeable foreign policy objectives.”⁶ Neither are there any current or foreseeable political objectives in Eurasia that could be effectively advanced by the main East-West protagonists turning their enormous conventional military combat arsenals on each other, and in the process risking escalation to nuclear use.

Does it ever make sense to threaten to do what you know will never be in your interests to do? Symbolic flights of fighter aircraft and bombers are intended to remind the adversary that these weapons are available for use.

But in any rational world, they are clearly not available for use by Russia against NATO or by NATO against Russia. There is no circumstance under which this would make sense or serve the interests of either side. Neither side wants them to be used.

Yet, NATO's response to Russia's annexation of Crimea was a classic case of threatening to do what American and Central European NATO states are nevertheless rightly convinced should never be done. NATO decided to establish a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) that would be able to deploy within a few days in response to a crisis,⁷ although there is no case of NATO having been politically ready to respond immediately to a crisis when it was prevented from doing so for reasons of logistics. NATO is now to develop the capacity to attack Russia or its allies within 48 hours, but it is enhancing its capacity to do what it will never do, and should never do, and that is to engage in direct combat with Russia or its immediate allies.

Continuing to make threats that must never be carried out is all the more irresponsible when we factor in the risk of miscalculation and unintended escalation. The danger is that heightened physical engagement and contact could turn to actual hostility, not at all over the substantive issue in politics or law – everybody knows they cannot be resolved militarily – but over a miscalculation. And what makes “air power diplomacy” against a rival power of extraordinary military capability especially dumb is that the risks increase in times of crisis, precisely when the objective should be de-escalation and risk reduction.

Communicating by fighter aircraft, when meeting rooms and the real language of diplomacy would be eminently more effective, is the pre-eminent folly of the current East-West dynamic. Brandishing arsenals, whether nuclear or conventional, that cannot possibly be used to positive effect, is above all a way of advertising impotence.

Teddy Roosevelt advised speaking softly while carrying a big stick, but he was counting on just one side having the stick – if both sides have them and they are both adorned with long spikes on the end, that is a sign it is time to speak more clearly and think about another kind of stick. If reason prevails, air power diplomacy will ultimately be exchanged for real conference table diplomacy, which is already backed by an array of economic and political sanctions. Brandishing arsenals, whether nuclear or conventional, that can be used only to one's own peril, is above all a way of advertising political impotence.

There is a reason that there has been no state-to-state war since the Eritrea/Ethiopia fighting at the turn of the millennium. It is true, the

powerful still invade the weak to advance the interests of the former (not that that works very well either). But mutually destructive forces (whether balanced or not is irrelevant) do not go to war with each other to settle a political dispute between them because it would be utterly self-destructive and thus irrational.

The problem is, states, even great states like the US and Russia, still act irrationally on a fairly regular basis. Which is why the absolute last thing they should be doing is indulging in the risky symbolism of air power diplomacy that could easily go wrong and lead to catastrophically irrational behaviour. Following which the political dispute that prompted the air power diplomacy in the first place would either remain unresolved or, more likely, be made utterly irrelevant by the whole new avalanche of political problems and instabilities that would follow deadly military exchanges.

Notes

¹ Thomas Frear, Łukasz Kulesa, and Ian Kearns, "Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014," European Leadership Network, November 2014. <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/policy-brief/dangerous-brinkmanship-close-military-encounters-between-russia-and-the-west-in-2014/>

² "US Planes Flying Near Russian Border Almost Every Day: Russian Air Force," Sputnik International, 16 December 2014. <http://sputniknews.com/russia/2014/1216/1015907245.html>

³ "US Planes Flying Near Russian Border."

⁴ James O. Poss, "Air Power: The New Gunboat Diplomacy?" Naval War College, Newport, 16 June 1994. <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a279474.pdf>

⁵ Thomas D. Goodall, "Gunboat Diplomacy: Does it Have a Place in the 1990s?" GlobalSecurity.org, 1991. <http://www.globalsecurity.org>

⁶ Henry Kissinger, Speech to the 45th Munich Security Conference, delivered 6 February 2009, American Rhetoric - Online Speech Bank. <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/henrykissinger45thmunichsecurityconference.htm>

⁷ "Wales Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales," NATO, 5 September 2014. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm?selectedLocale=en

8 Cooperative Security and Denuclearizing the Arctic¹

June 2019

Geography alone will continue to ensure that, as long as the United States and Russia place nuclear deterrence at the centre of their security strategies, both offensive and defensive systems will be deployed in the Arctic. As changing climate conditions also bring more immediate regional security concerns to the fore, and even as East-West relations deteriorate, the Arctic still continues to develop as an international “security community” in which there are reliable expectations that states will continue to settle disputes by peaceful means and in accordance with international law. In keeping with, and seeking to reinforce, those expectations, the denuclearization of the Arctic has been an enduring aspiration of Indigenous communities and of the people of Arctic states more broadly, even though the challenges are daunting, given that two members of that community command well over 90 percent of global nuclear arsenals. The vision of an Arctic nuclear-weapon-free zone nevertheless persists, and with that vision comes an imperative to promote the progressive denuclearization of the Arctic, even if not initially as a formalized nuclear-weapon-free zone, within the context of a broad security cooperation agenda.

The following considers proposals for a nuclear-weapon-free Arctic, explains the daunting challenges of Arctic denuclearization, briefly elaborates the theme of an emergent security community in the Arctic, and discusses measures in support of progressive denuclearization of the region in the context of the global commitment to pursue a world without nuclear weapons.

Proponents of a formal Arctic nuclear-weapon-free zone do not envision a nuclear-free Arctic while the rest of the world remains in the grip of nuclear arsenals threatening global destruction, and while the United States and Russia remain enthralled by “modernization” that fosters nuclear

use, including first-use, postures. Instead, the objective is to explore actions and policies conducive to strategic stability, the de-escalation of threats, and the promotion of regional cooperation in ways designed to reduce global tensions and promote arms control well beyond the Arctic. Measures to reduce nuclear risks and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the national security policies of the United States and Russia include a proposal to establish in the Arctic an attack-submarine-exclusion zone. The existing non-militarization of the surface of the central international Arctic Ocean begs for that status to be preserved and formalized through a treaty. Both stability and denuclearization in the Arctic require a reliable international forum or multilateral institution through which regional states can address common regional security concerns and prevent conflicts external to the region from infecting regional affairs. And in the context of ongoing global diplomatic efforts toward nuclear disarmament, each non-nuclear-weapon state in the Arctic has the opportunity to entrench and formalize its own nuclear-weapon-free status and to cooperate in the formation of a *de facto* nuclear-weapon-free zone in at least those currently non-nuclear parts of the region.

Nuclear Weapons in Today's Arctic

Russia's main sea-based nuclear-weapons arsenal is based in the Arctic on the Kola Peninsula and its nuclear-armed submarine patrols are currently largely confined to the Barents Sea bastion (even though Russia continues to seek reliable access to the Atlantic Ocean for its Arctic-based naval forces). While the United States does not base nuclear weapons in the Arctic and does not currently conduct Arctic patrols with nuclear-armed submarines, it does face the basic reality that any intercontinental missile headed to the American heartland from East Asia, the Middle East, or Russia would traverse some part of the Arctic – hence, the concentration of its strategic ballistic missile interception efforts in the North.

Neither Russian nor American strategic assets in the Arctic are in the service of strictly regional Arctic interests or focused on shaping conditions there. Arctic nuclear weapons and missile defence installations have global, not Arctic, missions, which means they are unlikely to be removed or substantially reduced without there being some major changes in the global security dynamics that drive strategic missions. Other nuclear-weapon states with sea-based nuclear weapons – notably, China, France, India, and the United Kingdom – have at least a theoretical capacity to deploy submarines equipped with strategic range ballistic missiles (SSBNs) in the Arctic, but

they have few geographic or strategic incentives to do so. Some see China as a potential exception. When its nascent nuclear-armed submarine force begins to patrol beyond its home waters, it could theoretically seek to bring its sea-launched ballistic missiles within range of the contiguous United States – in fact, a recent Pentagon report expresses concern about China potentially deploying nuclear deterrent forces in the Arctic² – but China is much more likely to seek the anonymity of the open Pacific over the treacherous and American patrolled waters of the Arctic for its sea-based deterrent.

When disarmament progresses to the point that the major nuclear powers give up on their insistence on a triad (air, land, and sea) of launch systems, sea-based systems will not be the first to go. In fact, they are likely to be retained the longest, largely because they are the least vulnerable to pre-emptive attack. Accordingly, both the United States and Russia are concentrating on modernizing sea-based nuclear arsenals, and Russia will certainly continue to see advantage in its Arctic submarine-based nuclear deployments.

Those sea-launched strategic nuclear weapons represent the main element of the global nuclear arsenal that is based in the Arctic. Russia could also be storing some of its non-strategic nuclear weapons in the Arctic. Given that its non-strategic nuclear weapons are prominently assigned to the Navy, it is likely that some are in storage on the Kola Peninsula as well.³ Russia has also been using the Arctic (for example, Novaya Zemlya in 2017) as a test site for its vaunted “Skyfall” nuclear-powered cruise missile – a weapon, still largely experimental and speculative, that would essentially have an unlimited range.⁴ Neither the United States nor Russia bases strategic nuclear bombers or land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles in the Arctic. [For further details of nuclear weapons deployments in the Arctic see Chapter 4: Nuclear Submarines in the Arctic.]

Thinking About a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Arctic

The vision of a nuclear-weapon-free Arctic obviously must contend with the reality of substantial nuclear weapons-related operations there; to this point, nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) have for the most part been created where nuclear weapons are already absent. In the Arctic, they are a major presence, but that has not stopped significant support for an Arctic without nuclear weapons. Indigenous peoples have proposed and endorsed an Arctic NWFZ (in 1977, 1983, and 1998), as have a variety of civil society groups from outside the region, and about a decade ago there was

considerable systematic attention paid to the issue. In 2007 and 2010, the Canadian National group of the Nobel Peace Prize-laureate organization Pugwash issued papers calling for an Arctic nuclear-weapon-free zone;⁵ then in March 2012 the Danish national Pugwash group held a meeting to consider the commitment in a Danish government policy paper that, “in dialogue with Denmark’s partners, the government will pursue the policy of making the Arctic a nuclear weapon free zone.”⁶

A 2010 survey, conducted for the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation of Canada, contacted more than 9,000 residents in eight Arctic states, confirming substantial popular support right across the region for an Arctic NWFZ. The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with this statement: “The Arctic should be a nuclear weapons free zone just like Antarctica is, and the United States and Russia should remove their nuclear weapons from the Arctic.” The results showed strong agreement in all six non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS) in the Arctic (ranging from 74 to 83 percent), and mixed but still significant support in Russia and the US (56 and 47 percent respectively).⁷

In 2009, the opening recommendation of an Arctic NWFZ Conference in Denmark⁸ called for the development of modalities for establishing “a nuclear weapon free and demilitarised Arctic region.” Whether those objectives – a NWFZ and demilitarization more broadly – are best pursued in that order, simultaneously, or in reverse order is an important tactical question, but conference participants saw the two pursuits as indelibly linked and critical for the development of a cooperative security environment in the Arctic.

The following does not make the case for such a zone, that having been done effectively by several of the writers and conferences noted above.⁹ The focus here is instead on exploring recent NWFZ proposals, and the challenges they face, with a view to identifying ways in which measures to demilitarize and denuclearize this key geostrategic zone can contribute effectively to the pursuit of global zero, a world without nuclear weapons.

NWFZs are a means of reducing the geographical sway of nuclear weapons and are thus an important and respected mechanism for advancing the goal of disarmament, prohibiting nuclear weapons within those zones, and eliminating the nuclear options of nuclear-weapon states toward states within those zones. Expanding NWFZs is a strategy promoted in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Article VII, and states have in fact pursued that strategy with remarkable success. There are now essentially nine such zones or jurisdictions. Five are formal NWFZs: Latin America and the

Caribbean (Tlatelolco-1967); South Pacific (Rarotonga-1985); South East Asia (Bangkok-1995); Africa (Pelindaba-1996); and Central Asia (Semipalatinsk-2006). Another four zones ban nuclear weapons by treaties or declarations: Mongolia declared its nuclear-weapon-free status in 1992; the 1959 Antarctic Treaty prohibits any military operations there; the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies prohibits placing nuclear weapons in orbit around Earth, installing or testing these weapons on the Moon and other celestial bodies as well as stationing these weapons in outer space in any other manner; and the 1971 Sea-Bed Treaty prohibits emplacement of nuclear weapons on an ocean floor or in the subsoil.¹⁰ Nuclear weapons are thus banned from space, the entire global seabed, the Antarctic, 99 percent of the southern hemisphere land area, and almost 60 percent of the global land mass – including some 114 states¹¹ (about 60 percent) that are home to 1.9 billion people.

Article VII of the NPT provides for “the right of any group of states to conclude regional treaties in order to assure the total absence of nuclear weapons in their respective territories” – so that is the basic condition, no nuclear weapons on the territories of states in the zone. To attain formal status, a NWFZ requires recognition of such by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, and within such zones the prohibition on possession is generally reinforced by prohibitions on deployment and use and is supported by a means to verify compliance. Prohibitions can include research, development, testing, acquisition, manufacture, possession, deployment, stockpiling, use, and/or control of nuclear weapons. Most of these, by the way, are included in the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (which will enter into force for the parties to the treaty once 50 states have ratified it). Some 186 non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS), whether or not they are in a NWFZ, are bound by these same prohibitions by virtue of being parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

While the NPT does not specify the long list of prohibitions included in NWFZs, its provisions are broad and have been taken, in practice and by decisions at NPT Review Conferences, to essentially include the full range of prohibitions. There is a critical exception, in practice if not in law. Notably, five NNWS members of NATO host US tactical nuclear weapons on their soil and all five remain NNWS parties to the NPT, in apparent good standing. Article II of the NPT, however, prohibits NNWS from receiving nuclear weapons by “transfer from any transferor whatsoever” or from

manufacturing “or otherwise acquiring” nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (with research and development understood as part of the process of “otherwise acquiring” nuclear weapons). Accordingly, NPT review conferences regularly feature demands that NNWS in NATO remove US nuclear weapons from their territories.

States within NWFZs generally seek assurances from nuclear-weapon states that they will not be attacked, targeted, or threatened by nuclear weapons. Protocols to the treaties are typically (though not in all cases) signed by the five nuclear-weapon states in the NPT (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) respecting the NWFZs and providing the countries in a zone with such negative security assurances. Article III of the NPT mandates safeguards whose purpose is to prevent diversions of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons. Additional provisions can include a prohibition on conventional attacks against nuclear facilities and on testing, the latter to be accomplished by having all states within the zone ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty¹² – a Treaty that has yet to enter into force due to the failure of certain nuclear-capable states to ratify it (including the United States and China, which have signed but not ratified; and North Korea, India, and Pakistan, which have neither signed nor ratified). Some NWFZs, for example the Rarotonga zone, include a prohibition on dumping nuclear waste – a serious issue within Russian Arctic waters, given the Cold War dumping, for example, of radioactive waste in the Kara Sea in the area of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago.¹³

The Challenges of Arctic Denuclearization

The basic characteristics and objectives of NWFZs are well established. The extent to which an Arctic NWFZ could meet those clear standards, and the relative priority that should be given to the pursuit of an Arctic NWFZ, is, of course, widely debated. The idea has obvious merit inasmuch as it contributes to the pursuit of global zero – a world without nuclear weapons – but legitimate questions arise regarding the extent to which a focus on the Arctic, a region that hosts a significant portion of the arsenal of one of the major nuclear-weapon states, advances or detracts from the progressive pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons. But before returning to such questions, it is important to review the challenges that confront the effort to establish the Arctic as a NWFZ.

Defining an Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone

Proposals to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone throughout the Arctic vary, but a first is the idea that a NWFZ could encompass only parts of the national territories of its members. Some propose a zone confined to all land, sea, and air territory, national and international, above the Arctic Circle, but not including the territories of those same states south of the Arctic Circle. Others propose that the zone include the entire national territories of all the Arctic NNWS, but only the Arctic territories of Russia and the United States. Another option would be to have the Arctic NWFZ boundaries follow those adopted by the Arctic Council for the Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement¹⁴ (see Appendix).

Each of these proposals would affect the major nuclear-weapons facilities of the Kola Peninsula. On the rather obvious assumption that Russia would not be inclined to denuclearize those facilities outside of broader global disarmament initiatives, an Arctic NWFZ would have to include special exemptions – for example, carving the Kola Peninsula out of the zone, while allowing the transit (some variation of innocent passage as opposed to patrols) of Russian SSBNs through parts of the zone on their way to and from their home bases.¹⁵ Such exemptions or exceptions would, of course, make it a highly discriminatory agreement – different rules for different states. A significant implication would be the prohibition of Russian SSBN patrols in the Barents Sea.

The geography of the zone, which in all the proposals includes the international Arctic Ocean, also raises the question of whether Arctic states have the capacity or jurisdiction to decide on their own that nuclear weapons should be prohibited from the Arctic Ocean. They clearly do not have such a mandate, but that objective could still be achieved without necessarily requiring a global treaty. NNWS are obviously already oriented and legally bound not to deploy nuclear weapons anywhere, including the Arctic Ocean. Thus, nuclear-weapon states on their own could agree to a collective commitment not to deploy any of their nuclear weapons anywhere within the international waters of the Arctic.

For non-nuclear-weapon states in the Arctic, the essential provisions associated with NWFZs are already in place. The six Arctic NNWS (of the eight Arctic Council member states) – Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland – are prohibited by virtue of the NPT from researching, developing, testing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, stockpiling,

deploying, using, and/or controlling nuclear weapons, in the Arctic or anywhere else.

Nuclear-Weapon States in a NWFZ?

Proposals to create a NWFZ in the Arctic are obviously unique in considering the participation of states with nuclear weapons. Complicated exemptions for the United States and Russia on the basic point of a NWFZ – namely, that member states not possess nuclear weapons – would obviously push the envelope, but Professor Jan Prawitz¹⁶ of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs points out that there is an Arctic precedent for special demilitarization provisions applying to only part of a state. Norway's Spitsbergen is demilitarized, even though the rest of Norway is not, implying that parts of the United States and Russia could be denuclearized, even though the rest of those countries would not be.

Were Russia to remove all its SSBNs from the Arctic in support of an Arctic NWFZ, something that is, to understate the point, not imminent, and redeploy them in the Pacific, that would not be a welcome development for Japan or China – nor the United States, for that matter. Tom Axworthy,¹⁷ a Senior Fellow with the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, emphasizes the point: “the goal,” he says, “is not to create a ‘zone of peace’ free from nuclear weapons in the Arctic and then have a build-up of nuclear weapons right on its border. That would defeat what the zone is trying to achieve.” He refers to what Prawitz¹⁸ calls the need for the “thinning out” of nuclear weapons in the territories just outside the zone as well. In other words, any reduction or removal of nuclear weapons from the Arctic would best be part of a move to reduce weapons globally, rather than just being a decision to redeploy them elsewhere, possibly in more vulnerable and/or provocative locations than the Arctic.

Negative Security Assurances (NSAs)

A prominent feature of nuclear-weapon-free-zone agreements are pledges by nuclear-weapon states that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against NWFZ member states. These pledges accord with general negative security assurances – pledges not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon state that is in compliance with its obligations under the NPT (formalized by all NPT nuclear-weapon states through UN Security Council Resolution 984 of 1995).

These assurances are routinely qualified to allow the threat of nuclear use against non-nuclear-weapon states under special circumstances such as an attack by a non-nuclear-weapon state in cooperation with a nuclear-

weapon state. The Pentagon's 2018 Nuclear Posture Review reaffirms these negative security assurances, with the qualification that nuclear-weapons use against non-nuclear-weapon states would be available in response to "significant non-nuclear strategic attacks" on the United States or its allies or partners.¹⁹

But in the case of a NWFZ that included nuclear-weapon states, negative security assurances would clearly have little practical meaning. In the case of the Arctic, not only are there nuclear weapons present, as are the forces of two nuclear-weapon states, but four Arctic states are members of an alliance that explicitly defines itself as a nuclear alliance. The United States and Russia are not about to provide mutual negative security assurances, and Russia is not about to give such assurances to states within NATO. Theoretically, an Arctic NWFZ could include an undertaking to exclude the geographic Arctic within the zone from the target lists of nuclear-weapon states (those within and those not in the zone), but that would be unlikely to extend to entire states and their territories beyond the Arctic. Any arrangement along such lines would obviously bend the traditional meaning of NSAs, but an NWFZ that includes NWS would itself be a major departure from the traditional NWFZ.

There is a precedent for states under an alliance nuclear umbrella to be accepted into NWFZs – notably, Australia within the Rarotonga Treaty zone and states of the Central Asia Zone. Australia is in alliance with a NWS under the Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), and three Central Asian NWFZ states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) are similarly allied to a NWS (Russia) under the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Nevertheless, in May 2014, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia signed the zone's NSA protocol.²⁰

Freedom of the Seas

NWFZs are clearly defined by geography, but international waters adjacent to but not under the legal jurisdiction of NWFZ member states are not automatically covered, and even the 12-mile territorial waters that fall under the sovereignty of NWFZ states are subject to "innocent passage" – meaning the right of vessels of other states to transit through waters in these zones directly and openly, provided there is no prejudice to the security of the state whose waters are being transited (Article 87 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea [UNCLOS] guaranteeing freedom of the high seas).²¹

Prawitz²² points out that “among existing Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, the Antarctic Treaty and the Rarotonga Treaty (South Pacific) include specific provisions that treaty obligations will not infringe upon freedom of the seas within the zone perimeter. The Tlatelolco Treaty defines the zonal area as including substantial parts of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, but nuclear weapon states parties to the security assurances guarantee protocol have made statements of interpretation to the effect that they will not be restricted as regards freedom of the seas in those areas.” The Canadian Pugwash proposal as elaborated by Professor Adele Buckley²³ counsels flexibility: “At least in early stages of an NWFZ, it is possible the United Nations’ *right of innocent passage* could apply to Russia and/or American submarines that may transit the Arctic, but commit not to patrol there.”

Ramesh Thakur²⁴ in his volume on nuclear-weapon-free zones notes that, while NWFZs “should have clearly defined and recognized boundaries,” various options exist. While all states have the right under UNCLOS to enter and use international waterways, Thakur points out that “a group of states can agree among themselves to impose restrictions on their own activities, but not on that of others – although they can invite other states to sign relevant protocols containing similar restrictions.”

Professor Hamel-Green²⁵ notes that

while nuclear weapon states may seek to insist on their full rights under [UNC]LOS, there is nothing to prevent their agreeing, through binding protocols, to respect specific maritime zones as denuclearized areas and waive their normal rights under the [UNC]LOS. The nuclear weapon states frequently unilaterally declare ‘exclusion zones’ in open waters for the purpose of missile testing and continue to observe the ban on nuclear weapons in the open waters of the Antarctic Treaty. The possibility of denuclearization is enhanced by the reciprocal undertakings of the US and Russia not to deploy tactical nuclear weapons on ships....

Verification

The international community already has an impressive array of verification mechanisms in place through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for confirming NNWS compliance with their obligations under the NPT. But there remain questions regarding the extent to which zone-specific verification mechanisms need to be constructed. For example, do individual states declaring their own territories to be nuclear-weapon-free

(as part of a NWFZ) need to mount their own national verification capacity to detect submerged submarines within their waters? And if the Arctic Ocean were to be declared nuclear-weapon-free, by virtue of NWS commitments not to deploy there, what would be the verification requirements and where would responsibility for them be lodged?

Verification is obviously essential to building basic confidence that a NWFZ is in fact what it claims to be, but the focus of verification should clearly be on those areas not covered by other verification and monitoring arrangements, notably those with the IAEA. Since all states that would be in an Arctic NWFZ are members of the NPT, the basic verification mechanisms for detecting diversion from peaceful uses are already in place. Other collective verification efforts, such as confirming the non-presence of nuclear-weapon submarines within or transiting through the zone, might be undertaken cooperatively through a dedicated regional agency. Thakur points to strong precedents for zone-based mechanisms to monitor compliance. A minimum requirement is full-scope safeguards under the IAEA, but existing NWFZs have augmented this with dedicated organizations or secretariats that include responsibilities for verifying compliance. The Tlatelolco secretariat has the authority to call special meetings in the event of emerging concerns, but has delegated to the IAEA its powers to conduct special inspections of suspicious activities. The Pelindaba Treaty establishes a 12-member commission to oversee compliance, which can request IAEA inspections that include representatives from the commission. The Bangkok NWFZ empowers the zone's executive committee to convene a special meeting of members in the event of a breach of its protocols by a nuclear-weapon state. The treaties also variously include provisions for referring issues to regional bodies, to the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council, or the International Court of Justice.²⁶

The Legal Framework

Jan Prawitz²⁷ has set out a clear legal framework for an Arctic NWFZ. He proposes an umbrella treaty to which several protocols would be added. The umbrella agreement would "specify the objectives and general purposes of the zone regime, its geographical scope and core parties," as well as basic verification provisions and "complaints procedures, entry into force requirements, duration and withdrawal."

A protocol signed by the six NNWS members of the zone would specify their obligations under the treaty. A second protocol signed by the two NWS

members “would specify their obligations as agreed between them and endorsed by the six core NNWSs.” The assumption here seems quite properly to be that, given the unusual circumstances of having nuclear-weapon states within a nuclear-weapon-free zone, it would be necessary for the two states to come to bilateral agreements on arrangements for managing their Arctic operations and facilities in the context of their overall strategic postures. Provisions for Russian nuclear forces on the Kola Peninsula, for BMD installations in Alaska and Greenland, and for anti-submarine deployments/operations would be among the issues to be resolved.

A separate protocol would commit all five NWS recognized as such in the NPT, and perhaps also the three other states with confirmed nuclear arsenals but not technically bound by the NPT (India, Israel, and Pakistan), to provide negative security assurances – a commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any targets within the zone – as well as a commitment not to launch such weapons from anywhere in the zone. All states with nuclear weapons would include in the protocol a commitment not to deploy or operate nuclear-weapons systems anywhere within the zone, including, of course, the international spaces within the zone.

An Arctic Security Community

The most basic characteristic of a security zone that has matured into a cooperative security community – that is, a genuine *community* of independent states within a defined region – is that there exists a reliable expectation that the states within that regional community will not resort to war to prosecute their disputes. Put another way, such a “pluralistic security community ... [is] a transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change.”²⁸ And, in fact, that is already a widely affirmed expectation, even if not a guarantee, for the Arctic region. The Ilulissat Declaration,²⁹ reaffirmed in 2018, is a commitment by Arctic states to settle disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law in general and the Law of the Sea in particular.

Despite today’s obvious NATO-Russian tensions, the Arctic, where NATO states and Russia are both prominent presences, remains a region of relative geopolitical calm, with all sides still credibly denying the presence of active military threats and insisting that regional conflicts will be resolved through cooperation and international law. It is a welcome and genuine regional reality that seems deeply incongruous with the concentration in the

Arctic of submarines bearing nuclear-armed intercontinental-range ballistic missiles, but for now at least, the absence of state-to-state and Arctic-specific military threats is not a case of wishful thinking. It is the considered judgement of both the Kremlin and the current US Government. While Russian Arctic security policies emphasize the refurbishment of its northern military and a growing role for it in protecting national interests in the region, those policies are also replete with commitments to maintaining stability and military cooperation toward that end.³⁰ American authorities also continue to affirm the absence of Arctic-specific military threats. The US Government Accountability Office,³¹ having reviewed the Pentagon's assessment of the Arctic threat level, concluded with the Pentagon that the threat "remains low" and that the US Department of Defense has the capabilities that are required to carry out the current Arctic Strategy (those capabilities are limited and commensurate with the low threat levels). That strategy, established in 2016, is to pursue "two overarching objectives: to (1) ensure security, support safety, and promote defense cooperation and (2) prepare to respond to a wide range of challenges and contingencies to maintain stability in the region." Those two objectives are made realistic, says the GAO,³² by the "low level of military threat in the Arctic" and by "the stated commitment of the Arctic nations to work within a common framework of diplomatic engagement."

Cooperation

Arctic cooperation is well established. Geography, harsh conditions, and shared interests have made political, economic, and military cooperation a staple of the international Arctic. As Finnish Member of Parliament Katri Kulmuni put it, "if we want to save the Arctic, we need the Arctic countries to cooperate."³³ Canadian academic Heather Exner-Pirot³⁴ reminds us of the plethora of organizations and international agreements that already contribute to Arctic governance. Sub-regional government-to-government cooperation occurs through groupings like the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the West Nordic Council. Indigenous communities come together through organizations like the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) and the Saami Council. International agreements like the Law of the Sea and the International Maritime Organization and, more recently, the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, are especially important to Arctic governance. Arctic public safety and security agreements include the 2011 Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic and the 2013 Agreement on

Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. The Arctic Coast Guard Forum was established in 2015, with all eight Arctic Council states part of the arrangement.

Arctic states have a high expectation that regional conflicts and disputes will be mediated by means other than military confrontation. But the Arctic does not as clearly reflect another crucially important characteristic of a security community: “the absence of a competitive military build-up or arms race involving [its] members.”³⁵ There is no denying that states in the region are virtually all building up, or declaring a strong intention to build, their conventional military capacities within the region, but it is still not definitively clear whether this “remilitarization” is becoming a “competitive military build-up” that undermines the growing expectation that change will be peaceful, or whether it actually facilitates increased security and public safety cooperation. Much of current military expansion is aimed at building domestic and cross-border support to civil authorities in search and rescue, emergency response, monitoring regional activity, and in ensuring compliance with national and international regulations. While nuclear weapons in the Arctic are clearly not the focus of a *regional* arms race – and global numbers have also been declining – it is nevertheless hard to deny competitive elements in the deployments of nuclear weapons and related systems in the Arctic.

All five Arctic Ocean states (Canada, Greenland/Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States) nevertheless now see cooperation and the stability it can bring as being in their interests, but in the absence of any overarching institutional or established security architecture or framework with the mandate and capacity to consolidate and entrench an overall climate of cooperation, this inclination has a fragile foundation.

Whether the progressive denuclearization of the Arctic is more likely to be a product of, or a primary means toward, a world without nuclear weapons, will continue to be debated, but in the meantime the Arctic still affords important opportunities for initiatives that could help shape an international climate of security cooperation that in turn will be more conducive to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in the security policies and planning of Arctic nuclear-armed states.

Limiting Attack Submarine Operations

The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* notes that Russia is moving to concentrate its sea-based warheads on fewer missiles – in other words, more MIRVed (multiple, independently targeted, re-entry vehicles) submarine-

based missiles.³⁶ That is a destabilizing configuration inasmuch as it makes strategic missile submarines higher value first-strike targets. One persuasive means of precluding first-strike options and planning would be through mutual US/Russian agreements to forgo sending attack submarines (SSNs) into each other's SSBN operational bastions.

Russia's SSNs are not really in a position to routinely track and target American ballistic missile-carrying submarines on widely dispersed patrols in the open waters of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Russian SSBNs, on the other hand, are largely confined to strategic bastions and thus are more vulnerable to aggressive anti-submarine activity – suggesting that stability would be enhanced if the United States were to formally commit to keeping its attack submarines out of Russia's primary areas of SSBN operation. Three familiar but key measures would go a long way toward substantially reducing sea-based risks in general and would certainly apply to the Arctic in particular: that the United States and Russia both reduce the launch readiness of their submarine-based ballistic missiles, that they both refrain from deploying their SSBNs close to each other's territories, and that they agree not to track and thus threaten each other's SSBNs with attack submarines in agreed exclusion areas for attack submarines.

One feature of the 1987 Murmansk Initiative of then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was a proposal to preclude Western anti-submarine warfare operations against the Soviets in the home waters of the Soviet Northern and Baltic fleets.³⁷ Well before the Gorbachev idea of ASW-free zones had been floated, Canadian analyst Ron Purver³⁸ argued that although the feasibility of putting limits on ASW activities was declining (1983 was, after all, the early Reagan era), the wisdom and desirability of such measures was increasing. As land-based missiles in fixed locations became more vulnerable to pre-emptive attack, the deployment of sea-based strategic nuclear missiles would, within the deterrence paradigm, be a stabilizing presence as survivable second-strike or retaliatory forces. That in turn meant that, if the rationale for SSBNs was their relative invulnerability, it would be counterproductive to try to render them vulnerable through ASW efforts.

Hence, analysts like Purver urged the pursuit of measures to limit destabilizing strategic ASW as a serious arms control and risk reduction objective. Proposals involved agreements to curtail the tracking of SSBNs and the establishment of SSBN sanctuaries or ASW-free zones. Such zones were proposed for the Gulf of Alaska, the Sea of Okhotsk, and the Barents Sea, and as Purver pointed out, these zones were all within what were essentially coastal defence areas and thus capable of being patrolled and

protected by their respective defence forces, including tactical ASW forces. There were also proposals for negotiated limits on ASW vehicles, the idea being that if attack subs were kept to no more than two or three times an adversary's SSBNs, it would be impossible to track all SSBNs simultaneously. For the same reasons, there were also proposals to confine seabed detection devices to areas near national waters and coasts.

A report by Anatoli Diakov and Frank von Hippel³⁹ proposed again that Russia agree to confine its northern SSBN fleet to the Arctic and that the United States agree to keep its attack submarines out of the Russian side of the Arctic. Promoting the Arctic as an area from which attack submarines are excluded or in which their operations are substantially curtailed is not explicitly an Arctic denuclearization measure, but as a realistic risk-reduction measure, it would serve as an important confidence-building development, which would in turn be supportive of nuclear disarmament broadly.

It is important to acknowledge the unfortunate reality that the current trend points in the opposite direction, but the pleas for nuclear sanity persist, even in the face of US and Russian determination to build up their respective anti-submarine warfare and ballistic missile defence capacities, while also moving to more accurate offensive ballistic missiles. In early November 2018, a US official told a submarine symposium that "the handcuffs are off now" – by which he meant that under a new Administration the Navy is now free to pursue more intensified levels of strategic ASW. He referred to the United States as being back "in a great power competition now," in which no adversary will "get a free ticket."⁴⁰ A particular initiative involves the development of more lethal torpedoes with which to threaten SSBNs.

The logic of their own deterrence requirements should drive the United States and Russia to welcome strategic ASW-free zones – that is, zones in which their own ballistic missile-carrying submarines would be free of threats of pre-emptive attacks from anti-submarine warfare subs (aided by ASW aircraft). And, given the prominent presence of Russian SSBN forces in the eastern Arctic, the Arctic is a logical location for at least a Russian ASW-free zone.

Preserving the Non-Militarized Surface of the Central Arctic Ocean

Historically, climate and geography have reliably combined to ensure the non-militarization of the surface of the central Arctic Ocean, but that salutary service will not be available much longer. Climate change and growing accessibility mean that preserving the status quo will depend on the

international community agreeing to accomplish politically what climate and geography can no longer deliver.⁴¹ The idea of prolonging indefinitely the non-militarization of the surface waters of the High Arctic has the great advantage of simply preserving what already exists. Just as the Seabed Treaty preserved the status quo in preventing the deployment of nuclear weapons on the seabed, and just as NWFZs to date have largely preserved the status quo by prohibiting nuclear weapons in places from which they were already absent,⁴² demilitarizing the surface of the Arctic Ocean preserves what is already a fortuitous reality. Formal demilitarization in the Arctic has at least one precedent. In 1920, the Svalbard Treaty demilitarized that archipelago, and all Arctic states have ratified the treaty.⁴³ The European Parliament has called for a protected area around the North Pole,⁴⁴ evidence of further political support for preserving the demilitarized state of the Arctic Ocean ice and surface waters.

If states agreed to forgo military operations on the surface of the central Arctic Ocean, that would complement the non-militarized seabed, and leave only the demilitarization of the sub-surface of the central Arctic Ocean. This latter demilitarization clearly awaits further progress in global reductions in nuclear weapons and the reinvention of strategic relations in the High North and beyond.

Building Support for Progressive Denuclearization

Popular support for an Arctic NWFZ may not be top of mind in the context of the many daunting challenges facing the region, but it remains thoroughly embedded in most Arctic states. Civil society groups are key to sustaining that support by virtue of having, over the years, presented credible proposals for the region's progressive denuclearization. Indigenous peoples of the region have been an essential part of the process. The 1977 ICC resolution on "peaceful and safe uses of the Arctic Circumpolar Zone" called for demilitarization; a commitment to "peaceful and environmentally safe purposes" for the Arctic; a prohibition on military bases and fortifications; a ban on testing and the disposition of chemical, biological, or nuclear materials in the Arctic; and "a moratorium ... on emplacement of nuclear weapons." A 1983 ICC resolution on "a Nuclear Free Zone in the Arctic" repeated the call for the Arctic to be used only for "peaceful and environmentally safe" purposes and called for a prohibition on "testing of nuclear devices in the arctic or subarctic," as well as a ban on nuclear dumpsites. A 1998 ICC resolution on the "clean-up of military sites" called on the governments of the United States, Russia, Canada, and Denmark to clean up

military sites and called “upon the governments of the Arctic countries and the world to designate the Arctic a military-free zone to make sure that reckless and harmful activities are never repeated in the Inuit homeland.”⁴⁵

Continued leadership from communities in the North will be essential for advancing the agenda of a peaceful, environmentally sustainable, and nuclear-free Arctic, and for emphasizing that the most urgent and immediately relevant security imperatives in the Arctic are not fostered by strategic competition or even military preparedness. Instead, they have to do with the sustainable well-being of the people of that region in a time of profound economic and environmental change and social dislocation. Of course, one essential ingredient of the pursuit of human security is regional stability. Peace and stability within and between the states of the region are part of the foundation of local well-being, and while the Arctic has been and still is a zone of cooperation, maintaining that requires close attention to issues like a timely and effective responsiveness to emergencies, as well as the capacity to ensure compliance with environmental, fishing, and other common standards, regulations, and local laws.

In the context of emphasizing measures with positive long-term security impacts and benefits – namely, pursuing deepened cooperation in support of public safety, exploring meaningful restrictions on the operations of attack submarines in the Arctic, preserving the demilitarization that already characterizes the ice and surface waters of the central Arctic Ocean, and promoting shared domain awareness in the region – it is appropriate to continue to debate, define, and declaim the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free Arctic. But, rather than proposing an Arctic NWFZ that would try to accommodate the particular circumstance of the still provocatively armed United States and Russia – accommodations that would necessarily be at odds with the most basic characteristics of such zones (the absolute non-possession of nuclear weapons by all states in the zone) – it may be more credible and effective to pursue the progressive denuclearization of the Arctic without trying to invent a hybrid NWFZ status.

It thus makes sense to first challenge the region’s non-nuclear-weapon states to promote and formalize the *de facto* denuclearization of their jurisdictions. That effort could adhere to the prevailing NWFZ model, namely, politically and legally reinforcing the denuclearized status quo of non-nuclear-weapon states parties to the NPT. Explorations toward a Canada/Nordic NWFZ⁴⁶ would present opportunities to sort out negative security assurance arrangements in a zone that includes NATO members – that is, states without weapons on their territories but, in the case of Canada

and Norway, still committed to a nuclear alliance. A Nordic NWFZ has been discussed for some time, with learnings available from the 1984-85 study by a bi-partisan commission and the 1987-91 exploration by a Nordic Senior Officials Group.⁴⁷

Canadian academic and Arctic expert Michael Byers⁴⁸ makes the useful point that sub-state entities like Nunavut⁴⁹ or Greenland also have a role to play and could simply declare themselves to be nuclear-weapon-free, the way some cities have, in anticipation of a future time when an Arctic NWFZ becomes a serious item on the international security agenda.

The pursuit of progressive denuclearization must take place in an Arctic that hosts an extraordinary confluence of geostrategic pressures. The challenges of the region's environmental fragility and changing climate intersect with the human-rights imperatives of its Indigenous people. Territorial claims drive the evolutionary application of the Law of the Sea. Traditional strategic rivals are now prodded by pragmatism and mutual self-interest to cooperate in the Arctic. At the same time, increased marine transport and newly accessible frontiers generate new pressures to increase military presence and capacity. And, of course, a concentration of nuclear weapons still hangs in Damoclean warning over the top of the world.

Former UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs Jayantha Dhanapala⁵⁰ has observed that, just as the Arctic is believed to have once formed a land bridge for the earliest human migration from Asia to the Americas, today it promises to build new and paradigm-shifting bridges across geostrategic divides and between continents. The potential for bringing nations and peoples together for peace and development is boundless, but so too is the potential for conflict.

The resurgent military activity is real. The years immediately following the Cold War saw a sharp decline followed by a lull in military/strategic attention to the Arctic, but now the region hosts increased nuclear submarine and bomber patrols, ballistic missile defence installations, and the build-up of conventional military capacity. Indigenous populations are taking wary note; strategic relations between the old Cold War rivals that now must share the Arctic cannot escape being jolted by far-off events; and some contemplate (while others fear) a growing security role for NATO in the Arctic. Russia is certainly expanding its military infrastructure in the region, with observers divided⁵¹ on whether the objective is primarily improved management and emergency response capacity related especially to the Northern Sea Route, or whether Moscow once again views the Arctic primarily through the lens of geopolitical competition.

The presence of nuclear arsenals and countermeasures in the region adds a dramatic element of both danger and urgency to shaping the future Arctic, and the idea of converting the Arctic into a zone without nuclear weapons has been a feature of both Cold War and post-Cold War hopes for solidifying the Arctic as a region of cooperation rather than conflict. However logical and compelling cooperation and denuclearization clearly are, the route to an Arctic nuclear-weapon-free zone will not be easy or quick; such a goal is unlikely to be achieved separately from major progress in the larger global pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The prospects are that Russia's Arctic nuclear arsenal will continue to parallel nuclear-weapons trends globally. As overall numbers decline, so will the number of warheads in the Arctic – and if the New START Treaty is not extended beyond its February 2021 expiry, the trend could reverse, and the Arctic would not be unaffected.

In the meantime, challenges like ballistic missile defence and NATO's superiority in conventional forces and persistent press eastward mean that even if New START is extended, "prospects for launching in the near future the next round of bilateral talks on future nuclear cuts are dim." That is the judgement of Russian academic Vladimir Rybachenkov,⁵² who not surprisingly concludes that the chances for movement toward an Arctic NWFZ "remain substantially reduced." He notes, perhaps warns, that Russian consideration of an Arctic NWFZ is inextricably linked to the global dynamics of nuclear disarmament.

In summary, the Arctic de-nuclearization agenda is clear: reduce nuclear risks and the role of nuclear weapons in the security policies of the United States and Russia by agreeing to make the Arctic an attack submarine exclusion zone; preserve the existing non-militarization of the surface of the Arctic Ocean through a formal treaty; create an Arctic institution with the mandate to pursue an ongoing security dialogue among Arctic states; devote priority diplomatic energy to fostering global strategic relations that will be conducive to further reductions in nuclear arsenals, including in the Arctic; and encourage NNWS in the Arctic to formalize and entrench their *de facto* status as a zone free of nuclear weapons.

Notes

¹ A slightly expanded version of this article appeared as: Ernie Regehr, "Cooperative Security and Denuclearizing the Arctic," *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 2/1 (2019): 274-96.

² Phil Stewart and Idrees Ali, "Pentagon warns on risk of Chinese submarines in Arctic," Reuters, 3 May 2019. <http://news.trust.org/item/20190502212503-a6q9n>

³ Hans M. Kristensen and Matt Korda, "Russian nuclear forces, 2019," *Nuclear Notebook, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 75/2 (2019): 73-84.

⁴ A February test took place at a more southerly test site at Kapustin Yar. See Kyle Mizokami, "Russia Conducts a New Test of its Nuclear-Powered Cruise Missile," *Popular Mechanics*, 6 February 2019. <https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/research/a26214314/russia-new-test-nuclear-powered-cruise-missile/>

⁵ Canadian Pugwash Group, "Statement on an Arctic Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone," Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, 24 August 2007. <https://pugwash.org/2007/08/24/statement-on-an-arctic-nuclear-weapon-free-zone>; Michael Wallace and Steven Staples, *Ridding the Arctic of Nuclear Weapons: A Task Long Overdue* (Toronto/Ottawa: Canadian Pugwash Group and Rideau Institute, March 2010). <https://assembly.nu.ca/library/Edocs/2010/001500-e.pdf>

⁶ John Scales Avery, "Towards an Arctic Nuclear Weapon Free Zone," Christiansborg Palace, 3 April 2013. <http://www.arnehansen.net/130403reportclosedMeeting.pdf>

⁷ EKOS Research Associates Inc., *Rethinking the Top of the World: Arctic Security Public Opinion Survey* (Ottawa: EKOS Research Associates, January 2011). <http://www.ekospolitics.com/articles/2011-01-25ArcticSecurityReport.pdf>. The results were: Northern Canada, 76 percent; Southern Canada, 78; Denmark, 74; Finland, 77; Iceland, 75; Norway, 82; Russia, 56; Sweden, 83; United States, 47.

⁸ Cindy Vestergaard, ed., *Conference on an Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, Copenhagen, 10-11 August, 2009* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2010).

⁹ Thomas S. Axworthy, "A Proposal for an Arctic Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone," InterAction Council, 2012. <https://www.interactioncouncil.org/publications/proposal-arctic-nuclear-weapon-free-zone>; J. Adele Buckley, "An Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone: Circumpolar Non-Nuclear Weapons States Must Originate Negotiations," *Michigan State International Law Review* 22/1 (2013); Vestergaard, *Conference on an Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone*; Jan Prawitz, "The Arctic: Top of the World to be Nuclear-Weapon-Free," *Disarmament*

Forum 2/2011, UNIDIR (2011); Wallace and Staples, *Ridding the Arctic of Nuclear Weapons*.

¹⁰ "Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) At a Glance," Arms Control Association, July 2017. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/nwfz>

¹¹ Tlatelolco, 33 countries; Rarotonga, 13; Pelindaba, 52 (38 signed and ratified and 16 signed but not yet ratified); Bangkok, ten; Central Asia, five; Mongolia, one.

¹² Axworthy, "A Proposal for an Arctic Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone."

¹³ Charles Digges, "Russia Updates Maps of Radioactive Debris Sunk in Arctic," *The Maritime Executive*, 15 October 2018. <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/russia-updates-maps-of-radioactive-debris-sunk-in-arctic>

¹⁴ Buckley, "An Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone."

¹⁵ Prawitz, "The Arctic."

¹⁶ Prawitz, "The Arctic."

¹⁷ Axworthy, "A Proposal for an Arctic Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone."

¹⁸ Jan Prawitz, "A Nuclear Weapon Free Arctic: Arms Control 'On the Rocks,'" in *Conference on an Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone*, edited by Vestergaard.

¹⁹ "U.S. Negative Security Assurances at a Glance," Arms Control Association, March 2018. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/negsec>

²⁰ "Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (CAN-WFZ)," Nuclear Threat Initiative, 29 March 2019. <https://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/central-asia-nuclear-weapon-free-zone-canwz>

²¹ Prawitz, "A Nuclear Weapon Free Arctic."

²² Prawitz, "A Nuclear Weapon Free Arctic."

²³ Buckley, "An Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone."

²⁴ Ramesh Thakur, "Stepping Stones to a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World," in *Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones*, edited by Ramesh Thakur (London/New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's Press, 1998), 19.

²⁵ Michael Hamel-Green, "Existing Regional Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones: Precedents that could inform the Development of an Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone," in *Conference on an Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone*, edited by Vestergaard.

²⁶ Thakur, "Stepping Stones to a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World," 16-17.

²⁷ Prawitz, "The Arctic."

²⁸ These definitions are taken from Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the problem of regional order*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), 18-21. Acharya's definition is, of course, an elaboration of Karl Deutch's foundational discussion of "security communities."

²⁹ Arctic Ocean Conference, "The Ilulissat Declaration," 28 May 2008.

<https://www.arctic-report.net/en/product/859>

³⁰ Pavel Devyatkin, "Russia's Arctic Strategy: Military and Security (Part II)," The Arctic Institute, Center for Circumpolar Security Studies, 13 February 2018.

<https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/russias-arctic-military-and-security-part-two/>. See the Arctic Institute's four-part series on "Russia's Arctic Strategy" at <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/russias-arctic-strategy-aimed-conflict-cooperation-part-one>. Part II focuses on the military and security.

³¹ United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Arctic Planning: Navy Report to Congress Aligns with Current Assessments of Arctic Threat Levels and Capabilities Required to Execute DOD's Strategy*, Report GAO-19-42 (Washington: United States Government Accountability Office, November 2018). <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/695312.pdf>

³² GAO, *Arctic Planning*.

³³ Wilson Center, "The Arctic: In the Face of Change, an Ocean of Cooperation," *New Security Beat*, 28 September 2017. <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2017/09/arctic-face-change-ocean-cooperation>

³⁴ Heather Exner-Pirot, "Why governance of the North needs to go beyond the Arctic Council," OpenCanada.org, 14 October 2016. <https://www.opencanada.org/features/why-governance-north-needs-go-beyond-arctic-council>

³⁵ Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia*, 18-21.

³⁶ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Russian Nuclear Forces, 2014," *Nuclear Notebook, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 70/2 (2014).

³⁷ Kristian Åtland, "Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic," *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 43/3 (September 2008): 289-311.

³⁸ Ron Purver, "The Control of Strategic Anti-Submarine Warfare," *International Journal* 38/3 (Summer 1983): 409-31.

³⁹ Anatoli Diakov and Frank von Hippel, *Challenges and Opportunities for Russia-U.S. Nuclear Arms Control* (New York/Washington: The Century Foundation, 2009), 15-16. <https://www.armscontrol.ru/pubs/en/Diakov-Hippel-Challenges.pdf>

⁴⁰ Megan Eckstein, "Navy Wants to Use Virginia Payload Module to Deploy New Missiles, UUVs," US Naval Institute News, 14 November 2018. <https://news.usni.org/2018/11/14/navy-looking-use-virginia-payload-module-deploy-new-missiles-uuv>

⁴¹ Franklyn Griffiths, "A Northern Foreign Policy," *Wellesley Papers* 7 (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1979), 61.

⁴² This is only largely the case because the Pelindaba Treaty in fact helped to confirm the denuclearization that took place in Africa when South Africa divested itself of nuclear weapons, and in other regions, like Tlatelolco, when states with nuclear weapons programs agreed to halt them and the NWFZ solidified that posture into the future.

⁴³ Michael Byers, *International Law and the Arctic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 256-57.

⁴⁴ "European Parliament calls for sanctuary around North Pole area," *Nunatsiaq News*, 13 March 2014. <http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674/european-parliament-calls-for-protection-of-high-arctic>

⁴⁵ Inuit Circumpolar Conference, "ICC Resolution on a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone," 1983. <http://www.arcticnwfz.ca/documents/I%20N%20U%20I%20T%20CIRCUMPOLAR%20RES%20ON%20nwfz%201983.pdf>

⁴⁶ Thomas S. Axworthy explored such a zone in an address to Canadian Pugwash, 26 October 2012: "Revisiting the Hiroshima Declaration: Can a Nordic-Canadian Nuclear-weapon-free Zone Propel the Arctic to Become a Permanent Zone of Peace?" InterAction Council, 26 October 2012. <https://www.interactioncouncil.org/publications/revisting-hiroshima-declaration>

⁴⁷ Torbjørn Graff Hugo, "An Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone: A Norwegian Perspective," in *Conference on an Arctic Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone*, edited by Vestergaard.

⁴⁸ Byers, *International Law and the Arctic*, 160.

⁴⁹ A region, or territory, in the Canadian Arctic.

⁵⁰ Jayantha Dhanapala, "The Arctic as a bridge," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 4 February 2013. <https://thebulletin.org/2013/02/the-arctic-as-a-bridge>

⁵¹ A good example being testimony found in the recent report of the Canadian House of Commons, *Nation-Building at Home, Vigilance Beyond: Preparing for the Coming Decades in the Arctic - Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development*, April 2019, 42nd Parliament, 1st Session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FAAE/Reports/RP10411277/faaerp24/faaerp24-e.pdf>

⁵² Vladimir Rybachenkov, "An Arctic Nuclear Weapons Free Zone – A View from Russia," Center for Arms Control, Energy, and Environmental Studies, Moscow, Russia, 2012. <https://www.armscontrol.ru/pubs/Arctic%20Nuclear%20Weapons%20Free%20Zone.pdf>

9 Re-visiting Missile Defence Cooperation

January 8, 2015

Recent reporting on Russia's new military doctrine accorded banner coverage to the Kremlin's designation of NATO as its "number one threat,"¹ but very few news stories acknowledged the new doctrine's statement of Russian openness to cooperation on missile defence.² Arctic missile defence installations may not figure prominently in the current deep strains in NATO/Russian relations, but East/West relations are unlikely to reach any sustainable equilibrium without some resolution of the missile defence question generally, so any opening on that front deserves attention.

American and NATO ballistic missile defence (BMD) programs have from their earliest days bedevilled relations with Russia. As a diminished military power, Russia assigns high strategic importance to its nuclear deterrent and looks warily upon any development that it thinks might undermine its nuclear retaliatory capability. The fact that no American or NATO BMD system has either the technical competence or the sheer numbers to pose any credible threat to Russia's deterrent is not really the point. Left unchecked, argue President Vladimir Putin and his generals, western BMD could at some point be rapidly expanded to the point that it would become a threat. At the very least, American/NATO BMD does not put Moscow into a mood to contemplate further cuts to its nuclear arsenal.

Indeed, in their year-end musings, Russian military leaders have been declaring that rebuilding strategic nuclear forces – submarines, intercontinental missiles, long-range strategic bombers – will be a priority in 2015,³ and they have also been touting Russia's own development of missile defence systems analogous to the US/NATO Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system and the North American US ground-based midcourse defence system with its Arctic-based interceptors.⁴

Just as BMD has from its earliest origins raised concerns about its destabilizing effects, it has all along also been accompanied by ideas and proposals for Russian/United States cooperation on missile defence as a way

of mitigating those effects. Even Ronald Reagan's 1980s Strategic Defense Initiative included a general offer to work with the then Soviet Union for a joint system.⁵ The Russian news agency TASS describes the current Russian offer to cooperate as a willingness to include, as part of its deterrent and conflict prevention strategies, the "creation of mechanisms of mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral cooperation in counteracting possible missile threats, including, if necessary, creation of joint missile defense systems if Russia has equal participation in these projects."⁶ Pledges of cooperation set aside the more fundamental question of whether BMD can ever be made to work, but such pledges are intended to, and do, address the political problem of strategic destabilization.

The premise of US/NATO/Russian cooperation on missile defence is the joint development and management of a non-discriminatory system that would be tasked with providing protection from rogue state missile launches, without affecting US/NATO/Russian strategic forces and their mutual deterrence posture. Of course, it is especially important to remember that the focus on the so-called rogue state missile threat involves the expenditure of indecent sums of money, all borrowed, on a defence system that remains more theoretical than practical against a threat that too is much more theoretical than actual.

As it turns out, the repeated declarations of openness to cooperation have also been more theory than practice. Most recently, the US Ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul, has said cooperation in missile defence is still possible with Russia.⁷ The NATO summit in Lisbon in 2010 invited missile defence participation from Russia. In 2011 Putin created a working group within the Kremlin to foster missile defence cooperation with NATO, and in 2012 he appointed a special envoy for missile defence discussions with NATO. But in late 2013 both were rescinded, while cooperation with Belarus and Kazakhstan on air defence and missile defence were upgraded.⁸

The two sides have rather different views of what cooperation means. Russia envisions the establishment of two systems that would be joined together by a unified command and control centre. NATO rejects this model on the grounds that it would be transferring part of its responsibility for protecting elements of NATO territory to a state that is not within NATO. Hence, NATO envisions cooperation as including shared intelligence and early warning data and other elements of the system's infrastructure while maintaining separate chains of command on the operational side. NATO argues that such an arrangement would leave NATO and Russia each in charge of operations for their own territory.

Russia has also consistently asked for legal commitments from the US and NATO that their BMD operations would not be directed toward Russian strategic deterrent forces, which the US and NATO have just as consistently rejected, offering instead political rather than legally binding guarantees.⁹

Given all of these differences and the realities of current relations, it would take a very high calibre of optimism to define this as a moment of opportunity for renewed cooperation, even at the most minimal levels of cooperation that could help to avoid the most obvious and brazen provocations of strategic missile defence. But perhaps the two Russian and American statements – the new doctrine’s openness to cooperation and the American Ambassador’s affirmation that cooperation is still possible – can at least be taken as evidence that predictions of the death of cooperation are still premature.

In the meantime, missile defence ambitions and programs seem to be in an all-systems-go mode, in Russia as in the US and NATO. Further deployments in the Arctic region are still on the American books, with plans to add 14 new interceptors in Alaska, bringing the total to 40 from 26 (and with another four in California).

As we have argued here before,¹⁰ US-Russian and US-Chinese¹¹ tensions over BMD do not make it easier for them to cooperate in other contexts, such as Syria and Ukraine, and it would be unrealistic to assume that BMD-generated disagreements do not also at some level undermine cooperation in the Arctic. Direct linkages are unlikely and would not be helpful, but, as a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson told reporters in Beijing in response to the announcements that additional interceptors were to be deployed in Alaska: “Strengthening anti-missile deployments and military alliances can only deepen antagonism and will be of no help to solving problems.”¹² He was not referring to the Arctic, of course, but there is no reason to believe that the Arctic would somehow be exempt from the effects of such antagonisms.

The pursuit of security cooperation in the Arctic is at the very least not bolstered by current BMD dynamics. It is impossible to expect full cooperation within the context of an Arctic security community when those same states are at loggerheads on other issues in other regions of the globe (especially when much of the hardware at the heart of those disagreements – interceptors in Alaska, radars in Alaska and Greenland, and nuclear weapons in Russia – are based in the Arctic).

Notes

- ¹ Vladimir Isachenkov, "New Russian military doctrine names NATO as No. 1 threat," *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 December 2014. <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Latest-News-Wires/2014/1227/New-Russian-military-doctrine-names-NATO-as-No.-1-threat>; Agence France-Press, "New Russian Military Doctrine Labels NATO as Main Threat," *Defense News*, 28 December 2014. <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2014/12/28/new-russian-military-doctrine-labels-nato-as-main-threat/>
- ² "Russia's new military doctrine allows creation of joint missile defense systems," TASS Russian News Agency, 26 December 2014. <https://tass.com/russia/769512>
- ³ "Strategic nuclear force to become Defence Ministry's priority 2015 – General Staff," TASS Russian News Agency, 29 December 2014. <http://itar-tass.com/en/world>
- ⁴ Esther Tanquintic-Misa, "Russia Develops US-Like Ballistic GMD, THAAD Missile Defense Systems; Fears US' Cruise Missile Rearmament Program," *International Business News*, 9 December 2014. <http://au.ibtimes.com>; "Russia is developing a missile defense system similar to the United States'....," Sputnik News, 8 December 2014. <http://sputniknews.com>
- ⁵ "At the October 1986 Reykjavik summit with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Reagan suggested that both countries abandon "mutual assured destruction" by agreeing to eliminate all offensive ballistic missiles within 10 years while researching and jointly developing strategic missile defenses." Daryl G. Kimball, "Why Sarah Palin Is Wrong About Missile Defense Cooperation with Russia," Arms Control NOW - The blog of the Arms Control Association, 10 June 2011. <http://armscontrolnow.org/2011/06/10/why-sarah-palin-is-wrong-about-missile-defense-cooperation-with-russia/>
- ⁶ "Russia's new military doctrine allows creation of joint missile defense."
- ⁷ "U.S. Missile defense cooperation with Russia still possible," TASS Russian News Agency, 25 December 2014. <http://itar-tass.com/en/world>
- ⁸ "Putin Dissolves Task Force for Missile Defence Cooperation with NATO," Nuclear Threat Initiative, 31 October 2013. <https://www.nti.org/gsn/article/russia-moving-deepen-air-defense-ties-ex-soviet-republics/>
- ⁹ Azriel Bermant, *The Russian and Iranian Missile Threats: Implications for NATO Missile Defense*, Memorandum No. 143 (Tel Aviv: The Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv University, November 2014).
- ¹⁰ Ernie Regehr, "Missile Defence and the Arctic," The Simons Foundation, 4 June 2013. <http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/highlights/missile-defence-and-arctic>

¹¹ Part of the US interest is to extend missile defence in response to North Korea so that China is increasingly uncomfortable with it and thus may be more open to pressuring North Korea to alter its behaviour to prevent provoking BMD deployments that impinge upon China. "The new deployment is also intended to send a signal to China, which tried but failed to block the more recent nuclear test, to rein in the North. 'We want to make it clear that there's a price to be paid for letting the North Koreans stay on the current path,' a senior official said Friday." Thom Shanker, David E. Sanger, and Martin Fackler, "U.S. Is Bolstering Missile Defense to Deter North Korea," *New York Times*, 15 March 2013.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/16/world/asia/us-to-bolster-missile-defense-against-north-korea.html?pagewanted=all>

¹² Tom Z. Collina, "Pentagon Shifts Gears on Missile Defense," Arms Control Association, April 2013. http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2013_04/Pentagon-Shifts-Gears-on-Missile-Defense

10 The “Rogue” Missile Threat: Getting from BMD to NPT

December 15, 2015

Canadians might soon be asking just where George W. Bush is when we really need him. He used to be a key antidote to Canadian temptations to embrace North American ballistic missile defence (BMD). Canada’s 2005 rejection of BMD was driven largely by anticipated public reaction to Canada signing on to a system championed by a Bush Administration that was, to understate it, little loved in Canada and that had especially offended disarmament advocates with its trashing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty¹ and its hostility toward arms control generally. Now, however, with the Bush effect waning, the allure of a Canadian BMD role seems to be waxing. So, well into the final quarter of the still appreciated Administration of Barack Obama, and with a new and less polarizing but Washington-friendly government in Ottawa, BMD supporters in Canada see a new opportunity to pursue BMD involvement without generating a major backlash. What has not changed, though, is the basic reality that, even if its technology improves, BMD will not solve the rogue state missile problem. That is because the North Korean missile threat is finally a non-proliferation, not a defence, challenge.

Canada’s Reviving BMD Ambitions

In May of 2014 two former Canadian Liberal Defence Ministers told an Ottawa Senate Committee that it was getting to be the right time for Canada to finally join BMD. They argued that if the US pursues continental systems that affect Canadian security – they put it more positively as “the development of ... systems that are designed to protect North America as a whole” – Canada is better off participating.² In June 2014 Prime Minister Stephen Harper told the Group of Seven gathering in Brussels that while Canada had not changed its position on BMD – that is, it was still not buying into the North American edition of BMD – his government was aware of

changing circumstances and regularly considered whether a change on BMD might serve Canadian security interests.³

Also in June, the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence issued a report directly focused on “Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence.” To no one’s surprise, it was “unanimous in recommending that the Government of Canada enter into an agreement with the United States to participate as a partner in ballistic missile defence.”⁴

In August of 2015, Mr. Harper again indicated some openness to Canada joining the US in continental BMD if the Conservatives were re-elected to government, but he insisted that he “would only give the green light to ballistic missile defence if [the government] felt Canada’s security was in jeopardy.”⁵

The *Ottawa Citizen* reported in September 2015 that Canada, with some encouragement from the Pentagon, was beginning to explore replacing the radars of the Arctic-based North Warning System (NWS) with “continental surveillance radars” that would track ships and aircraft, but also ballistic missiles⁶ – suggesting a direct Canadian role in BMD, first in researching the feasibility of enhanced air and space surveillance facilities in the Canadian North, and later in BMD-related deployments on Canadian territory. The Department of National Defence (DND) anticipates that existing NWS radars will require replacement in about a decade and research is now being undertaken through Defence Research and Development Canada on new multi-purpose radars.

Most recently, a report by the University of Ottawa’s Centre for International Policy Studies, authored by a working group of academics and former officials, has encouraged the new Liberal Government to reconsider Canada’s hitherto rejection of BMD. The paper recommends that Canada “seek to formally join the United States’ ballistic missile defence system” and to locate the command and control within NORAD in order to enhance the status of NORAD and to try to ensure its future.⁷ At the launch event for the report, the authors argued that “it’s better to be inside the room than outside the room when others make decisions about our security.” The point was also made that since all other NATO partners are in a BMD system of some kind – the Europeans supporting the NATO BMD – Canada should be part of the North American version.

Where Aspirations Trump Competence

Tellingly, the case for Canada joining BMD is rarely argued on the merits of the system. The Senate Committee report in fact briefly acknowledges that the effectiveness of strategic range or mid-course

interception BMD is still very much in question. The Senate report recalls one expert witness confirming that the “most problematic” element of America’s worldwide system is the strategic-range BMD – the part designed to intercept intercontinental missiles in mid-course (in space, after the warhead has separated from the missile) while *en route* to North America. The radar system, the expert told the Committee, needs to be upgraded and the “kill-vehicle” (the interceptor payload that is intended to collide with the incoming warhead) needs to be redesigned. US Lieutenant General (retired) Robert Gard, Chairman of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Washington and a BMD critic, told the Senate that the current “kill vehicle” is incapable of discriminating between an incoming warhead and the decoys that would accompany it, adding that “without this discrimination capability, the system will never offer reliable protection.”

Even Pentagon missile defence advocates, in their most optimistic assessments of the system’s prowess, cannot avoid acknowledging the inadequacies of the radars and kill vehicles.⁸

Philip Coyle, another well-known US critic of BMD and former Assistant Secretary of Defense and Director of Operational Test and Evaluation at the Pentagon, gave evidence of the growing rate of failure in the US BMD test program. Since 1999, he said in March 2014, half of the tests had been deemed successful, but since 2002 that record had fallen to one-third, and since 2008 only one of the four flight tests managed to hit its target – furthermore, none of the tests were conducted under real world conditions.

But ballistic missile defence aspirations have long trumped the system’s actual competence. So when Canadians promote joining BMD, they tend not to argue that it actually works as advertised, but focus instead on US-Canadian relations and on gaining access to this section of the continental security table. Prime Minister Harper at least insisted that any Canadian decision on BMD would be based on a perceived need to reduce vulnerability – a context in which it is possible to debate the nature and extent of the vulnerability (the threat) and, especially, the extent to which BMD could realistically reduce that vulnerability.

BMD and Managing Canada-US Security Relations

But the brief reference to BMD in the University of Ottawa study, the most recent call for Canada to join BMD, makes no reference to Canadian security needs, focusing instead on the importance of getting a seat at the BMD table.

That focus seems to ignore the many Canada-US security tables at which Canada is already present – NORAD, the Military Cooperation Committee, the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, the 80 treaty-level agreements, the more than 250 memoranda of understanding, and the 145 bilateral forums on defence issues between the two countries.⁹

Former Canadian Defence Minister Bill Graham told the Senate Committee that “participating in BMD would help preserve NORAD and Canada’s overall security relationship with the United States.” But it does seem odd to insist that NORAD’s long-term preservation is linked to its peripheral role in BMD, when the actual day-to-day work of NORAD operations is all about air defence. Monitoring the approaches to North American air space, as well as monitoring internal air space to guard against and respond to the kinds of hijackings that were featured in 9/11, is the core task of NORAD. It is an essential task valued by both countries – and presumably it is the relevance and importance of its core task that will preserve NORAD in the long run. Detection of ballistic missiles is nominally a NORAD function, but it is based entirely on US assets without NORAD being central to it.

There is logic in the claim that, without joining BMD, Canada remains absent from the table at which it is decided precisely how attempted interceptions are to be managed in the face of direct attack, but that hardly means that BMD is critical to Canada’s overall security relationship with the United States. There is clearly not a paucity of tables at which Canada can discuss the many facets of the Canada-US security relationship, including BMD.

The larger Canadian objective ought to be to bring BMD to a larger table at which cooperative, not competitive, development might become the model. A Canadian seat at any table with just two chairs, when the other one is occupied by a singular global power, does not necessarily afford Canada a lot of influence. Had Canada been at an explicitly American BMD table this past decade, how would the program’s development have changed? Would Canadians have been safer? Canada has traditionally understood that as important as bilateral security forums with the United States are, they alone will not adequately serve Canada’s interests – it also takes a range of multilateral tables that allow for cooperation with other like-minded states to pursue common interests and to collectively constrain the powerful in the exercise of their presumed prerogatives. Through multilateral forums there is an opportunity to influence the environment in which the North American security table is set – in this case, to create a greater sense of

urgency in support of global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament objectives over alliance-based defences as a means of responding to the North Korean threat.

BMD and the Strategic Environment

The strategic environment in which North American ballistic missile defence is pursued is now, in the words of former US Defense Secretary William Perry, on the “brink of a new nuclear arms race.”¹⁰ The risk of such a race reflects the obviously deteriorating relationship between the US and Russia,¹¹ and there is no denying that BMD is one contributing factor to that deterioration.

It is true, as was argued before the Senate Committee, that mid-course BMD as now configured does not pose an actual threat to Russian and Chinese deterrent forces, as they claim it does. As currently deployed, strategic BMD offers a potential capability against an isolated attack from a rogue state that, so far, also remains a potential, not an actual, threat, or from an accidental launch from an established nuclear arsenal.

At the same time, Russia makes the understandable counterargument that if BMD technology were to become reliable, the Americans could abandon the limits put on current deployments and move instead to rapidly build up their interception forces to the point that they could challenge the Russian deterrent. For China, with its much smaller force of strategic-range missiles, that point is even more compelling. And thus, if China’s leaders became convinced that the US missile defence system could be quickly expanded to neutralize their deterrent, they might well move to expand their offensive forces – setting off a classic defence-offence arms race.¹² Russia also argues that the regional ballistic missile defence systems that deploy US interceptors in Europe and North Asian waters leave it little choice but to pursue substantial modernization of its deterrent forces – including the development of new missiles, bombers, and submarines.

Russia has sought other measures to reduce the risks they see in US BMD: notably “legal guarantees that [US] interceptors will not target Russia’s strategic missiles,” similar assurances that European missile defence will not neutralize Russia’s deterrent, and joint NATO/Russian control over the launch of interceptors (all of which are said by the US, after all, to be focused only on North Korea’s potential missile attacks, protection from which should be a shared Russian/NATO interest). The US has rejected all such proposals.¹³

There is little doubt that ballistic missile defence in both its strategic and regional modes (the systems that go beyond war theatre defences against conventionally-armed short-range missiles) makes nuclear arms control politically more difficult. As a *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* analysis concludes, “an open-ended US commitment to ballistic missile defence will hinder the global disarmament process and perhaps even trigger a renewed nuclear arms race.”¹⁴ The Committee acknowledges this danger, but still concludes that, “while it is true that the sensitivities of Russia and China regarding BMD should be taken into account, development of missile defences against rogue states is too pressing a matter to be held hostage to these two countries.”

That amounts to a truly astonishing trade-off. The senators actually seem to be insisting that relations with Russia, one of the two largest nuclear powers (and an Arctic partner), and with China, the nuclear power with the most potential (the greatest risk) for rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal in response to a further deterioration of the strategic environment, are worth sacrificing for a BMD response to a still far from mature threat with still far from mature technology. At least one witness, Colin Robertson, thought it sensible to try to mitigate the negative impact on relations with Russia by inviting the Kremlin to be part of a collective BMD effort. Canada and the US are both partners with Russia in the Arctic and should want to respect the spirit of the Ilulissat Declaration, which insists that the Arctic is not a competitive military environment but one in which maritime domain awareness, search and rescue, and emergency response operations all benefit from regional cooperation. The only way to mitigate the negative political impact of BMD deployments on the strategic environment is for there to be legally binding limits on missile defence deployments, and for missile defence programs that do go forward to become overtly cooperative efforts, from research and development to deployment, with Russia and China at least at any ballistic missile defence table that Canada might join.

The senators did not take up the suggestion of cooperation with Russia, but the new Government of Canada should insist that the coming upgrade of the North Warning System (NWS), an Arctic-based project, should reflect the letter as well as the spirit of Ilulissat. The NWS is a string of radars from Alaska, across Canada’s north to Labrador, that could be conceived as part of a pan-Arctic, rather than just a North American, enterprise to enhance mutual situation awareness and cooperation in the region.

North Korea: A Non-Proliferation, Not Defence, Problem

The Senate Committee report gives prominent, and appropriate, emphasis to the emerging North Korean nuclear-armed missile threat. It cites North Korea's persistent efforts to develop an intercontinental-range ballistic missile, its work on nuclear warhead miniaturization, and its disruptive actions within the North Asia region: "North Korea has demonstrated a willingness to defy UN Security Council resolutions, to attack its neighbors, to threaten to attack North America, and to develop a means to make good on its threats using nuclear-armed ballistic missiles."

On Iran, the Senate Committee is less certain about the threat, concluding that "possibly" Iran's "capability and intent are combining to form a threat to Canada and the United States that today cannot be as readily dismissed as in 2005." In fact, the Iranian threat has declined markedly since 2005. The Senate report was written in 2014 before the July 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, but by then prospects for preventing a direct Iranian nuclear threat were actually much further advanced than they were in 2005.

While the extent and imminence of the North Korean threat are frequently overstated, it is still safe to assume that most Canadians would welcome a capacity to intercept and destroy any incoming missile that North Korea might choose to send our way (should it actually acquire that capacity). And few would insist that Canada should not lend a helping hand in developing such a defence if it possibly could. But it does not follow that pursuing such a capacity ought therefore to become the priority. At this moment the North Korean threat is potential, not imminent, and there are other much more important and durable responses to that potential threat that should have priority.

North Korea is first and foremost a proliferation challenge, not a defence problem. There is little doubt that North Korea, if left to its own devices, will continue pursuing the development of an intercontinental-range ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead that could become a more imminent threat. But why leave Pyongyang to its own devices? It remains in flagrant violation of its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations (the fact it has withdrawn from the treaty does not absolve it from the violations committed while still a member) and in violation of firm commitments it made in earlier rounds of the Six-Party talks (namely, to end its nuclear weapons program and to rejoin the NPT).¹⁵

Canada needs to reassert the importance of responding to rogue state nuclear-armed missile threats through the NPT and its International Atomic

Energy Agency verification mechanisms. Indeed, the non-proliferation architecture linked to the NPT, a proven focus of non-proliferation and prevention strategies (of its 185 non-nuclear-weapon state members, North Korea is the only one that has violated the treaty to the extent of acquiring a nuclear weapon), needs to become the top priority for addressing the North Korean challenge. Another important and established avenue that obviously needs to be maintained is preventing the spread of medium- and strategic-range ballistic missile technologies through the Missile Technology Control Regime.

But the key is nuclear non-proliferation – preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and reversing the spread where it has already happened. And the good news is that it is proving to be a very successful strategy – Iran being the case in point. Iran remains a challenge, and it is still developing its ballistic missile capabilities, but it has been the international community's focused program that has been able to ensure that Iran does not now pursue and will not acquire a nuclear weapon. At the moment that prevention strategy is on a positive trajectory and there is now no Iranian nuclear missile threat to Europe or North America, and there will not be one in the foreseeable future. It is thus no longer possible to credibly argue that either European or North American missile defence are warranted by the Iranian threat.

The imperative now is to vigorously apply the same strategy to North Korea. As already noted, North Korea stands in direct violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and commitments made under the Six-Party talks. Why are these violations not the focus of heightened diplomacy? The Six-Party talks¹⁶ need to be renewed and North Korea needs to be brought back into compliance with the NPT. It is right to call these major challenges, but allowing the emerging North Korean nuclear missile threat to stand and mature, with BMD our primary, or only, response, would be a failure of catastrophic proportions. In such an eventuality, global powers with the means, along with a few of their choice friends, might mount a credible, though far from certain, defence against Pyongyang's missiles, while the rest of the world stayed unprotected and left to watch as proliferation pressures mounted and other rogue, and not so rogue, states sought to follow North Korea's example.

It is not an overstatement to say that if our response to North Korea remains focused on ballistic missile defence, rather than on dismantling its nuclear weapons and weapons program, nuclear disarmament will have been dealt a fatal blow. What appetite for nuclear disarmament will there be

among the established nuclear powers (there are now eight of them¹⁷) if the international community comes to accept indefinitely a nuclear-armed North Korea? If our collective response to a threatening North Korea is confined to BMD systems, no matter how effective they might yet become, the cost will be a shattering loss of confidence in the global non-proliferation system. If the non-proliferation system cannot effectively deal with a state as poor, dysfunctional, and marginalized as North Korea, who will be prepared to rely on it?

The emerging North Korean threat must be pursued with diligence and urgency, but what is at stake cannot be rescued by trying to build a bigger and better ballistic missile defence system. Ignoring diplomacy, or making it a secondary effort, is already acquiescing to a permanently nuclearized, hence unstable and vulnerable, international order. Ballistic missile defence is not a rational response to the nuclear threat from potential rogue states. Prevention is the only rational response.

Canada has a vital role to play in collaboration with other like-minded states, both in promoting limits on missile defence in the interests of nuclear disarmament and strategic stability, and in implementing non-proliferation and prevention strategies against rogue nuclear powers. That is where the energy and ambition of the new government in Ottawa needs to be directed.

Notes

¹ A bilateral treaty between the US and the Soviet Union, it was an agreement signed in 1972 to severely limit ballistic missile defence and was supported by then Prime Minister Trudeau. The Bush Administration withdrew from it in 2002.

² Steven Chase, "Harper won't rule out Canada joining U.S. missile defence program," *Globe and Mail*, 5 June 2014. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-wont-rule-out-canada-joining-us-missile-defence-program/article19001119/>

³ Chase, "Harper won't rule out Canada joining U.S. missile defence program."

⁴ "Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence: Responding to the evolving threat," The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, The Honourable Daniel Lang, Chair, The Honourable Romeo A. Dallaire, Deputy Chair, June 2014. <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/412/secdrms/01jun14/home-e.htm>. Following references to the Senate Committee or the Senate report are references to this report.

⁵ Canadian Press, "Harper Leaves Door Open For Canada To Join Ballistic Missile Defence Program," *Huffington Post*, 14 August 2015.

https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/08/14/campaign-pledge-would-cost-14-million-to-pave-roadway-in-northwest-territories_n_7988604.html

⁶ David Pugliese, "Canada examining contribution to US missile defence in Arctic," *Ottawa Citizen*, 17 September 2015. <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/canada-examining-contribution-to-u-s-missile-defence-in-arctic>

⁷ Rob McRae, James R. Mitchell, Stuart A. Beare, Stéfanie von Hlatky, and Elinor Sloan, *Canada's International Security and Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Centre for International Policy Studies, University of Ottawa, November 2015). https://www.cips-cepi.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CIPS-International-security-defence-report_EN_embargoed.pdf

⁸ Major-General Francis Mahon, "Commentary: On Target with Missile Defense," *Defense News*, 27 April 2015. <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2015/04/27/commentary-on-target-with-missile-defense/>

⁹ From a 2008 backgrounder for Parliament: Maureen Shields, "Canada and the United States: The bilateral defence relationship," International Affairs, Trade and Finance Division, 2008. http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/research/publications/prb0834_09-e.htm

¹⁰ Aaron Mehta, "Former SecDef Perry: US on 'Brink' of New Nuclear Arms Race," *Defense News*, 3 December 2015. <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/2015/12/03/former-secdef-perry-us-brink-new-nuclear-arms-race/76721640/>

¹¹ Mehta, "Former SecDef Perry."

¹² Wu Riqiang, "No stability without limits on missile defense," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 24 September 2014. https://thebulletin.org/roundtable_entry/no-stability-without-limits-on-missile-defense/

¹³ Wu, "No stability without limits on missile defense."

¹⁴ Wu, "No stability without limits on missile defense."

¹⁵ China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea, and the United States.

¹⁶ Angela Stanzel, "China urges a reboot of Six Party Talks," *Al Jazeera*, 13 October 2015. <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/10/china-urges-reboot-party-talks-151008074746705.html>

¹⁷ China, France, India, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, plus Israel, which continues to neither confirm nor deny its nuclear arsenal.

11

Cruise Missiles: When Defence Is Not an Option

March 28, 2018

Cruise missiles recently made the front pages when President Vladimir Putin marshalled impressive audiovisuals to hype Russian strides in developing new and sinister military technologies. Cruise missiles were included but concerns regarding them did not just arrive with his speech. They have figured prominently, for just one example, in the current Canadian and American intention to replace the Arctic-based North Warning System.¹ Cruise missiles pose a two-fold challenge: the unavoidable reality that there is no credible defence against long-range nuclear-armed cruise missiles; and the related and equally inescapable reality that the only way to manage them in the long term is through internationally negotiated control agreements. The latter challenge is obviously made all the more daunting by a current political climate that is less than conducive to anything quite that rational.

The Threat

Cruise missiles first made their mark in World War II, and they are still spawning new bouts of anxiety. They are still essentially pilotless, air-breathing, flying bombs, but the V-1 buzz bombs of the German Luftwaffe have given way to variants that can carry nuclear weapons, fly largely undetectable² for thousands of kilometres, and then strike within feet of the intended target. They can be launched virtually from anywhere – from land, surface ships, submarines, or aircraft. And now military planners are pursuing models intended to reach supersonic and hypersonic speeds. Mr. Putin has promised a nuclear-powered, indefinite-range version capable of out-maneuvring any US defences,³ while President Donald Trump has also proposed a new nuclear-armed cruise missile to support a nuclear posture that is shifting toward more “flexible” nuclear options.⁴

Russia’s Arctic exercises around the Kola Peninsula and the Barents Sea last fall featured multiple cruise missile firings from surface ships,

submarines, and land launchers.⁵ The American Coast Guard is reportedly mulling plans to include cruise missile launchers on a proposed fleet of three heavy icebreakers.⁶

And cruise missiles also figure into American charges that Russia is in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, a bilateral US-USSR treaty which entered into force in 1988 and banned all land-based missiles, including ground-launched cruise missiles, with a range between 500 and 5,500 kms. A 2014 report by the Obama Administration concluded that Russia was in violation of its obligations under the INF,⁷ and the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review charges that Russia is engaged in the “production, possession, and flight testing of a ground-launched cruise missile” within the prohibited range.⁸ Russia in turn makes the credible claim that the US launcher system for the NATO ballistic missile defence system, deployed in Romania, and soon in Poland, also has the capacity to launch missiles within the range banned by the INF Treaty.⁹ These claims and counter-claims put the Treaty in jeopardy, and, as the Brookings Institution’s Steven Pifer argues, if the INF differences are not resolved and the Treaty preserved, the prospects for renewal of the New START Treaty in 2021 become increasingly bleak [the US withdrew from the INF in 2019].¹⁰

Basic cruise missile technology (complicated guidance systems and necessarily small propulsion plants) is also spreading - although, for now, relatively few states have deployed them. According to the 2017 report of the Pentagon’s Defense Intelligence Ballistic Missile Analysis Committee, the US, Russia, China, and Iran have the capacity to deploy long-range cruise missiles. These same countries, plus France, Germany, Sweden, Spain, South Korea, India, Israel, Pakistan, Taiwan, the United Arab Emirates, and the UK, all have the capacity to launch short-range (roughly up to 400 kms) versions.¹¹

Homeland Defence Is Not an Option

In the 2016 North American Vigilant Shield exercise, involving Canadian and American forces through NORAD, participating US National Guard forces operated out of Canadian Forces Base North Bay and reportedly used Boeing Avenger surface-to-air missiles intended to shoot down cruise missiles at short range.¹² But that is not evidence of any effective homeland defence against cruise missiles.

Long-range cruise missiles do pose a serious threat, meaning they are one more threat against which there is no credible defence. The only feasible defence against cruise missiles is point defence – that is, specific locations can be identified for protection through the installation of concentrated air-

defence systems. In localized battlefield operations, damage limitation efforts against conventionally-armed cruise missiles are feasible. Nationally, there can be selective points chosen for defence, and currently the US has chosen to deploy such systems around Washington, D.C.¹³

Some propose that key ports be added to the list of protected points – but the protection of ports is not just a matter of localized air defence systems. Defence also depends heavily on intelligence and detection technologies to identify which of the millions of containers that enter North American ports each year might have warheads or other explosives, or even cruise missiles,¹⁴ on board.

None of that constitutes continental defence, and in the case of nuclear-armed cruise missiles, damage limitation efforts have little meaning when failure to intercept even one attacker would mean devastating catastrophe. Given that cruise missiles, launched offshore from aircraft, ships, or submarines, could come from just about anywhere, and given that their target destinations could also be just about anywhere, continent-wide defence is impossible. Even if approaches to Canadian and North American coasts along the full length of the continent could be effectively monitored, there simply is no possibility of deploying interceptor aircraft or anti-aircraft systems broadly enough to mount a credible defence.

Recognition that broad defence against cruise missiles is in fact not possible has led some analysts to assert (or fantasize about) the possibility of mounting a defence that focuses on the “archer” rather than the “arrow.” In this scenario, the arrows are obviously the cruise missiles and the archers are the platforms from which they would be launched – e.g. an adversary’s ships, submarines, or strategic bombers. There being no credible defence against arrows after they have been launched (besides potentially coming from just about anywhere, cruise missiles are small, employ stealth technologies, and fly at very low altitudes, making reliable detection impractical), the thought is that their launch platform (the archers) could be destroyed before any cruise missile arrows were launched.¹⁵

In other words, the proposed solution is pre-emptive attack, but pre-emption as a defence posture amounts to a dangerously destabilizing conflict escalation strategy. The more an adversary understands that its opponent is betting on pre-emption, the more it is itself incentivised to launch even earlier surprise attacks. In the midst of any deep political crisis, the last thing antagonist states should want is a strategy that has both sides concluding that there is advantage to be gained from the early resort to military attacks – even a nuclear attack.

Comprehensive homeland defence against cruise missiles is simply not possible, and it will not be made more feasible by a new North Warning System that improves cruise missile detection capabilities. Improved domain awareness is always important; however, it does not translate into improved interception, and this is not the first time contemporary defence planners have faced a daunting and intractably threatening weapon system it can detect and track, but for which it has no defence. Indeed, that defines the nuclear age. There is no protection from nuclear attack – the only defence is the promise to meet apocalyptic destruction with more of the same in return. Defence is not possible, and for the most part, and wisely so, is not even attempted – a wisdom that was for a time enshrined in the ABM Treaty, the US-Russian agreement, abrogated by the George W. Bush Administration, to limit missile defence to selected point-defence sites and put severe limits on efforts to even try to develop defensive capabilities against ICBMs.

Despite long and costly efforts, meaningful defence against strategic-range nuclear ballistic missiles remains a fantasy. The point, in the cruise missile context, is that, though improved surveillance and early warning are important in their own right, they will not solve the cruise missile problem.

The Arms Control Imperative

Given the current climate in Washington, it is no longer surprising, though it is still decidedly short-sighted, that cruise missile fears have to date generated little official exploration of more realistic and less dangerous ways to confront a very real threat.

The strategic-range threat (strategic air- or sea-based launchers combined with long-range nuclear-armed cruise missiles), like the nuclear threat generally, is in the first instance “managed,” not through defence, but by the threat of catastrophic counter-attack. There will be no escaping the MAD (mutually assured destruction) dynamic of the nuclear age as long as the madness of nuclear weapons endures. But keeping nuclear attack disincentives in place itself requires diplomacy (a truth one fervently hopes the Trump Administration will discover before it is too late). That includes not only the need for deft crisis diplomacy, it requires perpetual care to avoid descending into the horrific circumstances of nuclear-use incentives, in which any nuclear state might come to conclude that initiating nuclear use could be to its advantage. Diplomacy is also and especially essential to building a grand global coalition/movement to politically challenge the nuclear powers and to impose serious political costs on their continued nuclear intransigence (which is what makes the failure of states like Canada to support that disarmament movement when it produced the Treaty on the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons such an abandonment of responsibility). And arms control diplomacy and negotiations are obviously essential for working out the details of mutual and verifiable restraints or prohibitions on the weapons themselves – including cruise missiles.

Cruise missiles are only marginally subject to effective arms control. As already noted, there is the prohibition of mid-range, land-launched cruise missiles through the INF Treaty. The central contemporary strategic arms control agreement, the New START Treaty of 2010, also imposes indirect limits on nuclear-armed cruise missiles inasmuch as it restricts the US and Russia each to a maximum of 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads on a maximum of 800 delivery vehicles (of which only 700 can be deployed at any one time). Cruise missiles are not counted as delivery vehicles in this formulation; instead, they are counted as warheads carried by aircraft, and one notable feature of the Treaty is that it counts each strategic bomber as carrying only one nuclear warhead, even though one bomber might carry as many as 20 nuclear-armed air-launched cruise missiles. Nuclear-armed cruise missiles have not been deployed at sea since 1991 as a result of the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives undertaken by US President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. President Putin has however made a point of declaring that Russian sea-launched cruise missiles used in Syria could carry nuclear warheads.¹⁶

Controlling nuclear-armed cruise missiles remains a major challenge, and it is clear that any successor treaty to New START will have to finally deal with cruise missiles as delivery vehicles subject to legally binding limits.

The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) represents a political commitment among the 35 participating states (which include Canada, the US, and Russia, with China not formally in the group but having declared it will not help other countries acquire missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons)¹⁷ to impose limits on the spread of missile technologies, including cruise missiles. The original focus of the MTCR was to curtail the spread of missiles designed to deliver weapons of mass destruction, without impeding space programs. There is thus a commitment not to transfer to another state any unmanned delivery systems (including cruise missiles) that can carry a payload of 500 kilograms more than 300 kms or deliver any type of weapon of mass destruction.¹⁸ This is a politically agreed arrangement, rather than a legally binding treaty, and critics charge that in large measure it is a matter of the missile “have” states trying to keep the “have not” states from joining their exclusive club. The MTCR is nevertheless an important non-

proliferation measure, but one that will not be sustained without its maturation into a legal obligation that applies equally to all states.

Former US Defense Secretary William Perry, now an effective and committed disarmament advocate, has led opposition to a US Air Force proposal for a new nuclear-armed cruise missile, the Long Range Stand Off Weapon (referred to as the LRSO). Even some supporters of nuclear “modernization” question the need for the LRSO, arguing that the US already has nuclear-armed cruise missiles and bomber aircraft that are sufficiently stealthy to frustrate Russian or other air defence systems – in other words, they regard the LRSO as expensively redundant. Others advocate developing it with the possibility of trading it away, for example, in exchange for full Russian compliance with and continuation in the INF Treaty.¹⁹ Arms control advocates offer two main arguments against the LRSO and nuclear-armed cruise missiles generally: first, they are dual-use and can deliver either nuclear or conventional warheads – an ambiguity that could lead to mistaken escalation to all-out nuclear exchanges in response to a misidentified conventional attack; second, cruise missiles are designed to deliver lower-yield nuclear warheads, lowering the use threshold – because there cannot be any realistic expectation that a low-yield nuclear attack would not escalate to high-yield nuclear attacks.²⁰ As the NATO Secretary-General told the *Wall Street Journal* in 2016, “No one should think it is possible to use nuclear weapons in a limited way as part of a conventional conflict.”²¹

To date, only Russia, the US, and France are in declared possession of nuclear-armed cruise missiles,²² although the US insists that China has nuclear-capable cruise missiles.²³ The limited employment of nuclear-armed cruise missiles offers an unusual opportunity to halt their expansion and work toward their elimination, as the respected Dutch international affairs institute, Clingendael, argues:

Eliminating nuclear-armed cruise missiles — multilaterally, bilaterally, or unilaterally — may seem a relatively small step to reducing the risks of intentional and inadvertent nuclear weapons use in the world, but it is an achievable step with immediate and obvious benefits. It would not only decrease the risks of use, miscalculations, and nuclear escalation, but would also show willingness to work on serious steps towards nuclear disarmament. This is especially important today, when many non-nuclear weapon states increasingly criticize the nuclear weapon states for not fulfilling their nuclear disarmament commitments made in the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968,

which may be damaging the fundamentals of the international nuclear arms control system. From this perspective, pivoting away from nuclear-armed cruise missiles is not only a concrete risk-reduction measure, it is also a symbolic step contributing to the strength of global nuclear arms control systems.²⁴

Arms control advocates have also made the eminently sensible proposal that the US, Russia, and China get together to ban further testing of hypersonic weapons (some variants envisioned as air-breathing missiles, like cruise missiles) before they can become operational. They argue there is only one military role for such systems, and that is to launch surprise first strikes against an adversary's key strategic assets – in other words, they would embody a highly destabilizing strategy of pre-emption that would generate escalating incentives to use nuclear weapons before they could be destroyed in a surprise attack. As the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* has put it, banning these weapons before they are fully developed “stands out as an easy and highly significant opportunity to resist an onslaught of destabilizing weapons technology.”²⁵

These are all arms control imperatives of significant importance and urgency. The most immediate urgency is the need to ensure the survival of the INF and New START Treaties. Both impose some limits on cruise missiles, particularly nuclear-armed cruise missiles. But that is only a start – intensified arms control diplomacy, despite the current realities in Washington and Moscow, remains the most promising response to the cruise missile threat. That threat is real, but it can be mitigated – not by devising fanciful defences but by pursuing serious arms control.

Notes

¹ Andrea Charron and James Fergusson, “Beyond NORAD and Modernization to North American Defence Evolution,” Canadian Global Affairs Institute, May 2017. https://www.cgai.ca/beyond_norad_and_modernization_to_north_american_defence_evolution

² Taking advantage of stealth technologies, staying below radar lines of sight, following circuitous routes to a target, and manoeuvring around radars and air defence installations.

³ Andrew Roth, “Putin threatens US arms race with new missiles declaration,” *The Guardian*, 1 March 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/01/vladimir-putin-threatens-arms-race-with-new-missiles-announcement>

⁴ Hans M. Kristensen, "The Nuclear Posture Review and the US nuclear arsenal," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 2 February 2018. <https://thebulletin.org/commentary/the-nuclear-posture-review-and-the-us-nuclear-arsenal/>

⁵ "Russia's Northern Fleet Cruise Missile Exercise Ended in Arctic," Naval Forces News – Russia, Navy Recognition, 27 September 2017. <https://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/news/defence-news/2017/september-2017-navy-naval-forces-defense-industry-technology-maritime-security-global-news/5606-russia-s-northern-fleet-cruise-missile-exercise-ended-in-the-arctic.html>;

Thomas Nilsen, "Cruise missiles crisscross the Barents Sea," *Barents Observer*, 20 September 2017. <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2017/09/cruise-missiles-crisscross-barents-sea>; Eye on the Arctic, Radio Canada International. <http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic>

⁶ Sydney J. Freedberg Jr., "New Icebreaker Will Have Space, Power For Weapons: Coast Guard," *Breaking Defense*, 10 January 2018. <https://breakingdefense.com/2018/01/new-icebreaker-will-have-space-power-for-weapons-coast-guard/>; Brendan McGarry, "Coast Guard Budget Would Fund 1st New Heavy Icebreaker in 40 Years," *Military.com*, 12 February 2018. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/02/12/coast-guard-budget-would-fund-1st-new-heavy-icebreaker-40-years.html>; Carlo Muñoz, "How the Coast Guard is prepping cruise missile on icebreakers as another Cold War heats up," *Washington Times*, 17 January 2018. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/17/coast-guard-wants-cruise-missiles-arctic-icebreake/>

⁷ Amy F. Woolf, "The New START Treaty: Central Limits and Key Provisions," US Congressional Research Service Report, 5 February 2018.

⁸ US Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review 2018* (Washington: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2018). <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Feb/02/2001872886/-1/-1/1/2018-NUCLEAR-POSTURE-REVIEW-FINAL-REPORT.PDF>

⁹ Steven Pifer, "Arms and the men," Brookings Institution, 16 January 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/16/arms-and-the-men/>

¹⁰ Pifer, "Arms and the men."

¹¹ National Air and Space Intelligence Center, *Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat, 2017* (Washington: Defense Intelligence Ballistic Missile Analysis Committee, Department of Defense, 2017). http://missilethreat.csis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/06262017_nasic.pdf

¹² Murray Brewster, "Cruise missile threat biggest priority in upcoming Norad makeover," *CBC News*, 26 July 2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/norad-cruise-missiles-1.4221039>

¹³ Lieutenant General Dan Leaf (ret.), "Comprehensive missile defense for the homeland," *Defense News*, 13 December 2017. <https://www.defensenews.com/>

[opinion/commentary/2017/12/13/comprehensive-missile-defense-for-the-homeland-commentary/](#)

¹⁴ Russia has reportedly developed a launch system that can fire up to four cruise missiles from a standard shipping container. Jeffrey Lewis, "Sokov on Russian Cruise Missiles," Arms Control Wonk, 25 August 2015. <https://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/207801/sokov-on-russian-cruise-missiles/>

¹⁵ Andrea Charron and James Fergusson, "NORAD and the Evolution of North American Defence," Inside Policy, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, 24 May 2017. <https://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/norad-and-the-evolution-of-north-american-defence-andrea-charron-and-james-fergusson-for-inside-policy/>

¹⁶ Richard Woolgar-James, "How the new nuclear-armed cruise missile might aid disarmament," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 27 June 2016. <https://thebulletin.org/2016/06/how-the-new-nuclear-armed-cruise-missile-might-aid-disarmament/>

¹⁷ "The Missile Technology Control Regime at a Glance," Arms Control Association, July 2017. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/mtrc>

¹⁸ The Nuclear Threat Initiative, backgrounder. <http://www.nti.org>; "The Missile Technology Control Regime at a Glance."

¹⁹ Aaron Mehta, "Will the US trade its new sub-launched cruise missile for Russian arms treaty compliance?" *Defense News*, 6 February 2018. <https://www.defensenews.com/space/2018/02/06/will-the-us-trade-its-new-sub-launched-cruise-missile-for-russian-arms-treaty-compliance/>

²⁰ Woolgar-James, "How the new nuclear-armed cruise missile."

²¹ As quoted in: "Revive Arms Control and Start With Nuclear-Armed Cruise Missiles," *Clingendael Magazine*, 9 June 2016. <https://www.clingendael.org/publication/revive-arms-control-and-start-nuclear-armed-cruise-missiles>

²² "Revive Arms Control and Start With Nuclear-Armed Cruise Missiles."

²³ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Chinese nuclear forces, 2016," *Nuclear Notebook*, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 3 July 2016. <https://thebulletin.org/2016/july/chinese-nuclear-forces-20169627>

²⁴ "Revive Arms Control and Start With Nuclear-Armed Cruise Missiles."

²⁵ As quoted in: Patrick Tucker, "The Problem with the Pentagon's Hypersonic Missile," *Defense One*, 14 April 2016. <https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2016/04/problem-pentagon-hypersonic-missile/127493/>

12 Arctic Security and the Canadian Defence Policy Statement of 2017

August 31, 2017

The Government's long-awaited defence policy statement, which arrived last spring, sensibly portrays Arctic security challenges as rooted largely in significant public safety challenges rather than in traditional, or primarily military, challenges to the defence of Canada. The Arctic operations of the Canadian Armed Forces thus focus on aiding civilian authorities, rather than on deterring or responding to state-based security threats. One essential dimension of sustainable Arctic security that does not receive adequate attention is the imperative, and the opportunity, to consciously shape the northern circumpolar arena into a durable regional security community by building on and reinforcing the current and fortunate absence of any state actors bent on militarily harming other Arctic states.

Especially since the famous 1987 Murmansk speech of Mikhail Gorbachev,¹ international discourse on Arctic security has tended toward an exceptionalist framework. The assumption, or at least the hope, has been that the North's geographic isolation and unique climate support its political isolation and largely shield it from the tensions and competition that dominate other regions of major power presence. The harsh conditions and unique circumstances of the Arctic have driven cooperation, it is argued, regardless of events and conflicts elsewhere. Russian President Vladimir Putin made the point in 2010 that cooperation is not only desirable but necessary in the Arctic: "If you stand alone you can't survive in the Arctic."² More recently he told a Russian conference that it is essential to "maintain the Arctic as a space of peace, stability and mutual cooperation."³ The former Canadian Chief of Defence Staff, General Walter Natynczyk, discounted the prospects for military competition or conflict in the Arctic by famously saying that "if someone were to invade the Canadian Arctic, [the] first task would be to rescue them."⁴

Of course, this beneficent Arctic exceptionalism is not universally assumed, and it is not surprising that Finns have been among those inclined

to challenge the paradigm. In 2015 the Finnish Institute for International Affairs published what it called “critical reflections on Arctic exceptionalism,”⁵ arguing in effect that what happens in Ukraine does not stay in Ukraine – that events in other parts of the world do spill over into the Arctic neighbourhood. The paper argues that “before the crisis in Ukraine, the increase in Russian Arctic [military] capabilities was widely interpreted as legitimate state behaviour to monitor and secure the opening of a new 7,000- kilometre-long border region and strategic assets therein, and to support civilian activities in a harsh environment,” but after Russia’s action in Ukraine, “increased Russian capability and activity in the Arctic has been read, again, as a sign of aggressive and threatening behaviour in a conflictual geopolitical situation.” The authors do not categorically deny all Arctic uniqueness, but they warn that it is more susceptible to external dynamics than is sometimes assumed.

The important implication of a non-exceptionalist Arctic is that preserving the Arctic’s current stability must become a much more deliberate political objective – that it certainly can no longer be left to geography and climate. For now, it is still true that, despite the soured relations between Russia and the West, the inclination to cooperate in the Arctic remains strong.⁶ While some military/security contacts with Russia in the Arctic have certainly been curtailed, the Ilulissat Declaration of 2008 still essentially stands as a basic principle, and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum and the search and rescue (SAR) and oil spill agreements continue to be the focus of implementation efforts.

However, no one seems to have told Canadian senators, who released two new reports through the Canadian Senate Defence Committee⁷ just ahead of the government’s defence policy statement.⁸ They contain little talk of a cooperative Arctic spirit and offer their own distinct takes on Arctic exceptionalism. One minor, but telling, example of the latter comes with the senators’ routine distinction between the Arctic and the rest of Canada and North America. There is frequent use of phrases like “...Canadian sovereignty, *including in the Arctic*,” or the “defence of Canada, North America *and the Arctic*” (emphasis added) – as if Canadian sovereignty or the defence of Canada do not include the Arctic unless it is specifically mentioned. It would be passing strange if the Senate reports had made the same distinct references to other regions (for example, had they referred to the “defence of Canada, *and the Maritimes*,” or “Canadian sovereignty, *including the West*”). One suspects that the Arctic is separately invoked mainly to appeal to the romance of the High North in an effort to bolster the

Senate's relentless campaigning for increased defence spending. It is a fundraising effort that drives the Senate to make a special case for Arctic vulnerability, and more generally to reject the notion that the Arctic is, or can be, more shielded than other regions from the vagaries of a competitive international environment.

So the senators appeal to a kind of reverse-exceptionalism, seeing the Arctic not as isolated from tensions elsewhere, but as itself a source of tension. There are repeated references to "resurgent Russian military activity close to Canadian airspace in the North," and an approving quote from one witness claiming those Russian aircraft to be "the real menace to Canadian sovereignty in the North."⁹ Other references are to "increased Russian activity around North America,"¹⁰ all supplemented by repeated references to Russian aggression and military activism generally.

This energetic wariness of Russia was certainly also part of the 2016 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN).¹¹ And while officials, in this case the Assistant Chief of Defence Intelligence, assured the committee "that Russia is at the top of our list in terms of countries we watch carefully and monitor closely,"¹² NORAD's documentation of this airborne Russian "menace," of Russian military aircraft in the region, paints a rather more subdued threat picture. According to NORAD's 2016 testimony, "since 2007, NORAD jet fighters have conducted, on average, five intercepts per year of Russian military aircraft in the American or Canadian ADIZ [air defence identification zone]. The peak year was 2014 when ten intercepts were made." The report says most of these interceptions occurred in the Arctic, "north of Inuvik," but does not specify how many were carried out by Canadian aircraft. But the report emphasizes that "none of these Russian aircraft *have ever* penetrated into American or Canadian airspace, nor demonstrated any hostile intentions" (emphasis added). The Russian aircraft have a right to operate in international airspace, and the purpose of identification zones is to identify aircraft nearing North America while they are still in international air space, where they can be engaged regarding intentions and flight plans.¹³ And, it is important to note that, except for the few Russian military aircraft on training and patrol flights in international air space, all aircraft in approaches to Canadian territory are civilian.

The same Committee heard extensive evidence of the growing cruise missile threat, and one witness concluded that "the Arctic would be a good location to establish cruise missile detection and interception sites, in light of the fact that Russian long-range military aircraft and submarines capable of

launching cruise missiles regularly operate in that region.”¹⁴ It is an issue that will necessarily be a prominent element of the coming debate over renewal of the North Warning System.

The New Defence Statement and the Arctic

The Russia-related alarms raised by officials, analysts, and Parliamentarians through the Senate and House of Commons reports were not carried over into the government’s new defence policy statement.¹⁵ It has only three references to Russia, and only one of those is linked to the Arctic, though even it does not suggest a threatening posture within or toward the Arctic itself. Instead, it notes a NATO concern that Russia is once again expanding its capacity to project force from the Arctic into the North Atlantic.¹⁶ The statement does not treat Russia as benign. It points to the “illegal annexation of Crimea,” notes Russia’s “willingness to test the international security environment,” and acknowledges the return of “a degree of major power competition ... to the international system.”¹⁷ Notably, the government defence policy statement makes no reference to the Russian bomber threat.

While the West understandably watches Russian military developments in the Arctic, it would also be useful to pay some attention to Russia’s own perceptions of threat related to the Arctic. Two Russian academics have offered a current and measured assessment of Russian threat perceptions in a 2017 paper published in the journal *European Security*.¹⁸ It should not come as a surprise that Russia shares many of the security concerns raised by other Arctic states. The Russians have also become more focused on soft or non-state security issues linked to climate change, growing competition over natural resources, and the protection and management of sea routes. The Russian military in the north is tasked with environmental cleanup, search and rescue, support for oil spill cleanup, monitoring poaching, and combatting smuggling and illegal migration. The authors describe military developments that include the build-up of naval bases along its Northern Sea Route and the deployment of dual-use equipment and the performance of dual-purpose operations that involve search and rescue, monitoring civilian maritime and air traffic, navigation regulation, emergency response, and Arctic research.

At the same time, the authors acknowledge that geography has made the Arctic and the Kola Peninsula in particular a key military bastion hosting nuclear submarine forces, a large conventional fleet, anti-submarine aircraft, air defence units, and so on. And fleet modernization, nuclear and

conventional, adds to that prominence. But much of that military concentration is focused, not on the Arctic as much as on the rest of the world. Russia's threat profile mirrors that of the West in that NATO has remained a perceived threat due to its expansion eastward, and that sense of threat grew following NATO's build-up in response to Russian action in Ukraine. In addition, Russia is also said to worry about US intentions in the Arctic and its power projection possibilities.

The new Canadian defence policy does not envision any significant changes in the Arctic security environment – either in threat perceptions or in defence requirements. While the focus is on improving the Canadian Forces' domain awareness and operational capacity in the Arctic, no new policy directions are identified, and the Arctic is not portrayed as a place where sovereignty is fragile and in constant need of being shored up.¹⁹ For the Arctic, it is not really a “new” Canadian defence policy. The basic themes of Canadian defence policy have been consistent over multiple decades and multiple Canadian governments, and the current government continues to highlight the traditional roles of defending Canada and North America (the latter in cooperation with the US), and contributing to international peace and security.

The new policy statement, as well as the earlier Senate and House of Commons reports, include a number of Arctic-specific references.

Threat Perceptions

The government's statement confirms the broad consensus that security threats relevant to the Arctic are not military, state-to-state, threats. While the Parliamentary reports²⁰ include plenty of references to the challenges of an assertive Russia, the March 2016 testimony of the Assistant Chief of Defence Intelligence²¹ reflects the prevailing threat assumption when he says that the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) “do not see a state actor that has both the capability and the intent to harm Canada militarily.”²²

The House of Commons Committee warns that intentions can change quickly, that defence is about planning for the unexpected, and that “preparing for the worst case scenario” should include “the low probability of a full-scale attack against Canada or North America by a foreign state,”²³ but its list of serious security challenges in the Arctic focuses on non-military threats: “environmental concerns over air and maritime pollution; the effects of climate change and the melting of the polar ice in the Arctic region; increases in commercial aviation and shipping traffic; industrial exploitation of natural resources; infringements of Canadian sovereignty; search and rescue incidents; and various other security threats and concerns.”²⁴

The government statement acknowledges, as already noted, that Russia's large Kola Peninsula forces give it the ability to project force into the North Atlantic, but the statement does not equate that with a threat to Canadian territory or sovereignty. Defence analyst Adam Lajeunesse "welcome[s] the recognition that, while Russia's Arctic forces may threaten other NATO regions, they do not pose an immediate danger to the Canadian North."²⁵

To the extent that security needs are changing in the Arctic, the changes are of course linked largely to the increasing accessibility of the region. As "an important international crossroads where issues of climate change, international trade, and global security meet," growing commercial interests, research, and tourism are coming to Canada's northern territory. And that rise in activity is not linked to growing defence concerns, but to "increased safety and security demands related to search and rescue and natural or man-made disasters to which Canada must be ready to respond."²⁶

Building Domain Awareness Capacity

To meet those public safety demands, says the defence statement, Canada will have to pay increased attention to intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capacity that is specifically tailored to the Arctic²⁷ – in other words, to improved domain awareness. The government promises new surveillance aircraft, remotely piloted aircraft (drones), the Arctic and Offshore Patrol Ships now under construction, and additional satellite capacity toward that end.²⁸ More effective land surveillance and links to Arctic communities are to come through the acquisition of "all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles and larger tracked semi-amphibious utility vehicles optimized for use in the Arctic environment."²⁹

The government statement announces an expansion of the Canadian Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) so that it covers the entire Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Notably, the North Warning System radars are not located at Canada's northern frontier, leaving vast areas of Canadian territory in the archipelago beyond the reach of radar surveillance. The expanded ADIZ is intended to "increase awareness of the air traffic approaching and operating in Canada's sovereign airspace in the Arctic."³⁰ This move is not so much a response to Russian military aircraft training and patrolling in international airspace, but relates more specifically to civilian and commercial aircraft approaching Canadian air space. As the statement explains, "an ADIZ typically begins at the edge of sovereign airspace and extends outward into international airspace," so aircraft within

those zones can be notified “that they may be intercepted if they do not notify Canadian authorities of their entry and exit through” it.³¹

Aiding Civilian Authorities

The preponderance of Arctic security threats “fall within the purview of civilian authorities responsible for law enforcement and public safety,” according to the House of Commons defence committee, and require “a whole-of-government response.” That makes the Canadian military a participant, but not the lead government department or agency, in responding to the primary security threats in the Arctic. The Canadian Armed Forces are described as performing a long list of roles in the North: “supporting law enforcement organizations in their ongoing efforts to counter criminal networks and their illicit smuggling of narcotics, weapons and humans, responding to search and rescue incidents, providing aid to the civil authorities in the event of natural or man-made disasters and other national emergencies, engaging in fisheries and pollution patrols, fighting cyber threats, contributing to counter-terrorism efforts, as well as conducting regular sovereignty, reconnaissance and surveillance patrols in the Arctic.”³²

Thus, the defence policy statement says the Canadian Forces will “maintain a robust capacity to respond to a range of domestic emergencies, including by providing military support to civilian organizations on national security and law enforcement matters when called upon, engaging in rapid disaster response, and contributing to effective search and rescue operations.”³³ It too puts the focus on working with “whole-of-government partners” to support national security and public safety objectives and to engage with “Indigenous communities [that] are at the heart of Canada’s North.”³⁴

Operational Challenges in the Arctic

Search and rescue in the Arctic “poses a complex challenge” due to size, climate, and geography. The House of Commons Committee heard that only four percent of Canadian search and rescue incidents occur in the North, but every one of them is complex. “Because search and rescue air assets are located south, where most of Canada’s population lives and most search and rescue incidents occur, every search and rescue operation in the Arctic becomes ‘expeditionary in nature’ because of the long distances to cover. It takes up to eight hours for a CC-130 Hercules aircraft based in Winnipeg, and 12 to 16 hours for a CH-149 Cormorant helicopter, to reach the high north.”³⁵

The government defence statement also emphasizes the operational complexity of northern public safety measures. The Canadian Arctic includes “75 percent of the country’s national coastlines and 40 percent of its total land mass. The sheer expanse of Canada’s North, coupled with its ice-filled seas, harsh climate, and more than 36,000 islands make for a challenging region to monitor – particularly as the North encompasses a significant portion of the air and maritime approaches to North America.”³⁶

DND’s Northern Capacity

The government statement refers to “the Defence team’s extensive Northern footprint [which] includes more than 800 buildings at over 60 sites,” and offers this summary:

Joint Task Force North, headquartered in Yellowknife with detachments in Whitehorse and Iqaluit, anchors the Canadian Armed Forces’ Northern presence. The Canadian Armed Forces, including through NORAD, operates from a number of locations in the North, including in Inuvik, Yellowknife, Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit, and Goose Bay, which also help support the Northern deployment of fighter aircraft. The Canadian Armed Forces also shares a number of facilities with federal partners, including a state-of-the-art cold weather training facility at Resolute Bay, a signals intelligence facility at Canadian Armed Forces Station Alert - the northernmost permanently inhabited facility in the world - and a high Arctic weather station at Eureka. In addition, work is ongoing to complete the Nanisivik Naval Facility which will support operations of the new Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships, and other government maritime vessels.³⁷

The North Warning System (NWS), the chain of radar stations (without local staff) across the North, is nearing the end of its useful life, and DND says it is cooperating with the US “to seek an innovative technological solution to continental defence challenges including early warning.”³⁸

Building an Arctic Security Community

The imperative to cooperate in the Arctic is clear. “To succeed in an unpredictable and complex security environment,” DND plans to “increase [its] presence in the Arctic over the long-term and work cooperatively with Arctic partners.”³⁹

However, in affirming Canada’s commitment “to exercising the full extent of its sovereignty,” the defence statement makes a point of saying it

will work in “close collaboration with *select Arctic partners*, including the United States, Norway and Denmark, to increase surveillance and monitoring of the broader Arctic region” (emphasis added).⁴⁰ It goes on to promise “joint exercises with Arctic allies and partners and support [to] the strengthening of situational awareness and information sharing in the Arctic, including with NATO.”⁴¹ Intimations of ongoing limits to cooperation with Russia, on the one hand, and the more direct introduction of NATO into Arctic domain awareness operations, on the other, are in denial of the stark fact that international cooperation throughout the whole of the Arctic is not optional. The failure of the government’s new security policy to make an overt commitment to the broad but foundational objective of building a stable and sustainable pan-Arctic security community⁴² is a major omission. The government says “Canada must enhance its ability to operate in the North and work closely with allies and partners,”⁴³ but the emphasis obviously needs to be on all the Arctic partners. By now it should be clear that pursuing mutuality and stability in a region that includes Russia should not focus security cooperation on NATO.

While Canadian politicians can muster impressive levels of indignation when Russia’s long-range bombers venture near Canadian airspace on their routine training and patrol missions,⁴⁴ defence officials and earlier prime ministers have nevertheless insisted that “Canada does not anticipate any military challenges in the Arctic,” and that “there is no likelihood of Arctic states going to war.”⁴⁵ In August 2012 the Department of National Defence spokesperson put it this way: “Defence issues do not drive Arctic affairs.”⁴⁶ That begs the question of why explicitly collaborative “surveillance and monitoring of the broader Arctic region” cannot include all states in the region. The Russian academics Alexander Sergunin and Valery Konyshchev⁴⁷ suggest that Russia is ready for increased Arctic cooperation among Arctic states in coordinating emergency assistance to civilian authorities, sharing information and lessons learned from anti-terrorist operations, holding technical workshops and skills development, exchanging observers, promoting mutual assistance in SAR and emergency response, and in sharing information on military policies and doctrines.

A security community that can claim a “dependable expectation of peaceful change” relies on credible assurances from community members that they will not go to war with each other to settle their disputes, and in their 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, the five Arctic Ocean states affirmed as much when they said they would rely on the “extensive international legal framework [that] applies to the Arctic Ocean” for “the orderly settlement of

any possible overlapping claims.”⁴⁸ And a second characteristic of a security community is the absence of an arms race – that is, the absence of a competitive military build-up among the members of the community. That does not necessarily mean the absence of any individual or unilateral national military expansion, but it does mean that such developments are not regarded as threatening to other members of the community and thus are not destabilizing.

If “the attainment of a security community can ... be tested operationally in terms of the absence of significant organized preparations for war or large-scale violence among its members,”⁴⁹ the Arctic fails the test based on the strategic nuclear forces that are in and around the Arctic and certainly prepare for “largescale” violence. Furthermore, the Arctic is now militarizing enough to engender wariness, but some perspective is in order. Much of Arctic military development is linked to civilian requirements – building up a military infrastructure to help manage increased civilian activity. Nevertheless, demilitarization (for example, Article 26 of the UN Charter speaks of “maintain[ing] international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world’s human and economic resources”) remains the vision – one certainly worth nurturing in the Arctic.⁵⁰

There are various measures that Canada and others could encourage the states of the region to undertake and thus to reinforce “expectations of peaceful change” and to mitigate “organized preparations for war”:

- demonstrably configuring military deployments as defensive and, especially, linked to public safety;
- resuming and expanding regular meetings of chiefs of defence staff to heighten understanding of each other’s military operations and intentions;
- sharing military policies and doctrines among the Arctic states;
- sharing information on anti-terrorist operations within the Arctic region;
- exchanging observers and participants in northern exercises;
- exploring the shared use of public safety assets like airlift and helicopters;
- issuing regular and credible mutual declarations on the absence of military threats to sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- actively exploring an appropriate forum for region-wide Arctic security consultations and coordination; and
- insistence by the Arctic’s five NATO members, as Canada has in the past, that NATO not become operationally present in the Arctic.

Measures that eschew competitive military expansion and that encourage expectations of peaceful change will serve to entrench the Arctic as a security community, and that in turn will help build a political/security climate of openness to proposals like an Arctic zone of peace or attack submarine exclusion zones.

Notes

¹ Mikhail Gorbachev, The Speech in Murmansk at the ceremonial meeting on the occasion of the presentation of the Order of Lenin and the Gold Star Medal to the city of Murmansk, 1 October 1987 (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency, 1987), 23-31. https://www.barentsinform.fi/docs/Gorbachev_speech.pdf

² Luke Harding, "Vladimir Putin calls for Arctic claims to be resolved under UN law," *The Guardian*, 23 September 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/sep/23/putin-arctic-claims-international-law>

³ John Thompson, "Putin Plays Mr. Nice Guy at Russian Arctic Forum," *Arctic Deeply*, 30 March 2017. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/arctic/articles/2017/03/30/putin-plays-mr-nice-guy-at-russian-arctic-forum>

⁴ "Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Issue 5 - Evidence - Meeting of June 2010," Senate of Canada, 7 June 2010. <https://sencanada.ca/en/Content/Sen/committee/403/defe/05evb-e>

⁵ Juha Kämpylä and Harri Mikkola, *On Arctic Exceptionalism: Critical Reflections in the Light of the Arctic Sunrise Case and the Crisis in Ukraine*, FIIA Working Paper 85 (Helsinki: The Finnish Institute for International Affairs, April 2015). <https://www.fiaa.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/wp85.pdf>

⁶ P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "Canada and Russia – Toward an Arctic Agenda," *Global Brief*, 2 September 2016. <https://globalbrief.ca/2016/09/canada-and-russia-toward-an-arctic-agenda/>

⁷ "Military Underfunded: The Walk Must Match the Talk," Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, April 2017. https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/421/SECD/Reports/DEFENCE_DP_R_FINAL_e.pdf; "Reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces: A Plan For the Future," Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, May 2017. https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/committee/421/SECD/reports/SECDDPRReport_FINAL_e.pdf

⁸ Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces, 2017). <http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/docs/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf>

⁹ "Reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces," 5.

- ¹⁰ "Military Underfunded," 7.
- ¹¹ "Canada and the Defence of North America: NORAD and Aerial Readiness," Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, September 2016, 42nd Parliament, 1st Session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/NDDN/Reports/RP8406082/nddnrp02/nddnrp02-e.pdf>
- ¹² "Canada and the Defence of North America," 7.
- ¹³ "Canada and the Defence of North America," 12.
- ¹⁴ "Canada and the Defence of North America," 29.
- ¹⁵ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*.
- ¹⁶ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 90.
- ¹⁷ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 50.
- ¹⁸ Alexander Sergunin and Valery Konyshev, "Russian military strategies in the Arctic: change or continuity," *European Security* 26/2 (2017): 171-89.
- ¹⁹ Adam Lajeunesse, "What Canada's New Defense Policy Means for the Arctic," Arctic Deeply, 16 June 2017. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/arctic/community/2017/06/16/what-canadas-new-defense-policy-means-for-the-arctic>
- ²⁰ Already referred to: "Military Underfunded;" "Reinvesting in the Canadian Armed Forces;" "Canada and the Defence of North America."
- ²¹ "Canada and the Defence of North America."
- ²² "Canada and the Defence of North America," 6.
- ²³ "Canada and the Defence of North America," 7.
- ²⁴ "Canada and the Defence of North America," 11.
- ²⁵ Lajeunesse, "What Canada's New Defense Policy Means for the Arctic."
- ²⁶ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 50-51.
- ²⁷ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 64.
- ²⁸ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 15, 35.
- ²⁹ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 37.
- ³⁰ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 80.
- ³¹ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 80.
- ³² "Canada and the Defence of North America," 11.
- ³³ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 60.
- ³⁴ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 80.
- ³⁵ "Canada and the Defence of North America," 39.
- ³⁶ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 79.
- ³⁷ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 79. For a more detailed account, please consult Ernie Regehr and Michelle Jackett, *Circumpolar Military Facilities of the Arctic Five*, The Simons Foundation, July 2018, http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/Circumpolar Military Facilities of the Arctic Five - updated to July 2018_3.pdf

³⁸ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 79-80.

³⁹ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 14.

⁴⁰ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 90.

⁴¹ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 80.

⁴² Karl W. Deutsch, *Political Community at the International Level: Problems of Definition and Measurement* (Sandy, UT: Aardvark Global Publishing Company, 1954; 2006 edition), 42.

⁴³ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 57.

⁴⁴ In 2009, when CF-18s were scrambled to rendezvous with Russian bombers in international air space, the prime minister warned of the “increasingly aggressive” Russian flights and promised that Canada would fulfill its “obligations to defend our continental airspace.” He went on to insist that “we will defend our sovereignty and we will respond every time the Russians make any kind of intrusion on the sovereignty in Canada’s Arctic.” The Russian bombers did not enter Canadian airspace or “make any kind of intrusion on the sovereignty in Canada’s Arctic.” “Russia denies plane approached Canadian airspace,” CBC News, 27 February 2009. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/russia-denies-plane-approached-canadian-airspace-1.796007>

⁴⁵ The chief of Defence Staff and the prime minister respectively, both commenting in 2010. Quoted in: Michael Byers and Stewart Webb, “Canada’s F-35 purchase is a costly mistake,” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 17/3 (2011): 217-27.

⁴⁶ David Pugliese, “Canadian Government Does not see a Military Threat in the Arctic, says DND,” Defence Watch, 16 August 2012. <http://blogs.ottawacitizen.com/2012/08/16/canadian-government-does-not-see-a-military-threat-in-the-arctic-says-dnd/>

⁴⁷ Sergunin and Konyshov, “Russian military strategies in the Arctic.”

⁴⁸ Arctic Ocean Conference, “2008 Ilulissat Declaration,” 28 May 2008. <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2008-Ilulissat-Declaration.pdf>

⁴⁹ Deutsch, *Political Community at the International Level*, 42.

⁵⁰ As already discussed, although climate and geography have to date combined to ensure the non-militarization of the surface of the Arctic Ocean, they obviously will not continue that salutary service indefinitely – making this the time for the international community to politically enshrine what has until now come naturally. The University of Toronto’s Franklyn Griffiths elaborated such a proposal some time ago, and it has the great advantage of preserving what already exists, without having to break difficult new political ground. A feature of Mikhail Gorbachev’s “zone of peace” speech was to block Western anti-submarine warfare operations in and near the home waters of the Soviet

Northern and Baltic fleets. His term was “limiting rivalry in anti-submarine weapons,” and undertaking confidence-building measures especially in the Greenland, Norwegian, and Baltic Seas. And a 2009 paper by Anatoli Diakov and Frank von Hippel proposed again that Russia agree to confine its northern nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines to the Arctic and that the US agree to keep its attack submarines out of the Russian side of the Arctic.

13

From Defending to Exercising Arctic Sovereignty

October 25, 2018

Questions about sovereignty are a constant in Canadian discourse on the Arctic – a current iteration being a study of “Canada’s Sovereignty in the Arctic” by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE).¹ As of October 22, the Committee had held four sessions, heard 15 witnesses, and received four written briefs,² and the overwhelming thrust of testimony so far is that Canada does not have an Arctic sovereignty problem. Furthermore, there is an irony in the application of Northern sovereignty that the Committee has yet to address – namely, the inescapable reality that, in a challenging region made manageable through international cooperation, part of the responsible exercise of national sovereignty in the Arctic is the willingness to curb purely national prerogatives in favour of regional collaboration and collective well-being.

Invoking Sovereignty

Political calls to be more attentive to Canada’s Arctic inevitably invoke the fragility of sovereignty, a worry that is given an air of credibility by reminders that outstanding territorial disputes mean that the outlines of the geography over which Canada is formally sovereign are yet to be decisively defined. The Beaufort Sea boundary dispute with the United States and the disputes with Denmark over Hans Island and maritime boundaries in the Lincoln Sea await settlement, but in the meantime they do not undermine Canadian sovereignty or security, and because, as is widely accepted, these disputes will in time be settled by either political or judicial means, the military defence of sovereignty is not part of the equation.

Arctic sovereignty – defined in the brief to FAAE by the Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI) as “the absence of any higher authority”³ – may not be fragile, but Canada’s national control over its sovereign territory is far from absolute. That is a truism that applies to all states inasmuch as the responsible exercise of sovereignty regularly means agreeing to limits on

national prerogatives in favour of collective interests expressed through treaties and evolving international law. The absence of a higher authority does not mean the absence of outside interference or external influences over national affairs. Economic, political/diplomatic, and security realities impose constraints on individual states that can sometimes be rather severe – but even then, formal or *de jure* sovereignty is not in question.

It is also true, for example, that sovereign states are not always able to exercise control over, or bring services to, all of the territories that are recognized to be under their jurisdiction. It is a mainstay of UN peacekeeping forces in post-conflict or conflict mitigation operations that they are mandated to help governments gradually extend their authority and influence to all areas under their jurisdiction – the UN focus being on establishing within the host state's territory the capacity to provide services, to enforce national laws, to win the support of local populations, and to be a cooperative presence within its international neighbourhood.⁴ For many states, sometimes called fragile states, those conditions remain aspirations, but they are no less sovereign as a result. A weak state remains sovereign even if, in practical day-to-day terms, parts of its territory are effectively beyond the government's reach and capacity to deliver services (the examples are unfortunately myriad – Libya, Mali, Somalia, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Iraq, Ukraine, and so on). But even stable, wealthy states face limitations. Canadians will not appreciate the parallel, but climate, geography, and competing national priorities have left parts of the Canadian Arctic territory beyond the timely reach of the central government.

As for the defence of sovereignty, it is also commonplace for governments to enjoy uncontested sovereignty over their territory, even though they would not have the capacity to defend it in the event of determined military attack. No country, to use the most extreme example, has the capacity to repel or defend itself against a nuclear attack, but that is obviously not a weakness that undermines national sovereignty. A state can enjoy full sovereignty even without the capacity to withstand physical attack. "Military might" to repel "armed state invaders" or to suppress "armed internal forces contesting government authority"⁵ are not the means by which sovereignty for most states is secured. They rely instead on their own populations and other states voluntarily respecting their territorial integrity and recognizing and honouring their sovereignty. Indeed, voluntary acceptance of state sovereignty is essential to a mutually beneficial international order. The CGAI brief, by academics Andrea Charron and

James Fergusson, agrees that sovereignty is increasingly “assumed and enforced via measures short of force or via international courts of law.” This reality, they add, “is vital to understanding why no Arctic sovereignty problem confronts Canada...”⁶

Establishing Sovereignty

Sovereignty is not a fragile thing. Almost 400 years into the Westphalian order, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states are highly valued. States under a broad range of circumstances – strong, weak, democratic, autocratic, efficient, dysfunctional – enjoy the international community’s consistent recognition and respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity. And that certainly applies in Canada’s Arctic.

The absence of an Arctic sovereignty problem was strongly asserted at the FAAE Committee by Alan H. Kessel, Assistant Deputy Minister for Legal Affairs at Global Affairs Canada.⁷ For starters, he said “...no one disputes Canada’s sovereignty over the lands of the Canadian archipelago, covering in excess of 1.4 million square kilometres and containing more than 36,500 islands.” That is the case despite unresolved border and territorial disputes. Kessel characterized the Beaufort Sea boundary dispute with the US, as well as the maritime boundary dispute with Denmark in two small zones of the Lincoln Sea and the conflicting claims by Canada and Denmark regarding Hans Island, as “well managed” (noting, for example, that in May 2018 Canada and Denmark established a “joint task force on boundary issues to explore options and provide recommendations on how to resolve” the outstanding boundary issues). And in later testimony, Professor Michael Byers of the University of British Columbia, an expert on both the Arctic and international law, suggested the Lincoln Sea disputes are essentially resolved and that the conflicting claims over Hans Island are inconsequential.⁸

Canadian sovereignty over the Northwest Passage is also clear, according to Kessel. He told the Committee that “all waters of Canada’s Arctic Archipelago, including the various waterways commonly known as the Northwest Passage, are internal waters of Canada by virtue of historic title.” And that title, he said, is reinforced when foreign ships navigate those waters in compliance with Canadian laws and regulations.

In fact, Kessel went further to argue there is no such thing as a Northwest Passage: “I defy you to find the Northwest Passage on the map.” He described it as “a combination of channels within the Arctic Archipelago,” but for it to be viewed as an international strait under international law it would have had to “have been used as an international strait for navigation.” Professor Suzanne Lalonde of the Université de Montréal told the FAAE

there are some seven different routes through the archipelago that can be considered as part of a Northwest Passage.⁹ Having been “icebound for 10,000 years,” said Kessel, “you can’t just simply change it into an international strait as the ice melts.”

He also drew attention to the Ilulissat Declaration – the 2008 declaration, reaffirmed in 2018, that commits Arctic States to reliance, not on purely national means, but on existing international law for the peaceful settlement of disputes in the Arctic. It emphasizes the Law of the Sea as providing for “important rights and obligations concerning the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf, the protection of the maritime environment, including ice-covered areas, freedom of navigation, marine scientific research, and other uses of the sea” – a legal framework to which Canada remains committed.¹⁰

In 1988 Canada and the US agreed to disagree on the status of the Northwest Passage, but in the meantime, “the U.S. essentially asks [Canada] for authority to pass through the passage,” which Canada grants on a per voyage basis. And Kessel argues that inasmuch as Canada authorizes transit through those waters, not only to American vessels but to all traffic, they are Canadian waters.¹¹

And all vessels do in fact notify Canada when they transit through the Northwest Passage, according to the Department of Transport’s Director General of Marine Safety and Security, Jane Weldon. She told the Committee that the regulations of the northern Canada traffic services zone (known as NORDREG) have been in place since 1977. They changed from a voluntary to a mandatory reporting system in 2010 and now all vessels that are within or are intending to enter Canadian waters are required to notify authorities.¹² When the Chinese vessel *Xue Long* went through the passage in 2017, it notified Canadian authorities, as a scientific research undertaking did not challenge Canadian authority.

Canadian scholar Adam Lajeunesse of St. Francis Xavier University’s Mulroney Institute of Governance briefed the Committee¹³ on three basic requirements for declaring national sovereignty over coastal waters beyond the 12-mile territorial zone – that they are under the state’s exclusive jurisdiction, have been such over an extended period, and the arrangement has the agreement or acquiescence of other states. On the first two of these, Canada’s exclusive control over the waters of its Arctic Archipelago has been consistent and unchallenged. Given the US position, acquiescence of the international community is less clear, nevertheless, no state has directly challenged Canada’s claim – and that means, he says, there has been implicit

foreign recognition of Canadian sovereignty over the waters of the Arctic Archipelago for some 70 years.¹⁴

Exercising Sovereignty

The primary concern in Canada's North is thus not to protect, or militarily defend, sovereignty that is being actively challenged; rather, it is to exercise sovereignty effectively in the service of the people of Canada, especially the people of the Arctic, and in support of a stable functional regional community that encompasses all of the Arctic.

The primary contribution of the Canadian Armed Forces to the exercise of sovereignty involves credible domain awareness, aiding those civil authorities that are mandated to meet the needs of Canadian citizens in the North, including search and rescue, and helping to fulfill Canada's obligations to the region and the international community, for example, in marine protection and management. Major-General William Seymour, Deputy Commander, Canadian Joint Operations Command, Department of National Defence, told the Committee that Canada's sovereignty is not under attack or under threat. "We have sovereignty in Canada," and "...our key [defence] interest in the north is maintaining an awareness of what's going on up there and having a presence year-round both to be able to see what's happening and to respond to what's going on."¹⁵

Operation LIMPID¹⁶ is the domestic, all-domain, surveillance operation that helps authorities "understand what's going on in the airspace, the waterways and underneath the ocean." NORAD is involved in maritime domain awareness, as well as air domain awareness and control. In response to a question about submarine detection capabilities, Major-General Seymour first reminded the Committee that "this is not the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s, when Russian submarines might be lurking behind every corner." Now, given advances in weapons technology, Russian forces do not have to venture much beyond their own territorial waters to launch weapons against North America from their home bastions within their territory or slightly outside. "The notion that Russian submarines, for example..., would have to travel underneath the ice in Canada's north to do their business is technologically out of date." So, when asked whether Canada has "complete knowledge" of what is happening below the surface in Canada's Arctic waters, Major-General Seymour noted that the level of awareness pursued is influenced by the level of threat, with threat assessed on the basis of intent as well as capability. By that judgement, he said, there is no threat and he acknowledged that the Canadian authorities do not have "complete knowledge" of what is happening in all domains all the time (for example,

they cannot have “complete knowledge” of what is happening on land throughout Canada on any particular day). Thus:

We allocate resources to understand what’s going on in the environment based on the threat that’s posed to us. ...In terms of applying resources to understand what’s going on in the underwater domain, resources are applied, some of which I can’t talk about, but there are capabilities that Canada and the U.S. have to understand what’s going on there.

As for Russian bombers, he said their operations within Canadian Air Defence Identification Zones (CADIZ) represented

a posturing activity rather than ... something of necessity in terms of an attack on the North American landmass. They can take off from their bases in Russia and launch their missiles well outside the range of our CADIZ and our fighters, so from an operational perspective, ...they have a much broader area from which they can operate to hit their targets.

Multiple levels of government, along with local community partners, are involved in monitoring the region (in knowing “what’s going on up there”) and in what the Department of Transport’s Jane Weldon called the “collaborative whole-of-government efforts”¹⁷ to maintain presence and an effective response. The Coast Guard is prominent among those collaborators.¹⁸ For example, when it manages Arctic icebreaker operations during the navigation season it also delivers supplies (with the assistance of on-board helicopters) to Indigenous communities which rely on those icebreakers for the timely arrival of fuel, building materials, vehicles, and other goods for which delivery by aircraft is too costly.

The commissioner of the Coast Guard, Jeffery Hutchinson, told the Committee that in maritime domain awareness and management the Coast Guard works with the Canadian Armed Forces (including through NORAD), Transport Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) through the Marine Security Operations Centres, or MSOCs, to detect and assess marine-based threats. He said the Coast Guard also provides ice information and routing advice, harbour breakouts, flood control, support for scientific and commercial shipping escorts, emergency search and rescue, and environmental protection services.¹⁹

Limiting Sovereignty

The point has already been made that there are myriad limits on sovereignty. Formal jurisdiction certainly does not mean untrammelled control over decisions and choices within a defined geography. And limits on national prerogatives are frequently, as in the European Union, understood to be an advantage. In the Arctic as well, the responsible exercise of hard-won sovereignty has come to be understood as inevitably accepting, even championing, some constraints on national prerogatives in favour of collective action in the interests of a larger regional good. Through formal agreements,²⁰ for example, states of the region agree to rely on each other for assistance in search and rescue and for oil spill cleanups. Through the recently signed Arctic Fisheries Agreement,²¹ the Arctic Ocean states and major fishing states agree to prohibit fishing in the central Arctic Ocean for at least 16 years, until scientific studies can clarify the nature and level of fish stocks and determine what levels of fishing could be sustainable.

In other words, in the Arctic, sovereignty and security questions are only partly answered by the formal jurisdictional clarity and frontier management of state-centric sovereignty and national defence. Millennia of occupation without reference to contemporary boundaries, along with rapidly changing environmental, economic, and social conditions, have spawned unique and surprisingly (given the states involved) robust disciplines of state cooperation and collaboration in the region. Anxiety about sovereignty may be a staple of the politics of the Arctic, but another recurring theme is an exceptional strain of international cooperation – the notion that the Arctic can not only avoid the conflicts and controversies that confront the powers in other parts of the world, but that the Arctic actually has potential as a model of regional cooperation. That leads some analysts to see in the Arctic a socially and politically constructed asset of international cooperation that might be modelled and mobilized in times of crisis in other regions that might well benefit from a reset in relations. Russian and American cooperation on the international space station has value beyond the specifics of space travel and experimentation, and is thus a global asset. Similarly, says Finnish academic Lassi Heininen, Arctic cooperation has value in modelling alternative possibilities for East-West relations – a human-made asset to be kept on hand and used when needed.²²

Arctic states “have intentionally negotiated a regional order predicated on a more cooperative framework than they pursue with each other elsewhere.”²³ An Arctic rigidly divided into fortified sovereign stove pipes will fail the people of the Arctic. The Arctic has so far enjoyed a security

climate of minimal military tension, and as the Polish academic Michał Łuszczuk of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin points out, the challenge now is “to keep it that way” by developing a range of “forums for discussing hard and soft security issues, confidence-building, and military cooperation.”²⁴

Notes

¹ “Committees - FAAE - Foreign Affairs and International Development,” House of Commons Canada. <http://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/FAAE>

² “Committees - FAAE - Foreign Affairs and International Development, Canada’s Sovereignty in the Arctic, Report and Government Response,” House of Commons Canada. <http://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/FAAE/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=10158962>

³ Andrea Charron and James Fergusson, “Arctic Sovereignty: Preoccupation vs. Homeland Governance and Defence,” Canadian Global Affairs Institute, September 2018. https://www.cgai.ca/arctic_sovereignty_preoccupation_vs_homeland_governance_and_defence

⁴ UN. Department of Peacekeeping Operations - UN. Department for Field Support - DPKO-DFS/DPET/Policy and Best Practice Service, 2017-06-12.

⁵ Terms used by Charron and Fergusson, “Arctic Sovereignty.”

⁶ Charron and Fergusson, “Arctic Sovereignty.”

⁷ Alan H. Kessel, Assistant Deputy Minister, Legal Affairs, Global Affairs Canada, FAAE Evidence, 14 June 2018.

⁸ Michael Byers, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia, FAAE Testimony, 17 October 2018.

⁹ Suzanne Lalonde, Professor, Faculty of Law, Université de Montréal, FAAE Testimony, 17 October 2018.

¹⁰ Kessel, FAAE Evidence.

¹¹ Kessel, FAAE Evidence.

¹² Jane Weldon, Director General, Marine Safety and Security, Department of Transport, FAAE Evidence, 19 September 2018.

¹³ Adam Lajeunesse, “Canada’s Sovereignty in the Arctic,” Brief to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, St. Francis Xavier University, Mulroney Institute of Governance, June 2018. Available through the Standing Committee: <http://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/FAAE/StudyActivity?studyActivityId=10158962>

¹⁴ Lajeunesse, “Canada’s Sovereignty in the Arctic.”

¹⁵ Major-General William Seymour, Deputy Commander, Canadian Joint Operations Command, Department of National Defence, FAAE Evidence, 19 September 2018.

¹⁶ “Operation LIMPID is the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) mission to detect threats to Canada’s security as early as possible. The CAF keeps a routine watch over Canada’s air, maritime, land, space, and cyber domains. It also maintains a physical presence in some areas.” It “makes use of the following CAF services and groups:

Sea: The Royal Canadian Navy provides maritime domain awareness.

Air: The Royal Canadian Air Force provides aerospace domain awareness in coordination with the Canadian NORAD Region.

Land: The Canadian Joint Operations Command’s Regional Joint Task Forces provide land domain awareness. They link up with Provincial emergency services. The Canadian Rangers also provide support.

Space: The Canadian Space Operations Centre coordinates space domain awareness data.

Cyber: The Canadian Forces Network Operations Centre coordinates cyber domain awareness.

Areas of Surveillance

North Pacific West Central East Atlantic

Joint Task Force North (JTFN) Surveillance Area

JTFN leads CAF operations in the North [including Yukon; the Northwest Territories; and Nunavut] ... JTFN’s surveillance area for maritime operations extends to the North along Greenland’s territorial borders. It reaches north to the pole. In the west it extends to the border of Yukon and Alaska. JTFN’s maritime region also includes: Hudson Bay; Ungava Bay; and James Bay. JTFN’s total surveillance area covers nearly 8.8 million square kilometres.” “Operation LIMPID,” National Security and Defence, Canadian Armed Forces, Government of Canada, last modified 20 March 2018. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-canada-north-america/op-limpid.page>

¹⁷ Weldon, FAAE Evidence.

¹⁸ Jeffery Hutchinson, Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, FAAE Evidence, 19 September 2018.

¹⁹ Hutchinson, FAAE Evidence.

²⁰ *Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic*, 2011. https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/531/EDOCs-3661-v1-ACMMDK07_Nuuk_2011_SAR_Search_and_Rescue_Agreement_signed_EN_FR_RU.PDF?sequence=5&isAllowed=y; *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic*, 2013. <https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/529/EDOCs->

[2067-v1-ACMMSE08 KIRUNA 2013 agreement on oil pollution preparedness and response in the arctic formatted.PDF?sequence=5&isAllowed=y](#)

²¹ *Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean*, signed in Ilulissat on October 3, 2018 by Canada, Norway, Russia, the United States, China, Iceland, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the European Union, and Denmark in respect of Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000449233.pdf>

²² Lassi Heininen, "High Arctic Stability as an Asset for Storms of International Politics – an Introduction," in *Future Security of the Global Arctic: State Policy, Economic Security and Climate*, edited by Lassi Heininen (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

²³ Heather Exner-Pirot and Robert W. Murray, "Regional Order in the Arctic: Negotiated Exceptionalism," The Arctic Institute, Center for Circumpolar Security Studies, and *POLITIK* 20/23 (2017). <https://tidsskrift.dk/politik/article/download/97153/145904/>

²⁴ Michał Łuszczuk, "Military Cooperation and Enhanced Arctic Security in the Context of Climate Change and Growing Global Interest in the Arctic," in *Future Security of the Global Arctic*, ed. Heininen.

14

Operation NANOOK 2016 and DND Aid to Civil Authorities

December 13, 2016

The Yukon's late August earthquake, its epicentre near Haines Junction, never made the news, but the emergency response effort was impressive. Municipal and territorial first responders attended the scene, and they were soon joined by volunteers and representatives from affected First Nations communities and additional civilian emergency response teams from as far away as Vancouver. A contingent from the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group arrived, along with several hundred Canadian Armed Forces personnel with equipment that included CH-146 Griffon and CH-147 Chinook helicopters and CC-130 transport aircraft. The Minister of National Defence visited the operation, as did the Commissioner of the Yukon (parallel to a provincial lieutenant governor). At least one other member of Parliament and one senator attended, and there were observers from the armed forces of the United States, United Kingdom, and France, as well as a small civilian observer group.

The earthquake was in fact an imagined event and the very real emergency response effort was a practice run, organized by the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) as Operation NANOOK. The Yukon scenario and response – centred around a serious natural disaster requiring a whole-of-government response – accurately reflected a key operational reality for the Canadian military at home – namely, its prominent function of aiding those civilian authorities and operations that have the primary responsibility for ensuring public safety in Canada.

In Operation NANOOK, an annual northern exercise to practice and train for Canadian military operations in the Arctic, the defence of Canada is less about vanquishing enemies bent on undermining sovereignty and violating our territorial integrity, and more about responding to the kinds of natural calamities and human misadventures that can, in the Arctic's

challenging environment, quickly overwhelm the capacity of civilian agencies tasked with restoring and maintaining public safety. Assisting civilian authorities and institutions in a broad range of responsibilities in law enforcement, environmental surveillance, and disaster relief is what the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) do in the Arctic. Indeed, the dominant day-to-day activity of the CAF in the rest of Canada is much the same. Air space surveillance and control and maritime surveillance of approaches to Canadian territory are undertaken by NORAD, but these are most often not national defence operations in the usual sense of that term. They are actually examples of the Canadian Armed Forces aiding civilian law enforcement agencies, like the RCMP, and the Coast Guard in its mission of promoting the safety, security, and accessibility of Canada's waterways.

So, each year the CAF mount an exercise, sometimes in cooperation with other militaries, notably the US, that focuses on working with Canadian non-military agencies and departments of government¹ with responsibilities related to security and public safety in the Arctic. Hence, this year's training response to a simulated crisis in the Yukon was premised on an earthquake, while another part of the exercise responded to a security crisis in the Rankin Inlet region of Nunavut. In the coming years, rather than Operation NANOOK being a single annual exercise, it will become a framework under which a series of exercises will be conducted throughout each year.

The point of such whole-of-government exercises is not only to practice interoperability and cooperation among diverse organizations, departments, and levels of government, and not only to develop technical operational skills, like rescuing adventurers from isolated mountain ridges or workers and residents from collapsed buildings. It is also to build durable and trusted relations between local communities and agencies responsible for various elements of public safety. Indeed, the relevance and urgency of practicing emergency operations in response to natural and human-made catastrophes was highlighted, and regularly commented upon, by the voyage this past summer of the cruise ship *Crystal Serenity* through the Northwest Passage with some 1,000 passengers on board – a harbinger of increased sea traffic and therefore increased risk of disaster (quite apart from the environmental and social impacts of cruises and other ship transport through Canada's Arctic waters). As it also happened this year, Griffon helicopters and their crews, because they were in the region for NANOOK and were thus available, participated in an actual operation to find and rescue stranded Alaskan paddlers.²

The question of when Canadian Forces become engaged domestically in direct assistance to civilian authorities is answered, not by the Forces themselves, but always by civilian authorities and agencies. A whole-of-government approach to emergencies begins with civilian first responders and draws in various government departments and agencies as warranted, and, in special circumstances, the CAF can be called on to assist as mandated by the National Defence Act and the Emergencies Act.

An important distinction is made between the CAF's security-related "aid to the civil power" and its disaster relief "assistance to civil authorities." The former term refers to military aid provided to law enforcement forces to restore and maintain law and order, while the latter term encompasses all other forms of assistance the military gives to civilians responding to emergencies. Examples of military support of civilian authorities in both categories include search and rescue, counter-terrorism, emergencies (natural and man-induced), fisheries and border protection, humanitarian assistance, environmental surveillance, special events, and operations to counter drug and arms smuggling and illegal immigration.³

The "Aid to the Civil Power" provision of the National Defence Act allows provinces, through their Attorney General, to "requisition aid where a riot or disturbance occurs or is considered as likely to occur." The request is made directly to the Chief of Defence Staff and he/she is then obliged to "call out such part of the Canadian Forces as the Chief of Defence Staff ... considers necessary for the purpose of suppressing or preventing an actual or likely riot or disturbance." In other words, the Chief of Defence Staff is "required" to provide assistance (although the form and extent of that assistance is determined by the military commander).⁴

The Emergencies Act of 1988 replaced the War Measures Act, and it addresses four kinds of emergencies: two of them domestic, public welfare (natural disasters) and public order (threats to security); and two of them international, threats to Canadian sovereignty and territorial integrity and imminent or actual war.⁵

The Government Operations Centre (GOC)⁶ within Public Safety Canada is responsible for monitoring and situational awareness at the national-level and for managing and coordinating what it calls "an all-hazards integrated federal emergency response to events (potential or actual, natural or human-induced, accidental or intentional) of national interest." The GOC website reports that some 250 events each year require a full risk assessment and coordinated response. In addition, some 30 to 40 events with a national security dimension require the same. Civilian authorities are in charge, and

when military assistance is sought, the idea is that the military should be “last in, and first out” – the armed forces are intended to be the agency of last resort and they are not to do jobs or tasks that other groups could do.

Instances of domestic military interventions to restore public order in response to social disruption have been rare. The invocation of the War Measures Act in 1970 in the context of the FLQ crisis, and the Oka Standoff of 1990, when the Quebec premier requested assistance under the National Defence Act, are the only instances of the CAF intervening in a domestic security crisis in the past 60 years. And there have been only four such interventions since World War II.⁷

That is why the declaration, in recent days, by Federal Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr drew prominent reprimands when he told a business audience, in the context of pipeline politics, that “if people choose for their own reasons not to be peaceful, then the Government of Canada, through its defence forces, will ensure that people will be kept safe.”⁸ The minister subsequently back-tracked from those remarks, and NDP MP Randall Garrison rightly pointed out that “the federal government has no such authority to use our military against pipeline protests.”⁹ Armed forces help is requested by the province and the Federal Cabinet can intervene only after the relevant province has indicated that the emergency exceeds the capacity or authority of the province to deal with it.¹⁰

Canadian political authorities have generally been reluctant to deploy military forces in domestic situations of threats to public order. In September 1995 First Nations communities occupied the Canadian Forces’ Ipperwash training camp, following decades of dispute over the federal government’s expropriation of part of the Stony Point reserve for use as a military training camp. The military withdrew in the face of the Indigenous occupation, and left the response to the Ontario Provincial Police, with the police killing a First Nations person, Anthony O’Brien “Dudley” George, in the context of escalating tensions.¹¹ At Gustafsen Lake in British Columbia in 1995, the CAF provided the RCMP with armoured personnel carriers, assault weapons, and night vision equipment during their confrontation with armed protesters, but the CAF did not directly intervene.¹²

More common are aid-to-civil-authorities operations (the kind practiced in the Yukon portion of NANOOK 2016). In the spring of 1997, for example, the Red River flooded to extraordinary levels, a public welfare emergency was declared, and the Manitoba Premier requested assistance from DND for personnel to build dikes in southern Manitoba. As the flooding exceeded original estimates, increased military support involved infantry personnel,

military police, army engineers, and medical and service units from the land forces, anti-submarine helicopters (which could land in water), clearance divers and small boat units from maritime forces, and helicopter and transport units and airfield engineers from the air force.

The Canadian military historian Sean Maloney notes that most of the work carried out by the CAF in the Manitoba flood “was analogous to common battlefield functions.” He points out that

reconnaissance aircraft, ground units, and satellites kept track of the flood’s progress, while search and rescue helicopters evacuated the population. Strategic airlift was used to bring in engineering resources from across the country. Military police handled movement control, while combat arms units controlled looting in evacuated areas. Engineer units built and maintained dikes, and diver units kept track of their integrity. The entire operation would have been impossible without the communications provided by divisional and brigade mobile signals units.¹³

During the 1998 Eastern Canada ice storm more than 14,000 soldiers were involved, and Joseph Scanlon, a Canadian academic and preeminent disaster response expert, describes the array of services provided:

The soldiers helped with the cleanup. They assisted at nursing homes that were short of staff. They provided extra ambulances. They picked up and delivered fuel, food, bottled water, and firewood. Some dug postholes for new telephone poles; others helped dairy farmers milk their cows by hand.¹⁴

Canadian Forces also responded to the 1999 Toronto winter emergency and the 2003 Eastern North America power failure. In 2005 the Canadian Forces assisted firefighters combating British Columbia forest fires. And in December 2005-January 2006 a drinking water emergency in a Northern Ontario First Nations community led to the Canadian military providing a water purification system.¹⁵

That military aid to civilian authorities is a long-established function of the CAF was reaffirmed more than two decades ago in the 1994 Defence White Paper¹⁶ which identified a broad range of Department of National Defence (DND) activities in support of other government departments and agencies. These are now widely acknowledged as key military activities and responsibilities.

In peacetime, and even in the acknowledged absence of any military threat, surveillance and control are key responsibilities of the CAF. National frontiers and territory must be monitored, especially to provide credible

assurances of the continuing absence of military threats and to assist civilian law enforcement agencies. And, as the White Paper notes, even though “responsibility for many of the Government’s activities in the surveillance and control of Canadian territory, airspace, and maritime areas of jurisdiction lies with civilian agencies,” the CAF play a role because they have the “readiness and reach” that are not usually available to civilian agencies.

In 1991 the renewed NORAD agreement assigned this North American joint command a role in counter-narcotic monitoring and surveillance. Again, monitoring borders for illegal human crossings as well as contraband prevention is a civilian responsibility, but Canadian Forces’ capabilities, for example monitoring and controlling air approaches to Canada, supplement those of other government departments and agencies.

Fisheries protection is a long-standing role for the Canadian Forces. The fisheries patrol operations are led by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, but DND contributes extensively with both ships and aircraft in surveillance and control activities. The same goes for environmental surveillance. DND and the Department of the Environment have an arrangement related to environmental surveillance and cleanup, and DND, in its routine surveillance mission, seeks “to identify and report potential and actual environmental problems.”

DND’s responsibilities include emergency preparedness and it thus regularly coordinates responses to emergencies with other departments and agencies. And DND also has primary responsibility for air search and rescue and assists the Coast Guard in marine search and rescue. It operates three Joint Rescue Coordination Centres (JRCC) – Victoria, Trenton, and Halifax – with personnel from the CAF as well as the Coast Guard. Ground search and rescue is the responsibility of the provinces and local police organizations, but the Canadian Forces also act in supportive roles.¹⁷

The CAF have also provided emergency disaster relief assistance to the United States under the 2008 Civil Assistance Plan, a bilateral agreement which facilitates the military forces of one country supporting authorities in the other during a civil emergency, once civil authorities have requested help. In September of 2008, after the agreement was signed in February of that year, Canadian CC-177 Globemaster strategic lift aircraft responded to Hurricane Gustav by airlifting patients from the southern US, and CC-130 Hercules transport planes helped in humanitarian relief.¹⁸

Overseas, humanitarian support for emergency responses is the focus of Canada’s Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART).¹⁹ Soldiers and

civilians from Global Affairs Canada deploy on short notice to scenes of natural disasters to complex humanitarian emergencies, but only to “permissive” environments and at the request of the host country. DART’s role is to help stabilize an emergency until local authorities and international aid groups can assume responsibility for recovery and reconstruction. It is not a first responder, but assists when local capacity is overwhelmed. Typical DART tasks include water purification, primary medical care, and engineering help.

Canadian Forces also have a history of working with civilian agencies internationally. UN peace support operations are in fact designed to aid civilian authorities and law enforcement, albeit in less permissive environments, by, among other things, helping to extend the authority and services of a host government to all parts of the country. UN-commanded peace support operations are prominently “aid to the civil power” operations (restoration of order and law enforcement), but experience has also shown that the restoration of order and law enforcement are more likely to be successful if they include humanitarian “assistance to civilian authorities.”

As Maloney has noted, military aid to the civil power and to civilian authorities engages battlefield functions. And while warfighting is generally assumed to be the primary competency sought by armed forces, in fact, that has not been the primary vocation of contemporary Canadian Armed Forces. The day-to-day military operations in Canada are to aid civil authorities, and briefings at NANOOK 2016, as well as a study by a group of Canadian academics,²⁰ identify some basic principles which are intended to govern domestic Canadian military operations when war-fighting is not the job and when the lead organization is not the military. The first principle is that civil authorities always stay in charge and that the military plays a subordinate role. Second, military personnel support civilian authorities and are normally not in direct contact with, or in confrontation with, the public. In addition, communication in such civilian-led operations remains open and unencrypted.

In domestic and international operations, humanitarian principles are central in the service of human security. As the UN’s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) define them,²¹ the humanitarian principles are: humanity, the obligation to address human suffering wherever it is found; neutrality, the refusal to take sides in the context of hostilities; impartiality, taking humanitarian action on the basis of need alone and giving priority to those in most urgent need without regard for nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class, or political opinions; and

independence, autonomy from political, economic, military, or other objectives.

When military forces are so extensively engaged in tasks and operations led by civilian authorities, the question arises as to when military aid to civilian authorities in disaster relief, for example, are in danger of compromising humanitarian principles and of militarizing what should remain unequivocally civilian tasks and responsibilities? Internationally, when the legitimacy of the host state's government is actively contested, helping to extend the authority and services of that government to all parts of the country is no longer a neutral or impartial activity. That is a lesson persuasively taught in Afghanistan. As humanitarian organizations cooperated with international forces in humanitarian activities, Afghan civilians increasingly understood that aid was coming with a political agenda, and that aid would be more forthcoming when it reinforced the geopolitical objectives of the international forces, including Canadian forces.²²

Some analysts point out that Canadian history and legislation, as well as the tradition and relatively modest size of the Canadian Armed Forces, mitigate against the militarization of emergency response in Canada.²³ Indeed, the Canadian goal should be to ensure that the CAF's prominent involvement in aid to civil authorities influences and helps to shape Canadian military culture in the direction of enhancing public safety and human security, rather than the military altering the culture of emergency response. In fact, that was a point emphasized in NANOOK 2016 – namely, if the armed forces are to become more effective in working, not only with, but for, civilian authorities, they will have to develop a better understanding of, and be more responsive to, the culture of civilian first responders and humanitarian organizations.

CAF roles and operations in the Arctic both foster and require effective cooperation with civilian authorities and agencies and regular engagement with the communities of the north. To put it simply, as one official did, security in the Arctic is not about guns. At the site of the imagined earthquake near Haines Junction in late summer, it was clear that firepower is not at the centre of what makes an effective military presence in today's Arctic.

Notes

¹ Non-military partners in the exercise were: the Government of the Yukon Territory, Town of Haines Junction, City of Whitehorse, Champagne Aishihik First Nation, RCMP, Public Health Agency Canada, Transport Canada, Parks Canada, Service Canada, Public Safety, Environment Canada, and Transport Safety Board.

² David Pugliese, "Op Nanook 2016 wraps up – exercise photos," *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 September 2016. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/op-nanook-2016-wraps-up-exercise-photos>

³ "TERMIUM Plus, The Government of Canada's terminology and linguistic data bank," Government of Canada. <http://www.btb.termiumpius.gc.ca/tpv2/alpha/alpha-eng.html?lang=eng&i=1&index=alt&srchtxt=MILITARY%20AID%20CIVIL%20AUTHORITIES>

⁴ Canadian Forces' "Duties in Aid Of the Civil Power," Queen's Regulations and Orders, Volume I, Chapter 23. <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/queens-regulations-orders/vol-1-administration/ch-23-duties-aid-civil-power.html>; *National Defence Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. N-5, Section 277. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/n-5/page-1.html>

⁵ Domestically, the Act provides for the proclamation of a public welfare emergency in the event of a real or imminent natural catastrophe; disease in humans, animals or plants; or accident or pollution which pose a "danger to life or property, social disruption or a breakdown in the flow of essential goods, services or resources so serious as to constitute a national emergency." The Act also provides for responses to a public order emergency, defined as "an emergency that arises from threats to the security of Canada" by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. *Emergencies Act*, R.S.C., 1985, c. 22. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-4.5/page-1.html>

⁶ Government Operations Centre, Public Safety Canada. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca>

⁷ David Etkin, Kenneth McBey, and Cliff Trollope, "The Military and Disaster Management: A Canadian Perspective on the Issue," Canadian Risk and Hazards Network, 2011. <https://crhnet.ca/sites/default/files/library/Etkin.pdf>

⁸ Catharine Tunney, "Jim Carr says military comments not a threat to pipeline protesters," CBC News, 2 December 2016. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/jim-carr-protests-pipeline-military-1.3878258>

⁹ Ryan Maloney, "Jim Carr's Remarks About Using Military At Kinder Morgan Protests Were 'Reckless': NDP," *Huffington Post*, 2 December 2016. https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/12/02/jim-carr-military-kinder-morgan-ndp_n_13375946.html

¹⁰ *Emergencies Act*, Section 25-3.

-
- ¹¹ Sean M. Maloney, "Domestic Operations: The Canadian Approach," *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* (Autumn 1997).
- ¹² Maloney, "Domestic Operations."
- ¹³ Maloney, "Domestic Operations."
- ¹⁴ Joseph Scanlon, "Canadian Military Emergency Response: Highly Effective, but Rarely Part of the Plan," *Military Review* (November-December 2005).
- ¹⁵ Etkin, McBey, and Trollope, "The Military and Disaster Management."
- ¹⁶ Department of National Defence, 1994 White Paper on Defence, Government of Canada Publications, 1994. <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/429769/publication.html>
- ¹⁷ Search and Rescue Canada, Department of National Defence. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-canada-north-america-current/sar-canada.page>
- ¹⁸ "The Canada-U.S. Defence Relationship, Backgrounder - Civil Assistance Plan," Project number: BG 13.055, Government of Canada, 4 December 2014. <https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2014/12/canada-defence-relationship.html>
- ¹⁹ "The Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART)," The Department of National Defence. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-abroad-recurring/dart.page>
- ²⁰ Etkin, McBey, and Trollope, "The Military and Disaster Management."
- ²¹ OCHA. <https://docs.unocha.org>
- ²² Taylor Owen and Emily Paddon, "Whither Humanitarian Space? Integrating militaries and humanitarian actors in Afghanistan came with a cost," OpenCanada.org, 8 June 2012. <https://www.opencanada.org/features/whither-humanitarian-space/>
- ²³ Etkin, McBey, and Trollope, "The Military and Disaster Management."

15

The Ilulissat Declaration: Ten Years Later

May 14, 2018

Ten years ago this month, the five Arctic Ocean states issued the Ilulissat Declaration.¹ In it they pledged to rely on existing international law, notably the Law of the Sea,² as the framework through which they would seek the “orderly settlement” of disputes in this rapidly changing region. In a welcome counterpoint to the persistent and sometimes overwrought warnings of a new Cold War set to engulf the Arctic along with the rest of the planet, the Denmark/Greenland governments hosted an anniversary meeting (Ilulissat II, May 22-23, 2018) commemorating the decade of “peaceful and responsible cooperation in the Arctic” that followed Ilulissat I.

When Danish Foreign Minister Ander Samuelsen insists that “a peaceful and stable Arctic” that “continue[s] on the track of dialogue and cooperation” is a prerequisite for durable northern development,³ he is essentially channelling Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1987 vision of the Arctic as a “zone of peace.” The former Soviet leader’s famous Murmansk speech is still understood to have marked the start of “a new era of Arctic Cooperation.” A recent University of Copenhagen study draws a direct line from that speech to the formation of the Arctic Council in 1996 and to the “mosaic” of regional agreements and institutions that function as “modest venues” for the “practical, low-politics cooperation”⁴ that the Arctic has enjoyed throughout the three post-Cold War decades.

If there is too much of Pollyanna in that account, reminders of Russia’s 2007 planting of a titanium Russian flag on the sea-bed at the North Pole, its determined northern military build-up, the region’s ongoing border disputes, and the competing continental shelf claims under the Law of the Sea, should together be more than enough to acknowledge that the Arctic’s “low-politics” are always in danger of morphing into a new version of the high politics or great game of strategic competition. But the Danes, by most measures the least likely of Arctic states to spearhead a paradigm-shifting initiative, helped to bend the arc of contemporary Arctic history toward

cooperation when they hosted one of those modest, low-politics meetings in May 2008 in Ilulissat, Greenland.

The focus at Ilulissat was on the Arctic Ocean, so only the five states bordering on it were invited (Denmark-Greenland, Norway, Russia, the United States, and Canada), a controversial exclusion of the other three states in the Arctic Council (Iceland, Finland, and Sweden) and Indigenous communities. And the meeting acknowledged only the obvious when it emphasized the global reality of climate change and its heightened impact on the Arctic. Its warning of the depth, speed, and impact of that change was also not news, neither to the inhabitants of the Arctic nor to much of the rest of the world. But, the Arctic Ocean Five had become concerned that a prominent feature of the global response was calls for an Arctic Treaty modelled at least somewhat on the 1959 Antarctic Treaty.⁵ They were concerned because a formula for collective action toward a region without any state presence, Antarctica, was unlikely to work in a region dominated by the presence of states, including superpowers, but also because collective global action on an Arctic Treaty would necessarily dilute the influence of the states in the region, and for the less dominant Arctic states it would be a radical dilution of influence over affairs in their own neighbourhood.

Hence, the Ilulissat meeting's most far-reaching assertion was its insistence that existing international law was both a necessary and a *sufficient* framework for managing relations among Arctic states and for providing for the orderly settlement of conflicting claims. The Arctic Ocean states were obviously seeking to reinforce order and stability in the region, but they also wanted to head-off calls for an Arctic Treaty heavily shaped by states outside the region.

So, on existing international law as the "necessary" framework, the Declaration says:

...an extensive international legal framework applies to the Arctic Ocean.... Notably, the law of the sea provides for important rights and obligations concerning the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf, the protection of the marine environment, including ice-covered areas, freedom of navigation, marine scientific research, and other uses of the sea. We remain committed to this legal framework and to the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims.

And on the “sufficiency” of existing international law, the Declaration specifically and pointedly added: “We therefore see no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal regime to govern the Arctic Ocean.”

The Declaration emphasized the Arctic as a region that relies especially on cooperation, notably in ensuring safe navigation and timely emergency responses with credible search and rescue facilities, and promised the collective development of mechanisms and arrangements towards that end:

Cooperation, including on the sharing of information, is a prerequisite for addressing these challenges. We will work to promote safety of life at sea in the Arctic Ocean, including through bilateral and multilateral arrangements between or among relevant states.

Regional cooperation, including under the Law of the Sea, was understood by all five Arctic Ocean states as serving their vital national interests (that included the Americans, even though they have yet to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea), all recognizing that whatever benefits were to be derived from a more accessible Arctic, they would be available only if the region was one of enduring stability, through cooperation. A 2017 RAND Corporation Arctic study⁶ points out that Russia in particular recognizes the benefits from cooperation, its persistently demonstrated stance in the Arctic, for three main reasons:

First, the difficulties of operating in such a rigorous environment make it inherently beneficial to collaborate; second, a number of key Arctic issues—oil spills, for instance—are transnational, therefore requiring collective responses; and third, economic development and investments benefit from a peaceful and cooperative environment—a factor of particular importance to Russia, which views the economic development of the Arctic as a key strategic objective.

The ongoing economic and strategic importance of the Arctic inclines Moscow toward reaffirming the Ilulissat Declaration, which it did in the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept of Russia. It declares Russia’s “belie[f] that the existing international legal framework is sufficient to successfully settle any regional issues through negotiation.”⁷ The University of Copenhagen study, “Learning from the Ilulissat Initiative,” thus credits the Ilulissat Declaration with helping to “calm international fears of an unregulated Arctic.”⁸

Regional stability depends on the behaviour of individual states, on the development of regional institutions or agreements that win legitimacy and the confidence of regional stakeholders, and on global standards. In the

Arctic, as elsewhere, regional management takes into account states acting unilaterally in their own interests but tempering that with awareness of and regard for the welfare of the neighbourhood. It also increasingly involves collective arrangements and institutions to guide and regulate areas of common concern and responsibility. That dual imperative of national assertiveness and joint regulation has made the Arctic a region of institutional entrepreneurship. The Arctic Council grew out of that dynamic and, reinforced by Ilulissat, that sense of being a coherent regional entity produced multiple region-wide agreements and institutions to “provide functional solutions to specific challenges.”⁹

Since 2008 and the Ilulissat Declaration there have been multiple examples of such “functional solutions to specific challenges.” The Polar Code of the International Maritime Organization was developed over the course of decades, entering into force in January 2017. It establishes mandatory regulations and standards for vessels operating in ice-covered waters to enhance safety and environmental protection. The Arctic Council brokered two key agreements: the 2011 Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, and the 2013 Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. During the 2013-15 Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the Arctic Economic Council was created as an independent organization to facilitate business activity and promote “responsible economic development through the sharing of best practices, technological solutions, standards and other information.”¹⁰ To these can now be added the November 2017 agreement in principle to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries on the Central Arctic Ocean, involving the five Arctic Ocean states plus Iceland and major fishing states, notably the European Union (EU), China, Japan, and South Korea.¹¹

Arctic states acting collectively have found the means, despite the serious differences that dog their relations in other parts of the world, to advance their own interests while also advancing the regional public good. They have managed, say Canadian scholars Heather Exner-Pirot and Robert W. Murray, to establish an “Arctic international society” in which “great powers and smaller powers [have] come together to form an order aimed at promoting norms and institutions not seen elsewhere in the world.”¹² In fact, some observers see in Arctic collaboration opportunities to influence the international strategic environment more broadly. The usual question is, do events and disputes elsewhere, beyond the Arctic, spill over into the Arctic and undermine cooperation there? The Danish study, however, makes the

claim that the reverse actually can and does happen – that is, cooperation in the Arctic spills over into other regions and state-to-state relations to ease tensions and promote cooperation and therefore security. “Arctic institutions ... have an impact that extends beyond the polar region, as they give Russia and Western diplomats an arena for communicating about broader non-Arctic questions, even as general East-West relations have grown strained since the Ukraine crisis.”¹³

In the meantime, of course, military expansion remains a prominent Arctic reality. To date the growing military presence has not altered the Arctic’s requirement for, or inclination towards, cooperation. It has also not challenged the pervasive assumption that military power holds little promise as a means to settling regional disputes.

Russia, in particular, is undertaking a significant military build-up and modernization – that applies to Russian forces generally, but also to the Arctic. Indeed, the Arctic has always been at the centre of the Soviet Union’s and Russia’s global strategic posture – it is the primary location of its strategic sea-based nuclear deterrent, which operates out of its Kola Peninsula installations. The Arctic is the Northern Fleet’s passageway to the Atlantic and, with changing maritime conditions, its access to the Pacific. The RAND Corporation study characterizes Russia’s Arctic military build-up as supporting its strategic deterrent, but it also places greater emphasis on territorial security, given receding ice coverage of the Arctic Ocean and a more exposed northern frontier. Russia is nevertheless, says the RAND study, “still a long way from reestablishing the level of military capability it had in the Arctic during the Cold War.” In short, Russia’s expansion of military capabilities in the Arctic is consistent with Russia’s overall defence posture, “without signaling any particularly ominous intent in the Arctic.”¹⁴

In one obvious sense there is no foreseeable circumstance in which Russia will not be the dominant military, economic, and political power in the region. Russia has the longest northern frontier, its national economy is heavily linked to its Arctic region (the source of one-fifth of its national production), and the Northern Sea Route’s navigable season is expanding and as such requires a major system of emergency response and search and rescue centres. With that in mind, Russia’s northern military build-up includes a string of airfields with search and rescue facilities from the Pacific side of the Bering Strait at Anadyr and Provideniya, to Cape Schmidt on the Arctic side. From there these airfields and search and rescue centres extend from Wrangle Island, moving east to Pevek, Kotelný Island, Tiksi, and

Severnaya Zemlya. From there, at least another eight such facilities extend eastward to the Kola Peninsula, the home of the strategic Northern Fleet.

Russia's dominance is a hard reality, and there is no foreseeable prospect of any other Arctic state, or group of states, challenging Russian capacity within the region. That is not a claim of Russian global strategic dominance (its primary claim to global prominence being its nuclear arsenal), but within the Arctic it is dominant, making cooperation with Russia in the Arctic a vital security interest of the rest of the Arctic community of states. Nevertheless, while military prowess can bring important infrastructure benefits to the region, it offers few geostrategic advantages – the extravagantly feared scramble for Arctic resources is still impractical, a point made effectively by Exner-Pirot and Murray:

The idea of taking Arctic resources by force also defies logic. Those large-scale Arctic developments that have been realized are typically multi-billion-dollar capital investments which require decades-long lifespans to reap returns. Investors do not and will not fund billion-dollar Arctic projects under conditions of significant geopolitical uncertainty, for example where territories are under dispute. It is therefore in everyone's economic interest to maintain a peaceful and stable Arctic region which is rules-based and predictable.¹⁵

Cooperation is a shared Arctic interest, and for it to endure requires a culture of increasing openness, transparency, and ongoing dialogue. That applies especially to Russian military operations, but also to all other military presence in the region. One way in which military transparency was at least somewhat served was by the annual meetings of the Arctic Chiefs of Defence Staff. Though reportedly valued by all states in the region, those meetings have happened only twice – having been suspended over Russia's action in Crimea.¹⁶ But these kinds of exchanges and confidence-building measures are clearly essential, not only to promote understanding of the rationales for military expansion and of the dangers of military missteps, but also for exposing the perils and opportunity costs of escalating conflict.

Inclusivity joins cooperation and transparency as another key to Arctic stability. And in the Arctic, inclusivity obviously does not only mean states in the region, and stakeholder states and international organizations beyond the region, but means especially Indigenous groups for whom the Arctic is home. The Inuit Circumpolar Council was critical of the Ilulissat Declaration as a purely state initiative that failed to recognize the self-

government rights of Indigenous peoples. When Canada, under the government of Stephen Harper, hosted a meeting of Arctic coastal states in 2010, again without Indigenous involvement, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton left the meeting before the closing news conference, having noted that “significant international discussions on Arctic issues should include those who have legitimate interests in the region.”¹⁷ Inclusivity is not optional, and the Danish Foreign Minister has rightly promised that the Ilulissat II conference to mark the 10th anniversary of the Ilulissat Declaration will be an “inclusive meeting.”¹⁸

The 2018 Ilulissat II meeting was not confined to the five Arctic Ocean states. It included Finland, Iceland, and Sweden, as well as the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Saami Council – and the other Indigenous organizations of the Arctic Council’s permanent participants were also invited but did not send representatives.

The following is excerpted from the intervention of the Canadian representative at the Ilulissat II meeting:

Over the past 10 years since the Ilulissat Declaration was signed, we, as Arctic Ocean coastal states, have strengthened this broader cooperation in a number of other areas that pertain more specifically to us.

One of these areas that I would like to highlight today relates to our commitment in the Ilulissat Declaration to the orderly settlement of territorial claims in the Arctic Ocean.

This commitment by all Arctic Ocean coastal states represents a shining example of our collective leadership in the region. It also reaffirms that we will adhere to the international legal framework that applies to the Arctic Ocean and that we will work together to resolve overlapping claims.

And our commitment to peaceful resolution is clearly demonstrated in our work to define the outer limits of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean. We are following the process and rules set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in this regard and we are cooperating to ensure a mutual understanding of how these rules and this process should be applied.

...

To conclude, it is of the utmost importance that the Arctic Ocean coastal states continue to reaffirm the principles and commitments outlined in the Ilulissat Declaration so that we can

continue to demonstrate to the rest of the world that the Arctic is a peaceful and well-managed region, characterized by excellent cooperation and global leadership.

Notes

¹ Arctic Ocean Conference, "The Ilulissat Declaration," 28 May 2008.

<https://www.arctic-report.net/en/product/859>

² United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982.

www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf

³ Ander Samuelsen, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Denmark, Speech to the Conference on the Arctic and SDGs, 1 December 2017. <http://um.dk/en/foreign-policy/the-arctic/the-sdgs-in-the-arctic/speeches/anders-samuelsen/>

⁴ Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen and Gry Thomasen, "Learning from the Ilulissat Initiative: State Power, Institutional Legitimacy, and Governance in the Arctic Ocean 2007-18," University of Copenhagen: Centre for Military Studies, February 2018. https://cms.polsci.ku.dk/publikationer/learning-from-the-ilulissat-initiative/download/CMS_Rapport_2018_1-Learning_from_the_Ilulissat_initiative.pdf

⁵ Rahbek-Clemmensen and Thomasen, "Learning from the Ilulissat Initiative."

⁶ Stephanie Pezard, Abbie Tingstad, Kristin Van Abel, and Scott Stephenson, *Maintaining Arctic Cooperation with Russia: Planning for Regional Change in the Far North* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2017).

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1731.html

⁷ Anders Bjørn Larsen, "The Ilulissat Declaration ten years on," YATA Denmark, 26 October 2017. <http://yatadk.com>

⁸ Rahbek-Clemmensen and Thomasen, "Learning from the Ilulissat Initiative."

⁹ Rahbek-Clemmensen and Thomasen, "Learning from the Ilulissat Initiative."

¹⁰ "About us," Arctic Economic Council. <http://arcticeconomiccouncil.com/about-us>

¹¹ "Arctic Security Briefing Papers," The Simons Foundation.

<http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/projects/arctic-security-briefing-papers>

¹² Heather Exner-Pirot and Robert W. Murray, "Regional Order in the Arctic: Negotiated Exceptionalism," The Arctic Institute, Center for Circumpolar Security Studies, and *POLITIK* 20/23 (2017). <https://tidsskrift.dk/politik/issue/view/6917/showToc> or <https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/regional-order-arctic-negotiated-exceptionalism/>

¹³ Rahbek-Clemmensen and Thomasen, "Learning from the Ilulissat Initiative."

¹⁴ Pezard et al., *Maintaining Arctic Cooperation*.

¹⁵ Exner-Pirot and Murray, "Regional Order in the Arctic."

¹⁶ Exner-Pirot and Murray, "Regional Order in the Arctic."

¹⁷ Rahbek-Clemmensen and Thomasen, "Learning from the Ilulissat Initiative."

¹⁸ Martin Breum, "Ilulissat Two: Why Greenland and Denmark are inviting Arctic governments back this May," *High North News*, 26 February 2018.

<http://www.highnorthnews.com>

16

Close Encounters with the Russian Military: Implications for Arctic Security Cooperation?

November 25, 2014

What does the recent burst of Russian military activity or brinkmanship, as some have characterized it,¹ mean for the Arctic? While current Russian-NATO strategic posturing may accurately reflect the sorry depths to which relations between Russia and most of the Western world have sunk,² a new Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report on “Russia’s Evolving Arctic Strategy”³ is among some timely antidotes to the return-of-the-Cold-War-in-the-Arctic narrative.

Close encounters with the Russian military do seem to be on the rise. Russian bombers have been on more frequent flights over the Barents, Norwegian, and Baltic Seas, as well as along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of North America. Further south there has been a Russian air presence over NATO vessels in the Black Sea, and ships of the Russian Navy sailed near Australia’s northern exclusive economic zone in a not fully appreciated military accompaniment to the G-20 summit.

There have been test missile launches and ongoing announcements of troop commitments and military facilities upgrades in the Arctic. There was even a claimed Russian land annexation – at least that is how an overly excited blogger⁴ characterized the emergence of a tiny, 500 square metre island in the Russian Arctic, all of one metre above the ocean level. The previously unidentified sand island, named the Yaya Island, is situated roughly midway between the Russian town of Sagastyr in the archipelago at the mouth of the Lena River and the New Siberian Islands. Given that the island is essentially a sand bar well within Russia’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ), sovereignty over it is neither in doubt nor controversial – in other words, this is not an audacious Russian land grab. It might conceivably extend Russia’s EEZ, but the idea, suggested by some,⁵ that the Russians could, or would, deploy armed forces there is not to be taken seriously.

The European Leadership Network,⁶ however, has produced a serious Policy Brief⁷ identifying what it calls “close military encounters between Russia and the West” during the first eight months of 2014. Of the almost 40 incidents reported, a few were in the Arctic. There were incidents of largely routine Russian long-range bombers and related aircraft entering US and Canadian air identification zones in international airspace above the Beaufort Sea. Two specific incidents are noted, along with more general references to other flights. In each of these cases cited, American and/or Canadian aircraft responded. The report notes Russia’s detention of a Lithuanian civilian vessel in international waters in the Barents Sea above Norway and the Kola Peninsula. The vessel was towed to Murmansk. The only other Arctic incident reported is the Russian claim that it expelled an American submarine from the same area of the Barents Sea, but the Americans insist it did not happen, and that there were no US subs there at the time.

The two reported incidents over the Beaufort Sea have also been reported by NORAD, the Canada-US North American Aerospace Defence command. On September 18 two Canadian CF-18s intercepted two Russian Tu-95 long-range (Bear) bombers “about 75 kilometres off Canada’s Arctic coast.” The Russians were flying “a course in ‘the western reaches’ of Canada’s Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the Beaufort Sea.” NORAD made it clear that “the Russian bombers never entered Canada’s sovereign airspace,” which extends 12 nautical miles from the coast. Six hours earlier the US scrambled F-22 fighter jets to intercept what was described as a group of Russian aircraft (two MiG-31 fighters, two long-range bombers, and two refuelling tankers). NORAD said at the time that it had “dispatched fighter jets to make contact with Russian long-range bombers ‘in excess of 50 times’ in the last five years.” In June Canadian fighter aircraft were scrambled twice when Russian bombers flew over the Arctic near North American airspace. Government sources told the *Globe and Mail* that in one case the Russian bombers turned back when the Canadian aircraft reached them, and in the other instance the Russians had already veered away before the CF-18s arrived.⁸ It is not clear that these encounters have necessarily become a lot more frequent. In 2010 the Canadian defence minister “told CBC News that Canadian military aircraft intercept between 12 and 18 Russian bombers⁹ annually.”¹⁰

At the end of October, in a 72-hour period, the Russians tested an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), a submarine-launched missile (SLBM), and strategic bomber flights in the Arctic region – testing an

element of each of the three legs of its land-sea-air strategic nuclear triad. The ICBM launch site was in the North but below the Arctic Circle at Plesetsk, which is nevertheless part of the Arkhangelsk Oblast that extends into the Arctic. The SLBM launch was the first operational test of a Bulava missile fired from a new Borey-class submarine. It was fired by the *Yury Dolgoruky* from a submerged position in the Barents Sea. The strategic bombers were intercepted when Norwegian fighter aircraft were scrambled for the second time in a week to meet four Tu-95 bombers and four refuelling tankers over the Barents Sea. Earlier in the week four bombers and four tankers flew over the Barents and Norwegian Seas, six returning to Russia immediately and two flying south to Portugal before returning. In the latter case, British fighters were also scrambled. NATO issued a statement saying such flights, which do not file flight plans or keep in touch with civilian air traffic authorities, pose a risk to civil aviation.¹¹

Far from the Arctic on September 7, three Russian aircraft “buzzed” the Canadian frigate HMCS *Toronto* which was on a training exercise with Ukrainian and American naval forces in the Black Sea. Aside from its reflection on Ukraine-based tensions, the report of the incident was interesting inasmuch as it noted that “Canadian and American fighters have intercepted about 50 Russian aircraft in the last five years”¹² (most of these will have been in the Arctic).

Russia has announced that the Northern Fleet nuclear-powered battle cruiser, the *Admiral Nakhimov*, is to be refurbished. Reputed to be the largest surface warship in the world, along with one other Soviet-era Kirov-class battleship, it has been mothballed since 1999 and is expected to be operational again in 2018.¹³ A new cold weather tank, the “Armata,” is under development, a chief feature of which is new lightweight armour that remains fully effective in extremely low temperatures.¹⁴

The head of the Russian National Defense Management Center recently repeated an earlier announcement that Russia is “planning to build 13 airfields, an air-ground firing range, as well as ten radar and vectoring posts” in the Russian Arctic. Deployments of military units all along the Arctic Circle are to be completed in 2014. The Defense Minister was reported to have said that Russia has “set quite a pace in our foray into the Arctic,” and that in 2014 “a large number of units [will be] deployed along the Arctic Circle, practically from Murmansk to Chukotka.”¹⁵ Thus, construction is reported to be underway at various locations, including Cape Schmidt and Wrangel Island along the eastern coast, at Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land in the central western region of the Arctic, and Koteln Island in the

central eastern region, and other locations along the Arctic coast.¹⁶ The Bering Sea coastal town of Anadyr, 400 miles from the coast of Alaska, is to host a drone base for military reconnaissance.¹⁷ Moscow has indicated plans for a permanent Arctic Force of 6,000.¹⁸

The strategic and international security implications of these developments is not so obvious. Is this really all evidence that “the North Pole could become the world’s next battlefield,” as a headline of *Foreign Policy in Focus* recently put it?¹⁹ Or was President Putin, whose credibility in Europe and North America is at a decidedly low ebb these days (unlike in Russia where Putin’s approval rating is at all-time high – in the 80s²⁰), closer to the mark when he said in 2012 that, apart from the basic objective of maintaining global parity, “modernization of the Russian Navy was dictated by the navy’s special role in supporting national economic interest in the energy-rich Arctic region where Russia is out to expand its exclusive zone of economic title?”²¹

The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), a relatively new, basically mainstream, group of senior policy experts, maintains a strong call for ongoing security cooperation in the Arctic and sees military developments largely in that light. A 2012 report proposing a roadmap for Arctic cooperation²² makes the point that while Russian and American strategic forces continue to operate in the Arctic, though at a much reduced scale, none of the Arctic coastal states has deployed combat units or assets in the region that are capable of long-range or region-wide military operations. RIAC goes on to say that current military modernization or build-up in the region are aimed at meeting “new challenges and threats” that are emerging not due to global strategic tension but due to climate change and increased economic activity – e.g. maritime safety, oil spill prevention, and cross-border crime. To meet these challenges, says RIAC, requires improved icebreaker fleets, enhanced Coast Guard services, state-of-the-art situational awareness capability, air and naval surveillance, and augmented emergency response capabilities. The report adds that “most if not all of these problems are easier to solve through bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region.”

RIAC’s Alexander Shaparov draws a distinction between “negative” and “positive” security approaches in the Arctic: the former focusing on risks and threats to be mitigated largely by military means, and the latter focusing on international cooperation designed to settle conflicts by non-military means and promoting “mutually accepted standards, regulations and procedures.” In the Arctic, he says, the negative security option would generate increased

militarization and reduced reliance on cooperative institutions such as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the Arctic Council. A positive security model will obviously expand cooperation and develop a region, but for that to happen, military issues need to be resolved and existing regional bodies cannot continue to keep security off their agendas.²³

To that end, he says, "Russia has repeatedly declared that it sees no need for any presence of military-political blocs in the Arctic," and that "there are no problems in the Arctic region that could require application of military force." Shaparov concludes with an interesting take on NATO in the Arctic – NATO not now being an Arctic actor, but still present through its Arctic member states. He says Russia and NATO will have to work together for constructive cooperation, using "existing structures," as well as building new ones. He welcomes joint military exercises – citing the RUKUS/FRUKUS (the Russia, UK, US annual military exercises which began in 1988, and which added France in 1993) and Northern Eagle exercises. While he says it is not clear whether NATO engagement will incline the Arctic more toward negative or positive security postures, he calls for NATO and Russia to cooperate, seeing NATO "as a mechanism of communication between positions of member countries ... and those outside the Alliance."²⁴

Of course, it will take more than analysis from a Russian academic council to assuage mutual concerns. In responding to the September interception of Russian bombers in international airspace off the coast of Canada in the Beaufort Sea area, Canada's Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Defence characterized the incident as reinforcing "the narrative of a Putin regime that's more aggressive not just in Crimea, not just in Ukraine, but indeed testing their neighbour in their entire region."²⁵ The Canadian Defence Minister insisted, in response to a similar flight in June, that the Russian military activity in the North demonstrates "the need for ongoing vigilance," and that "the Canadian Armed Forces remain ready and able to respond."²⁶ The former Foreign Minister of Norway, Thorvald Stoltenberg, also voiced concerns about what he called Russia's "offensive demonstration policy," but rather than proclaim a military readiness to respond, he urged closer cooperation and dialogue among the Nordic states and Russia. "We have a tradition of dialogue in the Nordic Region which we must continue with the Russians." Stoltenberg was the architect of Barents region cooperation in the 1990s.²⁷

The new SIPRI report, "Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy,"²⁸ in fact sees cooperation rather than belligerence as being Russia's continuing and primary posture in the Arctic. To begin with, the report reinforces the

centrality of the Arctic to Russia's sense of its own future. It recalls President Vladimir Putin's portrayal of the Arctic as "a concentration of practically all aspects of national security – military, political, economic, technological, environmental and that of resources,"²⁹ energy being especially important. In support of its intense identification of its strategic posture with the Arctic, Russia has given priority attention to reinforcing its sovereignty in the region and to expanding its jurisdiction – with the latter expansion effort pursued entirely within the processes and rules of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Within that basic framework, Russia has also clearly made the practical decision to pursue Arctic governance and regulation through regional structures and cooperation, especially through the Arctic Council.

The SIPRI report surveys the oil and gas potential for Russia within the region, making the important point that Russia has gradually come to the realization that its beneficial exploitation of its Arctic resources will ultimately depend not only on its unambiguous ownership of those resources, but especially on its ability to find reliable markets for them. "In the future Russia's management of interdependence, rather than its assertion of sovereignty in the Arctic, is likely to determine the prospects for development of the Russian Arctic."³⁰ In other words, the military assertiveness or "brinkmanship" that worries the European Leadership Network has little utility for advancing Russia's evolving Arctic strategy.

Russia's primary interest in its management of the Northern Sea Route (NSR), according to SIPRI, is to develop it as a *national* waterway, making regulatory and local military assertiveness rather more relevant. "[O]ne of Russia's main strategic goals in the Arctic is to use 'the Northern Sea Route as a national integrated transport-communication system of the Russian Federation in the Arctic'. As the fastest maritime route to connect the eastern and western parts of Russia, the NSR has played an important role in the course of Russian history."³¹ And while Russia is also interested in developing the NSR as a prominent global shipping route, the national importance attached to it means that Russia will continue to regard the entire route as under strict Russian jurisdiction, just as the Northwest Passage route is unambiguously within Canadian jurisdiction. In both cases, that means an interest in demonstrating military patrol capacity, but with a focus on the real operational requirement that comes with managing a major maritime corridor, and that is the development of credible emergency search and rescue capacity.

The development of the Russian NSR has been significantly slower than expected, with Russia lagging in its effort to build the essential infrastructure. "One of the main obstacles to development of the NSR," says SIPRI, "is the underdeveloped commercial transport infrastructure, including both its maritime (e.g. rescue and refuelling bases, seaports and equipment for response to oil spills) and land components (e.g. the realization of several large-scale railway projects in the North)."³² But it is not only the lack of infrastructure that is slowing the NSR's development as an international route. SIPRI points out that developments in international shipping do not, in fact, point strongly towards greater exploitation of the NSR. New ultra-large container ships which are being developed for economies of scale are said not to be particularly suited to the NSR. The relatively shallow waters of the NSR undermine its competitiveness with other routes.³³

Through all of this, the SIPRI report acknowledges Russia's commitment to adherence to international laws and norms in the Arctic. "Russia has repeatedly stressed that it adheres to UNCLOS and views the convention as the means to resolve disputes about borders and the limits of the Arctic continental shelf. On several occasions, Putin has mentioned that Russia will act strictly 'in line with international law'."³⁴ Similarly, Russia has repeatedly asserted the importance of the Arctic Five, the five littoral Arctic states on the Arctic Ocean, in maintaining the Arctic as a zone of cooperation and as the context in which Arctic rules of the game are developed. Similarly, Russia has been active in, and supportive of, the Arctic Council.

Of course, events in Ukraine have shaken confidence in Russia's commitment to cooperation, but, to be fair, events in Ukraine have also shaken Russian confidence in the West's commitment to cooperation and mutual security. The question of NATO's steady expansion toward the East, as well as the West's early and untroubled support for the overthrow of the elected government in Ukraine, while contentious and still the subject of debate,³⁵ have obviously also done much to undermine relations with Russia. Russia, besides its unhelpful turns to dramatic military symbolism (e.g. the presence of a Russian fleet just north of Australia during the time of the summit there), has thus turned to Plan B in the Arctic. If Plan A focused on partnerships with Western companies for both investment and technical expertise, Plan B looks to other states, notably China, for enduring partnerships and, especially, markets. It is obviously not a matter of making a wholesale switch. Russia still needs Western capital and experience in the Arctic, and while China has investment capacity along with a keen interest and some hard commitments,³⁶ it has little experience in exploiting

resources in the Arctic. Furthermore, says the SIPRI report, Russia remains wary of the rise of China as a major power and will remain reluctant to promote significant Chinese ownership of resource extraction capacity in the Arctic.

The upshot of all this is thus likely to be Russia's continued, if more cautious, security cooperation in the Arctic, with its military developments there focused not so much on defence of what is Russian in the Arctic against hostile threats, but on developing the infrastructure to enable what is Russian in the Arctic to be exploited and marketed internationally.

Notes

¹ Thomas Frear, Łukasz Kulesa, and Ian Kearns, "Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014," European Leadership Network, Policy Brief, November 2014. <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2014/11/05/3b2f357f/Dangerous%20Brinkmanship.pdf>

² "Former Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev has warned that tensions between the US and Russia over Ukraine is bringing the world closer to the brink of a new Cold War. 'The world is on the brink of a new Cold War. Some are even saying that it's already begun'," he said. "Former Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev Warns of New Cold War," *International Business Times*, 8 November 2014. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/>

³ Ekaterina Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy: Drivers, Challenges and New Opportunities*, SIPRI Policy Paper 42 (Solna, SE: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, September 2014). <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/PP/SIPRIPP42.pdf>

⁴ Tyler Rogoway, "Russia Annexes and Dzeplays Forces to Tiny But Strategic Arctic Island," *Jalopnik*, 22 October 2014. <http://foxtrotalpha.jalopnik.com>

⁵ Rogoway, "Russia Annexes."

⁶ A network of former military and civilian leaders devoted to promoting European cooperation and addressing security challenges.

⁷ Frear, Kulesa, and Kearns, "Dangerous Brinkmanship."

⁸ Steven Chase, "Russia's Arctic flybys a 'strategic' message," *Globe and Mail*, 19 June 2014. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/russias-arctic-flybys-a-strategic-message/article19255529/>

⁹ The inconsistency of these numbers is notable. 12 to 18 intercepts by Canada alone works out to a lot more than 50 over five years.

- ¹⁰ “Canadian fighter jets intercept Russian bombers in Arctic,” CBC News, 19 September 2014. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/canadian-fighter-jets-intercept-russian-bombers-in-arctic-1.2772440>
- ¹¹ Thomas Nilsen, “Russia plays nuclear war-games in Barents Region,” *Barents Observer*, 1 November 2014. <https://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/11/russia-plays-nuclear-war-games-barents-region-01-11>
- ¹² Steven Chase, “Russian military jets flew within 100 kilometres of Canadian mainland,” *Globe and Mail*, 19 September 2014. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/russian-military-jets-flew-within-100-kilometres-of-canadian-mainland-source-says/article20706528/>
- ¹³ Trude Pettersen, “Soviet nuclear battle cruiser to be relaunched,” *Barents Observer*, 31 October 2014. <https://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/10/soviet-nuclear-battle-cruiser-be-re-launched-31-10>
- ¹⁴ Denis Kungúrov, “Secret new Russian tank could be deployed to Arctic zones,” *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, 14 November 2014. https://www.rbth.com/defence/2014/11/14/secret_new_russian_tank_could_be_deployed_to_arctic_zones_41411.html
- ¹⁵ Thomas Nilsen, “Arms the Arctic with 13 new airfields,” *Barents Observer*, 29 October 2014. <https://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/10/arms-arctic-13-new-airfields-29-10>
- ¹⁶ Matthew Bodner, “Russia Starts Building Military Bases in the Arctic,” *Moscow Times*, 8 September 2014. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/09/08/russia-starts-building-military-bases-in-the-arctic-a39173>
- ¹⁷ Damien Sharkov, “Russia to Open Arctic Military Drone Base 420 Miles off the Alaskan Coast,” *Newsweek*, 13 November 2014. <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-open-arctic-military-drone-base-420-miles-alaskan-coast-284240>
- ¹⁸ Mark Franchetti, “Putin’s cold war in the Arctic,” *The Sunday Times*, 26 October 2014. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/putins-cold-war-in-the-arctic-c828vzcndkq>
- ¹⁹ Conn Hallinan, “How the North Pole Could Become the World’s Next Battlefield,” *The Nation*, 14 November 2014. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/big-chill-tensions-arctic/>
- ²⁰ Mark Adomanis, “Vladimir Putin’s Approval Rate is Still Near an All-Time High,” *Forbes*, 6 October 2014. <http://www.forbes.com>
- ²¹ Notes taken from Alexander Shaparov, “NATO and a New Agenda for the Arctic,” Russian International Affairs Council, 24 September 2013. <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/nato-and-a-new-agenda-for-the-arctic/>

-
- ²² A.V. Zagorsky, D.K. Bekyashev, A.I. Glubokov, P.V. Savaskov, and E.N. Khmelyova, *The Arctic: Proposals for the International Cooperation Roadmap*, No. 7 (Moscow: Russian International Affairs Council, 2012). https://russiancouncil.ru/upload/Arctica_Eng_S.pdf
- ²³ Shaparov, "NATO and a New Agenda for the Arctic."
- ²⁴ Shaparov, "NATO and a New Agenda for the Arctic."
- ²⁵ "Canadian fighter jets intercept Russian bombers in Arctic."
- ²⁶ Chase, "Russia's Arctic flybys."
- ²⁷ Thomas Nilsen, "Thorvald wants Nordic defence and security commission," *Barents Observer*, 30 October 2014. <https://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/10/thorvald-wants-nordic-defence-and-security-commission-30-10>
- ²⁸ Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*.
- ²⁹ At a meeting of the Russian Security Council on state policy in the Arctic, 22 April 2014, of Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, 1.
- ³⁰ Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, 1.
- ³¹ Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, 9.
- ³² Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, 11.
- ³³ Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, 11.
- ³⁴ Klimenko, *Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy*, 12.
- ³⁵ Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "Put It in Writing: How the West Broke Its Promise to Moscow," *Foreign Affairs*, 29 October 2014. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2014-10-29/put-it-writing>
- ³⁶ Atle Staalesen, "In Russia-China alliance, an Arctic dimension," *Barents Observer*, 14 November 2014. <https://barentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2014/11/russia-china-alliance-arctic-dimension-14-11>

17

Shielding the Arctic From NATO's
Return to Territorial Defence

December 6, 2017

NATO Defence Ministers have signalled their intention to create a new North Atlantic Command, one with Arctic operations also in mind. Along with current deployments in the Baltic States and Poland, intensified air patrols on its eastern and northern flanks, European ballistic missile defence, and a new logistics command for Europe, this new command reflects NATO's shift from out-of-area missions and back to the Cold War priority of defending the territories of NATO member states. Whatever that shift means for Eurasian security writ large, alliance-dominated territorial defence preoccupations in the Arctic would bode ill for its evolving cooperative security framework.

NATO closed its Cold War Atlantic Command in 2002, and the current move to re-establish a modified version of it reflects renewed military interest in what was known as the GIUK Gap, the maritime area between Greenland, Iceland, and the UK. It is the gap through which Russia's Northern Fleet must pass to enter the central Atlantic and beyond, and it is also a potential vantage point from which to disrupt North American-European-Arctic sea lanes of communication.

The head of NATO's military committee, General Petr Pavel of the Czech Republic, sounds the alarm, explaining that because there has been increased Russian naval activity in the northern Atlantic, and because of "the growing capabilities of countries like Russia and China," NATO has no option but to pay more attention to protecting sea lanes that are vital to European security.¹ NATO insists Russian patrols in the North Atlantic and Arctic have returned to Cold War levels,² and thus multiple warnings, some dire, about Russian assertiveness and NATO vulnerability have followed. The Commander of the US Sixth Fleet sees the North Atlantic as once again becoming an area of competition that amounts to "the start of the Fourth Battle of the Atlantic."³ Russia, on the other hand, was quick to label the proposed new Atlantic Command a return to the military competition modelled in the Cold War.⁴

While the more extreme rhetorical heights can be discounted, they ought not obscure the more moderate voices that agree that the combination of deteriorating relations with Russia and the latter's expanded maritime capacity and activity in the North Atlantic raises legitimate concerns about the long-term security of marine traffic in the North Atlantic and the European side of the Arctic⁵ – although it does say something about the imaginative paucity of alliance security planners that they are so readily drawn to reconstructing the Cold War's elaborate and costly (economically and politically) military responses to Russian recalcitrance. The new Canadian defence policy statement⁶ properly notes that “a credible military deterrent serves as a diplomatic tool to help prevent conflict *and should be accompanied by dialogue*” (emphasis added).

In the meantime, the new Atlantic Command is expected to be headquartered in the United States (although some in Scotland are vying for the honour⁷). Besides addressing maritime security, the renewed “Europe first” focus is also meant to reassure Baltic and east European allies, encouraging them to ignore President Donald Trump's musings about the obsolescence of NATO⁸ or making the American commitment to NATO conditional on increased European defence spending.⁹ The NATO Association adds other hopes for the new command, expecting it to help members “demonstrate renewed commitment to the alliance, while also coming closer to achieving the 2 percent [military spending] target.”¹⁰

Territorial Defence or Public Safety in the Arctic?

The move toward reactivated NATO operations in the North Atlantic Arctic inevitably raises the spectre of NATO operations in the Arctic. The more zealous strain of American hawks, like the American Lexington Institute (whose seemingly contradictory mission is to limit the role of the US federal government and to promote the projection of American power), see Russia as over-extended in Ukraine, Syria, and the Arctic, and thus urge the West to take advantage – by deploying “new generations of polar icebreakers;” challenging “the Kremlin's illegitimate claims to [unspecified] portions of the Arctic;” undertaking “new anti-submarine warfare exercises in northern waters with allies and friends such as the U.K., Norway, Canada and Sweden;” expanding US Army and Marine Corps exercises in the Arctic; and by “reinstating patrols by U.S. attack submarines in the Arctic.”¹¹ It is the kind of appeal that might resonate in NATO members that were once part of the Soviet Union, and while more sober voices are likely to prevail in Brussels, some recent testimony at Canada's House of Commons Standing

Committee on National Defence (NDDN) has seconded the call for expanded military operations in the North, notably to include direct NATO involvement, not only in the North Atlantic, but also in the wider Arctic.

Professor Alexander Moens of Simon Fraser University¹² emphasized the centrality of NATO in the face of a weakening US and a UN Security Council unable to come together on much of anything related to security, and encouraged Canada to become “a significant participant in securing the water and air approaches and access to the Arctic area as well as in securing the North Atlantic area.” Professor Robert Huebert of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute¹³ told members of Parliament that he interprets the government’s May 2017 defence policy as rejecting Canada’s traditional opposition to direct NATO involvement in the Arctic. He concluded that Canada is now ready to start talking to NATO about “the protection of the Arctic ... and North Atlantic approaches.”

General appeals for heightened territorial defence of the Arctic are of course premised on fears that the Russian assertiveness seen in the context of Ukraine will now be visited on the Arctic. But, in fact, those fears did not make it into the new Canadian defence policy statement. It confines itself to three substantive references to Russia, only one of which is linked to the Arctic, and it specifically does not portray Russia as representing a threat to Arctic stability or security. It raises the GIUK Gap issue by noting NATO concerns that Russia is once again expanding its capacity to project force from the Arctic, not into other areas of the Arctic, but into the North Atlantic and further south.

That said, the defence statement certainly does not treat Russia as benign. It points to the “illegal annexation of Crimea,” notes Russia’s “willingness to test the international security environment,” and acknowledges the return of “a degree of major power competition ... to the international system,” but these are not presented as Arctic-related warnings. As noted earlier in this space, it is especially revealing that the defence policy makes no reference to the Russian bomber threat¹⁴ – Russia is not singled out for concern in the context of the Arctic.

By now, of course, the changing Arctic is no longer news. The new defence policy thus links increasing security concerns to increasing ease of access to the region. Growing commercial interests, research, and tourism in the North confirm the Arctic as “an important international crossroads where issues of climate change, international trade, and global security meet.” Notably, the policy does not conclude that the rise in activity inevitably exacerbates traditional territorial defence concerns, but portrays

security needs in terms of “increased safety and security demands related to search and rescue and natural or man-made disasters to which Canada must be ready to respond.”

Competition or Cooperation?

Heightened activity in the Arctic, including China’s increasing investment and what will be increasing use of trans-Arctic sea routes, highlights the imperative to cooperate in the Arctic. A compelling new analysis of Arctic security by Canadian scholar Heather Exner-Pirot and analyst Robert W. Murray¹⁵ notes that “a narrative of competition has dogged the Arctic region in the popular media, with suggestions that the Arctic states, and especially the Arctic Five littoral states (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States) have been ‘racing’ to claim large swathes of extended continental shelf and exploit the large deposits of hydrocarbon and mineral resources.” They remind us, however, that more than 90 percent of the Arctic’s hydrocarbon resources are within accepted territorial seas or national exclusive economic zones, making the competition narrative rather overblown. In fact, Arctic states have largely compatible interests. More importantly, they note that both history and international relations theory “suggest that states, especially great powers such as the United States and Russia, will attempt to maximize their strategic and economic advantages when the opportunity presents itself, but will not make decisions that significantly increase the risk of conflict unless their survival is threatened.” As a result, shared interests in the Arctic have led to the development of “a robust international society negotiated to uphold Arctic states’ interests based on a set of primary and secondary institutions that foster collaboration and information sharing, while establishing a unique Arctic balance of power.” They argue that the five Arctic littoral states in particular “all stand to benefit from a stable, peaceful, and accessible ocean, whereas instability would threaten their economic and strategic advantages.” Arctic self-interest counsels cooperation, not militarized competition.

Avverting conflict and maximizing self-interest requires the further maturation of pan-Arctic governance, not expanded military forces. Two Russian academics, reflecting the sense of the Arctic as a zone of shared interests, argue for an Arctic legal regime to “regulate regional economic activity and satisfy the interests of stakeholders, including non-Arctic states.”¹⁶ The December 2017 issue of *Scientific American* also recounts the many ways in which competition on the Arctic global commons would affect fishing, oil exploration, mining, navigation, and national security, and then

calls for competition to give way to a region-wide “treaty that governs how we use this valuable region.”¹⁷ And Exner-Pirot and Murray point out that the Arctic is in fact remarkably advanced in developing a common Arctic approach to regional regulation and governance.

In 2010, pre-Ukraine NATO adopted its current Strategic Concept and clearly understood then that the alliance had no relevance for the Arctic. Indeed, they saw fit to not make any reference to the Arctic. Only half a decade old, the current Strategic Concept ignores the Arctic and describes the Euro-Atlantic area in radically different terms than those now dominating public discourse. Europe was then “at peace” and the key ongoing threats to peace and security were described as: the worldwide accumulation of modern military capabilities, including ballistic missiles; the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery; terrorism and the rise of extremist groups; and instability beyond NATO’s borders (leading to a major emphasis on out-of-area operations). Additional threats included cyber attacks, the vulnerability of communication and trade links, new weapons technologies, and environmental and resource constraints.

NATO countries were able to state collectively: “The Alliance does not consider any country to be its adversary.” In the Arctic, the eight states of the Arctic Council continue to say the same thing, the five Arctic Ocean states having said that formally in 2008 through the Ilulissat Declaration.

The geopolitical changes that directly affect countries with territory in the Arctic have occurred in their European context, not in the Arctic. Sovereignty and territorial integrity challenges in the Arctic are no greater today than they were in 2010 (acknowledging that Norway with its land border with Russia is not likely to feel quite as sanguine). The dangers of land or sea grabs outside of the parameters of the Law of the Sea, or of the emerging international fisheries and other regulatory agreements, have not changed since 2010. NATO member states have always understood that traditional national security and sovereignty issues in the Arctic would be managed at the national level, not at a collective security level. NATO has been understood to remain focused on Europe and global conflict zones (like Afghanistan and Libya). And in the unlikely event of an attack on any member state, the Arctic Five was relied upon to guide national responses. Even Canada and the US, with a long-standing joint command in North America through NORAD, have always retained full national control over surveillance and responses within their respective territories under normal peacetime conditions.

The idea that an overt NATO presence in the Arctic would induce Russia to become more cooperative, or more acquiescent, to Western leadership in the Arctic is no more credible than the notion that NATO's eastern expansion to Russia's borders and into its traditional sphere of influence would make Russia acquiescent in the face of the West's efforts to envelop Ukraine and Georgia. The insertion of NATO into Arctic affairs is thus a recipe for heightened Arctic tensions and is bound to inflict serious harm to Arctic cooperation. Canadian Parliamentarians, for example, have heard expressions of hope that Sweden and Finland might join NATO – even when that would seriously undermine multilateral cooperation in the Arctic. In considering the possibility of Sweden and Finland acceding to NATO, Professor Huebert agreed that the current success within the Arctic Council would probably not be sustained – calling that an “unfortunate casualty,” but a price worth paying: “we need to be preparing for this eventuality.”¹⁸ In other words, Canada should be prepared to sacrifice its vital interest in ongoing cooperation through the Arctic Council in favour of expanding NATO in the Arctic.

Avoiding the European “Error” in the Arctic

Two decades ago, an extraordinary group of American academics, along with former legislators, officials, diplomats, and military leaders, warned then President Bill Clinton that the US-led eastern expansion of NATO was a “policy error of historic proportions,” that it would make Europe less secure and less stable. They said it would undermine those in Russia who favoured reform and greater cooperation with the West. Thus, they recommended that the moves toward expansion be suspended in favour of alternative actions. The latter included continued arms reductions (nuclear and conventional), greater transparency in military deployments, enhanced NATO-Russian cooperation, emphasis on the Partnership for Peace program, and enhanced economic and political cooperation with Eastern Europe.¹⁹

The failure of official Washington and its NATO allies to heed that advice has in fact had the predicted consequences of historic proportions. The University of Antwerp's Tom Sauer traces the origins of the Ukraine crisis. Given Russia's historic links with Ukraine as a member state of the former Soviet Union, he writes, given that Crimea was a part of Russia until 1954 when it was granted to Ukraine, and given Russia's major port at Sevastopol in Crimea, it should have been obvious that Ukraine could not be peaceably folded into an anti-Russia political/military sphere. As Chris

Westdal, a former Canadian ambassador to Russia and to the Ukraine, told the NDDN:

Like them or not, ... major powers' spheres of influence are real. We Canadians know that. We live in one. In the real world, Kiev has about as much freedom to undermine Moscow's security as Ottawa has to undermine Washington's.²⁰

The lessons for the Arctic should be clear. The American Committee for East-West Accord,²¹ whose board members include former US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and former Senator Bill Bradley, draws on a broad range of Americans from business, academia, government service, science, law, and other professions to warn of the dangers of the new cold war between NATO and Russia. The group's "fundamental premise is that no real or lasting American, European, or international security generally is possible without essential kinds of stable cooperation with Russia." James Carden, executive editor for the Committee and correspondent for *The Nation*, recalls Mikhail Gorbachev's vision of a common European home²² and argues that the continued deterioration of relations between the West and Russia means that "now is the time to rethink the failed policies of the past and begin to consider reasonable alternatives to yet another round of NATO expansion that would take into consideration the security concerns of all."²³

The Arctic is a good place to focus on the reasonable alternatives. Exner-Pirot and Murray demonstrate that the "negotiated exceptionalism" of the Arctic constitutes just such an alternative – and it is already well underway. Creating an operational NATO presence in the Arctic would not be the way to reinforce existing regional stability. And on this, the defence policy statement, despite a balanced portrayal of Russia, moves in the wrong direction. It promises "joint exercises with Arctic allies and partners and support[s] the strengthening of situational awareness and information sharing in the Arctic, including with NATO,"²⁴ thereby essentially denying the hard reality that Arctic security imperatives mean pan-Arctic, not alliance-centered, cooperation is fundamental. The statement refers to military cooperation with "allies and partners,"²⁵ a reference that needs to be expanded to mean all Arctic partners – and in the Arctic Council context, Russia is in fact a partner. As argued here before,²⁶ it should by now be clear that NATO is not the institutional vehicle through which to pursue mutuality and stability in a region that includes a still cooperative Russia. Acknowledging and collectively responding via NATO to naval

vulnerabilities in the North Atlantic does not translate into a requirement for direct NATO presence in the High Arctic.²⁷

Canadian analyst Ariel Shapiro, a former policy analyst with the federal government, in a critical essay on the utility of NATO, observes that “NATO has contributed to securitizing the Arctic and perpetuating a Cold War narrative that turns an economic and environmental situation, for which legal dispute resolution mechanisms exist, into a potential military conflict.”²⁸ Russia makes no claim on Canadian territory and does not present a threatening military posture toward Canada (or any other Arctic Council state). In the Arctic, Canada’s primary sovereignty concern is maintaining and having other states recognize its sovereignty over all the islands of its Arctic Archipelago and the waters that surround them²⁹ - and the chief challenge to that sovereignty does not come from NATO’s erstwhile and re-emergent adversary, namely Russia, but from its most powerful NATO ally, namely the US.

In the meantime, “NATO pushes Canada into a conflict mindset with Russia, thus making cooperation on the Arctic (a core Canadian interest) more difficult....”³⁰ Membership in NATO pushes Canada toward accepting the apparent NATO priority of confronting Russia in Europe at the expense of improved relations with Russia in the Arctic.³¹ All that, despite the obvious fact that it is in Canada’s vital interest to maintain constructive Arctic relations with this most influential and consequential of Arctic neighbours.

As Mark Sedra, the President and Research Director of the Canadian International Council, told the NDDN, “let’s not securitize the Arctic based on what’s happening elsewhere. Let’s not apply the lens of Ukraine to the Arctic, because the Arctic is one area where there’s been a surprising array of agreement and cooperation between Russia and the United States.”³²

NATO’s expansion and military stance in Europe has aggravated tensions with Russia, prompted a dangerous gambit in Ukraine with no prospect for returning Crimea to Kiev, continues to feed Russian paranoia about the West, and allows Vladimir Putin to cast himself as the defender of Russian honour in the face of unrelenting hostility. There is no advantage in staging an Arctic version of that costly melodrama.

Notes

¹ Robin Emmott, “Echoes of Cold War as NATO mulls new North Atlantic command,” Reuters, 6 November 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us->

[nato-russia/echoes-of-cold-war-as-nato-mulls-new-north-atlantic-command-idUSKBN1D61ZP](#)

² Samuel Osborne, "Russian naval activity in Europe 'exceeds Cold War levels' says NATO admiral," *The Independent*, 10 April 2017.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-navy-europe-cold-war-levels-nato-admiral-michelle-howard-warships-submarines-aircraft-a7675771.html>

³ Ian Keddle, "Canadian Forces Track Russian Subs as New Cold War Brews Under the Atlantic," *Vice*, 15 November 2017. https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/a378y4/canadian-forces-track-russian-subs-as-new-cold-war-brews-under-the-atlantic

⁴ "NATO creates new military command structures under Cold War-era blueprints – Russian envoy," TASS Russian News Agency, 9 November 2017. <https://tass.com/politics/974921>

⁵ Michael Byers and Andrea Charron in recent testimony before the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 22 November 2017. <http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/meeting-71/evidence>

⁶ Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces, 2017).

<http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/index.asp>

⁷ Ben Borland, "SNP calls for North Atlantic Command to be located in Scotland despite referendum threat," *Express*, 26 November 2017. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/884403/SNP-calls-Nato-new-North-Atlantic-located-Scotland-independence-referendum>

⁸ D'Angelo Gore, "What's Trump's Position on NATO?" FactCheck.Org, 11 May 2016. <http://www.factcheck.org/2016/05/whats-trumps-position-on-nato/>

⁹ Krishnadev Calamur, "NATO Shmato? Donald Trump's apparent rejection of the cornerstone of global security after World War II has stunned U.S. partners in the alliance," *The Atlantic*, 21 July 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2016/07/trump-nato/492341/>

¹⁰ Touraj Riaz, "Testing Your Own Credibility: NATO's New Atlantic Command," NATO Association of Canada, 22 November 2017. <http://natoassociation.ca/testing-your-own-credibility-natos-new-atlantic-command/>

¹¹ Daniel Gouré, "U.S. & NATO Need an Arctic Strategy to Counter Russia," RealClear Defense, 8 November 2017. https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/11/08/us_nato_need_an_arctic_strategy_to_counter_russia_112602.html

¹² Alexander Moens, Evidence, House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2017.

<http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/meeting-68/evidence>

¹³ Robert Huebert, Evidence, House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 6 November 2017.

<http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/meeting-68/evidence>

¹⁴ Ernie Regehr, "Arctic Security and the Canadian Defence Policy Statement of 2017," *Disarming Arctic Security*, The Simons Foundation, 31 August 2017.

<http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/projects/arctic-security-briefing-papers>

¹⁵ Heather Exner-Pirot and Robert W. Murray, "Regional Order in the Arctic: Negotiated Exceptionalism," *POLITIK* 20/3 (2017).

¹⁶ Nadezhda Filimonova and Svetlana Krivokhizh, "A Russian Perspective on China's Arctic Role," *The Diplomat*, 27 September 2014. <https://thediplomat.com/2014/09/a-russian-perspective-on-chinas-arctic-role/>

¹⁷ "Without a Treaty to Share the Arctic, Greedy Countries Will Destroy It," *Scientific American*, 1 December 2017. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/without-a-treaty-to-share-the-arctic-greedy-countries-will-destroy-it/>

¹⁸ Rob Huebert, "Canadian Defense Review Depicts Russia as an Arctic Adversary," *Arctic Deeply*, 4 July 2017. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/arctic/community/2017/07/04/canadian-defense-review-depicts-russia-as-an-arctic-adversary>

¹⁹ "Former Policy-Makers Voice Concern Over NATO Expansion," *Global Beat*, Boston University, 26 June 1997. <https://www.bu.edu/globalbeat/nato/postpone062697.html>

²⁰ Chris Westdal, Evidence, House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 23 October 2017.

<http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/meeting-63/evidence>

²¹ "Mission Statement of The American Committee for East-West Accord," American Committee for East-West Accord. <https://eastwestaccord.com/mission-statement/>

²² Articulated by Gorbachev in his 1989 speech to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. "Address given by Mikhail Gorbachev to the Council of Europe (6 July 1989), CVCE. https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/address_given_by_mikhail_gorbachev_to_the_council_of_europe_6_july_1989-en-4c021687-98f9-4727-9e8b-836e0bc1f6fb.html

-
- ²³ James Carden, "Is Now the Time to Consider Expanding NATO?" *The Nation*, 31 October 2017. <https://www.thenation.com/article/is-now-the-time-to-consider-expanding-nato/>
- ²⁴ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 113.
- ²⁵ DND and CAF, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 57.
- ²⁶ Regehr, "Arctic Security and the Canadian Defence Policy Statement of 2017."
- ²⁷ It is a point made by Professors Michael Byers and Andrea Charron in recent testimony before NDDN, 22 November 2017.
- ²⁸ Ariel Shapiro, *NATO If Necessary, But Not Necessarily NATO: Critically Evaluating Canada's Membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (Calgary: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, October 2017). <http://www.cgai.ca/nato-if-necessary-but-not-necessarily-nato>
- ²⁹ Shapiro, *NATO If Necessary*.
- ³⁰ Shapiro, *NATO If Necessary*.
- ³¹ Shapiro, *NATO If Necessary*.
- ³² Mark Sedra, Evidence, House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 20 November 2017. <http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/meeting-70/evidence>

18

NATO's Brussels Summit and the Arctic

December 6, 2017

The run-up to this month's NATO summit featured an array of pundits, experts and, notably, Canadian parliamentarians, encouraging the Alliance to step up its presence and collective operations in the Arctic. As it turned out, NATO leaders wisely resisted the entreaties. The Brussels Summit Declaration is silent on the Arctic, and NATO officials, when asked about it, were just as inclined to talk about Arctic cooperation as they were about military expansion and Russian or Chinese threats in the High North.

The two-pronged appeals ahead of the Brussels meeting – to heed the ongoing build-up of Russian military capacity in the Arctic, and to call for a more overt collective response by NATO – were typified by the *Wall Street Journal's* insistence that the US and NATO should “adopt a new strategy” in response to the “massive Russian military buildup” in the High North.¹ Just days before the summit, the UK's Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, called on NATO to develop a “coherent vision for how to protect NATO interests in the Arctic.”² Earlier, a *RealClear Defense* analysis, one among many similar media commentaries, also insisted that the US and NATO needed an Arctic strategy to counter Russia's decade-long campaign “to assert and even expand its claims to the Arctic.”³ A CBC analysis went further to warn that “Russian advances in the Arctic are leaving NATO behind,” and that “the Russian bear has pursued a steady march forward much closer to Canada in the Arctic.”⁴

A June 2018 report from the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN)⁵ adopts a similar posture to recommend that “the Government of Canada take a leading role within NATO to specialize in Arctic defence and security doctrine and capabilities, and enhance NATO's situational awareness in the Arctic, including joint training and military exercises for NATO members in the Canadian Arctic” (Recommendation 19).

It was a surprising appeal from Canadian parliamentarians inasmuch as Canada's traditional posture has been one of firm opposition to collective NATO involvement in the Arctic.⁶ The government of Stephen Harper was pointed in its insistence that NATO had no role in the Arctic, and also in its warnings that continued calls for a NATO role would only heighten East-West tensions.⁷ A 2017 statement by the government of Justin Trudeau on Arctic foreign policy also implicitly rejects NATO involvement:

The increasing accessibility of the Arctic has led to a widespread perception that the region could become a source of conflict. This has led to heightened interest in the Arctic in a number of international organizations including NATO and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. *Canada does not anticipate any military challenges in the Arctic and believes that the region is well managed through existing institutions*, particularly the Arctic Council. We will continue to monitor discussion of Arctic issues in other international forums and intervene when necessary to protect Canada's interests. (emphasis added).⁸

Washington has certainly not proposed any significant role for NATO in the Arctic, seeing NORAD and its own Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) as the focus of defence efforts in the western Arctic. As the Canadian academic and Arctic specialist Michael Byers told the Committee:

[I]t's important to underline that there are in fact, from a security organizational perspective, two Arctics. There is the European Arctic, which the Americans regard as part of the U.S. European Command, which is very much a NATO co-operative exercise. There is the North American Arctic, which from an American perspective is NORTHCOM, and from a Canadian perspective a NORAD mission, not a NATO mission.⁹

The NDDN report nevertheless points to the Trudeau Government's defence policy paper – *Strong, Secure, Engaged* – and its reference to enhancing military operational capabilities in the North, including the capacity to conduct “joint exercises with Arctic allies and partners” and strengthening “situational awareness and information sharing in the Arctic, including with NATO,”¹⁰ finding in that a basis for promoting a collective NATO presence in the Arctic. The report notes that “a number of witnesses welcomed the involvement of NATO in the security and defence of Canada's

Arctic,” and that, as the region becomes more accessible, and as “Russia builds its military capabilities and China increases its presence in the Arctic,” Canada should look to NATO for help in Arctic protection.¹¹ One witness, in a curious take on Alliance solidarity, even “urged Canada to convince NATO to spend more time worrying about Canada’s north as opposed to Norway’s north.”¹² Testimony at the Committee included calls for Canada to conduct training exercises with NATO in the Arctic, establish a NATO centre of excellence on Arctic Security in Canada, and play a leadership role in any NATO northern or Arctic command.¹³

On the other hand, there was also testimony urging cooperation as the priority, noting that close cooperation with Russia – on matters such as search and rescue, oil spill mitigation, Coast Guard operations – is already mandated and to some extent operationalized.¹⁴ Notable in this regard was the testimony of Professor James Fergusson of the University of Manitoba, among other things a foremost expert on NORAD and a consistent advocate for expanded Canadian defence capacity:

When we look at Russia and Canada, as well as the United States, with regard to the Arctic west of Greenland, it is an area for cooperation among the three, and other members of the Arctic Council. Entering NATO here through whatever specific means is likely going to be perceived as provocative to the Russians, and is not going to be helpful to our interests....¹⁵

Major-General William Seymour, Chief of Staff Operations of Canada’s Joint Operations Command, told the Committee that Canada’s focus is on cooperation. “Through the Arctic Council and the work that we do in the Arctic Council to have a dialogue about the Arctic, we see it as a place where we need to come together and recognize that multiple nations will be up there, with the increasing openness because of global warming.” He pointed out that Russia is “very much an Arctic nation,” and given that a considerable proportion of Russians live in the Arctic, and given its major economic stake in the region and infrastructure requirements for the emerging Northern Sea Route, a significant defence presence is not surprising.¹⁶

The Arctic Security Roundtable of the Munich Security Conference, at a 2017 meeting at Reykjavik’s historic Höfði House,¹⁷ similarly acknowledged that Arctic problems are currently being addressed through dialogue and cooperation. As one participant put it, “we really have a shot to get the Arctic right.” While some participants saw Russia’s Arctic military build-up as a strategic expression of Russia’s antagonistic relationship with the West,

others found it normal that military activity in the region would increase along with increased shipping and economic activity in order to deal with search and rescue and the protection of navigation. All looked to Russia for greater transparency and sensitivity towards its smaller neighbours and some suggested joint military exercises.¹⁸

At the Munich Security Conference itself, an annual gathering not given to sentimentality about international cooperation, the 2017 discussions noted a history of adherence and commitment to international law in the Arctic. And given that some 95 percent of the region's estimated resources are located in undisputed jurisdictions, "predictions of a hostile race for oil and gas in the High North" seemed to be "unwarranted."¹⁹ The Conference acknowledged the potential for conflict – for example, Russia's assertion of national legal authority over all the waters of the Northern Sea Route is challenged by states that regard these as international waters – but the prominent point was that it is in the interests of all states that the Arctic remain "a zone of peace, prosperity, and constructive international cooperation."²⁰

In the end, and notably so, leaders at the Brussels NATO Summit decided not to include any reference to the Arctic in their final Declaration. Nor was the issue raised or addressed in the Alliance Secretary-General's post-meeting press conference. Nor, by the way, does the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept, the most recent and thus currently operative strategic guidance document of the Alliance, include any reference to the Arctic.

When the NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, is asked about NATO's role in the Arctic, he generally tries to find a balance between listing and emphasizing all the ways in which NATO is beefing up its military capacity/response to Russia, while also emphasizing the importance of dialogue and keeping tensions down in the Arctic and beyond. In a June press conference, when asked about the Arctic, he lauded the Arctic Council as a "platform for bringing people together" to address shared concerns and interests. He stressed working together with Russia on things like search and rescue – "that's cooperation which benefits both Russia, Norway and other NATO Allies," he said.²¹

The urge to insert NATO more overtly into the Arctic is obviously driven by a threat analysis that sees the Arctic as "returning to the forefront of the global security agenda" as "a potential geopolitical hotspot."²² But the prevailing view is more nuanced. Defence preparedness, much of it related to aiding civil authorities with lead responsibility for things like maritime law enforcement and regulatory compliance, and improved maritime situation

awareness are on the agendas of all Arctic Ocean states. The Brussels Declaration raised the domain awareness issue, not in the context of the Arctic, but with regard to the Baltic Sea and the North Atlantic (as well as the Black Sea and the Mediterranean). The Russian Navy has become more active and a more frequent presence in the North Atlantic GIUK Gap (the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap, also stretching northward to Norway and the Arctic), raising questions for military strategists about the reliability of the sea-lanes of communication between North America and Europe²³ in times of crisis, and prompting NATO states to increase and coordinate anti-submarine patrols in the North Atlantic.

But the Secretary-General also points out that in the Arctic itself, it is not a NATO international force that would be mobilized to improve, for example, the domain awareness of NATO members in their own neighbourhoods. It is the individual Arctic States, four of which are NATO members, that monitor their respective jurisdictions and decide when and what additional capabilities may be needed. In other words, while pundits call for action by NATO in the Arctic, when officials talk about NATO presence or action there, the focus is not on a collective NATO command or an international forces presence, but rather on the presence and capabilities of states in the Arctic that are NATO members operating within their own national jurisdictions – in other words, the *status quo*.

NATO was invented, as its first Secretary-General famously put it, to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down, but there is obviously no keeping the Russians out of the Arctic. Not only is Russia decidedly in, it is destined to remain the dominant presence in the region. Based on the expanse of its Arctic territory and shoreline, the prominence of its northern economy, the relatively significant proportion of its population that lives there, the emerging maritime shipping route along its northern coast, and its genuinely extraordinary Arctic military capabilities, Russia has no serious Arctic rivals.

There are, in fact, no prospects for NATO states expanding their military commitments to the point of creating a military balance within the Arctic. The US and NATO could obviously mount overwhelming military challenges and deterrent forces outside the region to impact Russian military behaviour within the region, but they will not come close, and will not try, to matching Russian military capability within the region itself. Calls for the US and Canada to acquire more icebreakers, for example, make sense from the point of view of helping both countries to more effectively meet their own needs, but with the current icebreaker count being 40-plus for Russia, one

for the US, and six for Canada, there will be no counterbalancing Russian strength.

Arctic peace and stability will be best assured by regional cooperation that is based on international law and is bent on advancing the welfare of Arctic populations and enterprise, not by military expansion in pursuit of a regional military draw or by collective NATO military operations.

Notes

¹ Paula J. Dobriansky, "A Cold War in the Arctic Circle: NATO plans a new command to counter Russia's buildup. It should be only a start," *Wall Street Journal*, 12 January 2018. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-cold-war-in-the-arctic-circle-1514823379>

² Mathieu Boulègue, "NATO Needs a Strategy for Countering Russia in the Arctic and the Black Sea," Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2 July 2018. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/nato-needs-strategy-countering-russia-arctic-and-black-sea>

³ Daniel Gouré, "U.S. & NATO Need an Arctic Strategy to Counter Russia," RealClear Defense, 8 November 2017. https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/11/08/us_nato_need_an_arctic_strategy_to_counter_russia_112602.html

⁴ Alex Brockman, "How Russian advances in the Arctic are leaving NATO behind," CBC News, 8 January 2017. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/russia-arctic-military-build-up-1.3926162>

⁵ "Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability," Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence, Chair Stephen Fuhr, June 2018, 42nd Parliament, 1st Session. <http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/report-10>

⁶ Helga Haftendorn, "NATO and the Arctic: Is the Atlantic Alliance a Cold War relic in a peaceful region now faced with non-military challenges?" *European Security* 20/3 (September 2011): 337-61.

⁷ Jorge Barrera, "While Harper talked tough with NATO on Arctic, U.S. believed PM all bark no bite," *APTN National News*, 11 May 2011. <https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/while-harper-talked-tough-with-nato-on-arctic-u-s-believed-pm-all-bark-no-bite/>

⁸ "Statement on Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy: Exercising Sovereignty and Promoting Canada's Northern Strategy Abroad," Global Affairs Canada, 2017. http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/arctic-arctique/arctic_policy-canada-politique_arctique.aspx?lang=eng

⁹ “Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability,” 78.

¹⁰ “Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability,” 77.

¹¹ “Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability,” 77.

¹² “Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability,” 77.

¹³ “Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability,” 78.

¹⁴ “Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability,” 78.

¹⁵ James Fergusson, Testimony, House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 8 February 2018.

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/meeting-80/evidence>

¹⁶ Major-General William Seymour, Testimony, House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 1 March 2018.

<http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/meeting-85/evidence>

¹⁷ Where Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev, to the consternation of their staff and advisors, broached the subject of complete nuclear disarmament.

¹⁸ “A “posterchild” for cooperation? Report from the MSC Arctic Security Roundtable Reykjavík,” Munich Security Conference, 13 October 2017.

<https://securityconference.org/news/meldung/a-posterchild-for-cooperation-arctic-security/>

¹⁹ “The Arctic: Tempers Rising?: Post-Truth, Post-West, Post-Order,” Munich Security Conference, 2017. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwizm73u3OjpAhUVH80KHdeyCXEQFjAGegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Freport2017.securityconference.de%2F&usg=AOvVaw2hpvegu38Gystxjs7Z51rc>

²⁰ “The Arctic: Tempers Rising?”

²¹ Jens Stoltenberg, Speech at Lancaster House, 21 June 2018.

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_156142.htm

²² “Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability,” 29.

²³ “Canada and NATO: An Alliance Forged in Strength and Reliability,” 32.

19

Arctic Coast Guard Forum – Cooperative Security Under Construction

November 16, 2017

The first ever “live exercise” involving all eight countries of the Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) rightly has some observers hailing this new forum’s potential for reinvigorating pan-Arctic security cooperation. Significant challenges remain – not the least being ongoing wariness of Russian military developments and growing Chinese interest¹ in the region, pushing some states towards the more familiar models of military competition – but the region-wide ACGF clearly affirms security cooperation as essential to survival in the Arctic. To the extent that all states of the region “benefit from a rules-based international order that enhances economic well-being, respects human rights and human dignity, and supports mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes while providing for territorial integrity,”² the pursuit of more formalized, and thus more sustainable, forms of mutual security promises to remain a feature of Arctic geopolitics. The slow emergence of cooperative pan-Arctic Coast Guard operations in the Arctic is a case in point.

The Arctic Coast Guard Forum was established in 2015, with all eight Arctic Council states part of the arrangement. Two important developments in 2017 have helped move it towards becoming an operational presence in the region. All eight members of the ACGF (Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, and the United States) agreed to a statement on doctrine, tactics, procedures, and information sharing.³ And the ACGF conducted its “first live exercise,” described as “full-scale naval drills” in the Denmark Strait near Reykjavik.⁴ All eight Arctic States participated, but maritime assets used were from Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and the United States, and air assets were from Canada, Denmark, Iceland, and the United States.⁵

The Canadian contingent⁶ included the CCGS *Pierre Radisson*,⁷ a medium-weight icebreaker able to manage ice a metre thick and carry provisions for 140 days and enough fuel to travel 15,000 nautical miles at cruising speed. The *Pierre Radisson* operates in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the winter and the Arctic in the summer.

The demands for state emergency response services in the Arctic are substantial and growing – hence, the focus of the live exercise on training to meet obligations under the 2011 Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic. The 2013 Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic represents another major requirement for state preparedness – all driving the need to convert cooperation in principle to practical capabilities through pan-Arctic exercises. Coast guard roles in the region also include the provision of navigation aids, border/sovereignty patrols, fisheries inspections, and constabulary operations – which in turn requires enhanced maritime domain awareness.⁸ There are also responsibilities that accrue to the coast guards for implementing the new Polar Code, established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2017. The IMO is the UN agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships. Its newly established and mandatory Polar Code goes beyond other IMO requirements to set minimum standards for the design, construction, and operation of ships in the polar regions. It also requires special training and environmental protection measures⁹ – and coast guards are mandated to monitor and ensure compliance.

The key strategic goals of the ACGF¹⁰ presume a significant regional governance presence: the pursuit of a stable, predictable, safe, secure, and transparent maritime operational environment; promoting cooperation among the region's coast guards toward those ends; building a common operational picture and shared domain awareness; supporting high operational standards; and sharing information and best practices. That means an operationally-focused ACGF, as the US Coast Guard described it after completing two years in the Chair and handing it off to Finland, “with the purpose of leveraging collective resources to foster safe, secure and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic.”¹¹

But, even in times of normalized relations among states in the region, there are practical limits on full cooperation. Sovereignty patrols and support for constabulary forces are examples of functions not conducive to joint operations, and joint operations are obviously also limited by

geography – the vast distances make it unlikely, for example, that Canadian search and rescue assets will ever be available to assist Norway in an emergency.¹²

Nevertheless, cooperation among Arctic states, and especially with Russia, is recognized as essential, if challenging. Seven of the eight Arctic states are linked to NATO. Five are members of NATO and two (Finland and Sweden) are cooperating partners – and given the currently vexed state of relations between NATO and Russia, Moscow also harbours a certain measure of understandable wariness. But, as Andreas Østhagen, a Norwegian scholar with strong links to Canadian academics and researchers, concludes, “how much the Forum will be hampered by the current political situation, ultimately, is dependent on the willingness [of Arctic states] to keep [the ACGF] sheltered from the larger political environment in the Arctic and beyond.” He notes, and we should all hope, that “in most cases, coast guard affairs constitute so-called ‘low politics’, which states tend to separate from larger diplomatic affairs.”¹³

Thus, the ACGF has the potential – through joint engagement on International Maritime Organization requirements, the development of joint search and rescue units in strategic locations,¹⁴ and regular joint exercises – for rising above the vagaries of geopolitics and promoting an overall climate of cooperation. A US Council on Foreign Relations task force report on Arctic security concludes, for example, that the ACGF offers “a practical, operationally focused context for confidence-building with Russia on Arctic issues,” including in “cooperative maritime law enforcement.”¹⁵

The importance of operational cooperation through the Arctic Coast Guard Forum is highlighted by Commander Ásgrímur L. Ásgrímsson of the Icelandic Coast Guard. All regional coast guards, he says, need each other, because all have long coastlines, extensive search and rescue areas, extreme weather and sea conditions, ice, few assets, and a lack of infrastructure. All in the context of increased human activity.¹⁶

The American policy community, as reflected in a recent release from Washington’s Wilson Center approvingly quoting Finnish Member of Parliament Katri Kulmuni, is generally oriented toward cooperation: “If we want to save the Arctic, we need the Arctic countries to cooperate.”¹⁷ That clear imperative is qualified by Kulmuni’s lament that, “right now, we are in a situation where we seem to be lacking the trust to continue in an open and constructive manner.”

Coast guard cooperation has the potential for building trust and thus speaks to the larger question of cooperative region-wide governance in the

Arctic. The Wilson Center notes that despite some disagreement within the Arctic Council regarding the “direction and pace” of regional governance developments and arrangements, there is what it calls a surprising level of agreement on the basic need for “a system of Arctic governance.” And such a system should, it is broadly recognized, “address five fundamentals – the need to protect the environment; develop resources sustainably; ensure that Arctic inhabitants benefit from that development; broaden participation in Arctic decision-making processes; and promote cooperation instead of conflict in the region.”¹⁸

The Canadian academic and Arctic expert Heather Exner-Pirot reminds us of the plethora of organizations and international agreements that already contribute to Arctic governance. Sub-regional government-to-government cooperation occurs through groupings like the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the West Nordic Council. Indigenous communities come together through organizations like the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Saami Council. International agreements like the Law of the Sea and the International Maritime Organization are especially important to Arctic governance,¹⁹ and then there are the Arctic-wide agreements on search and rescue and oil spill recovery. In other words, Arctic governance is diverse and evolving, and as Østhagen points out, the ACGF “adds another layer to the governance of the region, ideally taking a step beyond the conference rooms and into real-life operations and practical action.”²⁰

Notes

¹ One such interest obviously includes shipping, which led to the successful voyage of the Chinese icebreaker, *Xue Long*, through the Northwest Passage this fall, with Canadian cooperation and science personnel on board. Nathan Vanderklippe, “China casts its ‘net’ over Northwest Passage in search of a shortcut,” *Globe and Mail*, 15 November 2017. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/china-reveals-plans-to-ship-cargo-across-canadas-northwest-passage/article29691054/>

² “Arctic Imperatives: Reinforcing U.S. Strategy on America’s Fourth Coast,” Council on Foreign Relations, Independent Task Force Report No. 75, 22 March 2017. <https://www.cfr.org/event/arctic-imperatives-reinforcing-us-strategy-americas-fourth-coast>

³ “Arctic Coast Guard Forum Agrees Protocols,” *The Maritime Executive*, 24 March 2017. <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/arctic-coast-guard-forum-agrees-protocols>

⁴ “Arctic Coast Guard Forum member countries to hold drills in the Denmark Strait,” *The Arctic*, 23 August 2017. <https://arctic.ru/international/20170823/660907.html>

⁵ “The First Operational Exercise, Arctic Guardian, of the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, held in Iceland,” 11 September 2017. <https://www.arcticcoastguardforum.com/>

⁶ “Arctic Guardian – The Arctic Coast Guard Forum’s first live exercise,” Canadian Coast Guard. <https://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/corporation-information-organisation/partnerships-partenariats/arctic-forum-eng.html>

⁷ “Arctic Guardian.”

⁸ Andreas Østhagen, “The Arctic Coast Guard Forum: Big Tasks, Small Solutions,” in *Maritime Security Challenges: Focus High North, Papers from the Kiel Conference 2016*, edited by Sebastian Bruns and Adrian J. Neumann (Kiel: Institute for Security Policy Kiel University, 2016). <https://www.ispk.uni-kiel.de/de/abteilung-maritime-strategie-und-sicherheit/publikationen/download/kico-2016-proceedings>

⁹ “Milestone for polar protection as comprehensive new ship regulations come into force,” International Maritime Organization (IMO), Briefing: 1 January 2017. <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/Pages/02-Polar-Code.aspx>

¹⁰ The Arctic Coast Guard Forum. <https://www.arcticcoastguardforum.com/>

¹¹ “Coast Guard joins Arctic stakeholders in historic forum,” United States Coast Guard, Press Release, 24 March 2017. <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSCG/bulletins/18fb6e2>

¹² Østhagen, “Arctic Coast Guard Forum.”

¹³ Østhagen, “Arctic Coast Guard Forum.”

¹⁴ Østhagen, “Arctic Coast Guard Forum.”

¹⁵ “Arctic Imperatives.”

¹⁶ Wilson Center Staff, “The Arctic: In the Face of Change, an Ocean of Cooperation,” *New Security Beat*, 28 September 2017. <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2017/09/arctic-face-change-ocean-cooperation/>

¹⁷ Wilson Center Staff, “The Arctic: In the Face of Change.”

¹⁸ Douglas C. Nord, “The Challenge of Arctic Governance,” *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer/Fall 2017. <https://www.wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/into-the-arctic/the-challenge-of-arctic-governance/>

¹⁹ Heather Exner-Pirot, “Why governance of the North needs to go beyond the Arctic Council,” OpenCanada.org, 14 October 2016. <https://www.opencanada.org/features/why-governance-north-needs-go-beyond-arctic-council/>

²⁰ Østhagen, “Arctic Coast Guard Forum.”

20 Can a Fisheries Agreement Help Forestall Militarization on the Central Arctic Ocean?

December 21, 2017

If the Cold War is truly back, the news has yet to reach the Arctic. In the High North, putative rivals are having a hard time getting over their habit of cooperating. They have been at it again, this time agreeing on a set of measures to prevent over-fishing in the soon-to-be-accessible high seas of the Arctic Ocean. The agreement is rightly lauded as another advance in collective governance in the Arctic. Furthermore, it bolsters hopes that the logic of cooperation in support of public safety, environmental protection, and responsible resource extraction will increasingly spill over into security cooperation in the global commons of the Arctic high seas.

Canada's new defence policy, unveiled this past June, declares "the re-emergence of major power competition."¹ The new American national security strategy, unveiled this week, takes up the same theme, insisting that the US faces "growing political, economic, and military competition," with China and Russia "challeng[ing] American power, influence, and interests."² A similar strain of worry runs through academic and think tank worlds, frequently including assertions that renewed global rivalry portends heightened state-to-state confrontation in the Arctic.

As climate change renders the region more and more accessible, the argument goes, increased marine traffic and resource exploitation will generate dramatically new levels of commercial competition backed by re-energized geopolitical manoeuvring. That, along with Russia's demonstrated willingness to pursue changes to borders by military means, heightens the risk of military confrontation. But one thing these dire warnings fail to acknowledge is the Arctic region's inclination toward cooperation.

The region and its international partners have been remarkably proactive in anticipating and seeking to prevent state-to-state confrontation. The most recent example is the agreement in principle to Prevent

Unregulated High Seas Fisheries on the Central Arctic Ocean. The parties to the agreement reached at the end of November (the EU, Canada, China, Denmark, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, Norway, Russia, and the US) are now embarked on a legal and technical review of the agreement's provisions and are seeking final approval from their respective governments to sign and ratify the agreement.³ It will enter into force once all ten parties have done so.⁴

The agreement covers an area of 2.8 million square kilometres (about the size of the Mediterranean) and will ensure that no commercial fishing will take place before the necessary scientific work has been done and "appropriate conservation and management measures" are established.⁵ Any subsequent fishing in the High Arctic is to be regulated and supported by scientific information on the sustainability of fish stocks. It is regarded, in the words of the European Commission, as "a first step towards the creation of regional fisheries management organizations for the Central Arctic Ocean."⁶

The science will be aided by a Joint Program of Scientific Research and Monitoring established by the agreement. Its aim will be to improve understanding of the region's ecosystem(s) and to determine "whether fish stocks might exist in this area that could be harvested on a sustainable basis."⁷

The agreement will remain in place for the next 16 years and will be renewable every five years after that, or until those appropriate conservation and management measures are in place. Inuit representatives were consulted and included in the Canadian delegation to the negotiations, and the agreement's "final text recognizes Arctic Indigenous Peoples' interests, the value of indigenous knowledge and decision making, and provides for their inclusion in the process moving forward," according to Canada's Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard, Dominic LeBlanc.⁸

The agreement is an example of constructive pre-emption. As the Canadian environmental organization, Oceans North, put it, "this will be the only ocean in the world that humankind have agreed to not fish in until we have a scientific understanding of what's there and the management regime under which to operate."⁹ Legislators, scientists, and civil society organizations have long urged Arctic States to apply this "cautionary principle" to the high seas of the Arctic – that is, to act preventively *before* fishing begins. In 2008 the US Senate called for action to prevent unregulated fishing. In 2010 the US closed its Arctic exclusive economic zone (EEZ) to fishing. In 2012, a letter signed by more than 2,000 scientists

called for a delay in fishing “until such time as the biology and ecology of the region are understood sufficiently well to allow for setting scientifically sound catch levels.”¹⁰ In 2014 Canada blocked commercial fishing in its Beaufort Sea EEZ. In July 2015, the five states on the Arctic Ocean issued the Oslo Declaration in which they agreed that there should be a fishing moratorium in the Arctic Ocean until appropriate management measures could be put in place.¹¹

Other examples of practical Arctic cooperation include the Arctic Coast Guard Forum involving the eight states of the Arctic Council. This year they issued an agreed statement on doctrine and information sharing, and conducted their first live exercise.¹² The same cooperation is central to the new Polar Code that entered into force in January 2017. A mandatory set of safety and pollution prevention measures, the Code was negotiated through the International Maritime Organization and establishes design and operational standards for vessels and related equipment in the Arctic.¹³ Earlier agreements on cross-border cooperation in search and rescue and oil spill prevention and mitigation all add to the Arctic’s cooperative approach to public safety.

And all these arrangements, obviously with much still to be done on implementation, are consistent with the 2008 declaration of the five Arctic Ocean States that they would in the future be guided by cooperation rather than confrontation. The 2008 Ilulissat Declaration acknowledges the “extensive” international legal regime already in place for the Arctic, including the Law of the Sea, and commits states to respecting that “legal framework” and to pursuing “the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims.”¹⁴

Of course, the past does not determine the future, and, to be sure, agreements on paper are regularly flouted in practice. But old habits are also hard to break, and the Arctic is one place where the learned habit of cooperation so clearly serves the welfare of the region that, in the process, it also serves the self-interest of every Arctic state. So, while climate and geography have to date combined to protect the central Arctic Ocean from over-fishing, Arctic and non-Arctic states together have now recognized that this natural maritime protection regime is melting away, and that it is in their collective interest to replace it with a politically generated regime.

The same “cautionary principle” that is now being relied on to forestall unsustainable fishing has a role to play in averting a military face-off on the high seas of the Arctic. The University of Toronto’s Franklyn Griffiths sees the parallel. The climate conditions that have prevented fishing on those

high seas have also prevented naval military operations on the surface of the central Arctic Ocean.¹⁵ And the same climate change that will make the Arctic's high seas accessible to fishing boats will make the ocean surface accessible to any military forces interested in going there. The cautionary principle thus points to the current political opportunity to do politically what has until now come naturally – namely, preventing the militarization of the surface of the Arctic Ocean. Once again, constructive pre-emption can feed the habit of cooperation. Arctic states together are in a strong position to engage non-Arctic states in preserving what already exists, the non-militarized surface waters of the central Arctic Ocean – but it has to be done before climate change and a new Cold War conspire to destroy what nature has until now preserved.

Notes

¹ Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces, 2017).

<http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/index.asp>

² *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington: The White House, December 2017). <https://apps.npr.org/documents/document.html?id=4332188-Trump-s-National-Security-Strategy-Dec-2017>

³ "Meeting on High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, Chairman's Statement," U.S. Department of State, 28-30 November 2017. <https://www.state.gov/e/oes/ocns/opa/rls/276136.htm>

⁴ "Daily News 01/12/2017," European Commission, 1 December 2017. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEX-17-5065_en.htm

⁵ "Minister LeBlanc commends historic international agreement to prevent unregulated fishing in the high seas of the central Arctic Ocean," Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Statements, 30 November 2017. https://www.canada.ca/en/fisheries-oceans/news/2017/11/minister_leblanccommendshistoricinternationalagreementtopreventu.html

⁶ "EU and Arctic partners agree to prevent unregulated fishing in high seas," European Commission, 1 December 2017. https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/content/eu-and-arctic-partners-agree-prevent-unregulated-fishing-high-seas_en

⁷ "Meeting on High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, Chairman's Statement."

⁸ "Minister LeBlanc commends historic international agreement."

⁹ Levon Sevunts, "Canada signs 'historic' international agreement on Arctic fishery," Radio Canada International, 30 November 2017. <http://www.rcinet.ca/>

[en/2017/11/30/arctic-states-and-major-fishing-powers-reach-historic-agreement-on-fishery-in-central-arctic-ocean/](#)

¹⁰ Mia Bennett, "Blog: Arctic fishing agreement – When climate change drives diplomacy," Eye on the Arctic, Radio Canada International, 5 December 2017. <http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/2017/12/05/blog-arctic-fishing-agreement-when-climate-change-drives-diplomacy/>

¹¹ "Preventing Unregulated Commercial Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean (CAO): A Compilation of Reports from Meetings of Experts in Shanghai (China), Incheon (Korea) & Sapporo (Japan)," The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 2017. <https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Preventing-Unregulated-Commercial-Fishing-CAO.pdf>

¹² Elaborated at: Ernie Regehr, "Arctic Coast Guard Forum – Cooperative Security Under Construction," Arctic Security Briefing Papers, The Simons Foundation, 16 November 2017. <http://www.thesimonsfoundation.ca/highlights/arctic-coast-guard-forum-cooperative-security-under-construction>

¹³ Department of Transport, "Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement," Government of Canada, 1 July 2017. <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2017/2017-07-01/html/reg1-eng.html?wbdisable=true>

¹⁴ Arctic Ocean Conference, "2008 Ilulissat Declaration," 28 May 2008. <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2008-Ilulissat-Declaration.pdf>

¹⁵ Just as the Seabed Treaty preserved the status quo in keeping nuclear weapons from the seabed, and just as NWFZs to date have largely preserved the status quo in keeping nuclear weapons out of regions from which they were already absent.

21

Pan-Arctic Military Cooperation: Still the Most Reliable (and Likely?) Option

January 7, 2020

It is now seemingly routine for pundits and security professionals to warn of an impending militarized scramble for dominance over the lands, seas, and resources of the Arctic, with Russia enjoying a formidable advantage – all evidenced by the undeniable expansion of military facilities throughout the region. But it is not clear that the official West is buying it. The Americans have ratcheted up the rhetoric, but little else has changed. The 2019 NATO summit ignored the Arctic, and individual states like Canada and Norway are sticking with a more nuanced and restrained posture on Arctic security.

While the Kremlin no doubt welcomes any characterizations of Russia as a fearsome presence on the world stage, in the Arctic it insists that its increasingly robust armed forces and exercises are a practical and strictly defensive necessity. With a substantial civilian population, a critically important economic stake in the region, and a national identity that is heavily invested in the North, Russia cannot ignore the reality of an increasingly accessible Arctic – accessible to its own population and industry, to its northern neighbours, and also to friends and potential rivals from China and Europe and beyond.

For essentially the same reasons, the other four Arctic Ocean states (the United States, Canada, Greenland/Denmark, and Norway), all in NATO, are similarly led to assign a higher priority to northern defence, also recognizing that to be a practical necessity.

Part of the practical reality of the Arctic region is that it is one place where Russia truly is unrivalled as a regional power – and that is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. The Russian armed forces have decades of Cold War operational experience in the Arctic, and the North is not for Russians the remote North, but is fully integrated into national life, including national security life. Globally, Russia is a much-diminished power

(its current military spending is at the level of Germany and roughly a twentieth of NATO states collectively¹), but in the Arctic that imbalance is essentially reversed, but it is not by definition destabilizing.

Russian re-militarization in the Arctic now involves a string of some 30-plus military bases, many re-emerging from post-Cold War dormancy, that stretches from Anadyr-Ugolny and Provideniya across the Bering Sea from Alaska, around Russia's Bering Strait shoreline, along its Arctic coastline, extending into the Arctic Ocean through new and upgraded military installations on five major islands and archipelagos, and culminates on the Kola Peninsula. Those military sites run the gamut of isolated airstrips, infantry and artillery stations, radar and air defence installations, forward operating locations for fighter and bomber aircraft, ports and naval infrastructure, and finally the Kola naval bases which host more concentrated nuclear firepower than any other single location on the planet.²

All around wariness is an understandable and prudent response, but much of the analysis, including offerings in the leadup to and since the December 2019 NATO summit, ignores the massive global Russia/NATO conventional military imbalance in favour of the West, while insisting that forces in the region itself must be more balanced, typically advocating for a much more overt NATO operational presence in the Arctic.³ It is a posture that really belongs to the same strain of imprudence that has long privileged NATO's eastward expansion over the careful pursuit of Eurasian stability. It is notable, however, that in London, NATO leaders demurred. Their final declaration was silent on the Arctic, as had been the 2018 summit communique.

Notwithstanding Russia's expanding military presence, the Arctic remains well down the list of official worries for an alliance that faces a rather high wariness quotient these days – on its Baltic and southern flanks, the North Atlantic Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap, and, notably, a political flank that features growing internal challenges from both sides of the Atlantic. There are good reasons for the official silence and for questioning the more alarmist warnings about Russia's Arctic ambitions, and it is not just a matter of NATO having more immediate concerns elsewhere.

Even their critics recognize the legitimacy of the Russian forces' basic military missions in the Arctic: sovereignty protection, public safety (e.g. search and rescue), the defence of its northern resource assets, and enforcement support for a more robust regulatory infrastructure for the emerging Northern Sea Route that runs entirely through Russia's exclusive

economic zone or territorial waters. Furthermore, a primary Kremlin interest in the Arctic is to avoid military confrontation in favour of promoting a stable security environment conducive to exploiting northern resources and to enticing much needed foreign investment and technology. In other words, military adventurism against neighbours does not fit Russia's basic Arctic game plan.

The degree to which Russia's Arctic military assets are seen as a threat to stability depends heavily on the context. Viewed in the global context (with places like Ukraine, Georgia, and Syria looming large), Russian intentions anywhere are automatically suspect in the West. Viewed in the context of the Arctic itself, suspicions should be, and actually are, mitigated by the reality of an ongoing tradition of Arctic cooperation, and wariness should also be eased by a recognition of the centrality of good governance in resisting Russian meddling and destabilization efforts.

As the Ilulissat Declaration⁴ affirms, Arctic cooperation and a political commitment to a rules-based order are real. Canada's "Arctic and Northern Policy Framework" acknowledges that "the circumpolar Arctic can and should continue to benefit from a deeply ingrained culture of international cooperation" (while also warning of "complacency"),⁵ and key Arctic states recognize that continuation of that cooperation accords with Russian interests.

Canada's Arctic foreign policy simply declares that "Canada does not anticipate any military challenges in the Arctic and believes that the region is well managed through existing institutions, particularly the Arctic Council."⁶ More recently, a Department of National Defence spokesperson is reported as reaffirming the current absence of a military threat, albeit while also emphasizing "growing international competition in the region."⁷ Even Norway, sharing a land border with Russia and facing the Russian Arctic brigade stationed a mere 30 kms from that border, continues to insist that it does "not consider Russia a military threat"⁸ – though it does not hesitate to characterize some Russian actions and current posture as worrisome.

The central role of good governance is a reminder of just how different the Arctic context is from that of other locations where Russia has intervened or interfered in independent sovereign states. All the non-Russian states of the Arctic are obviously led by highly stable and competent governments – free, in other words, from the kinds of internal weaknesses that Russia was and is able to exploit in places like Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and even Turkey. Russian political and military adventurism threatens in contexts of local instability and dysfunction, but retreats in

locations of solid, confident governance and strong national consensus. And, of course, that points to a primary source of protection for territorial integrity and national security in the states of the Arctic – namely, good governance, domestically and regionally, that avoids the kind of disunity and dysfunction that create opportunities for foreign manipulation for nefarious ends.

There is, at the same time, no denying that legitimate national military roles do come with capabilities that could be turned to more threatening purposes. Fighter and bomber aircraft deployed to Russian Arctic locations for air and coastal defence operations certainly also convey threats to neighbours. And Russia's newest icebreaker is explicitly equipped for operations beyond icebreaking – it comes with combat capabilities that include electronic warfare systems, artillery, and the *Kalibr* cruise missile with a range of up to 2,500 kms for anti-marine and land attack missions.⁹

It is also true that the military roles of NATO states carry the same dual capabilities. The US and NATO can install ballistic missile defence batteries in Eastern Europe in the interests of defence, but from the Russian perspective, it pays to worry that those launchers for interceptor missiles could be re-purposed with missiles aimed at Russian targets. Indeed, Russia views NATO's northern engagements with the same suspicion that it views NATO's eastward expansion or NATO's deployments and accelerated patrols in Eastern Europe and the Baltics. The Russians are unlikely to forget that their four Arctic Ocean neighbours are all members of NATO and lay claim to the all-for-one principle of Article Five.

The key challenge for NATO states in the Arctic is thus to manage that foreboding NATO presence, to Russia, in ways that avoid adding to the escalatory pressures already present. Any constructive Arctic security policy needs to encourage individual Arctic states to focus their military developments on defensive territorial and sovereignty protection missions, on contributions to public safety through enhanced emergency response and search and rescue capabilities, and on support for region-wide cooperation toward those same ends.

American troops now in Norway,¹⁰ technically on rotation but practically on permanent deployment that ignores Norway's early Cold War assurances that foreign combat troops would not be stationed there,¹¹ are an example of the opposite. While that presence is at least in part a response to Russian infantry forces in the upper Kola Peninsula, its emerging permanence not surprisingly generates Russian wariness, raises tensions, and risks instability, even though Norway, the NATO member most directly affected if tensions

rise in the Arctic, has an obvious and declared interest in holding on to the Arctic's rules-based order and tradition of post-Cold War cooperation and reducing tensions. There has been political opposition in Norway to the deployments, and Norway's Senior Arctic Official, Bård Ivar Svendsen, assured the opening session of the 2019 Arctic Circle in Reykjavik that, while it is important to address the geopolitical and security issues that emerge out of the profound changes in the region, the Norwegian objective

is to not cause unnecessary tension. *The current situation is that the Arctic is a peaceful and stable region. We will do what we can to contribute to continued peace and stability, and we do ... not see anything that goes to indicate that that will change significantly.* Maintaining the stability and peace we have today is in the interest of all Arctic states (emphasis added).¹²

NATO restraint and regional collaboration with Russia's far superior conventional capabilities are in a sense the only realistic options, since there is, after all, no regional Arctic military balance with Russia available (and, more to the point, no one is seriously trying for that kind of regional balance). Icebreakers, for example, while not a good basis for comparing relative military strengths, are nevertheless indicators of the level of priority assigned to a surface naval presence in the region. It will take the US at least a decade to double its current fleet of one heavy icebreaker to a total of two.¹³ Compare that with Russia's six-plus heavy icebreakers, some nuclear powered, its three dozen-plus medium and light icebreakers, and its plans for almost a dozen more,¹⁴ and you get a sense of how little importance the Americans assign to icebreakers in support of a conventional naval presence in the Arctic.

The Pentagon also attaches little urgency to expanding its conventional military capacity in the Arctic. Even though it characterizes Russia and China as Arctic competitors, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, with its record-breaking \$738 billion defence budget, does not commit any new funding for Arctic operations to respond to those declared Russian and Chinese challenges.¹⁵ Furthermore, the enhanced conventional Arctic naval roles that American military planners envision involve cooperation with the Coast Guard and such missions as preserving commercial operations, protecting the environment, and securing sovereignty¹⁶ – concerns about Russian and Chinese threats are more rhetorical than operational.

Much of Russia's Arctic presence, notably the nuclear and strategic naval forces based on the Kola Peninsula, is obviously countered by American

strategic forces far from the Arctic. Russia's northern conventional forces, focused on regional operational roles, will not be "balanced" by the regional operations of the Arctic's NATO states – nor should that be the latter's objective. Canada's Arctic military capabilities, for example, are not now and will not in the future be a response to Russian military installations on the other side of the Arctic Ocean. Canadian military requirements are determined by domestic sovereignty, law enforcement, and public safety needs, not by threats to national defence posed by Russia's forces. Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution argues that Arctic military operations "should not be viewed principally as a matter of rivalry with Russia (or China or anyone else),"¹⁷ but focused on building a credible emergency response and law enforcement capacity.

National military deployments should be responsive to domestic defence and public safety needs in the region. The Arctic continues to be a zone in which no state insists that it is facing a state-based military threat – leaving defence forces to focus on aiding civil authorities, reinforcing sovereignty, border security, emergency response/search and rescue, domain awareness (especially air and maritime), and peacetime air and maritime surveillance and control.

The situation in the European Arctic is of course different from that in the North American Arctic. Significant Russian forces are virtually on the borders of Norway and Finland, and in both of those cases close monitoring of Russian activity is unavoidable. But Norwegian or Finnish forces on their own will not counter or deter Russian military adventurism. Broader conventional and strategic forces outside the Arctic are the defence and deterrence forces that Russia must contend with in its security relations with Norway and Finland.

There are serious political differences/conflicts that bedevil the Russian/NATO relationship, notably regarding Ukraine, but it does not follow that those differences create Arctic security challenges to which NATO must respond,¹⁸ or that those conflicts are amenable to Arctic-based influences. NATO is part of what restrains Russian behaviour in the Arctic, not by means of a military presence in the Arctic itself but by virtue of the global strategic dynamic. Indeed, a more overt NATO operational presence in the Arctic would be taken as a provocation that would undermine the tradition of cooperation and would very likely encourage more confrontational, rather than cooperative, behaviour in the Arctic by Russia.

Ratcheting up military competition in the Arctic has no redeeming virtue, and the Arctic's NATO states seem to have well-warranted reticence

about going there. It is thus time for commentators and editorialists to focus on the real challenge, and that is to encourage further development of pan-Arctic coast guard¹⁹ and military arrangements that foster cooperation and facilitate joint operations as needed to support public safety and emergency response, law enforcement, and environmental sustainability, while respecting national sovereignty. The Canadian Global Affairs Institute's David Bercuson has recently concluded that "the only Arctic nation that has the capacity to monitor and support ... [Arctic] shipping is Russia." His frank assessment is that "neither Canada nor the United States have much to offer in the event of a maritime disaster in North American Arctic Waters"²⁰ – all the more reason to work at nurturing the region's still viable impulse to cooperate and to focus on aid-to-civil-authorities roles.

A minimalist but constructive initiative is the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable. Canadian Major-General William Seymour commended it to the House of Commons Defence Committee during a 2018 appearance.²¹ The Roundtable is a regular gathering for the mutual exchange of information and exploration of the Arctic security and threat environment. Gatherings of Arctic chiefs of defence have had similar functions. The problem is that since 2014 these forums have excluded Russia, and that is an exclusionary tactic that is no way to run a region like the Arctic. Trying to marginalize Russia in a region that it dominates will not work, and refusing to engage Russia on security matters in the Arctic will do nothing to change realities in Ukraine, Crimea, Georgia, and elsewhere.

The Arctic would clearly benefit from a forum dedicated to addressing regional security concerns, coordinating military relations within the region, and facilitating mutual cross-border assistance in support of public safety – a mechanism for ongoing regional engagement on the requirements for strategic stability and public safety cooperation in a region that, by general consensus, requires both. The nature, scope, and institutional home of such a forum will continue to be debated, but in the meantime, Arctic stability would be served by an immediate resumption of direct, inclusive engagement among the region's military commanders and security policymakers.

Notes

¹ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2019* (London: Routledge, January 2019), 513-18.

² Ernie Regehr and Amy Zavitz, *Circumpolar Military Facilities of the Arctic Five*, The Simons Foundation, September 2019. <http://thesimonsfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/Circumpolar%20Military%20Facilities%20of%20the%20Arctic%20Five%20-%20updated%20September%202019.pdf>

³ Mathieu Boulègue, "NATO Needs a Strategy for Countering Russia in the Arctic and the Black Sea," Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2 July 2018. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/nato-needs-strategy-countering-russia-arctic-and-black-sea>; Rebecca Pincus, "NATO North? Building a Role for NATO in the Arctic," War on the Rocks, 6 November 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/11/nato-north-building-a-role-for-nato-in-the-arctic/>; Anna Wieslander, "NATO Must Engage in the Arctic," *Defense One*, 16 September 2019. <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/09/its-time-nato-arctic/159887/?oref=d-river>; Tyler Cross, "The NATO Alliance's Role in Arctic Security," *The Maritime Executive*, 19 July 2019. <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/the-nato-alliance-s-role-in-arctic-security>; Dan Sullivan, "Peace through strength in the Arctic," *Anchorage Daily News*, 16 November 2019. <https://www.adn.com/opinions/2019/11/16/peace-through-strength-in-the-arctic/>; Shane Miller, "As Russia and China Increase Arctic Activities, Is Canada Keeping Up?" *Epoch Times*, 30 December 2019. https://www.theepochtimes.com/as-russia-and-china-increase-arctic-activities-is-canada-keeping-up_3188962.html; David J. Bercuson, "Russia set to dominate the Arctic unless Canada acts quickly to address shipping concerns," *National Post*, 28 November 2019. <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/david-j-bercuson-russia-set-to-dominate-the-arctic-unless-canada-acts-quickly-to-address-shipping-concerns>

⁴ In the Ilulissat Declaration, first issued in 2008 and reaffirmed in 2018, the five Arctic Ocean states attest to their ongoing commitment to the legal framework, notably the Law of the Sea, that governs the Arctic and to the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims. Arctic Ocean Conference, "The Ilulissat Declaration," 28 May 2008. <https://www.arctic-report.net/product/859/?lang=>; Marc Jacobsen, "The 10-year anniversary of the Ilulissat Declaration is celebrated in Greenland this week," *High North News*, 23 May 2018. <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/ilulissat-declarations-10-year-anniversary>

⁵ Government of Canada, "Arctic and Northern Policy Framework: Safety, security, and defence chapter," Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern

Affairs Canada, 10 September 2019. <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1562939617400/1562939658000>

⁶ Government of Canada, "Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy," Government of Canada, last modified 12 May 2017. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/arctic-arctique/arctic_policy-canada-politique_arctique.aspx?lang=eng

⁷ Miller, "As Russia and China Increase Arctic Activities."

⁸ Siri Gulliksen Tømmerbakke, "Ambassadors' panel with seven countries met in Bodø – We do not consider Russia a threat, we consider it a concern," *High North News*, 4 April 2019. <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/we-do-not-consider-russia-threat-we-consider-it-concern>

⁹ Brendan Cole, "Russia Unveils 'Unique' Weaponized Icebreaker as It Eyes Arctic Oil and Gas," *Newsweek*, 28 October 2019. <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-arctic-ivan-papanin-icebreaker-1468057>; "Ivan Papanin (Project 23550) Class Arctic Patrol Vessels," Naval Technology. <https://www.naval-technology.com/projects/ivan-papanin-project-23550-class-arctic-patrol-vessels/>

¹⁰ In June 2018 the Government of Norway agreed to double Americans stationed in Norway from 350 to 700 – with American forces reaching that level in October 2018. The soldiers are stationed at Værnes in Trøndelag and Setermoen in Indre Troms. Gerard Taylor, "350 US troops in place in Troms," *Norway Today*, 3 October 2018. <https://norwaytoday.info/news/350-us-troops-place-troms/>

¹¹ Bill W. Williams, "Norway to Host 700 American Soldiers," *Norway Today*, 16 August 2018. <https://norwaytoday.info/news/Norway-host-700-american-soldiers/>

¹² Siri Gulliksen Tømmerbakke, "This is Why Finland and Iceland Want Security Politics in the Arctic Council," *High North News*, 22 October 2019. <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/why-finland-and-iceland-want-security-politics-arctic-council>

¹³ The operational US polar icebreaking fleet currently consists of one heavy polar icebreaker, *Polar Star*, and one medium polar icebreaker, *Healy*. "In addition to *Polar Star*, the Coast Guard has a second heavy polar icebreaker, *Polar Sea*. *Polar Sea*, however, suffered an engine casualty in June 2010 and has been nonoperational since then." In 2013 a decision was taken to add three new heavy icebreakers; the first of these is now in the design phase and "is scheduled to begin construction in 2021 and be delivered in 2024." Ronald O'Rourke (Coordinator), "Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service, CRS Report (R41153), 20 December 2019. <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=832535>

¹⁴ The US Coast Guard puts the combined total numbers of Russia's Arctic icebreakers at 46 with another 11 under construction. "Major Icebreakers of the World," The US Coast Guard Office of Waterways and Ocean Policies, 1 May 2017. <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO Documents/Office of Waterways and Ocean Policy/20170501 major icebreaker chart.pdf?ver=2017-06-08-091723-907>

¹⁵ Melody Schreiber, "The latest U.S. national defense bill expands focus on Russia and China in the Arctic," ArcticToday, 19 December 2019. <https://www.arctictoday.com/the-latest-u-s-national-defense-bill-expands-focus-on-russia-and-china-in-the-arctic/>

¹⁶ Melody Schreiber, "New Senate legislation would require a greater U.S. Navy presence in the Arctic, more collaboration with Coast Guard," ArcticToday, 24 December 2019. <https://www.arctictoday.com/new-senate-legislation-would-require-a-greater-u-s-navy-presence-in-the-arctic-more-collaboration-with-coast-guard/>

¹⁷ Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Beyond NATO: A New Security Architecture for Eastern Europe* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 103. <https://www.brookings.edu/uploads/2017/06/full-text-beyond-nato>

¹⁸ Tømmerbakke, "This is Why Finland and Iceland Want Security Politics."

¹⁹ The Arctic Coast Guard Forum includes the coast guards of all eight Arctic states and promotes "safe, secure, and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic." The coast guards have held two live exercises, in 2017 and 2019, to test and model international cooperation in search and rescue operations. <https://www.arcticcoastguardforum.com/>

²⁰ Bercuson, "Russia set to dominate the Arctic."

²¹ Major-General William Seymour, Testimony, House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 1 March 2018. <http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/NDDN/meeting-85/evidence>

Index

A

“Arctic exceptionalism,” 113-115, 133, 172
 air defence identification zone (ADIZ), 115, 118-119, 157. *See also Canadian Air Defence Identification Zones (CADIZ)*.
 Alaska, 18, 19, 24, 135n16, 138; ballistic missile defence (BMD), 22, 29n11, 76, 91; North Warning System (NWS), 3, 4, 99; proposed anti-submarine warfare (ASW)-free zone, 40, 79-80; security concerns, 34, 46
 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, 94, 102n1, 107
 anti-submarine warfare (ASW), 36-37, 38, 39-40, 47, 76, 79-80; American, 35, 37, 38, 39, 47, 48, 79-80, 167; Canadian, 36, 141; Chinese, 38, 49; Cold War, 36, 38, 79; -free zones, 31, 38, 39-40, 41, 78-80, 125n50-126n50; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 181; Russian, 34, 37, 79, 80, 116 (*see also Tu-95 and Tu-142 (Bear) aircraft*)
 Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF), 23-24, 78, 114, 184-187, 191, 203n19; exercises, 24, 184-185, 186, 191, 203n19
 Arctic Council, 6, 18, 19, 24, 27, 50, 71, 147, 148, 150, 153, 160, 161, 162, 170, 171, 172, 173, 178,

179, 180, 187, 196; agreements, 23, 24, 71, 150; Arctic Coast Guard Forum, 23, 78, 184, 191 (*see also Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*); Arctic Economic Council, 150
 Arctic nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 65-84, 88n42, 193n15; freedom of the seas, 73-74; negative security assurances (NSAs), 70, 72-73, 74, 76, 82-83; popular support for, 68, 81, 85n7. *See also security community; verification*.
 Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR), 27, 183n17, 200

B

ballistic missile defence (BMD), 37, 83, 84, 98, 99, 101, 102, 170; American focus on, 11, 21-22, 26, 29n11, 29n12, 37, 48, 66, 76, 80, 89, 91, 92n5, 93n11, 94, 95, 96, 98, 99, 105, 197 (*see also Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty*); Canada, 94-98; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 11, 89-90, 91, 95, 105, 166, 197; Russian, 80, 89-90, 92n5, 99 (*see also Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty*)
 Baltic states [Baltics], 53-59, 61; Global Peace Index, 56; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 53-54, 55, 57-58, 166,

- 167, 195, 197; Prosperity Index, 57; Russian presence around, 39, 54, 61, 79, 126n50, 156, 181; Sea, 54, 61, 79, 126n50, 156, 181; security, 55, 56-57, 59
- Beaufort Sea, boundary dispute with US, 127, 129; Canadian exclusive economic zone (EEZ), 191; Ice Exercise (ICEX), 36; North Warning System (NWS), 4; Russian activities and patrols, 13, 61, 157, 160
- bombers, 61, 83, 106; American, 67, 109; Chinese, 46; gunboat/air power diplomacy, 61-64; Soviet/Russian threat, 1-2, 4, 10-11, 12, 13, 22, 61, 67, 89, 98, 116, 121, 125n44, 132, 156, 157, 158, 160, 168, 195, 197; Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), 108
- C**
- Canadian Air Defence Identification Zones (CADIZ), 115, 118-119, 132, 157. *See also air defence identification zone (ADIZ).*
- Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), 9, 13, 16n8, 53-54, 117, 150, 199; aid to civil power, 139, 140, 143; Canadian Rangers, 135n16, 137; China, 50-51; domain awareness, 9, 117, 131-132, 135n16; emergency disaster relief internationally, 142-143, 143-144; Joint Task Force North (JTFN), 120, 135n16; responsibilities and roles/aid to civilian authorities, 9, 13, 16n8, 113, 119, 120, 131, 137-143, 144, 199; search and rescue, 138, 139, 141, 142; sovereignty, 131, 137; training exercises, 105, 120, 158 (*see also Ice Exercise (ICEX); Operation NANOOK*). *See also Department of National Defence (DND), Strong, Secure, Engaged; Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART); fighter aircraft [fighters], Canadian; North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD); North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings; surveillance and control, Canada/Canadian Armed Forces.*
- Canadian Coast Guard (CCG), 24, 132, 138; domain awareness, 132; exercises, 185; search and rescue, 132, 142. *See also Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF).*
- Central Arctic Ocean, Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, 6, 77, 133, 150, 189-190, 191-192; non-militarization of surface, 66, 80-81, 82
- CF-18s, 11, 16n8, 125n44, 157
- China, 54, 70, 72, 73, 103n17, 163, 199; Arctic interests, 10, 45, 46, 49, 50-51, 51n2, 162-163, 169, 184, 187n1, 194; cooperation in the Arctic, 50, 51n2, 110, 130, 150, 162-163, 187n1, 190; Missile Technology Regime

Control (MTRC), 108-109;
 Northwest Passage, 50, 130,
 187n1; Nuclear Non-
 Proliferation Treaty, 70 (*see also*
Nuclear Non-Proliferation
Treaty (NPT)); tensions
 with/perceived threat of, v, 6,
 10, 11, 13, 14, 34, 38-39, 45-51,
 52n10, 66-67, 91, 93n11, 98, 99,
 105, 109, 166, 177, 179, 184,
 189, 198 (*see also* *cruise missiles*,
Chinese; *intercontinental*
ballistic missiles (ICBMs),
Chinese; *submarines*, *Chinese*);
 white paper on the Arctic
 (2018), 50. *See also* *anti-*
submarine warfare (ASW),
Chinese; *Law of the Sea*, *United*
Nations Convention on
(UNCLOS).

Cold War, 1-2, 4, 10, 18, 22, 31, 36,
 38, 41, 70, 83, 84, 147, 151, 166,
 194, 195, 197, 198; Atlantic
 Command (NATO), 166; post-
 war interventions, 55-56;
 revivalism/another Cold War?,
 1, 6, 147, 156, 166, 167, 172,
 173, 189, 192 (*see also* *North*
Atlantic Treaty Organization
(NATO), *tensions with Russia*;
Russia, *tensions with/perceived*
threat of). *See also* *Soviet Union*.

cruise missiles, 34, 104, 105, 109,
 110n2, 115-116; American, 34-
 35, 104, 105, 109, 110; Chinese,
 105, 109, 110; concern, 4-5, 10,
 11, 104-108, 115-116;
 eliminating, 109-110;
 Russian/Soviet, 2, 4, 10, 11, 12,
 34, 67, 104-105, 109, 110,

112n14, 115-116, 197. *See also*
Intermediate-Range Nuclear
Forces (INF) Treaty; *Long Range*
Stand Off Weapon (LRSO);
Missile Technology Control
Regime (MTCR); *North*
Warning System (NWS);
Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
(START).

cyber, 10, 51, 119, 135n16, 170

D

Denmark, 78, 120-121, 169, 194;
 Agreement to Prevent
 Unregulated High Seas Fisheries
 on the Central Arctic Ocean,
 150, 189-190; Arctic Coast
 Guard Forum (ACGF), 184 (*see*
also *Arctic Coast Guard Forum*
(ACGF)); dispute over Hans
 Island and Lincoln Sea, 127,
 129; Ilulissat Declaration, 20,
 28n8, 148 (*see also* *Ilulissat*
Declaration); Ilulissat II, 147,
 153; Inuit Circumpolar Council
 (ICC) resolution (1998), 81-82;
 North Atlantic Treaty
 Organization (NATO), 58;
 Nuclear Non-Proliferation
 Treaty (NPT), 71-72 (*see also*
Nuclear Non-Proliferation
Treaty (NPT)); nuclear-weapon-
 free zone (NWFZ), 68, 85n7. *See*
also *Arctic Council*; *Arctic*
Security Forces Roundtable
(ASFR); *Law of the Sea*, *United*
Nations Convention on
(UNCLOS); *Missile Technology*

Control Regime (MTCR);
 Northern Chiefs of
 Defense/Defence meetings.
 denuclearization, 65-84, 109-110;
 Indigenous peoples, 65, 67, 81-
 82, 83; North Korean, 101-102.
*See also Arctic nuclear-weapon-
 free zone; Nuclear Non-
 Proliferation Treaty (NPT).*
 Department of National Defence
 (DND), 120, 121, 196; aid to
 civil authorities and other roles,
 140-141, 142; Defence White
 Paper (1994), 141-142; North
 Warning System (NWS), 95,
 120; on Russia, 160, 196; *Strong,
 Secure, Engaged*, 2, 114, 116,
 117, 118-119, 120-121, 167, 168,
 172, 178, 189. *See also Canadian
 Armed Forces (CAF).*
 deterrence [deter], 4, 9, 10-15, 20,
 32, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 46, 47, 48,
 62, 65, 80, 89, 90, 91, 98, 151,
 167, 199; North Warning
 System (NWS), 4
 diplomacy, 32, 61, 77, 107-108, 110,
 167;
 disarmament/denuclearization,
 15, 66, 84; "gunboat
 diplomacy"/air power
 diplomacy, 61-64; North
 Atlantic Treaty Organization
 (NATO) and Russia, 54-55;
 North Korea, 101, 102. *See also
 Ilulissat Declaration;
 international cooperation;
 security community.*
 Disaster Assistance Response Team
 (DART), 143

Distant Early Warning (DEW)
 Line, 1-2, 4
 domain awareness, 1, 3, 6, 9, 13-14,
 82, 107, 180-181, 199;
 American, 21, 22, 27; Arctic
 Coast Guard Forum, 185 (*see
 also Arctic Coast Guard Forum
 (ACGF)*); Canadian/Canadian
 Armed Forces (CAF), 3, 5-6, 9,
 117, 118-119, 121, 131-132,
 135n16, 139-140, 172, 177, 178
 (*see also Canadian Air Defence
 Identification Zones (CADIZ)*);
 Ilulissat Declaration, 99;
 importance, 3, 5-6, 9, 10, 13-14,
 131, 185; North American
 Aerospace Defence Command
 (NORAD), 10, 131, 135n16;
 North Atlantic Treaty
 Organization (NATO), 121,
 172, 177, 178, 181; North
 Warning System (NWS), 9, 10,
 13-14, 99, 107; Russian, 159

E

emergency response, 3, 9, 78, 197,
 199, 200; American, 25, 200;
 Canada, 118, 119, 132, 135n16,
 138-143, 144, 145n5, 168-169,
 200 (*see also Operation
 NANOOK*); Ilulissat
 Declaration, 99, 149; increasing
 need, 3, 5, 9, 138, 151, 159, 168-
 169, 185; international
 cooperation, 99, 121, 149, 185,
 186, 200; Operation NANOOK,
 137-138, 143, 144, 145n1;
 Russian, 83, 116, 121, 151, 159.

See also law enforcement; public safety; search and rescue (SAR).

F

fighter aircraft [fighters], 61, 62, 63, 158, 197; American, 13, 53, 157, 158; Canadian, 11, 13, 16n8, 120, 132, 157, 158 (*see also CF-18s*); North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), 11, 61, 115, 157; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 53; Russian, 53, 61, 157, 195

Finland, 51n2, 77, 199; Arctic Coast Guard Forum, 184 (*see also Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*); Arctic exceptionalism 113-114; Global Peace Index, 56; Ilulissat Declaration, 148; Ilulissat II, 153; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 53, 58, 171, 186; Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 71-72 (*see also Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*); support for nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 85n7. *See also Arctic Council; Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR); Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention on (UNCLOS); Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR); Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings.*

first-strike capability, 12, 33, 37, 38, 39, 47, 79, 106, 110; American,

39, 65-66; Chinese, 39, 46, 47, 48; Russian, 65-66

G

GIUK (Greenland, Iceland, United Kingdom) Gap, 166, 168, 181, 195

Greenland, 12, 78, 125n50-126n50, 135n16, 179, 194; Americans at Thule, 22, 23, 29n12; Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF), 23, 184 (*see also Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*); ballistic missile defence (BMD), 22, 76, 91; Chinese investment in, 45; Ilulissat Declaration, 28n8-29n8, 147-148; Ilulissat II, 147; nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 83. *See also Denmark; GIUK Gap.*

H

House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE), 40; Canadian sovereignty, 127, 129-132; China, 49-51

House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), 115-116, 117, 119, 167-168, 171-172, 173, 177, 178-179, 200

hypersonic glide vehicles, 10

I

Ice Exercise (ICEX) (US Navy), 35-36

Iceland, 18, 45, 51n2; Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries on the Central Arctic Ocean, 150, 190; Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF), 184 (*see also Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*); Ilulissat Declaration, 148; Ilulissat II, 153; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 58; Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 71-72 (*see also Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*); nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 85n7. *See also Arctic Council; Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR); GIUK Gap; Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention on (UNCLOS); Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR); Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings.*

Ilulissat Declaration, v, 20, 28n8-29n8, 50, 76, 99, 114, 121-122, 130, 147-150, 153-154, 170, 191, 196, 201n4; criticisms, 148, 152-153; Ilulissat II, 147, 153-154

Indigenous peoples, 77, 83, 131, 132, 140, 141, 144, 152-153, 187; Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries on the Central Arctic Ocean, 190; American Arctic strategy, 20; Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF), 23-24; Canadian

defence policy, 119; Canadian Rangers, 135n16, 137; denuclearization of the Arctic, 65, 67, 81-82, 83; Ilulissat Declaration, 148, 152-153; Ilulissat II, 153; Operation NANOOK, 137, 138, 145n1. *See also Inuit; Inuit Circumpolar Council.*

intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), 5, 10-11, 31, 34, 37, 38, 39, 46, 66, 77, 80, 90, 95, 96, 97, 107; American, 33, 35, 37, 67; Chinese, 10, 11, 34, 39, 46-47; North Korean, 100, 101; Russian, 10, 11, 32, 36, 37, 67, 89, 157-158. *See also Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; ballistic missile defence (BMD); submarine-launched missile (SLBMs); SSBNs.*

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, 105, 108, 109, 110

international cooperation, v, 3, 6, 14, 27, 31, 32, 39, 50, 51n2, 65-66, 76, 77-78, 79, 82, 83, 84, 89-91, 92n5, 99, 102, 102n1, 107-108, 110, 113, 114, 120-121, 122, 127, 133-134, 142, 147-154, 159-160, 162-163, 166, 169-170, 171, 172, 173, 177, 179-180, 182, 187, 187n1, 189-192, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200; Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries on the Central Arctic Ocean, 6, 77, 133, 189-192; American Arctic strategy, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26-27, 32, 77, 186; among coast guards, 6, 23, 200 (*see also Arctic Coast Guard Forum*

(ACGF)); ballistic missile defence (BMD), 97, 99; Barents Euro-Arctic Council, 77, 160; nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 68, 84; search and rescue and emergency response, 6, 23, 24, 71, 77-78, 114, 133, 149, 150, 179, 180, 185, 186, 187, 191, 200, 203n19. *See also* *Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty*; *Arctic Council*; *Arctic Security Forces Roundtable*; *Ilulissat Declaration*; *Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty*; *International Maritime Organization (IMO)*; *Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)*; *Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention on (UNCLOS)*; *Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)*; *North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD)*; *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*; *Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings*; *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*; *security community*; *Strategic Arms Reduction (START) Treaty*.

International Maritime Organization (IMO), 27, 50, 77, 185, 186, 187; *Polar Code*, 150, 185, 191

Inuit, 82; *Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries on the Central Arctic Ocean*, 190. *See also* *Indigenous peoples*;

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC).

Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), 77, 187; denuclearizing the Arctic, 39, 81-82; *Ilulissat Declaration*, 152-153; *Ilulissat II*, 153

K

Kremlin, *see* *Russia*.

L

Labrador, North Warning System (NWS), 3, 4, 99

law enforcement, 1, 5, 6, 9, 13-14, 119, 121, 122, 159, 180, 185, 186, 199, 200; *American Arctic*, 20, 24, 25; *Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)*, 13, 119, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143, 199; *North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD)*, 3-4, 13, 142; *Russia*, 116, 121, 159, 186

Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention on (UNCLOS), 28n8-29n8, 50, 73, 74, 76, 77, 83, 130, 147, 148, 149, 153, 161, 162, 170, 187, 191, 201n4; *America*, 20, 21, 22-23

Long Range Stand Off Weapon (LRSO), 109

M

Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), 101, 108-109

mutually assured destruction (MAD), 15, 58, 62, 64, 92n5, 107

N

North American Aerospace

Defence Command (NORAD), ii-iii, 3-4, 5, 9, 10-11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16n8, 22, 61, 97, 105, 115, 120, 131, 132, 135n16, 138, 142, 157, 170, 178; ballistic missile defence (BMD), 95, 97; exercises, 105; North Warning System (NWS), 1, 3, 9, 10, 12

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

(NATO), 31, 53-54, 60n19, 83, 109, 116, 121, 123, 167-168, 170, 181, 195, 197; Arctic Council, 19; ballistic missile defence (BMD), 11, 89-90, 91, 92n5, 95, 98, 105, 166; Baltics, 53-54, 55, 57-58, 166, 167, 195, 197; Brussels Summit Declaration, 177, 180, 181; Canada in, 121, 167-168, 172, 173, 177-179; cooperation with Russia, 89-90, 91, 92n5, 98, 160, 171, 198; exercises and patrols, 54, 121, 166, 177, 179, 181, 197; expanding in the Arctic, 121, 123, 166-173, 177-182, 195; London summit (2019), 194, 195; nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 69, 70, 73, 82-83; Strategic Concept (2010), 170, 180; tensions with Russia, 53-55, 57-58, 61-62, 63, 65, 76, 83, 84, 89-91, 98, 105, 116, 117, 118, 156-159, 160, 161, 162, 166-167, 168, 171, 172, 173, 177, 178, 179, 180, 182, 184, 186, 189, 194, 195, 196-200; Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, 54, 63

North Korea, 70; concerns of, 11, 21, 93n11, 94, 98, 100-102;

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 100-101

North Warning System (NWS), 1, 2, 3-5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13-14, 16n8, 95, 99, 104, 107, 116, 118, 120

Northern Chiefs of

Defense/Defence meetings, 27, 122, 152, 200

Northern Sea Route (NSR), 14, 50, 83, 116, 151, 161-162, 179, 180, 195-196

Northwest Passage (NWP), 25, 129-130, 138; Canadian sovereignty/disputes over, 20, 129-131, 161; China in, 50, 187n1

Northwest Territories, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), 120, 135n16; North Warning System (NWS), 3, 4

Norway, 35, 72, 78, 120-121, 125n50-126n50, 167, 169, 180, 186; Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries on the Central Arctic Ocean, 150, 190; American deployments in, 197-198, 202n10; Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF), 184 (*see also Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*); Global Peace Index, 56; Ilulissat Declaration, 28n8-29n8, 148; Ilulissat II, 153; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 58, 179; Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 71-72 (*see also*

Nuclear Non-Proliferation

Treaty (NPT)); nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 82-83, 85n7; Russia, 156, 157, 158, 160, 170, 194, 196, 199. *See also* Arctic Council; Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR); GIUK Gap; Ilulissat Declaration; Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention on (UNCLOS); Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR); Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 15, 68, 69-70, 71-72, 74, 75, 76, 82, 100-101, 109-110

nuclear weapons, 4, 11, 21-22, 26, 42n12, 55, 62, 63, 65-66, 67, 69, 73, 78, 81, 83-84, 91, 170, 193n15; defenceless against, 9, 10, 11-13, 14, 104, 105-106, 128.

See also cruise missiles; deterrence; intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs); Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); nuclear-weapons-free zone (NWFZ); sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs); SSBNs; SSNs; submarine-launched missile (SLBM).

Nunavut, 12; Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), 120, 135n16, 138; North Warning System (NWS), 3; nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 83

O

Operation NANOOK, 137-138, 140, 143, 144, 145n1

P

Pentagon, 32, 35, 39, 53, 73, 77, 198; ballistic missile defence (BMD), 11, 21, 95, 96; China, 39, 45-46, 51, 52n10, 67, 198; Defense Intelligence Ballistic Missile Analysis Committee, 105; freedom of the seas, 22-23; nuclear weapons, 33, 35, 73; Russia, 32, 53, 54, 57-58, 77, 198; strategy (2018), 35. *See also* US Department of Defense (DOD).

public safety, 1, 5, 27; American strategy, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 200; Canada/Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), 113, 118, 119-120, 122, 137-141, 142, 144, 169, 199, 200 (*see also* Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART)); international cooperation and agreements, 23, 24-25, 77, 78, 82, 114, 133, 149, 150, 151, 179, 185, 187, 189, 191, 200; North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), 13; North Warning System (NWS), 3, 6, 9, 10, 13-14; Russia, 116, 159, 195. *See also* emergency response; law enforcement; search and rescue.

R

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), 138, 140; domain awareness, 132; Operation NANOOK, 145n1

- Russia, 4, 9-10, 13, 18, 19, 27, 31, 37, 39, 41, 45, 49, 53-54, 56-57, 58, 60n19, 64, 65-66, 67, 70, 71, 73, 77, 78, 80, 83, 85n4, 103n17, 109, 114, 133, 169, 170, 179-180, 181-182, 194-196, 203n14; Arctic Coast Guard Forum, 23-24 (*see also* *Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*); Arctic Council, 19 (*see also* *Arctic Council*); Arctic strategy/policy, 14, 18, 31-32, 65-66, 77, 89-91, 113, 151-152, 160-162, 195-196; ballistic missile defence (BMD), 89-90, 92n5, 99, 197; Baltics, 53-54, 56, 57-59; cooperation in the Arctic, 45, 51n2, 89-90, 91, 92n5, 99, 110, 113, 121, 125n50-126n50, 149, 150, 159-160, 162-163, 171, 172, 173, 179, 186, 190, 196, 198 (*see also* *Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty*; *Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*; *Arctic Council*; *Ilulissat Declaration*; *Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty*; *Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)*; *Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings*; *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*; *Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START)*); Crimea, 63, 116, 152, 160, 168, 171, 173, 200; exclusive economic zone (EEZ), 156, 159, 195-196; GIUK Gap, 166, 181; Ilulissat II, 153; Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, 105, 108 (*see also* *Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty*); Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) Resolution (1998), 81-82; Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), 101, 108-109; Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 70 (*see also* *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*); nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 82, 84, 85n7; perception of Arctic threat, 116-117; sovereignty, 14, 156, 161, 195; tensions with/perceived threat of, v, 4, 6, 10-11, 12, 13, 14, 22, 34, 37, 40, 46, 53-55, 57-58, 61-62, 63, 65, 67, 76, 84, 89-91, 98, 99, 104-105, 114, 115-116, 117-118, 125n44, 131, 132, 147, 151-152, 156-159, 160, 161, 162, 166-167, 168, 169, 171, 172, 173, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181-182, 184, 186, 189, 194, 195, 196-200; training missions, exercises, and patrols, 2, 4, 13, 22, 54, 66, 71, 74, 115, 118, 121, 160, 166; Ukraine (*see* *Ukraine*). *See also* *anti-submarine warfare (ASW)*, *Russian*; *bombers*, *Soviet/Russian threat*; *cruise missiles*, *Russian*; *fighter aircraft [fighters]*, *Russian*; *Ilulissat Declaration*; *intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)*, *Russian*; *Law of the Sea*, *United Nations Convention on (UNCLOS)*; *Long Range Stand*

Off Weapon (LRSO); Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings; Northern Sea Route (NSR); search and rescue, Russia; Soviet Union; submarines, Russian; Tu-95 and Tu-142 (Bear) aircraft.

S

sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs), 12, 34, 106, 107; American, 34, 35, 105; North Warning System (NWS), 5, 12; Russian, 4, 12, 34, 104-105, 108, 115-116, 197

search and rescue, 78, 117, 197, 199; America and, 19, 22, 25-26; Canada/Canadian Armed Forces, ii, 117, 118, 119, 131, 132, 138, 139, 141, 142, 168-169; challenge, 119-120; domain awareness, 3; increasing need, 3, 5, 25, 118, 151, 168-169, 180; international cooperation and agreements, 6, 23, 24, 71, 77, 99, 114, 121, 133, 149, 150, 179, 180, 185, 186, 187, 191, 203n19 (*see also Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*); Russia, 116, 151-152, 161, 179, 180, 195. *See also emergency response; law enforcement; public safety.*

security community, 65, 76-84, 86n28, 91, 113, 120-123

sovereignty, 10, 13, 50, 53, 56, 73, 122, 128-129, 130, 133, 170, 185, 197, 199, 200; American Arctic, 18, 24, 27, 198; the Baltics, 55; Canadian, 2, 51, 114, 115, 117,

118, 119, 120-121, 122, 125n44, 127-132, 137, 139, 157, 173, 199; domain awareness, 1, 5, 10, 13; North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), 13; North Warning System (NWS), 1, 2, 5, 10; Russian, 14, 156, 161, 195

Soviet Union, 53, 151, 158; initiatives with/of, 10, 27, 34, 39, 42n12, 79, 90, 92n5, 102n1, 105, 108, 113, 125n50-126n50, 147, 172, 183n17; threat, 1-2, 10-11, 31, 36. *See also Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; Cold War; Russia; Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).*

SSBNs (submarines carrying intercontinental nuclear-armed ballistic missiles), 31, 34, 36-38, 39-40, 46, 66-67, 76-77, 78-79, 80; American, 31, 33, 35, 37, 40, 49, 79, 80; Chinese, 34, 38-39, 46-48, 49, 51, 52n10, 66-67; Russian, 31, 32-33, 36, 38, 40-41, 71, 72, 78-79, 80, 126n50. *See also anti-submarine warfare (ASW); submarine-launched missile (SLBM).*

SSGNs (submarines carrying conventionally-armed land-attack cruise missiles), 34; American, 34-35

SSNs (strategic attack submarines), 31, 34-36, 36-37, 38, 47, 48, 82; American, 31, 34-36, 37, 42n12, 47, 48, 79, 80, 167; Chinese, 48-49; exclusion zones, 39-41, 66, 79-80, 84, 123, 126n50; Russian/Soviet, 31, 34, 36, 42n12, 79

stewardship, 20

Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), 33, 84, 105, 108, 110

submarine-launched missile (SLBM), 37; Chinese, 38, 46, 47; Russian, 31, 32, 157-158. *See also* SSBNs.

submarines, 3, 31, 36, 38, 66-67, 75, 77, 80, 83; American, 18, 25, 31, 33, 34-35, 36, 37, 40, 49, 66, 67, 74, 79, 80, 82, 126n50, 157; Canadian, 36; Chinese, 34, 38-39, 45, 46-49, 51, 52n10, 66-67; Ice Exercise (ICEX), 35-36; Russian, 12, 31, 32-33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40-41, 42n12, 66, 67, 71, 72, 74, 78-79, 80, 89, 98, 115-116, 126n50, 131, 157-158. *See also* sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs); SSBNs; SSGNs; SSNs; submarine-launched missile (SLBM).

surveillance and control, 6, 61, 107, 199; American, 19, 95; Canadian, 3, 5, 13-14, 16n8, 95, 118, 119, 120-121, 131, 135n16, 138, 139, 141-142, 170; Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), 119, 131, 135n16, 138, 139, 141-142; need, 3, 6, 13-14; North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), 10, 13-14, 16n8, 138, 142, 170; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 61; Russian, 159. *See also* ballistic missile defence (BMD); Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line; domain awareness; North Warning System (NWS).

Svalbard, 81

Sweden, 18, 19, 167; Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF), 184 (*see also* Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)); cruise missiles, 105; Global Peace Index, 56; Ilulissat Declaration, 148; Ilulissat II, 153; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 53, 58, 171, 186; Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 71-72 (*see also* Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)); nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ), 68, 85n7. *See also* Arctic Council; Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR); *Law of the Sea, United Nations Convention on* (UNCLOS); *Missile Technology Control Regime* (MTCR); *Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings*.

T

Tu-95 (Bear), 157, 158

Tu-142 (Bear) aircraft, 13

U

Ukraine, 91, 128, 167, 170, 173; Global Peace Index, 56-57; military training exercises, 158; Russia, 6, 54, 56-57, 58-59, 114, 117, 128, 151, 158, 160, 162, 167, 168, 171-172, 196, 199, 200

US Coast Guard (USCG), 30n32; and the Arctic, 19, 22, 24-26, 198, 202n13; Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF), 24, 185

(*see also Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF)*); cruise missiles, 105

US Department of Defense (DOD), and the Arctic, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26-27, 32, 77, 198;

USNORTHCOM, 178. *See also Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR); Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR); Northern Chiefs of Defense/Defence meetings; Pentagon.*

US Navy, 33, 37, 38-39, 80, 158; 198; Arctic Roadmap, 24, 25-26; Ice Exercise (ICEX), 35-36. *See also submarines, American.*

US White House, and the Arctic, 19, 20-21; *National Security Strategy* (2017), 189

V

verification, 69, 74-75, 101

Y

Yukon, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), 120, 135n16; North Warning System (NWS), 3, 4; Operation NANOOK, 137-138, 140, 144, 145n1

DETERRENCE, ARMS CONTROL, AND COOPERATIVE SECURITY

Selected Writings on Arctic Security

Ernie Regehr

Focusing on military aspects of the broader security agenda in the Arctic, Ernie Regehr poses the overarching question: “What are and should be the roles, and limits, of military forces in supporting human security, in strengthening the rule of law nationally and internationally, and in promoting efforts towards a cooperative security regime within the Arctic region?” The various chapters in this important book provide critical reflections on the security implications of technology and climate change, international strategic drivers (such as evolving Russian and Chinese Arctic interests), and the roles of military institutions such as NORAD and NATO. Arctic and North American defence cannot be isolated from global dynamics, and Regehr’s clear and poignant analysis of the capabilities and intentions of Arctic and non-Arctic states lays an important foundation for rational, evidence-based debate and discussion.

THE
SIMONS
FOUNDATION

NAADSN

North American and Arctic Defence
and Security Network

