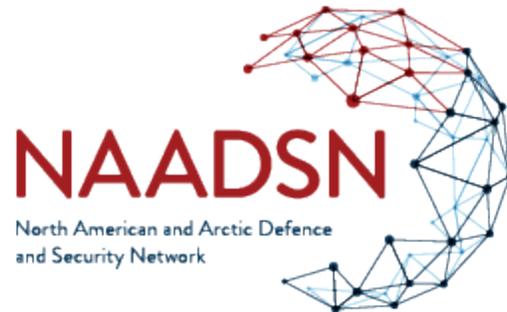


Russian Arctic Strategies

Ambitions and Near-Term Expectations

Troy Bouffard
Center for Arctic Security and Resilience
University of Alaska Fairbanks

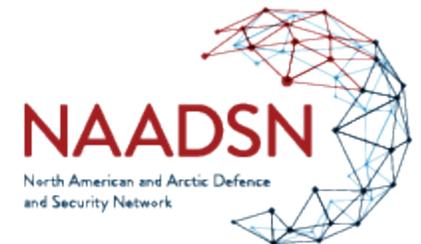


P. Whitney Lackenbauer
Canada Research Chair in the Study of the
Canadian North, Trent University

Purpose

To explore the major components involved in long-term strategic development of Russia's Arctic in order to contextualize near-term and overall ambitions of its *legitimizing grand strategy*, to include:

- Setting up the “Big Arctic Show”
 - Understanding authoritarian vs democratic policy efficiencies
 - The role and timing of various published Russian Arctic strategies and policies
 - Recent governmental changes
 - Upcoming Russian Arctic Council Chairmanship
- Information Domain
- Potential impacts to the Circumpolar North



Official Government Statements and Publications	State-Funded Global Messaging	Proxy Sources	Weaponizing of Social Media
Former strategy documents	State-funded, foreign-facing media	Russian-aligned outlets with global reach	Infiltrating domestic conversations
Kremlin or ministerial statement	State-funded, domestic-facing media	Local language-specific outlets	Stating campaigns to undermine faith in institutions
Official Russian social media post	Foreign-based, Russian-funded state media	Deliberate and unwitting proliferators of Russian narratives	Amplifying protests or civil discord
Statement or quote from a Russian official	Russian social, cultural, and business institutions	Foreign state narrative amplification	

Russian Policy Efficiencies

Differences between democratic vs authoritarian processes

Democratic

- Primary stakeholder inclusion
- Key stakeholder input and review
- Susceptible to partisan dynamics

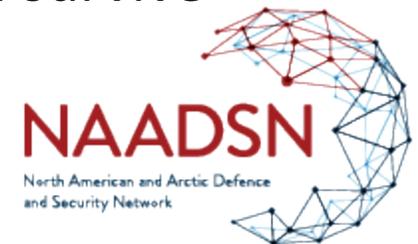
Authoritarian

- experiences little governmental resistance or social interference
- civic buy-in and deliberation not needed

Similarities: Rulers cannot rule alone...

- rulers need to rely on others, and the more successfully they interact with these other actors in stable, but at the same time adaptive, institutional arrangements, the higher the likelihood that the ruler, and the regime as a whole, will survive

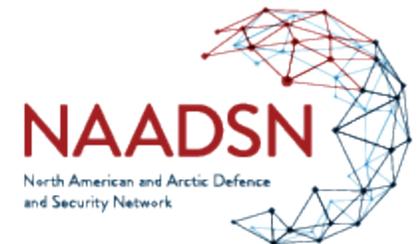
Burkhardt, Fabian. "Institutionalising Authoritarian Presidencies: Polymorphous Power and Russia's Presidential Administration." *Europe-Asia Studies* (2020): 1-33.



Russian Arctic Strategies and Policies

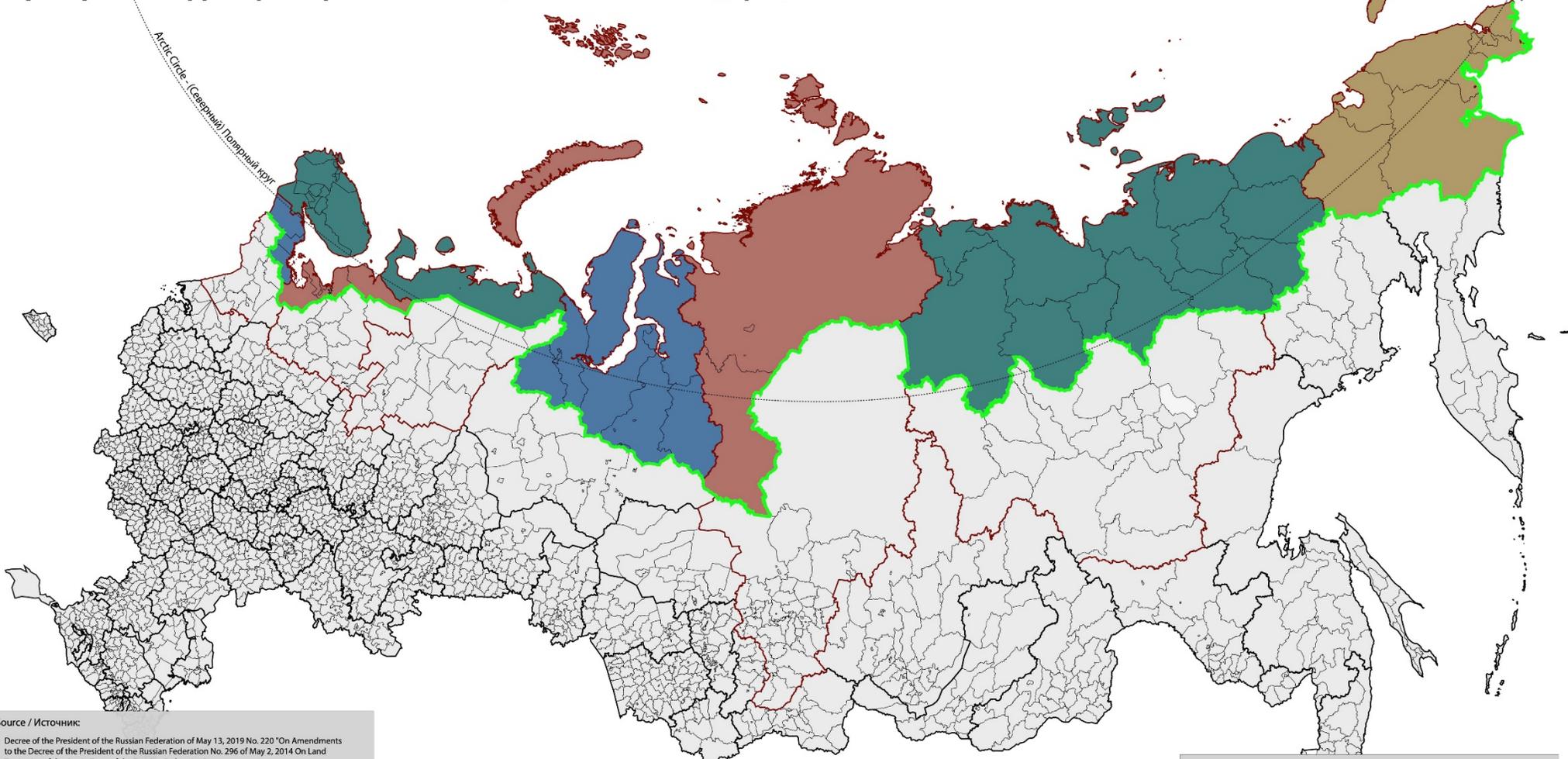
- Strategy for the Development of the Russian Arctic Zone and Provision of National Security Through 2035 (Oct 2020)¹
- Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of September 18, 2020 N 1487 "On approval of the Rules for navigation in the water area of the Northern Sea Route"
- Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic to 2035 (Mar 2020)
- Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 13, 2019 No. 220 and June 27, 2017 No. 287 "On Amendments to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 296 of May 2, 2014 On Land Territories of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation"
- On the Approval of the Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Activities for the Period to 2030 (2017)
- Transport Strategy of the Russian Federation up to 2030 (2014)
- Russian Strategy of the Development of the Arctic Zone and the Provision of National Security until 2020 (2013)
- Energy Strategy of Russia (2009)
- Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period up to 2020 and Beyond (2008)

¹ "Долгожданное Решение Для Регионов Крайнего Севера," [Long-awaited solution for Far North regions], Няръяна вындер, updated 31 October, 2020, accessed 01 November, 2020, <http://nvinder.ru/article/vypusk-no-119-21033-ot-31-oktyabrya-2020-g/82721-dolgozhdannoe-reshenie-dlya-regionov>.



The Land Territories of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation

Сухопутные Территории Арктической Зоны Российской Федерации



Source / Источник:
Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 13, 2019 No. 220 "On Amendments to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 296 of May 2, 2014 On Land Territories of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation"

Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of June 27, 2017 No. 287
On the Introduction of Amendments to the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 2, 2014 No. 296 "On the Land Territories of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation"

Указ Президента РФ от 13 мая 2019 г. № 220 «О внесении изменений в Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 2 мая 2014 г. N 296 О сухопутных территориях Арктической зоны Российской Федерации»

Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 27.06.2017 г. № 287
О внесении изменений в Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 2 мая 2014 г. № 296 «О сухопутных территориях Арктической зоны Российской Федерации»

Russian Federation subjects without territory in the Arctic Zone
 Российские федеральные субъекты без сухопутной территории в Арктической зоне
 Political boundary of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation
 Политическая граница Арктической зоны Российской Федерации

- ### List of Territories
- Murmansk Oblast
 - Nenets Autonomous Okrug
 - Chukotka Autonomous Okrug
 - Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug
 - Republic of Karelia:
 - Districts of Belomorsk, Loukhsky, and Kemsky
 - Arkhangelsk Oblast:
 - Districts of Mezensky, Novaya Zemlya, Onezhsky, and Primorsky. City of Arkhangelsk, Novodvinsk and Severodvinsk
 - Komi Republic:
 - City of Vorkuta
 - Krasnoyarsk Krai:
 - Districts of Taimirsky Dolgano-Nenetsky and Turukhansky. City of Norilsk.
 - Republic of Sakha (Yakutia):
 - Districts of Abyisky, Allaikhovskoy, Anabarsky, Bulunsky, Verkhnekolymsky, Verkhoyansky, Zhigansky, Momsky, Nizhnekolymsky, Oleneksky Evenki, Srednekolymsky, Ust-Yansky, and Eveno-Bytantaysky.

- ### Список территорий
- Мурманская область
 - Ненецкий автономный округ
 - Чукотский автономный округ
 - Ямало-Ненецкий автономный округ
 - Республика Карелия:
 - Белооморский, Лоухский и Кемский районы
 - Архангельская область:
 - Мезенский, Онежский, Приморский районы, район Новая Земля. Город Архангельск, Новодвинск, Северодвинск
 - Республика Коми:
 - Город Воркута
 - Красноярский край:
 - Таймырский Долгано-Ненецкий район, Туруханский район. Город Норильск.
 - Республика Саха (Якутия):
 - Районы Абыйского, Аллаиховского, Анабарского, Булунского, Верхнеколымского, Верхоянского, Жиганского, Момского, Нижнеколымского, Оленекского эвенкийского, Среднеколымского, Усть-Янского, и Эвено-Бытантайского.



The Northern Sea Route Северный морской путь (Севморпуть) NSR / СМП

Article 5.1. Navigation in the area of the Northern Sea Route. Статья 5.1. Плавание в акватории Северного морского пути

1. The area of the Northern Sea Route means a water area adjoining the northern coast of the Russian Federation, including internal sea waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, and limited in the East by the line delimitating the sea areas with the United States of America and by the parallel of the Dezhnev Cape in the Bering Strait; in the West, by the meridian of the Cape Zhelaniye to the Novaya Zemlya archipelago, by the east coastal line of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago and the western limits of the Matochkin Shar, Kara Gates, Yugorski Shar Straits.

1. Под акваторией Северного морского пути понимается водное пространство, прилегающее к северному побережью Российской Федерации, охватывающее внутренние морские воды, территориальное море, прилегающую зону и исключительную экономическую зону Российской Федерации и ограниченное с востока линией разграничения морских пространств с Соединенными Штатами Америки и параллелью мыса Дежнева в Беринговом проливе, с запада меридианом мыса Желания до архипелага Новая Земля, восточной береговой линией архипелага Новая Земля и западными границами проливов Маточкин Шар, Карские Ворота, Югорский Шар

Source: The Federal Law of July 28th, 2012, N 133-FZ
Источник: Федеральный закон от 28 июля 2012 г. N 133-ФЗ

-  200nm EEZ Boundary
200-мильная зона из исходных линий
-  A: Strait of Karski Gates
Пролив Карские ворота
-  B: Vilkitsky Straits
Пролив Вилькицкого
-  C: Strait of Sannikovo
Пролив Санникова
-  D: Strait of Long
Пролив Лонга
-  E: Strait of Dmitry Laptev
Пролив Дмитрия Лаврова

Source: Administration of the Northern Sea Route (subordinate to) Federal Agency of Maritime and River Transport (subordinate to) Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation
Источник: Администрация северного морского пути (подчиненный) Федеральное агентство морского и речного транспорта (подчиненный) Министерство транспорта Российской Федерации

- ### Water Areas of the Northern Sea Route Водные районы Северного морского пути
1. South-western part of the Kara Sea
Юго-западная часть Карского моря
 2. North-eastern part of the Kara Sea
Северо-восточная часть Карского моря
 3. The western part of the Laptev Sea
Западная часть моря Лаптевых
 4. The eastern part of the Laptev Sea
Восточная часть моря Лаптевых
 5. South-western part of the East Siberian Sea
Юго-западная часть Восточно-Сибирского моря
 6. North-eastern part of the East Siberian Sea
Северо-восточная часть Восточно-Сибирского моря
 7. The Chukchi Sea
Чукотское море



Russian Government Shuffle - 09 November 2020

- President Putin adjusts the government...with a strong nod to the Arctic
 - Fired – Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Dmitry Kobylnkin
 - Fired – Minister of Transport, Yevgeny Dietrich
 - Fired – Minister of Construction, Vladimir Yakushev
 - Hired – Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Alexander Kozlov¹
 - Hired – Minister for the Development of the Far East and Arctic, Alexei Chekunov
 - Hired – Deputy Prime Minister (new position), Alexander Novak
 - Hired – Minister of Energy, Nikolai Shulginov



¹"Владимир Путин Назначил Александра Козлова Министром Природных Ресурсов И Экологии." Министерство Российской Федерации по развитию Дальнего Востока и Арктики, Updated 10 Октября, 2020, <https://minvr.gov.ru/press-center/news/28710/>.

Russian Arctic Council Chairmanship



- 20 May 2021
- During its upcoming Chairmanship, Russia plans to focus on economic, social and environmental sustainable development in the Arctic region.¹
- Russia will build upon joint efforts with the Arctic Council States on the principles of international law and with respect and consideration of each other's interests in various areas from research and implementation of environmental projects to the use of the Northern Sea Route
- 26 November 2020: Putin signed a decree to establish the Committee on Russia's Chairmanship in the Arctic Council in 2021–2023²



Committee Chair:
Yury Trutnev

¹ <https://arctic-council.org/en/about/states/russian-federation/>

² Президент Путин. "Указ Президента Российской Федерации От 25.11.2020 № 740 "Об Организационном Комитете По Подготовке И Обеспечению Председательства Российской Федерации В Арктическом Совете В 2021 - 2023 Годах"." In № 740, edited by Кремль. Москва, Россия: Официальный интернет-портал правовой информации, 2020.
<http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202011250037>.



Russian Information Operations

- Use of InfoOps during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine '04
- Use of InfoOps during the Russo-Georgian War in '08
- In 2013, General Gerasimov, stated in an article that “the role of non-military methods in achieving political and strategic goals has significantly surpassed the effectiveness of the power of weapons.”
- Russia's InfoOps refocus and execution of a stunningly successful demonstration in Crimea during annexation in '14



Велерий Герасимов "Ценность науки в предвидении." Военно-промышленный курьер, Updated 26 February, 2013, accessed 13 August, 2020, <https://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>.



Strategy
for Developing
the Russian
Arctic Zone
and Ensuring
National
Security until
2035

(26 Oct. 2020)



Russian Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem

- Multiple media platforms, no unified messaging across sources
 - Various, overlapping approaches that are perceived to be mutually reinforcing (even when individual messages appear contradictory)
 - Allows for variation in false or skewed narratives to fit target audiences
 - No need for consistency as with official government policy documents or statements
 - Facilitates circulation of disinformation prejudicial to adversaries while allowing Russian state to disavow responsibility for malign activity
 - Potential for multiplier effect as stories interact and offer circular validation
 - Also sows confusion for audiences trying to parse truth from fabrication or distortion

“Firehose of Falsehood” Propaganda Model

- Distinctive features:
 1. High-volume and multichannel
 2. Rapid, continuous, and repetitive – first impressions are highly resilient (“illusionary truth effect”); repetition → familiarity → acceptance
 3. Lacks commitment to objective reality - “sleeper effect”; information eventually discredited/retracted/proven false can still influence reasoning
 4. Lacks commitment to consistency
- “several of these features run directly counter to the conventional wisdom on effective influence and communication from government or defense sources, which traditionally emphasize the importance of truth, credibility, and the avoidance of contradiction”

State-funded, foreign-facing media

- Most Russian strategic Arctic messaging is propagated by Russian mainstream outlets in traditional formats (and then disseminated by social media)
 - overt, attributable messages that amplify Arctic-related pro-Russian / anti-Western narratives
 - Strategic goal: weaken the credibility of the United States and its Western allies/partners while enhancing the *legitimacy* of Russia and projecting the message that it is the dominant Arctic player
- Aligns with core messaging in the *Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone and Ensuring National Security until 2035* and other strategic documents

Major Messaging: Pro-Russian

- Promoting Kremlin statements, Arctic Development Doctrine, Russia's icebreaking and construction programs
- Refurbishing and modernizing of military infrastructure; new bases, weapons, air-defence systems (e.g. Bastion coastal missile systems – BRK); troop strength and major exercises
 - Superiority of Russian weapon systems in the Arctic region
- Energy resources in the Russian Arctic – driver of US covetous interest
- Northern Sea Route: Russia only seeks stability in region to ensure conflict-free operation of NSR as Russian economic artery
- Russia's adherence to international law, respect for sovereignty, open to dialogue, and ready to discuss common issues
- **Take aways: Russian superiority over the West; Russian legitimacy as the largest Arctic rightsholder; establish requirement to defend**

Major Messaging: Anti-Western

- NATO designs to push Russia out of the Arctic, deny its right to exploit resources
 - All justification for “defensive” military capabilities in the region
 - NATO = aggressor, Russia = peaceful target with rights that NATO refuses to recognize
 - Canada-U.S. exercises as provocative, directed at Russia, and show that Western countries are readying for confrontation
- Weakness of Western states
 - US icebreakers (even China has more than the US)
 - Canadian Rangers as Canada’s only Arctic defenders, and no naval port
 - NATO unable to build anything significant north of the Arctic Circle
 - quality, scale, and outcomes of NORAD military exercises – prove Russian regional superiority?
- Accuse US of aggressive global disinformation campaign setting up an imaginary Russian threat to the Arctic to serve the U.S. military-industrial complex
- Sanctions hurt, but cannot stop, Russia – and hurt the Nordic states even more...

Russia-aligned misinformation outlets with global reach

Example of *Global Research*

- Canadian-based website run out of Montreal by Michael Chossudovsky (retired U of O professor)
- site has posted more than 40,000 of its own pieces since it was launched in 2001, often picked up by other pro-Russian and pro-Chinese websites
- also shares reports from obscure websites that get cross-posted on a series of other sites or aggressively spread across Facebook and Twitter by followers who actively share or retweet them, including social botnets or bots
 - Globe and Mail, 17 November 2017, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/nato-research-centre-sets-sights-on-canadian-website-over-pro-russian-disinformation/article37015521/>

Sample stories

Lucas Leiroz de Almeida, “US-NATO Military Presence in the Arctic Threatens Global Security,” 14 Mar 2020, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/western-military-presence-arctic-threatens-international-security/5706340>

- *Excerpt:* “Oil and gas certainly explain a considerable part of military maneuvers and international interest in the Arctic, but they do not exhaust the reasons why the United States and NATO are increasing their presence in the north.... The dominance achieved by the West in the Middle East costed the lack of attention with the Arctic, only now realized. And Washington will not stop putting the world in danger to seek its hegemony in the region.”

Alex Foster, “Canada’s Arctic Initiative in the Geopolitical Crucible,” 19 Sept 2019, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/canada-arctic-initiative/5689662>

- *Excerpt:* “The problem of Canada’s Arctic policy, or lack thereof, lies in its attachment and dependence to Western models of security and integration, and particularly to its traditional ally, the United States.”

Specific Topics: Freedom of Navigation

- West wants to deny Russian rights to the NSR, and the US unjustifiably claims that it is an international strait
- in any case, the US does not have the power to force the issue because Russia has established military dominance in the region
- stories also highlight Canada's displeasure with the US over its stance with respect to the NWP (although often demonstrate confusion about Canada's actual position and how it compares to Russia's)
 - e.g. Russian news sources also frequently make dubious claims to the Northern Sea Route as internal waters on the basis of article 234 of the Law of the Sea Convention, claiming that this is also Canada's position
- recognized as potential wedge issues between Canada and the U.S., and source of common ground between Canada and Russia

See, for example, "US wants Russia to stop being stingy & share its Arctic waters with the world," RT, 15 Oct 2019, <https://www.rt.com/business/470954-us-russia-arctic-waters/>; Scott Ritter (former US Marine Corps intelligence officer), "US muscle-flexing threatens to open Arctic front in new Cold War with Russia," RT, 14 May 2020, <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/488679-arctic-military-russia-us/>

Specific Topics: Indigenous Peoples

- Russian media actively emphasizes how Canada and the US are guilty of committing “genocide” against Arctic Indigenous peoples
 - suggests that poor treatment of Inuit and other groups means that they have no legitimacy criticizing Russia or accusing Russia of violating Indigenous rights
- Goal: illegitimize Western claims that they respect Indigenous peoples; goal to absolve Russia of need to make its case



The image is a screenshot of a news article from RT. The article is titled "Canada guilty of decades-long 'race-based genocide' against indigenous people - inquiry" and is dated "4 Jun, 2019 03:08 / Updated 6 months ago". The article features a photograph of women at a protest holding signs that say "MURDERED" and "MISSING". Below the photo, the text reads: "Women hold signs during the closing ceremony of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, June 3, 2019. © REUTERS/Chris Wattie". The article also includes social media sharing icons and a "Follow RT on" button.

RT QUESTION MORE LIVE US ELECTION

News USA UK Russia & FSU Op-ed Sport Business

Home / World News /

Canada guilty of decades-long 'race-based genocide' against indigenous people – inquiry

4 Jun, 2019 03:08 / Updated 6 months ago [Get short URL](#)



Women hold signs during the closing ceremony of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, June 3, 2019. © REUTERS/Chris Wattie

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Follow RT on [Google News](#)

A damning report has accused the Canadian government of perpetuating genocide by inaction against indigenous women and girls. Indigenous rights activists say they've been witnessing their own grim version of #MeToo for years now.

The report is the result of an extensive inquiry commissioned by the Canadian government itself in 2016. With over 1,200 pages, it paints a grim picture of systemic mistreatment of indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA (which stands for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual) people. These groups of the indigenous population have been singled out as the most vulnerable ones.

Specific Topics: China

- Russian media acknowledge China's active interest and intervention in Arctic affairs whenever opportunities arise
 - e.g. "Polar Silk Road: Why Russia's Northern Sea Route is the Best Option for China," *Sputnik News*, 30 Jan 2018, <https://sputniknews.com/analysis/201801301061169398-china-polar-silk-road/>
- Moscow's dominant official message is that China is an ally and economic and political partner, but Russian media uses Western voices to raise concerns about Chinese influence and investment
 - propagate narratives of US concern about China, including about prospect of Chinese submarine activities in the Arctic
 - although framed as a U.S.-China issue, also allows for expressions of wariness and indirect critiques of China's Arctic ambitions

Foreign State Narrative Amplification

- Selected, undeniable amplification – “I didn’t write it”
- typical tactic of Russian news media and social media
- difficult to counter given that these are not “fake news” stories
- Examples:
 - Secretary of State Pompeo’s comments to Arctic Council
 - US offer to purchase Greenland from the Kingdom of Denmark (without first consulting with Greenlanders)
 - Canada’s colonial legacies and “cultural genocide”

Other Considerations

- unwitting Western proliferators of Russian narratives
 - “critics” of Western policy who emphasize Russian superiority and dominance (often out of a desire to secure more defence funding)
 - US expansion of Arctic presence as a way to contain Russia in the Arctic
- Should we expect Russian infiltration of Northern debates?
 - Oct/19 disinformation campaign during Canadian federal election campaign to exacerbate divisions about Wexit
 - Nordic countries and use of automated social media accounts to aggravate debates about environmental issues

Western misinformation/disinformation?

- Example of *Barents Observer* story on Medvedev (14 Oct. 2020)
 - Suggestion that Medvedev and the Russian Security Council would play a key role in Russia's Arctic Council chairmanship (2021-23), and that Russia planned to introduce national security as a key priority as chair
 - “‘Certain NATO members, among them the USA, try to restrict Russia's activities in the Arctic,’ says top security strongman Dmitry Medvedev and makes clear that issues of national security will be part of his country's upcoming chairmanship priorities in the Arctic Council.”
 - not reflected in Russian language reports of the council meeting, and inquiries with Western officials in Moscow indicate no evidence that Medvedev linked the two directly ...
 - ... but message propagated by Arctic Today, Radio-Canada, etc.

How would we read this if the tables were turned? Fake news? Deliberate state-sponsored misinformation campaign designed to undermine Russia's chairmanship?



Former prime ministers Dmitry Medvedev and Jens Stoltenberg, now respectively Deputy Head of Russia's Security Council and NATO General Secretary, on the Russian-Norwegian border in 2013. Photo: Thomas Nilsen

Moscow signals it will make national security a priority in Arctic Council

“‘Certain NATO members, among them the USA, try to restrict Russia's activities in the Arctic,’ says top security strongman Dmitry Medvedev and makes clear that issues of national security will be part of his country's upcoming chairmanship priorities in the Arctic Council.

[Read in Russian | Члены, по-прежнему](#)

By **Atle Staalesen**



October 14, 2020

According to the former president and prime minister, Russia is experiencing a wide range of threats in the Arctic from its NATO neighbors, including military buildup along its northern borders and the introduction of sanctions.

Russia wants peace, stability and mutually beneficial partnership, but that view is not shared by the NATO members, he argues.

“All of this, of course, poses direct threats to our national security,” Medvedev underlined in a [Russian Security Council meeting](#) this week. The meeting was the first in Council's newly established Arctic Commission.

Strategic region

Medvedev highlighted that Russia has growing strategic interests in the Arctic, both in terms of economy and national security.

“This region is of special strategic importance for us. Here, the state is handling its most important tasks – the protection of economic interests and national security,” he said.

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Final Reflections: An Open Information Offensive

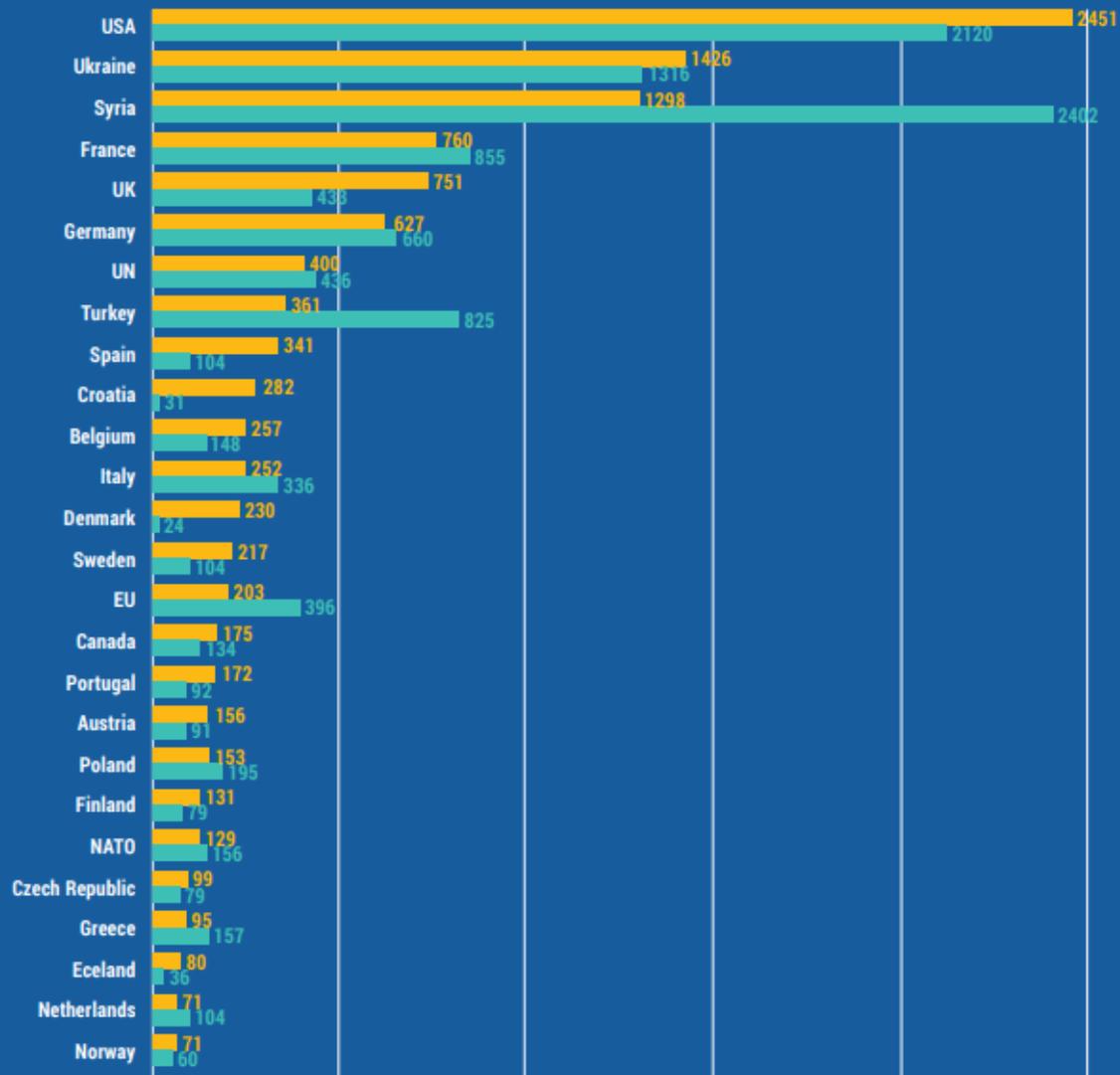
- Russia's search to *legitimize* its dominant position in the Arctic
- Monitoring a *shaping environment*: few “smoking guns,” but need for careful reading and assessment *by subject matter experts*
 - Parsing what is Russian mis/disinformation from credible differences of interpretation from propagation of Western narratives that we resent when an adversary turns them back on us...
- Blurred lines: is this best conceptualized as information “warfare” (requiring a military response) or as influence operations best monitored and countered by other agencies (e.g. intelligence agencies)?
- How to coordinate messaging amongst allies (e.g. NATO and NORAD) without simply feeding the Russian propaganda grist mill?
- How to counter Russian narratives without succumbing to the same sort of “propaganda” campaign?
 - How do you counter “fake news” effectively?

Canada: A Prime Target?

“The Kremlin has a growing interest in dominating the Arctic, where it sees Russia as in competition with Canada. This means Canada can anticipate escalations in information warfare, particularly from hacktivists fomenting cyber-attacks. Perceived as one of Russia’s chief adversaries in the Arctic region, Canada is a prime target in the information wars, with Russia potentially even meddling in the October 2019 federal election. Ottawa should be ready for a new surge in cyber-attacks, disinformation and propaganda levelled against Canada in the near future.”

Sergey Sukhankin, “The Western Alliance in the Face of the Russian (Dis)Information Machine: Where Does Canada Stand?” The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, 9 Sept 2019, https://www.cgai.ca/the_western_alliance_in_the_face_of_the_russian_disinformation_machine_where_does_canada_stand.

Figure AA. *Pervyi kanal* coverage from 2016 and 2018 of all states that are members of NATO and/or EU, plus coverage of Ukraine and Syria, plus coverage of the UN, NATO, and the EU as entities, ranked by volume of news stories.



<https://www.stratcomcoe.org/download/file/fid/83434>

What Can Be Done to Counter the Firehose of Falsehood?

- “We are not optimistic about the effectiveness of traditional counterpropaganda efforts. Certainly, some effort must be made to point out falsehoods and inconsistencies, but the same psychological evidence that shows how falsehood and inconsistency gain traction also tells us that retractions and refutations are seldom effective. Especially after a significant amount of time has passed, people will have trouble recalling which information they have received is the disinformation and which is the truth. ... ***Don't expect to counter the firehose of falsehood with the squirt gun of truth.***”
- ***Forewarning*** – when potential audiences have already been primed with correct information, the disinformation finds itself in the same role as a retraction or refutation: disadvantaged relative to what is already known (the burden of proof)
- Highlight ***how*** propagandists attempt to manipulate audiences rather than fighting specific manipulations
- “find ways to help put raincoats on those at whom the firehose of falsehood is being directed”
- focus on countering the ***effects*** of Russian propaganda, rather than the propaganda itself
- “*Don't direct your flow of information directly back at the firehose of falsehood; instead, point your stream at whatever the firehose is aimed at, and try to push that audience in more productive directions.*”

So What Does the Mean Near-Term?

- This all has to happen IN THE OPEN
- expect a barrage of conflicting messages about Canada as adversary and as friend
- ensure that Canadian/North American/allied audiences have a sober appreciation of Russia's strategic goals, and that they are competitors
- offer ***anticipatory***, competing narratives
 - increase the flow of persuasive information that informs and persuades selected audiences
 - requires a more nuanced understanding of those audiences, their vulnerabilities, and resonant messaging



[Putin says Russia ready for restoring Moscow-London mutually respectful dialogue, 5 Feb. 2020](#)

"We are open for cooperation with Canada based on mutual respect and the need to take the interests of each other into account. Our countries are neighbors in the Arctic and bear joint responsibility for the sustainable development of this vast region, for preserving the traditional way of life of the indigenous peoples and for the attentive approach towards its fragile eco-system," Putin said at the ceremony in the Kremlin.

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Discussion

What We're Reading

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• Whitney

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Articles Debates Contributions About

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Competitive coexistence: A new blueprint for Russia-West relations

ELIZABETH BUCHANAN

Building a better strategy means, above all, getting rid of theoretical constructs that no longer apply.

Russian President Vladimir Putin with French President Emmanuel Macron at the memorial service for former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, 30 September 2019 (Photo: Gettyimages)

Published 3 Feb 2020 14:00 | Comments | Diplomacy, Russia | Follow @BuchananLit

The collapse of the Soviet Union was – for Vladimir Putin – one of the greatest geopolitical disasters of the 20th century. Since the tumultuous 1990s, Russia has re-emerged as an important global actor, albeit with inherent state weaknesses, including, but not limited to, how Moscow is governed and how the Russian economy can revitalize itself and avoid the perils of the resource curse. Russia has had 30 years on its feet to build out, and Putin has worked during this period to consolidate the state by centralising power.

RUSSIA'S (DIS-) INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS VOL. 2

RUSSIA'S FOOTPRINT IN THE NORDIC-BALTIC INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Report 2019/2020

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Russia's Arctic Policy A Power Strategy and Its Limits



Marlène LARUELLE

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Peer-reviewed article

Russian Expert and Official Geopolitical Narratives on the Arctic: Decoding Topical and Paradigmatic DNA

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Abstract
This article examines current Russian expert and official narratives on the Arctic, situating them in the broader context of the debate on Russia's role in the international system. Combining a critical geopolitics approach to the study of international relations with content analysis tools, we map how structural geopolitical changes in the wider region have shaped narratives on the Arctic in Russia today. Two types of Russian narratives on the Arctic are explored—the one put forward by members of the Russian expert community, and the one that emerges from official documents and statements by members of the Russian policymaking community. With the expert narratives, we pay particular attention to the Arctic topics featured and how they are informed by various mainstream approaches to the study of international relations (IR). In examining policy practitioners' narrative approaches, we trace the overlaps and differences between these and the expert narratives. Current expert and official Russian narratives on the Arctic appear to be influenced mostly by neorealist and neoliberal ideas in IR, without substantial modifications after the 2014 conflict, thus showing relatively high ideational continuity.

Keywords: *Russia; the Arctic; critical geopolitics; expert narratives; official narratives*
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ARTICLE

Forging Russia's Arctic strategy: actors and decision-making
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ABSTRACT
This study examines how Arctic policies are being made in present-day Russia. More specifically, this paper focuses on the roles and functions of various actors and institutions participating in the decision-making process. Both governmental and non-governmental actors are examined. The effectiveness of the decision-making mechanism is assessed. Major problems in organisation and functioning of this system are identified. The authors conclude that a rather stable decision-making machinery on Arctic policy has been created within the executive branch of the Russian government. The elements of parliamentary control over the decision-making process have been created. An executive-legislative liaison/consultative mechanism has been established and it facilitated the dialogue between the Kremlin and the legislature on Arctic policies. The role of the Russian regional and local governments became more salient in Arctic policy-making. Russia's Arctic regional and local governments develop numerous horizontal/networking-type relations (transnational) with their foreign partners. Non-governmental actors, such as the Russian business community, human rights, indigenous peoples' and environmental NGOs have got some say in Arctic policy-making. Despite some shortcomings the Russian Arctic policy-making system evolved in a more democratic and efficient way. Transitional period still continues but the grounds for optimistic expectations are quite solid.

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Introduction

The main body of scholarship on Russia's Arctic strategies focuses on Moscow's interests in the High North, its domestic and external policies in the region as well as on implications of Russia's actions for the regional international relations system.¹ Most

