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Arctic Strategies for a Peaceful Future

DOI 10.17047/HADTUD.2022.32.4.58

In the context of the effects of climate change on the Arctic, it is also important to examine the direction in which the Arctic states' future vision for the Arctic is changing. Each state has its own official strategy paper outlining its vision for the Arctic, which are also presented in this study. Strategies provide a picture of a peaceful Arctic, and while Russia's role in the conflicts of recent years is a cause for concern, states in the region are voicing cooperation with Russia and its success not only in their actions but also at the level of strategies.

KEYWORDS: Arctic states, Russia, strategy, cooperation

Arktiszi stratégiák egy békés jövőért

A klímaváltozás Északi-sarkvidékre gyakorolt hatásaival összefüggésben mindenképpen vizsgálандó az is, hogy az északi államok Arktisszal kapcsolatos jövőbeli elképzelései milyen irányba változnak meg. Valamennyi állam rendelkezik önálló, az Arktisz térségével kapcsolatos elképzeléseit bemutató hivatalos stratégiai dokumentummal, amelyeket jelen tanulmány is bemutat. A stratégiák alapján egy békés Arktisz képe rajzolódik ki, s bár Oroszország utóbbi évek konfliktusaiban játszott szerepe aggodalomra adhat okot, a térség államai az Oroszországgal való együttműködést és annak sikerességét hangoztatják nem csak tetteikben, hanem a stratégiák szintjén is.

KULCSSZAVAK: arktiszi államok, Oroszország, stratégia, együttműködés

Introduction

Throughout history, the Arctic has always been an area that humanity wanted to know and then later conquer. For a long time, however, it was both inaccessible and not considered by states to be much strategic or economic. Currently this trend seems

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to be changing.¹ When the Arctic emerges today, it is most often mentioned in the context of resources, territorial disputes, and a growing military presence. Although the Arctic military presence has grown steadily in recent decades, the area is still peaceful compared to other parts of the world, and there is a relative consensus in the scientific society that no conflict is likely in the region.² However, peace in the region needs to be explained in the same way as in other regions, why conflicts erupt. On the one hand, the Arctic is a region of great rival powers that are relatively close to each other. It is located on two shores of the Bering Strait between the United States and Russia, and is only 89 km away between the two states. Furthermore, the Arctic is the region most affected by the burning challenge of today, the climate change.

This study focuses on the state level (the second level - the aspects of international organizations - are not analyzed). In this context, the relevant strategic documents of the Arctic states should be analyzed, highlighting the findings on the role of the Arctic states in the Arctic and their perceptions of Russia. A pre- and post-Crimean strategy paper is available for several countries; thus, a comparative analysis can also be performed in this area.

The existence of the Arctic as an independent region is justified by an external conflict, by examining the impact of an external conflict outside the Arctic on relations between states. This conflict outside the region is the Crimean crisis. We chose this crisis because an Arctic state (Russia) was involved in the conflict, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (hereinafter NATO) and its member states, several of which define themselves as Arctic states, vehemently opposed the Russian steps and considered Russia's attitude as a breach of international law. Therefore, the conflicts of today, it is the Crimean crisis that is most likely to affect the Arctic and its security policy's future.

In the following, we examine the relevant strategies of the Arctic states to demonstrate that the Arctic is a region to be interpreted and managed on its own, not or only minimally affected by conflicts in other regions, and that Russia seeks to act not as an aggressor in the region.

State strategies

The analysis aims to examine the Arctic strategies of the eight Arctic states. The analysis of the strategies focuses on the following issues:

- How does the state assess the security situation of the Arctic?
- What threats does the state detect?
- How have these threats changed since 2014?
- What role does militarization play in strategies?

1 Among the earlier works in the Hungarian literature, we highlight the work of Andrea Márton (Andrea Márton: The Arctic from the perspective of the Scandinavian states. *Repüléstudományi közlemények*, 13. évf, 2012. 2. szám 273-284.) We also refer to Erika Gazdag (NATO's Arctic policy: deterrence and protection. *Hadtudomány* 2022/1. 3-25.), László Kálló, Anita Deák (László Kálló, Anita Deák: Az Északi-sark – A „versenyfutás” kezdete. *Felderítő Szemle* Vol. X No. 1-2 No. 43-64) and Vivien Vigh's studies (Vivien Vigh: Az Arktisz geopolitikai jelentősége a 21. században. *Hadtudományi Szemle* Vol. 13 (2020) No. 2 No. 47-61).

2 Grätz 2012, Käpylä és Mikkola 2012, Duxbury 2020

In the analysis of strategies, in each case, we examine how the state thinks about Russia, but we do not analyze further bilateral relations. This is due to the fact that each state is a member of NATO, so military confrontation between them can be ruled out, and, on the other hand, the Arctic states' relation with Russia are key to proving or disproving whether we can talk about a separate region in Arctic.

Norway

The Prime Minister of Norway from 2013 to 2021 was Erna Solberg, president of the Conservative Party. *Norway's Arctic Policy* was issued in November 2014 after the Crimean crisis, so it already reflects the changes in security policy following the crisis in Ukraine.³ The strategy specifically mentions Russia and the importance of military involvement in it, but adds that its goal is cooperation with Russia. At the same time, it is noteworthy that Norway is increasing the number of military border posts between Norway and Russia and naming the control of the Norwegian-Russian border as one of the main tasks of the armed forces. The militarizing attitude is also evidenced by the fact that Norway has ordered 52 new F-35 fighters from the United States.⁴

However, Norway ultimately wants to cooperate with Russia, although its approach is still cautious. The willingness to cooperate is also shown by the fact that in 2011 the two countries managed to conclude a forty-four-year territorial dispute that began back in 1974 over the border in the Barents Sea. The area concerned is 175,000 km² and is very important both strategically and economically. This area is accessible to Russia's only year-round ice-free port, Murmansk, and it is also the entrance to the North Sea Route. Also, Russia estimates that there are 5.8 trillion m³ of recoverable gas reserves and an additional 2.7 billion barrels of oil in the region.⁵

In 2021, still under conservative control, Norway issued its latest Arctic strategy, the *Norwegian Government's Arctic Policy*.⁶ This strategy outlines a much grimmer security situation than any Canadian or even the 2014 Norwegian document. The strategy focuses on Russia. On the one hand, it points out that the Russian-Norwegian relations have developed significantly over the last thirty years in a couple of areas: fisheries, research, the environment, rescue, nuclear safety, health, education, business, energy, culture and indigenous affairs. Also, a bilateral committee has been set up on fisheries, nuclear safety, economic cooperation and environmental protection. However, the strategy also highlights that due to the Crimean crisis, Norway has suspended bilateral military cooperation with Russia, with the exception of matters relating to maritime security, air defense and northern stability. However, direct contact between the Norwegian High Command and the Russian Northern Fleet has been maintained and participants in the Russian and Norwegian Coast Guard, Border Guard and search and rescue operations continue to cooperate. The mechanisms of

3 Norway's Arctic Policy 2014

4 Dennis 2019

5 Moe, Fjaertoft, és Øverland 2011, 150.

6 The Norwegian Government's Arctic Policy 2021

the Maritime Incident Convention⁷ have also been maintained and are being further developed.⁸ This negotiation was successfully concluded in 2021, and the parties agreed on several issues. The agreement applies to ships and military aircraft circulating twelve nautical miles away from territorial waters, and further measures have been taken to increase transparency.⁹ The strategy also highlights the fact that direct communication channels have been established between Russia's and Norway's top military leaders since 2019, and concludes that "in the current situation, it is particularly important to further develop contact of this kind in the area of defence."¹⁰

However, the 2021 strategy is by no means limited to the Arctic security policy analysis, as it is only one of the eight chapters. With regard to the international system, it emphasizes that the Arctic is a peaceful region where states show willingness to cooperate and resolve their misunderstandings in accordance with the principles of international law.

In this case, therefore, we can see that an external conflict had a direct impact on the region and its security, in which two factors played a role. On the one hand, Norway and Russia are border states, which may explain why Norway has reacted more sensitively to the Crimean crisis, but, as the strategy points out, even after the crisis, military cooperation between the two countries has not ceased and the parties have reached another agreement (as we have seen in the context of the Marine Incidents Convention). Thus, the statement at the beginning of the study that the stability of the region is slightly or not at all affected by external conflict is not refuted by the weakening of Norwegian-Russian military cooperation, but on the contrary: it confirms, whereas although the impact of the conflict was detectable, signs of resurgence are already visible.

Denmark

The *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020*, published in 2011, can be linked to a minority government led by Prime Minister Lark Løkke Rasmussen and Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Lene Espersen, which consisted of the Liberal Alliance and the Conservative People's Party.¹¹ According to its strategy, Denmark will also increase its military presence in the region and envisage four new initiatives for the army: the establishment of a total Arctic Force Command, the establishment of an Arctic Response Force, risk analysis of traffic growth in the surrounding waters and finally, by 2014, a comprehensive analysis of the future tasks of the military.

7 The Convention on Maritime Incidents was concluded between Norway and the Soviet Union in 1989, with the aim of avoiding misunderstandings by establishing protocols for avoiding collisions, keeping distance, and monitoring ships. The convention also banned the simulation of attacks and the interference of ship formations. See at: Łukasz, Thomas, és Denitsa 2016

8 The Norwegian Government's Arctic Policy 2021, 19.

9 O'Dwyer 2021

10 The Norwegian Government's Arctic Policy 2021, 19

11 Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020 2011

In addition, the strategy states that Denmark considers the exercise of sovereignty a priority for the army. The importance of cooperation with Russia should also be emphasized in the Danish strategy. In the context of Danish-Russian cooperation, the strategy also raises the possibility of scientific cooperation, the exchange of information in the context of sustainable development and the cooperation of defense forces.

The review of the 2011 strategy is still ongoing, and a new Danish document for the next ten years was expected to be published in 2021. In 2018, the Danish government entered into a full-spectrum agreement with the other opposition parties (the Social Democratic Party, the Danish People's Party and the Social Liberal Party) entitled Defense Agreement 2018-2023, which sets the direction for the development of the Danish military until 2023.¹² The analysis of the entire document goes beyond the scope of the study, so here we only address issues related to the Arctic. The Arctic area affected by climate change is where activity has increased and will be specifically addressed for future Danish Arctic military involvement. According to the document, the region will become geopolitically more valuable in the future, but the Danish goal is to maintain peaceful conditions in the region. The agreement mentions Russia only once, as NATO's challenge from the East, in the section on analyzing the global security situation.

Sweden

The Swedish Strategy of 2011 can be linked to the minority government of the Liberal Conservative Coalition (Moderate Party, Centralist Party, Liberal People's Party, Christian Democrats) led by Fredrik Reinfeldt. According to the *Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region* "Sweden should stress the importance of an approach based on security in its broadest sense and that the use of civil instruments is preferable to military means".¹³ With regard to the security situation, the strategy emphasized that the challenges were not primarily military in nature, but rather environmental due to climate change. Although the strategy mentions Russia at a number of points, not as a threat but simply as one of the other Arctic states.

Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region in 2020 was issued by Social Democrat Stefan Löfven.¹⁴ Regarding the use of military force, the document states that the Government will continue to strengthen Sweden's military capability to operate in the northern parts of Sweden and neighboring areas. Another formulation is alleviated by the statement that the government will work to ensure that the Arctic remains a region with well-functioning international cooperation and, as well as that states respect international law, including the law of the sea. The interpretation of security challenges differs between the 2011 and 2020 strategies. While in 2011 the Swedish Strategy states that security issues in the region are not military in nature, the 2020 strategy already sees the risk of arms competition in the region and

12 Defence Agreement 2018-2023 2018

13 Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region 2011, 23.

14 Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region 2011, 21.

emphasizes the growing importance of military involvement. The 2020 strategy highlights that, although relations between the Western states and Russia have deteriorated in recent years, the Arctic Council continues to be characterized by constructive spirit and cooperation, and the cooperation with Russia is good, especially in areas concerning environmental issues in the Arctic Council, in the Barents Cooperation Council and also on a bilateral basis. The Strategy attributes Russian armaments to the protection of Russian territories and does not see them as a threat. The name *Russia* is mentioned forty-seven times in the Swedish document but in none of them as a threat - not even in the context of militarization. These findings clearly demonstrate the Arctic region's ability to operate independently from the rest of the world.

Iceland

For Iceland, a decision shall be used instead of a strategy document. In 2011, the coalition of the Social Democratic Alliance and the Left-Green Movement, led by Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, issued a *Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*.¹⁵ One of the 12 principles of the policy (9th) states that Iceland is opposed to all forms of militarization and that security can and shall only be guaranteed only by civilian means. This, incidentally, follows from Iceland's decades-long approach that although Iceland has become a member of NATO, it only participates in the military wing of the organization as an observer.

Finland

Finland is also a country with a clear difference in attitudes before and after the Ukrainian crisis. In 2013, the center-right government, led by Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen, issued *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013*, in which the economy, education and the environment play a greater role in a holistic approach.¹⁶ With regard to Arctic stability, the emphasis must be on preparedness and close cooperation between the authorities, industry, NGOs and the general public is also important. The Strategy pays little attention to the military aspect of security. It states that a military conflict in the region is unlikely and that Russia is only talking about cooperation. No other military issue is raised in this Strategy.

In 2021, the government led by Prime Minister Sanna Marin and the government of the Social Democratic Party issued a new strategy document for the country titled *Finland's Strategy for Arctic Policy*.¹⁷ This document was written in a completely different spirit, as shown by the fact that while the 2013 strategy devotes only one page to security policy issues, the 2021 strategy analyzes the current security situation through almost ten pages immediately after the defining objectives. The strategy also focuses on Russia, stressing that Russia has directly affected the security

15 A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy 2011.

16 Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013 2013

17 Finland's Strategy for Arctic Policy 2021

situation in the neighboring region through the illegal annexation of Crimea, and points out that Russia is increasing its military presence in the Arctic in order to protect its economic interests and the North Sea Route. At the same time, the Strategy also highlights that regional cooperation has strengthened since the previous strategy was issued, with the aim of strengthening cooperation with Russia on a bilateral basis in the future. While the 2021 Strategy detects the change in the security environment since 2014, it does not see it as sufficient to perceive it as a threat and prioritizes it, even with the allocation of resources.

Canada

Canada's strategy for the Arctic in the run-up to the Crimean crisis is *Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future*.¹⁸ The strategy was released in 2009 when Canada's prime minister was conservative Stephen Harper. According to him, "the first and foremost priority of our northern strategy is the protection of our Arctic sovereignty".¹⁹ This line of thought also appears in the strategy: one of its four pillars is only about exercising Arctic sovereignty.²⁰ As part of this, the strategy also addresses the need to increase the military presence and to develop infrastructure and equipment. It emphasized the importance of land, sea and air patrols, and considered it a strategic task to establish a Military Training Center on land in Resolute Bay and provide Canadian Rangers²¹ and deep-sea ports, fuel facilities and new icebreakers at sea for the Coast Guard. The country also wants to work with other states and does not see Russia as a threat. It only mentions Russia in connection with joint research cooperation, the signing of a joint memorandum on minority rights and the Declaration of Illulisati.

The most recent Canadian strategy addressing the Arctic is the *Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework* issued in 2019²² with its International Chapter. This strategy was no longer issued by the previous conservative leadership, but by the administration led by the Liberal Party and Justin Trudeau. A major shift from the document ten years earlier is the relegation of sovereignty and military reinforcement of the region to the background, which will be replaced in the 2019 framework by the indigenous relationship between the indigenous peoples and the government. The strategy highlights that there are robust rules, norms and institutions that govern international affairs. In terms of the legal framework, in addition to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the document highlights international and bilateral agreements affecting the Arctic with binding force. The strategy deals with military questions only to a limited extent, and

18 Canada's Northern Strategy: our north, our heritage, our future 2009

19 Arctic sovereignty a priority: Harper 2010

20 The other three pillars are the promotion of social and economic development, the protection of the environmental heritage, and the development and promotion of northern governance.

21 The Canadian Rangers are a reserve force, made up primarily of indigenous peoples, who can remain in remote northern regions where the Canadian military force has little or no access.

22 Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework 2019

Russia is mentioned only once in connection with the establishment of the Inuit Arctic Council, even there in a footnote.

The international chapter examines the goals set out in the strategy in an international context. Following a brief assessment of the situation, it examines first the role of the Arctic Council and then the other members of the “robust” international Arctic system. The strategy emphasizes that the region is very important geopolitically and will become even more important due to the easier access to the Arctic waters because of the climate change. The strategy aims to regularize US-Canada bilateral meetings and to lay new foundations for Russian-Canadian relations on indigenous peoples, scientific cooperation, the environment, transportation and rescue activities, as common interests, priorities and challenges govern Canada and Russia.

We can see that while Canada’s 2009 strategy was built on a highly realistic foundation, the new strategy ten years later seemed to be ‘dictated’ by Joseph Nye himself as other, more liberal political backgrounds and beliefs are felt so strong. This is also reflected in the security policy approach of the two strategies. The liberal approach of 2019 is fully aware of the geopolitical significance of the region and the impact of climate change on geopolitics, which not only hints at, but it also textually captures. However, Canada does not feel that Russia is a threat to it and is committed to cooperating extensively with Russia. In this regard, therefore, the Crimean crisis has not affected Canada’s security perception of the region’s security policy challenges and, in particular, the potential Russian threat.

The United States of America

In the United States, the change in administration has also brought changes in the Arctic policy. The Bush and Obama administrations did not yet pay much attention to the region and neglected infrastructure and military developments as well.²³

A 2011 report by the Ministry of Defense further stated that an armed conflict in the region was unlikely in the foreseeable future and that the existing infrastructure was in line with short- and medium-term national security interests.²⁴ In 2013, the Obama administration issued a strategy paper, the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.²⁵ The Strategy sees the region as a conflict-free zone where nations work together in a spirit of trust and cooperation. The document does not deal with Russia separately either, it is only mentioned in a footnote in relation with the Arctic Council. In the Arctic environment, the United States seeks to achieve three main goals: to advance its own national interests, to manage the regional responsibly, and to strengthen international cooperation.

As the Trump administration moved closer to the region, primarily in terms of security and economic policy, its importance has begun to increase. The construction of the icebreaking fleet has also begun,²⁶ Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOP)

23 Holland 2014

24 Report to Congress on Arctic Operations and the Northwest Passage 2011, 25.

25 Obama 2013

26 Trump 2020

in the Arctic have been envisaged, and an increase in military presence and infrastructure development in the Bering Sea has emerged.²⁷

In 2019, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense issued the *Arctic Strategy of the Ministry of Defense*,²⁸ which depicts the security environment in a complex way. On the one hand, it points out that cooperation has a long tradition in the region and the chances of an immediate outbreak of conflict are low, but the other hand it draws attention to a number of strategic trends that could jeopardize US interests and undermine stability in the region. The key dynamics that define a region are as follows:

- changes in the physical environment;
- multilateral cooperation along common interests and challenges;
- the status of Arctic Sea routes;
- increasing military activity;
- manipulation of Arctic governance by economic force (China).

What is a significant change from the 2013 Strategy and the Arctic Strategy of most other Northern states is that the document treats Russia (alongside China) centrally. The claim that military activity in the region is on the rise is derived primarily from Russian activities, and it is stated that Russia is challenging the rule-based Arctic region as it seeks to regulate the North Sea Route. In response to the Russian (and Chinese) challenge, the Strategy aimed at increasing Arctic exercises and training, as well as developing infrastructure.

The Strategy also identifies U.S. interests in the region in three points. On the one hand, the Arctic is interpreted as a homeland where it can exercise its rights in a sovereign way - so it also has the right to defend its territory. It also sees the Arctic as a common region, which also means that there are common interests in the region in terms of security and stability, and that the United States must be ready to be able to intervene in order to maintain the balance of power in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region. Third, it assumes that the Arctic is an area of strategic competition, and that it is the interest of the United States to continue to maintain its global deployment capacity, freedom of navigation and flight, while restricting Chinese and Russian efforts to force their strategic interests in the region.

Russia

Russia's policy was developed on the basis of secondary sources due to the availability of documents and language constraints. Russia's position is well reflected in its opinion on Arctic co-operation in the *2008 Basics of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic: Taking into account the interests of the Federation*: "carrying out of an active interaction of the Russian Federation with the sub-Arctic states with a view of delimitation of maritime areas on the basis of norms of international law, mutual arrangements taking into account national interests of the Russian Federation".²⁹

27 Micallef 2020

28 Report to Congress Department of Defense Arctic Strategy 2019

29 Medvedev 2008

The essence of the Russian position, then, is that although Russia is open for cooperating with the Arctic states, its actions will always be guided by Russian interests. This could, however, even mean a future confrontation. The interests of the Russian Federation are precisely named in the Strategy itself:

- the Arctic as a resource base that provides a solution to Russia’s economic and social problems;
- maintaining peace and cooperation in the Arctic;
- maintaining the unique ecological characteristics of the Arctic;
- the North Sea Route as the only transport route in the Arctic.

Comparing the 2020 principles adopted in 2008 with the 2035 principles adopted in 2020, there is no difference between the two documents in terms of economic status, and maintaining peace and cooperation remains a central strategic element. At the same time, ensuring sovereignty is a new element in the 2020 document. However, the concept covers nothing more than the set of goals already described in the previous strategy document, so we can expect further military and civilian modernization in the future as well.³⁰ Russia has tightened standards for military and civilian ships passing through its waters. 45 days before the intended voyage, the name of the ship, the purpose of the voyage, the route and the duration of the voyage must be given, and Russia reserves the right to refuse entry to the North Sea Route at any time. The new regulations are partly due to increased maritime traffic, but more importantly, Russia’s interest in their ability to maintain control over merchant shipping.³¹ Russian military exercises are still common in the area, and since 2018, sharp ammunition has been used in the exercises.³²

In the context of Russia’s Strategy, it is not the opinion of Russia that can be examined, but the country’s attitude towards other Arctic states. In 2007, Vladimir Putin ordered patrols over the Arctic Ocean, which resulted in the appearance of strategic bombers (Tu-95, Tu-160, Tu-22M3) in the area.³³ The Northern Fleet, stationed on the Kola Peninsula, has undergone significant developments in recent years, primarily with respect to its submarine fleet. Its primary purpose is to increase nuclear deterrence. In 2008, Russia announced that warships would once again patrol the Arctic Ocean.³⁴ Russia has also developed a drone that can operate in Arctic conditions (-30 degrees Celsius to 55 degrees Celsius) and can land on and off the water. It is officially assigned rescue roles, but the military implications of such technology can also be easy.³⁵

In view of all these, Russian military construction cannot and should not be interpreted as a provocation as the practical trend does not support this. The Arctic

30 Klimenko 2020

31 A. Staalesen, “Russia sets out stringent new rules for foreign ships on the Northern Sea Route”, *Arctic Today*, 2019, <https://www.arctictoday.com/russia-sets-out-stringent-new-rules-for-foreign-ships-on-the-northern-sea-route/> (Downloaded: 2021.10.22.)

32 Nilsen 2019

33 Piffero Spohr et al. 2013, 44.

34 PPiffero Spohr et al. 2013, 44, Nowak 2008

35 Rescue drone taking off from water developed in Russia 2021

plays a key role in the Russian economy. The Arctic accounts for 91% of Russia's natural gas production, 80% of the country's natural gas reserves, 90% of its offshore hydrocarbon reserves and most of its ore deposits.³⁶ In addition, brass, tin, uranium and phosphates are mined in the area. According to 2006 figures, there are 25 mines in the Arctic, but new mines are still opening to this day.³⁷ Rosatom, for example, plans to open \$800 million worth of lithium mines in Siberia,³⁸ and the Kola Peninsula is rich in apatite,³⁹ aluminum, iron ore, mica, titanium, copper, nickel, cobalt, phlogopite,⁴⁰ and vermiculite.⁴¹

In addition, Russian behavior in relation to the Arctic also paints a picture of a cooperating state. There are indeed territorial disputes in the region, but it does not want to resolve them by arms, on a unilateral basis, but within the framework of the international system. Russia (for the first time) submitted its application in 2001, citing the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), alleging that the Lomonosov Pass and the Alpha-Mendeleev Pass were part of the Siberian pedestal. The UN rejected the Russian request because it did not have enough data to support the Russian claim.⁴² In 2013, Russia submitted an application for the Sea of Okhotsk, which was received by the competent committee⁴³ in 2014.⁴⁴ In 2015, Russia resubmitted its 2001 application, supplemented by the results of several years of research,⁴⁵ which it then supplemented in 2021. Russia's new territorial claims already partially coincide with Canadian and Danish demands, which anticipates conflicts in the region and the region's growing importance in security policy.⁴⁶

As for Russian armaments, it is often emphasized that Russia has the largest icebreaker fleet and also employs nuclear-powered icebreakers.⁴⁷ While it is undeniable that icebreakers can pass in front of military convoys, so they can be considered a dual-use device, this is not primarily the job of the icebreaker fleet. The construction and propulsion of icebreakers are also different from that of other vessels, as they require much stronger propulsion. Due to its geographical location, many Russian settlements simply rely on the capacity of icebreaking fleets, as this is the only way to deliver consignments, including food.

36 Brzezinski 2020, 168.

37 Glasby és Voytekhevsky 2009

38 Russia's Rosatom Plans to Launch Lithium Mines in Siberia 2021

39 Apatite is used in the manufacture of fertilizers and detergents.

40 Phlogopite is used in plastics used in the automotive industry and to replace asbestos in brakes and gearboxes.

41 Vermiculite is used for germination, cuttings and sowing, Glasby és Voytekhevsky 2009

42 Heininen, Sergunin és Yarovoy 2014

43 Commission on the Limits of Continental Shelf

44 Subcommittee established for the consideration of the Submission made by the Russian Federation, Summary of Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in Regard of the Partial Revised Submission Made by the Russian Federation in Respect of the Sea of Okhotsk on 28 February 2013 10, 2014.

45 Russia lays claim to vast areas of Arctic 2015

46 Russia Claims Continental Shelf in Arctic Ocean 2021, Tranter 2021

47 Osboorn 2021, Melino és Conley 2021, Gady 2015

With regard to transnational cooperation, in order to avoid overfishing, in 2015, Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark and Norway voluntarily agreed to ban commercial fishing in the Arctic Ocean (except for fishing within the exclusive economic zone).⁴⁸ Since then, new members have joined the convention, with the accession of the European Union, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.⁴⁹ Subsequently, the United States, China, Japan, Russia, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, the Republic of Korea and the European Union agreed on joint research against overfishing, which was the basis for the previous agreement. There are also plans to set up a body to regulate uncontrolled fishing and deal with fishing disputes.⁵⁰

Due to the increase in traffic through the Bering Strait, in 2018, the United States and Russia jointly proposed the establishment of voluntary shipping routes through the Bering Strait and the Bering Sea, which was adopted by the International Maritime Organization and entered into force in 2018.⁵¹

Finally, the Arctic is one of the few locations on the Earth where U.S. and Russian Chiefs of Staff can meet. In September 2021, Mike Milley Chairman of the Joint Committee of U.S. Chiefs of Staff, and Valery Gerasimov Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Armed Forces, met in Finland for six hours.⁵² However, not only military leaders meet in the area, but also the Coast Guard, which qualifies as a paramilitary organization. In 2021, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Russian Maritime Rescue Service agreed to update their plans to prevent international marine pollution in the Bering and Chukotka Seas. The agreement was reached shortly after the Coast Guard and Russian border guards patrolled the two countries' sea borders.⁵³ In January 2021, the American ship *Polar Star* conducted communication exercises with Russian aircraft and more are planned in the future.⁵⁴

Conclusions

The existence of the Arctic as an independent region, which is not or only minimally affected by conflicts in other regions, has been confirmed by the strategic analysis above. Examining the states' perceptions at the strategic level before 2014 and after 2014, the general conclusion can be drawn that the Arctic states have also strategically recognized that the global security policy situation has changed significantly in recent years. While these are region-specific issues, the most pressing challenges that concern countries are climate change and maintaining cooperation. It should also be noted that, as an impact, albeit minimal, both at the state and supranational levels, there has been a slowdown in Arctic integration and a decline in some areas, most

48 Hoag 2016

49 Arctic: Agreement to prevent unregulated fishing enters into force 2021

50 Danilov 2021, Okuyama 2021

51 Ham 2018, Fletcher et al 2019

52 Liebermann és Kaufman 2021

53 This was not the first case; as early as 2019, joint patrols were carried out. See at: Petropavlovsk 2019

54 Schreiber 2021

notably in military cooperation. However, in assessing the results of the research, the Crimean crisis cannot be seen as a turning point for the Arctic that would have disrupted peaceful cooperation processes in the region.

The Arctic region itself is highly important for Russia, both economically and strategically, and the country is acting accordingly. The main consideration is to ensure the stability of the region in order to exploit its economic potential. Although Russia has increased its military capabilities in the region, it does not use them in its disputed cases. In conflicts, it prefers negotiation, gives priority to the provisions of international law, and submits to the decisions of the international regime in territorial disputes.

Based on all these, we can be confident that the unexpected, yet imminent effects of climate change will not lead to a conflict-ridden Arctic, but the Arctic will remain as peaceful as it has been for centuries.

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