

Thawing Ice and French Foreign Policy: A Preliminary Assessment

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Climate change is bringing non-Arctic states closer to the Arctic. For France, thawing ice and increased human activities in the circumpolar north have initiated an 'unofficial' but discernable reevaluation of how Paris looks at and relates to the Arctic. Although French officials have yet to pen into policy an official French strategy or agenda for the Arctic, this article looks at how thawing ice has led various governmental and non-governmental officials in Paris to rethink how French foreign policy should be addressing Arctic change today. It explores how images of a changing Arctic have led policymakers to question the governance structures of the Arctic. It also offers an initial overview of French interests related to the Arctic and identifies key issues that are currently shaping the Arctic foreign policy discourse in Paris. The purpose of this assessment is to first, explore how France is engaging in and with the Arctic in an era of climate change, and also, to expand the discussion on the role and interests of non-Arctic states in the region.

The proximity between France and the Arctic has grown over the years. Considering that France has no Arctic territory, the French have nonetheless nourished their relationship with the circumpolar north mainly through scientific research and cultural inquiry. However, natural resources and economic interests have also drawn French transnational corporations (TNCs) to the High North, like Total which has been present in circumpolar areas since the 1970s. Furthermore, as a maritime (nuclear) power, the French have also maintained their strategic interests in the region through military cooperation with, on the one hand, northern coastal NATO allies such as Norway, Denmark, Canada and the United States, and on the other, most recently, with Russia's Northern Fleet. By appointing its very first *Ambassador for International Negotiations on the Arctic and the Antarctic* (polar ambassador), assigned to former Prime Minister Michel Rocard in 2009, France is indeed bringing its relationship with the

Arctic to another diplomatic level, as the Arctic Council and Arctic governance have gained unprecedented attention by elected officials, academics and media in the country.

While French political interests in the Arctic are not new, climate change and thawing polar sea ice have led to a recent reevaluation of the Arctic as a zone of interest and influence for France. Appointed by former President Nicolas Sarkozy, Michel Rocard (also known as the “political father” of the Madrid Protocol of the Antarctic Treaty) has been France’s leading voice on Arctic foreign policy issues since 2009, reminding Arctic states that the future of the region is a matter for all its users, regardless of their territorial connections with the circumpolar space (Truc, 2011). Although this increased interest for the Arctic has yet to be penned into a policy or strategy, France has nevertheless informally outlined, through its newly appointed polar ambassador, some comprehensive Arctic foreign policy objectives that appear to be relevant when studying Arctic geopolitics today.

Since the specific literature on French foreign policy making related to the Arctic is very scarce, this discussion will try to address this gap by producing a preliminary assessment of France’s approach to the circumpolar north in an era of global warming. The purpose of this paper is to explore how France, as a world power and with vested interests in a future navigable Arctic Ocean, is fine-tuning (or not) its foreign policy with Arctic change. The first part of the discussion looks at discernable or potential French national interests related to *or* in the Arctic. The second part attempts to identify various political actors and discourses in the French foreign policy *entourage* in Paris that have been contributing to the emerging debate on how the ‘new’ Arctic is an issue for France (and the EU), thus requiring corresponding actions by these actors in the region.

Part 1: The French *Arctic* Connection

French interests in the Arctic are rooted in the exploration and the study of Arctic spaces and northern peoples. Despite their geographical distances with both polar regions, the French have produced many famous polar explorers and scientists dating back to the 18th century, such as geographer and glaciologist Charles Rabot (1856-1944) and geomorphologist Jean Corbel (1920-1970), who now both share their names with France’s

permanent scientific bases at Ny Ålesund in Svalbard (opened in the 1960s).¹ Years later, the French continue to pursue their scientific interests in the High North, notably through collaboration with Germany as part of their bilateral program at the AWIPEV base at Ny Ålesund.² French students and researchers are also associated with the University of Svalbard (UNIS) at Longyearbyen (Svalbard). And like many other non-Arctic states, France has been actively involved in the International Polar Year (IPY, 2007-2008). While scientific research has acted as a traditional pillar in the relationship between France and the Arctic, the end of the Cold War steered France into the political architecture of the circumpolar north.

Table 1 General Overview of Polar Science in France

The **French Polar Institute** – *Institut polaire français* (IPEV): Named after ethnologist Paul-Émile Victor (1907-1995), legendary “*explorateur des extrêmes*” (or explorer of the extremes), who led a total of 31 outings to both poles as Head of Mission for the French polar expeditions. The IPEV provides French representation as a Council Member at the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC).³

The **Center for Arctic Studies** – *Centre d'études arctiques* (CEA) – was founded in 1957 by Jean Malaurie (1922), French cultural anthropologist, geographer and physicist. Known as one of France’s most respected scholars on Inuit issues, he was appointed “UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Arctic Polar Issues” in 2007 as recognition for his anthropological work in Greenland and Northern Canada.⁴

The **European Arctic Center** – *Centre Européen Arctique* (CEARC) was created at the request of Nicolas Sarkozy. It is based at the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (YVSQ). This laboratory has the mandate to support multidisciplinary and circumpolar research (with an English Masters program called “Arctic Studies”). The CEARC has been part of the University of the Arctic (UArctic) system since 2011.⁵

The **French National Center for Scientific Research** (*Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* or *CNRS*) has various themed projects on polar studies and promotes international research collaboration. A recent partnership called “*Takuvik*” was created in 2011 between the *CNRS* and Université Laval (Québec, Canada). This bi-national laboratory is planning to study Arctic ecosystems. France has approximately 20 research programs in the Arctic (2007 statistics), supported by the United States, Canada; Greenland; and Sweden (Gaudin, 2007: 92).

Regional Cooperation

In the early 1990s, France was invited to become an observer of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) along with Canada, Germany, Japan, Poland and the United States (it is also connected to the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) since 1993 *via* the EU Commission

which is a member of the regional forum for intergovernmental and interregional cooperation).⁶ Several years later, France requested and was granted Observer status at the Arctic Council (AC) in 2000, another move into the political dynamics of Arctic governance. Indeed, France's integration to both organizations reflected an interest to enhance French standing on northern (polar) related research, which was considered (and still is) deficient compared to the Antarctic (Gaudin, 2007). Furthermore, it underlined the importance of post-Cold War regional security and stability building through northern institutions, and thus, considering their mandates, emphasizing the relevance of pursuing cooperation through environmental security in the Arctic. Thus, since the end of the Cold War, France's interest for these institutions and regional governance seems to be growing, especially since the implications of climate change in the Arctic and for the planet are widely diffused and discussed (see part 2).

Energy & Economic Security

Looking to the north, French officials and stakeholders are particularly interested in maintaining a stable and accessible Arctic neighborhood to pursue economic opportunities. Indeed, behind French involvement in circumpolar cooperation and institutions over the last twenty years, also lie economic interests in the High North that have potential impacts on French foreign policy making, arguably because they are connected with strategic neighbors – such as Russia and Norway – and a potentially rich and usable maritime zone. Therefore maintaining the Arctic as a “zone of peace” reflects the economic interests of France and French industry.

Proximity to northern resources in Russia and Norway is a strategic factor that needs to be considered and looked into further when exploring French interests in the Arctic, a space that is often referred to “as one of the last regions worldwide where large oil fields are still untapped” (Major and Steinicke, 2011: 6). Total, a multinational French oil and gas group, made record profits of 12 billion euros in 2011, with tax transfers of 1.2 billion euros to government treasuries in Paris.⁷ Total has been present in the Arctic for over thirty years and is a ‘versatile’ and valuable actor in the BEAR: it has cold weather hydrocarbon extraction expertise and exports technologies for that very lucrative industry. Most of Total's current Arctic operations are located in Russian and Norwegian offshore and onshore projects.⁸ While Total pursued its gas ventures in the Arctic throughout 2012, its chief executive,

Christophe de Margerie, recently warned against oil drilling in the Arctic, mentioning that TNCs should not drill for crude oil in Arctic waters, as “[o]il on Greenland would be a disaster” (Chazan, 2012).

Figure 2 Total’s Activities in Conditions of Extreme Cold, Circum-Arctic Areas¹⁰

NORTH AMERICAN ARCTIC	
United States - Alaska	
Chuckchi Sea	Exploration 1989-1991 (4 wells; 1 gas discovery)
NPRA	Exploration 2002-2004 (operator)
White Hills	Exploration 2008-2009 (5 wells)
Beaufort Sea	Exploration 1987-1992 (6 wells) Exploration from 2007 (operator)
Canada – Yukon/Nunavut	
Mackenzie Delta	Exploration 1981-1984 (6 wells)
Arctic Islands	Exploration 1970-1976 (15 wells, operator)
Labrador Sea	Exploration 1980 (1 gas discovery; operator)
Denmark	
West Greenland	Exploration 1977 (1 well, operator)
Labrador Shelf	Exploration 1971-1985 (25 wells, operator of 14 wells; 3 gas discoveries)
EURASIAN ARCTIC	
Norway	
Spitsbergen	Exploration 1971-1974 (4 wells)
Barents Sea	Exploration 1983-1987 (2 wells) Operator of the PL535 Norvarg licence Partner in Snohvit LNG Production
Russia	
Barents Sea	Partner in Shtokman development studies
Western Siberian Basin	Partner in Termokarstovoya appraisal
Timan Pechora Basin	Operator of Kharyaga production since 1999
Kazakhstan	
Caspian Sea	Partner in development of Kashagan field

Russia

Total holds 25% of Gazprom’s Shtokman gas oil field project in the Barents Sea (Norway’s StatoilHydro holds 24%) while Gazprom controls the 51% majority of this gas field that is projected to be – when (and if) completed – the world’s largest with a capacity of 3800 billion cubic meters of gas and approximately 37 million tons of light oil. For the time being, French expertise on oil and gas development in the Arctic is needed for Russian companies

to exploit energy resources in the High North and to profit from these investments. French Ambassador to Russia, Jean de Gliniasty, suggests that the Shtokman project (despite its recent delays) will form a key element of energy security for France since Russian total hydrocarbons represent 92% of Russia's exports to France.⁹

France's economic relationship with the Arctic expanded in 2011 when Total acquired 20% of the Russian Yamal LNG field in Russia's High North. This 4 billion US dollar transaction gave the French TNC a total capital share of 12.08% in Russia's Novatek. The Yamal LNG project is owned by Russian companies Novatek (80%) and Gazprom (20%).

Continued economic relations between France and Russia are often considered as a way to build stronger political ties and bilateral diplomacy. Such a regional *rapprochement* tends to draw French companies towards northern Russia, like in the Murmansk Oblast where economic activities continue to grow (Ambassade de France en Russie, 2009). And as France's demand for gas continues to increase, Total ventures in the High North will possibly continue to progress in Russia and in Norway for the years to come.¹¹ Moreover, as underlined by Major and Steinicke (2011: 6), a French White Paper on Defense and National Security published in 2008 makes energy security one of four priority areas for the protection of European citizens. Although the Arctic is not cited, France is moving forward in "securing energy and strategic raw material supply" (ibid).

Norway

Norway is Total's top country when it comes to hydrocarbon production: it is France's first natural gas supplier, receiving about 30% of Norwegian gas exports, and second when it comes to oil, behind Russia. In fact, former Prime Minister François Fillon made an official state visit to Norway in June 2010, the first of its kind in 25 years (accompanied amongst others by Pierre Lellouche, French State Secretary for European Affairs who represented France with Michel Rocard at the 2010 Arctic Council meeting). Both states have maintained a strategic dialogue during recent years as a way to advance talks, namely on the High North and energy related issues in the region. Norway is considered as the most technologically advanced and prosperous hydrocarbon nation of the Arctic Circle. In Norway, the French TNC has activities in the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea. Total and Gaz de France/Suez are among the principal clients and partners of the Snøvit gas field in

Norway's Barents Sea. Snøvit (at Hammerfest) is the first offshore project in the history of Barents Sea extractive activities. It is also the first development to export LNG from Norway to Europe (Kolstad, 2012).

Beyond oil and gas, France also has known interests in the fishing sector. Although France does not import significant amounts of fish from Arctic markets, yet, its top supplier of fresh fish or refrigerated fish is Norway, with exports to France totaling 303 million euros in 2008.¹² This supply could increase in the years to come, given the potential of commercial fishing veering north.

Commercial fishing in the Arctic has gained much attention by third party state powers such as France who are fish dependent. Recent reports indicate that the French consume more than they can actually produce inside EU limits. OCEAN2012 estimates that as of 2008, France had a total of 100 vessels operating in its external fleet (fishing operations outside EU waters and fishing, for example, in French Overseas Departments and Territories maritime spaces – DOM-TOM). This corresponded to 14% of the total number of EU vessels operating outside the Community.

Along with Spain, Portugal, Italy and Germany, France sources “more than one half of [its] fish from non-EU waters” (OCEAN2012/NEF, 2010). As of 2005, the French had the highest fish consumption rates in the EU, consuming 34.3 kilograms per capita of fish per year (ibid). Hence, with a structural trade deficit associated with “high consumption of seafood products and to low and failing domestic supplies,” (AAC, 2007) the French are therefore major seafood importers in the global market with imports totaling up to 5.8 billion US dollars in 2008.

It is predicted that with warming waters resulting from climate change, fish stocks from the south will be forced to veer further north from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (EU fishing zones), thus changing migration and commercial fishing patterns in various parts of the Arctic maritime space. WWF France has reported that almost half of the entire fish imports in the EU originate in the Arctic (Norwegian Sea, Barents Sea and Kara Sea).¹³

National Defense & Military Security

France is a maritime (nuclear) power that looks at the Arctic because of its past and emerging strategic significance in domestic and international defense affairs. Arctic states' military-related discourses and policies have captivated the attention of media over the last 10 years, hence increasing the strategic profile and value of that region among third party states (non-Arctic and non-coastal states like France). Arctic expert and professor at the University of Calgary, Rob Huebert, has an interesting description of this unprecedented amplified attention on Arctic affairs:

It is impossible to pick up a magazine or a newspaper, or turn on a TV without seeing some mention of the changing Arctic. From concern about the survival of polar bears to the promise of vast new resources including diamonds, oil and gas, the world has new appreciation of the region. Media reports have focused on the fear that a 'race for resources' may be developing in the region, with many reports discussing the emergence of a new 'Cold War.' The main thrust of most of these reports has been the development and interaction of three major forces: climate change; resource development; and boundary creation. The intersection of a melting ice cover, the promise of vast resource wealth, and the need for new maritime boundaries has resulted in unprecedented interest in the Arctic. At the heart of almost all of these stories is the concern over the security of the region. Concerns run from issues surrounding environmental security regarding the impact of climate change, to economic security for northerners as new economic opportunities and challenges arise, and ultimately, to political and military security for all of the Arctic states (Huebert, 2010: 23).

Huebert suggests that these mediatized events began to surface around 2005, a period when Arctic states (first Norway) started to make public "a series of foreign and defense policy statements regarding Arctic security" (Huebert, 2010: 4). These documents clearly designate the Arctic (national or international space) as part of each Arctic states' national interest (see Heininen's article in this volume). During that time, these actors also announced their intentions to increase their naval military capabilities/mobility in the region as a way to defend their own national security where such infrastructures had been neglected in the past.

It is therefore possible to imply that for the first time since the end of the Cold War, military related events in the Arctic have pushed world powers to look at *and* include this geographical space within their own strategic military calculus for defense and security purposes. French military observers and agenda setters have recently engaged in this discursive strategic planning process. Some examples are presented below.

While literature on defense and security issues in the Arctic remains very limited in France, well-known French analysts Richard Labévière and François Thual (2008) were inspired by the 2007 Russian flag-planting incident to write a preliminary strategic assessment on the emerging ‘geo-strategic’ situation in the Arctic. In their book entitled “*La bataille du Grand Nord a commencé?*” (2008, *The Battle for the Great North has Begun*), Labévière and Thual draw interesting conclusions, arguing that the Arctic region is a highly sensitive strategic space where regional and external state actors have now engaged in a race for natural resources. In their view, the Arctic is undergoing a geo-strategic shift where states are aiming to control new maritime routes. Thus the rush for northern maritime spaces is redefining shipping patterns and creating lucrative opportunities for TNCs. While we do not imply that their analysis has any direct influence on French policymakers, it is interesting to point out for this assessment their views that often correspond with an alarmist evaluation of the evolving relations *in* and *with* the Arctic region. Differing perspectives are hard to find in French IR/*géopolitique* literature.

Labévière and Thual’s assessment portrays the Arctic in a way that, for a nuclear and maritime power like France, is almost impossible to ignore. Their perception of an increasingly “unstable” vast maritime zone with bordering nuclear/G8 states (Russian Federation; United States) surely has the potential to influence agenda setters and policy makers in Paris (indeed Brussels). If not, it has an analytical merit – through its authors’ standing – to attract serious attention from the highest levels of government. Since 2007, observers have noted, “France in particular has publicly stated its intentions to provide its military with some Arctic capabilities” (Huebert et al., 2012: 21). And if France decides to modify its strategic posture in the Arctic, this will certainly have implications on its foreign policy and for international affairs.

Considering the growing strategic value given to the Arctic over the past years, the French Ministry of Defense (*Ministère de la Défense*) began to look at the Arctic differently with corresponding (albeit preliminary) policy orientations. Since March 2009, French infantry battalion members have partaken in Norwegian-led multinational ‘Cold Response’ exercises that involve several thousand soldiers from NATO countries. These invitational exercises have been taking place in the counties of Norway’s Nordland and Troms (2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012). The 2012 edition included over 16,000 soldiers from 14 states, of which 420

participants came from the 27th Brigade of the Mountain Infantry (République française, 2011). The largest participants came from Canada, France, The Netherlands, Great Britain, Sweden and the United States.¹⁴ ‘Cold Response 2012’ gathered soldiers in a “NATO mission scenario under a UN mandate [...] to balance the use of diplomatic and military force, helping soldiers learn to train in an international environment where they have to master a common language and procedures” (National Defence Canada, 2012).

Later on in 2012, France and Russia held PACEX naval drills in the Barents Sea. The French deployed their navy warship *De Grasse* up to Severomorsk to carry out military exercises with Russia’s large landing ship *Aleksandr Otrakovsk* part of the Northern Fleet. Officials note that the purpose of the Arctic exercises was intended to “practice interoperability between warships of the two countries in order to act jointly in critical regions worldwide”.¹⁵ Both navies had undertaken similar joint exercises in the Barents Sea in 2010. At that time, Russian nuclear-powered missile cruiser *Petr Veliky* had visited Brest in France, its main naval base on the Atlantic coast (Pettersen, 2012).

Projecting power and preparedness in Russia’s northern neighborhood implies that the Arctic should be a zone where the French are capable to intervene in any kind of scenario. In a 2008 White Paper, the Ministry of Defense stated that “France possesses military capabilities that function in extreme climatic zones.” Two years later, in a letter of response to an earlier National Assembly inquiry, the minister of Defense outlined France’s Arctic defense policy by specifying that, as a military power, the French have “Arctic-friendly“ (or extreme climate capable) military capabilities and cold climate troops that could be deployed in any northern crisis. The notion of French preparedness for a probable crisis in the High North was elaborated as follows (Assemblée Nationale, 2010; Huebert, 2011):

- French navy ships and nuclear submarines are deployed in Arctic waters for defense preparedness purposes and to maintain French nuclear deterrence. Navy units are required to carry out cold climate deployment;
- The French army has a contingent of 6 000 men (the 27th brigade of the mountain infantry, the “27^e BIM”) who are trained for “*grand froid*” (very cold) interventions;
- The army also continues to participate in military exercises in the Arctic, like Cold Response in Norway every two years. It trains 400 soldiers;
- As of 2012, new military capabilities will be acquired and tested in polar zones;

- The Air Force participated alongside the US and Canada in the exercise “Red Flag” in 2009 in Alaska;
- Every year, French pilots undergo survival exercises in the North Calotte region (Arctic parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland).

In addition to reviewing its military capabilities for the North, and as of 2010, the Ministry of Defense also integrated an Arctic security component to its national military school research institute (IRSEM), as a way to produce and promote northern defense related academic research.¹⁶

Part 2: Impacts of the ‘New’ Arctic on French Policies

As stated in the introduction, despite its interests in or related to the circumpolar north, France has not yet developed any policy or strategy for the Arctic. However, it has started to demonstrate through discourse that the changes occurring in the circumpolar north will have beyond-the-region impacts, thus affecting French and European interests. While keeping in mind the relationship between France and the Arctic (part 1), the second part of this paper offers a brief overview of how France has been reacting to Arctic change. It tries to unscramble an emerging circumpolar narrative that seems to be put forward to defend French interests related to specific issues in the north.

Since the early 2000s, climate change has rapidly become a major issue of concern for both Arctic and non-Arctic states (ACIA, 2004). This phenomenon has not been limited to Arctic states, since others, such as France, have been openly concerned by the impacts of climate change on *and* outside the Arctic zone. Furthermore, in the early 2000s, global warming, thawing ice and increased economic activities in the Arctic, coupled with a Russian flag planting ‘stunt’ in the Arctic Ocean, are today seen as accumulated contextual factors that had impacts on how the world perceived the circumpolar north at that time. Arctic sea-ice has been disappearing at record levels since the 1970s, attaining a historic peak in 2007. That year, “the sea ice crashed, melting to a summer minimum of 4.3m sq km (1.7 square miles), close to half the average for the 1960s and 24% below the previous minimum, set in 2005” (The Economist, 2012). It was also the summer that “left the north-west passage, a sea-lane through Canada’s 36,000-island Arctic Archipelago, ice-free for the first time in memory” (ibid). Arctic change was thus becoming a reality. And so, thawing polar ice instinctively

became synonymous with Arctic shipping, thus raising unprecedented security apprehensions around the world.

Melting ice was not the only security issue of 2007. The Russian *Arktika* expedition was a *coup d'éclat* that stunned the post-Cold War world. Images of a “fifteen centuryish” expansionist Russia – embodied by political activist and polar explorer Artur Chilingarov, a Russian titanium flag, and two mini submersibles – provided an exceptionally dramatic scene. Associated to the impacts of climate change, it added rhetorical value to the notion of an “Arctic Race” for untapped resources.

All of these perceived accumulated events have potential implications on foreign policy decisions and need to be taken into consideration when exploring the French discourse relating to the Arctic. Our brief assessment looks at this period (2007-2012) that coincides with the beginning of the IPY (and consequently reports for the Senate/National Assembly on the state of France in the Arctic), the Sarkozy presidency, the French presidency of the EU and the appointment of Michel Rocard as the very first French polar ambassador.

Towards an Arctic Treaty

Presented as a region undergoing major transformations, the Arctic has been framed as an area in the world requiring a new sense of responsiveness by state actors (Major and Steinicke, 2011: 10). In 2007 and 2008, French Senator Christian Gaudin released two major reports on France’s interests and roles at both poles (“La place de la France dans les enjeux internationaux de la recherche en milieu polaire: le cas de l’Antarctique”¹⁷ and “Faut-il créer un observatoire de l’Arctique”). Prepared for the Senate and the National Assembly, Gaudin’s reports concluded that the High North was “becoming increasingly accessible for the development of economic activities. The Northwest and Northeast Passages, as well as the natural resources of the Arctic and the Antarctic regions are important issues” (Gaudin, 2007).

The Senator produced key recommendations for French foreign policy makers. He first observed that France’s presence in both polar regions “suffer[ed] from a lack of direction and permanency” (Gaudin, 2007). The Senator therefore advised the newly elected President Nicolas Sarkozy to “reorganize France’s presence in the polar regions [by] appoint[ing] a coordinator for the French presence at the two poles, by assigning this mission to either the

French Polar Institute – Paul-Émile Victor or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA] through the naming of an ambassador-at-large in charge of polar-related issues” (ibid). Considering the political and diplomatic implications of such a position, Senator Gaudin had indicated a preference for the second option (MFA) in his report, notably because of its practicality for French foreign relations, since France is a non-Arctic state. On March 30th 2009, foreign affairs minister Bernard Kouchner announced that France was appointing Michel Rocard as polar ambassador “to serve the French national interest” in a way to enhance governance structures for the Arctic (Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 2009).

Second, senator Gaudin’s 2007 report also mentioned that France should “strengthen” its presence in the North as a way to “give substance” to its participation in the AC (Gaudin, 2007: 93). Accordingly, the author suggested that France should support the idea of creating “a new status, that of ‘associated member’ [in the Arctic Council] which would allow [France] to fully participate in the workgroups” (ibid: 94).¹⁸ Indeed, France has often mentioned its interest in having a greater role particularly within the ‘Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response’ (EPPR) working group since it deals with maritime issues such as Search and Rescue (SAR) and Arctic marine oil pollution. Correspondingly, in May 2010, polar ambassador Michel Rocard participated in his first AC meeting in Copenhagen, with then State Secretary for European Affairs, Pierre Lellouche, who acknowledged, “this was the first time a French minister was present at an AC meeting” (Arctic Council, 2010). He added that such an increased interest “was a sign of France recognizing the urgent challenges in the Arctic, and its willingness to contribute in facing those challenges” (ibid).

Finally, policy-wise, Gaudin recommended that France should establish an international ‘Observatory’ for the Arctic (*Observatoire scientifique multidisciplinaire et multinational de l’Arctique*) and use its EU Commission Presidency in 2008 to push this idea forward with its European allies (Gaudin, 2008). Furthermore, the Senator also mentioned that considering the fragility of Arctic ecosystems, it has become imperative to regulate human activities related to natural resource exploitation and tourism in the Arctic (Gaudin, 2007: 143). Although discussions on an observatory for the Arctic remain to be followed-up on, Gaudin’s suggestion to enhance governance structures for the Arctic did find its way to policymakers in Paris. Indeed, the National Assembly (French parliament) adopted a bill in 2008¹⁹ that supported the creation of a specific international commission on the Arctic. This bill – named ‘Grenelle

de l'Environnement 1' – acknowledged that the Arctic region plays a central role in the overall balance of the planet's climate. It also states that France will promote “the adaptation of international regulations for new usages of the Arctic Ocean made possible by decreasing sea-ice and its accessibility.” Furthermore, the *Grenelle de l'Environnement* also called for the introduction of an Arctic treaty during the 2008 French Presidency of the Council of the EU (Sénat, 2009).

Gradually, because of climate change, the French connection with the circumpolar north was shifting, while “France’s stance on Arctic issues acquired an overtly political character” (CIC, 2011: 10), arguably because Paris was considering the governance structures of the Arctic (namely UNCLOS, AC, IMO) obsolete, requiring contextual reconfigurations by the international community, thus having an impact on France’s foreign policy. Impacts of climate change in the Arctic were conveying responsibilities on the international community to make sure “exploitation of resources, as well as tourism in these regions [would be properly] regulated” (Truc, 2011). In that perspective, the Arctic maritime space was being considered as an international zone like any other where global powers must pursue their national interests through foreign policy, and by reinforcing international institutions through dialogue and cooperation. In this process, mentions of existing governance structures or long-lasting cooperation between Arctic states were limited or simply inexistent.

Outside the government, other actors also believed that the Arctic needed an enhanced international framework to protect the region and its inhabitants from any form of economic activity arising from thawing ice. In 2006, the NGO “*Le Cercle Polaire*” (CP) was created in France “to develop and promote true scientific understanding of the Arctic and Antarctic regions, and to encourage the preservation of the polar environments.”²⁰ Its mandate also seeks to develop and promote an international treaty for the Arctic space by promoting “the principles of international control over and management of the polar environments, through either the reinforcement of existing regulatory frameworks or the introduction of new regulations”(ibid).

CP was co-founded by Stanislas Pottier and Laurent Mayet. Pottier had previously been advisor to past minister of the Economy, Industry and Employment, Christine Legarde, currently president of the IMF, while Mayet, physicist and philosopher, is Associate

Professor at *Grande École* Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (IEP, or Science po Paris) and has an academic background. Both Pottier and Mayet were appointed special advisors to polar ambassador Michel Rocard in 2009. It should also be mentioned that Rocard has been the honorary president of CP since 2007.

These individuals are considered a “knowledgeable Arctic elite,”²¹ potentially supported and consulted by governmental institutions (i.e. committee on foreign affairs and the Senate). They are also the official voice of France on Arctic affairs in the world (i.e. foreign government conferences, news interviews, publications, high level meetings, keynote speakers, Arctic Council ministerial meetings, and other public or private events). In addition, these actors are recognized in academia and the media and, arguably, have impeding discursive powers to shape the way France perceives the Arctic as a place and space and how the area(s) should be considered as a foreign policy priority for the country.²²

While we are unable to provide any formal link between the MAF, policymakers and CP, it is possible to observe certain proximity between the French government and this NGO through Michel Rocard. The themes elaborated by CP are also similar to those emerged from Gaudin's reports. CP programs such as “The Call of the Poles” and “A Flag for the Arctic” aim to foster awareness and promote multinational information sharing on climate change impacts on the Arctic, other components can be seen as soft power strategies or arrangements since they support larger and stronger political implications by France in the Arctic. Advocating for a remodeled governance structure for the Arctic is one of these examples, consistent with the *Grenelle de l'Environnement's* 230th commitment on an Arctic treaty (Sénat, 2009). It is therefore hypothesized in this preliminary assessment that information generated by the experts at CP can be useful for foreign policymakers in Paris. But no formal association can be proved at this time and no significant policy shift has been detected thus far.

France, the EU and the Arctic

In 2007, CP created a working group on Arctic governance called *GEGA* (*Groupe d'étude sur la gouvernance Arctique*, or *Working Group on Arctic Governance*). It was created with the intention to “reflect on the legitimacy and the form for a future international regulation framework for the Arctic”.²³ The GEGA working group elaborated a treaty project for the protection of the

Arctic environment (*Traité relatif à la protection de l'environnement Arctique*, or *Treaty for the Protection of the Arctic Environment*) that is said to have led to the famous “French Amendment” (article 15) of the *European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on Arctic governance* (Arctic Governance resolution). This resolution calls “on the EU Council of Ministers to initiate, as soon as possible, talks aimed at adopting an international treaty protecting the Arctic”.²⁴ Consistent with the *Grenelle de l'Environnement* and the work of the CP, the ‘French Amendment’ stipulates “(...) the Commission should be prepared to pursue the opening of international negotiations designed to lead to the adoption of an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic” (European Parliament, 2008). A massive 597 MEP’s in total voted in favor of the 2008 Arctic Governance resolution.

France’s Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2008 is another example of how French foreign policy was ‘going polar’, by trying this time to “raise public awareness on the urgent need to conduct scientific research in the Arctic to protect the environment” (République française, 2011). Fabio Liberti from IRIS in Paris explains that before Nicolas Sarkozy took the EU Presidency, “France had all but disappeared from the European political map between 2005 and 2007, following the French rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in the 2005 referendum, opted for by Jacques Chirac” (Liberti, 2008). He goes on to explain that “Sarkozy’s primary objectives were firstly to show the world that France was back in Europe and to reclaim the influence that France had lost by the end of Chirac’s mandate and secondly to make progress on the issues that have historically been an integral part of French foreign policy (ibid). Four priorities guided policy during the French EU Presidency: immigration; reforming CAP; making progress on the climate-energy package; and reviving the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) (ibid). The Arctic was addressed through at least two of these priorities: climate-energy and ESDP.

Indeed, France had previously positioned itself within the EU as a member state that shapes and shares the Union’s posture when dealing with Arctic issues. In 2008, French ambassador-at-large for the environment, Laurent Stefanini (Rocard was yet to be named polar ambassador), declared, in Greenland, that while

France is presiding over the Council of the European Union, [it] is also a demonstration that the EU feels directly concerned and wishes to be involved in the debate. The Arctic is fully part of the Nordic dimension of the EU joint foreign and security policy and you can rely on our determination to push

forward this priority. EU has an “arctic window” and even more... According to me it’s an “arctic door” (NORDEN, 2008).

While France has yet to produce a national strategy for the Arctic, it thus appears that the French are using the EU to push their unofficial foreign policy agenda for the Arctic. On that point, Ida Holdus points out that states like France, Germany and the UK, for example, are not only G8 powers but also maritime powers (military or commercial) that are “of considerable weight in international relations and EU policy-making. They are also among those states in the EU with a stated interest in the Arctic” (Holdus, 2011: 58). In this regard, Holdus considers that if France and Germany “were to have strong positions regarding Arctic issues, it is possible to believe that this could potentially influence the EU’s policy” (ibid: 59). Indeed, France is said to have been “the most engaged of the three member states”...“putting forward the initiative to make the Conclusions [for the Council of the European Union in 2009 on Arctic Issues]” (ibid).

Moreover, foreign affairs minister Kouchner acknowledged the importance of enhanced French-European cooperation on Arctic issues. He stated in 2009 that France was actively engaged in Arctic issues within the EU *via* then MEP Michel Rocard “who created a parliamentary group [GEGA] devoted to Arctic affairs. From thereon, he co-wrote the ‘Arctic Governance’ resolution, approved the 9 October [2008]. This resolution made way to the Commissions’ [November 2008] communication that established the first steps for a European Arctic policy (...)” (Ministère des Affaires étrangères, 2009). Kouchner has also reaffirmed his complete confidence in Rocard’s mission as polar ambassador who is expected to offer France future recommendations on Arctic and Antarctic affairs, a task the ambassador was familiar with given his previous experience ‘negotiating’ the Madrid Protocol on the Antarctic treaty in the late 1980s.

Closing Governance Gaps

As we demonstrated earlier, the idea of a French polar ambassador, assigned to Michel Rocard, emerged in a 2007 Senate report on “French polar research on the eve of the international polar year” (Gaudin, 2007). The official title of Rocard’s position, *Ambassador for International Negotiations on the Arctic and the Antarctic*, is telling since it corresponds with French governmental and non-governmental actors’ actions in relation to the Arctic since

2007. It gives a sense of how French policy makers see Arctic change and seek to influence the evolving governance structures in the region, *from* a non-Arctic point of view but also *as* a potential user of the Arctic.

Over the last years, Michel Rocard has, in some way, embodied French Polar Policy. He has been the dominant voice for France on all Arctic issues since 2009. Highly mediatized and well networked with foreign (Arctic) heads of states and diplomats,²⁵ Rocard has tried to make the case for users of the Arctic – the globalization dimension of Arctic geopolitics today that is often overlooked by analysts of Arctic change. Rocard has a well-known background on polar diplomacy and governance going back to 1989. As Prime Minister and in collaboration with Australia – especially Prime Minister Bob Hawke – Rocard engaged the international negotiation process leading to the Madrid Protocol of the Antarctic Treaty of 1991. While the ‘Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty’ was established essentially to protect the Antarctic from commercial (mining) activities for a period extending to 50 years, Rocard recognizes that issues at both poles are diametrically different today. Although he does underscore the urgency to act now for the Arctic is much greater than it was in the 1980s.²⁶ Hence, Rocard counts on his past experiences and polar treaty-making *savoir faire* (as PM and MEP) to guide him in his mission as French polar diplomat. Indeed, Rocard considers that as an informed ambassador-at-large, “the experience and the knowledge I gained from [the Madrid Protocol on the Antarctic Treaty] are still with me” (ibid).

Over the past few years, Rocard has been trying to persuade Arctic states to pay additional attention to governance gaps in the Arctic. Three recurring questions seem to have emerged from Rocard’s speeches and testimonies on Arctic governance: do corresponding rules and regulations sufficiently cover all economic activities in the Arctic?; can and should the five Arctic coastal states (A5) tackle alone (as a bloc) over the next twenty to thirty years, the growing list of issues in the area that will potentially have implications on French and EU national interests?; and how can France support the efforts of Arctic states in protecting the High North from emerging global relevant security challenges? On the latter question, Michel Rocard stated in an August 2011 media interview that the *status quo* by Arctic states on Arctic/world governance issues could no longer be tolerated: improved frameworks that deal with the obvious regulatory gaps would need to be considered seriously with the

involvement of all interested actors, thus not limiting Arctic governance to the geo-powers of the Arctic Ocean (Shields, 2011: A3). Rocard's criticism of the A5 structure is known by the polar states. In 2009, he made clear that AC membership system reproduced a weak "*club arctique*" ("Arctic Club") that failed to integrate any legally binding regulations within its operating framework (République française, 2009: 76).

As polar ambassador for France, Rocard has been opposed to discussing Arctic governance in a limited A5 setting. Commenting on the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, he depicted this document as being a statement that roughly says "the Arctic is full of problems: fisheries, maritime security, strategic interests of world powers, economic exploitation etc. We [A5] know this, trust us: these are issues of particular relevance to Arctic states so we will be cautious. We will take care of these issues. Outsiders, just leave us alone ("*fichez-nous la paix*"). This is roughly the message from Ilulissat and the AC. We must respect this in an elegant manner since we can understand their positions. But such behavior is also insufficient" (Rocard, 2011). In addition, he has also been cited for calling the AC "a sleepy monster with great uncertainty on how it manages in world affairs" (Rocard, 2011). In less controversial words, Rocard considers that there is an "unspoken assumption [between Arctic states] that whatever happens in the Arctic, it is sufficient for each coastal state to shoulder alone and totally the responsibilities ... I [Rocard] can certainly not adhere to that view" (Shields, 2011: A3).

While these are not foreign affairs ministers' comments (or official French positions on international issues), Rocard's remarks do reflect perceived opposition between non-Arctic states and the current *modus operandi* of Arctic governance, at least from a French perspective (Plouffe, 2010). Oran Young argues that third party states like France for example are not "prepared to accept the role of the five coastal states as stewards who are deputized by the international community to look after the Arctic issues in the interest of all" (Young, 2009: 180). Young anticipates world powers like France or associations of powers like the EU to continue to express stronger disapproval of such Arctic arrangements. It would therefore be a mistake, given the obvious links between the Arctic and the outside world, "to relegate outsiders (for example Britain, China, France, Germany, the European Union) to the status of observers who seldom even get to speak at council sessions" (Young, 2009: 180).

While AC states do agree on the need to reinforce existing governance structures for safety and security purposes in the Arctic (e.g. SAR Agreement of 2011), observers like France and even Germany have voiced their concern over how “self proclaimed” stewards tend to act alone in the Arctic, thus limiting involvement of observers in matters such as SAR and oil spill response treaties within the EPPR working group. With the notion of an “Arctic club” inside the AC, which appeared as early as 2008 at the Ilulissat meeting in Greenland (not an AC event), the French and many MEPs have looked at A5 arrangements with suspicious eyes. In their view, it tends to prevent states or other actors outside the Arctic Circle to legitimately engage on issues that are increasingly global, urgent and thus of interest to others than the A5 or AC states. This essentially synthesizes four years of diplomatic messages from Michel Rocard around the Arctic Circle.

In relation to French Arctic interests related to the governance gaps in the circumpolar north, Rocard has been vocal on every issue explored in ‘part 1’ of this assessment, except for national defense.

While the question of greater participation by non-Arctic states in working groups of the AC has been addressed earlier in this analysis, this paper will now briefly focus on French positions related to governance issues touching fisheries and environmental protection in the Arctic. There are currently many debates over what exactly the legislative gaps are when dealing with Arctic fishing regulatory frameworks and how to define the corresponding quotas for commercial activities (Duyck, 2012). Other pressing questions identified by analysts and stakeholders relate to the potentially destructive illicit activities such as poaching and piracy that could appear (or increase) in years to come in northern waters.²⁷

Commercial fisheries in the Arctic – beyond Svalbard and the Bering Strait – are not integrated in any management or conservation regime, thus differing very much from the established fishing industry in the South. Experts believe that there are key differences in the current dialogue on Arctic fisheries. First, compared to the fishing zones in the south, “relatively little data, knowledge and insight required for science-based and ecosystem-based fisheries management exists for the marine areas north of the Bering Strait and Svalbard” (Bolton, 2009). Second, still in comparison with southern areas, “there are no commercial fisheries of any significance in the more northerly areas and no fisheries at all in the high seas portion of the Central Arctic Ocean” (ibid). Finally, “whereas the areas farther south are

covered by a number of international fisheries management regimes, no such international regimes exist for managing fisheries in the more northerly areas other than the inclusion of the Atlantic sector of the Central Arctic Ocean within the NEAFC Convention Area” (ibid). Another important factor to consider when discussing these issues is that Arctic fisheries and development and research today deal with “two major planning areas: 1) colder Arctic Ocean areas closer to Alaska, Canada and Eastern Russia; and 2) warmer Arctic Ocean areas closer to Norway, Western Russia and portions of Greenland” (Watson, 2009). Finally, experts have identified potential organizations that could contribute to further deepen research, discussions and options for fisheries in the Arctic (by non-Arctic states like France). Those mentioned include:

- **The Arctic Council** working groups: Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) and Arctic Monitoring Assessment Programme (AMAP);
- **The North East Atlantic Fisheries Council** (since the Ilulissat Declaration was referenced for regional Arctic Ocean governance (via A5 coastal states), experts suggest that cross-sector eco-system based ocean management could possibly fall under the Arctic Council or the OSPAR Convention).
- The **North Pacific Marine Science Organization** (PICES);
- The **International Arctic Science Committee** (IASC);
- The **International Council for the Exploration of the Sea** (ICES).

While France remains “attentive to any initiative that allows greater protection of the Arctic, based on existing legal instruments or new ones” (République française, 2009), it has also asserted an interest in broadening to the Arctic maritime zone the geographical limits of RFMOs like the framework of the North-East Atlantic RFMO, where the EU is already a member (and represents the interests of the EUs 27 members); and the North-Western Atlantic RFMO regime where France is a member (but not the EU) via the islands of St-Pierre-et-Miquelon (adjacent to Canadian waters). There are actually a total of nine geographical RFMO zones that manage fish stocks in the high seas. According to Michel Rocard, it could take up to ten years to establish new or enlarged regimes. France is proposing a Mediterranean model-inspired regime for the Arctic (République française, 2010).

On governance and environmental protection, the assessment and planning processes attached to the impacts of increased oil and gas activities in the Arctic is a growing issue of

concern. If northern areas are to be the next “Saudi Arabia” or “Middle East” in terms of energy production,²⁸ avoiding any ecological disaster seems obvious for local, national and international stakeholders. The images produced by the 2010 BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico surely overshadow TNC activities around the world and probably more severely when it comes to the Arctic. Therefore France considers that work on universal oil and gas regulations for extractive activities is lacking or not progressing rapidly enough. Michel Rocard observed that,

If such a trivial spill like the one in the Gulf of Mexico should happen in the Arctic, the difference is that in the North, it is so cold that the chemical products used in the South to clear up the oil do not work. It is so cold that we cannot work underwater like in the South to close and seal the well. Therefore, if there is an accident similar to the one of the Gulf of Mexico in the Arctic, it will be a disaster infinitely considerable to any others ever known and probably unsolvable (SRC, 2010).

Such a message comes with no surprise, as any environmental disaster would be felt on Arctic socio-economic activities, future commercial fishing, tourism or other unwarranted effects on the entire European periphery. Nevertheless, the AC had agreed in 2011 to further talks on possible international measures for oil spill preparedness and response throughout the circumpolar north. Furthermore, an initiative led by the United States and Norway has produced international dialogue supporting an “oil pollution preparedness and response instrument built on the momentum of the Search and Rescue agreement and strengthens the Arctic Council as a high-level forum” (Salazar, 2010). An agreement on this issue could be reached by 2013. There is no doubt that France will monitor these talks and try to gain influence to establish rules and regulations that reflect their interests (while keeping in mind its TNCs major activities in the Arctic). Indeed, since talks on oil and gas measures will take place inside a new task force on Arctic marine oil pollution, the French would seek greater participation in the AC EPPR.

On other environmental concerns, further research should be focused on how France is dealing with IMO allies in the process of establishing a ‘polar code’ for Arctic shipping and navigation. While France has vested interests in having proper transportation regulations in the Arctic, little information on this issue was made available at the time of writing this assessment.

Conclusions

While looking closer at Senate/National Assembly reactions to Arctic change over the years, as well as the nomination of a polar ambassador, France appears to be fine-tuning its foreign policy in an era *and* area where all actors who have interests in the Arctic need to prepare for a ‘useable’ and ‘environmentally compatible’ circumpolar space. This means, for France and others, establishing new rules and regulations as well as decision-making provisions to govern Arctic activities and all their users. It also suggests that France will actively engage itself in international bodies that deal with rules and regulations that govern the circumpolar north (i.e. IMO; UNCLOS; NATO; AC). Therefore, France looks at the Arctic maritime space as an international zone like any other where global actors coordinate and defend their national interests through foreign policy and international institutions.

This assessment on France and its foreign policy objectives in the Arctic attempted, on the one hand, to look at how the French are connected to the Arctic through regional institutions, economic interests and military cooperation and national defense. On the other, this analysis tried to focus on how changing perceptions of Arctic issues in France have engaged policymakers and others in a reflection on how France is affected by these changes and vice versa. While France has not produced an Arctic strategy or policy, it has certainly been active on promoting its vision of the future of Arctic governance, and has used the EU to influence the debate around these issues.

This preliminary assessment was produced as a way to expand the debate on non-Arctic states, the Arctic and globalization. It tried to initiate a necessary discussion on France’s relationship with the Arctic. While acknowledging that literature on French foreign policy and the Arctic zone is scarce, we also encourage further research on French representations of the Arctic; evolving perceptions of Arctic security since Gaudin’s report until now; France’s role on the developing EU Arctic policy; French military cooperation with its Nordic neighbors; France’s posture on the NATO-Arctic-Russia triangle; and most of all, transatlantic Arctic relations.

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Notes

1. The “La Recherche” expedition of 1838-1840 illustrates such historical scientific missions. Launched by France, this expedition to “the Nordic countries, Spitzbergen and the White Sea, remains one of the most memorable explorations ever bound for ‘The High North’. The principal goal of the expedition was to accomplish great scientific work, and “La Recherche” resulted in the publication of a series of articles and reports”. From Rafaelsen, R. (2009).
2. AWIPEV is short for Alfred Wegener Institute (AWI – Germany) Paul-Émile Victor (PEV – France)
3. From 1947 to 1992, French expeditions to the poles were organized as part of the *Expéditions polaires françaises*. This structure was integrated within the *Institut polaire français – Paul-Émile Victor* (IPEV) in 1992. The IPEV was previously known as the *Institut Français pour la Recherche et la Technologie Polaires* (IFRTP). In 2002, the IFRTP was extended for 12 years by the French government under the name of IPEV.
4. See UNESCO, <http://portal.unesco.org>.
5. See Centre Européen Arctique (CEARC), <http://www.cearc.uvsq.fr/>
6. The EU Commission signed the Kirkenes *Declaration on Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region* in 1993, establishing the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). All parties of the *Kirkenes Declaration* are currently working on a renewed declaration that should be signed by the four member states and the EU in Kirkenes in early 2013. See Plouffe (2012) and Pettersen (2011).
7. From Le Monde.fr. (2011, December 21). Total, champion des profits... et des augmentations. Retrieved (10.22.12) from, <http://lauer.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/12/22/total-champion-des-profits-et-des-augmentations/>
8. AFP. Total engrange plus de 12 milliards de profits en 2011. Retrieved (02.10.12) from, http://lexpansion.lexpress.fr/entreprise/total-engrange-plus-de-12-milliards-de-profits-en-2011_282323.html
9. In the summer of 2012, Gazprom shelved its attempts to develop Shtokman with Total and Statoil. It has since then applied to the Russian Federal Agency for Subsoil

- Usage to delay the gas field development. Other reports suggest that work on the Shtokman gas field could start as early as 2017. See Interfax, 2012.
10. A map of all activities is available online at Total. Our Energies, <http://www.total.com/en/our-energies/oil/exploration-and-production/our-skills-and-expertise/extreme-cold-environments/total-s-operations/map-201849.html>
 11. Analysts point out that “France’s demand for gas has significantly increased in recent years, doubling its share (in Norway) between 1990 and 2004.” See Major, C. & Steinicke, S. (2011): 6.
 12. Top suppliers of France are the Netherlands (8.9%), the United Kingdom (8.7%), Denmark (8.6%), Spain (7.2%) and Belgium (7.1%).
 13. The Commission states that the “EU is among the most important consumers of Arctic fish, of which only a small part is caught by Community vessels. The European Community is a member of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). It cooperates fully with states with sovereignty or jurisdiction in the Arctic waters, seeking not only to ensure fishing opportunities, but also to guarantee long-term conservation and optimum utilization of fishery resources.” See EU Maritime Policy Actions, http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/arctic_fisheries_en.html.
 14. See Norwegian Armed Forces (2012). Cold Response 2012. Retrieved (06.18.12) from, <http://mil.no/exercises/coldresponse2012/Pages/default.aspx>
 15. RUSNAVY. (2012, May 30). French Frigate De Grasse to call at Severomorsk. Retrieved (06.24.12) from, http://rusnavy.com/news/navy/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=15227
 16. See Institut de recherche stratégique de l’École militaire (IRSEM), <http://www.irsem.defense.gouv.fr>
 17. Even though the report’s title indicates a case study on the Antarctic, part VI of Gaudin’s 2007 report is dedicated to France’s role in the Arctic (Gaudin, 2007: 93-109).
 18. The six working groups are: Arctic Council Action Plan (ACAP); Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP); Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF); Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME); Emergency, Prevention, Preparedness and Responses (EPPR); and Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG).
 19. The Senate adopted the *Grenelle de l’Environnement* in 2009. It is specifically stated that the Senate adopted Senator Gaudin’s recommendations on the creation of scientific observatory for the Arctic and to promote a proper legal framework to regulate human economic activities in the Arctic. See Senat (Melquiot, 2009).
 20. See *Le Cercle Polaire*, www.lecerclepolaire.com. Discussions on an Arctic Treaty are not new. In 1991, University of Ottawa, Canada, Professor Emeritus of International Law, Donat Pharand, drafted such a treaty where he “emphasized the idea of an Arctic Region Council aiming at region cooperation which should lead to the use of the Arctic Region for peaceful purposes”. From Rasmussen, O.R. (Publication date unknown). Viewpoint: Time for an Arctic Treaty! *Nordregio*. Retrieved (08.15.12)

- from,
<http://www.nordregio.se/?vis=artikel&fid=10585&id=010620101841149331>.
21. The “knowledgeable elite” on Arctic affairs is here understood as individuals or a group of recognized experts of specific issues through research but also via field experiences (witnesses of change).
 22. As Said (2008: 71) explains: “Expertise in foreign affairs, for example, has usually meant the legitimation of the conduct of foreign policy and, what is more to the point, a sustained investment in revalidating the role of experts in foreign policy”. See Said, E. (2008). *The World, the text and the critic*, London: Vintage, p. 2. Quoted in Klaus J. Dodds, “Geopolitics, Experts and the Making of Foreign Policy”, *Area* (1993), 25.1, p. 71.
 23. See “GEGA 2” at *Le Cercle Polaire*, <http://www.lecerclepolaire.com/grouparctic.html>.
 24. See Michel Rocard’s biography at *Le Cercle Polaire*, http://www.lecerclepolaire.com/En/autres_portraits/Rocard.html
 25. For example, according to the French Embassy website in Reykjavik, Rocard was scheduled to meet with Icelandic President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson in October 2012.
 26. From Michel Rocard’s biography at *Le Cercle Polaire*, http://www.lecerclepolaire.com/En/autres_portraits/Rocard.html
 27. See for example WWF Franc. (2010). Actualités, Océan Arctique: urgence d’une nouvelle gouvernance. Retrieved (08.20.12) from, <http://www.wwf.fr/s-informer/actualites/ocean-arctique-urgence-d-une-nouvelle-gouvernance>
 28. This is a characterization voiced by Michel Rocard in many of his discourses post-2009.

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