Russian Military Build-up in the Arctic:

Strategic Shift in the Balance of Power or Bellicose Rhetoric Only?

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The Arctic has been playing a central role in Russia's identity and economic development. On the naval-strategic level, the most relevant for Moscow is maintaining of the credibility of nuclear deterrence, securing the open access of strategic submarines to world's seas and in theoretical case of large-scale European war the Russian Navy´s strategic objective would be to interrupt the connection between Europe and North America (the latter was more eminent during the Cold War but still it is a part of Russian strategic thinking and objectives). Besides that, recent developments shows that the Arctic's importance for Russia is not only growing but also widening and new sectors have been gradually added. Moscow's strategic goal is to determinate Russia as preeminent Arctic nation eminently clear by political, economic, and military means to "defend" its interest. As part of its effort to create a comprehensive presence in the Arctic, Russia has been steadily expanding its military component there since 2007. However, these movements are primarily focused on protection of coastlines and offshore energy extraction installations, search-and-rescue operations and icebreaker capabilities, therefore should not be seen strictly as an militarization of the region. The occasional assertive statements by Russian representatives are more tailored for domestic audience rather than threatening factor to the other Arctic states. More substantive signals of Russian intent would be refusal to recognize the decisions or authority of international organizations in the Arctic, or its withdrawal from such organizations. In observing Russian activities in the Arctic, it is important to analyze the relevance of these statements to map it in those framework and wider context. The aim of proposed paper is to focus on the relevance and substance of above mentioned developments.

Introduction

The Russian Northern territories are crucial for Moscow to keep its relevance in world affairs. The aim of this paper is to analyze Russia as a status quo power in the Arctic and the motives behind its approaches and actions. To keep its position in the Arctic as a dominant power, Russia needs to focus on the modernization of its Arctic capabilities. The official statements of Kremlin's representatives supported by regular exercises are however often perceived as provocative to the other Arctic littoral states. Such developments can lead to a "spiral" effect,

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when other states feel threatened by the Russian build-up and launch countermeasures. It can lead to a classic security dilemma and increase the securitization of the whole region.

A Strategic Framework: Development of the Arctic's Importance for Russia

In order to understand recent Russian ambitions in the Arctic it is necessary to define a framework for the broader strategic picture of Moscow's strategic culture and security identity. Russia is perceiving the Arctic as a geopolitically central region and sees its own role/position there as a predominant one.

During the Cold War the strategic importance of the Arctic was irreplaceable. First, the Northern Fleet (NF), stationed in the Arctic (Kola Peninsula) guaranteed nuclear deterrence. Second, the surface combat ships protected its nuclear strategic submarines by establishing a "naval fortress" in the Arctic, preventing access of NATO fleets that could harm its strategic submarine force. Third, if needed (in theoretical case of war) they could conduct operations from Arctic bases to interrupt Transatlantic supply lines and crucial naval communications between the US and Europe.

After the collapse of the USSR, the Arctic witnessed dual-direction simultaneous development. First, there was a slight diminishing of its importance from a strategic-military point of view, caused by the decreasing overall relevance of nuclear deterrence, which in the Russian context was guaranteed predominantly by the NF. On the other hand, that decrease was just a relative one; because of Russia's dramatically reduced conventional capabilities, the nuclear strategic forces has maintained a high level of importance in Moscow's overall strategy. Further, the relative importance of nuclear deterrence dramatically increased during late 1990s, because of continuous deterioration of conventional capabilities and the lowering threshold for engaging nuclear weapons. As stated in the Russian military doctrine – "Russia retains nuclear power status for deterring (preventing) aggression against it or its allies" (Prezident Rossii 2000). This was reconfirmed in the 2010 Military Doctrine. It reversed attention back towards the elements and regions crucial for nuclear capabilities, thus the Arctic was among the biggest winners of this development, again because of its NF. In the end it has caused the renaissance of the military factor of the Arctic's relevance. As Baev confirms, the main permanent factor in the securitization of the Arctic agenda is still the Northern Fleet (Baev 2009).

Second, there has been an increase of economic and political importance of Russia's High North. Due to the loss of Eastern European territories (especially Ukraine and Belarus) and Central Asia, the relative share of the Arctic on overall Russian GDP/economy increased. Moreover, the nature of the Arctic economy has been transformed. During the Soviet era, natural resources in Northern territories were developed to provide the necessary materials for an isolated Soviet Union to industrialize. Today, this region is developed to meet the needs of international markets (Southcott 2010: 49). Currently, the Arctic accounts around 20 percent of the total Russian GDP (Medvedev 2008b) comparable to Ukrainian SSR's share before 1991.[1]

Russia as the Arctic's Status Quo Power

As stated in the Russian "Arctic Strategy" Moscow's key objective is to *maintain Russia's role as a "leading Arctic power"* (Medvedev 2008a).[2] According to Zysk, Russian military activity in the Far North has tangibly increased in recent years. Combined with political assertiveness and rhetorical

hostility toward the West, which was a particular feature of Vladimir Putin's second presidential term (2004-2008),[3] the intensified presence of the Russian naval and air forces operating in the region has drawn much of the international attention and contributed to the image of Russia as the wild card in the Arctic strategic equation (Zysk 2011: 85-86).[4] However, in contrast to quite frequent military exercises and harsh public diplomacy, one of the main declared priorities of Russian politics is *to keep the Arctic as a zone of peace and cooperation* (Medvedev 2008a). The reason is that Russia is a dominant actor in the Arctic (with half of its territory and a majority of its population) it can thus be considered as a status quo power in the region, i.e. it is not seeking revision in the regional balance of power. Moscow needs stability in its Northern territories to guarantee the necessary level of industrial and economical development. As a status quo power, it wants to solve disputes in this region by peaceful means, with the help of international law and international organizations, as it guarantees economical, political and security benefits (Konyshev and Sergunin 2014a).[5,6]

In the field of social-economic development Kremlin plans to *transform the Arctic as a principal source of natural resources, which will fully meet the Russian needs, by 2020*.[7] From this perspective the above mentioned status quo and stability are crucial. A potential military conflict could negatively influence the assurance of Russia's national interests (Strategia 2009). Therefore, in this case the economic interests prevail over other intentions. Furthermore, Moscow realizes that it is very much in their interest to avoid significant militarization in the Arctic, as they need to have good relations with western corporations, first and foremost because of western capital and know-how to develop its Arctic oil and gas resources.

On the other hand, Moscow has expressed its readiness to protect its interests in the Northern territories even by military force. This does not necessarily mean a change in the existing strategic balance, but rather applies to situations where some potential factor threatens Russia's security or economic development, and thus threatens the status quo (in geopolitical terms).

Modernization of Russian Military Capabilities: A Key Factor in Maintaining the Status Quo

In a strategic context, Arctic military capabilities play a crucial role in Russia's ability to maintain its current advantages and deter potential challengers. In recent years all Arctic countries have increased their capabilities to operate militarily in the Far North. They have also started to increase their military presence and have presented plans for additional military build-up (acquiring specific equipment capable for the polar conditions, improving military infrastructure and increasing military forces) (for detailed information see Annex 1). While these changes are sometimes portrayed as significant military build-ups and potential threats to security, the five littoral states are making only limited increases in their capabilities to project military power beyond their recognized national territories (Wezeman 2012).

However this development could be perceived in Moscow as a challenge to the status quo which is favorable to Russia.[8] The reaction included the development of several modernization plans tailor-made for the Arctic. It includes modernization of military hardware but also support capabilities and necessary infrastructure in the High North. In the vast distances of the Arctic, the maintenance of infrastructure is a necessary precondition for effective military presence. In this context the Ministry of Defence has announced plans to modernize its Arctic military and border

patrol capabilities and to reopen its airfields as well as ports on the New Siberian Islands and the Franz Josef Land archipelago, which were mothballed in 1993 (Ria Novosti 2014a). In 2013, Russia also completed reconstruction of the runway at the airport *"Rogachevo"* ("Anderma-2"), which is located on the peninsula *Gusinaya Zemlya* (part of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago), and has started to restore its airfield "Temp" on Kotelny Island near the city of Norilsk. It is also overhauling urban facilities in Tiksi, Naryan-Mar, and Anadyr. Additionally, seven airstrips on the continental part of the Arctic Circle are planned to be reopen. The location of these islands is strategic as it enables Russia to control the entire region (Muhin 2013; RT 2013).

Besides infrastructure, the Kremlin also seeks to reinforce its military. Russia emphasizes the importance of maintaining a "necessary combat potential" in the North (Medvedev 2008a). President Putin supported this statement saying that Russia needs to use every means to protect its national interests in the region. "Next year, we have to complete the formation of new large units and military divisions (in the Arctic)" (BBC News 2013; Ria Novosti 2014c). In March 2009, the Kremlin announced a plan for a special military force to protect Arctic interests. Later on (May 2011), it was reported that two Arctic special forces brigades had been unveiled, based at Pechenga on the Kola Peninsula. Despite the fact that the concrete status of these brigades still remains unclear, the first brigade should be the 200th Independent Motorised Rifle Brigade (200 IMRB), which was resubordinated from Ground Forces to the Russian Navy's Northern Fleet in 2012. It should receive modernized systems and upgraded equipment suited to the polar conditions, while retaining its existing armored vehicles and tanks. The whole process was planned to be completed by the end of 2011, however, as the Russian officials saw its limits to fulfill the proposed plans, the timetable for the "Arctic brigades" full readiness has been extended to somewhere between 2015 and 2020. The second brigade is to be based at Arkhangelsk. This brigade's disposition also remains to be clarified. The fundamental equipment changes (such as snow capable vehicles) are still to be fulfilled. Each of the Arctic brigades should have about 4000 troops, although what ultimate size, scale, composition and missions these new "Arctic brigades" will have will become much clearer after the complete transformation of these formations (O'Gorman 2013). [9]

According to some experts Moscow's legitimacy for such a plan (together with new equipment for Russian border guards and coast guard forces) has been presented to the domestic audience as a necessity to protect its interests and borders against the US and Canada. However, there is no such threat, neither from the US nor Canada, to which Moscow should fear. Therefore, it looks like more political and economic posturing than a real, cross-Arctic, rapid-intervention force capability (O'Gorman 2013).

Even more importantly, these investments will also focus on enablers as automatic systems for constant surveillance of the furthermost Arctic reaches, including stationary and mobile electro-optical and infrared systems, as well as meteorological, communication and radar satellites within the space system "Arktika" (Zysk 2010).

The air force is perceived by Moscow as a central element in its demonstration of power. Two Tu-95MS, based in the Saratov region at the Engels aviation base with mid-flight refueling capability, now regularly patrol the Arctic. The Russian air force potential available for operations in the Arctic has a fleet of aging long- and medium-range bombers. The air force consists of 63 turbo-propelled Tu-95MSs, which are very old but remain a strategic aviation component. The air

force further includes 18 long-range Tu-160 Blackjacks bombers, as well as 80 Tu-22M Backfire medium bombers. In the regard of the Russian airforce, no credible plans to modernize the above fleet are known (Konyshev and Sergunin 2014a).[10]

The NF is responsible for the protection of the Northern territories - the largest of the Russian fleets - which is stationed at several large naval and air bases on the Kola Peninsula and along the coasts of the Barents and White seas. It plays a crucial role in securing Russian sovereignty over its part of the Arctic. The NF includes 30 nuclear-powered submarines, from which 7 are nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), protected by surface ships. Russia's only aircraft carrier "Admiral Kuznetsov" is also dedicated to the NF, however its primary role is to project power to the Atlantic Ocean and beyond. The fleet also includes 17 cruisers, destroyers and frigates, including the flagship of the Navy, "Pyotr Velikiy", a nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser, and 33 auxiliary vessels.

According to the latest news, 40 new ships and logistics vessels will be supplied to the NF by 2020, including 6 multi-role nuclear and conventional submarines, 2 large landing vessels, a destroyer, 5 frigates, 5 trawlers and 21 logistics vessels. As confirmed by fleet commander Admiral Vladimir Korolyov: "it is planned to replenish the Northern Fleet with new vessels and upgrade those in service by 2020 as part of the state armaments program and by 2016, the amount of new equipment should reach 50 percent, by 2020, it has to rise to 85 percent" (Lenta.Ru 2014). Priority has also been given to the modernization of Russian nuclear arsenals, including the building of Russia's first multi-purpose nuclear submarine - *Yasen class* (NATO classification Severodvinsk), which officially started service in 2013. An additional 4 *Yasen class* submarines are planned to be completed by 2020 (Staalesen 2012).

Currently, Moscow is preparing a detailed plan for this new structure, which should become operational by the end of 2014 (Ria Novosti 2014b). The new command structure, "*Northern Fleet - United Strategic Command (SF-USC)*" will include the NF, Arctic warfare brigades, part of the Air Force and Air Defence units as well as additional administrative structures. The new command will be subordinate to the Commander of the NF (Admiral Vladimir Korolev in 2014) and will be responsible for protecting Russia's Arctic shipping and fishing, oil and gas fields on the Arctic shelf, and the country's national borders in the north (Pettersen 2014a).

Specifics of Russian Arctic Capabilities: Icebreaker Fleet and Nuclear Deterrence

One of the crucial enablers of the NF is the unique icebreaker capability of Russia. In the geographical context and circumstances of the Arctic, the icebreakers have a superior strategic importance. Icebreakers guarantee necessary level of access to territories - without the access there is no real, only a theoretical capability to deploy forces or to use the territory for military or economic purposes. The unique capabilities of Russia's icebreaker fleet gives it a central position in Russian strategic thinking and considerations. In this context it is a crucial factor that Russia has the world's largest and most powerful icebreaker fleet. At present, Rosatomflot possesses 18 icebreakers of which 6 are active nuclear-powered and 12 are diesel-powered.[11] The Kremlin has been actively using icebreakers created mainly for the purpose of supplying and servicing the country's Northern settlements, including the export of natural resources, ensuring naval and civilian ship traffic across thick ice along the route (Ragner 2008).

At the moment, the icebreaker fleet is largely capable of fulfilling needs in the Russian Arctic, but while capacity is bound to diminish, the need for icebreaker services will increase as petroleum activities and transport increases in the Barents and Kara Seas. In a not too distant future, needs will surpass capacities (Ragner 2008). While refurbishing efforts have been made to enable the nuclear icebreakers to operate beyond their normal service-life, several of the remaining icebreakers will inevitably be decommissioned within the coming decade. The icebreaker fleet is ageing, therefore under current conditions of limited funding, perhaps the highest priority is life extension of the icebreakers.[12] Since the planning and building of a new generation of large (nuclear) icebreakers can be assumed to take at least ten years from the time a decision is made, it seems obvious that Russia's icebreaker fleet will shrink considerably before it grows again.[13] Currently, there is only one ship under construction - the biggest nuclear-powered icebreaker "Arktika", which is planned to be commissioned in 2017. This ship will be able reach any point in the Arctic Ocean any time of the year (Weaver, 2013).[14]

Nuclear icebreakers remain important for the economic survival of Russia's Arctic regions, as they guarantee the free naval transport thought far north territories and secure access to isolated regions. Therefore, they are a central element of the Northern Sea Route development strategy (Bukharin 2006).

Besides the icebreaker fleet, the nuclear deterrence force stationed at the bases of the Kola Peninsula, should be considered as Russian-specific, but in the Arctic. The Kola Peninsula hosts two-thirds of the Russian sea-based nuclear forces. However it is necessary to underline that those forces are not useful in case of conventional military conflict in the High North. Their primary role is global strategic deterrence and the only connection with the Arctic is, that their home bases and parts of their operational area are located there. While not tailored for strikes in the Arctic their presence gives very specific importance to the Russian military in general.

In this context it is crucial to secure open access to the world's oceans and the possibility of broad operational maneuver for the submarine forces (unlike the ports on the Black Sea or the Baltic which have choke points to open oceans controlled by NATO countries). Moreover, there is relatively developed military infrastructure which makes this region well suited for strategic naval operations, and land territories also provide a test bed for new weapons and host a range of important military installations and defence industries.

The specific importance of the Arctic is emphasized by the fact that the nuclear deterrent remains not only a key element of the Russian military strategy, but serves also as a symbol and guarantee of Russia's great power status. Maintaining strategic nuclear capabilities is, therefore, one of the highest priorities of Russia's military policies both in the North and globally (Zysk 2010; Konyshev and Sergunin 2014a). Currently, one of the main Arctic-related strategic motivations of the Kremlin is to regain status as a "world naval power" as it is declared in the National Security Strategy, and thus is impossible without guaranteed access to the Atlantic Ocean (Strategia 2009).

Conclusion

Russia's growing attention to the geopolitics of the Arctic has been occasionally accompanied by a rhetoric, and to some extent, an increase in northern military presence is to protect Russian interests. Certainly, the two new "Arctic brigades" as well as the military infrastructure development in the High North can be considered as an increase in Russia's Arctic presence.

While those improvements are often seen as serious in terms of military capabilities, the majority of advertised military programmes have been launched to modernize current capabilities and replace decommissioned weapon systems. It means, in the best-case scenario, that they slow the gradual downsizing of armed forces. The icebreaker fleet is a cogent example of the continuously shrinking capabilities, which will not be able to maintain current levels even through the already declared modernization plans. Altogether, these changes have little or nothing to do with power projection outside of Russian territory. Most of them are supporting border patrol capabilities and protecting national territories that have recently become more accessible.

Therefore, the Kremlin's strong announcements about the large acquisition of military capabilities are misleading and have little prospect of being completely realized (mainly for financial reasons). These "political dances" are mostly addressed as a message for domestic audience, even though they have drawn international attention. The Russian strategic interest is to maintain the status quo, as within the current situation they have the most advantage. Cooperation with other Arctic states is the utmost priority for Moscow, as it guarantees some level of stability and necessary know-how for economic prospects. Any changes at the international platforms, which could lead to the isolation of Russia, would have dramatic consequences, as it could weaken Russia's Arctic position. As Byers notes, even though the Arctic Council was established as part of efforts to engage Russia in the post Cold War era, the latest developments might stir the Kremlin's biggest concern, that is that NATO could potentially speak with one voice against Russia (Byers 2014).

Russian shortfalls in transparency about their long-term military ambitions could also have a negative impact on the region's security, and in the end on Moscow's strategic position as well. Russia's unclear and insufficient communication about the current status of their armed forces and modernization plans could lead to serious concerns on the part of other Arctic states. If their concerns reach a critical level, the reaction would be further securitization of the region, in an atmosphere which currently lacks confidence-building measures.

Notes

1. Paradoxically, during the 1990s, Russia's Arctic regions were perceived by the federal government as a burden or source of various socioeconomic problems rather than an economically promising region. The far northern regions were almost abandoned by Moscow and had to rely on themselves (or foreign humanitarian assistance) in terms of survival (Konyshev and Sergunin 2014a).
2. Strategic document for Russian policy in the Arctic. *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Arktike na period do 2020 goda i dalneishuiu perspektivu*, 2008, Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Retrieved from http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/15/98.html, hereafter "Foundations" 2008.
3. One of the best-known examples of the assertiveness is found in a famous speech by president Putin at the 2007 Security Conference in Munich. The address, which many observers felt as a reminiscence of the Cold War, contributed to the perception of Russia

as a resurgent power with an approach to international relations rooted deeply in classical realpolitik and an inherently conflictual zero-sum game (Zysk 2011). The speech was delivered on 10 February 2007 and is available at the conference´s website: http://www.securityconference.de.

4. The military activity includes regular aircraft surveillance patrols by Russia´s long-range-aviation (LRA) and support aircrafts to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This practice was resumed in August 2007 after fifteen years long pause. The increase in the activity was remarkable - 14 flights of Russian strategic bombers along the Norwegian coast in 2006, next year, in 2007, the number was 88 flights, in 2008 the number was 97 flight, in 2009 the number slightly decrease to 75 flights (Zysk 2011). For more information see: Pål Guttormsen, "Møter færre russerfly", Finnmarken, 3 August 2010.

5. Such a privileged position of Russia in the Arctic is very unique, because on other borders (like Ukraine or South Caucasus) the Kremlin doesn't have such a position, and is rather challenging the balance of power in terms of geopolitics and strategy.

6. Even though the rhetoric over the Arctic was politically charged, Russia and the other Arctic countries have been cooperating on a regular basis. The military cooperation between Russia and NATO countries, such as Norway and the US, has been one distinctive and exceptional Arctic feature. The first bilateral Russian-U.S. exercise "Northern Eagle" was conducted in 2004 and Norway joined these exercises in 2008. Since that time, the exercises have been held every two years in the Barents and Norwegian seas. For more information see: Pettersen, T. (2014b March 05). USA cancels joint exercises with Russia. Barents Observer. Retrieved from http://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/03/usa-cancels-joint-exercises-russia-05-03. However, the cooperation has been disturbed this year, when the biannual "Northern Eagle" was called off after the US announced that it would be cancelling its participation as a result of Russian invasion to the developments in Ukraine. Furthermore, Canada boycotted an Arctic Council Working Group meeting in Moscow. As this is the first time that an Arctic Council meeting was boycotted by one of the state member, this event remains historical in the Arctic co-operation. Cancellation of these events could have serious impacts on the future status of relations among the Arctic leaders. Mainly in regard to the next US chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the other littoral states might not be willing to include Russia to the negotiation table.

7. *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Arktike na period do 2020 goda i dalneishuiu perspektivu*, 2008, Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Retrieved from http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/15/98.html, hereafter "Foundations" 2008.

8. Russian national interests and main strategies in the Arctic were formulated the draft of the document "Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic", which was approved by the Russian Cabinet, on 14 June 2001. After seven years, on 18 September 2008, President Medvedev approved the "Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic Up to and Beyond 2020", which was the first Russian post-Soviet Arctic strategy. Russia was one of the first among the Arctic states who managed to adopt such a document (only Norway had its official doctrine for the North in 2006). Since the Strategy-2008 was of a rather general nature, it should be

specified and regularly updated by other documents. On 20 February 2013, a document titled "The Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" was approved by President Vladimir Putin (Konyshev and Sergunin 2014a). For more information see Konyshev, V., Sergunin, A. (2014a). Is Russia a revisionist military power in the Arctic?. Defense & Security Analysis. Routledge.

9. Russia has several aspirations for these new military reforms but the one that most pertains to the formation of the Arctic brigades can be found resonating in a statement from then Russian Minister of Defence Anatoliy Serdyukov: *"All ground forces to become fully manned, permanent-readiness units."* In practical terms, this meant the desire for the most modern equipment, the adoption of a regular trainings and the readiness to deploy on short notice (six to eight hours) within their areas of responsibility (O'Gorman 2013).

10. Over flights of Russian military aircraft over the Arctic fell from 500 per year during the Soviet period to only half a dozen in the 1990s and at the start of the 2000s. In 2007, Russian strategic bombers flew over the Arctic for the first time since the end of the Cold War (Konyshev and Sergunin 2014a).

11. The primary difference between nuclear-powered and diesel-powered ships is that the former one are bigger, more powerful, without almost no range limitations, and most importantly they don't require refuelling for several years (5-7 years) (http://arcticjournal.com/politics/243/russia-building-largest-nuclear-ice-breaker).

12. Icebreaker life expectancy depends on operational tempo, ice conditions, maintenance and other factors. The expected service life is 100,000 full power hours, which corresponds to about 20 years of ship operation. Makarov et al., "The Experience of Designing and Operation of Civilian Ship Reactor Units," Atomnaia Energia (September 2000): 179–189 (Bukharin 2006).

13. After the Yamal joined the fleet in 1993, it took 14 years until another major icebreaker – the 50 Let Pobedy – was launched in 2007. Bigger and more powerful icebreakers of the Arktika class, such as the "50 Let Pobedy" and the "Yamal", have been playing the first fiddle, as it were, since the 1970s.

14. The "Arktika" icebreaker is able to open passages through 3 metres thick ice fields, in comparison to current icebreakers, which are able to cut average ice fields about 1.5-2 metres depth (Bukcharin 2006).

15. Canada's current defence policy is contained in the Canada First defence strategy of 2008, which includes plans for investments until 2028 (Canadian Department of National Defence (DND), Canada First Defence Strategy (DND: Ottawa, 18 June 2008).; Canada's Arctic policy is specified in the government's Northern Strategy, which was released in July 2009. Canadian Government, Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future (Minister of Public Works and Government Services: Ottawa July 2009).

16. Denmark's defence policy for the period 2010–14 is contained in the 2009 Danish Defence Agreement, which underlines the changing geostrategic significance of the Arctic (Danish Ministry of Defence (MOD), Danish Defence Agreement 2010–2014 (MOD: Copenhagen, 24 June 2009); A special Arctic strategy was adopted in 2011. (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Greenland Department of Foreign Affairs and Faroe

Islands Foreign Service, Kongerigets Danmarks Strategi for Arktis 2011–2020 [The Kingdom of Denmark's strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020] (MFA: Copenhagen, Aug. 2011).; In July 2009 the Danish Parliament approved a plan for an Arctic military command and task force to be set up by 2014 (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greenland Department of Foreign Affairs and Faroe Islands Foreign Service; The Arctic Military Command will merge the Greenland and Faroe Islands commands and will be headquartered in Nuuk, Greenland (ibid.)

17. Norwegian defence policy is guided by the 2007 Soria Moria Declaration on International Policy, which gave the north of Norway and Svalbard a priority in national defence. (Office of the Norwegian Prime Minister, 'The Soria Moria declaration on international policy', 4 Feb. 2007, <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/documents/Reports-and-action-plans/rapporter/2005/The-Soria-Moria-Declaration-on-Internati.html>; Norwegian Ministry of Defence (MOD), Norwegian Defence: Facts and Figures 2011 (MOD: Oslo, 2011), p. 30.

18. The US Arctic Policy was firstly presented in 1994, than it was replaced during the President Bush administration in 2009 - White House, 'Arctic region policy', National Security Presidential Directive no. 66 and Home land Security Presidential Directive no. 26, 9 Jan. 2009, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2009/01/20090112-3.html>; The Arctic was not mentioned at all in a January 2012 document outlining security priorities for the 21st century. Later on, in May 2013, the US published its National Strategy For the Arctic Region, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nat_arctic_strategy.pdf The new strategy is being unveiled as the United States begins preparations to take over the rotating chairmanship of the Arctic Council. (http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/11/u-s-unveils-military-strategy-arctic/)

19. Russia's latest Arctic military exercises took place in March 2014, when paratroopers (a 350-strong battalion) landed on the New Siberian Islands. Such an exercise was realized for the first time in Russian history (Ria Novosti 2014a).

20. The most prominent military capabilities located in the US part of the Arctic are connected with the air force basis in Alaska, which are dealing with Russian far east, and – as the most recent development – the built up anti-missile capabilities tailored for countering missile threat from north east Asia. It means that the most important US military capabilities in the Arctic, notably Alaska, are there to counter security threats and challenges rooted in other-than-Arctic regions. The American military capabilities directly associated with the Arctic remain limited, if we do not count with air force dealing with Russian air forces and long-range strategic bombers.

21. Norway has always played an irreplaceable role from the NATO strategic point of view. The latest NATO military exercise "Cold Response" took place in March 2014 in Harstad (northern Norway), which included nearly 16,000 troops from 16 different NATO countries to train high-intensity operations in an extremely challenging cold-weather. As such, it improves the NATO's ability to effectively fight and survive in an Arctic environment. It is believed, that following the withdrawal from ISAF mission, NATO is returning to the type of winter warfare drills that were used during the Cold War. Some

of the equipment (for example winter clothes) that were specially prepared for Afghan mountains will be possible to use also in cold Arctic weather conditions (Pettersen, T. 2014, March 21). *Exercise Cold Response in final phase.* Barents Observer. Retrieved from http://barentsobserver.com/en/security/2014/03/exercise-cold-response-final-phase-21-03).

22. The readiness of Russian navy is being checked by the military exercises. In 2011, Russia conducted large-scale military exercises of Northern Fleet, which included the only aircraft carrier *"Admiral Kuznetsov*", the Navy's flagship nuclear-powered heavy cruiser the "*Pyotr Veliky",* also submarines, surface vessels, ground force and air force. (Pettersen, T. 2011, September 9). *Russian navy flexing muscles in Barents Sea.* Barents Observer. Retrieved from http://barentsobserver.com/en/regions/russian-navy-flexing-muscles-barents-sea .

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Annex 1: Military Capabilities in the Arctic

Air capabilities	
Canada[15]	- the Royal Canadian Air Force operates 18 CP-140 (P-3C) anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft that have the range to patrol the Arctic region from their base on the east coast of Canada -they will be replaced by 10–12 new aircraft from 2020 - 80 F/A-18 combat aircraft stationed in south-east and central Canada that are regularly deployed in the Arctic region, especially to intercept Russian bomber, which are supported by 7 tanker aircraft - Aircraft acquisitions in recent years, such as of C-130J and C-17 transport aircraft, have been partly for Arctic missions -Joint Uninhabited Surveillance and Target Acquisition System (JUSTAS) project for 6 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for maritime and Arctic patrol - air surveillance radars North Warning System, which forms part of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) *- plans to replace the F/A-18s with 65 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters (JSFs) from 2020* *-17 search-and-rescue aircraft are planned to replace older C-130 and other aircraft*
Denmark incl.	- Denmark operates three unarmed maritime patrol aircraft over the Baltic

Greenland[16]	Sea and off Greenland. - *plans for the potential deployment of F-16 combat aircraft to Greenland* - in the past Danish F-16s have used Kangerlussuaq (Søndre Strømfjord) Airport in western Greenland. The renewed use of the currently dormant Thule Air Base in the north-west of Greenland has been considered - in Thule there is the air surveillance radar, which is operated by the North Warning System and controlled by the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD)
Norway[17]	- a large proportion of the approximately 60 F-16 combat aircraft that Norway operates is based in Bodø, the main base of the Royal Norwegian Air Force. However, in November 2011 the Norwegian chief of defence recommended the closure of the air base at Bodø by 2024 and relocation of the combat aircraft south to Ørland - Norway has decided to buy up to 56 F-35 aircraft to replace the F-16s from around 2018. However, with their limited range and lack of tanker aircraft support, F-16 and F-35 aircraft are not much use in the Arctic area outside Norway. The bulk of what can be seen as a real Arctic capability lies with the six P-3 long-range maritime patrol aircraft. However, these are now over 20 years old and, while they are to be modernized, no plans have yet been announced for a replacement
Russia	- Russia's air assets in the Arctic region consist mainly of the aircraft supporting the Northern Fleet or stationed in northern Russia, along with some of the aircraft based with the Pacific Fleet. Many of these do not have the range for operations in the Arctic area outside Russia, but 100 navy-operated long-range Tu-22 bomber and Tu-142 and Il-38 maritime reconnaissance aircraft also form part of the fleets. - after a 15-years hiatus, in 2007 Russia recommenced regular deployment of these reconnaissance and bomber aircraft on missions near or over the Arctic
The US[18]	- military-strategic component of the US Armed Forces is the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), based in Alaska, which controls the North Warning System, which operates air surveillance radars in Alaska, Canada and Greenland. NORAD is crucial for the US strategic security. Even though it is located in the Arctic, it focuses on global dimension of security rather than regional or strictly Arctic-rooted security challenges. - the US maintains 2 large air bases in Alaska: Eielson Air Force Base (AFB) near Fairbanks and Elmendorf-Richardson AFB near Anchorage - both bases house combat and support aircraft, including F-22 interceptors and airborne early-warning (AEW) aircraft and are able to accommodate substantially larger forces - while the US has over 200 long-range maritime patrol aircraft, only a few US Coast Guard HC-130 aircraft based on Kodiak Island operate over the Bering Sea and the Arctic - the US forces also have the use of Thule AFB in the north-west of Greenland, which has a long runway. It is the most northerly US air base but it currently houses only a large intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) detection radar and no aircraft

Sources: (Wezeman, 2012; Lasserre-Le Roy-Garon, 2012)

Land capabilities

Canada	- the Canadian Rangers, a lightly armed paramilitary force with a patrol and reconnaissance role in northern Canada, is trained and equipped for year-round Arctic operations. Its size is being increased from 4100 personnel in 2008 to 5000 by 2012, and it will receive new equipment and weapons - a special small battalion-sized (500 troops) regular army unit for Arctic operations is to be set up. Since 2008, Canadian reserve forces have included an Arctic company, based in Yellowknife, NWT, which under the Northern Strategy is planned to have a strength of 100 by 2019 - Since the 1950s a small military base has been located at Alert on Ellesmere Island, Nunavut, in the extreme north of Canada, facing Greenland. To improve Arctic training, a special Arctic training base was set up at Resolute Bay, Nunavut, in 2007
Denmark incl. Greenland	- the small Frømandskorps (frogman corps) special forces unit has a partly Arctic role on Greenland. Denmark also maintains a small military patrol force on Greenland, the Slædepatrulje Sirius (sledge patrol Sirius)
Norway	- Brigade Nord (Brigade North), is the largest active unit of the Norwegian Army. It is winter-trained but is organized as a heavy mechanized unit and is equipped for operations in Norway. - in November 2011 the chief of defence recommended that the brigade's 2 battalions be reduced to 1 - in August 2009 the headquarters of the Norwegian Armed Forces moved from Jåttå in the south of the country to Reitan, near Bodø, just north of the Arctic Circle, and the headquarters of the Norwegian Army is even further north, in Bardufoss
Russia[19]	- ground forces include naval infantry and an army brigade on the Kola Peninsula. These are winter-trained but are organized and equipped for operations in the north of Russia, not in the more inhospitable regions of the Arctic. - In March 2009 Russia announced a plan for a special military force to protect Arctic interests. In May 2011 it was reported that Russia's first Arctic special forces brigade had been unveiled, based at Pechenga on the Kola Peninsula. According to Russia, these forces 'balance the situation' with NATO forces in the Arctic. The exact status of the Russian Arctic forces is unclear.
The US[20]	- the US has not yet announced plans for a separate command to supervise military operations in the Arctic - currently, the Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), the Pacific Command (USPACOM) and the European Command (USEUCOM) all have responsibilities in the Arctic region - the US Army Alaska (USARAK) 'America's Arctic Warriors', fall under the Alaskan Command (ALCOM), which is part of USPACOM - ALCOM consists of 16 000 regular personnel and 3700 National Guard and reserve personnel - the USARAK is made up of ordinary mechanized infantry and airborne troops and is not specifically ear-marked for Arctic operations. It has bases near Anchorage and Fairbanks - all US Army cold weather training takes place in the Northern Warfare Training Center in Black Rapids

	- the 1850-strong Alaska National Guard is the most likely army components to have Arctic tasks - some other US land forces (incl. the US Marine Corps) have specific training or equipment for potential Arctic roles

Sources: (Wezeman, 2012; Lasserre-Le Roy-Garon, 2012)

Sea capabilities	
Canada	- Canada's 15 major surface warships are large enough and its 4 conventional submarines have enough range to operate in the Arctic Ocean - The Royal Canadian Navy currently has no ice-strengthened warships. Patrolling the Arctic is mainly done by the Canadian Coast Guard which has five large- or medium-sized unarmed icebreakers and six small icebreakers. However, most of these can only operate in the Arctic in the summer. *- plans for 6 to 8 large Arctic offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) for the navy and 1 large icebreaker for the coastguard to be operational by 2017 replacing an older ship* *- The nearest naval base is at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in the far south-east* *of Canada. However, the existing small coastguard base at Nanisivik on Baffin Island, Nunavut, is being expanded in the period 2010–15 to a naval base with docking and supply facilities*
Denmark incl. Greenland	- Denmark's 3 frigates, are able to operate in Arctic waters but are not ice-strengthened (soon to be increased to 5). However, 4 Thetis class OPV/frigates, which were commissioned in the early 1990s and designed for patrols in the North Atlantic and off Greenland, are capable of breaking ice up to 1 metre thick. - 2 smaller but potentially more heavily armed ice-strengthened Knud Rasmussen class OPVs are dedicated for patrols off Greenland; they were ordered in 2004 and commissioned in 2008–2009, and a third is planned for 2017 - 1 ice-strengthened large patrol craft also operates from Greenland. - the Royal Danish Navy has a base at Kangilinnguit (Grønnedal) in the south of Greenland
Norway[21]	- the Royal Norwegian Navy is based mainly in Bergen, in the south - in 2010 the coastguard's headquarters was moved north, to Sortland - they had replaced its 5 small frigates by 5 much larger and more capable Fridtjof Nansen class frigates by early 2011. Because of their size and equipment, the new frigates are much more able to operate in Arctic waters, as are Norway's six Ula class submarines. - for the first time, Norway is planning to acquire a large support ship, to be in service in 2015, which will give the frigates a substantial increase in range - Norway also operates a large 'research ship' with electronic and signals intelligence equipment, which is capable of operations in thin ice. A replacement was ordered in 2010. - the Norwegian Coastguard operates 4 large but lightly armed OPVs capable of operations in

	icy conditions, including 3 with a helicopter hangar, and 4 other large ocean-going OPVs. None of Norway's warships or patrol ships can break ice.
Russia[22]	- the Northern Fleet is the largest of the 5 Russian fleets, stationed at several large naval and air bases on the Kola Peninsula and along the coasts of the Barents and White seas - the fleet includes nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), which operate in the Arctic area (including under the ice) and are protected by surface ships (including Russia's sole aircraft carrier), nuclear-powered submarines and aircraft - Flagship of the Russian Navy "Pyotr Velikiy" nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser - 10 nuclear powered submarines with ballistic missiles - The Kuznetsov Class heavy aircraft carrying cruiser "Admiral Kuznetsov", which was launched in 1985 - a thick icebreaking capacity with the large icebreaker "50 Let Pobedy" - 4 small Project 97 icebreakers, capable of breaking thin ice - the Border Guard Service operates 3 Project 97P large armed icebreaking OPVs in the Northern Fleet area - over 20 civilian icebreakers, including several former navy ships - Russian SSBNs have become more active and in 2009 restarted operations near or under the Arctic ice. In 2009 SSBN launched a ballistic missile after breaking though the Arctic ice. Several older SSBNs are being modernized and new SSBNs are being built. It is likely that this larger and more active SSBN fleet will lead to an increase in surface ships and aircraft - need for escorts and patrol aircraft - while announced plans or visions that foresee several aircraft carriers and large numbers of submarines and escort and support ships are unlikely to be realized due to their high costs, a substantial increase in the Northern Fleet escort capabilities is likely - in addition, power-projection capabilities will increase with the introduction of new amphibious ships - 2 Mistral class amphibious assault/helicopter carrier
The US	- while not specifically adapted to ice conditions, the many US aircraft carriers, other major combat ships and amphibious warfare ships are generally capable of operating in northern weather conditions, but none of them are permanently or partly located in the Arctic - the annual large Northern Edge and Alaska Shield summer exercises included an aircraft carrier group in 2004 and 2009. - The US Navy's only surface ship specifically adapted to Arctic ice conditions is the MV Susitna, a small experimental icebreaking ferry/landing ship - most of the approximately 53 US nuclear attack submarines (but not the SSBNs) are known to be able to operate under the Arctic ice and break through the ice from below; they regularly transit under the Arctic ice or break through the ice and surface near the North Pole - the US Pacific Fleet has a dedicated Arctic Submarine Laboratory that is responsible for developing and maintaining the Arctic capabilities of submarines. - in April 2011 2 US nuclear attack submarines participated in Ice Exercise (ICEX)

	2011,operating under the Arctic ice. In the same exercise a camp was established 278 nautical kilometres north of Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. - the US Coast Guard regularly deploys OPVs in or near the Arctic - the new Legend (also known as National Security Cutter, NSC) class large OPVs have been designed partly to be able to operate in Arctic weather conditions better than the previous Hamilton class, but they are not ice-strengthened *-8 are planned, the first 2 of which were commissioned in 2010–11* - the US Coast Guard operates 3 large, unarmed icebreakers capable of breaking Arctic ice, which have mainly scientific role - 1 of the ships is being modernized in the period 2009–13, and 1 has been out of service since 2010 and is scheduled for decommissioning due to budget constraints - plans for 1 large icebreaker under the Coast Guard in 2013-2017

Sources: (Wezeman, 2012; Argumenty i fakty, 2014 ; Lasserre-Le Roy-Garon, 2012)