

Groningen Model United Nations 2018

North Atlantic Council



“Norwegian military preparations during Exercise Cold Response, 2009,” *Wikipedia*, March 24, 2009

Designing NATO’s Arctic Policy



Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	3
Introduction	4
A brief history of NATO	4
Arctic interests of NATO	5
Military	6
Resources	7
Humanitarian interests	8
NATO in the arctic	8
NATO Policies	9
NATO activities	9
International Cooperation in the Arctic region	10
Russian activities in the Arctic region	11
Conclusion	14
Questions a resolution must answer	15
Further reading	16
Bibliography	16

Welcome Letter

Dear Ambassadors to the North Atlantic Council,

It is with our great pleasure that we can welcome you to the North Atlantic Council of GrunnMUN 2018. Ahead of your excellencies, there is a full day of negotiations, on a topic where all NATO states have something to gain or lose. In this situation, it might prove very demanding not to give up and to keep looking for compromises. On behalf of the Secretariat, we urge all ambassadors to give their best effort to find consensus in the Council, as the unity of NATO is at stake.

For your experience to be as enjoyable as possible, please read this background paper with basic information and have a look at the Rules of Procedure. The better prepared you are the easier it is to achieve your state's priorities. However, above all, remember that the goal of the session is to provide you with a fun and rewarding experience as well as an opportunity to meet your fellow delegates and share the passion for International Relations. To achieve this, we as the NATO Secretariat, are here for you to answer your questions both ahead as well as during the session. Do not hesitate to contact us in case you have some doubts about the preparation or the negotiation. Above all, we hope that you will enjoy the day and we are looking forward to meeting you.

Best regards,

Anna Książczak and Kevin Chen
Secretary General of NATO

Introduction

It's not a secret that the world is undergoing a massive climate change due to global warming. In fact due to global warming the earth's biggest supply of fresh water, which is mainly locked up in the Ice caps, is quickly dwindling. The consensus among scientists is that the melting of these ice caps will be disastrous for humanity in the long term. However, in the short term the melting north pole offers an abundance of natural resources to those able to lay claim to them. Furthermore, due to the melting ice other interests, such as strategic ones, started to play a bigger role in the national policies of the arctic states.

This is one of the reasons why the Russian Federation laid claim to more than 700.000 square kilometres of the arctic in 2007, when they placed a russian flag more than 4 kilometres underneath the arctic ice.¹ Two years later the allied ministers of NATO met in Iceland to address the changes that occurred in the north.² Thus, it may be clear that the ever changing landscape of the North is having a bigger and bigger impact on the arctic states and their policies. Consequently, a good understanding of the situation and their stakeholders may prove to be invaluable to the creation of good policy revolving the arctic.

A brief history of NATO

NATO was originally established shortly after the second world war as a mutual defense pact between west-european countries. The main focus of this pact was to deter USSR influences and activities. However, the precursor to NATO was seen as inadequate due to a feeble military structure and occupation and thus the North Atlantic Treaty came into existence. After a military coup by the communist party in Czechoslovakia and the rising of the communist party in Italy, the United States started to prioritize a joint defense alliance. In response to the rise of communism in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed by the five states that signed the Treaty of Brussel and also the US, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland in 1949. From then on there would be a major powerblock centering the Atlantic, which was reinforced by the fact that an attack on one NATO member would be considered an attack on all the members.

In the years that followed, NATO started unifying their armed forces by centralizing the command structure. Furthermore, they went on to adopt NATO wide strategies against a possible Soviet invasion. One of these measures included the usage of nuclear weapons in the event of a war with the Soviet Union regardless of the Soviet nuclear policies. The value of these measures was further emphasized by the outbreak of the Korean war, where the member states realized the military strength of a communist coalition. In response, NATO expanded their competence and capacity by increasing joint military exercises and the inclusion of Greece and Turkey into the NATO alliance. Eventually, the incorporation of

¹ Tom Parfitt, "Russia plants flag on North Pole Seabed", *The Guardian*, August 7th, 2007, accessed February 21st, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/aug/02/russia.arctic>.

² "The Seminar on Security Prospects in the High North", *NATO*, accessed March 1st, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_49745.htm?selectedLocale=en.

West Germany elicited a response by the Soviet Union, which resulted in the Warsaw Pact of 1955. This pact was comparable to the North Atlantic Treaty in the sense that it was a collective defence treaty. This collaboration between the USSR and seven other Soviet satellite states was seen as a counterweight by the Soviet Union against the NATO alliance.

Even though a direct confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact states never came to be, a hefty troop buildup and movement around the borders separating the two blocks escalated tensions. Evenmore, the placement of nuclear missiles in the centre of Europe by both parties led to further decay of Soviet - NATO relations, despite sentiment hovering towards nuclear disarmament after an arms race that had lasted for several decades.

Eventually, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to a re-evaluation of NATO policies since their de facto adversary had disappeared. This promoted the decrease of a military presence in Europe, which entailed nuclear disarmament and a strategic assessment of their priorities. Finally, this resulted in the expansion of NATO towards the east and centre of Europe and a policy shift towards political and humanitarian issues.

Lately, relations between the former Soviet Union, the Russian Federation, and NATO have deteriorated. This was largely due to the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014.³ As reaction to this, NATO stipulated that they supported the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. Furthermore, on the first of april that year, NATO officially stated that they were suspending all military and civilian cooperation with Russia.⁴ In the following eight months, 40 military clashes between NATO and Russia were recorded. This prompted both Russia and NATO to revitalize their military structure. Among others, Russia started increasing their naval and aerial activity in the Baltic to unprecedented levels. At the end of 2014, NATO created a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force as a means to enhance their presence in the eastern part of the alliance.⁵ The following years were filled with troop build-up by both sides and deterioration of relations and communications. Not unlike the Cold-war era, the current situation is filled with distrust, tension and an increase in militarization.

Arctic interests of NATO

As stated in the introduction, the Arctic holds vast riches for those who are able to obtain them. However, the environment and the location of the Arctic make operations within the arctic circle complex and expensive.⁶ Furthermore, there has been no consensus among the arctic states regarding state borders. This not only increases the complexity of the situation on the ground, but this also increases the risk of breaches of sovereignty which

³ “Ukraine: Putin signs Crimea annexation”, *BBC news*, march 21, 2014, accessed February 27th, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26686949>.

⁴ “Ukraine crisis: NATO suspends Russia cooperation”, *BBC news*, april 2, 2014, accessed February 27th, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26838894>.

⁵ “Statement of Foreign Ministers on the Readiness Action Plan”, *NATO*, accessed February 27th, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_115551.htm.

⁶ Luke Coffey, “NATO in the Arctic: Challenges and Oppurtunities”, *The heritage foundation*, June 22, 2012, accessed February 27th, 2018, <https://www.heritage.org/trade/report/nato-the-arctic-challenges-and-opportunities#>

could result in an escalation of the tensions between the arctic states. As such, it seems apparent that the interests of NATO in the Arctic are diverse. Moreover, the interests of individual NATO states can't be seen as interchangeable. Thus, in order to truly understand the arctic interests of NATO, it is preferable to delineate separate categories of interests.

Military

First of all, one of the prime concerns of NATO continues to be their military. Since it's a defensive alliance, most of their interests and organizational structure revolve around their armed forces. Generally, the main military interests that govern the High North, a commonly used synonym for the Arctic circle, mostly focus on defensive capabilities and regional stability.⁷

Due to the increase of activity in the Arctic, regional stability has become increasingly important for NATO. With the Russian Federation progressively claiming territory, establishing a regional dominance, mainly through the presence of armed forces, has started to play a bigger role for NATO member states. The increase of Russian troop movement⁸, is seen as a high security risk by several NATO members. Mostly, since the territorial claims of Russia overlap with the claims of some member states such as Denmark.⁹ Entailed within these concerns of NATO states, lies the key issue of state sovereignty.¹⁰ A region with conflicting territorial claims and a big military presence increases the risk of an escalating conflict and/or stand-off. As often seen in areas with disputed borders, violation of state sovereignty regularly leads to increase of tension.¹¹ Even more so, unintentional violation of sovereignty could lead to further involuntary escalation of a conflict, thereby decreasing regional stability even more. However, a balanced military presence of all involved states does diminish the chances of an accidental provocation and thus abates one aspect which could possibly depreciate Arctic stability. Furthermore, a well established military structure in the Arctic, may well serve as a deterrent against any Russian intervention.¹²

Furthermore, an important facet of Arctic interests of NATO entails their defensive capabilities in the High North. These defensive capabilities mainly focus on inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM).¹³ Often, due to their trajectory, these missiles would pass the Arctic

⁷ See for example: Helga Haftendorn, "NATO and the Arctic: Is the Atlantic Alliance a Cold War Relic in a Peaceful Region Now Faced With Non-Military Challenges?", *European Security*, September 2011 20(3) 337-361, p 343.

⁸ See paragraph: "Russian activities in the Arctic".

⁹ "Frozen Conflict", *The Economist*, December 17, 2014, accessed February 21st, 2018, <https://www.economist.com/news/international/21636756-denmark-claims-north-pole-frozen-conflict>.

¹⁰ Dana Gabriel, "U.S. Arctic Ambitions and the militarization of the High North", *dissidentvoice*, July 22nd, 2013, accessed February 21st, 2018, <https://dissidentvoice.org/2013/07/u-s-arctic-ambitions-and-the-militarization-of-the-high-north/>

¹¹ See for example: *BBC News*, "Kashmir Why India and Pakistan fight over it", November 23rd, 2016, accessed February 26th, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/10537286>.

¹² Sally de Boer, "Collective Defense in the High North: It's time for NATO to prioritize the Arctic", *Center for International Maritime Security*, July 17th, 2015, accessed February 24th, 2018, <http://cimsec.org/collective-defense-high-north-time-nato-prioritize-arctic/17437>.

¹³ *RT*, "US anti-missile reshuffle, really, aimed at control over Arctic resources", March 16th, 2013, accessed February 21st, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/us-amd-korea-arctic-371/>.

circle in order to strike locations in Europe and/or North America. NATO's main concern would be a possible ICBM-strike by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Russian Federation. Especially since the nuclear missile tests that have been held within the DPRK recently.¹⁴ Thus, currently the main focal point of this issue for NATO would be an adequate coverage against such an attack through the placement of anti-ballistic missile shields. Yet notably, such placement has often been interpreted by other non-NATO states as a provocation and has thereby regularly elicited a military response.¹⁵

Resources

The prime interests of states in the Arctic mainly focus on the vast amount of resources which become more available as the ice caps melt. Many of the waters surrounding the North Pole that become exposed during the summer have been left unexplored.¹⁶ Furthermore, the possibility of large reserves of oil and gas fields combined with the possibility of faster shipping lanes clearly have their allure for Arctic states. Therefore, it seems clear that the Arctic is filled with opportunities.

Currently, most countries within the Arctic circle are primarily interested in the gas and oil fields located in the North Pole. It is estimated that 13% of the world's oil reserves and a third of the world's gas reserves are located within the Arctic Circle.¹⁷ Furthermore, around 93% of the natural gas and 75% of the oil within the Russian Federation originates from the Arctic.¹⁸ Most of these fields have been covered by ice, thereby inhibiting exploitation of such due to high costs.¹⁹ However, due to global warming it has become ever increasing lucrative to invest in the High North.

Secondly, the shipping lanes which become ever more traversable are of great importance. With the decline of the ice sheets which covered the entire Arctic circle, new shipping lanes have become available which would greatly diminish traveling time and costs. Most prominent among them regards the Northeast Passage which would cut traveling distance between Western Europe and Asia almost by a third.²⁰ Moreover, the safety of this passage is greatly increased due to the absence of pirates, whom are present at almost every

¹⁴ "North Korea nuclear test: Hydrogen bomb missile ready", *BBC News*, September 3rd, 2017, accessed February 21st, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41139445>.

¹⁵ Helga Haftendorn, "NATO and the Arctic: Is the Atlantic Alliance a Cold War Relic in a Peaceful Region Now Faced With Non-Military Challenges?", *European Security*, September 2011 20(3) 337-361, p 343.

¹⁶ "Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment", *US Coast Guard*, April 29th, 2009, accessed February 23rd, 2018, <http://www.arctic.gov/publications/AMSA/infrastructure.pdf>.

¹⁷ Luke Coffey, "NATO in the Arctic: Challenges and Opportunities", *The Heritage Foundation*, June 22, 2012, accessed February 27th, 2018,

<https://www.heritage.org/trade/report/nato-the-arctic-challenges-and-opportunities#>

¹⁸ Sally de Boer, "Collective Defense in the High North: It's time for NATO to prioritize the Arctic", *Center for International Maritime Security*, July 17th, 2015, accessed February 24th, 2018, <http://cimsec.org/collective-defense-high-north-time-nato-prioritize-arctic/17437>.

¹⁹ Sally de Boer, "Collective Defense in the High North: It's time for NATO to prioritize the Arctic", *Center for International Maritime Security*, July 17th, 2015, accessed February 24th, 2018, <http://cimsec.org/collective-defense-high-north-time-nato-prioritize-arctic/17437>.

²⁰ Brooke Smith-Windsor, "Putting the 'N' back into NATO: A High North policy framework for the Atlantic Alliance?", *Research Division NATO*, July, 2013.

current trade route.²¹ Being able to assert control over these routes would be an immeasurable economic advantage for any state. Hence, one of the reasons why the territorial claims of several Arctic states overlap is so they can ensure that such passages would fall within their state's territorial waters.

Humanitarian interests

Even though humanitarian interests in the arctic are not seen as a prime objective for NATO, it is nonetheless of great influence on NATO policies. Even more so, NATO has asserted that one of their prime interests where the Alliance may be of value is mainly to prevent loss of human and ecological life.²²

One of these measures as to prevent such loss of life concerns a coordinated search and rescue effort.²³ Many of the current shipping lines which are used in the Arctic are located in quite remote areas without immediate emergency services. Furthermore, resource exploitation and research, which would be considered routine in many other locations, are complex, costly and dangerous in the Arctic. It is therefore of great importance that a well coordinated response to emergencies is established. Even more so when several territorial claims overlap and thus the main actor during a crisis remains unclear.

Another important humanitarian aspect concerns oil spills. History has taught mankind that such ecological disasters have a great impact on wildlife. Now that exploitation of oil and gas reserves has increased within the Arctic, are oil spills becoming an ever more present danger. Thus, a coordinated emergency response to such a crisis is greatly needed as to prevent further man-made catastrophes within the Arctic circle.

NATO in the arctic

It seems clear from the stated above, that NATO has many strategic interests in the Arctic. However, NATO has outright rejected an permanent NATO presence in the Arctic.²⁴ Thus, the question remains what policies shape the current activities within the Arctic region? Furthermore, what activities does NATO even participate in?

²¹ Luke Coffey, "NATO in the Arctic: Challenges and Oppurtunities", *The heritage foundation*, June 22, 2012, accessed February 27th, 2018,

<https://www.heritage.org/trade/report/nato-the-arctic-challenges-and-opportunities#>

²² Brooke Smith-Windsor, "Putting the 'N' back into NATO: A High North policy framework for the Atlantic Alliance?", *Research Division NATO*, July, 2013.

²³ Brooke Smith-Windsor, "Putting the 'N' back into NATO: A High North policy framework for the Atlantic Alliance?", *Research Division NATO*, July, 2013.

²⁴ Gerard O'Dwyer, "NATO Rejects Direct Arctic Presence", *Atlantic Council*, May 30th, 2013, accessed February 21st, 2018, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/nato-rejects-direct-arctic-presence>.

NATO Policies

It seems that despite the absence of a general NATO policy²⁵, the NATO's arctic member states have however created their own policies regarding the High North. These policies mostly recognized the challenges and opportunities within the Arctic circle that emerge due to climate change. These policies also outline their responses towards these changes within the Arctic circle as well. While the primary focus of these policies has been on non-military measures to address the broad range of effects triggered by the melting of the ice caps, some have also explicitly acknowledged a role for the military, and have already taken steps to reinforce their Arctic defence capabilities. Thus, for example, Norway relocated its Armed Forces Operational Headquarters to Bodo, north of the Arctic Circle, in 2009, and has been open about the greater focus of its armed forces on their tasks within the Arctic.²⁶ Canada has ordered a new polar icebreaker to replace the current one in 2017, and to upgrade a refuelling facility in Nanisivik.²⁷ Denmark has established its Arctic Command in Nuuk, Greenland, while announcing it will acquire a new inspection vessel in 2014.²⁸ In general, the state of Canada has been against further involvement of NATO in the arctic, whilst Norway has been pushing for a unified NATO Arctic policy for years.²⁹

Yet, what remains clear when creating policies for the NATO alliance, is that it should be conceived consistently, cohesively and so that it serves as a equal counterweight to the Russian Arctic policies.³⁰ However, despite the lack of an official NATO policy regarding the Arctic, member states should keep in mind that NATO's activities in the arctic are quite numerous already and therefore deserve extra attention.

NATO activities

As previously mentioned, NATO currently does not have a policy regarding the High North. Nonetheless, NATO presently has several coordinated activities by member states which could give the impression of a general NATO undertaking.

²⁵ Page Wilson, "Between a Rock and a Cold Place? NATO and the Arctic", *E-International Relations*, November 23rd, 2013, accessed February 23rd, 2018, http://www.e-ir.info/2013/11/28/between-a-rock-and-a-cold-place-nato-and-the-arctic/#_ftn10.

²⁶ "The High North: Visions and Strategies", *Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, February 13th, 2011, accessed February 21st, 2018,

https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/high_north_visions_strategies/id664906/.

²⁷ "Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy", *Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada*, June 3rd, 2013, accessed February 21st, 2018,

http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/arctic-arctique/arctic_policy-canada-politique_arctique.aspx?lang=eng.

²⁸ "Danish Defence Agreement 2013-2017", *Danish Ministry of Defence*, January 29th, 2018, accessed February 21st, 2018, <http://www.fmn.dk/eng/allabout/Pages/DanishDefenceAgreement2013-2017.aspx>.

²⁹ Luke Coffey, "NATO in the Arctic: Challenges and Opportunities", *The heritage foundation*, June 22, 2012, accessed February 27th, 2018,

<https://www.heritage.org/trade/report/nato-the-arctic-challenges-and-opportunities#>

³⁰ Sally de Boer, "Collective Defense in the High North: It's time for NATO to prioritize the Arctic", *Center for International Maritime Security*, July 17th, 2015, accessed February 24, 2018, <http://cimsec.org/collective-defense-high-north-time-nato-prioritize-arctic/17437>.

First of all, NATO members regularly hold joint military exercises within the Arctic circle. One of such exercises was the Norwegian Cold-Response exercise with troops from over 15 NATO members.³¹ Such exercises mainly focus on gaining experience with the harsh climate and improving the military organizational structure.

Secondly, NATO often holds policing duties over contested waters and over the borders of NATO member states. Main purpose of such policing is to deter a violation of state sovereignty. However, while recognizing the need to improve security and policing in the Arctic region, NATO has recognized that these measures need to stop well short of a militarization of the region.

Lastly, NATO prioritizes their current assets within the Arctic circle as one of their most important activities. One of such activities is NATO's Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence System (ALTBMD), which relies on radar and tracking stations in Alaska, Northern Canada and Greenland. Furthermore, NATO has concerned itself with the charting of the arctic sea's changing environment to enhance anti-submarine warfare capabilities.³² It seems that the permanent presence of a charting submarine is not conceived by NATO as a military presence.

International Cooperation in the Arctic region

To regulate the relations between the Arctic states, there are several international organizations. The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental body of 8 Arctic states and 15 non-Arctic states with an observe status, among those also NATO members France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the UK.³³ Except for its environmental agenda, it served as a forum for the negotiation of binding treaties such as the Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic.³⁴

Another platform for cooperation is the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR). It is an annual event and since 2011, it works as a forum for discussing security related issues among the Arctic states and some others. It concentrates military leaders, who inform each other on potential military risks and discuss issues such as search-and-rescue missions. However, when the war in Ukraine erupted, Russia stopped attending the meetings. Thus, in 2015 in Reykjavik there were no Russian representatives to talk to about military risks in the Arctic.³⁵ Together with the suspension of all practical cooperation and only limited dialogue within the

³¹ NATO, "Exercise Cold Response 2016 wraps up in Norway", March 9th, 2016, accessed February 23rd, 2018, <https://shape.nato.int/2016/exercise-cold-response-2016-wraps-up-in-norway>.

³² *Allied Command Transformation*, "Charting the Arctic Sea's Changing Environment", accessed February 27th, 2018, <http://www.act.nato.int/charting-the-arctic-sea-s-changing-environment>.

³³ "Observers - Arctic Council," *Arctic Council*, May 7, 2015, accessed February 21, 2018, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/arctic-council/observers>.

³⁴ "Agreement On Cooperation On Aeronautical And Maritime Search And Rescue In The Arctic," *Arctic Council*, 2011, accessed February 21, 2018, <https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/handle/11374/531>.

³⁵ Klaus Dodds, "The Arctic - From Frozen Desert to Open Polar Sea," in *Maritime Strategy and Global Order*, eds. Daniel Moran and James A. Russell, (Georgetown University Press: 2016), accessed 22 February 2018, https://books.google.com/books/about/Maritime_Strategy_and_Global_Order.html?hl=cs&id=iUgxDAAAQBAJ.

NATO-Russia Council,³⁶ this means that there are very few possibilities of communicating about the High North.

Russian activities in the Arctic region

Russian presence in the region dates back in history. During the Soviet times, it controlled one third of the Arctic Ocean. However, in 1989 the Arctic borders were redrawn and Russia received a smaller percentage of the territory. The region remained peaceful and Arctic states kept cooperating in the Arctic Council. Russian approach changed in the early 2000's as the region was gaining higher and higher priority in Russian policy makers' minds. Russia brought grand territorial claims under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), laying claim to a significant portion of the Arctic territory. These claims are conflicting with the claims of Denmark.³⁷



"Frozen Conflict," *The Economist*, December 17, 2014

Additionally, Russian jets started flying over the Arctic in combat patrol missions and in 2008 an Arctic Policy was published. The official goal of this policy is to preserve the Russian position as the leading Arctic state. It states four national priorities: "the utilisation of Russia's Arctic zone as a national strategic resource base; the preservation of the Arctic as a

³⁶ "NATO-Russia Council (NRC)," *NATO*, accessed 22 February 2018, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50091.htm.

³⁷ "Frozen Conflict," *The Economist*, December 17, 2014, accessed February 21, 2018, <https://www.economist.com/news/international/21636756-denmark-claims-north-pole-frozen-conflict>.

zone of peace and cooperation; the protection of the unique ecological systems of the Arctic; and, the use of the Northern Sea Route as a unified transportation link”.³⁸

Especially the Northern Sea Route (NSR) produces interesting opportunities for Russia. With melting ice, economic activity in the region is increasingly possible and the development of the NSR would shorten the shipment from Asia to Europe by two weeks³⁹. In August 2017, the first Russian tanker passed through the NSR without the help of ice-breaking vessels.⁴⁰ If Russia were to establish its control over the NSR, it could in the future control a significant part of intercontinental trade. Russia has been preparing for managing the NSR for years and trying to build up infrastructure in order to assert its control. In 2013, it established a federal state institution, the Northern Sea Route Administration as the institutional framework for developing it. It also announced the intention of developing 10 search and rescue centers to increase the safety of the trading ships.⁴¹ These centers can serve both military and non-military purposes, in agreement with the recent Arctic Council resolutions.⁴²

³⁸ Andrew Foxall, “Russia’s Policies towards a Changing Arctic: Implications for UK Security,” *The Henry Jackson Society*, (June 2017),

<http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Russias-Policies-towards-a-Changing-Arctic-1.pdf>.

³⁹ Jeremy Bender, “Why the Kremlin Is Militarizing the Arctic,” *Business Insider*, February 26, 2015, accessed February 21, 2018,

<http://uk.businessinsider.com/why-the-kremlin-is-militarizing-the-arctic-2015-2?international=true&r=UK&IR=T>.

⁴⁰ Russell Goldman, “Russian Tanker Completes Arctic Passage Without Aid of Icebreakers,” *The New York Times*, August 25, 2017, accessed February 21, 2018,

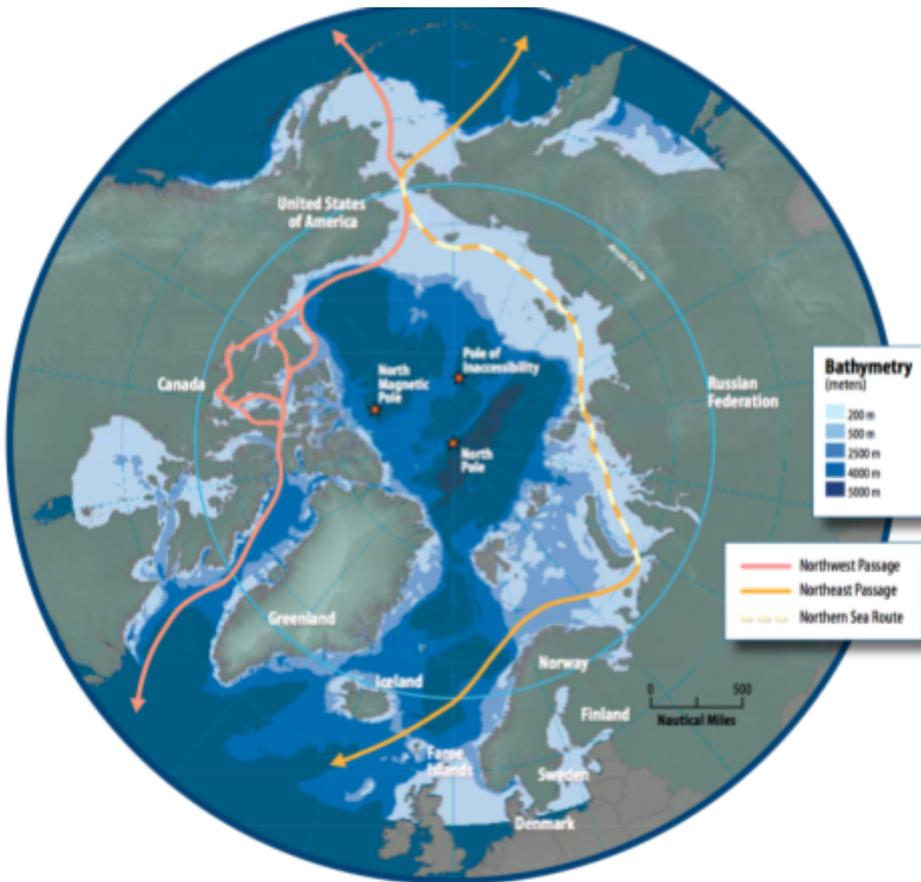
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/world/europe/russia-tanker-christophe-de-margerie.html>.

⁴¹ “Search and Rescue in the Northern Sea Route,” *International Expert Council On Cooperation In The Arctic*, February 20, 2015, accessed February 22, 2018,

<http://www.iecca.ru/en/legislation/strategies/item/363-search-and-rescue-in-the-northern-sea-route>.

⁴² Andrew Foxall, “Russia’s Policies towards a Changing Arctic: Implications for UK Security,” *The Henry Jackson Society*, (June 2017): 12,

<http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Russias-Policies-towards-a-Changing-Arctic-1.pdf>.



Wikipedia, "Northern Sea Route," accessed February 21, 2018

More generally, both in trading and security terms, the year of 2014 brought a massive increase of Russian activity in the Arctic. This had mainly two reasons. Firstly, Russia was going through an economic stagnation and the High North offered new resource extraction opportunities. Secondly, due to the war in Ukraine the relations with NATO rapidly deteriorated. "A broad spectrum of potential challenges and threats to our national security is now being formed in the Arctic," announced the Russian Defence Minister in early 2015.⁴³ As a consequence of these developments, Russia began to strengthen its military presence in the region.

Since 2014, Russia yearly invests 4 to 5 percent of its GDP into modernising the military. As a part of the modernisation, a new joint command was established - the Arctic Joint Strategic Command, with the task of coordinating activities in the region. Some of the Soviet-time border posts and military bases were renewed.⁴⁴ New Arctic brigades were created and the

⁴³ Jeremy Bender, "Why the Kremlin Is Militarizing the Arctic," *Business Insider*, February 26, 2015, accessed February 21, 2018, <http://uk.businessinsider.com/why-the-kremlin-is-militarizing-the-arctic-2015-2?international=true&r=UK&IR=T>.

⁴⁴ "Russia Builds Massive Arctic Military Base," *The Telegraph*, October 20, 2015, accessed, February 21, 2018,

Northern Fleet, a part of Russian Navy tasked with protection of Russia from north west, was strengthened with investments into new ice-breakers. The Arctic is also an important place for storing the nuclear missiles. Russia further intends to modernise 50 airfields in the region. During the 2017 Victory Day parade, arctic equipment was demonstrated for the first time, showing the importance of the High North for the Russian Federation.⁴⁵

Added to the modernisation of equipment, Russia conducts also large scale military exercises, such as Vostok-2014 with 100 000 personnel and 1500 tanks, missile exercises and exercises in the international waters beneath the North Pole. Since 2007, the practice of bomber patrols flying over the Arctic was reinstated, often breaching the airspace of other Arctic countries.⁴⁶

Conclusion

In general, it seems that NATO does not have a unified policy concerning the Arctic circle. However, despite this lack of policy, NATO has undertaken many activities within the Arctic. Many of such activities mainly have a humanitarian and economic intention. Yet, several bilateral and multilateral exercises, both military and non-military, have been held by several of the NATO member states within the Arctic region. Evidently, NATO has chosen to remain neutral with regards to their Arctic policies. The question remains whether this will remain, with ongoing escalation between the Russian Federation and NATO since 2014.

Overall, it is quite clear that the Russian Federation has far reaching ambitions for the future of the region. From the list of activities above it is visible that Russia has an interest in the High North and is willing to make significant financial contributions to protecting that interest. Although some scholars believe that it is not seeking military dominance in the Arctic and instead is pursuing its economic goals,⁴⁷ the military build-up and air-space breaches could be worrisome for some NATO member states.

In light of Russian activities in the Arctic, a question comes to mind, whether NATO is not lagging behind. The 2010 NATO Strategic Concept does not even mention the word "Arctic".⁴⁸ The goal of this North Atlantic Council session is to evaluate this position and decide how and whether to approach the security risks of the High North collectively.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/11944219/Russia-builds-massive-Arctic-military-base.html>.

⁴⁵ Andrew Foxall, "Russia's Policies towards a Changing Arctic: Implications for UK Security," *The Henry Jackson Society*, June 2017,

<http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Russias-Policies-towards-a-Changing-Arctic-1.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Andrew Foxall, "Russia's Policies towards a Changing Arctic: Implications for UK Security," *The Henry Jackson Society*, June 2017,

<http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Russias-Policies-towards-a-Changing-Arctic-1.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Valery Konyshov and Alexander Sergunin, "Is Russia a Revisionist Military Power in the Arctic?," *Defense & Security Analysis* 30, no. 4 (2 October 2014): 323.

⁴⁸ "Strategic Concept 2010," *NATO*, accessed February 22, 2018, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm.

Furthermore, the Council needs to consider its relation to Russia in the light on the High North affairs. Although only some of NATO members lay territorial claims to the Arctic, it is in the interest of all member states to achieve and demonstrate a united position on this issue, whether it means addressing the security of the High North or continuing with the current policy of lack of engagement.

Questions a resolution must answer

- Should NATO formulate a strategy for the Arctic to address the security of the region and if so, how should such a strategy look like? Should NATO establish its presence in the region more firmly?
- Should NATO explicitly encourage Russia to start participating in platforms and initiatives such as the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable?
- Should NATO endorse the Arctic Council as the best forum for dealing with issues concerning the security in the High North or should it adopt a different, perhaps more active stance towards the Arctic Council?

Further reading

“NATO LibGuides: Arctic Security: Essentials.” *NATO*, 22 February 2018.
<http://natolibguides.info/arcticsecurity/home>.

- A NATO library guide to the Arctic Security. It contains a list of useful analyses, both from NATO and external sources. A great place to start your research of the Arctic.

“Agreements - Arctic Council.” *Arctic Council*. July 7th, 2015,
<https://arctic-council.org/index.php/en/our-work/agreements>.

- Here are all three agreements, that were concluded in the Arctic Council format. They provide a useful insight into how the Arctic states interact with Russia.

Bibliography

“Agreement On Cooperation On Aeronautical And Maritime Search And Rescue In The Arctic.” *Arctic Council*, 2011. Accessed 21 February 2018.

<https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/handle/11374/531>.

"Agreements - Arctic Council." *Arctic Council*, 2015. Accessed 22 February 2018.

<https://arctic-council.org/index.php/en/our-work/agreements>.

Bender, Jeremy. “Russian Defense Minister Explains Why the Kremlin Is Militarizing the Arctic.” *Business Insider*, February 26, 2015. Accessed 21 February 2018.

<http://uk.businessinsider.com/why-the-kremlin-is-militarizing-the-arctic-2015-2>.

Brooke Smith-Windsor, “Putting the ‘N’ back into NATO: A High North policy framework for the Atlantic Alliance?”. *Research Division NATO*. July 2013.

<http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/downloads.php?icode=381>.

“Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy”. *Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada*. June 3rd 2013. Accessed February 21st 2018.

http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationale/arctic-arctique/arctic_policy-canada-politique_arctique.aspx?lang=eng.

“Charting the Arctic Sea’s Changing Environment”. *Allied Command Transformation*. Accessed February 27th 2018.

<http://www.act.nato.int/charting-the-arctic-sea-s-changing-environment>.

Dana Gabriel, “U.S. Arctic Ambitions and the militarization of the High North”. *Dissident Voice*. July 22nd 2013. Accessed February 21st 2018.

<https://dissentvoice.org/2013/07/u-s-arctic-ambitions-and-the-militarization-of-the-high-north/>

“Danish Defence Agreement 2013-2017”. *Danish Ministry of Defence*. January 29th 2018. Accessed February 21st 2018.

<http://www.fmn.dk/eng/allabout/Pages/DanishDefenceAgreement2013-2017.aspx>.

Dodds, Klaus. “The Arctic - From Frozen Desert to Open Polar Sea.” In *Maritime Strategy and Global Order*. Eds. Daniel Moran and James A. Russell. Georgetown University Press, 2016. Accessed 22 February 2018.

https://books.google.com/books/about/Maritime_Strategy_and_Global_Order.html?hl=cs&id=iUgxDAAAQBAJ.

“Exercise Cold Response 2016 wraps up in Norway”. *NATO*. March 9th 2016. Accessed February 23rd 2018.

<https://shape.nato.int/2016/exercise-cold-response-2016-wraps-up-in-norway>.

Foxall, Andrew. “Russia’s Policies towards a Changing Arctic: Implications for UK Security.” The Henry Jackson Society. June 2017.

<http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Russias-Policies-towards-a-Changing-Arctic-1.pdf>.

“Frozen Conflict,” *The Economist*, 17 December 2014. Accessed 22 February 2018.

<https://www.economist.com/news/international/21636756-denmark-claims-north-pole-frozen-conflict>.

Gerard O’Dwyer, “NATO Rejects Direct Arctic Presence”. *Atlantic Council*. May 30th 2013. Accessed February 21st 2018.

<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/nato-rejects-direct-arctic-presence>.

Goldman, Russell. “Russian Tanker Completes Arctic Passage Without Aid of Icebreakers.” *The New York Times*, August 25, 2017. Accessed 22 February 2018.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/world/europe/russia-tanker-christophe-de-margerie.html>.

Haftendorn, Helga. “NATO and the Arctic: Is the Atlantic Alliance a Cold War Relic in a Peaceful Region Now Faced with Non-Military Challenges?” *European Security* 20, no. 3 (1 September 2011): 337–361.

Konyshv, Valery, and Alexander Sergunin. “Is Russia a Revisionist Military Power in the Arctic?” *Defense & Security Analysis* 30, no. 4 (2 October 2014): 323–335.

Luke Coffey, “NATO in the Arctic: Challenges and Opportunities”. *The Heritage Foundation*. June 22 2012. Accessed February 27th 2018.

<https://www.heritage.org/trade/report/nato-the-arctic-challenges-and-opportunities#>.

“NATO-Russia Council (NRC).” *NATO*. Accessed 22 February 2018.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50091.htm.

“Observers - Arctic Council.” *Arctic Council*. May 7th, 2015. Accessed 21 February

2018. <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about-us/arctic-council/observers>.

Page Wilson, “Between a Rock and a Cold Place? NATO and the Arctic”.

E-International Relations. November 23rd 2013. Accessed February 23rd 2018.

http://www.e-ir.info/2013/11/28/between-a-rock-and-a-cold-place-nato-and-the-arctic/#_ftn10.

“Russia Builds Massive Arctic Military Base.” *The Telegraph*, 20 October 2015.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/11944219/Russia-builds-massive-Arctic-military-base.html>.

Sally de Boer, “Collective Defense in the High North: It’s time for NATO to prioritize the Arctic”. *Center for International Maritime Security*. July 17th 2015. Accessed February 24, 2018.

<http://cimsec.org/collective-defense-high-north-time-nato-prioritize-arctic/17437>.

“Search and Rescue in the Northern Sea Route.” *International Expert Council On Cooperation In The Arctic*. February 20, 2015. Accessed 22 February 2018.

<http://www.iecca.ru/en/legislation/strategies/item/363-search-and-rescue-in-the-northern-sea-route>.

“Strategic Concept 2010.” *NATO*. Accessed 22 February 2018.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm.

“The High North: Visions and Strategies”. *Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. February 13th 2011. Accessed February 21st 2018.

https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/high_north_visions_strategies/id664906/.