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L'Artide e le nuove sfide di sicurezza

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ufficio ricerche nel settore della
politica estera e della difesa



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ARCTIC REGION



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1. INTRODUZIONE

I cambiamenti climatici, la profonda crisi finanziaria internazionale e il bisogno di nuove fonti energetiche hanno fatto della regione artica (in seguito Artide) una delle zone del mondo di maggior interesse e possibile campo di cooperazione o competizione per una pluralità di paesi, tra cui Stati Uniti, Federazione Russa e Repubblica Popolare Cinese.

L'Artide si colloca geograficamente all'estremo nord dell'emisfero globale e sino a cinquanta anni fa era quasi interamente ricoperta da ghiacci che impedivano tanto lo sfruttamento delle risorse naturali, la navigazione delle sue acque, ghiacciate per la maggior parte dell'anno. I continui cambiamenti climatici e l'innalzamento della temperatura globale, come affermato dall'Unione Americana Geofisici in occasione della *Convention* annuale del 2007, hanno determinato una riduzione dei ghiacci perenni di circa il 41% negli ultimi 23 anni, aprendo spazio all'ipotesi di un Artide "libero dai ghiacci", quantomeno nel periodo estivo, a partire dal 2013.

La scomparsa o la riduzione dei ghiacci perenni porterebbe con sé una pluralità di conseguenze di natura politico-territoriale, socio-ecologica, energetica ed infine anche militare.

Da un punto di vista politico-territoriale, la scomparsa dei ghiacci ha permesso l'emergere di numerose terre o vie di navigazione di valore strategico, su cui gli stati che si affacciano sull'oceano Artico desiderano rivendicare il diritto di sovranità, soprattutto in riferimento ad una possibile estensione della loro zona economica esclusiva. In particolare, senza soffermarsi sul disaccordo tra Norvegia e Russia concernente la delimitazione del mare di Barents, nel 1990 gli Stati Uniti e la stessa Federazione Russa avevano stipulato un accordo circa le delimitazioni del mare di Bering, che tuttavia Mosca non ha mai ratificato. Il Canada e gli Stati Uniti, invece, non sono ancora giunti ad un accordo circa le delimitazioni del mare di Beaufort, così come non sono risolte le dispute territoriali tra Norvegia e Russia. Le contese territoriali non riguardano solamente ampi spazi marittimi, bensì anche isole dal grande valore strategico, come nel caso della disputa tra Canada e Danimarca per l'isola di Hans nello stretto di Davies e, infine, il "Passaggio a nordovest" tra Canada e Stati Uniti¹.

I cambiamenti climatici e soprattutto un mutamento profondo della natura dell'Artide incidono, in secondo luogo, sullo *status* della flora e fauna della regione, ponendo a rischio di estinzione specie marine, mammiferi marini e, più in generale, l'ecosistema artico, ma anche danneggiando seriamente la vita delle popolazioni indigene che vivono in tale area geografica, per le quali la pesca è l'attività economica primaria. La tutela ambientale e, più in generale, la

¹ Due sono le rotte marittime nel Mar Glaciale Artico tra Oceano Atlantico e Oceano Pacifico. Il Passaggio a nordovest è stato scoperto dall'esploratore norvegese Amundsen nel 1906.

Il Passaggio a nordest, detto anche "rotta marittima settentrionale" che corre lungo la costa siberiana dal Mare di Barents allo Stretto di Bering è stato, invece, percorso per la prima volta dall'esploratore svedese Nordenskiöld nel 1879.

preservazione delle specie esistenti oltre che la limitazione dei danni derivanti dai cambiamenti ambientali, rappresentano uno dei punti dell'agenda politica dei paesi del nord di maggiore rilievo.

Ultima dimensione, che costituisce il punto di chiusura di tale cerchio analitico, è quella energetico-militare, dimensione di particolare delicatezza e rilevanza non solo per gli Stati che si affacciano sulla regione artica, ma anche per una pluralità di organizzazioni internazionali e regionali, che vedono proprio nell'Artide una possibile arena di cooperazione, ma anche di competizione tra le maggiori potenze internazionali. Come sottolineato dal rapporto *Global Trends 2025* del *National Intelligence Council*², le due maggiori implicazioni di un possibile scioglimento della calotta polare sarebbero un accesso più esteso alle molteplici risorse dell'Artide e, in secondo luogo, rotte marittime più brevi, con implicazioni strategiche. Secondo recenti stime, l'Artide racchiuderebbe al proprio interno circa il 25% delle riserve mondiali di greggio, metano e altre fonti energetiche³ oltre che materiali e pietre preziose, che sono rimasti preservati grazie anche alle condizioni geo-climatiche oltre che alle norme di diritto internazionale, ed in particolare a quelle contenute nella Convenzione delle Nazioni Unite di Montego Bay sul diritto del mare (*United Nations Convention on the Law Of the Sea*, UNCLOS). Le risorse energetiche costituiscono un elemento importante per la sicurezza e l'interesse nazionale di tutti gli Stati rivieraschi, che viene evidenziato nei vari documenti strategici nazionali degli ultimi 5 anni. La dimensione militare interviene, come legata a doppio filo, con quella energetica, essendosi aperte, a seguito dello scioglimento di una parte della calotta polare, nuove vie per la navigazione, tanto in superficie come sottomarina, così come aree strategiche, nelle quali diviene possibile collocare strutture militari dal particolare valore non solo simbolico, ma anche, *extrema ratio*, operativo.

In tale cornice si colloca la dimensione della cooperazione multilaterale, ovvero la creazione di un complesso quadro istituzionale, in parte di recente creazione in parte di più storica fondazione, che ha lo scopo di facilitare il dialogo e il consenso tra i paesi geograficamente e politicamente maggiormente coinvolti, al fine di stabilire linee comuni di azione nei vari settori di interesse.

² Creato durante la seconda guerra mondiale negli Stati Uniti, il *National Intelligence Council* è la struttura preposta all'analisi e definizione di scenari di sicurezza statunitense e mondiale nel medio e lungo periodo. Il *National Intelligence Council* dispone di un ufficio permanente all'interno della *Central Intelligence Agency* (CIA).

³ Dati del *Nato Defence College research report n. 45* che fanno riferimento alle ricerche condotte sulle riserve di petrolio e gas naturale nella zona dell'Artico dall'Istituto Geologico degli Stati Uniti. A quest'ultimo riguardo si veda <http://energy.usgs.gov/arctic/>.

2. QUADRO GIURIDICO ED ISTITUZIONALE DELLA COOPERAZIONE NELL'ARTIDE

A partire dagli inizi degli anni Novanta il tema della sicurezza della dimensione settentrionale ha assunto sempre maggiore rilevanza tanto a livello nazionale, quanto a livello regionale ed internazionale. L'Artide presenta delle specificità e peculiarità che hanno determinato l'impossibilità di creare un *corpus* di norme imperative vincolanti specifiche per tale regione. Il panorama del diritto internazionale, infatti, mostra come le norme applicabili alla regione polare artica siano quelle contenute nella UNCLOS del 1982, oltre che le regole derivanti dalla concertazione a livello regionale nei *fora* come il Consiglio Artico o il Consiglio Euro-Artico del Barents. Non di meno, i paesi che si affacciano sulla regione artica, ovvero Canada, Stati Uniti, Federazione Russa, Groenlandia (Danimarca), Islanda, Regno Unito, Irlanda, Svezia, Norvegia, hanno da tempo sviluppato vari livelli di dialogo sulle tematiche di maggiore rilievo per la regione, generando in alcuni specifici casi anche la nascita di organismi intergovernativi.

Le molteplici organizzazioni internazionali competenti, inoltre, hanno iniziato una intensa attività di studio, che ha portato alla produzione di documenti di ampio respiro e rilievo su specifici temi, come il riscaldamento climatico nella regione del Grande Nord, la tutela delle popolazioni indigene presenti nella zona, il problema della gestione sostenibile delle risorse del suolo e sottosuolo artico, fino alla possibile degenerazione in conflitto armato per l'affermazione della propria sovranità su parte o tutta l'Artide. Tra tali organizzazioni è possibile citare le Nazioni Unite, la FAO, l'Unione Europea, la NATO, l'Unione Europea Occidentale (in seguito UEO) e l'Organizzazione per la Sicurezza e la Cooperazione in Europa (OSCE)⁴.

Il **Consiglio Artico** è un forum intergovernativo creato nel 1996 da Canada, Danimarca, Finlandia, Islanda, Norvegia, Russia, Svezia e Stati Uniti, al fine di stabilire un luogo di concertazione delle linee guida nella regione artica in materia di sostenibilità ambientale, sociale ed economica. L'azione del Consiglio Artico si fonda sulla *Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy* (AEPS), ovvero l'atto approvato al termine dell'incontro intergovernativo del 1991 (cui non partecipò la Russia) che diede impulso alla concertazione politica sull'Artide. Particolarità del Consiglio Artico è che questo vede tre Stati (Danimarca, Finlandia e Svezia) membri dell'UE, cinque membri della NATO (Canada, Danimarca, Islanda, Norvegia e Stati Uniti) e solo gli Stati Uniti come paese non avente ratificato la UNCLOS. Sebbene sia un forum di dibattito e non si fondi su un proprio trattato internazionale⁵, il Consiglio Artico è certamente la struttura

⁴ L'assemblea parlamentare dell'OSCE nel 2005 ha organizzato a Tromsø una conferenza sul tema *High North: Environment, Security and Co-operation*.

⁵ La dichiarazione di Ottawa del 1996 prevede esplicitamente che il Consiglio Artico sia un *forum* di alto livello, atto a garantire cooperazione, coordinamento e interazione tra i suoi stati partecipanti, oltre

intergovernativa che ha prodotto i maggiori risultati sia a livello di concertazione che di operatività nella regione. Le sue peculiarità, però, lo limitano nell'agire, giacché non prevede, per natura e statuto, la concertazione su materie, come quelle della determinazione delle frontiere nazionali o l'azione in caso di catastrofi naturali o conflitti, oggi di più vivo interesse tra i paesi che si affacciano sulla regione del Grande Nord.

L'**Unione Europea** ha cercato di ampliare le tematiche già dibattute all'interno del Consiglio Artico, espandendole, sino a creare una politica della "**Dimensione Settentrionale della Sicurezza**". Con tale termine si suole indicare la politica posta in essere per fronteggiare le sfide derivanti dai cambiamenti climatici e dai loro effetti nella zone della regione artica. L'Unione Europea, in particolare, ha teso a sviluppare un dialogo più intenso con la Federazione Russa⁶, al fine di creare una cornice rafforzata nella quale inserire la cooperazione tra l'UE, Norvegia, Russia e Islanda. Scopo di tale dialogo sarebbe quello di creare una normalizzazione delle relazioni che si svolgono nel Grande Nord, in una cornice giuridica in cui il rischio di uno scontro, anche militare, per l'affermazione nella regione sarebbe così ridotto o eliminato. La creazione di un quadro normativo maggiormente vincolante e corposo rappresenta uno dei punti principali della politica UE nel Grande Nord, sebbene proprio ciò rappresenti un elemento di contrasto con i paesi del nord, i quali appaiono poco propensi ad una maggiore regolamentazione a livello regionale o internazionale, come sottolineato nella Dichiarazione di Ilulissat del 28 maggio 2008⁷. Proprio in seno alla conferenza di Ilulissat, gli stati partecipanti, nel sottolineare la loro contrarietà a qualsivoglia forma di ulteriore regolamentazione internazionale dell'Oceano Artico, hanno posto l'accento sul quadro normativo che la UNCLOS determina in relazione alla regione polare artica, e su come la Convenzione riconosca agli stati costieri la sovranità, diritti sovrani e giurisdizione su larga parte dell'Oceano Artico, ribadendo il loro rifiuto ad un possibile Accordo sull'Artide, come auspicato da alcune voci della comunità internazionale. Infatti il trattato di Madrid sull'Antartide del 1993 era stato citato come possibile modello di accordo su cui sviluppare un quadro normativo internazionale per l'Artico dallo stesso Parlamento Europeo nella risoluzione del 6 ottobre 2008. La posizione emersa dalla Conferenza di Ilulissat mostra come non vi sia, allo stato attuale, un consenso in tale direzione da parte degli Stati che si affacciano sull'Oceano Artico.

che con le popolazioni indigene presenti nella regione dell'Artide, sulle tematiche di principale rilevanza per l'Artide, ed in particolare lo sviluppo sostenibile e la protezione ambientale nella regione.

⁶ Rinforzare la cooperazione con il vicino russo costituisce per l'Unione Europea una importante priorità politica, anche in relazione alla dipendenza energetica del continente europeo dalla Federazione Russa, e alla conseguente opportunità di una gestione condivisa o favorevole per l'UE delle nuove risorse dell'Artide.

⁷ Alla conferenza in cui venne adottata tale dichiarazione hanno partecipato la Danimarca, gli Stati Uniti, il Canada, la Federazione Russa e Norvegia. In tale dichiarazione, i paesi partecipanti hanno affermato che si opporranno congiuntamente a qualsiasi nuovo regime legale internazionale complessivo per governare l'Oceano Artico.

Anche l'UEO ha riposto la propria attenzione sul tema delle problematiche derivanti dai cambiamenti climatici e la *governance* nell'Artide, pubblicando il 4 dicembre 2008 un *report* intitolato la *Dimensione settentrionale di sicurezza dell'Europa*, nel quale viene delineato un quadro delle problematiche di maggior interesse e preoccupazione per la sicurezza europea, tra cui la gestione delle risorse del suolo e sottosuolo (in particolare gli idrocarburi), il controllo delle nuove rotte derivanti dallo scioglimento dei ghiacci perenni, la competizione militare e la supremazia nazionale nelle zone artiche. Il *report* evidenzia come tutti gli stati che partecipano attivamente alla determinazione della politica della zona artica stiano aggiornando le loro posizioni e politiche ufficiali in relazione all'Artide, soprattutto a partire dalla metà del 2008, da quando cioè alcuni eventi storici hanno ridestato l'attenzione su tale tema, soprattutto da una prospettiva energetica e militare. Proprio per tale rilievo, la UEO auspica la creazione di un quadro di dialogo politico costante tra gli attori principalmente coinvolti, a partire dagli stati rivieraschi, in modo da risolvere le possibili contrapposizioni nel multilateralismo e nella cooperazione internazionale. Il tema, quindi, auspica la UEO, dovrà entrare nell'agenda delle maggiori organizzazioni regionali, UE e NATO per prime, le quali dovranno aggiornare il loro concetto strategico anche alla luce della rilevanza che i cambiamenti climatici hanno sulla sicurezza settentrionale europea. Importante appare la raccomandazione finale approvata dall'Assemblea dell'UEO nel dicembre 2008, sia in quanto riprende i punti salienti del *report* sin qui esplicitati, ma soprattutto perché si rivolge espressamente al Consiglio dell'UEO e al Consiglio dell'UE affinché: supportino i paesi che si affacciano nell'area a mantenere un livello di tensione basso e sviluppare, per altro verso, un sistema forte di cooperazione internazionale nel settore della ricerca; stabiliscano con la Federazione Russa un dialogo continuo, che determini anche una agenda condivisa sull'Artide, nella cornice della dimensione settentrionale e del Consiglio Artico; sviluppino con la NATO una analisi compiuta sulla rilevanza che i cambiamenti climatici hanno sulla sicurezza, cui l'Alleanza Atlantica è posta a difesa; spingano perché gli Stati Uniti ratifichino l'UNCLOS.

3. I PRINCIPALI ATTORI: STATI UNITI, FEDERAZIONE RUSSA, UNIONE EUROPEA E NATO

Sull'Artide si affacciano Stati Uniti, Canada, Groenlandia (Danimarca), Federazione Russa, Norvegia e Islanda. Sebbene questi paesi concorrano nella determinazione della politica dell'emisfero nord, è altrettanto vero che anche altri attori statali nutrono forti interessi nella regione: tra questi certamente la Repubblica Popolare Cinese, la Corea, il Giappone e la Svezia. Anche le maggiori organizzazioni internazionali e regionali dell'area hanno formulato una posizione in merito a tale tematica, cogliendo appieno non solo le opportunità per una cooperazione multilaterale, ma anche i timori per la sua trasformazione in un terreno di competizione politica e militare nei prossimi anni.

4. STATI UNITI

Rispetto ai paesi sopracitati che partecipano pienamente per posizione geografica alla determinazione della c.d. dimensione nord, gli Stati Uniti sono gli unici a non essere parte della UNCLOS del 1982, pur avendola sottoscritta, in quanto, il Senato non l'ha ancora ratificata.

Gli Stati Uniti nutrono da molto tempo grande interesse per l'Artide, e più in generale per gli effetti dei cambiamenti climatici sulla sicurezza nazionale. Già nel 2003, il Pentagono sottolineava la possibilità che un peggioramento delle condizioni climatiche mondiali incida sulla sicurezza nazionale.

La politica statunitense sull'Artide ha trovato una cornice istituzionale nell'emanazione di una direttiva presidenziale datata 9 gennaio 2009, durante la presidenza di George W. Bush. In tale documento strategico, l'amministrazione statunitense sottolinea il legame esistente tra la sicurezza nazionale e la determinazione di una politica definita sulla regione dell'Artide. Gli Stati Uniti, sottolinea il documento, hanno fondamentali interessi nazionali in Artide, interessi che sono disposti a difendere⁸, sia individualmente sia congiuntamente con altri paesi. Al medesimo tempo, l'amministrazione statunitense rimarca l'importanza di continuare a sviluppare un sistema di *governance* mondiale, anche per ciò che riguarda la regione artica, facendo esplicito riferimento alle istituzioni regionali ed internazionali *ad hoc*, come il Consiglio Artico e l'Organizzazione Internazionale Marittima. Tra i sette punti del richiamato documento strategico statunitense per l'Artide, emergono, certamente, quello dedicato al tema energetico, la libertà dei trasporti marittimi e la promozione della cooperazione scientifica internazionale.

Tale documento strategico, pubblicato pochi mesi prima del termine del secondo mandato del presidente George W. Bush, resta tuttoggi il documento di riferimento per ciò che concerne la politica statunitense nell'Artide, sebbene il neo presidente Obama abbia espresso, anche in campagna elettorale, un forte interesse nei confronti della politica ambientale e personale preoccupazione nei confronti dei cambiamenti climatici. Ci si aspetta, quindi, che la nuova amministrazione statunitense produca presto una nuova politica degli Stati Uniti sull'Artide⁹.

5. FEDERAZIONE RUSSA

La Federazione Russa si è mossa negli anni in senso opposto rispetto agli Stati Uniti, laddove ha teso a rafforzare la propria presenza militare sempre più a

⁸ Il documento esplicita gli interessi che gli Stati Uniti rivestono nell'area, che comprendono: difesa missilistica, *early warning*, dispiegamento di sistemi strategici sia via mare sia via aerea, deterrenza strategica, presenza marittima e operazioni di sicurezza marittima, garantendo la sicurezza della percorrenza delle rotte marittime. Al medesimo tempo, gli Stati Uniti incoraggiano la risoluzione pacifica delle dispute nella regione artica.

⁹ Si veda il *report* del dicembre 2008 UEO.

Nord, sia con la creazione di infrastrutture militari nelle aree più estreme del paese, come la penisola di Kola, sia con il potenziamento del proprio bastione navale nell'area del Mare di Barents. Sebbene anche il Canada e gli Stati Uniti si siano dimostrati negli anni i paesi che più hanno premuto nelle loro rivendicazioni territoriali in merito all'Artide, la Federazione Russa ha agito in maniera più incisiva, conducendo anche azioni dimostrative, come nell'agosto del 2007, quando due piccoli sommergibili Mir-1 e Mir-2 sono scesi a più di 4 km di profondità all'altezza del polo nord geografico a depositare una bandiera. Gli ultimi anni hanno visto incrementare le attività militari nella regione, fino a che nel settembre 2008 il Consiglio Nazionale di Sicurezza russo ha deliberato l'installazione di nuove infrastrutture strategiche nella zona nord del paese. Come sottolineato anche dagli Stati Uniti nella dichiarazione del 9 gennaio 2009, l'Artide riveste una rilevanza strategica notevole, soprattutto in relazione alla deterrenza missilistica e all'*early warning*.

Come sottolineato nel *Paper* del *NATO Defence College*, n°45 del febbraio 2009, la Federazione Russa ha una visione specifica della frontiera nord, avendola da sempre considerata come vitale per la sicurezza nazionale e di assoluto interesse strategico, e le dedica particolare attenzione da un punto di vista sia militare sia strategico-tecnologico.

La presenza delle truppe russe, infatti, non è andata diminuendo negli ultimi quindici anni, a differenza dell'atteggiamento dell'Alleanza che, con il mutare dello scenario internazionale, ha gradualmente spostato i propri centri di comando dal Nord Europa verso il sud. Inoltre i finanziamenti in campo tecnologico, per il miglioramento delle proprie strutture ed infrastrutture atte a garantire un migliore sfruttamento delle risorse del suolo e sottosuolo della regione nord, hanno costituito un punto centrale della politica nazionale russa degli ultimi dieci anni.

Infine, la dimensione militare ha rappresentato, e rappresenta tuttoggi, uno specchio importante della politica russa sull'Artide, sia in relazione alle missioni di perlustrazione dei mari del nord, come quelle ricordate di Mir-1 e Mir-2, sia in relazione alla c.d. terza dimensione, quella aerea, con lo svolgimento di missioni di pattugliamento aereo che in alcuni casi hanno creato tensioni con i vicini, come tra il 2007 e 2008 quando bombardieri strategici russi hanno sorvolato il mare di Barents e il mare del Nord, sino al confine dello spazio aereo norvegese, tanto da spingere il Segretario di Stato per la Difesa Norvegese, Espen Barth Eide, il 19 agosto 2008, durante una conferenza ad Oslo, a denunciare un atteggiamento particolarmente aggressivo da parte russa. Ciò che emerge, anche a seguito delle passate dichiarazioni del presidente Putin e dell'attuale presidente Medvedev, è che la Federazione Russa desidera giocare un ruolo di primo piano nella determinazione delle sorti dell'Artide, basando il proprio operato tanto su una strategia per l'estremo Nord definita e chiara, quanto sul principio di protezione dell'interesse nazionale attraverso una politica estera fondata sul pragmatismo.

6. L'UNIONE EUROPEA

I cambiamenti climatici e gli effetti che questi producono sull'Artide hanno destato l'interesse dell'Unione Europea, che soprattutto negli ultimi anni ha dedicato particolare attenzione e sforzi politici a tale tema. In particolare, tutte e tre le principali istituzioni comunitarie, Parlamento Europeo, Commissione Europea e Consiglio Europeo, e l'Alto Commissario per la Politica Estera e di Sicurezza Comune, Javier Solana, si sono recentemente espressi in merito agli effetti del surriscaldamento terrestre sulla regione del Grande Nord. Il 14 Marzo 2008, l'Alto Rappresentante Javier Solana e la Commissione Europea hanno pubblicato un comune documento strategico, intitolato *Cambiamenti Climatici e Sicurezza Internazionale*, indirizzato al Consiglio Europeo, nel quale veniva posto l'accento sulle conseguenze che il surriscaldamento terrestre ha sulla sicurezza internazionale, e su come tali possibili mutamenti di scenario potessero avere effetti diretti sia sulla eco-stabilità del territorio europeo così come sulla sicurezza dei Paesi membri e dei vicini prossimi. Riconoscendo un ruolo di primo piano all'Unione Europea nella promozione della protezione ambientale, così come nella tutela della sicurezza internazionale, il *Paper* pone particolare accento sugli strumenti di cui può avvalersi l'UE e, in particolare il secondo pilastro. Strumenti che potrebbero essere utilizzati grazie alla loro flessibilità anche per fronteggiare le sfide che il cambiamento climatico porta rispetto alla sicurezza internazionale. In particolare, il dialogo costante atto a rafforzare la cooperazione ed il multilateralismo con i paesi terzi viene considerato uno degli strumenti chiave per la risoluzione di possibili conflitti nascenti, soprattutto in riferimento al Grande Nord. Il *Paper* sottolinea come sia negli stessi interessi europei fronteggiare le implicazioni nel campo della sicurezza derivanti dai cambiamenti climatici, ponendo in essere una pluralità di misure a più livelli, tanto di Unione Europea, come bilaterale e multilaterale, in un contesto di mutua necessità. Il Capitolo 6, incentrato sull'Artico, ha preceduto l'attività di concertazione a livello centrale nell'Unione Europea, fino alla pubblicazione di nuovi documenti strategici, come la Comunicazione della Commissione, intitolata *L'Unione Europea e la Regione Artica*, del 20 novembre 2008¹⁰, e la precedente risoluzione del Parlamento Europeo datata 9 ottobre 2008, dedicata alla *governance* nell'Artide. Ponendo l'accento sulle delicate e peculiari sfide che l'Artide vive e porta con sé, la Risoluzione del Parlamento Europeo è stata fatta propria da parte della Commissione, la quale ha sviluppato le principali tematiche delineate nella risoluzione, come la protezione e l'aiuto alle popolazioni indigene presenti nei territori dell'Artide, oltre che la necessità di preservare l'eco-sistema della regione del Grande Nord, attraverso una politica

¹⁰ La Comunicazione della Commissione si sviluppa analizzando tre fattori principali, cui conseguono altrettante linee guida e obiettivi di medio e lungo periodo. Tali linee guida sono la tutela e preservazione dell'Artide di concerto con la sua popolazione; la promozione dell'uso sostenibile delle risorse; infine, la contribuzione ad una migliore *governance* multilaterale nell'Artide.

multilaterale di tutela delle specie protette a rischio e un commercio vigile rispetto alla vendita di prodotti derivanti da attività che pongono a rischio la sopravvivenza di tali specie. Inoltre, grande rilevanza viene data all'azione di dialogo multilaterale, atta a creare una vera e propria *governance* artica, che coinvolga non solo i principali attori statali che si affacciano nella regione, ma anche l'Unione Europea e il Consiglio Artico, per la definizione di una politica comune di utilizzo sostenibile delle risorse, con una piena rappresentanza e partecipazione delle popolazioni indigene, e per la elaborazione di linee comuni per fronteggiare possibili sfide alla sicurezza, come catastrofi naturali o conflitti di altra natura. Due fattori appaiono di particolare interesse: da un canto il riferimento esplicito nella Comunicazione alle sfide che le risorse energetiche presenti nel suolo e sottosuolo artico portano con sé, soprattutto in termini di gestione, sfruttamento e sovranità su tali risorse; in secondo luogo, l'auspicio da parte del Parlamento Europeo che la Commissione chieda di partecipare come osservatore permanente al Consiglio Artico, auspicando anche la creazione di un proprio tavolo di lavoro dedicato a tale tema, in modo da potenziare non solo il ruolo della stessa Europa, ma soprattutto per porre realmente le basi per lo sviluppo di una *governance* nell'Artide.

7. NATO

L'Alleanza Atlantica ha avviato da alcuni anni una riflessione sull'Artide. Gli eventi tra il 2007 e 2008, ed in particolare il posizionamento di una bandiera russa sul fondo marino polare e il sorvolo di cacciabombardieri strategici russi nello spazio aereo del mare di Barents e dell'Oceano Polare, hanno riaccessato l'attenzione sulla regione artica, ed in particolare sulle possibili minacce o instabilità che potrebbero incidere sulla sicurezza dei paesi membri del nord Europa, Canada e Stati Uniti. In particolare, gli studi finora condotti in seno all'Alleanza si sono incentrati sui cambiamenti climatici e gli effetti che questi potrebbero avere sulla sicurezza dei paesi dell'Alleanza e i loro vicini più prossimi, prospettando anche scenari di medio e lungo periodo. Nella relazione dell'Assemblea NATO della sessione primaverile 2009, intitolata *Climate Change and National Security*, il relatore Pierre Claude Nolin ha dedicato una intera sezione della propria analisi alle implicazioni che i cambiamenti climatici hanno sulla regione artica, e quindi quelli che potrebbero aversi per l'Alleanza. In particolare, il documento pone l'accento sul problema dello sfruttamento delle risorse energetiche presenti nel suolo e sottosuolo artico, oltre che sulle numerose dispute territoriali e sul controllo delle nuove rotte di navigazione che sono emerse a seguito dello scioglimento dei ghiacci perenni. Il rispetto o primato della sovranità appare un *leitmotiv* nelle varie dichiarazioni dei ministri degli esteri o della difesa dei paesi rivieraschi. La NATO, però, come evidenziato, dovrà affrontare quattro specifici temi in relazione all'Artide: l'aumento dell'attività di navigazione nella regione artica, che porta ad un incremento dell'attività umana in quello specifico territorio e quindi anche l'aumento del

rischio di disastri ecologici; il problema energetico e dell'estrazione delle risorse, in particolare gli idrocarburi, per cui la NATO potrebbe essere interessata a numerose attività di informazione e *intelligence*, di protezione della stabilità e cooperazione regionale, di protezione delle infrastrutture critiche e supporto alla conseguente gestione delle possibili crisi; in terzo luogo, il problema delle rivendicazioni territoriali, per il quale la NATO potrebbe creare un *forum* di dibattito *ad hoc* per i paesi rivieraschi o interessati nella possibile disputa; infine, l'incremento di attività di natura militare nell'area, che fanno emergere il ruolo che la NATO potrebbe assumere nella regione del Grande Nord nel prossimo futuro. In particolare, questo ultimo punto pone in rilievo una constatazione, ovvero il ruolo particolare che la Federazione Russa gioca in tale regione, essendo l'unico paese direttamente interessato non membro NATO. Una sua politica particolarmente aggressiva determina una seria e concreta percezione di minaccia alla sicurezza per uno dei paesi rivieraschi membri dell'Alleanza, porterebbe fino all'applicabilità del regime giuridico dell'articolo 5 del Trattato di Washington. Tale riflessione è concentrata nel *research paper* del febbraio 2009, n°45, pubblicato dal NATO Defence College, intitolato *Towards cooperation or confrontation? Security in the High North*. Tuttavia l'autore, Sven G. Holtmark, ritiene che l'Oceano artico possa continuare a rappresentare, come è avvenuto finora, un'area di stabilità regolata da accordi bilaterali e multilaterali e che ciò che sia negli interessi della Russia, in quanto Stato rivierasco e firmatario della Convenzione di Montego Bay del 1982. La misura del successo nel mantenimento della stabilità nel Grande Nord dipende dalla capacità occidentale di coinvolgere, tramite il Consiglio NATO-Russia, la Federazione Russa in una cooperazione costruttiva sul più ampio spettro delle questioni di sicurezza.

A tal riguardo si segnala che l'Assemblea UEO auspicava l'inclusione del tema della sicurezza dell'Artide all'interno del nuovo Concetto strategico dell'Alleanza e nella revisione della strategia di sicurezza europea, in modo tale da dotare NATO e UE di linee guida politiche e strategiche in relazione sia ai cambiamenti climatici sia alle sfide posti da questi nell'estremo nord dell'emisfero terrestre.

ALLEGATI



COMMISSIONE DELLE COMUNITÀ EUROPEE

Bruxelles, 20.11.2008
COM(2008) 763 definitivo

**COMUNICAZIONE DELLA COMMISSIONE AL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO E AL
CONSIGLIO**

L'UNIONE EUROPEA E LA REGIONE ARTICA

COMUNICAZIONE DELLA COMMISSIONE AL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO E AL CONSIGLIO

L'UNIONE EUROPEA E LA REGIONE ARTICA

1. INTRODUZIONE

L'Unione europea è strettamente legata alla regione artica¹ (in appresso denominata "l'Artico") da una combinazione unica di fattori storici, geografici, economici e scientifici. Tre Stati membri — Danimarca (Groenlandia), Finlandia e Svezia — hanno territori nell'Artico, mentre altri due Stati artici — Islanda e Norvegia — sono membri dello Spazio economico europeo². Il Canada, la Russia e gli Stati Uniti sono partner strategici dell'UE. Le zone europee dell'Artico sono una priorità della politica della dimensione settentrionale³. Oltre alle zone soggette alla giurisdizione dei singoli Stati, il Mar Glaciale Artico contiene zone d'alto mare che fanno parte dei fondali marini gestiti dall'Autorità internazionale dei fondali marini.

I vasti spazi marini e terrestri della regione artica sono componenti vitali e vulnerabili del sistema ambientale e climatico del nostro pianeta. Nell'Artico, le temperature dell'aria sono aumentate in misura due volte superiore alla media mondiale⁴. La rapida diminuzione della banchisa, del manto nevoso e del permafrost ha scatenato forti meccanismi di feed-back (retroeffetti) che accelerano il riscaldamento globale. Lo scioglimento accelerato della crosta ghiacciata della Groenlandia provocherebbe un forte e rapido aumento del livello del mare.

Malgrado le condizioni estremamente difficili, lo scioglimento dei ghiacci e le nuove tecnologie agevoleranno progressivamente l'accesso alle risorse biologiche e non biologiche dell'Artico, come pure alle nuove rotte di navigazione. Pur rimanendo una delle zone più incontaminate della terra, l'Artico sarà sempre più minacciato dall'effetto combinato dei cambiamenti climatici e della più intensa attività umana.

Le politiche europee in settori come l'ambiente, i cambiamenti climatici, l'energia, la ricerca, i trasporti e la pesca hanno un'incidenza diretta sull'Artico. Il carattere unico di ciascuna regione marittima e la necessità di esaminarla singolarmente per equilibrarne le attività in modo sostenibile sono presupposti fondamentali della politica marittima integrata dell'Unione.

Considerato l'effetto di "moltiplicatore dei rischi" dei cambiamenti climatici, la Commissione e l'Alto rappresentante per la politica estera e di sicurezza comune hanno insistito sul fatto che i cambiamenti ambientali stanno alterando la dinamica geostrategica dell'Artico con potenziali

¹ Nella presente comunicazione, per "regione artica" s'intende la zona circostante al Polo Nord nella parte settentrionale del circolo polare artico. Questa zona comprende il Mar Glaciale Artico e i territori degli otto Stati artici: Canada, Danimarca (compresa la Groenlandia), Finlandia, Islanda, Norvegia, Russia, Svezia e Regno Unito.

² Le disposizioni dell'accordo SEE assicurano la piena partecipazione degli Stati SEE/EFTA al mercato interno e consentono la cooperazione in settori quali ambiente, ricerca, turismo e protezione civile, di grande importanza per l'Artico.

³ La dimensione settentrionale è una politica comune dei quattro partner (Unione europea, Islanda, Norvegia e Russia) volta a promuovere la stabilità, la prosperità e lo sviluppo sostenibile.

⁴ Dati rilevati dal Consiglio artico (2005) e confermati da misurazioni successive.

ripercussioni sulla stabilità internazionale e sugli interessi europei in materia di sicurezza, caldeggiando l'elaborazione di una politica dell'UE per l'Artico⁵. Nel complesso, le problematiche e le opportunità legate all'Artico avranno notevoli ripercussioni sulla vita delle prossime generazioni di cittadini europei. L'Unione europea deve assolutamente gestirle in modo coordinato e sistematico, collaborando con gli Stati, i territori e le altre parti interessate dell'Artico. La presente comunicazione definisce gli interessi dell'UE e propone agli Stati membri e alle istituzioni dell'UE interventi imperniati su tre obiettivi strategici principali:

- tutelare e preservare l'Artico di concerto con la sua popolazione
- promuovere l'uso sostenibile delle risorse
- contribuire a una migliore governance multilaterale nell'Artico.

2. TUTELARE E PRESERVARE L'ARTICO DI CONCERTO CON LA SUA POPOLAZIONE

2.1. Ambiente e cambiamenti climatici

Le attività svolte negli Stati membri dell'UE, come del resto nella maggior parte degli altri paesi, lasciano un'impronta ambientale nell'Artico. Per affrontare le cause di fondo dei cambiamenti nell'Artico occorre una risposta globale. L'impatto dei cambiamenti climatici rappresenta una sfida cruciale per la regione, sia ora che per il futuro. L'UE svolge un ruolo di primo piano nella lotta ai cambiamenti climatici e nella promozione dello sviluppo sostenibile. Gli Stati membri dell'UE e la Comunità europea hanno aderito alla maggior parte degli accordi ambientali multilaterali di fondamentale importanza per l'Artico. Le industrie europee sono ai primi posti per lo sviluppo di tecnologie atte a consentire operazioni sicure e sostenibili in condizioni difficili a terra, nelle zone costiere e in mare aperto.

L'ambiente dell'Artico è particolarmente vulnerabile, ma la scarsa densità di popolazione e di infrastrutture rende estremamente difficile gestire le risposte alle emergenze.

Obiettivi strategici

L'obiettivo principale deve essere quello di prevenire e attenuare l'impatto negativo dei cambiamenti climatici e di agevolare l'adattamento agli inevitabili cambiamenti. L'azione di prevenzione e di attenuazione deve riguardare anche altri processi mondiali e transfrontalieri con ripercussioni negative nell'Artico, come il trasporto di inquinanti su lunghe distanze. Al tempo stesso, occorre sviluppare una gestione globale e sostenibile delle attività umane che sia basata sull'ecosistema e integri le considerazioni ambientali a tutti i livelli. La gestione delle risposte alle emergenze deve essere migliorata.

Proposte di intervento:

- valutare l'efficacia delle politiche dell'UE e degli accordi ambientali multilaterali nell'affrontare le problematiche ambientali proprie dell'Artico.

⁵ Cambiamenti climatici e sicurezza internazionale, documento strategico congiunto presentato al Consiglio europeo del 14 marzo 2008.

- Intensificare le iniziative internazionali volte ad attenuare i cambiamenti climatici e individuare i settori in cui occorre agevolare l'adattamento agli effetti dei cambiamenti climatici, compresa la gestione adattativa della biodiversità.
- Promuovere un dialogo permanente con le ONG sullo stato dell'ambiente nella regione artica.
- Coordinare gli interventi con gli Stati, i territori e le altre parti interessate dell'Artico che promuovono standard ambientali elevati. Migliorare la gestione marina basata sull'ecosistema nel Mar Glaciale Artico condividendo l'esperienza dell'UE con gli Stati artici.
- Tener conto dell'impatto ambientale prima di prendere decisioni relative a strategie e progetti dell'UE che interessino l'Artico. Promuovere l'uso delle valutazioni d'impatto di progetti, piani e programmi che interessino l'ambiente artico, comprese le valutazioni ambientali strategiche, e condividere l'esperienza con gli Stati artici.
- Promuovere lo screening e il monitoraggio dei prodotti chimici nell'Artico. Moltiplicare gli sforzi per ridurre l'inquinamento dell'Artico causato da inquinanti organici persistenti, metalli pesanti e altri contaminanti, compresi quelli provenienti da fonti terrestri. Continuare a sostenere la distruzione delle scorte di prodotti chimici dannosi e la riduzione del rischio di fuoriuscite radioattive nell'Artico.
- Continuare a collaborare per quanto riguarda la prevenzione, la preparazione e la risposta alle catastrofi. Il Centro di monitoraggio e informazione della Commissione può contribuire a migliorare la capacità di risposta dell'UE alle catastrofi nell'Artico. La Commissione sosterrà la conclusione di un accordo sulla prevenzione e sulla risposta alle emergenze nel Consiglio euroartico di Barents (BEAC)⁶.
- Intensificare la cooperazione per promuovere ulteriormente il risparmio di energia primaria, l'efficienza energetica e l'uso di energie rinnovabili nell'Artico.
- Contribuire a valutare l'impatto sui mammiferi marini del rumore prodotto da attività umane.

2.2. Sostegno alle popolazioni indigene e locali

Circa un terzo dei 4 milioni di persone che vivono nell'Artico è composto da indigeni, particolarmente vulnerabili alle pressioni sempre più forti esercitate dai cambiamenti climatici e dalla globalizzazione.

Obiettivi strategici

Le popolazioni indigene della zona artica che appartiene all'UE sono tutelate da disposizioni speciali del diritto della Comunità europea⁷. Fra i principi fondamentali della dichiarazione congiunta sulla politica di sviluppo dell'UE⁸ figurano la piena partecipazione e il consenso libero, con cognizione di causa, dei popoli indigeni. Anche la politica regionale e i programmi

⁶ Forum di cooperazione intergovernativa nella regione di Barents.

⁷ Protocollo 3 dell'atto di adesione di Svezia e Finlandia.

⁸ adottata nel 2005 dal Consiglio, dal Parlamento e dalla Commissione.

transfrontalieri dell'UE comportano vantaggi per i popoli indigeni, le cui organizzazioni fanno parte della dimensione settentrionale. I diritti delle popolazioni indigene sono una priorità tematica dell'iniziativa europea per la democrazia e i diritti umani.

La caccia ai mammiferi marini è indispensabile fin dalla preistoria per la sussistenza delle popolazioni artiche, il cui diritto a mantenere la loro fonte tradizionale di sussistenza è esplicitamente riconosciuto. Le attività umane moderne, tuttavia, hanno messo in pericolo alcune di queste specie e il benessere degli animali desta sempre più preoccupazione nell'UE. Le politiche dell'Unione devono continuare a tener conto di tutti i fattori, puntando a instaurare un dialogo aperto con le comunità interessate.

Proposte di intervento:

- avviare un dialogo regolare con le popolazioni indigene dell'Artico.
- Creare opportunità per uno sviluppo autogestito e per la protezione del loro stile di vita.
- Sostenere in particolare le organizzazioni e le attività dei Saami e degli altri popoli dell'Artico europeo, anche nell'ambito dei programmi regionali e transfrontalieri. Promuovere il know-how dell'Europa settentrionale per quanto riguarda l'allevamento delle renne.
- Continuare a impegnarsi per garantire una protezione efficace delle balene, specialmente nell'ambito della Commissione baleniera internazionale (IWC), anche nel contesto artico. Sostenere le proposte relative alla gestione da parte delle popolazioni indigene della caccia alla balena di sussistenza, purché non sia compromessa la conservazione della specie, le operazioni di caccia siano debitamente regolamentate e le catture non superino il fabbisogno di sussistenza documentato e riconosciuto.
- Condurre dialoghi con i popoli indigeni e con le altre comunità locali che si dedicano tradizionalmente alla caccia alla foca.
- La Comunità sta prendendo in considerazione la possibilità di vietare l'immissione sul mercato, l'importazione, il transito e l'esportazione di prodotti derivati dalla foca. Questo, però, non deve ledere gli interessi socioeconomici fondamentali delle comunità indigene che si dedicano tradizionalmente alla caccia alla foca. Ai sensi della proposta di regolamento del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio sul commercio dei prodotti derivati dalla foca⁹, tale divieto non si applica ai prodotti derivati dalla foca provenienti dalla caccia tradizionalmente praticata dalle comunità Inuit e che contribuiscono al loro sostentamento. La proposta prevede anche che in altri casi il commercio di detti prodotti sia autorizzato se vengono rispettate determinate condizioni riguardanti il modo e il metodo di uccisione e di scuoiatura delle foche. Il dialogo della Commissione con le comunità indigene interessate punterà a facilitare l'applicazione pratica di queste disposizioni.

⁹ COM(2008) 469 del 23.7.2008.

2.3. Ricerca, monitoraggio e valutazioni

Le risposte politiche devono basarsi su valutazioni eseguite utilizzando la migliore conoscenza e la migliore comprensione dei processi che riguardano l'Artico. Il Consiglio artico¹⁰ attua vasti programmi di ricerca e pubblica valutazioni di grande utilità.

Gli Stati membri dell'UE e la Comunità europea contribuiscono in misura considerevole alla ricerca nell'Artico¹¹. Il Settimo programma quadro della Comunità, attualmente in corso, riguarda nuovi progetti e impegni internazionali di vasta portata sulla ricerca connessa all'Artico. Il Consiglio polare europeo cerca di armonizzare e di massimizzare l'impatto della ricerca polare europea. L'Agenzia europea dell'ambiente ha eseguito una serie di valutazioni basate sui lavori del Consiglio artico.

Il monitoraggio a lungo termine, il coordinamento e l'attendibilità dei dati rimangono però insufficienti ai fini della ricerca nell'Artico.

Obiettivi strategici

La Comunità europea deve continuare a considerare l'Artico un settore prioritario della ricerca onde colmare le lacune in termini di conoscenza e valutare i futuri effetti antropogenici, specialmente in materia di cambiamenti climatici. Deve inoltre rafforzare la cooperazione e l'interoperabilità a livello internazionale e contribuire a definire misure concrete di prevenzione, attenuazione e adattamento.

Proposte di intervento:

- sviluppare altri programmi di ricerca riguardanti l'aumento del livello del mare, la diminuzione della banchisa, lo scioglimento del permafrost e i retroeffetti connessi che accelerano il riscaldamento e provocano altri effetti antropogenici sugli ecosistemi dell'Artico.
- Valutare lo stato e l'evoluzione dell'ambiente artico per contribuire alla definizione di opportune politiche dell'UE.
- Creare nuove infrastrutture di ricerca e potenziare le capacità di monitoraggio e di sorveglianza. Contribuire al progetto relativo al rompighiaccio di ricerca Aurora Borealis.
- Coordinare le iniziative nei vari settori di ricerca connessi all'Artico, come l'ambiente, i trasporti, la sanità e l'energia, e sviluppare le tecnologie relative all'Artico.
- Garantire la continuità delle misurazioni spaziali tramite il GMES¹². Sostenere le misurazioni a lungo termine e la comunicazione dei dati marini attraverso la rete europea

¹⁰ Il Consiglio artico è un forum intergovernativo che promuove la cooperazione fra gli Stati artici coinvolgendo le comunità indigene.

¹¹ I precedenti programmi quadro comunitari (PQ5 e PQ6) hanno sostenuto oltre 50 progetti riguardanti la zona polare, tra cui DAMOCLES, il principale contributo all'anno polare internazionale. La dotazione per l'Artico nell'ambito del PQ6 è ammontata a 86 milioni di euro.

¹² Il GMES (Sistema globale di osservazione per l'ambiente e la sicurezza) è un'iniziativa dell'UE volta a prestare servizi di informazione sostenibili e totalmente affidabili utilizzando le infrastrutture di osservazione spaziale.

di osservazione e dati sull'ambiente marino. Contribuire ad approntare la componente artica del Sistema dei sistemi per l'Osservazione Globale della Terra (GEOSS).

- Sviluppare e intensificare un vasto scambio di informazioni a livello internazionale sui progetti di ricerca e agevolare il coordinamento dei programmi nazionali. L'UE dovrebbe contribuire in tal modo alla creazione della rete di osservazione costante nell'Artico.
- Garantire il libero accesso alle informazioni fornite dal monitoraggio e dalla ricerca sull'Artico in base al principio del Sistema comune di informazioni ambientali. Facilitare e promuovere la diffusione presso il grande pubblico.

3. PROMUOVERE L'USO SOSTENIBILE DELLE RISORSE

3.1. Idrocarburi

L'Artico contiene notevoli riserve non sfruttate di idrocarburi¹³. Le risorse offshore conosciute si trovano all'interno della zona economica esclusiva degli Stati artici. Le risorse dell'Artico possono contribuire a rendere più sicuro l'approvvigionamento dell'UE per quanto riguarda l'energia e le materie prime in genere¹⁴. Lo sfruttamento, tuttavia, procederà lentamente, in quanto comporta notevoli problemi e costi elevati dovuti alle condizioni difficili e ai numerosissimi rischi ambientali.

Obiettivi strategici

Il sostegno allo sfruttamento delle riserve di idrocarburi dell'Artico deve essere fornito nel pieno rispetto di standard ambientali rigorosi, che tengano conto della particolare vulnerabilità della regione artica. La posizione privilegiata dell'UE per quanto riguarda le tecnologie atte a uno sfruttamento sostenibile delle risorse in condizioni polari deve essere mantenuta.

Proposte di intervento:

- adoperarsi per consolidare le basi di una cooperazione a lungo termine, segnatamente con la Norvegia e la Federazione russa, agevolando lo sfruttamento, l'estrazione e il trasporto sostenibili e ecocompatibili delle risorse di idrocarburi dell'Artico. Come sempre, si opererà in base ai principi della parità di condizioni e dell'accesso reciproco al mercato.
- Promuovere l'osservanza di standard ambientali per quanto possibile rigorosi. Insistere affinché siano introdotti standard ambientali vincolanti, basandosi tra l'altro sugli orientamenti del Consiglio artico e dalle convenzioni internazionali pertinenti.
- Promuovere ulteriormente la ricerca e lo sviluppo delle tecnologie e delle infrastrutture offshore. Avvalersi dell'esperienza acquisita dall'industria europea nello sfruttamento offshore di gas e petrolio. Agevolare ulteriori attività di ricerca e innovazione a mano a mano che si interviene in condizioni climatiche più difficili e in acque più profonde.

¹³ Cfr. Wood Mackenzie e Fugro Robertson: "Future of the Arctic, A new dawn for exploration" e valutazioni dell' U.S. Geological Survey. Va sottolineato che le stime si basano su indagini; per dati più precisi occorre una ricerca approfondita.

¹⁴ Il 4 novembre 2008, la Commissione ha adottato una comunicazione intitolata "L'iniziativa "materie prime" — rispondere ai nostri bisogni fondamentali per garantire la crescita e creare posti di lavoro in Europa" (COM(2008)699).

- Incoraggiare lo sviluppo di cluster marittimi nel cui ambito le università e i centri di ricerca possano mettere a disposizione di imprese più piccole personale qualificato e infrastrutture di ricerca. L'innovazione sarà incentivata per la maggior parte dalle piccole e medie imprese dei cluster regionali.
- Vagliare la possibilità di sottoscrivere gli orientamenti elaborati dal Consiglio artico per quanto riguarda lo sfruttamento di gas e petrolio.

3.2. Pesca

Ora come ora, le uniche attività di pesca di un certo rilievo si svolgono nel Mare di Barents e nelle parti orientale e meridionale del Mare di Norvegia. I cambiamenti climatici potrebbero tuttavia comportare un aumento della produttività di determinati stock ittici e una redistribuzione spaziale di altri. Il più ampio accesso dovuto alla riduzione della banchisa potrebbe rendere altre zone più attraenti per la pesca. La mancanza di un regime internazionale di conservazione e gestione per alcune zone di alto mare dell'Artico potrebbe dar luogo a una pesca non regolamentata.

L'UE è uno dei principali consumatori del pesce dell'Artico, di cui solo una piccola parte è catturata da pescherecci comunitari. La Comunità europea fa parte della Commissione per la pesca nell'Atlantico nordorientale (NEAFC). Coopera pienamente con Stati che hanno sovranità o giurisdizione sulle acque dell'Artico, cercando di garantire non solo possibilità di pesca, ma anche la conservazione a lungo termine e l'uso ottimale delle risorse ittiche.

Obiettivo strategico

L'obiettivo principale dell'UE è garantire che lo sfruttamento delle risorse di pesca dell'Artico avvenga a livelli sostenibili nel rispetto dei diritti delle comunità costiere locali.

Proposte di intervento:

- istituire, prima che si presentino nuove opportunità di pesca, un quadro normativo per le zone d'alto mare dell'Artico non ancora contemplate da un regime internazionale di conservazione e di gestione. Si impedirà così che la pesca si sviluppi in un vuoto normativo e si garantirà una sua gestione equa e trasparente in linea con il codice di condotta per una pesca responsabile. In linea di massima, è preferibile estendere il mandato delle organizzazioni di gestione esistenti, come la NEAFC, piuttosto che crearne di nuove. Fintanto che non esisterà un regime di conservazione e gestione per le zone non ancora contemplate da tale regime non dovrebbe iniziare nessuna nuova attività di pesca.

3.3. Trasporti

Gli Stati membri dell'UE possiedono la flotta mercantile più grande del mondo e molte di queste navi percorrono rotte transoceaniche. Lo scioglimento dei ghiacci marini sta aprendo gradualmente nuove possibilità di navigare su rotte che attraversano le acque dell'Artico. Questo potrebbe abbreviare notevolmente i viaggi dall'Europa al Pacifico, far risparmiare energia, promuovere gli scambi e ridurre la pressione sui principali canali di navigazione transcontinentali. Sussistono tuttavia ostacoli considerevoli come il ghiaccio galleggiante, la mancanza di infrastrutture, i rischi ambientali e le incertezze circa la struttura degli scambi futuri. Lo sviluppo della navigazione commerciale nell'Artico richiederà quindi tempo e impegno.

Obiettivi strategici

È nell'interesse dell'UE esplorare e migliorare le condizioni per una graduale introduzione della navigazione commerciale artica, promuovendo al tempo stesso standard ambientali e di sicurezza più rigorosi e scongiurando effetti nocivi.

Gli Stati membri e la Comunità dovrebbero inoltre difendere il principio della libertà di navigazione e il diritto di passaggio inoffensivo lungo le rotte e nelle aree di recente apertura.

Proposte di intervento:

- promuovere l'osservanza totale degli obblighi esistenti per quanto riguarda il codice di navigazione, la sicurezza marittima, il sistema delle rotte e gli standard ambientali nell'Artico, in particolare quelli stabiliti dall'Organizzazione marittima internazionale (IMO).
- Insistere sulla necessità di evitare che gli Stati costieri dell'Artico applichino pratiche discriminatorie (specialmente in termini di diritti, servizi obbligatori e regolamenti) nei confronti delle navi mercantili di paesi terzi.
- Migliorare le capacità di sorveglianza marittima nell'estremo nord. La Commissione sta studiando, insieme all'Agenzia spaziale europea, un sistema satellitare in orbita polare in grado di raccogliere segnali da qualsiasi parte del globo che, se diventasse operativo, migliorerebbe la conoscenza del traffico navale e consentirebbe di reagire in modo più tempestivo alle emergenze. Anche il sistema di navigazione satellitare Galileo svolgerà un ruolo importante per consentire una navigazione più agevole e più sicura e migliorare sia la sorveglianza marittima che la risposta alle emergenze nell'Artico.
- Compatibilmente con le norme applicabili del diritto in materia di concorrenza, mantenere il vantaggio concorrenziale dei cantieri navali europei nello sviluppo della tecnologia richiesta dalle condizioni dell'Artico¹⁵. La possibilità di fornire navi ecocompatibili appositamente progettate, compresi i rompighiaccio, è una prospettiva molto interessante per il futuro.
- Valutare l'opportunità di appoggiare la designazione, su proposta di uno qualsiasi degli Stati costieri dell'Artico, di determinate rotte di navigazione artiche come zone marine particolarmente sensibili secondo le norme dell'IMO.
- Sostenere qualsiasi ulteriore misura volta a rafforzare gli standard ambientali e di sicurezza dell'IMO applicabili alle acque artiche.

L'obiettivo principale per quanto riguarda il trasporto terrestre e aereo nelle zone europee dell'Artico deve essere lo sviluppo delle infrastrutture di trasporto terrestre e aereo est-ovest. La creazione di un partenariato della dimensione settentrionale per il trasporto e la logistica darà un ulteriore sostegno al miglioramento dei collegamenti via terra fra l'UE e la Russia nordoccidentale, che sono importanti per l'ulteriore sviluppo della zona.

¹⁵ Costruzione, riparazione e trasformazione navale, design e equipaggiamento marittimo, come la straordinaria Double Acting Ship, che ha una prua ottimizzata per la navigazione in mare aperto e la cui poppa è disegnata per rompere il ghiaccio. Un altro settore è il dragaggio dei porti artici.

3.4. Turismo

Il turismo nell'Artico, specialmente quello praticato con le navi da crociera, è in rapida espansione ma comporta determinati rischi, come dimostrano i numerosi incidenti verificatisi.

Obiettivi strategici

L'UE deve continuare a promuovere il turismo sostenibile nell'Artico, incoraggiando le misure prese per ridurre al massimo l'impatto ambientale. La tutela dell'ambiente e i vantaggi per le comunità costiere locali vanno tenuti nella massima considerazione.

Proposte di intervento:

- sostenere una maggiore sicurezza delle navi da crociera, una migliore navigazione e la restrizione dell'accesso alle zone molto vulnerabili.
- Promuovere il turismo ecocompatibile, coinvolgendo le comunità locali.

4. CONTRIBUIRE A UNA MIGLIORE GESTIONE MULTILATERALE DELL'ARTICO

Non esiste un trattato specifico che definisca il regime applicato all'Artico. Nessun paese o gruppo di paesi ha sovranità sul Polo Nord o sul Mar Glaciale Artico che lo circonda. Esistono numerose frontiere marittime per le quali gli Stati costieri dell'Artico non hanno raggiunto un accordo sulla delimitazione delle zone economiche esclusive¹⁶. Le richieste presentate alla commissione ONU sui limiti della piattaforma continentale possono dar luogo a una sovrapposizione delle rivendicazioni¹⁷. Le condizioni per il passaggio delle navi in alcune acque dell'Artico vengono inoltre interpretate in modo diverso, specialmente nel passaggio a nord-ovest¹⁸.

Esiste già un quadro legislativo internazionale che si applica anche all'Artico. Le disposizioni della convenzione ONU sul diritto del mare (UNCLOS)¹⁹ forniscono la base per la composizione delle controversie riguardanti, fra l'altro la delimitazione. L'UNCLOS contiene anche regole sull'uso delle risorse biologiche e non biologiche e sulla tutela dell'ambiente. Esistono inoltre numerosissimi accordi ambientali multilaterali che si applicano all'Artico, spesso senza contenere riferimenti specifici.

¹⁶ Sono state negoziate cinque delimitazioni bilaterali, mentre rimangono in sospeso le seguenti questioni: Russia contro Norvegia nel Mare di Barents, Stati Uniti contro Russia nello Stretto di Bering e Stati Uniti contro Canada nel Mare di Beaufort. Esiste una vertenza fra il Canada e la Danimarca per quanto riguarda l'isola di Hans. Inoltre, la Norvegia e vari altri paesi, tra cui gli Stati membri dell'UE, interpretano in modo diverso l'applicabilità del trattato delle Svalbard nella zona di 200 miglia nautiche che circonda l'arcipelago.

¹⁷ Nel 2001, la Russia ha rivendicato una zona molto vasta dell'Artico, che comprendeva anche il Polo Nord. Anche la Norvegia ha presentato una richiesta e la Danimarca e il Canada intendono fare altrettanto.

¹⁸ La vertenza riguarda sia la delimitazione delle acque interne del Canada, dove questo paese può regolamentare totalmente le infrazioni, che il diritto del Canada di adottare e applicare leggi contro l'inquinamento provocato dalle navi nelle acque ricoperte di ghiaccio.

¹⁹ Tutti gli Stati artici (tranne gli USA), tutti gli Stati membri e la Comunità sono parti dell'UNCLOS.

Nel maggio 2008, cinque Stati costieri del Mar Glaciale Artico hanno adottato una dichiarazione²⁰ in cui ribadivano l'impegno ad applicare il quadro legislativo esistente e a gestire correttamente tutte le eventuali sovrapposizioni di rivendicazioni. Successivamente, molto di essi hanno annunciato misure volte a estendere o ad affermare la loro giurisdizione nazionale e a rafforzare la loro presenza nell'Artico.

Il Consiglio artico ha conseguito il suo obiettivo di preparare valutazioni, sviluppare un'identità regionale e definire l'agenda per l'Artico. Partecipa alla dimensione settentrionale insieme al BEAC e al Consiglio dei ministri nordici²¹.

Il Parlamento europeo ha recentemente sottolineato l'importanza della governance artica e ha caldeggiato una politica specifica dell'UE per l'Artico, raccomandando alla Commissione di svolgere un ruolo dinamico nella regione²². La dimensione parlamentare della cooperazione artica è fondamentale per una maggiore sensibilizzazione e per un contributo più costruttivo alla definizione della politica in questo campo. Il Parlamento europeo ha svolto un ruolo importante al riguardo.

Conformemente al suo mandato, la Banca europea per gli investimenti può sostenere gli investimenti in parti della regione artica, specie per quanto riguarda l'ambiente, i trasporti, l'energia e le infrastrutture di ricerca.

Fra i principali problemi della governance artica figurano la frammentazione del quadro legislativo, la mancanza di strumenti efficaci, l'assenza di un processo globale per la definizione delle politiche e le lacune in termini di partecipazione, attuazione e portata geografica.

Obiettivi strategici

- L'UE deve sostenere l'ulteriore sviluppo di un sistema cooperativo di governance artica basato sull'UNCLOS e atto a garantire:
 - la sicurezza e la stabilità
 - una gestione ambientale rigorosa, compreso il rispetto del principio precauzionale
 - un uso sostenibile delle risorse, nonché un accesso equo e libero
- Anziché proporre nuovi strumenti legislativi, occorre promuovere il pieno rispetto degli obblighi già esistenti, senza che ciò precluda la possibilità di sviluppare alcuni quadri per adeguarli alle nuove condizioni o alle specificità dell'Artico.
- L'UE deve promuovere un vasto dialogo e soluzioni negoziate e non sostenere intese che escludano uno qualsiasi degli Stati artici membri dell'UE o dei paesi SEE-EFTA artici.
- Le considerazioni artiche devono essere integrate nelle politiche generali e nei negoziati dell'UE.

Proposte di intervento:

²⁰ Dichiarazione di Ilulissat della conferenza artica del 28 maggio 2008.

²¹ Il Consiglio dei ministri nordici dà un contributo prezioso alla promozione della cooperazione artica.

²² Risoluzione del 9 ottobre 2008 sulla governance artica.

- valutare l'efficacia degli accordi multilaterali inerenti all'Artico per stabilire se occorrono iniziative o misure supplementari. Seguire con attenzione i processi di delimitazione marittima e di definizione dei limiti esterni delle piattaforme continentali per valutarne l'incidenza sugli interessi dell'UE.
- Vagliare la possibilità di creare nuovi quadri multisetoriali per la gestione integrata dell'ecosistema. Questo potrebbe comprendere la creazione di una rete di zone marine protette, l'adozione di misure relative alla navigazione e la definizione di norme atte a garantire lo sfruttamento sostenibile dei minerali.
- Aumentare il contributo al Consiglio artico compatibilmente con il ruolo e il potenziale della Comunità. Per prima cosa, la Commissione chiederà lo status di osservatore permanente nel Consiglio artico.
- Proporre che i partner della dimensione settentrionale si riuniscano regolarmente per discutere delle questioni inerenti all'Artico e valutino i possibili progetti da attuare nell'ambito del partenariato ambientale della dimensione settentrionale per coprire zone più estese dell'Artico europeo. Gli sforzi prodigati a favore dell'efficienza energetica e nell'ambito dei nuovi partenariati della dimensione settentrionale avranno grande importanza per la cooperazione artica.
- Avviare una riflessione sulle possibilità di sviluppare ulteriormente la cooperazione transfrontaliera relativa all'Artico e sui programmi regionali volti a intensificare la cooperazione con gli Stati artici.
- Esaminare tutte le possibilità a livello internazionale di promuovere misure volte a tutelare la biodiversità marina nelle zone non soggette alla giurisdizione nazionale, anche puntando alla conclusione di un accordo di attuazione dell'UNCLOS.
- Adoperarsi per il buon esito dei negoziati internazionali sulle zone protette di alto mare.
- Esaminare con la Norvegia e l'Islanda il modo in cui la direttiva quadro sulla strategia per l'ambiente marino sarà integrata nell'accordo SEE e si applicherà quindi a una parte del Mar Glaciale Artico.
- Inserire le questioni relative all'Artico nelle future riunioni del dialogo ad alto livello sugli affari marittimi.
- Inserire nel sito web dedicato agli affari marittimi un riepilogo di tutte le attività dell'UE connesse all'Artico e promuovere il dialogo con le parti interessate su queste attività.
- Vagliare insieme ai paesi nordici le possibilità di creare un centro europeo di informazione sull'Artico.
- Intensificare i contatti con le reti didattiche dell'Artico.

Groenlandia

In quanto parte della Danimarca, la Groenlandia è uno dei paesi e territori d'oltremare (PTOM) associati alla Comunità. La Comunità fornisce alla Groenlandia un'assistenza finanziaria consistente attraverso i programmi d'azione annuali²³.

Proposte di intervento:

- intensificare la cooperazione con la Groenlandia per quanto riguarda l'Artico. Si deve cercare di fare di più affinché l'UE svolga un ruolo ancora più importante nell'aiutare la Groenlandia a gestire il suo ambiente fragile e le sfide a cui deve far fronte la sua popolazione²⁴.

5. CONCLUSIONI

I suggerimenti contenuti nella presente comunicazione intendono gettare le basi per una riflessione più approfondita che risulterà utile per l'attuazione delle iniziative strategiche dell'UE, tra cui la politica marittima integrata. Dalla presente comunicazione dovrebbe inoltre scaturire un approccio più strutturato e coordinato alle questioni artiche, primo passo verso una politica dell'Unione europea per l'Artico. Questo aprirà nuove prospettive di cooperazione con gli Stati artici, aiutando tutti noi ad aumentare la stabilità e a trovare un giusto equilibrio fra l'obiettivo prioritario che consiste nel preservare l'ambiente artico e la necessità di usare le risorse in modo sostenibile.

²³ Nel periodo 2007-2013, i programmi d'azione annuali a sostegno dell'istruzione e della formazione professionale beneficiano di un'assistenza finanziaria che va fino a 25 milioni di euro all'anno a cui si aggiungono 15,8 milioni di euro all'anno, stanziati per la pesca.

²⁴ Tenendo conto del libro verde della Commissione sulle future relazioni tra l'UE e i paesi e territori d'oltremare - COM(2008) 383.



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CLIMATE CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council

I INTRODUCTION

The risks posed by climate change are real and its impacts are already taking place. The UN estimates that all but one of its emergency appeals for humanitarian aid in 2007 were climate related. In 2007 the UN Security Council held its first debate on climate change and its implications for international security. The European Council has drawn attention to the impact of climate change on international security and in June 2007 invited the High Representative and the European Commission to present a joint report to the European Council in Spring 2008.

The science of climate change is now better understood. The findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change demonstrate that even if by 2050 emissions would be reduced to below half of 1990 levels, a temperature rise of up to 2°C above pre-industrial levels will be difficult to avoid. Such a temperature increase will pose serious security risks that would increase if warming continues. Unmitigated climate change beyond 2°C will lead to unprecedented security scenarios as it is likely to trigger a number of tipping points that would lead to further accelerated, irreversible and largely unpredictable climate changes. Investment in mitigation to avoid such scenarios, as well as ways to adapt to the unavoidable should go hand in hand with addressing the international security threats created by climate change; both should be viewed as part of preventive security policy.

Climate change is best viewed as a threat multiplier which exacerbates existing trends, tensions and instability. The core challenge is that climate change threatens to overburden states and regions which are already fragile and conflict prone. It is important to recognise that the risks are not just of a humanitarian nature; they also include political and security risks that directly affect European interests. Moreover, in line with the concept of human security, it is clear that many issues related to the impact of climate change on international security are interlinked requiring comprehensive policy responses. For example, the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals would be at considerable risk because climate change, if unmitigated, may well wipe out years of development efforts.

This report focuses on the impact of climate change on international security and considers the impact of these international security consequences for Europe's own security, and how the EU should respond.

The EU is in a unique position to respond to the impacts of climate change on international security, given its leading role in development, global climate policy and the wide array of tools and instruments at its disposal. Moreover, the security challenge plays to Europe's strengths, with its comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction, and as a key proponent of effective multilateralism.

The European Security Strategy recognised the link between global warming and competition for natural resources while the Communication "Europe in the World" highlighted the effects of globalisation on external relations.

The report considers how the full range of EU instruments, including Community and CFSP/ESDP action, can be used alongside mitigation and adaptation policies to address the security risks. It also considers the implications for the intensification of political dialogue with third countries. A post-2012 agreement has to be developed by the end of 2009 and all levers of EU foreign relations must work towards this end.

The report concludes that it is in Europe's self interest to address the security implications of climate change with a series of measures: at the level of the EU, in bilateral relations and at the multilateral level, in mutually supportive ways.

Although this report addresses the impact of climate change on international security, the EU's response will be conditioned by the impact of climate change on Europe itself. Climate change will heavily affect Europe's natural environment and nearly all sections of society and the economy.

II. THREATS

The effects of climate change are being felt now: temperatures are rising, icecaps and glaciers are melting and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more intense. The following section outlines some of the forms of conflicts driven by climate change which may occur in different regions of the world.

i) Conflict over resources

Reduction of arable land, widespread shortage of water, diminishing food and fish stocks, increased flooding and prolonged droughts are already happening in many parts of the world. Climate change will alter rainfall patterns and further reduce available freshwater by as much as 20 to 30% in certain regions. A drop in agricultural productivity will lead to, or worsen, food-insecurity in least developed countries and an unsustainable increase in food prices across the board. Water shortage in particular has the potential to cause civil unrest and to lead to significant economic losses, even in robust economies. The consequences will be even more intense in areas under strong demographic pressure. The overall effect is that climate change will fuel existing conflicts over depleting resources, especially where access to those resources is politicised.

ii) Economic damage and risk to coastal cities and critical infrastructure

It has been estimated that a business as usual scenario in dealing with climate change could cost the world economy up to 20% of global GDP per year, whereas the cost of effective concerted action can be limited to 1%. Coastal zones are the home of about one fifth of the world's population, a number set to rise in the years ahead. Mega-cities, with their supporting infrastructure, such as port facilities and oil refineries, are often located by the sea or in river deltas. Sea-level rise and the increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters pose a serious threat to these regions and their economic prospects. The East coasts of China and India as well as the Caribbean region and Central America would be particularly affected. An increase in disasters and humanitarian crises will lead to immense pressure on the resources of donor countries, including capacities for emergency relief operations.

iii) Loss of territory and border disputes

Scientists project major changes to the landmass during this century. Receding coastlines and submergence of large areas could result in loss of territory, including entire countries such as small island states. More disputes over land and maritime borders and other territorial rights are likely. There might be a need to revisit existing rules of international law, particularly the Law of the Sea, as regards the resolution of territorial and border disputes. A further dimension of competition for energy resources lies in potential conflict over resources in Polar regions which will become exploitable as a consequence of global warming. Desertification could trigger a vicious circle of degradation, migration and conflicts over territory and borders that threatens the political stability of countries and regions.

iv) Environmentally-induced migration

Those parts of the populations that already suffer from poor health conditions, unemployment or social exclusion are rendered more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which could amplify or trigger migration within and between countries. The UN predicts that there will be millions of "environmental" migrants by 2020 with climate change as one of the major drivers of this phenomenon. Some countries that are extremely vulnerable to climate change are already calling for international recognition of such environmentally-induced migration. Such migration may increase conflicts in transit and destination areas. Europe must expect substantially increased migratory pressure.

v) Situations of fragility and radicalization

Climate change may significantly increase instability in weak or failing states by over-stretching the already limited capacity of governments to respond effectively to the challenges they face. The inability of a government to meet the needs of its population as a whole or to provide protection in the face of climate change-induced hardship could trigger frustration, lead to tensions between different ethnic and religious groups within countries and to political radicalisation. This could destabilise countries and even entire regions.

vi) Tension over energy supply

One of the most significant potential conflicts over resources arises from intensified competition over access to, and control over, energy resources. That in itself is, and will continue to be, a cause of instability. However, because much of the world's hydrocarbon reserves are in regions vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and because many oil and gas producing states already face significant social economic and demographic challenges, instability is likely to increase. This has the potential to feed back into greater energy insecurity and greater competition for resources. A possible wider use of nuclear energy for power generation might raise new concerns about proliferation, in the context of a non-proliferation regime that is already under pressure. As previously inaccessible regions open up due to the effects of climate change, the scramble for resources will intensify.

vii) Pressure on international governance

The multilateral system is at risk if the international community fails to address the threats outlined above. Climate change impacts will fuel the politics of resentment between those most responsible for climate change and those most affected by it. Impacts of climate mitigation policies (or policy failures) will thus drive political tension nationally and internationally. The potential rift not only divides North and South but there will also be a South - South dimension particularly as the Chinese and Indian share of global emissions rises. The already burdened international security architecture will be put under increasing pressure.

III. GEOGRAPHICAL EXAMPLES

In many regions, climate change is fuelling one or more of the threats identified above. The following sections illustrate how climate change is multiplying existing pressures in various regions around the world. Since the EU's neighbours include some of the most vulnerable regions to climate change, e.g. North Africa and the Middle East, migratory pressure at the European Union's borders and political instability and conflicts could increase in the future. This could also have a significant impact on Europe's energy supply routes.

1. Africa:

Africa is one of the continents most vulnerable to climate change because of multiple stresses and low adaptive capacity. In North Africa and the Sahel, increasing drought, water scarcity and land overuse will degrade soils and could lead to a loss of 75% of arable, rain-fed land. The Nile Delta could be at risk from both sea-level rise and salinisation in agricultural areas while 12 to 15% of arable land could be lost through sea-level rise in this century with 5 million people affected by 2050. Already today, climate change is having a major impact on the conflict in and around Darfur. In the Horn of Africa reduced rainfall and increasing temperatures will have a significant negative impact on a region highly vulnerable to conflict. In southern Africa, droughts are contributing to poor harvests, leading to food insecurity in several areas with millions of people expected to face food shortages. Migration in this region, but also migration from other regions through Northern Africa to reach Europe (transit migration) is likely to intensify. In Africa, and elsewhere, climate change is expected to have a negative effect on health, in particular due to the spread of vector-borne diseases further aggravating tensions.

2. Middle East:

Water systems in the Middle East are already under intense stress. Roughly two-thirds of the Arab world depends on sources outside their borders for water. The Jordan and Yarmuk rivers are expected to see considerable reduction in their flows affecting Israel, the Palestinian territories and Jordan. Existing tensions over access to water are almost certain to intensify in this region leading to further political instability with detrimental implications for Europe's energy security and other interests. Water supply in Israel might fall by 60% over this century. Consequently, a significant drop in crop yields is projected for an area that is already largely arid or semi-arid. Significant decreases are expected to hit Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia and thus affect stability in a vitally strategic region for Europe.

3. South Asia:

Sea-level rise may threaten the habitat of millions of people as 40% of Asia's population (almost 2 billion) lives within 60km from the coastline. Water stress and loss of agricultural productivity will make it difficult for Asia to feed its growing population who will additionally be exposed to an increase of infectious diseases. Changes in the monsoon rains and decrease of melt water from the Himalayas will affect more than 1 billion people. Conflicts over remaining resources and unmanaged migration will lead to instability in a region that is an important economic partner of Europe with factors of production and distribution concentrated along vulnerable coastlines.

4. Central Asia:

Central Asia is another region severely affected by climate change. An increasing shortage of water, which is both a key resource for agriculture and a strategic resource for electricity generation, is already noticeable. The glaciers in Tajikistan lost a third of their area in the second half of the 20th century alone, while Kyrgyzstan has lost over a 1000 glaciers in the last four decades. There is thus considerable additional potential for conflict in a region whose strategic, political and economic developments as well as increasing trans-regional challenges impact directly or indirectly on EU interests.

5. Latin America and the Caribbean:

In drier areas of Latin America climate change will lead to salinisation and desertification of agricultural land and to decreasing productivity of important crops and livestock. This will have adverse consequences for food security. Sea-level rise is projected to cause increased risk of flooding in low-lying areas. Increases in sea surface temperature due to climate change are projected to have adverse effects on coral reefs, and cause shifts in the location of fish stocks. Latin American and Caribbean countries are already subject to the detrimental effects, including many extreme events, associated with the El Niño cycle. Changes in rainfall patterns and the disappearance of glaciers are projected to significantly affect water availability for human consumption, agriculture and energy generation, for example in the Andes region. Countries in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico are already increasingly affected by major hurricanes. This will be further exacerbated by climate change and result in social and political tensions in a region with often weak governance structures.

6. The Arctic:

The rapid melting of the polar ice caps, in particular, the Arctic, is opening up new waterways and international trade routes. In addition, the increased accessibility of the enormous hydrocarbon resources in the Arctic region is changing the geo-strategic dynamics of the region with potential consequences for international stability and European security interests. The resulting new strategic interests are illustrated by the recent planting of the Russian flag under the North Pole. There is an increasing need to address the growing debate over territorial claims and access to new trade routes by different countries which challenge Europe's ability to effectively secure its trade and resource interests in the region and may put pressure on its relations with key partners.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

The impact of climate change on international security is not a problem of the future but already of today and one which will stay with us. Even if progress is made in reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, weather patterns have already changed, global temperatures have already risen and, above all, climate change is already being felt around the globe.

The active role of the EU in the international climate change negotiations is vital and must continue. The EU has demonstrated leadership both in international negotiations, in particular by advocating the 2°C target, and with its far-reaching decisions on domestic climate and energy policies. Yet, the EU cannot act alone. In a changing international political landscape, major emitters and emerging economies will also have to be engaged and commit to an ambitious global climate agreement under the UN framework.

In the EU's response, special consideration needs to be given to the US, China and India and what the implications mean for the EU's long term relations with Russia. The recommendations below should be complemented by further studies and followed up by coherent EU action plans, aiming at addressing the different dimensions of the responses required to address the impact of climate change on international security in a comprehensive and effective manner. The upcoming examination of the implementation of the European Security Strategy, and as appropriate proposals to complement it, should take account of the security dimension of climate change.

Enhancing capacities at the EU level

A first step to address the impact of climate change on international security should be to build up knowledge and assess the EU's own capacities, followed by an improvement in the prevention of, and preparedness for early responses to, disasters and conflicts. Financial implications for such responses should be identified and also be considered in the EU's budget review.

Possible actions that could be developed include:

- Intensify EU capacities for research, analysis, monitoring and early warning and Watch Lists including the Institute for Security Studies, the EU Satellite Centre (EUSC), the EU Joint Situation Centre (SITCEN), the EU Network of Energy Correspondents (NESCO), the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and Joint Research Centres. Monitoring and early warning needs to include in particular situations of state fragility and political radicalisation, tensions over resources and energy supplies, environmental and socio-economic stresses, threats to critical infrastructures and economic assets, border disputes, impact on human rights and potential migratory movements.

- Further build up EU and Member State planning and capabilities including civil protection and the use of crisis management and disaster response instruments (civil and military) to contribute to the response to the security risks posed by climate change.
- Commission further work to look, region-by-region, in more detail at what the security implications are likely to be and how they will affect EU interests.

EU multilateral leadership to promote global climate security

Climate change is a key element of international relations and will be increasingly so in the coming years, including its security dimension. If recognised, it can even become a positive driver for improving and reforming global governance. As it is a global problem, the EU is advocating a multilateral response. Building on the successful Bali conference in Dec 2007 the EU needs to continue and strengthen its leadership towards an ambitious post-2012 agreement in 2009, including both mitigation and adaptation action by all countries as a key contribution to addressing climate security.

Possible actions that could be developed include:

- Focus attention on the security risks related to climate change in the multilateral arena; in particular within the UN Security Council, the G8 as well as the UN specialised bodies (among others by addressing a possible need to strengthen certain rules of international law, including the Law of the Sea).
- Enhance international cooperation on the detection and monitoring of the security threats related to climate change, and on prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response capacities. Promote the development of regional security scenarios for different levels of climate change and their implications for international security.
- Consider environmentally-triggered additional migratory stress in the further development of a comprehensive European migration policy, in liaison with all relevant international bodies.

Cooperation with third countries

Climate change calls for revisiting and reinforcing EU cooperation and political dialogue instruments, giving more attention to the impact of climate change on security. This could lead to greater prioritisation and enhanced support for climate change mitigation and adaptation, good governance, natural resource management, technology transfer, trans-boundary environmental cooperation (inter alia water and land), institutional strengthening and capacity building for crisis management.






Possible actions that could be developed include:

- Further integrate adaptation and resilience to climate change into EU regional strategies (for example Northern Dimension, European Neighbourhood Policy, EU-Africa Strategy, Barcelona Process, Black Sea Synergy, EU-Central Asia Strategy, Middle East action plan). Special attention should be given to the most vulnerable regions and potential climate security hot spots. The Global Climate Change Alliance between the EU and the most vulnerable developing countries should be built upon.
- Develop an EU Arctic policy based on the evolving geo-strategy of the Arctic region, taking into account i.a. access to resources and the opening of new trade routes.
- Examine the security implications of climate change in dialogue with third countries including through the sharing of analyses.



Procedure : **2008/2633(RSP)**

[Document stages in plenary](#)

Select a document: RC-B6-0523/2008			
Texts tabled : RC-B6-0523/2008	Debates :  PV 08/10/2008 - 25  CRE 08/10/2008 - 25	Votes :  PV 09/10/2008 - 7.12  CRE 09/10/2008 - 7.12 Explanations of votes	Texts adopted :  P6_TA(2008)0474

Texts adopted

Thursday, 9 October 2008 - Brussels Provisional edition

Arctic Governance P6_TA-PROV(2008)0474 **B6-0523, 0526** and **0528/2008**

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on Arctic governance

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the International Polar Year (March 2007 - March 2009),
- having regard to the Eighth Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians, held in Fairbanks, Alaska from 12 to 14 August 2008,
- having regard to the Commission communication on Arctic policy expected in the autumn of 2008,
- having regard to its earlier resolutions on the Northern Dimension of 16 January 2003⁽¹⁾, 17 November 2003⁽²⁾, 16 November 2005⁽³⁾ and 16 November 2006⁽⁴⁾
- having regard to the conclusions of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment report from 2005,
- having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the Commission published a Communication on 10 October 2007 entitled 'An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union' (**COM(2007)0575**) (the 'Blue Book'),

B. whereas on 14 March 2008 the High Representative and the Commission issued a policy paper to the European Council, entitled 'Climate Change and International Security',

C. whereas the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Arctic region is growing, as symbolised by the planting of a Russian flag on the sea bed below the North Pole in August 2007,

D. having regard to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which has not yet been ratified by the US Senate and which was not formulated with specific regard to the current circumstances of climate change and the unique consequences of melting ice in the Arctic Seas,

E. whereas the recent conference of Arctic parliamentarians brought together elected representatives from the European Parliament, Canada, Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the US, to discuss the issues of maritime safety, health care, environmental protection and sustainable development,

F. whereas the Arctic region is currently not governed by any specifically formulated multilateral norms and regulations, as it was never expected to become a navigable waterway or an area of commercial exploitation,

G. whereas maritime traffic in Arctic waters has increased exponentially in recent years, owing to increased interest in offshore drilling and the ever more frequent passage of cruise ships, as well as the prospects offered by

the Northwest Passage,

H. whereas the Arctic region may contain approximately 20 % of the world's undiscovered oil and gas reserves,

I. whereas the Ilulissat Declaration was adopted by the 'A5 countries' (Denmark, Canada, Norway, Russia and the US) in May 2008,

J. whereas the Commission participated fully in the conference on 'The Arctic: Our Common Concern', organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers in Ilulissat (Greenland) on 9 and 10 September 2008, and whereas Parliament notes the chairman's conclusions in respect of that conference,

K. whereas the above-mentioned conference on the Arctic also focused on climate change in the region, its effects on the indigenous populations and possible adaptations to these effects,

L. whereas the rate of global warming in the Arctic region is much higher than in the rest of the world, with an increase of 2 °C in the last hundred years compared to an average of 0,6 °C in the rest of the world,

M. whereas the changes in climatic conditions in the Arctic are already such that the Inuit people, for example, can no longer hunt in the traditional manner, as the ice is too thin to hold their sleds, while wildlife such as polar bears, walruses and foxes are in danger of seeing much of their habitats disappear,

N. whereas three of the EU's Member States, and a further two of the EU's closely-related neighbours participating in the internal market through the EEA Agreement, are Arctic nations, meaning that the EU and its associated states comprise more than half the numeric membership of the Arctic Council,

1. Is deeply concerned at the effects of climate change on the sustainability of the lives of the indigenous peoples in the region, in terms of both the general environment (melting icecap and permafrost, rising sea levels and flooding) and the natural habitat (the retreating icecap poses problems for polar bears' feeding habits), and underlines that any international decisions relating to these issues must fully involve and take account of all peoples and nations of the Arctic;

2. Recalls that during the 20th century, Arctic air temperatures increased by approximately 5 °C, and that this increase is ten times faster than the observed global mean surface temperature; underlines that additional warming of about 4-7 °C in the Arctic is predicted for the next hundred years; believes, therefore, that the time for diagnosis is over and the time for action is now;

3. Underlines that Arctic species and societies have developed highly specialised methods of adaptation to the harsh conditions found at the poles, thus making them extremely vulnerable to dramatic changes in these conditions; is very concerned for walruses, polar bears, seals and other marine mammals which rely on sea-ice for resting, feeding, hunting and breeding, and which are particularly threatened by climate change;

4. Welcomes the concluding conference statement adopted by the Eighth Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians in Fairbanks on 14 August 2008;

5. Welcomes the fact that the 'High North' forms part of the EU's Northern Dimension policy, but is convinced that awareness of the Arctic's importance in a global context needs to be raised further by delivering a standalone EU Arctic policy;

6. Underlines the significance of the Arctic for the global climate in this respect, and hopes that the present support for research activities in that region will be continued beyond the International Polar Year;

7. Awaits with great interest the forthcoming Commission communication on Arctic policy, and hopes that it will lay the foundations for a meaningful EU Arctic policy; calls on the Commission to address, at least, the following issues in its communication:

- a) the state of play in relation to climate change, and adaptation to it, in the region;
- b) policy options that respect the indigenous populations and their livelihoods;
- c) the need to cooperate with our Arctic neighbours on cross-border issues, in particular maritime safety; and
- d) options for a future cross-border political or legal structure that could provide for the environmental protection and sustainable orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreement over resources and navigable waterways in the High North;

8. Calls on the Commission to include energy and security policy in the Arctic region on its agenda, and to propose,

in particular, in its expected communication on the region, suitable subjects and joint working procedures for the EU and the Arctic countries in the fields of climate change, sustainable development, security of energy supply and maritime safety;

9. Draws attention to the fact that the Arctic region, by virtue of its impact on the world's climate and its singular natural environment, merits special consideration as the EU develops its position for the COP 15 UN Climate Change Conference, due to be held in Copenhagen in 2009;

10. Is of the view that the maritime traffic in the region (both tourist- and offshore drilling-related) does not enjoy anywhere near the level of minimum international safety rules that prevail in other international waters, in terms of either protection of human life or protection of the environment, and urges the Commission to ensure, as soon as possible, that appropriate amendments are made to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) regulations;

11. Emphasises the external aspects of energy policy and the role of the Arctic in the formulation of the Energy Policy for Europe (EPE), as proposed by the March 2007 European Council;

12. Supports the Arctic Council in maintaining the Arctic region as a region of low tension, open to international research cooperation, so as to allow its potential as a future energy supplier region to be fully developed within a sustainable environmental framework;

13. Remains particularly concerned over the ongoing race for natural resources in the Arctic, which may lead to security threats for the EU and overall international instability;

14. Urges the Commission to take a proactive role in the Arctic by at least, as a first step, taking up 'observer status' on the Arctic Council, and considers that the Commission should set up a dedicated Arctic desk;

15. Suggests that the Commission should be prepared to pursue the opening of international negotiations designed to lead to the adoption of an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic, having as its inspiration the Antarctic Treaty, as supplemented by the Madrid Protocol signed in 1991, but respecting the fundamental difference represented by the populated nature of the Arctic and the consequent rights and needs of the peoples and nations of the Arctic region; believes, however, that as a minimum starting-point such a treaty could at least cover the unpopulated and unclaimed area at the centre of the Arctic Ocean;

16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Governments of the Member States, Norway, Iceland, Russia, Canada and the United States, and the regional cooperation actors.

(1) OJ C 38 E, 12.2.2004, p. 283.

(2) OJ C 87 E, 7.4.2004, p. 411.

(3) OJ C 280 E, 18.11.2006, p. 73.

(4) OJ C 314 E, 21.12.2006, p. 258.



European Security and Defence Assembly
Assembly of Western European Union

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4 December 2008

FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION

Europe's northern security dimension

REPORT

submitted on behalf of the Political Committee
by Paul Wille, Rapporteur (Belgium, Liberal Group),
and Odd Einar Dørum, co-Rapporteur (Norway, Liberal Group)

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Report transmitted to: the President of the Council of WEU; the President of the Council of the European Union; the WEU Secretary-General/EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy; the President of the European Commission; the EU Commissioner for institutional relations and communication strategy; the Presidents/Speakers of the 39 national parliaments represented in the Assembly; the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Baltic Assembly, the Nordic Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the CIS Parliamentary Assembly; the President of the European Parliament; the Secretaries General of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe, NATO and the OSCE.

Europe's northern security dimension

REPORT¹

*submitted on behalf of the Political Committee
by Paul Wille, Rapporteur (Belgium, Liberal Group),
and Odd Einar Dørum, co-Rapporteur (Norway, Liberal Group)*

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DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

on Europe's northern security dimension

AMENDMENTS

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

¹ Adopted unanimously by the Committee on 5 November 2008.

RECOMMENDATION 833²
on Europe's northern security dimension

The Assembly,

- (i) Considering that the Arctic is a region that is both crucial in terms of the global climate and host to important research and economic activities carried out by a number of non-Arctic countries, including many EU member states, thus making its governance and future legal status a global responsibility;
- (ii) Concerned by data showing that climate change is occurring faster than predicted and calling therefore for a greater sense of urgency with respect to tackling the causes;
- (iii) Aware that climate change in the Arctic already impacts on the daily lives of the four million people living in the region and in particular on the traditional way of life of indigenous peoples;
- (iv) Noting that, in a referendum held on 25 November 2008, the people of Greenland voted by a large majority in favour of greater autonomy from Denmark and aware that the prospect of new sources of wealth has revived discussion about independence for this Arctic island with a population of under 60 000 people;
- (v) Welcoming the policy priorities set out by the European Commission in its Communication on the European Union and the Arctic, published on 20 November 2008; also the Commission's intention to apply for permanent observer status in the Arctic Council; but while convinced that closer involvement by the European Union in the Arctic region would be of all-round benefit to Arctic Council member countries, aware that the way forward is through the process of applying and being accepted by all its member states;
- (vi) Considering also that climate change has brought a geopolitical agenda to the Arctic, based on new access to fishing, mineral and hydrocarbon resources and navigation routes and generating new challenges in terms of management of disputes and resolution of security issues;
- (vii) Convinced that the Arctic potentially can supply a part of Europe's future energy needs and therefore must remain an area of low tension and stable governance based on mutual trust and cross-border cooperation;
- (viii) Having regard to the document on climate change and security published jointly by the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Commission, which contains a chapter on the Arctic;
- (ix) Perturbed that the recent war in Georgia may be indicative of a return to symmetric conflict;
- (x) Convinced that the threshold for the use of military force is far higher in the Arctic and the Baltic than in the Caucasus;
- (xi) Taking the view that Russia's ambitions are wide-ranging and extend to the Arctic;
- (xii) Noting the increase in Russia's military activities in the Arctic region, which include passes by strategic bomber planes close to Norwegian and Icelandic airspace, and in its investment in power projection capabilities;
- (xiii) Concerned by Russian President Dmitri Medvedev's recent first state of the nation address in which he said that Russia would have short-range missiles within the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad in response to deployment of parts of the United States missile defence system in Poland and in the Czech Republic;
- (xiv) Aware of an increase in civil and military activity in the Arctic on the part of a number of countries with the aim of backing their territorial claims and rights of access to the region;

² Adopted by the Assembly on 4 December 2008 at the 4th sitting.

- (xv) Having regard to the recent meeting in Helsinki between the Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff and his Russian counterpart;
- (xvi) Noting that, for the first time since the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Norwegian Long Term Defence Planning now includes a scenario based on the assumption that Norway is subject to permanent challenge from military operations by one of its neighbours and that parts of the country may fall under the control of a foreign state – a scenario not thought likely but which cannot be completely discarded;
- (xvii) Noting that a review by the Finnish Parliament of the government's national defence white paper refers to the need for Finland to be able to give and receive military assistance;
- (xviii) Having regard to the conclusions of a study by the Swedish Defence Institute (FOI) concerning the growing strategic importance of the Arctic in terms of missile defence and nuclear deterrence;
- (xix) Anticipating a diversion of focus by NATO and the European Union from building peace and stability elsewhere towards member state security, thus confirming the continued relevance of the kind of collective guarantees afforded by the North Atlantic Treaty and the modified Brussels Treaty;
- (xx) Aware of the recent adoption of an Arctic strategy by Russia's highest political authority, the National Security Council;
- (xxi) Noting Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's view that securing Russia's interests in the Arctic is a national priority;
- (xxii) Noting that the Russian Government has made clear its interest in cooperative solutions to all questions relating to the Arctic and in peace and stability being maintained there;
- (xxiii) Considering the high percentage of its energy that the European Union imports from Russia and the fact that Russia's renewed strength stems from the extensive income it derives from its energy exports;
- (xxiv) Considering that while the EU economy is highly integrated with that of Russia there is little political cooperation between the two;
- (xxv) Considering that cooperation on a variety of issues will build trust and help prevent security issues developing in the wrong direction;
- (xxvi) Having regard to the meeting of the five Arctic coastal states (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States) in Ilulissat, Greenland, in May this year; to their plea for continuing commitment to the legal framework that applies in the Arctic region – notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – for achieving an the orderly settlement of their claims to the Arctic continental shelf and to their position that they see no need for a new comprehensive legal schema for governance of the region;
- (xxvii) Concerned that a small group of US Senators is effectively holding up ratification of UNCLOS, notwithstanding support for such ratification from the President of the United States and within the US Government;
- (xxviii) Concerned that, while it applies UNCLOS de facto, the United States should be reluctant to adhere fully to this major multilateral legal instrument, making it the only country in the region not to have ratified this particular UN convention;
- (xxix) Convinced that its ratification by the United States would reinforce UNCLOS, making it a more robust legal framework for settlement of anticipated overlapping territorial claims to the Arctic;
- (xxx) Welcoming the fact that the Arctic is part of the framework known as the Northern Dimension bringing together the European Union, Iceland, Norway and Russia; recognising the important work done in the framework of the Arctic Council, but regretting that these institutions have so far not been able to address the matter of the importance of the Arctic for Europe's security;

(*xxxi*) Taking the view that the existing institutional and legal framework applying to the Arctic must be adapted if security issues are to be dealt with within its ambit;

(*xxxii*) Having regard to calls for the establishment of a treaty for the Arctic similar to the Antarctic Treaty, but of the view that such calls may delay United States ratification of UNCLOS;

(*xxxiii*) Believing that existing institutions should first be exploited to the full in order to strengthen trust and deepen cooperation,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. Take stock of the crucial importance of the Arctic to the global climate and strengthen and support research activities, in particular with respect to long-term monitoring of climate change, beyond the International Polar Year which ends in 2008;
2. Support the countries of the region in maintaining the Arctic as an area of low tension and stability and one open to cooperative international research, so as to allow its potential to supply energy to be developed under effective environmental governance;
3. Establish with Russia a broad agenda for cooperation on Arctic issues in particular within the framework of the Northern Dimension and the Arctic Council;
4. Encourage member countries represented in the various institutions in the Arctic and Baltic regions to explore fully their potential for dealing with the new Arctic challenges, including security aspects;
5. Discuss in NATO how climate change may impact on the organisation's presence in the Arctic and include a reference to the security consequences of climate change in the "Declaration on Alliance Security", which it is anticipated will be adopted at the organisation's 60th anniversary summit in 2009;
6. Invite the United States to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), thus ending speculation that the US will not fully adhere to this multilateral mechanism for the settlement of its territorial claims in the Arctic;
7. Make reference in any update of the European Union's 2003 European Security Strategy to the consequences of climate change for Europe's security and include a chapter on the European Union's strategic attitude towards the Arctic.

ORDER 129³

on Europe's northern security dimension

The Assembly,

(i) Convinced that with the growing importance for the whole of Europe of Arctic security, it behoves national parliamentarians to take an increased interest in that region,

INSTRUCTS ITS PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE TO

Study the possibilities of increased cooperation between the Assembly and existing parliamentary forums in the region.

³ Adopted by the Assembly on 4 December 2008 at the 4th sitting.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

*submitted by Paul Wille, Rapporteur (Belgium, Liberal Group) and
Odd Einar Dørum, co-Rapporteur (Norway, Liberal Group)*

I. Introduction

1. The northern dimension of Europe's security is increasingly being determined by climate change in the Arctic. Global warming happens faster in the High North than in other areas. All the latest data indicate that the ice is melting faster than any model has predicted. Polar ice is both receding and thinning, and the remaining ice is disappearing faster than ever. Increasingly ice-free Arctic waters warm in the summer, slowing the build-up of new winter ice. Even if mitigation efforts are successful, it will take until the middle of the century to stop global warming, which means that the Arctic will continue to lose ice until then.⁴

2. Due to the high proportion of endemic species, the Arctic ecosystem is more fragile than in most other places in the world. About four million people live in the Arctic region and the changing environment changes their lives. The impact of such change will affect all Europeans, including in terms of their security. The melting permafrost also has an impact on the energy industry: pipelines can crack and maintenance and transportation become more difficult.

3. Geopolitics is not limited to Afghanistan and the Middle East; it also affects Europe's High North. With the melting of the polar ice cap, new opportunities for oil and gas exploration open up and coastal states have begun to lay claim to the new areas of open sea and the access these afford to the riches of the Arctic waters and seabed. Many of their claims will overlap. In view of the forecast growth in demand for oil and gas, the region could become a major future energy supplier, while new navigation routes across and along the polar area could alter patterns of global shipping. The prospect of new sources of wealth has led to a revival of the discussion in Greenland about independence from Denmark.

4. The region is also affected by the financial crisis and its geopolitical consequences: Norway is offering additional credit to Iceland so that the country does not need to take up a Russian loan offer which would increase the latter's influence in the region.

5. A further driving force in the Arctic is a more assertive and resourceful Russia which has resumed its military activity there. Military equipment is getting better and the receding ice no longer acts as a brake on such activity.

6. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced after a meeting of the National Security Council that guaranteeing Russia's claims in the Arctic is a national priority: "We must surely, and for the long-term future, secure Russia's interests in the Arctic."⁵ Russia's recent assertiveness has contributed to more active policies on the part of other countries in the region, including Canada and the United States.

7. These countries represent the transatlantic element of Europe's northern security dimension. Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper, announcing the construction of eight new Arctic offshore patrol ships and a deep water port for resupplying them, said that "when it comes to defending our sovereignty over the Arctic (...) we intend to use it" and that "nothing is as fundamental as protecting Canada's territorial integrity; our borders, our airspace and our waters".⁶ The Arctic region remains important to NATO and is home to major installations of the US global missile defence system.

⁴ Stefan Rahmstorf from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 27 October 2008 in Berlin. He is co-author of a study on "Climate change as a security risk" mandated by the German Government-sponsored Advisory Council on Global (Environmental) Change (WBGU). The study is available in English at www.wbgu.de

⁵ Telegraph, 22 September 2008.

⁶ 7 July 2007, Prime Minister's website <http://www.pm.gc.ca>

8. In March this year, the EU's CFSP High Representative, Javier Solana, and the European Commission jointly published a text, "Climate Change and International Security".⁷ It contains a chapter on the Arctic in which attention is drawn to the changing geostrategic dynamics of the region and its potential impact on international stability and European security interests. The debate over territorial claims and access to shipping routes is viewed with concern because it challenges "Europe's ability to effectively secure its trade route and resource interests in the region and may put pressure on its relations with key partners". The development of an EU Arctic policy is therefore a necessity. The update of the 2003 European Security Strategy, which is expected to be presented to the European Council in December this year, should integrate the consequences of climate change for Europe's security and introduce a chapter on the European Union's strategic position with respect to the Arctic.⁸

9. Attention must also be paid to the consequences of the war in Georgia and Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Was this an episode or is it a new trend in Russia's foreign and security policy? Russia's lack of respect for international law and conventions is being carefully evaluated, not only by NATO and the European Union, but also by the countries in the Arctic and Baltic Sea regions. "A real chill" had been sent across NATO, Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen said during his recent visit to Vilnius and Helsinki, where he met his Russian counterpart, General Nikolai Makarov. The Admiral saw his own presence in the region as a "very visible message of reassurance" and affirmed that NATO would do everything "to prevent and deter an attack by any potential aggressor".⁹ Baltic countries have called for NATO to start making contingency plans for their defence.

10. The mood is certainly changing. While until very recently the "gold-rush" for the High North was only regarded as an issue among experts in security questions and opportunities were seen to outweigh potential challenges, in September this year the British newspaper The Daily Mail posted the headline: "Polar war could break out in 12 years".¹⁰ "The Arctic contest heats up", announced the weekly, The Economist, in October, while the Vice-President of the Foreign Policy Council in Washington drew on more frosty imagery when publishing his views in Jane's Defence Weekly: "Chill wind blows over claims to Arctic lands", and invoked the spectre of a new cold war.¹¹ A poll conducted among European citizens after the war in Georgia reveals that Russia is being seen for the first time in many years as a threat to international security.¹²

11. Your Rapporteurs believe it is possible to prevent differences over sovereignty and the use of resources in the Arctic escalating into open conflicts. But to do so, it is necessary to strengthen the legal and institutional framework governing the Arctic and avoid a security vacuum forming.

12. After the Political Committee's first report entitled "Security in the High North" (Doc. 1969, 2007) contributed to launching a debate among a wider audience on the subject, this second report seeks to evaluate the consequences for Europe's security of climate change in the Arctic. In so doing, it also takes in the situation in the Baltic Sea and raises the following issues:

- Will the Arctic remain a stable region or could it become a source of insecurity for Europe?
- Is Russia a reliable partner in the area? One that plays by the rules? Or is there potential for conflict and instability?
- Have the region's existing institutional and legal frameworks the ability to deal with the anticipated challenges?

⁷ EU Council document S113/08, 14 March 2008. www.consilium.europa.eu

⁸ See also the report on "Revision of the European Security Strategy – reply to the annual report of the Council", submitted on behalf of the Political Committee by Daniel Ducarme, Document 2000, adopted on 3 June 2008.

⁹ International Herald Tribune, 23 October 2008.

¹⁰ Daily Mail Online, 25 September 2008. www.dailymail.co.uk

¹¹ The Economist, 11 October 2008; Ilan Berman in Jane's Defence Weekly, 22 October 2008. www.jdw.janes.com

¹² Financial Times, 23 September 2008.

- Is the European Union’s policy towards the Arctic the right one in view of the region’s future strategic importance and is there further need for support to Europe’s partners in the north?

II. The institutional and legal framework of the Arctic

13. The report reviews the current and future legal and institutional framework for the Arctic and Baltic regions. There are a variety of institutions and legal regimes governing the wider region (the Arctic Council; the EU Northern Dimension and EU Baltic Strategy; the Barents Sea Cooperation; the Nordic Council; NATO; UNCLOS and the International Maritime Organisation).

14. The most relevant and promising institutional bases for international cooperation are the Arctic Council and the EU’s Northern Dimension; the most relevant legal base is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The report examines whether the Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension are equipped to take institutional responsibility and whether UNCLOS is sufficient to provide a comprehensive legal framework that can take effective responsibility for tackling the issues and settling the disputes of the region.

1. Arctic Council

15. The Arctic Council is made up of eight countries of the polar north. Three (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) are members of the European Union; five are members of NATO (Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and the United States). Russia has been a member of the Arctic Council since the latter was established in Ottawa in 1996.

16. The Arctic Council is a cooperation mechanism. However, it is not based on an international Treaty. Its member countries have achieved a high degree of cooperation but the Council was never intended as a forum for security questions. Its founding declaration states: “the Arctic Council should not deal with matters related to military security”.¹³

17. Critical commentators describe the Arctic Council as having a “weak institutional structure, soft law status and *ad hoc* funding system” and believe the capability of international governance in the region needs reinforcing.¹⁴

18. The Arctic Council has developed a good record of cooperation on environmental issues. Helge Blakkisrud, Iver Neumann and fellow researchers from the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI) in Oslo argue that if the High North is to be opened up further for navigation and exploration of its natural resources it is essential to introduce a tough environmental protection scheme.¹⁵ However, in their view, Russia has scant ability or willingness to meet environmental standards due to lack of acceptance of them and inadequate technology.

2. The Northern Dimension

19. Such problems could be dealt with through the EU/Russia dialogue based on the “new” Northern Dimension, in which Russia, the EU, Iceland and Norway cooperate as equal partners and where funding is available to initiate and sustain common projects. However, the researchers from NUPI argue that in a situation where Russia was convinced that it could only achieve its ends from a position of strength, the European Union, with a culture based on regulation and avoidance of military might as a means of resolving difficulties, might not be able to achieve much in the “jungle that is the High North”.

20. Almost all security experts and government representatives your Rapporteurs met ruled out the possibility of using the Northern Dimension to deal with security issues. Indeed, in the recent declaration adopted by the Northern Dimension Summit there is no reference to security questions. Instead, the Northern Dimension has a good working record on issues such as health, the environment

¹³ Signed in Ottawa on 19 September 1996. www.arctic-council.org

¹⁴ Timo Koivurova, “Alternatives for an Arctic Treaty – Evaluation and a New Proposal”, Review of European Community and International Environmental Law, pages 14-26. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com>

¹⁵ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 20 August 2008 in Oslo.

and social affairs. Axel Voss from the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs indicated that because the Northern Dimension goes back to the four common spaces of the EU-Russian partnership, there might be a possibility of linking the Northern Dimension to security issues (common space on external security). However, he did not believe this was a realistic option.¹⁶

3. NATO

21. According to a diplomat consulted by your Rapporteurs, putting the Arctic's geopolitical and security related questions on the agenda at NATO would probably mean their being looked at quickly from a purely military perspective. Your Rapporteurs were also told that involving NATO with the Arctic issues risked creating a split in the Alliance between northern, "Anglo-Saxon", and continental European countries with the latter showing considerable resistance to launching such a debate within NATO.

22. Your Rapporteurs nevertheless believe that NATO should at least incorporate the challenges of the Arctic into its "Declaration on Alliance Security" which was announced at the 2008 Bucharest Summit and is expected to be adopted at the Alliance's 60th anniversary summit in 2009.

23. As far as the many non-military issues of the Arctic are concerned, Arild Moe, Deputy Director of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, does not think the Atlantic Alliance could be an appropriate body for dealing with them.¹⁷ Nor would the European Union be any better suited, as its Arctic policy is still loose and limited in scope. The Arctic Council could be strengthened but lacks support from the US Government.

24. In his view, there really is no cooperation forum to deal with the potential conflicts of the Arctic. But Arild Moe also believes that existing disagreements over the extension of the continental shelf could take years to develop into open conflict. We are not on the verge of a war over Arctic resources, he says.

4. *The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)*

25. The legal framework for dealing with territorial claims in the Arctic is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).¹⁸

26. At your Rapporteurs' meetings in Oslo, reference was made to an article, published in the March/April issue of Foreign Affairs,¹⁹ by Scott Borgerson, a former Lieutenant Commander in the US Coast Guard and now International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, New York. Borgerson explains that at present the United States, as the only Arctic coastal state which has not yet ratified UNCLOS, may not be in a position to stake its claim to its share of the Arctic, despite wide acceptance of its right to do so. In his view, it is a mistake to place too much reliance on "customary international law and a powerful navy".

27. Wayne Limberg, Director of the US State Department Office for Russia, explains that the White House would need to put more pressure on the Senate to have UNCLOS ratified but that it was currently concerned with many other issues and had simply not been able to bring the case forward.²⁰ His colleague Raymond Dalland (Office for Analysis on Russia and Eurasia) believes that some senators are also worried about the possible need for military naval operations in the Arctic following UNCLOS ratification, although he himself did not see things that way. Julianne Smith and David Pumphrey, senior fellows at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, believe that senators block ratification for ideological reasons, probably related to their views on multilateral institutions.²¹ Isaac Edwards, Legislative Director in the office of Alaska Senator Lisa

¹⁶ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 27 October 2008 in Berlin.

¹⁷ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 20 August 2008 in Oslo.

¹⁸ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982. www.un.org

¹⁹ Scott Borgerson, "Arctic meltdown. The economic and security implications of global warming", in Foreign Affairs, March/April 2008. www.foreignaffairs.com

²⁰ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 9 October 2008 in Washington.

²¹ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 9 October 2008 in Washington.

Mukowski, believes sovereignty issues are important to many senators. Senator Mukowski is in favour of ratifying UNCLOS and convinced that if a vote was scheduled today, UNCLOS would be passed.²²

28. The reasons behind the refusal to ratify UNCLOS may be tactical manoeuvring in Congress and it may well be the case that the United States tacitly respects regulations governing the Arctic although it has not ratified the Convention. Your Rapporteurs are nevertheless concerned over its hesitancy about adhering to a global legal system and believe this Assembly should encourage the United States to become more involved in Arctic policy issues. Once party to UNCLOS, the United States would also be able to claim exclusive economic zones. It may also be easier to come to an agreement with Canada over rights of passage through waters off the Canadian coast.²³

29. Scott Borgerson also criticises the US Government for neglecting the country's icebreaker fleet, with the result that "Washington has forfeited its ability to assert sovereignty in the Arctic". He believes the United States cannot afford to be a bystander because, in his view, "the Arctic region is not currently governed by any comprehensive multilateral norms and regulations because it was never expected to become a navigable waterway or a site for large-scale commercial development". The situation is especially dangerous because "there are currently no overarching political or legal structures that can provide for the orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreements".

30. In particular, environmentally oriented people have called for the establishment of an Arctic Treaty, similar to the Antarctic Treaty, in order to protect that fragile region from the risks of increased navigation and natural resources exploitation and to limit its use to peaceful purposes only.²⁴

31. Neil Hamilton, Director of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Arctic programme, thinks UNCLOS is no longer adequate and that "a solid Arctic Treaty and a multilateral governance body (...) is the only way to ensure the implementation of sustainable development (...) and help the Arctic to adapt to the severe impact of climate change".²⁵ The Nordic Council Parliamentary Assembly has asked the Nordic Council to aim at creating "a legal system pertaining to the Arctic" and the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR) has called "[for] an audit of existing legal regimes that impact the Arctic and to continue the discussion about strengthening or adding to them where necessary".²⁶

32. In his speech to the Nordic Council Conference on "Common Concern for the Arctic" held on 9 September 2008 in Ilulissat, Greenland,²⁷ EU Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Commissioner Joe Borg recalled that no international fisheries conservation and management regime covered the whole of the Arctic Ocean and that the broader question of the region's governance remained open. He called for further development of the existing institutional framework and a review of the international environmental treaties applicable to the Arctic.

33. For Elisabeth Walaas, Norwegian State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the Arctic is different to the Antarctic because under the ice there is water and legal instruments governing the world's oceans exist already.²⁸ Norway has expended considerable effort in consolidating this view among the five Arctic coastal states (Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Russia and the United States).

34. On 28 May 2008, these five states came together in Ilulissat for an "Arctic Ocean Conference" where they recalled the "extensive international legal framework", and notably the "Law of the Sea" (UNCLOS), that applied to the Arctic Ocean and confirmed their unique position "as the five coastal states" and their "sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction in large areas of the Arctic Ocean". They agreed to "remain committed to this framework and to the orderly settlement of any possible

²² In a meeting with your co-Rapporteur on 10 October 2008 in Washington.

²³ IISS Strategic Outlook 2008, page 69.

²⁴ The Guardian, 29 May 2008. www.guardian.co.uk

²⁵ "New rules needed to regulate Arctic activities, says WWF", WWF UK press release, 17 August 2007. www.wwf.org.uk

²⁶ Cited in Timo Koivurova, pages 22 and 23.

²⁷ Joe Borg: "The Arctic: a matter of concern to us all", Ilulissat, 9 September 2008. <http://ec.europa.eu>

²⁸ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 20 August in Oslo.

overlapping claims”. They saw “no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal regime to govern the Arctic Ocean”.²⁹

35. With the Ilulissat Declaration, the five coastal states attempt to stress their “supremacy” in this area.³⁰ The establishment of an Arctic Treaty is highly unlikely without the support of the five Arctic coastal states. State Secretary Walaas explained to your Rapporteurs that the Ilulissat Conference highlighted the essential role these five countries – including the United States – attach to the UNCLOS as a legal framework for the Arctic. In her view, one of the most important outcomes of the meeting and its preparatory sessions between high officials had been the implicit call to the United States to ratify UNCLOS.

36. Your Rapporteurs believe that the Assembly should also call on that country to adhere to UNCLOS. With the United States on board, UNCLOS would be reinforced and offered a more robust legal framework. It may, however, be necessary to further strengthen international governance in the Arctic so that the melting of the ice does not lead to the freezing over of relations as soon as differences over territorial claims, the exploitation of maritime resources and the legal status of shipping routes become more serious.

37. The Eighth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held on 12-14 August 2008 in Fairbanks, Alaska,³¹ to which the European Parliament sent an important delegation, seems to confirm that support inside the region for a new legal regime for the Arctic is weak and that further development of Arctic governance is very likely to happen through reform of the Arctic Council. The final statement of the conference calls on all actors in the Arctic, including the institutions of the European Union, to support management of the Arctic Ocean through “the existing, comprehensive international legal regime” and to “promote ideas to strengthen the legal and economic base of the Arctic Council”.

38. On 9 October 2008, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Arctic governance which states that the “ongoing race for natural resources ... may lead to security threats for the EU and overall international stability” and supports the Arctic Council in seeking to maintain an area of low tension. The European Parliament also declares itself “deeply concerned at the effects of climate change on the sustainability of the lives of the indigenous peoples” and that the retreating icecap “poses problems for polar bears’ feeding habits”.

39. The resolution then suggests “the opening of international negotiations designed to lead to the adoption of an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic” which should cover “as a minimum starting-point ... the unpopulated and unclaimed area at the centre of the Arctic Ocean”. (This begs the question of how a treaty on the unpopulated areas will be able to protect indigenous peoples.) An amendment tabled by Green members calling for a moratorium on all prospection and exploitation activities was rejected.³²

40. Your Rapporteurs welcome the European Parliament’s interest in the Arctic, but feel its call for an Arctic Treaty is misguided. It is unclear to us what those who support such a treaty want to achieve. With respect to Russia, such a call implies that the country is being asked to accept a limit to the use of the vast continental shelf it claims, which is highly unrealistic given the current political agenda in Moscow. With respect to the United States, it weakens efforts to see the country ratify UNCLOS. Washington might well ask why the United States should ratify one multilateral scheme if there were negotiations upcoming for another one that might supersede it.

41. During the debate in the European Parliament on the resolution referred to above, Vladimir Spidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, explained that the Commission was preparing a Communication proposing three areas of action: protection and

²⁹ The Ilulissat Declaration is available at www.ambwashington.um.dk

³⁰ Ingo Winkelmann in: “Fixed rules of play for dividing up the Arctic Ocean”, SWP Comments, July 2008. www.swp-berlin.org

³¹ Conference Statement, Eighth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic region, Fairbanks, 12-14 August 2008. www.arcticparl.org

³² Bulletin Quotidien Europe No. 9760, 14 October 2008.

preservation; promotion of sustainable resources management and improvement of multilateral governance. He insisted that preservation of the environment, while an absolute priority, would not exclude the use of the region's natural resources and also recognised that the conditions for the introduction of a specific and binding legal system for the Arctic were not present.

42. It is important to note that the European countries were not represented at the Arctic interparliamentary conference in Fairbanks by national parliamentarians from any other than Arctic states and Poland and the United Kingdom. With security issues becoming increasingly important for the region and the whole of Europe, national parliamentarians need to pay more attention to the Arctic and not leave Europe's interests in the hands of a delegation from the European Parliament alone.

5. Contested issues in the Arctic

43. Many of the territorial disputes were literally considered to be "frozen" until very recently, but the retreating ice and new knowledge about potential mineral and hydrocarbon resources have brought them back to the attention of analysts and political leaders.³³

44. The formal machinery of UNCLOS allows signatories to lodge claims with the UN Continental Shelf Commission for control over water and seabed resources off their coastlines over distances extending beyond the exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles to up to 350 nautical miles if the existence of a continuous continental shelf can be proven. A time limit for lodging such claims comes into force for a new signatory state, as from the time it ratifies the Convention.

45. The five Arctic coastal states are all in the process of gathering scientific evidence to prove their claims to segments of the Arctic waters and seabed. Russia argues that the Lomonosov Ridge is a continuation of its continental shelf and that it is thus entitled to claim a vast area off its coast, including the highly symbolic North Pole. In August 2007, in an equally symbolic gesture, a small Russian submarine planted a titanium flag in the North Pole's seabed.

46. Russia first lodged its claim to the North Pole in 2001 – a claim rejected by UNCLOS – but is expected to provide more proof in support of it in 2009. Denmark has stated that it considers the underwater ridge extending from Greenland towards the North Pole to be part of its continental shelf. Denmark has not yet submitted a claim, but if it does, it may then include the North Pole. Norway made its submission in 2006. If their claims are awarded, Russia will gain 463 000 square nautical miles (1.2 million square kilometres) and Norway 96 500 square nautical miles.

47. Canada and the United States are at odds over a wedge of territory in the Beaufort Sea. Both countries also disagree as to whether the waters around the Canadian northern archipelago of islands should be considered internal Canadian territorial waters or as part of Canada's exclusive economic zone open to international shipping. The determination could impact on the right to innocent passage without prior notice.

48. Canada and Denmark are in disagreement over the tiny Hans Island in the strait between Canada and Greenland.

49. Denmark and Norway are engaged in a territorial dispute over Tuppiap Qeqertaa (Tobias Island). The island was discovered under the permanent sea ice only in 1993.

50. Norway and Russia have differing views, dating back to Soviet times, over boundaries in the eastern Barents Sea. Huge gas fields have been located or are being exploited close by.

51. Norway claims an exclusive economic zone around the archipelago of Svalbard. Because of the specific legal nature of Svalbard, based on the 1920 Spitsbergen Treaty, 40 contracting parties to that treaty are involved in solving legal disputes in the Arctic.

52. So far the Arctic states have managed to deal with their disputes peacefully, through negotiation, conciliation or legal procedures, making the Arctic a "distinct political region".³⁴ While

³³ For maps illustrating the various claims see for example Catlin Harrington's article "Eyeing up the new Arctic" in Jane's Defence Weekly, 16 January 2008. For more details of the different claims see IISS Strategic Outlook 2008.

this favourable evaluation may be justified, one should not forget that there are other issues and sources of conflict that are not covered under UNCLOS and need to be addressed by other institutions and legal frameworks. They include:

- increased Russian assertiveness and military activity;
- the establishment of new navigation routes;
- the protection of indigenous people and their social and economic rights;
- the treatment of Russian nuclear waste;
- the possibility of Greenland taking steps to gain independence from Denmark;
- the growing number of polar tourists.

III. The security situation in the North

53. In the past, the region was the theatre of silent but intense confrontation between the two cold war blocs. This was the area where, as an essential element of nuclear deterrence strategy, nuclear submarines hid under the ice and cruised in the deep Arctic sea. Few are aware of how often the two sides came close to “heated” conflict. After the end of the cold war, the region lost some of its strategic importance although important military installations, in particular with respect to the United States-led missile defence system, were maintained, updated and extended. The region also continued to be of interest because of its fish stocks, oil and gas exploration and as Russia’s only access to the Atlantic.

54. The potential for tension and instability in the High North has again increased with the melting of the polar ice cap and the new opportunities it opens up for further exploration and exploitation of natural resources. Old and new disagreements over overlapping claims to territories and economic zones could turn into conflicts. In addition, disputes are likely to arise over the status of new navigation routes.

55. A study recently published by the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) concludes that the Arctic is growing in importance with respect to missile defence and nuclear deterrence.³⁵

1. Russia’s renewed military assertiveness

56. Russia’s military presence in the region is a new factor and one that might potentially contribute to instability.

57. According to Espen Barth Eide, Norwegian State Secretary for Defence, Russian strategic bomber flights close to Norwegian airspace have become a weekly event.³⁶ Also, a Russian aircraft carrier recently cruised around Norway’s oil platforms. The Economist has even reported a mock bombing run against Norway’s northern command centre at Bodo.³⁷ According to Mr Eide, Russia now had more resources and seemed more disposed to resume military activity than in the past. Its bomber planes were not violating Norwegian airspace but wanted to “be seen” and the Norwegian air force would regularly escort them. The number of flights in 2007 had exceeded the total for the entire period from 1991 to 2006.

58. In Mr Eide’s view, these flights were not specifically directed at Norway. Rather they were a message to the West: “You took advantage of us when we were weak. Now we are not weak anymore, so reckon with us”. He gave another example: on the day when the United States removed its planes from Iceland, Russian planes flew around the island. Russia now had a High North strategy and was implementing it.

³⁴ Timo Koivurova, pages 15-16.

³⁵ “Arktis- Strategiska frågor i en region i förändring”, published in January 2008 (in Swedish only). www.foi.se

³⁶ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 19 August 2008 in Oslo.

³⁷ The Economist, 11 October 2008.

59. Mr Eide believes that events in Georgia are symptomatic of the tectonic shift that has taken place in international relations. Geopolitics is now back with new emerging powers, including Russia, China and India, all wanting their say in global politics. In his view, this will have the following major consequences:

- the West’s hegemony in international relations is less assured than before; western powers need to realise that history is moving in a direction over which they do not necessarily have control;
- after a period in which most strategists believed that future conflicts would be asymmetric, “we are now back to symmetric conflicts”;
- strategic planning needs to remain open to different turns of events and avoid an overly narrow focus on deployable forces with only a residual force for domestic security.

60. Norway now keeps a daily watch on the High North and maintains air and naval patrols. Access to raw materials forms an essential part of strategic planning. The Arctic, as a future energy region, will naturally become a focal point for all major actors. Norway’s military is therefore once again directing more attention to its own vicinity. Security *in* Europe is still relevant and needs our full attention.

61. While some would go so far as to believe that Russian military activity poses a new threat, Mr Eide and others, like Peter Johan Schei, Director of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, warn against exaggerating the likely consequences of the new Russian military presence.

62. Researchers from the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI) in Oslo argued at their meeting with your Rapporteurs that Norway needed to be able to handle a crisis on its own and make clear to Russia that the cost of any military action the latter might take against it was too high. The researchers from NUPI believe that Norway cannot always rely on its alliance partners which were developing divergent economic interests.

63. In the past, Norway’s policy was invariably to operate through multilateral frameworks such as NATO. After the cold war ended the decision had been taken also to involve the Russians in networks on the basis of individual projects, on the assumption that regional and local representatives had a degree of leeway with respect to the central power in Moscow. But with the arrival in office of President Putin, regional and local representatives found themselves with less and less room for manoeuvre to act on behalf of their own areas. Russia had always been part of the problem and the challenge was to make it part of the solution. Norwegians had been naïve in the past and their expectations, in particular of what could be obtained from bilateral dialogue on environmental issues, had not been met.

64. Svein Rottem from the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI), Oslo, believes that the concept of security is widening and now includes issues relating to natural resources management and the environment.³⁸ At the same time, unresolved maritime delimitation and claims over the extension of the continental shelf are still potentially a source of conflict. Norway’s attitude to NATO has become increasingly ambivalent. While it wants the Arctic region to be as demilitarised as possible, it needs NATO to pay more attention to it as part of Norway’s traditional strategy, still applied, of deterrence and reassurance. In Mr Rottem’s view, climate change will have consequences for military forces. The situation in the Barents Sea is particularly relevant to Norway. Hence Norway pursues a policy mix whereby it maintains its “coast guard” presence in the Arctic (deterrence) yet presents itself as a nation committed to peace through its mediation efforts on the international stage (in the Middle East conflict or Sri Lanka for example) while at the same time launching bilateral and multilateral diplomatic initiatives in the Arctic region (reassurance).

65. Your Rapporteurs believe that the European Union has a responsibility to support its northern partners in maintaining stability in the Arctic region. With Russia recovering economically and militarily, power politics are back in the Arctic. While there is a need to avoid provocation, a strategic

³⁸ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 20 August 2008 in Oslo.

vacuum cannot be allowed to form and awareness must be raised of the vital role of the Arctic for Europe's security.

2. Preference for a multilateral institutional setup

66. The question is how, and through what institutional setup, such support will be managed. In our view, the preferred solution would be a multilateral one and higher involvement of the EU is in the interest not only of the three EU members in the region. Norway would also benefit from a greater EU engagement. Regional actors are of uneven size and influence. Bilateral agreements carry the risk of favouring the bigger players.

67. State Secretary Eide was emphatic in his remarks to your Rapporteurs about Norway's fundamental preference for multilateral solutions. The various existing institutions all had a role to play. However, a place still needed to be found for a security dialogue on the North. In matters of energy the European Union would think of Norway in terms of "we". Understanding of the other issues concerning the High North was growing, but still insufficient. The European Union as yet had no common approach to territorial defence, including the defence of sea routes. ESDP operations focused on distant theatres. But in the Arctic, energy was an EU neighbourhood issue.

68. Kristian Atland, Senior Analyst at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), feels that the situation in Georgia is confirmation of Russia's new military assertiveness.³⁹ In its dealings in the Caucasus, Russia has demonstrated its willingness and ability to use military force in an overwhelming, indeed disproportionate manner. He thinks however, that the threshold for military action is higher in the Arctic than in the post-Soviet space. The Barents Sea area in particular has developed into a functioning region with its own issues and agenda. Also, much more intraregional interaction now takes place than during the cold war. After a period of calm following the end of the cold war, the region is now seeing a return to a hard security agenda over fisheries, oil and gas. During President Putin's last visit to Norway, a large part of his talks in closed sessions were devoted to the Svalbard issue.

69. Mr Atland believes that Russia's assertiveness can in part be explained by its fear that others will seize the resources in the Arctic. So far, all the countries concerned have respected the existing mediation mechanisms in relation to the disputed areas. The situation could change dramatically if one of them started exploration activities. It is therefore necessary to prevent the potential conflicts from erupting.

70. In his view, in the unlikely event of a deteriorating political climate in the Arctic, the battle lines may not be defined by military alliances alone but also by long-term economic interests. The United States (and other NATO members besides) will need energy from Russia. There is also a need to pay more attention to the interplay of state and commercial actors in the region, in the process of which a future conflict might be triggered.

71. Moreover, an element of caution as to the scope of Russia's military presence might be advisable. Pascal Marchand, of the University of Lyon, recalls that following the end of the cold war, Russia's military activities in the region diminished considerably, before picking up at their lower level of today.⁴⁰ The number of Russian naval forces staff stationed in the area went down from 477 000 in 1988 to only 200 000 in 1995. Central government subsidies to the region, including generous salary bonuses for employees, were scrapped and as a consequence extensive depopulation occurred. The population of Murmansk, for instance, has decreased from its 1989 high of 472 000 to 321 000 in 2006. In contrast, near major natural gas exploration sites the population has grown, as the example of Novy Ourengoi demonstrates (up from 95 000 in 1989 to 113 000 in 2006).

72. Other counsels of caution advise that the Russian military assets in the region are old and the capability to carry out a major military operation of any kind is low. However, Russia's leaders are committed to its return to global superpower status and the Arctic is a key factor in achieving that

³⁹ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 20 August 2008 in Oslo.

⁴⁰ Pascal Marchand, "La Russie et l'Arctique", *Le courrier des pays de l'Est*, No. 1066, March-April 2008, pages 6-19. www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr

goal. Behaviour that goes unchallenged, combined with a neglected legal and institutional framework, might offer fertile ground for Russia to move ahead with its assertive strategy.

3. Security scenarios in the High North

73. Iver Johansen, analyst at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), presented six scenarios established for the Norwegian Long-Term Defence Planning which were the first to identify the Russian military presence as a potential source of instability.⁴¹ Two of them, the “Strategic Assault” and the “Peace time operations” scenarios, are of particular relevance for this report.

74. According to the “Strategic Assault” scenario, a state or group of states uses military force to control part of Norway. This is considered an unlikely but not impossible scenario. Johansen’s view is that Russia has not yet been sufficiently integrated into the western security community to make this scenario impossible.

75. The “Peace time operations” scenario postulates that a state’s or group of states’ routine military activities may pose a permanent challenge to Norway, for example a state/group of states using limited military assets for exercises and intelligence gathering. This scenario is close to Russia’s current behaviour: there is no direct challenge to Norway’s sovereignty but constant Norwegian effort is required to keep an eye on what is happening.

IV. New routes for navigation

76. As the ice recedes, the North-East Passage along Russia’s northern coastline becomes easier to navigate and the North-West Passage along Greenland, Canada and Alaska is open to shipping for the first time in the history of navigation.⁴² Because the prevailing winds will drive the remaining ice floes in the direction of the North-West Passage, this route will be less navigable and probably remain closed during winter.⁴³ Traffic through the North-East Passage is likely to be limited for a considerable time to come to regional transport from and to the new offshore oil and gas platforms. But once the thick layer of polar ice built up over the years has melted, ice formed over a single winter will be less of an obstacle to shipping and allow year-round navigation. Looking further into the future, even a direct route via the North Pole may become navigable.

77. The North-East Passage is not strictly speaking a *new* route because Russia has long been developing and using what is known in Russian as the North Sea Route (Sevmorput) as a national westward transport corridor – first for fur trading with indigenous people, then for the industrial development of its Arctic resources.⁴⁴ In Soviet times a fleet of powerful nuclear-powered ice breakers was established to keep it open, although its use as a transit route was limited and regular traffic did not extend beyond the Kara Sea and Norilsk mining area. It also had military significance and was closed to foreign traffic until 1 July 1991. But according to Claes Ragner, former Head of the Russian-Norwegian-Japanese International Northern Sea Route Programme (INSROP), there has “not been one single ‘ordinary’, commercial transit by a non-Russian vessel” since the route was opened.⁴⁵ The absence of sufficient traffic on the route has in the recent past led to its freezing over again. Becoming the “new” North-East Passage could breathe new life into it and create a shortcut between Europe and east Asia.

78. The North-East Passage would cut the travel distance between Rotterdam and Yokohama from 11 200 to 6 500 nautical miles (-42 %) as compared to a route via the Suez Canal. The North-West Passage would cut the route from Rotterdam to Seattle by 2 000 nautical miles (-25 %) as compared to

⁴¹ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 20 August 2008 in Oslo.

⁴² The North-West Passage is free of ice for the third year since summer 2006 according to the US National Ice Centre Press Release, 5 September 2008. www.natice.noaa.gov

⁴³ Pal Pestrud from the Cicero Research Centre in a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 20 August 2008 in Oslo.

⁴⁴ Claes Lykke Ragner, “The Northern Sea Route”, Norden Associations’ Yearbook 2008. www.norden.se

⁴⁵ One reason could be the present high fees, often referred to as icebreaker fees, demanded, even under summer ice conditions when an ice-strengthened ship may transit without icebreaker escort.

going through the Panama Canal. The difference would be much greater for the kind of mega ships that cannot pass through the canals and have to sail round Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope.⁴⁶

79. However, navigation on these routes will not be entirely “plain sailing” and naval authorities as well as shipping and insurance companies are struggling to achieve an accurate forecast of the geo-economic impact of the new routes. They could increase competition between existing routes, lead to a reduction in canal fees and relieve the pressure on existing naval traffic bottlenecks. Also fishing and tourism navigation could expand rapidly.

80. According to one estimate, the real cost of travel between Rotterdam and Yokohama would be cut by 20%. However, the question arises as to whether a shipping route which is not available all year round and requires the composition of convoys following in the wake of powerful icebreakers will be fit for modern “just-in-time” transport and the punctuality it implies. Also, it remains to be seen what the impact of the melting ice cap on the flow of ice sheets through navigation channels is likely to be. The new navigation routes will not be linear routes. Their predictability cannot be guaranteed because ships will be required to change course and constantly seek the optimal route.

81. As far as the North-East Passage is concerned, the often shallow waters impose volume and draft limits. The need for specially reinforced vessels and to maintain a fleet of icebreakers also reduces the cost benefit of the new routes. What is more, escort demand is likely to outstrip the capacity of the current fleet of ageing icebreakers, adding a further element of unpredictability to the voyage. However, new shipbuilding technologies may limit the need for icebreakers. The Arctic Council’s Arctic Climate Impact Assessment predicts a lengthening of the average sailing season, from 20-30 days in 2004 to 170 days once the Arctic Ocean is ice-free in summer. In response, private investors are already building special ice-capable tankers able to navigate without icebreakers to future oil and gas fields in the Arctic.

82. Now that it is possible to liquefy natural gas at the exploration site, LNG is increasingly becoming a commodity like oil which can be sold while the ship is sailing. What is more, direct shipping is regarded as a means of diversification of supply. There are advantages to LNG both for producer and consumer countries. Recent speculation about the establishment of a cartel of gas-producing countries further underlines LNG’s potential as an alternative to pipeline gas.

83. While it is no longer a question of “if” but “when” the new routes open for traffic, their viability and profitability, and hence their economic relevance, have still to be confirmed.

84. The Arctic Council is currently undertaking an Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA, 2005-2009) in order to identify key factors shaping Arctic navigation looking ahead to the year 2050. To guide reflection, the level of demand for Arctic natural resources has been selected as the primary driving factor and the degree of stable governance as the key uncertainty factor.⁴⁷

85. Weighing these factors, AMSA develops scenarios that range from “Polar Low” (low demand and unstable Arctic governance), “Arctic Race” (high demand and low level of cooperation), “Polar Preserve” (low demand and stable governance) to “Arctic Saga”, where high demand for Arctic resources implies a significant increase in navigation and is combined with a high level of international cooperation on the various new uses of the High North.

86. If this latter scenario comes about and the new routes become of strategic importance, they will have to be kept open. The way this is handled would depend on the level of international cooperation. Also, with growing traffic, coastal countries need to prepare for the contingency of a major shipping disaster.

87. AMSA warns that few salvage resources are prepositioned in the area and that there is need for more search and rescue capabilities. It also points to the lack of communications, charting and aids to

⁴⁶ Scott Borgerson, page 2.

⁴⁷ The following paragraphs are based on a presentation: “Globalization and challenges for Arctic marine transport” by Lawson Brigham, Chairman of AMSA, at the International Conference on Globalization and Challenges for Oceans and Marine Regions organised by the Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI) and held in Oslo on 21-23 August 2008. The conference compendium also contains a map with the new routes. www.fni.no.

navigation. Another task will be to develop a system of rules and regulations to enhance marine safety and environmental protection while respecting the existing principles of freedom of navigation. The AMSA Chairman, Lawson Brigham, who is also Deputy Director of the United States Arctic Research Commission, suggests that the Arctic countries deal with these issues, together with other flag states, through the International Maritime Organisation.

V. Selected Arctic countries and their perspectives

88. The following chapters are based on your Rapporteurs' fact-finding missions to Helsinki, Oslo, Moscow and Washington. Norway's policies towards the Arctic, which are subject to the country's "Strategy for the High North", were covered in the Assembly's previous report on "Security in the High North" (Doc. 1969, 2007) available on the Assembly's website (www.assembly-weu.eu). New developments are presented in chapter III of the present report: The security situation in the North.

1. Finland

89. Finland is a member of the European Union and has been instrumental in setting up the latter's Northern Dimension policy, the aim of which is to engage Russia in a regional dialogue. While Finland itself has no coastal access to the Arctic, it is a member of the Arctic Council. However, northern Finland, and in particular the city of Rovaniemi in Lapland, could develop as a hub for foreign engineers working on Russian off-shore platforms, in view of the fact that accommodation facilities in north-west Russia are poorly developed.

90. Finland has a view of security that is primarily focused on the situation in the Baltic Sea, although a high level of awareness exists in relation to the issues of the Arctic. Up to 80% of Finland's imports and exports are transported through Baltic waters and any deterioration in the political climate would have serious consequences. Finland needs to be prepared for circumstances in which the country might face military conflict with Russia. Pekka Sivonen from the National Defence College believes, for instance, that following the building of the Nord Stream gas pipeline linking Russia and Germany, one could expect there to be an increase in Russian military naval activity which may lead to incidents.⁴⁸

91. Finnish analysts and politicians watch the behaviour of their Russian neighbour very closely: many have a fine feeling for the Russian psyche and understand the way policy is made in Moscow. The view in Helsinki is that Russia is no longer willing to accept what it perceives as a unipolar world under US dominance. But the United States has entered a weaker phase: it is tangled up in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and has a president at the end of his mandate. The situation in Georgia gave Russia an opportunity to demonstrate its force. Russia is on its way back to becoming a superpower and has regained the means and will to take risks. Pertti Salolainen, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament, believes that "Russia will show its ambitions everywhere, including in the Arctic".⁴⁹

92. Russia is, however, not on its way back to becoming the old Soviet Union. Markku Kivinen, Director of the Aleksanteri Institute, argues that despite a clear authoritarian turn, basic human rights there are still guaranteed.⁵⁰ Neither Prime Minister Putin nor President Medvedev are autocratic leaders and they have to consult and strike a balance between the different groups that make up the Russian power structure. These mechanisms are, however, highly opaque and not based on formal procedures. Economic interdependence is an important factor in Russian politics and the influence of a number of important economic actors is putting a brake on the current show of force. Nevertheless, there is the perception in Moscow that the sacrifices Russia made in the second world war entitle it to a sphere of influence at its borders, something which is regarded as incompatible with NATO enlargement. Markku Kivinen recalled that while the European Union had an economy that was highly integrated with that of Russia there was little political cooperation between them.

⁴⁸ In a meeting with your co-Rapporteur on 17 September 2008 in Helsinki.

⁴⁹ In a meeting with your co-Rapporteur on 16 September 2008 in Helsinki.

⁵⁰ In a meeting with your co-Rapporteur on 17 September 2008 in Helsinki.

93. The current Russian disregard for the most basic principles such as territorial integrity and the rule of law is something also noted with alarm in Helsinki. Finland, which currently holds the presidency of the OSCE, has a particular responsibility to ensure that the organisation's principles are respected. Russia's recognition of separatist Georgian regions contributes to a world where borders are again uncertain. It was also made clear to your Rapporteurs that Helsinki does not believe in the grand new security designs announced in rather vague terms by various prominent Russian speakers.

94. The government in Helsinki is currently preparing a new security and defence policy report (White Paper) which is expected to deal with new threats such as climate change, pandemics, cyber warfare and terrorism, but also with the possibility of conflict over trade and fisheries issues and traditional scenarios, including a large-scale attack on Finnish territory. It is clear that Finland cannot rule out the possibility of a military conflict in its neighbourhood even if it is officially considered a remote one. While the previous Finnish Government White Paper took an optimistic, perhaps even an idealistic approach towards relations with Russia, the outlook is now much gloomier. Russia has become more authoritarian and its increased defence spending gives Finland cause for concern. Most likely, the new White Paper will present a more realistic analysis of those relations.

95. The relationship between the Russian minority and indigenous population in the Baltic countries is a particular source of instability and Helsinki considers that not much progress has been made towards improvement in recent years. Teija Tiilikainen, State Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, believes that the concerns of Russian minorities should be taken seriously and that NATO and the EU should discuss the implications of President Medvedev's comments about Russia's policy towards Russian minorities in neighbouring countries.⁵¹

96. The war in Georgia will have a profound impact on the security outlook. Helena Partanen, Director of the International Defence Policy Unit at the Ministry of Defence, recalled that during the previous White Paper exercise in 2004, Russia was not in any way viewed as a military challenge.⁵² At the time there had been cross-border security problems such as trafficking, but Russia, while having the capability to engage in military conflict with Finland, had no will to do so. However, even then, a cautious note had been sounded about the difficulty of finding the means of practical cooperation with Russia. The war in Georgia has been a kind of wake-up call.

97. Military conflict in the region, were it to occur, would form part of a wider international situation and Finland, in all likelihood, would not respond in isolation. A parliamentary review, chaired by Juha Korkeaoja, Chairman of the Defence Committee, as part of the preparation of the new Finnish Defence White Paper, mentions the need for Finland "to improve the capabilities to receive and provide military assistance".⁵³ This does not, however, mean membership of NATO.⁵⁴ Helsinki considers that the mutual assistance obligation and the solidarity clause included in the Lisbon Treaty apply to Finland.

98. Raimo Väyrynen, Director of the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, believes that the war in Georgia could lead to NATO drawing up concrete defence plans for the Baltic region.⁵⁵ His colleague Charly Salenius-Pasternak recalled that it was also necessary to look at the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad where a lot of Russian military exercises took place. As far as the Arctic was concerned, he suggested (at least in relation to regulation of naval traffic) looking at an instrument along the lines of the Montreux Convention (governing the Black Sea straits). Both were sceptical about the capacity of the Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension to deal with the strategic challenges of the region and believed that neither Finland nor Sweden had a substantial Arctic policy since they were not coastal states. They also emphasised that the challenges of the Arctic were complex and could not be solved within the ambit of one particular international forum or by means of the same set of measures.

⁵¹ In a meeting with your co-Rapporteur on 17 September 2008 in Helsinki.

⁵² In a meeting with your co-Rapporteur on 17 September 2008 in Helsinki.

⁵³ Parliamentary Review Group on Finnish Security and Defence Policy, English Summary, Helsinki, June 2008, page 67.

⁵⁴ In a meeting with your co-Rapporteur on 16 September 2008 in Helsinki.

⁵⁵ In a meeting with your co-Rapporteur on 17 September 2008 in Helsinki.

99. The regional context of the security threat also means that Helsinki watches with a degree of unease the choice it believes its Swedish neighbour has made of concentrating on participation in crisis-management operations as the main task of its defence forces. Some analysts believe, however, that Sweden might be prepared to rethink in the light of recent events in Georgia. It should also be noted that Sweden's and Norway's defence expenditure remains higher in absolute terms than Finland's (in US Dollars, for 2009, Sweden: 6.5 billion; Norway: 6.3 billion; Finland: 3.4 billion).⁵⁶

100. Finland maintains a conscript army and a military capability to "defend the entire territory of the nation". It claims to be able to mobilise a reserve force of up to 350 000 soldiers. However, recently the Chief of Staff explained that a strength of 250 000 soldiers was sufficient and the money would be better spent on equipping them.

101. Helsinki is very interested in defence cooperation with its Nordic neighbours, Sweden and Norway, and does not rule out going beyond current levels of cooperation which are limited to procurement, maintenance and training. While your co-Rapporteur was conscious of a degree of hesitancy about opening up cooperation to more partners, it became clear that if a major incident were to take place there would be no limit to security cooperation.

102. As far as regional governance is concerned, Helsinki considers the Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension as the two essential frameworks, but a deepening of cooperation was necessary. State Secretary Tiilikainen therefore welcomed an initiative from the current Norwegian chairmanship of the Arctic Council to start meeting at State-Secretary level, something she hopes will make it possible to tackle issues in more depth. She was "hopeful" that the new issues in relation to the Arctic could be discussed within the existing frameworks.

103. With respect to the Baltic Sea, the current elaboration of an EU Baltic Sea Strategy will go hand in hand with the Northern Dimension: they are, according to Mrs Tiilikainen "two sides of the same coin", the former the external, the latter the internal expression of EU involvement. Many EU member states would otherwise not pay enough attention to the Baltic Sea and neglect its strategic relevance and the extent to which it provided an opportunity to engage Russia in a multilateral framework where common interests could be identified and pursued. Today, security issues were not to the fore and cooperation on other issues might prevent the security situation from evolving in the wrong direction. However, it was also her view that any Russian demands to be directly involved in the preparation of the Baltic Sea Strategy would be ill-founded as this was an internal EU policy involving funding from the EU budget.

2. *Russia*

104. The Arctic is vital for Russia which considers the area part of the country's future strategic reserve. Tatyana Parkhalina, Director of the Centre for European Security in Moscow, believes that the income from energy exports, coupled with the influence western dependence on them has brought Russia, has created the illusion of a link between the country's new wealth and its regaining its former international status – or such was the reasoning of the current political leadership. The Arctic therefore had a crucial part to play in assuring Russia's continuing wealth and was seen as the basis for the country's future relevance in world affairs.⁵⁷ Some observers told your Rapporteurs that a current of "imperial reconstruction" could even be detected in the thinking of the political elite in Moscow. But, despite the income generated from energy exports, Russia is still coping with the social and economic consequences of its transformation following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

105. Given the importance Russia attaches to the Arctic, any activities that risk undermining the Arctic's relative stability and predictability should be avoided. Russia's Arctic mainland is considerably underdeveloped by comparison with the rest of the country. The regional authorities are attempting to claim subsidies and there is an internal struggle going on about whether a given area falls within the Arctic zone, delimitation of which is becoming less and less clear with the changing climate. According to remarks made by Ruslan Tsalikov, First Deputy Emergencies Minister, in June

⁵⁶ Defense News, 22 September 2008.

⁵⁷ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs in Moscow on 28 October 2008.

this year, by the year 2030, over a quarter of housing, along with airports and storage facilities, including oil reservoirs, in north Russia, could be destroyed if the permafrost melted further.⁵⁸ Russia's main security concern in the region was the presence of NATO vessels and submarines and the installations of the United States' global missile defence system.

106. Foreign observers point to the growing "energy nationalism" in Russia and to new legislation limiting foreign participation in so-called "strategic sectors". Energy and the continental shelf have been defined as such in laws recently passed. Western companies already know from experience that they can be squeezed out once infrastructure has been built or knowhow transferred. But Russian companies are heavily indebted and still need foreign investment in order to exploit the country's hydrocarbon wealth.

107. The first Vice-President of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (Second Chamber), Aleksander Torshin, who has his constituency in the region bordering on Finland, confirmed the importance of the Arctic and the need for cooperation, in particular as far as cross-border projects supporting Russia's north-west is concerned.⁵⁹ He regrets that the current financial crisis and the events in Georgia are overshadowing Arctic issues; also the question mark that for the time being hangs over cooperation opportunities. His hope is that it will soon be possible to move on from the war in Georgia. The historic chance to maintain the stability of the Arctic through a joint effort must not be missed.

108. The view of his colleague, Senator Valeri Kadokhov, First Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council's Committee on Federation Affairs and Regional Policy, is that Russia offers enormous opportunities for economic cooperation and that European investment and knowhow are vital to the development of Russia's vast Arctic spaces, in particular with respect to energy and transport infrastructure. The difficulty with the North-East Passage, he felt, was that in its eastern section it would be navigable only for a month and half. Senator Anatoly Karabenikov, member of the Council's International Affairs Committee, insists that western countries should not simply trade with Russia but should "come here and work with us". The Council's task was to safeguard a favourable business climate. Laws and regulations facilitating cross-border cooperation and investment had been adopted or were being prepared. The Council was aware of the recent fall-off in economic activity experienced by western companies.

109. Vice-President Torshin questioned the relevance being given to the Russian strategic bomber flights, believing that not all of them were necessary and hoping accidents would be avoided. The flights were a response to patrols by NATO allied countries. He also referred to the recent flight of Russian strategic bombers to Venezuela stating that this was all psychological weaponry with limited value and not received with enthusiasm by the members of the Federation Council. Russian planes had flown over the Caucasus but this had not prevented escalation of the situation there. It was necessary to clarify security concerns before they degenerated and countries started to improvise, otherwise it could prove very costly.

110. His hope was for the United States to ratify UNCLOS. If not, Russia would continue to work out differences bilaterally as was the case on issues in the Bering Strait. Senator Kardokhov thinks that more regrettable is the United States' refusal to adhere to the Kyoto process given its huge part in global greenhouse gas emissions.

111. With respect to issues related to the North-East Passage, Vice-President Torshin suggested the creation of a working group either within the Arctic Council or the Northern Dimension. Your Rapporteurs believe this to be an excellent idea.

112. There was a different tone to the meeting with Yuli Kvitsinsky, Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Duma and member of the Communist Party.⁶⁰ He rejects the idea of introducing new regulations in the Arctic and is sceptical about the need for a place to discuss security questions. Countries would have to give up on the individual laws and rules they had passed for their

⁵⁸ RIA Novosti published 23 June 2008. www.russiaprofile.org

⁵⁹ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs in Moscow on 28 October 2008.

⁶⁰ On 28 October 2008 in Moscow.

part of the region. He also dismisses the idea of creating an international working group on the North-East Passage as traffic conditions along this route are very special. This was why Russia preferred to be the main regulator there. He feels no urgency about taking part in the risk analysis of the Arctic or involving a larger number of countries. His comment was: “We are five up there and selfish. What do we need the others for?”

113. Ambassador Anton Vasiliev, Head of the Department on Arctic and Barents Sea Affairs in the Russian Foreign Ministry and current chair of the Group of Senior Officials in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, explained that one of the conclusions of the Assembly’s previous report on the security situation in the High North, namely that Russia lacks a coherent Arctic policy, was no longer true.⁶¹ On 17 September 2008, the National Security Council, the country’s highest political authority, adopted a policy programme for the Arctic up to the year 2020 and the necessary funds had been earmarked.

114. The four major points of the new policy plan are:

- to use the Russian part of the Arctic as a strategic resource base that will support the country’s social and economic development;
- to maintain the Arctic as an area of peace and cooperation;
- to preserve the Arctic’s unique ecosystem;
- to develop and use the North-East Passage as an important national transport route.

115. The next step, Ambassador Vasiliev maintains, is to define the southern border of what constitutes the Arctic zone inside Russia. This is important for the distribution of regional subsidies. Russia needs to reduce the disproportion in economic development between the country’s north and south. The extension of Russia’s continental shelf needs to be approved internationally. He hopes that past cooperation with Canada and Denmark on geological research can continue. The Arctic Council and the Barents Sea Cooperation are important for solving environmental questions in the region. Russia was putting forward ideas on common rules for hydrocarbon exploitation and the monitoring of the environment. Ambassador Vasiliev also made mention of initiatives from the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) aimed at harmonising interests in the exploration of hydrocarbon resources with the requirements of local and indigenous peoples.

116. He does not share the views of those who argue that the quest for the resources of the Arctic will lead to a clash of interests. To his way of thinking, the process for deciding the limits of the continental shelf is a factor contributing to cooperation rather than conflict. The Ilulissat Declaration (see chapter II, heading 4 of this report) was clear: countries would have to approve one another’s claims. If they overlapped, one would be “pushed by the situation and have to strike a deal”.

117. He suggests reinforcing practical cooperation in the area to overcome any remaining cold war legacy. Russia feels the need to discuss the continuing use and modernisation of cold war infrastructure – in particular the United States’ missile defence system. This would not require a new agreement or treaty but the development of trust through military cooperation. Any new structure in the Arctic would not work in any event if this kind of trust were not there. The existing Arctic and Barents Sea institutions all had their worth but streamlining them should be considered. The recent summit bringing together the Northern Dimension countries had achieved good results, but no one there had brought up security questions.

3. United States

118. US policy makers are adapting to the new reality in the Arctic. Russian assertiveness has also stimulated US interest. But as Julianne Smith from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) explained to your Rapporteurs, the focus is on the energy perspective.⁶² The current Arctic policy was formulated in 1994 and an update is in progress. The security issue is not the primary one

⁶¹ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 29 October 2008 in Moscow

⁶² In a meeting on 9 October 2008 in Washington.

when dealing with the region: commercial interests take priority. Wayne Limberg from the US State Department recalled that the United States was fighting two wars elsewhere and it was therefore very unlikely that it would increase its military presence in the Arctic. His colleague Joshua Handler played down Russia's military activity in the region, the materiel its navy and air force used was old. The Russian military was improvising and did not have a medium-term policy. He believed that the war in Georgia was a "one-off" occasion, not the first in a series of events.⁶³

119. Your Rapporteurs were also told that in Russia commercial and government interests were increasingly mixed up with one another and that it was at times difficult to see where the Kremlin began and Gazprom ended or to distinguish national from commercial interests. Wayne Limberg therefore saw no advantage in establishing a new governance structure for the Arctic. The Arctic Council was well placed to address High North issues.

120. Evan Bloom, Deputy Director of the State Department's Ocean Affairs Office, also believed the existing legal framework to be adequate and hoped the United States could soon become party to UNCLOS.⁶⁴ He acknowledged that lack of ratification had created a void and that the United States risked not being included in decision-making processes. He highlighted the problem of search and rescue with respect to the growing naval activity and believed the Arctic Council could deal with this. He also held that the United States Government was sceptical about a new treaty for the Arctic. He welcomed more non-Arctic state participation and involvement by the European Union in the region's affairs. Because open conflict in the region was unlikely, the Arctic Council remained the one institution that could deal with the concerns at hand. Isaac Edwards, Legal Counsel to Senator Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), pointed out that the coming together of parliamentarians in connection with the work of the Arctic Council could make it possible to explore discussion of issues beyond that organisation's agenda – including security issues.

121. Julianne Smith of the CSIS recalled that the region's institutional architecture was old and had been established before there was any awareness of current issues. She believed that it would be an advantage for the region if a number of institutions were involved in solving Arctic problems. She was convinced that Russia had a distinctive policy for the region and was not improvising at all. Her colleague Stephen Flanagan, Director of the International Security Programme, added that Georgia might well represent the opening of Pandora's box.

122. The new US Arctic Policy may still be published before the end of the current Administration. Your Rapporteurs were told it would address environmental issues related to climate change, energy questions and scientific research. Security matters would also be covered and it would contain a call for increased cooperation with allies in the region.

VI. Conclusions

123. Climate change is reshaping the Arctic. The ice, as it recedes, is failing in its function of regulating the global climate and no longer acts as a brake on military and economic activities in the area. It is unclear what institutional and legal framework will provide the region with the architecture of governance it requires to maintain the current situation of low levels of tension combined with high strategic predictability.

124. The irony is that global warming resulting from the use of hydrocarbon energy in the past has opened up the prospects for greater access to more hydrocarbon resources in the future. Arctic coastal states, the countries of the wider region and the entire international community are faced with the fundamental dilemma of reconciling the availability of hydrocarbon energy sources in the Arctic and the detrimental effects of more greenhouse gas emissions as a result of their consumption.

125. Russia has stepped up its military presence in the region as well as issuing assertive statements about safeguarding the Arctic for the country's future. Other nations have reacted to claims by Russia that encompass the North Pole. Canada has announced that it is building new patrol ships and has stepped up efforts to confirm its territorial sovereignty over its Arctic waters. Norway has developed a

⁶³ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 9 October 2008 in Washington.

⁶⁴ In a meeting with your Rapporteurs on 10 October 2008 in Washington.

High North Strategy aimed at involving non-Arctic countries in solving the issues of the region. The publication of a new United States Arctic Policy is imminent.

126. The anticipated race for the maritime, mineral and hydrocarbon resources to which the receding ice gives access is likely to be extremely contentious, potentially giving rise to disputes that could degenerate into open conflict if the requisite machinery for dealing with territorial claims and new navigation routes is not available and a minimum level of trust in them has not been established.

127. However, exploitation of these resources is costly and requires major investment in specialised technology and a level of knowhow not available to all of the coastal states concerned. Consistently high oil prices are necessary to make exploration in the Arctic commercially viable.

128. While there is a debate about the legal status of the new polar navigation routes that may open up, their commercial relevance remains unproven. Predictions about shrinking ice sheets are based on summer ice. However, a few weeks of ice-free ocean do not constitute a new, reliable navigation route that will change the pattern of global trade. Moreover, we are most probably looking at a time-frame to around the year 2050. But maritime traffic is already increasing significantly and rules governing emergencies and disasters – in particular the occurrence of a massive oil spill in an environment that is extremely fragile – have yet to be formulated and the ocean itself has not yet been fully mapped.

129. Both new energy exploitation infrastructure and growing maritime traffic need protection from pirates and terrorists and this will mean an enhanced military presence in the area is more likely.

130. None of the existing institutions involved in the Arctic have in the past shown themselves able to deal with the security aspects of the new Arctic challenges and few seem to have the potential to serve as a platform for an effective dialogue on future security issues. The global importance of the Arctic, both for the climate and for energy supply and security make the region's governance a global responsibility.

131. However, the five coastal states comprising Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Norway, Russia and the United States have shown little interest in being led by the hand by others. In a unique meeting, in which all the existing formats for the Arctic were pushed aside, the five came together in Ilulissat, Greenland, in May this year to state their intention to use the existing legal framework for the settlement of their differences over the extension of their respective continental shelves, also making clear that they saw no need for a new comprehensive legal regime for the Arctic. Without the support of the five coastal states, it is highly unlikely that any new rules governing the region can be established.

132. It is vital, therefore, that the sole existing comprehensive legal framework and the one which happens also to have the highest potential as a means of achieving peaceful resolution of the territorial disputes that might be expected to arise – namely the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – should at last be ratified by the only remaining country in the region which has not done so: the United States, thus putting an end to any speculation that it cannot accept the verdict of this multilateral mechanism.

133. The European Union is directly involved in the closely-knit group of Arctic coastal states through Denmark/Greenland. But any move by Greenland in the direction of independence from Denmark would change that. That apart, there is an indirect involvement in the resolution of legal disputes in the region through individual member states that are party to the 1920 Spitsbergen Treaty.

134. Almost all ongoing research activities, and in particular those directed towards determining the extent of the continental shelf, have a geopolitical character. There needs to be a follow-up to the multinational research cooperation that has taken place under the aegis of the International Polar Year 2007 and 2008. The region's status as an area open for international research cooperation is of overriding importance, because common research lays the bases for trust and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

135. The European Union and NATO must incorporate the consequences of climate change in the Arctic for the security of their member states as a subject for discussion in their respective ongoing or upcoming strategic debates. The new European Security Strategy it is anticipated the European

Council will adopt in December this year should contain a chapter on the Union's strategic attitude towards the Arctic. NATO's "Declaration on Alliance Security" approved at this year's Bucharest Summit and expected to be published at its 60th anniversary summit in 2009 will be incomplete without a reference to the continuing importance of the Arctic Ocean for NATO's Strategic Concept, of which nuclear deterrence forms a part.

136. Russia's new military assertiveness and the country's stated priority for safeguarding its interests in the Arctic must be studied carefully. There is no need to over-exaggerate the conflict potential of recent Russian military activities in the region but the creation of a vacuum, both in institutional terms and with respect to political awareness must be avoided.

137. The European Union's dependence on energy imports from Russia highlights the level of integration of the Union's and Russia's economy: yet there is little political cooperation between the two economic partners. The war in Georgia has not contributed to establishing an atmosphere conducive to more effective political cooperation, but the long-term interest of the latter for both sides is evident.

138. At the same time it must be said that Russia's recent return to strength is based entirely on the wealth generated by energy exports. Reducing Europe's dependence on energy imports serves two essential goals: lowering its carbon emissions and limiting Russia's leverage over global political issues. The financial crisis may soon uncover Russian weaknesses that could trigger a more cooperative attitude in the Kremlin.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION
on Europe's northern security dimension

The Assembly,

- (i) Considering that the Arctic is a region that is both crucial in terms of the global climate and host to important research and economic activities carried out by a number of non-Arctic countries, including many EU member states, thus making its governance and future legal status a global responsibility;
- (ii) Concerned by data showing that climate change is occurring faster than predicted and calling therefore for a greater sense of urgency with respect to tackling the causes;
- (iii) Aware that climate change in the Arctic already impacts on the daily lives of the four million people living in the region and in particular on the traditional way of life of indigenous peoples;
- (iv) Considering that the European Commission is preparing a Communication on a European Union Arctic Strategy extending beyond the current coverage of the Arctic of the Union's Northern Dimension;
- (v) Considering also that climate change has brought a geopolitical agenda to the Arctic, based on new access to fishing, mineral and hydrocarbon resources and navigation routes and generating new challenges in terms of management of disputes and resolution of security issues;
- (vi) Convinced that the Arctic potentially can supply a part of Europe's future energy needs and therefore must remain an area of low tension and stable governance based on mutual trust and cross-border cooperation;
- (vii) Having regard to the document on climate change and security published jointly by the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Commission, which contains a chapter on the Arctic;
- (viii) Perturbed that the recent war in Georgia may be indicative of a return to symmetric conflict;
- (ix) Convinced that the threshold for the use of military force is far higher in the Arctic and the Baltic than in the Caucasus;
- (x) Taking the view that Russia's ambitions are wide-ranging and extend to the Arctic;
- (xi) Noting the increase in Russia's military activities in the Arctic region, which include passes by strategic bomber planes close to Norwegian and Icelandic airspace, and in its investment in power projection capabilities;
- (xii) Aware of an increase in civil and military activity in the Arctic on the part of a number of countries with the aim of backing their territorial claims and rights of access to the region
- (xiii) Having regard to the recent meeting in Helsinki between the Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff and his Russian counterpart;
- (xiv) Noting that, for the first time since the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Norwegian Long Term Defence Planning now includes a scenario based on the assumption that Norway is subject to permanent challenge from military operations by one of its neighbours and that parts of the country may fall under the control of a foreign state – a scenario not thought likely but which cannot be completely discarded;
- (xv) Noting that a review by the Finnish Parliament of the government's national defence white paper refers to the need for Finland to be able to give and receive military assistance;
- (xvi) Having regard to the conclusions of a study by the Swedish Defence Institute (FOI) concerning the growing strategic importance of the Arctic in terms of missile defence and nuclear deterrence;

- (xvii) Anticipating a diversion of focus by NATO and the European Union from building peace and stability elsewhere towards member state security, thus confirming the continued relevance of the kind of collective guarantees afforded by the North Atlantic Treaty and the modified Brussels Treaty;
- (xviii) Aware of the recent adoption of an Arctic strategy by Russia's highest political authority, the National Security Council;
- (xix) Noting Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's view that securing Russia's interests in the Arctic is a national priority;
- (xx) Noting that the Russian Government has made clear its interest in cooperative solutions to all questions relating to the Arctic and in peace and stability being maintained there;
- (xxi) Considering the high percentage of its energy that the European Union imports from Russia and the fact that Russia's renewed strength stems from the extensive income it derives from its energy exports;
- (xxii) Considering that while the EU economy is highly integrated with that of Russia there is little political cooperation between the two;
- (xxiii) Considering that cooperation on a variety of issues will build trust and help prevent security issues developing in the wrong direction;
- (xxiv) Having regard to the meeting of the five Arctic coastal states (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States) in Ilulissat, Greenland, in May this year; to their plea for continuing commitment to the legal framework that applies in the Arctic region – notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – for achieving an the orderly settlement of their claims to the Arctic continental shelf and to their position that they see no need for a new comprehensive legal schema for governance of the region;
- (xxv) Concerned that a small group of US Senators is effectively holding up ratification of UNCLOS, notwithstanding support for such ratification from the President of the United States and within the US Government;
- (xxvi) Concerned that, while it applies UNCLOS de facto, the United States should be reluctant to adhere fully to this major multilateral legal instrument, making it the only country in the region not to have ratified this particular UN convention;
- (xxvii) Convinced that its ratification by the United States would reinforce UNCLOS, making it a more robust legal framework for settlement of anticipated overlapping territorial claims to the Arctic;
- (xxviii) Welcoming the fact that the Arctic is part of the framework known as the Northern Dimension bringing together the European Union, Iceland, Norway and Russia; recognising the important work done in the framework of the Arctic Council, but regretting that these institutions have so far not been able to address the matter of the importance of the Arctic for Europe's security;
- (xxix) Taking the view that the existing institutional and legal framework applying to the Arctic must be adapted if security issues are to be dealt with within its ambit;
- (xxx) Having regard to calls for the establishment of a treaty for the Arctic similar to the Antarctic Treaty, but of the view that such calls may delay United States ratification of UNCLOS;
- (xxxi) Believing that existing institutions should first be exploited to the full in order to strengthen trust and deepen cooperation,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION AND THE
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. Take stock of the crucial importance of the Arctic to the global climate and strengthen and support research activities, in particular with respect to long-term monitoring of climate change, beyond the International Polar Year which ends in 2008;

2. Support the countries of the region in maintaining the Arctic as an area of low tension and stability and one open to cooperative international research, so as to allow its potential to supply energy to be developed under effective environmental governance;
3. Establish with Russia a broad agenda for cooperation on Arctic issues in particular within the framework of the Northern Dimension and the Arctic Council;
4. Encourage member countries represented in the various institutions in the Arctic and Baltic regions to explore fully their potential for dealing with the new Arctic challenges, including security aspects;
5. Discuss in NATO how climate change may impact on the organisation's presence in the Arctic and include a reference to the security consequences of climate change in the "Declaration on Alliance Security", which it is anticipated will be adopted at the organisation's 60th anniversary summit in 2009;
6. Invite the United States to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), thus ending speculation that the US will not fully adhere to this multilateral mechanism for the settlement of its territorial claims in the Arctic;
7. Make reference in any update of the European Union's 2003 European Security Strategy to the consequences of climate change for Europe's security and include a chapter on the European Union's strategic attitude towards the Arctic.

AMENDMENTS⁶⁵***Amendments 1, 2 (revision 2) and 3
tabled by Mr Wille, Rapporteur and Mr Dørum, co-Rapporteur***

1. In the preamble to the draft recommendation replace recital (*iv*) with the following new recital:
“Welcoming the policy priorities set out by the European Commission in its Communication on the European Union and the Arctic, published on 20 November 2008; also the Commission’s intention to apply for permanent observer status in the Arctic Council; but while convinced that closer involvement by the European Union in the Arctic region would be of all-round benefit to Arctic Council member countries, aware that the way forward is through the process of applying and being accepted by all its member states;”.
2. In the preamble to the draft recommendation, after recital (*xi*) add the following new recital:
“Concerned by Russian President Dmitri Medvedev’s recent first state of the nation address in which he said that Russia would have short-range missiles within the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad in response to deployment of parts of the United States missile defence system in Poland and in the Czech Republic;”.
3. In the preamble to the draft recommendation, after recital (*iii*) add the following new recital:
“Noting that, in a referendum held on 25 November 2008, the people of Greenland voted by a large majority in favour of greater autonomy from Denmark and aware that the prospect of new sources of wealth has revived discussion about independence for this Arctic island with a population of under 60 000 people;”.

Signed: Wille, Dørum

⁶⁵ See 4th sitting, 4 December 2008 (Amendments adopted).

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Towards cooperation or confrontation? Security in the High North

Sven G. HOLTSMARK ¹

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Introduction

The High North is currently a fair distance away from the focal points of NATO and its member countries. Rather, the ongoing war in Afghanistan and the experiences from Iraq, the growing attention to the Middle East and the Mediterranean, and the recent naval operation off the coast of Somalia dominate the NATO agenda. However, there is solid evidence that the Arctic, and particularly the Arctic Ocean, is gradually attracting international attention over a wide spectrum of issues, including military security. This process seems destined to continue, and there is reason to believe that it may be accelerating.

With NATO focusing on the upcoming summit and on efforts to chart future roles and challenges, there is growing awareness of the need to explore the security implications of developments in the High North. The aim should be to find ways to handle already existing and potential conflicts of interests and other threats to High North security and stability. This implies political and military strategies that will minimise the risk of armed conflict in the region, but that will also provide effective means of crisis management should prevention fail. Discussions of High North security - this paper included - link up with the emerging debate within NATO about the need to pay renewed attention to the Alliance's core functions "in" as opposed to "out of area" and about the interpretation and credibility of the Washington Treaty's Article 5. The inherent danger is, of course, that such a move, if handled unwisely, might by itself provoke mistrust, tension and instability. The overarching aim must be to prevent a return to patterns of military confrontation in the High North.

This paper argues against the widespread idea that there is an ongoing "grab" for territories and resources in the Arctic Ocean area. On the other hand, it presents a number of challenges that will have to be addressed in order to secure continued stability and prosperity in the area. The *first part* of the paper presents an overview of some of the major topics that are likely to define the High North security environment in the coming decades. This includes an introduction to recent media coverage and policy statements, an outline of regimes and juris-



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dictional issues, and finally a brief discussion of Russia's stakes in the High North. The *second part* will suggest some guidelines for how NATO and the Alliance's Arctic member countries should approach security issues in the region as part of a broader vision for handling relations with Russia, which will be the key to, and measure of, success or failure. The aim should be to develop High North policies based on the premise that short term gains, apparent tactical "victories" or demonstrative political moves may in the longer run undermine the attainment of the ultimate aim - stability and prosperity in the High North as part of a relationship with Russia characterised by predictability and mutually recognisable rules of the game. The paper is in line with other recent analyses that emphasise the importance of clearly defined political objectives or "end states" as a prerequisite for effective policies. Iraq and Afghanistan have provided powerful reminders of this in a military operational context. It is, however, no less true with regard to other policy areas.

Papers on the High North cannot avoid a brief discussion of geographic terminology. Most of the issues presented here pertain to the open sea and the continental shelves to the north of the five Arctic Ocean states: Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark (Greenland), and Norway. However, discussions on regional security naturally must include the adjacent mainlands and islands. Thus, the terms High North and Arctic as used in this paper roughly denote all areas to the north of the Arctic Circle. Iceland, considered an Arctic state although not littoral to the Arctic Ocean proper, has been one of the first countries to directly feel the impact of increased activity in the High North. A steadily increasing number of LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) tankers are passing through Iceland's Exclusive Economic Zone from Norway and Russia, and the number is set to increase in the years to come.² Likewise, it did not go unnoticed in Iceland when in 2007 Russian strategic bombers started to make regularly passes close to Icelandic airspace as part of their renewed long-range training flights.

Elements of High North discussions

The renewed focus on the Arctic Ocean region can be basically traced to the beginning of the new century. All of the five countries bordering on the Arctic Ocean, the United States, Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Norway and Russia, have in the last few years issued authoritative Arctic policy strategy documents or statements.³ The EU Commission did so in November 2008,⁴ and the WEU Assembly received reports on High North security in June 2007 and November 2008.⁵ In the case of Norway, the High North is at the top of the government's domestic and international policy agenda.⁶ The recently released US Presidential Directive on Arctic region policy is the first such document since 1994.⁷ The US intelligence community's *Global Trends 2025* includes a brief discussion on strategic implications of an "opening Arctic".⁸ Given Russia's strong position as an Arctic power, the increasing prominence of Arctic issues in Russian foreign and security policy rhetoric and in the Russian defence posture is of particular significance.⁹

Although focus on the High North has been building up since the turn of the century, Arctic questions made international headlines in August 2007 when a Russian deep-water submersible planted a titanium flag on the North Pole sea bed 4300 metres below the ice-covered surface of the Arctic Ocean. The Russian government did not suggest that this somewhat archaic act had any legal implications, but the event nevertheless reinforced pre-existing images of a "scramble for the Arctic"¹⁰ which might even develop into a "new cold war".¹¹ Journalists suggested that the Arctic powers are "carving up"¹² what remains to be divided of the vast Arctic Ocean area surrounding the North Pole. Some Western politicians fanned the flames: the Canadian foreign minister Peter MacKay dismissively compared the Russian action to "14th or 15th century" habits. MacKay could have been reminded that Canada itself until very recently had been involved in a much-derided "flag war" with Denmark

² Valur Ingimundarson, "Iceland's security policy and geopolitics in the High North", in Kjetil Skogrand (ed.), *Emerging from the Frost. Security in the 21st Century Arctic*, in the series *Oslo Files on Defence and Security*, 02/2008, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, p. 85.

³ The Danish document, "Arktis i en brydningstid. Forslag til strategi for aktiviteter i det arktiske område", was released in May 2008 and is available at www.um.dk. The Canadian government has not issued an integrated Arctic strategy document, but government officials have made numerous Arctic policy statements. The Inuits, through the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, in January 2008 presented the Canadian government with the draft of "An Integrated Arctic Strategy", available at www.itk.ca. The Russian government has recently approved a new Arctic strategy. The document, however, has not been published. The strategy document of 2001, *Osnovy gosudarstvennoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Arktike*, is available at www.sci.aha.ru/econ/A111c.htm. Arctic issues also figure prominently in other Russian foreign and security policy documents.

⁴ Commission of the European Communities: *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. The European Union and the Arctic*, COM (2008) 763.

⁵ For the most recent of these reports, see "Europe's northern security dimension", report submitted to the WEU Assembly, 5 November 2008. The WEU Assembly discussed the report and approved its recommendations on 4 December 2008.

⁶ Cf. the Ministry's website, www.mfa.no: "The High North will be Norway's most important strategic priority area in the years ahead."

⁷ National Security Presidential Directive and Homeland Security Presidential Directive, Subject: Arctic Region Policy, released January 9, 2009. Available at www.whitehouse.gov.

⁸ *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*, p. 53. Available at www.dni.gov.

⁹ For a short overview, see Katarzyna Zysk, "Russian Military Power and the Arctic", *The EU-Russia Centre's Review* no. 8 - Russian Foreign Policy, EU-Russia Centre, October 2008, pp. 80-86.

¹⁰ Cf. a title in the *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 August 2007, retrievable from www.csmonitor.com. Numerous articles and comments using this and similar expressions can easily be found.

¹¹ Cf. "Arctic military bases signal new Cold War", in www.timesonline.co.uk, 11 August 2007.

¹² Cf. "Carving Up the Arctic", published 20 September 2007 in <http://www.time.com/time/magazine>.

over the miniscule Hans Island in the Kennedy Channel between Greenland and Canada.

Think-tanks and publicists followed suit. An article in the spring 2008 issue of *Foreign Affairs* called for a stronger US role in managing emerging differences over the distribution of access to Arctic resources. Otherwise “the region could erupt into an armed mad dash for its resources”.¹³ The author had some months earlier expressed similar concerns in *Parade Magazine*, which has a wide distribution in the United States.¹⁴ In October 2008 the Vice-President for policy at the US Foreign Policy Council warned in *Jane’s Defence Weekly* that developments in the Arctic, and Russian policy in particular, “could bring the spectre of a new cold war a good deal closer”.¹⁵ Russian media drew attention to alleged Western aggressive intentions in the area, urging the Russian government to resist any infringement on Russian interests, but also warning against allowing the situation to escalate, lest it slip out of control.

It was a reflection of a pervasive mood, therefore, when the European Parliament in October 2008 expressed its concern over the potential security implications of the allegedly “ongoing race for the natural resources in the Arctic”.¹⁶ The resolution and the EU Commission’s subsequent Arctic policy document both mentioned the August 2007 flag episode as an illustration of “new strategic interests” in the Arctic resulting from climate change.¹⁷ In an apparent attempt to calm the debate, a representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry a few days later characterized the media’s talk of “possible aggression in the Arctic” or “even a third world war” as “extremely alarmist” and unfounded.¹⁸

Russian discourse on the High North is heavily focused on the role of the military in securing Russian territorial and economic interests, often by emphasizing alleged military security aspects of avowedly purely civilian (Western) activity in the area. The military’s role in energy security, from the exporter’s point of view, is high on the Russian agenda. Although of a different scale and within a very different political setting, the West’s new focus also includes calls for strengthening the Arctic NATO countries’ High North defence posture. At times such calls have been implicitly or even explicitly justified by referencing the expected Russian naval build-up in the Arctic Ocean. In Norway, the close neighbour of the major military base complex at the Murmansk inlet, the issue of interpreting and defining the appropriate response to the expected strengthened Russian

defence posture in the High North is at the core of public defence policy debates. Although most comparisons of setting and scenarios between the High North and the Caucasus tend to be misleading, the Georgia-Russia war in August 2008 strengthened the rhetorical hand of those who questioned some of the premises of post cold-war thinking on Arctic security.

Some limited deeds followed words. For instance, in the weeks and months after the Russian flag episode, Canada announced plans to speed up the strengthening of its military presence in the country’s Arctic regions. Norway is cautiously moving in the same direction, although emphasizing the view that Russian moves are not directed against Norway as such. Also the frequent use of the terms “geopolitics” and “geopolitical” suggests an underlying concern over the long-term military-strategic implications of developments in the Arctic.¹⁹ However, the debate over their military security implications is only just beginning.

The present mood therefore differs starkly from the situation only a few years ago. According to one prominent scholar and analyst “the Arctic simply ceased being an area of significant concern for Canadian security during the 1990s.”²⁰ US policy towards Iceland provides an even more striking example. The security implications of topics such as territorial claims, new areas for exploitation of Arctic natural resources resulting from climate change, or the prospect of new sea lines of communication (SLOCs) allegedly “played no role whatsoever” in the US-Icelandic negotiations resulting in the 2006 unilateral US decision to abandon the Keflavik air base.²¹

Drivers of change in the High North - climate change and energy

The growing focus on the High North is part of a complex set of discourses reflecting multiple domestic and international factors. High on the official agendas are issues of national identity and the growing awareness of the need to respect the rights of Arctic indigenous populations and make the most of their experience and knowledge. Moreover, military security elements of the debate at times seem to reflect an instinctive urge to return to the familiar territory of cold war patterns rather than herald new insights and approaches to the handling of interstate conflict. However, there is widespread agreement that two closely interrelated “new” factors are major drivers behind the re-emerging focus on the High

¹³ Scott G. Borgerson, “Arctic Meltdown. The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming”, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2008.

¹⁴ “The Race to Own the Arctic”, in *Parade Magazine*, 6 January 2008.

¹⁵ Ilan Berman, “Opinion: Chill wind blows over claims to Arctic lands”, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, posted on the internet edition 16 October 2008.

¹⁶ European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on Arctic governance.

¹⁷ Cf. joint paper by the Commission and the Secretary-General/High Commissioner on “Climate change and international security”, III/6 and the European Parliament resolution.

¹⁸ RIA Novosti, 22 October 2008, “Russia says media reports on possible Arctic conflict ‘alarmist’”.

¹⁹ Cf. the *Global Trends 2025* and the EU documents already referred to. The terms appear frequently in media coverage of High North issues.

²⁰ Rob Huebert, “Renaissance in Canadian Arctic Security?”, p. 8, available at www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/rsepResources/arctic.asp.

²¹ Valur Ingimundarson, *op.cit.*, pp. 80-82.

North: the prospect and effects of climate change and the potential significance of still-unexplored Arctic energy resources.

There is no need here to go into detail about the projected effects of climate change in the Arctic. These are covered by a rapidly growing body of literature, and are summarized in a number of easily accessible reports.²² It suffices to say that according to the best available prognoses, reduced ice coverage in large parts of the Arctic Ocean combined with technological improvements may in the coming decades allow this region to become accessible to large-scale economic activity to a degree never before experienced. As one consequence of this, new shipping routes between Asia and the North Atlantic - the Northwest Passage through Canadian waters, the Northern Sea Route along Siber's shores or new SLOCs directly across the Polar basin - may become technically feasible and economically viable. Of these, up until now only parts of the Northern Sea Route have been in use, mostly for domestic shipping in Russia. Already today areas of the North Atlantic bordering on the Arctic Ocean are witnessing a sharp increase in shipping due to the transport of oil and gas from Norway and Russia.²³ However, huge uncertainties remain about if, and when, new Arctic SLOCs will actually be taken into large-scale use. Although ice coverage may recede, remaining drifting ice, in combination with a still limited sailing season, represents just one of many substantial technological, economic and environmental challenges.

The increasing focus on the High North as a future energy province of potentially global significance is closely related to the expected effects of climate change, coupled with current and expected technological progress in off-shore petroleum extraction. It has become customary to refer to the United States Geological Survey, which suggests that a high percentage of the world's undiscovered reserves of oil and gas may be located in the High North.²⁴ And indeed, the agency's most recent survey of July 2008 estimates that petroleum reserves in areas north of the Arctic circle could amount to 13 percent of the world's total undiscovered oil and about 30 percent of the undiscovered natural gas. Arctic fields already under exploration contain around 10 percent of the world's known petroleum resources.²⁵

However, great caution is required in drawing policy implications from these numbers. First, on account of the limitations

in geological data for most of the area, the USGS report is partly based on a complex "geology-based probabilistic methodology", i.e. the numbers are not the result of comprehensive geological surveys of the areas involved. Second, although more than 80 percent of the undiscovered resources are expected to be offshore, some of the most promising fields are within the littoral states' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), i.e. in non-disputed areas of the Arctic Ocean. Third, there are huge uncertainties about when, or if at all, potential new or even some of the already-identified offshore petroleum fields will actually be exploited, notably those under present or possible future Russian jurisdiction. A consistently high petroleum price is only one of many necessary preconditions.²⁶ However, these and other uncertainties cannot be expected to make the Arctic states refrain from taking steps to secure their long-term economic interests in the area.

Some of the High North challenges may have the potential to promote cooperation rather than confrontation between the Arctic Ocean states. This applies to elements of living resources management and handling the ecological implications of climate change, as well as some of the indirect effects related to increased economic activity. In particular, there is widespread agreement about the need to find solutions to a wide spectrum of complex issues before new SLOCs in the Arctic Ocean can be ecologically sustainable and commercially viable.²⁷ Satisfactory systems for search and rescue, pollution control, surveillance and navigation can only be handled through multinational cooperation. It may be argued that the same principle applies to certain peace-time security challenges with military repercussions, the most obvious case being defence against terrorist attacks.²⁸

On the other hand, the opening of new SLOCs will also enhance the High North's military-strategic significance by their potential importance for intercontinental shipping. In times of war, in or outside the region itself, their importance could be paramount. On balance, however, the prospect of new SLOCs in the Arctic Ocean may have the potential to prompt the states in the region to undertake cooperative solutions to common challenges and threats rather than igniting interstate conflict. Examples of successful bilateral and multilateral regional regimes covering living resources management, such as those between Norway and the Soviet

²² See "Arctic Climate Impact Assessment", available at www.acia.uaf.edu. For a good introduction to the implications of climate change, including three scenarios, see *Arctic Shipping 2030: From Russia with Oil, Stormy Passage, or Arctic Great Game?*, published as Econ Report 2007-070, available at www.econ.no.

²³ Cf. Valur Ingimundarson, op.cit., p. 85.

²⁴ For instance, in her speech at a conference on High North security in Tromsø, Norway, in August 2007, US Assistant Secretary of State Claudia A. McMurray stated that the Arctic "could be home to more than 25 percent" of undiscovered reserves of oil and natural gas. Claudia A. McMurray, "Emerging from the Frost: The US perspective", in Kjetil Skogrand (ed.), op.cit., p. 34.

²⁵ U.S. Geological Survey: *Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal: Estimates of Undiscovered Oil and Gas North of the Arctic Circle*, published in July 2008.

²⁶ For a sceptical view of Russian intentions and real options in the short and medium term perspective, see Pavel Baev: "Russia's Race for the Arctic and the New Geopolitics of the North Pole", published as *Occasional Paper*, October 2007, The Jamestown Foundation.

²⁷ The Arctic Council, in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization and other UN agencies, may be a suitable forum for these efforts.

²⁸ *Global Trends 2025* notes the potential for concerns over maritime security to create opportunities for multinational cooperation in protecting critical sea lanes. *Global Trends*, p. 66.

Union in the Barents Sea, even under conditions of international tension during the cold war, give cause for optimism.

The implications of the region's possible energy riches for interstate relations in the High North are more ambiguous.²⁹ The same applies to the existence of still-undecided issues of delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones and continental shelves. This leads to the key question of the status, strength and limitations of the international legal framework for the handling of Arctic Ocean challenges.

Arctic Ocean regimes and disputes

Discussions of Arctic Ocean issues often take as their point of departure the alleged absence of a legal framework for the peaceful resolution of present and future disputes and conflicts of interest. Parts of the region that are beyond national jurisdiction are portrayed as a legal "no-man's-land" waiting to be invaded and occupied by the littoral states. According to this reasoning, the alleged lack of "comprehensive rules" for living resources management and petroleum extraction, and an insufficient framework for the settling of territorial disputes, could easily turn the Arctic into "a zone of clashing national interests."³⁰ This has led some, most recently the European Parliament in its resolution of 9 October 2008, to argue in favour of modelling a comprehensive Arctic regime on the Antarctic Treaty of 1959.³¹

The five coastal states of the Arctic Ocean unanimously take the opposite view, and they seem to have a strong case. The overarching international legal regime for the Arctic Ocean is provided by the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS).³² UNCLOS has been ratified by all the Arctic states except the United States, and there is reason to believe that US accession may take place in 2009.³³ Moreover, large parts of the Convention already reflect international customary law, which is binding on all states. As stated in the Arctic Ocean states' Ilulissat declaration of 28 May 2008, "the law of the sea provides for important rights and obligations concerning the delineation of the outer limits of the continental shelf, the protection of the marine environment, including ice-covered areas, freedom of navigation, marine scientific research, and other uses of the sea." The signatories to the declaration therefore saw "no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal regime to

govern the Arctic Ocean".³⁴ UNCLOS is supplemented by a number of multilateral and bilateral treaties and agreements impacting resource management, but also a large body of practice and rules developed e.g. under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).³⁵

The Ilulissat meeting was convened at the initiative of the Danish government, following preparatory work carried out in Oslo in October 2007 by the legal advisers of the five ministers of foreign affairs. The meeting and the declaration clearly reflected a growing concern among decision makers in the Arctic Ocean littoral states that the alarmist tone of international media coverage of Arctic issues might become self-fulfilling prophecies leading to geopolitical dispute and potential conflict. One can assume that they were also concerned by the discussions in some EU political circles about the need for a separate legal regime for the Arctic. Among the signatories to the declaration were Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and United States Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte. This type of declaration carries particular significance when issued at the level of foreign ministers.

UNCLOS, of course, does not provide ready-made solutions for all current and potential interstate conflicts - this is rarely achieved by international law.³⁶ What it does is to prescribe the rules of the game and the procedures to be followed in the search for solutions. Apart from issues related to conflicting interpretations of the 1920 Svalbard (Spitsbergen) Treaty, the most substantive current and potential future disputes in the Arctic are linked to the delimitation of the littoral states' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and to the definition of the extension of their continental shelves beyond the EEZs.

Regarding the Exclusive Economic Zones, UNCLOS gives each coastal state the right to establish a 200 nautical miles EEZ, but does not define clear principles for the delimitation between adjacent or opposite zones. This leads to conflicting claims, some of them in areas of significant economic potential. Although agreement has been reached about the majority of such cases, some remain unsolved. One of the most important of these, both in economic and in security terms, is the disagreement between Russia and Norway over the delimitation of the two countries' economic zones in the Barents Sea. Neither Russia nor Norway can easily

²⁹ Cf. the brief discussion of the issue in Klaus Naumann et al., *Towards a Grand Strategy for an Uncertain World*, Lunzeren 2007, pp. 34-35.

³⁰ Tony Barber, "Europe's Arctic Challenge", www.ft.com, 9 October 2008.

³¹ The WEU Report of 5 November 2008 makes the reasonable point that it is rather unlikely that for instance Russia will be willing to give up its claims to the extended continental shelf in favour of an international regime. "Europe's northern security dimension", op.cit., p. 11 (point 40).

³² This was admitted by the European Council in its Arctic policy paper of November 2008. The Council explicitly stated that Arctic governance must be "based on UNCLOS".

³³ UNCLOS as the overarching legal framework for the region is mentioned repeatedly in the new US Arctic policy directive.

³⁴ The Ilulissat Declaration, issued 28 May 2008. The text of the declaration, together with supplementary information, is available from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, www.um.dk.

³⁵ The UN Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks of 1995 is of particular relevance. Among IMO instruments and measures are sea routing measures for navigation, vessel trafficking systems, but also guidelines for construction of ships operating in ice-covered waters (known as "the Polar code").

³⁶ Nevertheless, it is somewhat unclear what the European Council had in mind when pointing to "the fragmentation of the legal framework, the lack of effective instruments, the absence of an overall policy-setting process and gaps in participation, implementation and geographic scope" as key problems of Arctic governance. Cf. the European Council document of 9 November 2008 quoted above, p. 10.

agree to a permanent compromise, since the areas still under dispute may contain significant petroleum resources. Regarding the continental shelves, the littoral states' sovereign rights in the EEZ include the exploitation of mineral riches (including petroleum) on the seabed and in the subsoil. Moreover, under certain circumstances the convention gives them extensive rights to the seabed and subsoil far beyond the 200 nautical miles limit. Subject to specific rules, procedures and deadlines, claims for such extensions are reviewed by the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, set up under UNCLOS. Based on the scientific evidence presented by the applicant state, the Commission has the authority to issue a final "recommendation". While several claims are currently under review, no final recommendation on the limiting rights to the seabed outside the EEZ has yet been issued in the northern areas.³⁷ As is the case with the EEZ, the convention does not dictate how the line between adjacent or opposite continental shelves should be drawn, but refers to applicable sources of international law and the need to achieve "an equitable solution".

The application of UNCLOS stipulations may intersect with pre-existing regimes. A significant example is the disagreement over the interpretation of the 1920 Treaty on the Svalbard archipelago. The Treaty recognized Norwegian sovereignty over Svalbard. However, in the interest of "seeing these territories provided with an equitable regime" in order to assure "their development and peaceful utilization", the Treaty gave the nationals of the signatory powers "equal rights" to certain economic activities "on land and in the territorial waters" of the archipelago (Article 3).³⁸ In the Norwegian view, these stipulations do not apply outside the archipelago's territorial waters. Irrespective of the interpretation of the rules on equal treatment, Norway maintains that it has the right to establish an EEZ in the area.³⁹ Moreover, in the Norwegian view the Svalbard Treaty limitations have no consequences for the status of the seabed around Svalbard, which Norway claims is an extension of mainland Norway's continental shelf. All these issues have to be dealt with on the basis of UNCLOS, which also requires that any other treaty applicable to a maritime area must be compatible with the law of the sea.

Although UNCLOS provides the rules and the key principles for solving delimitation disputes in the Arctic, some of the existing and potential disagreements between littoral states cannot be solved by reference to UNCLOS as such. UNCLOS, similar to other international agreements on issues of vital interest to the signatories, reflects the usual balance and compromise between often conflicting state interests. However, the International Court of Justice has developed a jurisprudence providing detailed interpretations and guidance regarding delimitation in various situations. A number

of international arbitral courts have built on this jurisprudence, thus contributing to increasing clarity and predictability in this field. Coastal states should be helped by the considerable case-law with regard to delimitation issues.

Apart from the Norwegian-Russian disagreement concerning the Barents Sea, the following bilateral delimitation disputes remain unresolved.⁴⁰ In 1990, the US and Russia agreed on a delimitation line in the Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean, but the agreement has not been ratified by Russia. Both countries nevertheless apply it on a provisional basis. In the Beaufort Sea, the delimitation between the US and Canada is still open. As with the Norwegian-Russian disagreement in the Barents Sea, both these cases are fundamentally about which delimitational principle to apply - the equidistance or the meridian line. The dispute between Canada and Denmark over Hans Island in the Davies Strait has already been mentioned, as has the more substantial disagreement between Canada and the US on the status of the Northwest Passage and certain other areas under Canadian sovereignty.

Apart from the unresolved issues mentioned above, what remains to be divided, and has inspired much of the alarmist media coverage and political rhetoric, are the continental shelves outside the littoral states' 200 nautical miles EEZ. Four major issues seem to be at stake.

First, there is the potential of directly overlapping claims as the result of neighbouring states applying different principles of delimitation, such as in the Barents or Beaufort Seas. UNCLOS does not provide clear-cut guidance in these cases, and the disagreement must be solved by the parties involved.

Second, there may be overlapping claims resulting from conflicting interpretation of scientific evidence, i.e. two or more states claiming that an area is an extension of the country's continental shelf according to UNCLOS definitions. One such case are the significant areas covered by submarine ridges on the seabed of the Arctic Ocean, including the Lomonosov Ridge crossing the North Pole. It has yet to be established whether these ridges are part of continental shelves or not and, if so, how the maritime delimitation between the states concerned should be effected. In these cases the Continental Shelf Commission's "recommendations" will not necessarily solve the issue.

Third, it is conceivable that states or groups of states may question an Arctic Ocean state's claim to continental shelf areas without claiming any area for themselves. Such cases, however, should be resolved by application of the recommendation of the Continental Shelf Commission.

³⁷ The first final recommendation was issued with regard to Australia's documentation.

³⁸ The text of the Treaty is available on the webpage of the Norwegian Governor at Svalbard, www.sysselmannen.no.

³⁹ The current 200 nautical miles zone is declared as a "Fisheries Protection Zone", not an EEZ.

⁴⁰ This paragraph is based on Alf Haakon Hoel, "Jurisdictional issues in the Arctic: An Overview", Kjetil Skogrand (ed.), op.cit., pp. 42-44.

Fourth, UNCLOS has established a regime for the management and exploitation as “the common heritage of mankind” of mineral resources on the seabed and in the subsoil in areas outside any state’s jurisdiction. Thus, conflict over the access to such resources will be avoided by adherence to the stipulations of the Law of the Sea Convention.

Russia in the High North

Some rather obvious observations may form a basis for political and military strategies for handling the security implications of change in the High North. First, apart from asymmetrical threats like terrorism and piracy, the possibility of armed conflict in the region will in the foreseeable future be linked to relations between the Arctic Ocean states themselves. This follows directly from the area’s remoteness from the world’s other major powers. Only in the long run may the opening of new SLOCs, combined with the rise of China, India and other emerging great powers, change this picture in any fundamental way.

Secondly, Russia is the only non-NATO member of the five Arctic Ocean countries. Despite the presence of points of dispute between, most importantly, Canada and the US (delimitation of Beaufort Sea and legal status of Northwest Passage) and Norway and some of the signatories to the Svalbard Treaty (disagreement over applicability of the Treaty outside the archipelago’s territorial waters), and despite the memory of the Iceland-UK “cod wars” of the 1950s and 1970s, one can safely assume that these intra-NATO disputes will not develop into armed conflict. The NATO countries’ community of interests over a wide spectrum of issues, including security challenges, will easily outweigh even substantial bilateral or multilateral disputes.

This leads to the conclusion that the state of High North security in the long run will be determined primarily by the bilateral and multilateral interaction between Russia and the other states bordering on the Arctic Ocean. These “other states” will at times act individually and at times in concert through cooperative structures, most importantly NATO and, in a wider context, the European Union.⁴¹ This, in turn, implies that High North affairs will be intertwined with the broader picture of relations between Russia and the West. However, this will not be a one-way relationship. Given the importance of the Arctic regions for the Russian economy and its military posture, and the increasing awareness of the importance of High North issues in Western countries, relations with Russia in the Arctic may

turn out to be one of the determinants of the evolution of relations between Russia and the West in general. Thus, while maintaining stability and prosperity in the High North is important in and of itself, even more is at stake here.

In geopolitical terms, Russia has a unique stature among the states bordering the Arctic Ocean. First, there is geography. From the Bering Strait in the east to the border with Norway in the west, the Russian Arctic Ocean shore line covers nearly half of the latitudinal circle. Second are the economic factors. Because of the presence of enormous petroleum resources and other natural riches in the Russian European High North and in Northern Siberia, as much as 20 per cent of the Russian GDP is generated north of the Arctic Circle. At 22 per cent, the Arctic’s share in Russian exports is even higher.⁴² Only a profound and long-term diversification of the Russian economy away from today’s heavy reliance on energy extraction may fundamentally alter this situation.⁴³ At present, there are few signs that such a structural change is under way.⁴⁴ Moreover, in decades to come, the Arctic’s share in Russian petroleum extraction is expected to grow rather than diminish.⁴⁵ Thus, there is a very real economic basis for the last years’ strong focus on Arctic issues among Russian policy makers and in the Russian media. The uncertainty about Russia’s will and ability to make full use of already identified and potential new offshore Arctic petroleum fields does not change this general picture.

Third, there is the military and security dimension. With the end of the cold war, the High North rapidly receded into the background in Western thinking as an area of potential armed conflict. The cold war focus on the region was mainly defined by two factors: the possibility of a nuclear exchange over the polar region, and by the crucial role of the Soviet Northern fleet in the battle for control over the SLOCs between North America and Europe in an all-out European war.⁴⁶ Despite the region’s continued central role for strategic deterrence, early warning and missile defence, in other areas of military security the attention of the Western major powers and NATO to the High North evaporated with the transformation of relations with Russia. The emergence of new “out-of-area” threats reinforced this trend, and so did the discussion and process of NATO enlargement. One highly visible effect was the shift of the point of gravity of NATO’s command and control structure from northern Europe towards the Mediterranean. Another was the absence, since the late 1980s, of major US surface vessels in the Norwegian Sea.

⁴¹ Greenland, despite being part of Denmark, is not a member of the European Union. Thus, the EU as such is not littoral to the Arctic Ocean. However, this hardly diminishes Denmark’s interest in contributing to EU policies which reflect the views and interests of the Arctic Ocean states.

⁴² These numbers were quoted and emphasized by President Medvedev in his speech on Arctic issues on 17 September 2008.

⁴³ Both Medvedev and Putin have repeatedly stressed the need for diversification.

⁴⁴ For a critical appraisal of Russia’s economic performance under Putin, see Marshall I. Goldman, “Anders in Wonderland: Comments on Russia’s Economic Transformation under Putin”, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 2004, 45, No. 6, pp. 429-434.

⁴⁵ Cf. “The Summary of the Energy Strategy of Russia for the Period of up to 2020”, http://ec.europa.eu/energy/russia/events/doc/2003_strategy_2020_en.pdf.

⁴⁶ For an in-depth discussion of the High North during the cold war, see Rolf Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North*, Oslo (Universitetsforlaget), 1991.

The Russian perspective is different. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian military posture in the High North (as elsewhere) went into sharp decline. However, this did not substantially undermine the area's central role in Russian strategic thinking. Decisive elements include the Russian Northern Fleet's continued role in the Russian nuclear triad and the sheer weight of the massive military infrastructure on the Kola Peninsula. In the 1990s, while the US Navy reduced its presence in the North Atlantic, Russian strategists further developed the "bastion defence" concept for the Barents Sea area.⁴⁷ In the basic Russian strategic outlook and threat perceptions, elements of change continued to compete with strong undercurrents of continuity. Despite new patterns of military contact and even cooperation with NATO and individual NATO member states, numerous episodes left the impression that Russia continued to be fundamentally distrustful of NATO intentions in the area. An analysis of Russian military and foreign policy rhetoric related to the Arctic provides ample support for the often-repeated conclusion about Russian security thinking as being coloured by "zero sum" approaches, and the assumption that the existence of great power spheres of interest is a geopolitical law of nature.

Under Putin's presidency, Russia's posture in the High North was augmented by ambitious plans for the long-term development of the Northern Fleet with major blue water capacities that included aircraft carriers. Starting in the spring of 2007, as part of similar developments in other areas of Russian strategic interest, the ambitious rhetoric was accompanied by the renewal of training sorties of strategic bombers across the Barents Sea into the Norwegian Sea and North Sea. Highly visible naval exercises added to the picture. Russian government representatives repeatedly emphasized the vital role of the military in securing Russian economic interests in the Arctic,⁴⁸ and the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that vessels of the Northern Fleet would "renew" their regular patrolling of Arctic waters, including the waters around Svalbard.⁴⁹ However, with knowledge of the limited results of previous post-Soviet military planning, it remains to be seen as to what degree the plethora of high-profile projects for the expansion and modernization of the Russian Northern Fleet will become anything more than grand ambitions. There are fundamental uncertainties about the prospects for Russia's long-term economic development and therefore also the ability to sustain the ambitious rearmament programs. Continued massive corruption, inadequate training and other structural deficiencies in the Russian armed forces give additional reason for doubt.

Foundations for stability in the High North

It may nevertheless be argued that at the start of the new century Russia is pivotal in defining the framework for geopolitical interaction in the Arctic Ocean. If so, much will depend on the Western countries' will and ability to develop appropriate responses to Russian moves and to present constructive agendas of their own. An obvious danger is that heavy-handed Russian political rhetoric, military signalling or even the use of military force may provoke correspondingly unproductive and short-sighted Western responses, collectively or from individual members of the Alliance. The August 2007 flag episode provided some examples of this mechanism. The Georgia-Russia crisis and its aftermath gave many more. Although indignation may give emotional satisfaction, it does not present the best guide to political action in most situations.

Vicious circles of provocative rhetoric or action and equally futile responses are certain to recur in the future. However, as a means to reduce their frequency and impact, Western policies need to be anchored to a set of long-term fundamental policy aims. This applies in particular to the High North, where state actors until now have by and large adhered to jointly established regimes over a broad spectrum of crucial issues. The overarching aim of Western policies should be to prevent the area's renewed militarization, meaning that maximum effort must be made to minimise the probability that military means will be applied in any conceivable High North inter-state conflict scenario.

Moreover, Western policy makers should set for themselves the ambitious goal of developing the area into a source of stability, community of interest and cooperation between Russia and the West. A recent analysis of NATO-Russia relations noted that, in order to cooperate, the two sides must shift their focus from "tactical differences" to "broader strategic aims and first-order issues".⁵⁰ Their first-order ambition should be to agree on "a desired end state" reflecting commonly identified shared objectives. The Arctic Ocean area, where numerous arenas for comprehensive cooperation are still open, represents a chance to put these guidelines into practice. The shared objectives in the High North must include final and permanent solutions to unresolved issues of territorial delimitation and natural resources management and exploitation.

⁴⁷ Cf. Kristian Atland, "The introduction, adoption and implementation of Russia's 'Northern Strategic Bastion' Concept, 1992-1999", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 20/2007, pp. 499-528.

⁴⁸ See for instance an interview with Lieutenant General Vladimir Shamanov in *Krasnaia Zvezda*, 24 June 2008, "Podgotovka i oblik armii budut meniat'sia"; Viacheslav Popov, "Zakonodatelnoe obespechenie natsionalnoi morskoi politiki i ekonomicheskoi deiatelnosti v Arktike", *Morskoi sbornik*, No. 9, September 2006

⁴⁹ "Voenno-Morskoi Flot vozobnovil prisutstvie boevykh korablei Severnogo Flota v arkticheskikh raionakh", posted 14 July 2008, retrieved from www.mil.ru/info/1069/details/index.shtml?id=47282.

⁵⁰ Julianne Smith, "The NATO-Russia Relationship. Defining Moment or Déjà Vu?", CSIS Report, November 2008, p. 14.

There are, in fact, several factors that contradict the often-repeated pessimistic scenarios for the Arctic Ocean. As mentioned above, some of the most promising potential petroleum reserves are in areas of undisputed national jurisdiction. Even where this is not the case, there is agreement among the littoral states, including Russia, about the need for multilateral solutions to regional challenges. This includes support for UNCLOS as the overarching legal framework. The Ilulissat declaration points exactly in this direction. The long history of successful regional cooperation on resources management in the region, even between cold war foes, gives cause for optimism. Apart from defining the framework for the resolution of delimitational disputes, this approach calls for the further development of robust regimes for the handling of issues such as ecological safety and living resources management, the challenges of opening and operating new SLOCs, and the handling of security threats emanating from outside the Arctic Ocean region. The list of challenges that can only be handled through cooperation between all the Arctic states can easily be expanded. In most cases, framework regimes are already in place, so there is no need start from a “blank sheet”.

Alarmist scenarios are often linked to pessimistic predictions of Russian behaviour, and certain aspects of Russian rhetoric and action give legitimate reasons for concern. So does the fundamental weakness of the Russian regime in terms of domestic legitimacy, and the ability and will to withstand pressures towards authoritarian solutions. Up until now, however, Russian foreign policy statements and strategy documents regularly emphasise the primary role of international law and multilateralism in international relations. Despite the harsh tone, this message was at the core of then President Putin’s much-discussed Munich speech in February 2007,⁵¹ and less confrontationally in President Medvedev’s proposal in the summer of 2008 of new European security architecture.⁵² Such statements should not be routinely dismissed as simple expressions of a fundamentally anti-American and anti-Western agenda. It may well be that Russian policy makers realise that adherence to international law and collective solutions are in fact in Russia’s own vital interest.

If so, this would be in line with the traditional behaviour of middle-sized powers or powers with limited power projection capabilities.⁵³ Even the military operation against Georgia in August 2008 does not necessarily contradict this interpretation of Russia’s fundamental foreign and security policies. However controversial and possibly mis-

guided, legal arguments have been at the forefront of Russian justifications of their actions towards Georgia. The preferred Russian comparison between Kosovo and South Ossetia is not altogether without relevance. Stating this does not imply any sympathy with Russia’s instrumental use of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia conflicts, or the behaviour of Russian troops in the field. However, given that the Russian interpretation of the events leading up to and following NATO’s (1999) and Russia’s (2008) interventions diverge substantially from the dominant Western view, and not merely for instrumental reasons, it is important to remind oneself of the importance of sometimes elusive perceptions as a key factor in state actors’ policies. This being said, lingering uncertainties about the future Russian posture is one reason why there is more to High North security than creating frameworks for regional cooperation.

Economic factors as well create strong inherent interests that will tend to maintain stability and predictability in the area. This is particularly true for energy producing countries. Large-scale exploitation of technologically and environmentally challenging Arctic Ocean petroleum fields is only imaginable under conditions of regional peace and stability. This also applies to the transportation of oil and gas out of the region, and to the exploitation of mineral resources on the Arctic Ocean seabed. Moreover, security of demand is as important for the exporting country as security of supply for the importer. This is particularly true in the case of an economy as heavily dependent on energy exports as Russia’s. It may be recalled that East-West tension in the cold war was no hindrance to large-scale Soviet gas exports to Western Europe.

Thus, the prospects of increasing economic activity in the Arctic Ocean will by themselves present strong incentives for regional cooperation. The High North’s post-Second World War history of stability and pragmatic cooperation is actually one of the factors attracting global attention to its still-unexplored petroleum and mineral resources. One example may illustrate the point. The disputed area in the Barents Sea contains documented gas fields, which might be exploited even with today’s technology. None of the state actors in the region have shown any inclination to do so. The new Russian Arctic strategy approved in September 2008 allegedly singles out maintaining the Arctic “as an area of peace and cooperation” as one of the four major policy aims.⁵⁴ Other global players will have the same interest as the Arctic Ocean countries in maintaining stability and peace in the High North.

⁵¹ An English translation of the text of the speech is available at www.securityconference.de. For an analysis of the speech, see Andrew Monaghan, “‘An enemy at the gates’ or ‘from victory to victory’? Russian foreign policy”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 4 (2008), pp. 717-733.

⁵² For an analysis of the Russian initiative, see Andrew Monaghan, “Russia’s ‘Big Idea’: ‘Helsinki 2’ and the reform of Euro-Atlantic Security”, *NDC Research Report*, 3 December 2008.

⁵³ Apart from the historical legacy, Russia’s aspirations to great power status rely on two premises – geography and the nuclear arsenal.

⁵⁴ Declaration by Ambassador Anton Vasiliev in an interview with WEU Assembly rapporteurs, cf. “Europe’s northern security dimension”, *op.cit.*, p. 22 (point 114).

However, there are serious obstacles to be overcome.⁵⁵ First, the western Arctic Ocean states, joined by the EU and NATO, should intensify their efforts to develop and maintain a unified approach to Arctic Ocean issues in general and relations with Russia in the Arctic in particular. The evolving consensus about UNCLOS as the appropriate legal framework is a step in the right direction. Less reassuring is the tendency, still visible in individual cases, of initiating political processes without including all interested parties. As an important first step, the western Arctic Ocean states should make every effort to find solutions to their remaining delimitational and jurisdictional disputes.

Second, the Western states must improve their skills in interpreting and finding appropriate responses to Russian rhetoric and behaviour. The often heavy-handed Russian emphasis on the defence of national interests as a zero-sum game and the corresponding use of military signalling make this a challenging task. Equally disturbing and difficult to handle is the tendency among Russian media and even policy makers to present most aspects of non-Russian activity in the Arctic as inherently hostile and threatening to Russian interests, even when such activity infringes in no conceivable way on recognized Russian rights. Of particular relevance and urgency, the Western states must clarify their response to a possible long-term strengthening of the Russian military presence in the Arctic Ocean based on a modernizing and expanding Northern Fleet.

The multiple asymmetries that characterise the Arctic Ocean region present a third and overarching challenge. One of them, Russia's particular stance as an Arctic power, has already been mentioned. The regional military element of this asymmetry, particularly evident in the Barents Sea area, must be a major factor in designing western approaches to both deterrence and contingency planning. Other asymmetries are inherent in the starkly different weight of the Arctic Ocean in the Western littoral states' foreign and security policy agendas. Moreover Canada, Denmark and Norway, together with the other Nordic countries and most non-Arctic actors, tend to focus on High North security in a regional context. To the United States and Russia the High North is also an important element in their overall security strategy on account of the region's continued role in the two countries' nuclear postures. Moreover, there are a number of current and potential conflicts of interest between countries with territories and sovereign rights in the Arctic Ocean region and adjacent waters (the five Arctic Ocean states plus Iceland) on the one hand, and still-interested but more distant states and multinational organizations on the other.

Which role for NATO in the High North?

This paper argues that Western-Russian cooperation in the Arctic Ocean region, as well as globally, is the key to Arctic stability. Bringing NATO into the discussion may seem to contradict this vision - Russia may be expected to respond negatively to almost any aspect of an increased Allied presence in the region. There is little reason to believe that this attitude will change in the foreseeable future, despite regional measures of confidence building and a hopefully positive trend in the overall NATO-Russia relationship. However, NATO is at the core of the defence and security strategies of all the other Arctic Ocean states. For this simple reason, NATO cannot avoid defining its role in the area. The challenge will be to devise policies that recognise Russian concerns, while at the same time securing fundamental Western security interests.

For this very reason, in the Arctic as elsewhere NATO has no other choice than to make every effort to engage in political and military confidence building and cooperative ventures with Russia to supplement bilateral or regional arrangements. Most of these will have a non-Article 5 character. Apart from locally well-established arenas such as marine search and rescue operations, bilateral information exchange and courtesy visits,⁵⁶ one approach may be to jointly identify and develop common security interests outside the traditional hard security realm.⁵⁷ Various security and safety challenges related to Arctic SLOCs seem to offer a wide field of areas of mutually beneficial cooperation based on common interests, including surveillance and patrolling. Russia's active participation in Operation Active Endeavour (OAE) in the Mediterranean, even more so as this is an Article 5 operation, might serve as a reference point. NATO and the West should actively search for arenas of cooperation in which shared perceptions may prove stronger than disagreements or perceived "values gaps" on other issues.⁵⁸

Turning to NATO's less inviting side, i.e. the Alliance's commitment to collective defence, the Alliance's closely intertwined core functions in the Arctic remain surveillance and intelligence, and deterrence. Should deterrence fail, the Alliance must prepare for crisis management and, ultimately, participation in armed conflict. This will not necessarily mean a radical departure from existing patterns. NATO as such is present in the High North today, for instance, through the NATO Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS), including fighters on Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) and regular AWACS airborne early warning flights, and exercises in Norway and Iceland.

⁵⁵ This paper is based on the premise that the United States Senate will, and sooner rather than later, accede to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas.

⁵⁶ The paper builds on the premise that forms of cooperation that were suspended after the South Ossetia crisis in August 2008 will gradually be resumed.

⁵⁷ Cf. Julianne Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Global Trends 2025*, p. 32.

The aim of surveillance and intelligence is to create a basis for adequate situational awareness, a key factor in the maintenance of regional stability. This starts with the elaboration of framework analyses of regional developments over a wide spectrum of security-related issues, and ends up with real time surveillance of the movements of civilian and military activities. As mentioned above, some of these tasks may present areas for cooperation with Russia. In other areas it should be explored to what degree Allied resources, such as maritime and aerial surveillance and patrolling, may be further developed to supplement efforts by the Arctic states themselves. The same applies to intelligence.

Deterrence works only if it has credibility based on visible substance. It must be designed on the basis of conceivable conflict scenarios, and it must include documented and credible contingency planning for the management of crises that escalate to the use or the threat of use of military force. It must also include a material basis in the form of a combination of national and NATO (integrated and pooled) military capabilities that, taken together, cover the entire range of military peace time activities and crisis management tasks. Here, as elsewhere, cooperation and coordination between Allied countries is of primary importance.

Looking at the conflict potential inherent in the region, it seems highly unlikely that any of the Arctic Ocean states would risk large-scale interstate military conflict to press for their preferred solution to regional conflicts of interest. The likely material and political costs would by far outweigh any conceivable gains. This, however, does not rule out the possibility that localized episodes may inadvertently develop into armed clashes despite the original intentions of the parties involved. Neither does it rule out the possibility that one state actor in the region may consider the use of limited military force based on a firm conviction that the other side will not escalate the conflict into major confrontation. Existing asymmetries of strength may increase the temptation for this option. Finally, it may be argued that the growing strategic attention to the region makes the High North more vulnerable to the effect of events in other parts of the world. It cannot be excluded that armed aggression in the High North may be launched in continuation of a major crisis somewhere else.

The challenge may be summarized as maintaining a military presence that is sufficient to act as a stabilizing factor in conceivable crisis scenarios but without undermining stability through provoking short-term and long-term counter-measures and the ensuing escalation of general tension. A clear line must be drawn between a model of deterrence in the Arctic as suggested in this paper and the sort of presence and posture NATO and the West maintained during the

cold war.⁵⁹ NATO and the West must leave no doubt that the use of military force in inter-state disputes in the Arctic will be considered only as a last resort of self defence.

This balancing applies to national military forces, but even more to forms of multilateral efforts under the umbrella of NATO or other multinational organizations. A low-key approach in times of tranquillity must be paralleled by demonstrations that national and NATO contingency planning include updated scenarios for the collective handling of a wide range of crisis and conflict in the Arctic. In practical terms, the credibility of declarations of collective solidarity should be reinforced by an appropriate mixture of NATO-led military exercises, the proper preparation of designated military units, a continuous critical look at the adequacy of existing structures for command and control, and other peace time preparations.⁶⁰ The residual risk that conflicts elsewhere may lead to armed confrontation in the Arctic implies that force levels and postures should appear adequate in comparison with the strength of non-NATO forces in the region.

Even if military deterrence may be effective in preventing the premeditated use of military force, it may prove unable to forestall the occurrence of episodes that, unintended by any of the parties, may escalate into the use of force. In the short and medium term, the potential for local crisis escalation in the Arctic Ocean region is linked to fisheries management in disputed areas rather than to conflicting claims to petroleum resources. For instance, Russian trawlers take twenty five per cent of their Arctic Ocean catch in the Fisheries Protection Zone around Svalbard, where Russia and other states dispute Norway's sovereign rights to resources management. The Norwegian Coast Guard regularly patrols and conducts inspections in the area. However, on more than one occasion Russia has also sent naval vessels to the Fisheries Protection Zone for inspection purposes. It must be emphasized that all parties with an interest in the area tend to acquiesce to the terms of Norwegian jurisdiction and control.

This example brings us back to the core importance of national and Allied contingency planning for the handling of local conflicts over resources management, including fishing rights, that escalate to a military level. Such plans must be closely coordinated with the Arctic NATO member states' national defence and security policies. Moreover, they must include robust procedures for escalation control; procedures that must involve close cooperation with national governments and NATO organs. Some of the conceivable conflict scenarios will involve parties of strikingly different orders of strength, which emphasizes the challenge of calibrating the call for Allied support against the danger of large-scale esca-

⁵⁹ Cf. Sverre Diesen, "New perspectives on military power in the Arctic", in Kjetil Skogrand (ed.), op.cit., p. 96.

⁶⁰ Cf. US NATO Ambassador Kurt Volker's remarks in September 2008 about the need for "more visible planning" and the proper use of "exercises" to provide credibility to Article 5. Volker's comment specifically addressed the situation of the Baltic states after the Georgia conflict. Volker's interview with *The Financial Times* on 3 September, as quoted in *Europe Diplomacy & Defence*, No. 155/4, September 2008.

lation. As one important element of both general deterrence and crisis management, national governments and NATO need to consider to what degree the regular presence of Allied forces in High North waters may reduce the provocative effect of requesting Allied support in a crisis situation.

Concluding remarks

The discussion above of military aspects of High North security should not distract from the overall message of this paper: there is no ongoing “race” for High North resources, nor is there a visible threat of a “grab” for still undivided Arctic Ocean areas. Until now, the Arctic Ocean has been an area of stability, characterized by a web of bilateral and multilateral regimes. There are many good reasons to believe that this benign state of affairs can be maintained. Most importantly, Russia shares the West’s fundamental interest in maintaining the High North as an area characterized by international cooperation and the absence of military confrontation. Like all the other Arctic littoral states, Russia also considers that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas, UNCLOS, provides the overall legal framework for the Arctic Ocean region. It can be taken for granted that Russia would like the High North to remain the country’s most stable and conflict-free border region.

Managing relations with Russia will be both the key to - and the measure of - success or failure in securing continued prosperity and stability in the High North. Full use should be made of hard-won lessons from the era of strategic confrontation during the cold war, and from the ups and downs of managing relations with Russia since the 1990s.⁶¹ This will require the skilful calibration of political and military means to reach a defined set of fundamental aims. Western policy makers must demonstrate the ability and will to take Russian foreign and security interests into account as the Russians themselves perceive them, without necessarily accepting

them at face value.⁶² The West and NATO should be unanimous in their resolve to engage Russia in constructive cooperation over the broadest spectrum of security-related issues. The NATO Russia Council may be one important arena for constructive High North dialogue.

But there is still the residual risk that conflicts of interests may develop into armed confrontation, through escalation or otherwise. However unlikely, it cannot be excluded that a major conflict elsewhere may spill over into armed aggression in the High North. Thus, the High North is one of several areas where NATO needs to examine how the Alliance’s core function - the idea of collective defence presented by the Washington Treaty’s Article 5 - ought to be interpreted and implemented in the post cold war setting. *Surveillance and intelligence and deterrence including contingency planning* must remain core elements of the Western Alliance’s military posture in the High North. The difficult task will be to find ways to back up declarations of intent through necessary adjustments to current policies without jeopardizing the ultimate goal of preventing the use of armed force in the High North.

All decisions must be guided by a firm intent to avoid a return to the chess-board reasoning of the cold war, which presupposed that only one winner would be left on the field. This will involve multiple balancing acts between demonstrations of Allied solidarity and preparedness and the danger that they may provoke destabilizing Russian counter-measures. The approach should be analytical rather than emotional. All steps should be calculated in terms of their long-term effect on High North security and stability, and they should be predictable and legitimate in terms of the Western countries’ declared policy aims. Military measures have the negative aim of avoiding the worst. Positive ambitions can only be achieved through dialogue, cooperation and compromise solutions to matters under dispute.

⁶¹ For a critical appraisal of Western policies towards Russia since the 1990s, see Richard Sakwa, “‘New Cold War’ or twenty years’ crisis? Russia and international politics”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (2008), pp. 241-267. See also Julianne Smith, op.cit., and Andrew Monaghan, op.cit.

⁶² Cf. Klaus Naumann et al, op.cit., p. 65.

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125	Dossier	Disegno di legge A.S. n. 586-905-955-956-960-B Trattato di Prüm
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