



**THE NEWLY EMERGING ARCTIC  
SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

# **The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Arctic is changing and, as a result, is garnering unprecedented international interest. With warming temperatures, melting ice and greater accessibility to resources in the region, concerns for security in the region are at the forefront of the Arctic states' attempts to maintain their foothold in the Arctic. All of the Arctic states – Canada, Russia, Denmark, Norway and the United States – have downplayed concerns about conflict sparked by a “race for resources” in the Arctic by issuing policy statements. The core of these statements is that the Arctic states will work together to maintain peaceful cooperation in the region.

However, the Arctic states are seemingly contradicting the intent of their statements as evidenced by their current actions. All of the Arctic states have begun rebuilding their military forces and capabilities in order to operate in the region. Personnel are undertaking Arctic training exercises; submarines that can operate in ice are being developed or enhanced; icebreakers are being built; and so forth. The catalyst for the Arctic states' efforts appears to be a recognition that the Arctic is critically vital to their interests and they will take the steps necessary to defend these interests. The consequence of these efforts is that notwithstanding the public statements of peace and cooperation in the Arctic issued by the Arctic states, the strategic value of the Arctic is growing. As this value grows, each state will attach a greater value to their own national interests in the region. The Arctic states may be talking cooperation, but they are preparing for conflict.

## SOMMAIRE

L'Arctique est en plein changement, et c'est pourquoi il connaît un intérêt international sans précédent. Avec le réchauffement des températures, la fonte des glaces et l'augmentation de l'accessibilité aux ressources de la région, les préoccupations de sécurité dans la région sont à l'avant-plan des tentatives que font les États arctiques pour maintenir leur emprise sur l'Arctique. Tous les États arctiques – le Canada, la Russie, le Danemark, la Norvège et les États-Unis – ont minimisé l'importance de leurs préoccupations concernant le conflit déclenché par une « course aux ressources » dans l'Arctique en publiant des énoncés de politique. Au coeur de ces énoncés il y a l'idée que les États arctiques vont travailler ensemble à maintenir une coopération pacifique dans la région.

Toutefois, si on se fie à leurs agissements actuels, les États arctiques paraissent contredire l'intention de leurs déclarations. Tous les États arctiques ont commencé à réédifier leurs forces et leurs capacités militaires afin de pouvoir opérer dans la région. Le personnel entreprend des exercices d'entraînement dans l'Arctique, des sous-marins qui fonctionnent dans la glace sont en voie de développement ou d'amélioration, on construit des brise-glace, et ainsi de suite. Le catalyseur des efforts déployés par les États arctiques semble être une reconnaissance que l'Arctique est un élément vital critique pour leurs intérêts et qu'ils vont prendre les mesures nécessaires pour défendre ces intérêts. La conséquence de ces efforts est que, nonobstant les déclarations publiques de paix et de coopération dans l'Arctique publiées par les États concernés, la valeur stratégique de l'Arctique prend de plus en plus d'ampleur. À mesure que cette valeur s'accroît, chaque État va attacher une plus grande importance à ses propres intérêts nationaux dans la région. Les États arctiques peuvent bien parler coopération, ils se préparent au conflit.

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to pick up a magazine or a newspaper, or turn on a TV without seeing some mention of the changing Arctic. From concern about the survival of polar bears<sup>2</sup> to the promise of vast new resources including diamonds,<sup>3</sup> oil and gas,<sup>4</sup> the world has a new appreciation of the region. Media reports have focussed on the fear that a “race for resources” may be developing in the region,<sup>5</sup> with many reports discussing the emergence of a new “Cold War.”<sup>6</sup> The main thrust of most of these reports has been the development and interaction of three major forces: climate change;<sup>7</sup> resource development; and boundary creation. The intersection of a melting ice cover, the promise of vast resource wealth, and the need for new maritime boundaries has resulted in unprecedented interest in the Arctic.<sup>8</sup> At the heart of almost all of these stories is the concern over the security of the region. Concerns run from issues surrounding environmental security regarding the impact of climate change, to economic security for northerners as new economic opportunities and challenges arise, and ultimately, to political and military security for all of the Arctic states.

It is the issue of state security in the region that has garnered some of the greatest attention. Increasing number of media reports are raising concerns over the possibility of growing competition in the region with the prospect of conflict developing.<sup>9</sup> While these stories are proliferating in the media, officials from the major Arctic nations – Denmark, Norway, the United States, Russia and Canada – are asserting that such concerns are unfounded. It is their public view that this transformation will take place in an orderly and peaceful manner.<sup>10</sup> All of the Arctic states have issued public statements to this effect and have even taken the step to meet in the Arctic to formally pledge their commitment for cooperation.<sup>11</sup> They have

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to support the anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments.

<sup>2</sup> CBC, “Climate Change: Polar Bears,” (April 28, 2008) [<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/climatechange/polar-bears.html>].

<sup>3</sup> Canada, Statistics Canada, “Study: Diamonds are adding lustre to the Canadian Economy,” *The Daily* (January 13, 2004) [<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/040113/dq040113a-eng.htm>].

<sup>4</sup> United States Geological Survey. *Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal: Estimates of Undiscovered Oil and Gas North of the Arctic Circle. Fact Sheet 2008-2049.* (2008).

<sup>5</sup> Scott Borgerson, “Arctic Meltdown: The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2008).

<sup>6</sup> *Economist*, “Drawing Lines in Melting Ice” (August 18, 2007):51-52; Roger Howard, “Cold War in the Arctic: As the ice retreats, the territorial claims of the Arctic Five are Hotting up,” *Times Online* (September 4, 2009)

[[http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\\_contributors/article6820907.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article6820907.ece)]; and Ed Struzik, “The New Arctic Cold War,” *TheStar.com* (November 17, 2007) [<http://www.thestar.com/article/277301--the-new-arctic-cold-war>]

<sup>7</sup> The most comprehensive study on the impact of climate change is Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA). *Impacts of a Warming Arctic: ACIA Overview Report* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) [<http://amap.no/acia/>].

<sup>8</sup> Durham University, International Boundaries Research Unit, “Maritime Jurisdiction and Boundaries in the Arctic Region.” (December 13, 2008) [<http://www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/resources/arctic/>].

<sup>9</sup> Tim Reid, “Arctic military bases signal new Cold War,” *Times Online* (August 11, 2007) [[http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us\\_and\\_americas/article2238243.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article2238243.ece)]; Randy Boswell, Russian report suggests conflict over Arctic possible,” *Canwest News Service* (May 13 2009) [<http://www.canada.com/news/Russian+report+suggests+conflict+over+Arctic+possible/1593393/story.html>]; and *New York Times* “Arctic Thaw presents new chance for conflict,” (January 28, 2009) [<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/29/world/europe/29iht-arctic.1.19773378.html>].

<sup>10</sup> *Moscow News*, “Summit Seeks Accord on Arctic Ocean,” (May 30, 2008) [<http://www.mnweekly.ru/business/20080530/55330986.html>].

<sup>11</sup> The best known example of this was the meeting in Ilulissat Greenland. It was this meeting that led to a series of public statements by the Arctic states in attendance, affirming their commitment to the peaceful resolution of boundary issues. *The Ilulissat Declaration: Arctic Ocean Conference Ilulissat, Greenland 27-29 May 2008* [[http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Ilulissat\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Ilulissat_Declaration.pdf)].

portrayed the “race for resources” in the region as the result of an ill-informed and provocative media and pundits who are over-hyping the potential for change.<sup>12</sup> They assert that the media is simply attempting to show conflict where none exists in an effort to make “news.” Ultimately, the region is secure and will remain an area of international cooperation.

It is understandable if the public is confused about the nature of international security in the Arctic. Is it a case of an irresponsible media attempting to create a crisis where none exists, with a responsible set of officials labouring to restore calm? Or is it a case of a media that is working hard to uncover an increasingly dangerous Arctic region in the face of stonewalling officials who do not want the true nature of the problem exposed? What is the true nature of Arctic security today?

This paper addresses this question by examining the build-up of the Arctic states’ military forces and capabilities. The issue, which has been largely ignored, is that beginning in the 2000s the Arctic states made a move to rebuild combat-capable forces. Although still in its very early stages, it appears that most of the Arctic states are now rebuilding both the equipment and the capabilities to operate in the Arctic. Why is this happening? What does this build-up mean? Should this be an issue of concern for the Arctic states and the international community in general? This paper will examine if there is a military build-up by the Arctic states. If this is the case, this paper will then attempt to ask why this is occurring and determine what it means for the international system?

## THE MILITARIZATION OF THE ARCTIC

Of all of the world’s oceans, the Arctic Ocean and its surrounding region is the last to receive any attention by the world’s navies. The extreme cold, which created a substantial layer of ice, combined with the lack of ice-faring capabilities, made the area inaccessible to naval ships. It was not until the Second World War that the most advanced military powers were able to operate at the southern fringe of the area.<sup>13</sup> The Germans operated secret weather stations in Greenland and northern Canada.<sup>14</sup> They also fought several major naval and air battles in the waters off Norway. The Germans, in cooperation with the USSR, first used the northern waters to move surface naval units through the Northeast Passage. In the summer of 1940 the German auxiliary cruiser, the *Komet*, sailed from Germany to the Pacific Ocean by transiting this route, the first warship to use the northern path.<sup>15</sup> The Japanese invaded and held two Alaskan islands in an effort to draw the Americans away from their attack on Midway Island. American and Canadian long-range bombers used a high Arctic route as a means of getting to allied bases in Europe and Asia.

However, it was not until the Cold War that technological developments allowed for weapons systems to operate in a sustained manner in the entire Arctic region. Two of these systems – the long-range bombers and nuclear-powered submarines – led to a substantial arms build-up in the region. If war broke out, these were the main weapons that would be used over the region to engage in nuclear war.<sup>16</sup> In addition, land-based nuclear-armed ballistic missiles

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<sup>12</sup> Allison Doyle, “Arctic Nations say no Cold War; Military Stirs - Military activity stepping up as Arctic Flaws,” *Reuters* (June 22, 2009) [<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLH63704820090622?feedType=RSS&feedName=vcCandidateFeed2&virtualBrandChannel=10102>]

<sup>13</sup> Mark Llewellyn Evans, *Great World War II Battles in the Arctic* (London: Praeger Publishers, 1999)

<sup>14</sup> Wilhelm Dege, translated by William Barr, *War North of 80: The Last German Arctic Weather Station of World War II* (Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> This voyage demonstrated the viability of northern waters as a strategic route. It also demonstrated that acts of overt cooperation in the Arctic (or elsewhere) can often mask the developing phases of a conflict. Tobis Philbin III, *The Lure of Neptune: German-Soviet Naval Collaboration and Ambitions, 1919 - 1941*, University of South Carolina Press, 1994, 131-140.

<sup>16</sup> Oran R. Young, “The Age of the Arctic,” *Foreign Policy*, no 61 (Winter, 1985-1986): 160-179.



would be fired over the Arctic owing to the geographic location of the USSR and the US. In addition to the conduct of war, the maintenance of deterrence<sup>17</sup> during the Cold War also depended on systems in the Arctic.<sup>18</sup> Both sides needed the other to know that any attack on their homeland would be detected in time to launch a counterattack. The belief was that this would deter either side from attacking in the first place;<sup>19</sup> however, in order for this to work, both sides needed to have dependable observation systems as far north as possible. Thus the Arctic was the critical strategic location for both fighting a nuclear war and avoiding it.

## THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE ARCTIC

Once the Cold War ended, both sides allowed their northern forces to dissipate. Amongst NATO northern allies, Canada, Norway and Denmark all took immediate steps to utilize the “peace dividend.”<sup>20</sup> The United States also began to reduce its Arctic capable forces, albeit to a lesser degree. Of all the Arctic states, the United States retained the largest and most capable Arctic capable navy and air force. The former Soviet Union’s forces quickly dwindled to a fraction of their former self as it dealt with its newly diminished powers.<sup>21</sup>

During the 1990s, most of the Arctic states shifted their focus from military concerns to ones associated with constabulary duties, such as environmental protection and fishery patrols.<sup>22</sup> One of the most significant international security actions undertaken by the Arctic states was the United States and Norway’s assistance with the safe decommissioning of the Russian government’s nuclear-powered submarine forces. With the collapse of the Russian economy following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, all of the Russian armed forces fell into disarray.<sup>23</sup> Ex-Soviet submarines were simply allowed to rot in harbour. International concern grew that the nuclear reactors left on board could suffer a meltdown or breach thereby posing a serious environmental threat. The United States, Norway and Russia created the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation Program (AMEC),<sup>24</sup> which provided substantial resources to properly decommission these submarines and to safely store the radioactive materials. In time, the G-8 also agreed to assist through the G-8 Global Partnership Program for the Dismantlement of Russian Submarines.<sup>25</sup>

When the circumpolar states took the time to engage each other, it was primarily for the purpose of developing new forms of international cooperation. The two most important were

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<sup>17</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “Nuclear Myths and Political Realities,” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 84, no. 3 (Sep., 1990): 731-745.

<sup>18</sup> Sanjay Chaturvedi, “Arctic Geopolitics then and now,” in *The Arctic: Environment, people, policy* edited by Mark Nuttall and Terry V. Callaghan (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2000):441-458.

<sup>19</sup> Harriet W. Critchley, “The Arctic,” *International Journal*. Vol. XLII (Autumn 1987).

<sup>20</sup> Oran Young, “Governing the Arctic: From Cold War Theatre to Mosaic of Cooperation.” *Global Governance* vol. 11 (2005): 9-15.

<sup>21</sup> Rob Huebert “Canadian Arctic Security Issues: Transformation in the post-Cold War era,” *International Journal* (Spring 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Lassi Heininen, “The military and the environment: An Arctic case,” *Green Security or Militarized Environment* edited by Jyrki Kakonen, (Dartmouth: Ashgate 1995); Natalie Mychajlyszyn, *The Arctic: Canadian Security and Defence* PRB 08-13E (Ottawa: Parliamentary Information and Research Service, October 24 2008):2-4.

<sup>23</sup> Nils Bøøhmer, Aleksandr Nikitin, Igor Kudrik, Thomas Nilsen, Andrey Zolotkov, Michael H. McGovern , *The Arctic Nuclear Challenge Bellona Report Volume 3* (Bellona, June 1, 2001) [[http://www.bellona.org/reports/The\\_Arctic\\_Nuclear\\_Challenge](http://www.bellona.org/reports/The_Arctic_Nuclear_Challenge)].

<sup>24</sup> United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Russian Nuclear Submarines: US Participation in the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation Program Needs Better Justification* GAO-040924 September 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada’s G-8 Website - Report on the G8 Global Partnership*, “Dismantlement of Nuclear Submarines and Related Work,” December 12, 2008 [[http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/g8/summit-sommet/2007/global\\_partnership-partenariat\\_mondial.aspx?lang=eng](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/g8/summit-sommet/2007/global_partnership-partenariat_mondial.aspx?lang=eng)].

the creation of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and subsequently the Arctic Council.<sup>26</sup> In both instances it was hoped that these new organizations would allow the former Arctic enemies to cooperate on an international basis. One of Finland's core objectives when it initiated the Rovaniemi Process was to encourage the newly formed Russian Government to join into a series of new cooperative arrangements.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, Canada's intent when leading the initiative to create the Arctic Council was to develop a circumpolar body that would address all problems facing the circumpolar states, including those pertaining to issues of security.

At the same time, the Arctic states began to reduce the forces that they had deployed in the region, reduced or eliminated Arctic based exercises, and stopped developing policies that were directed to operations in the Arctic.<sup>28</sup> For example, Arctic states such as Canada not only cancelled their plans to buy nuclear-powered submarines with the end of the Cold War, but also ended, or substantially reduced, all of their forces' northern operations.<sup>29</sup> It seemed that military confrontation in the Arctic, which had begun in the Second World War, had been cast into history as the Cold War ended. The focus of almost all writing on the circumpolar world in the 1990s was that a new and cooperative era was beginning;<sup>30</sup> however, as the second decade of the post Cold-War era began, cracks began to appear in this hopeful future.

### THE RETURN OF MILITARY SECURITY TO THE ARCTIC

While both politicians and many analysts have been stressing cooperation in the Arctic, two developments began to surface during 2005 that suggest that the circumpolar states are also beginning to think again about increasing their ability to strengthen their military capabilities to act in the region. First, most of the Arctic states have recently developed and issued a series of foreign and defence policy statements regarding Arctic security. This in itself was a deviation from the previous decade and did not even occur during the Cold War. At that time, the Arctic states did not issue distinct Arctic security policies. Now, while reaffirming the commitment to support cooperative behaviour in the Arctic, most of the Arctic states' policy statements clearly indicate that they view the Arctic as a critically vital region for their own national interests. All have stated that they will take the steps necessary to defend their interests in this region.

The second emerging trend was the redevelopment of northern military capabilities. Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States have all either begun to rebuild their Arctic capabilities, or have indicated their plans to do so in the near future. Some countries, such as Denmark and Norway, have already spent considerable resources rebuilding their military forces. Other states, such as Canada, have drawn up significant plans to do so in the near future.

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<sup>26</sup> Rob Huebert, "New Directions in Circumpolar Cooperation: Canada, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy and the Arctic Council," *Canadian Foreign Policy* 5 no.2 (Winter 1998):37-58.

<sup>27</sup> Esko Rajakoski, "Multilateral Cooperation to Protect the Arctic Environment: The Finnish Initiative," *The Arctic: Choices for Peace and Security* (Vancouver: Gordon Soules Book Publisher, 1989): 54-55.

<sup>28</sup> "Proving" that the Circumpolar states "stopped" doing things in the Arctic is difficult. It is always challenging from a research perspective to cite the point at which a Government does not say or does not do anything in any region of the world, let alone the Arctic.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew Carnaghan and Allison Goody, *Canada Arctic Sovereignty* PRB 05-61E (Ottawa: Parliamentary Information and Research Service, January 26, 2006):11

<sup>30</sup> The two leading scholars who have examined the developing cooperation in the region are Oran Young and Franklyn Griffiths. See Young, Oran *Arctic Politics: Conflict and Cooperation in the Circumpolar North*, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992); Oran, Young "Governing the Arctic: From Cold War Theatre to Mosaic of Cooperation." *Global Governance* vol. 11 (2005): 9-15 and Franklyn Griffiths ed. *Arctic Alternatives: Civility or Militarism in the Circumpolar North* (1992).

Taking together the policy statements and the rebuilding of military capabilities (planned or actual), it is clear that while publicly stating that the Arctic of the 2000s remains as cooperative and peaceful as the Arctic of the 1990s, the Arctic states' actions and expenditures suggest otherwise. They are increasingly becoming concerned about maintaining their ability to protect and defend their interests, unilaterally if need be. While there is no immediate danger of conflict in the region, there is a re-emergence of a combat capability, which had originally dissipated at the end of the Cold War. This begs the question why? Are the Arctic states simply developing the means to protect their Arctic interests as climate change makes the region more accessible? Or is it possible that they are beginning to see the need to develop capabilities for a future Arctic that faces less cooperation and more conflict? In order to understand this process, this paper will examine the security policy and actions of each of the main Arctic states: Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States.

However, before doing so, it is necessary to consider several challenges facing this examination. From an analytical perspective, it is always difficult to demonstrate when any element of the international system is in transformation. What are the indicators that would show a change in a region that has been largely ignored for the last two decades? Furthermore, even if indicators can be identified, is it possible to assess them for any meaningful comments about the nature of the developing security environment? What would an increasingly globalized Arctic look like if the region remains one of cooperation? What would it look like if the region is heading towards more conflict?

Before even considering what this study needs to examine, there are three limiting factors that need to be acknowledged. First, the modern Arctic will contain both elements of conflict and cooperation at the same time. The challenge is isolating any trends that may be developing regarding either cooperation or conflict.

Secondly, the location of both Russia and the United States as Arctic states will blur the distinction between security developments that are Arctic specific and those that are occurring because these two Arctic states have global interests. The geography of Russia means that as that state recovers from its economic collapse of the late 1980s and 1990s, it will build new forces that must be located in the Arctic. This is particularly true for its naval forces. It is only to be expected that the United States will likewise respond; however, it does not really matter. Even if a build-up is occurring because of other global issues, the fact remains that the Russian geopolitical reality means that the Arctic region will be involved.

Third, it is very difficult to get specific numbers on the new activities in the Arctic. This means that much of the evidence presented in this study is currently incomplete. Operations in the Arctic are by its nature hidden from view. To a large degree, the evidence that can be found is mainly information that the various governments release. What is not known is activity that remains both out of site and classified. This remains a significant limiting factor facing this study.

## **INDICATORS OF THE NEW SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

This examination will look to two main types of indicators to determine if a new security environment is developing: what are the states saying and doing?

The first set of indicators will be based on what the circumpolar states are saying. Are there indications that they are giving any new emphasis on unilateral action and on the protection of their interests in the region? Are these states saying anything that may indicate that they are less committed to the cooperation of the 1990s?

The second set of indicators will be based on the actions of the circumpolar states. Are they

engaged in any activities that suggest that they are building up new capabilities that go beyond those needed for cooperation? Such indicators can be found in terms of new military construction and in training. What is being built? Are there any signs of new types of training? If so, what does this look like?

## CANADA

Throughout the 1990s, the main thrust of the Canadian position was that the Arctic needed to be developed in a cooperative fashion. All official documentation specifically stated that the need for military security in the region had ended with the fall of the USSR.<sup>31</sup> There were no official publications that raised concerns regarding traditional security issues. Instead, the focus was clearly on issues of environmental security, but this began to change in the early 2000s. Canada was one of the first Arctic states to publicly discuss rebuilding its Arctic security capability. Back in the mid-2000s the short-lived Martin Liberal Government launched two key initiatives to examine Canada's Arctic needs from both a domestic and an international perspective. The Martin Government launched a defence and foreign policy review, which ultimately led to a set of policy papers on defence, diplomacy, development and international trade. While not quite White Papers, these documents made it clear that Canada needed to improve its ability to protect its Arctic region. On the basis of an anticipated increase in international activity in the region due to climate change and resource development, the document stated, "(t)he demands of sovereignty and security for the Government could become even more pressing as activity in the North continues to rise."<sup>32</sup> This anticipated increase in foreign interest in the region corresponds with the need to act. The Martin Government also began to develop a domestic Arctic policy that would provide a Government of Canada position on the north. Called the Northern Strategy, it was to be built on seven pillars. One of the pillars was "Reinforcing Sovereignty, National Security and Circumpolar Cooperation,"<sup>33</sup> that focussed on improving Canada's ability to defend both its Arctic sovereignty and security; however, the policy was not finalized before the Martin Government was defeated in the 2006 federal election.

Under Stephen Harper, the Conservatives also raised the issue of building up Canadian capability. During his 2005-2006 campaign, Harper surprised many observers when he made this a campaign issue by issuing a policy promise to rebuild Canadian Arctic forces. This included a commitment to build three armed icebreakers to be operated by the navy.<sup>34</sup> Following their election victory, the new Conservative Government continued to develop plans to improve Canadian Arctic forces. From 2006 to the present, the Harper Government has continued to develop its plan to strengthen Canada's northern security capabilities.

In May 2008, with the release of their defence policy *Canada First Defence Strategy*, the Conservative Government stated its concern about Canada's ability to protect its north.

In Canada's Arctic region, changing weather patterns are altering the environment, making it more accessible to sea traffic and economic activity. Retreating ice cover has opened the way for increased shipping, tourism and

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<sup>31</sup> Canada, Library of Parliament *The Arctic: Canada and International Perspectives* (October 2008): 1-7; 29-34.

<sup>32</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World - Defence*, (Ottawa, 2005) 17.

<sup>33</sup> Canadian Arctic Resource Committee (CARC), *Northern Perspective* vol 30, no1 (Winter 2006) 2. [[http://www.carc.org/pubs/v30no1/CARC\\_Northrn\\_Perspectives\\_Winter\\_2006.pdf](http://www.carc.org/pubs/v30no1/CARC_Northrn_Perspectives_Winter_2006.pdf)].

<sup>34</sup> CBC, "Tories Plan to Bolster Arctic Defence," (December 22, 2005) [<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2005/12/22/elxn-harper-dfens.html>].

34. Canada, National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (May 2008):6, [[http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/focus/first-premier/June18\\_0910\\_CFDS\\_english\\_low-res.pdf](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/focus/first-premier/June18_0910_CFDS_english_low-res.pdf)].

resource exploration, and new transportation routes are being considered, including through the Northwest Passage. While this promises substantial economic benefits for Canada, it has also brought new challenges from other shores. These changes in the Arctic could also spark an increase in illegal activity, with important implications for Canadian sovereignty and security and a potential requirement for additional military support.<sup>35</sup>

On July 26, 2009, they released their *Northern Strategy*.<sup>36</sup> This document was based on four “pillars,” one of which was “exercising” Canada’s sovereignty. This document went on to list the Canadian plan: build six to eight Arctic Offshore vessels; build a large icebreaker; develop an indigenous surveillance capability (Northern Watch and RadarSat II; Polar Epsilon); expand the Rangers; create a Northern Reserve Unit based in the Arctic; develop an army Arctic training base in Resolute; and develop a deepwater resupply port in Nanisivik.<sup>37</sup>

While the government has remained vocal in its support for each of the projects, its progress has been somewhat slow. The Harper administration first announced that it was going to build armed Arctic vessels in December 2005.<sup>38</sup> In the ensuing time, this idea morphed from three armed navy icebreakers into six to eight navy Arctic Offshore Patrol Ships (AOPS) capable of travelling through first-year ice and a separate Polar Class icebreaker for the Coast Guard. While navy officials are still hopeful that the first ship can be delivered by 2014, as of January 2010, the request to industry for proposals has still not gone out.<sup>39</sup> It seems increasingly unlikely that the government will be able to request industry bids, make a decision, and build the vessel within a four-year bracket. Nevertheless, the 2014 date is still the official position. The vessels are being designed to show presence and to provide constabulary duties. They will be fitted for a gun, but the navy has not released the type or size or even if the vessels will have them when they are built; however, if the Canadian Forces do proceed with building these vessels, it will represent one of the few instances where they have acquired a new capability. In the post-Cold War era (and even in the period since the 1960s) the Canadian Forces have only replaced or updated (or eliminated) existing military capabilities. The one example of acquiring a new capability is the strategic heavy-lift capability provided by the purchase of the CC-177 Globemasters (aka C-17). These were bought to address the immediate need of the Afghanistan war. Thus, the AOPS will represent an important element of transformation for the Canadian Forces.

On August 28, 2008, the Harper Government announced that at a cost of \$720 million, it will also build an icebreaker, the *John G. Diefenbaker*, to replace the *Louis St. Laurent* when it is retired.<sup>40</sup> The government stated that it expects to have the vessel operational by 2017;

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<sup>35</sup> Canada, National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (May 2008):6, [[http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/focus/first-premier/June18\\_0910\\_CFDS\\_english\\_low-res.pdf](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/focus/first-premier/June18_0910_CFDS_english_low-res.pdf)].

<sup>36</sup> Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, *Canada’s Arctic Foreign Policy* (December 21 2009) [[http://www.international.gc.ca/ministers-ministres/Cannon-Arctic\\_Foreign\\_Policy-Politique-etrangere-arctique.aspx?lang=eng](http://www.international.gc.ca/ministers-ministres/Cannon-Arctic_Foreign_Policy-Politique-etrangere-arctique.aspx?lang=eng)].

<sup>37</sup> Rob Huebert, “Canada and the Changing International Arctic: At the Crossroads of Cooperation and Conflict” in *Northern Exposure: Peoples, Powers and Prospects for Canada’s North* edited by Frances Abele, Thomas J. Courchene, F. Leslie Seidle and France St-Hilaire (Montreal:IRPP, 2009):100-102. [<http://www.irpp.org/books/archive/AOTS4/huebert.pdf>].

<sup>38</sup> CBC, “Northwest Passage: The Arctic Grail,” (August 2006) [<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/northwest-passage/>].

<sup>39</sup> Canada Department of Defence, Commodore Peter Ellis, Director General Maritime Force Development, “Arctic/Offshore Patrol Ship (AOPS), Presentation to Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.” (Oct 27, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> Canada, Office of the Prime Minister, “PM Announces New Polar Class Icebreaker Project to be named after Former PM John G. Diefenbaker,” (August 28, 2008) [<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=2251>].

however, to date little information has been provided as to the project's progress. There is no information on the status of the project's parameters and there is no indication as to when the government will put out calls to industry. Given how long the process has taken with other large-scale building projects such as the one to replace the navy's replenishment vessels, it seems unlikely that the icebreaker will be designed, ordered and built in seven years.

In fact, the Canadian Government has taken a step back from one of its promised renewals of Arctic capabilities. The replacement for Canada's aging naval replenishment vessels, the Joint Support Vessel, was to have the capability to travel in first-year ice up to one metre thick.<sup>41</sup> These vessels were also to be double-hulled and therefore compliant with the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act*. However, in August 2008, the government announced that the bids received from industry were significantly over budget and that the government was re-examining the design.<sup>42</sup> To date the government has issued no further statements on the status of the project.

The Canadian Government has yet to discuss modernizing its air capabilities for northern use, but, the current needs in Afghanistan have enabled the air force to purchase new assets that can also be used in the north. The newly purchased CC-177s can use only a few of the northern airfields because they are too short or do not have an adequate surface on them for the aircraft.<sup>43</sup> In 2009 the air force was asked what improvements would be required in order for a number of airfields to be used. The seventeen new CC-130Js are expected to arrive in mid-2010 and will be able to use many of the existing airfields since they can land on short/rough airfields. Likewise, the fifteen new heavy lift Chinook CH-147D helicopters will also be useful in northern operations; however, the air force is still determining what it needs to replace its long-range patrol Aircraft CP-140/CP-140A Auroras and Arcturus, its CF-18 fighter aircraft, and its one northern-based aircraft: the CC-138 Twin Otter utility aircraft.<sup>44</sup> The *Canada First Strategy* did "promise" that both the CF-18s and CP-140s will be replaced,<sup>45</sup> but it is unlikely that the replacements for any of these aircraft will be announced soon. The Canadian Forces are also examining the use of UAVs in the Arctic, but they are currently experiencing some challenges in making them work in the high north. Given the high latitudes involved, there is a problem with getting adequate satellite "locks" on the UAVs to allow them to be controlled. The extreme conditions of the climate are also undermining their operations in the high north.

On a more positive note, the Canadian Government is proceeding with the Rangers expansion. This is a militia style unit that allows local northern communities to act as the "eyes and ears" of the forces. Given that many Rangers are northern aboriginals, their knowledge of the land proves useful to the regular forces operating in the Arctic. They are

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<sup>41</sup> Canada, National Defence, Assistant Deputy Minister - Material "Joint Support Ships (JSS) (July 27, 2009) [<http://www.forces.gc.ca/admmat/jointsupportshipjss-projetdunaviredesoutieninterarmeesnsi-eng.asp#psca>].

<sup>42</sup> Canada, The Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, "Bidders fail to meet budget requirements," (August 22, 2008) [<http://www.forces.gc.ca/admmat/documents/Bidders-fail-to-meet-budget-requirement1.pdf>].

<sup>43</sup> The main challenge is the need for a paved runway, something that few Arctic runways have. The heaving caused by the extreme cold means it is easier to repair runways that are gravel. To repair a paved runway requires heavy equipment that is difficult to move to the north. Interview Confidential Source. (2009).

<sup>44</sup> Canada, National Defence, Air Force, "Canada's Air Force," (May 10, 2009) [<http://www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/v2/equip/index-eng.asp>].

<sup>45</sup> Canada, National Defence, *Canada First Defence Strategy* (May 2008):17, [[http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/focus/first-premier/June18\\_0910\\_CFDS\\_english\\_low-res.pdf](http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/focus/first-premier/June18_0910_CFDS_english_low-res.pdf)].

now in the process of expanding from 4,100 members to 5,000.<sup>46</sup> A reserve company of 41 Canadian Brigade Loyal Edmonton Regiment is also being recruited to be stationed in Yellowknife. It is anticipated to have 100 personnel by 2019.<sup>47</sup>

The Canadian Space Agency successfully launched RadarSat II into orbit and it was operational as of July 2009.<sup>48</sup> Officials have expressed “delight” at how well it is functioning and the replacement system is now being developed. While planning is still in the early phases, it is hoped that RadarSat II will be replaced by a number (3-5) of smaller satellites. The Northern Watch program is also back on track despite having some difficulties in 2008 and another set of field tests on new sensor capabilities is expected to be conducted in the summer of 2010. Both systems will give Canada vastly improved indigenously built surveillance systems. RadarSat II provides outstanding satellite imagery from space, and the Northern Watch program is developing a sub-surveillance system for detecting submarines.

The Canadian Government had ceased conducting Arctic military exercises at the end of the Cold War in 1989; however, in 2002, the Canadian Government was one of the first Arctic states to recommend these exercises amidst a growing concern led by a succession of Canadian Forces Northern commanders.<sup>49</sup> Conducted in August, these have focussed in and around the eastern Arctic and include all three branches of the Canadian Forces. The scope of these exercises now includes submarines, frigates, coastal patrol vessels, icebreakers, F-18s and CP-140s, as well as land units. The Forces are now planning to develop an exercise that will take place outside of the summer months, but the date has not yet been announced.

As of 2010, the Canadian Government has devoted considerable effort to drawing up plans to improve its ability to know and act in the Arctic. This planning clearly exceeds any efforts prior to this period, but it is uncertain whether the promises of the government will be fulfilled.

## DENMARK

Denmark is an Arctic state by virtue of its control of Greenland, although it is seldom thought of as a militarily significant state. It was defeated by Germany in days in the Second World War. It did join NATO as one of the first member states, but it provided limited assets to the alliance. However, it has spent most of the post-Cold War era rebuilding a significant element of its forces into a small, but modern and combat capable force. In particular, it has spent considerable resources building up its naval forces into an Arctic combat capable force.

At the policy level, Denmark, like many other Arctic states, has issued several policy statements and engaged in several diplomatic actions regarding circumpolar relations. In 2008 it hosted a gathering of the five Arctic states – Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States – that are in the process of determining the outer limits of their extended continental shelf under the terms of the *United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS). Meeting in Ilulissat, Greenland in May 2008, these countries declared their intention to settle any differences that may develop over their claims by the rules established

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<sup>46</sup> Canada, Office of the Prime Minister “Backgrounder - Expanding Canadian Forces Operation in the Arctic,” (August 10, 2007) [<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1785>].

<sup>47</sup> CBC, “Mackay makes Arctic army reserve unit official,” (August 17, 2009) [<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2009/08/17/mackay-yellowknife-reserve.html>].

<sup>48</sup> Radarsat-2, “RadarSat -2 Successfully Launched,” (December 14, 2007) [[http://www.radarsat2.info/outreach/innews/2007/12142007\\_gsi.asp](http://www.radarsat2.info/outreach/innews/2007/12142007_gsi.asp)].

<sup>49</sup> Rob Huebert, “Renaissance in Canadian Arctic Security,” *Canadian Military Journal* vol.6 no.4 (2005-2006):17-29. [[http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/engraph/Vol6/no4/PDF/04-North1\\_e.pdf](http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/engraph/Vol6/no4/PDF/04-North1_e.pdf)].

by international law and in a peaceful fashion.<sup>50</sup> To a large degree this was to demonstrate to the world that there was no “resource war” in the Arctic. At the same time the inclusion of only these states was a signal to all other states – the other Arctic states, Finland, Sweden and Iceland included – that this region and the resources within it were under their control.

One year later Denmark released the *Danish Defence Agreement*. This provides a roadmap for the development of the Danish armed forces for the next four years. It contained a significant section on the Arctic justifying this by stating:

the melting of the polar ice-cap as a result of global warming and the resulting increased activity in the Arctic will change the region’s geostrategic significance and thus entail more tasks for the Danish Armed Forces.<sup>51</sup>

To this end, the Danish Government announced that it will be establishing an Arctic Task Force and Arctic Command<sup>52</sup> that will deploy Danish F-16 Fighters to Greenland, something that the Danish air force had not previously done with this aircraft. Thus, Denmark is signalling that it wishes to cooperate in the region, but it is now preparing for a stronger military presence if necessary.

Denmark has already overseen a substantial rebuilding of its forces with a focus on its navy. It has always maintained at least one or two small ice-capable patrol craft – *Agdlek* class (300 tons, no armament) – that it employed for fisheries and environmental patrols in Greenland. Toward the end of the Cold War, the Danish Government decided to build a class of four ice-capable patrol vessels (listed by the Danish Navy as a frigate). The first of these vessels was laid down in October 1988 and the final vessel entered service in November 1992.<sup>53</sup> These vessels are able to travel through ice up to 1 metre thick and are armed with 76 mm guns. They are also designed to take on extensive additional weapons systems including Harpoon and Sea Sparrow missiles for anti-air and anti-ship capabilities, and have space for anti-submarine torpedo tubes. As of this date, funds have not yet been allocated for these systems so they do not presently operate with them,<sup>54</sup> however, they could be added quickly if conditions warrant their use. These vessels have also proven very versatile; they are capable of operating in Arctic waters in fisheries and sovereignty patrols and off the shores of Somalia in anti-piracy patrols.

The addition of these vessels illustrates an interesting point about the impact of adding new military capabilities in the Arctic. Canada and Denmark have had a long-term disagreement about a small island/rock between Greenland and Ellesmere Island. Hans Island is an uninhabited island that is about 1 by 4 kilometres.<sup>55</sup> It has no resources and its ownership does not affect the maritime boundary between Canada and Denmark (Greenland). Up until the commissioning of the Danish *Thetis* class frigates, the dispute was characterized by the occasional visit to the island by a Canadian or Danish official or scientist. The two sides

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<sup>50</sup> *The Ilulissat Declaration: Arctic Ocean Conference Ilulissat, Greenland 27-29 May 2008* [[http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Ilulissat\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/Ilulissat_Declaration.pdf)].

<sup>51</sup> *Danish Defence Agreement 2010-2014* Copenhagen (June 24, 2009):12 [<http://www.fmn.dk/Nyt%20og%20Presse/Documents/20090716%20Samlede%20Forligstekst%202010-2014%20inkl%20bilag%20-%20english.pdf>].

<sup>52</sup> *The Copenhagen Post Online*, “Arctic Rivalry Heating Up,” (July 15 2009) [<http://www.cphpost.dk/news/national/88-national/46275-arctic-rivalry-heating-up.html>].

<sup>53</sup> Eric Wertheim, *The Naval Institute Guide to Combat Fleets of the World 2005-2006* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005): 146.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>55</sup> Rob Huebert, “Return of the “Vikings”: The Canadian-Danish dispute over Hans Island – new challenges for the Control of the Canadian North,” in *Breaking Ice – Renewable Resource and Ocean Management in the Canadian North* edited Fikret Berkes, Rob Huebert, Helen Fast, Micheline Manseau and Alan Diduck (Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 2005.)



would often leave a bottle of their national drink as a “claim,” thereby illustrating the good-natured approach that both sides employed. Soon after the commissioning of *Thetis*, however, the Danish Government deployed her to Hans Island to land troops to strengthen the Danish claim. This was then followed in 2003 with a visit by her sister ship the *Triton*. The Canadian Government responded in July 2005 by flying its Minister of Defence, Bill Graham, to land on the island with Canadian troops. At this point both governments recognized that the issue was escalating and met in New York in September 2005 and agreed to avoid any further military activity. Both sides now inform each other of any action that they plan to take in regards to the island. There is also reason to believe that Canadian officials are careful to avoid any action that could be perceived as “threatening.”<sup>56</sup> In effect, the Danish military action led to the de facto creation of a joint management agreement over the island.

This incident illustrates that even in circumstances involving allied states that are on friendly terms, the addition of new military capabilities can often escalate tensions and lead to changes in control. There is little that Hans Island offers to either state, yet the issue commanded significant attention from the leaders of both states. So even for insignificant issues, insertions of new forms of power can be important even among friends.

The Danes are now building two more ice-capable patrol vessels – the *Knud Ramussen* – that will also be given a combat capability. As in the case of the *Thetis* class, these ships are designed to quickly accept a 76 mm main gun, a sea sparrow missile launcher and anti-submarine torpedo tubes, none of which will currently be carried, but all can be quickly loaded on the ship when required.<sup>57</sup>

The Danish Navy has also built a class of vessels that will include a strong anti-air and anti-submarine capability, and will have an ice-reinforced hull.<sup>58</sup> The twelve Guided Missile Patrol Craft of the *Flyvefisken* class (350 tons) will be able to adjust their specific mission capability through a process of compartments that can be quickly loaded and offloaded.<sup>59</sup> Finally, the Danes are now building a class of large vessels that will be both self-sufficient and combat capable. The two *Absalon* ships and the three slightly smaller *Iver Huitfeldt* ships are designed to perform a wide range of roles.<sup>60</sup> They are armed with a 127 mm gun, Harpoon anti-ship missiles, Sea Sparrow anti-aircraft missiles, Eurotorp anti-submarine torpedos, and two Close in Weapons (CWIS),<sup>61</sup> however, it remains unclear as to whether or not these vessels have ice-capability.

The Danish Air Force had expected to pick the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter as a replacement for the F-16 in 2009 as Denmark had substantially funded the development of the aircraft, but this decision has been postponed. On April 29, 2009, Danish Defence Minister Søren Gade announced that the decision was temporarily postponed. He stated that there was no need to rush the decision because the replacement was not needed until 2020.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Confidential Interview. It has been suggested that Canada and Denmark both ensure that neither take unilateral action regarding the island. Thus a repeat of the “Crisis” will not be repeated in the future.

<sup>57</sup> Canadian American Strategic Review, *An Overview of Current, Ongoing Danish Naval Projects 2005-2009 Knud Rasmussen class Ice-Resistant OPV (Offshore Patrol Vessel)* (May 2008) [<http://www.casr.ca/id-danish-naval-projects-rasmussen.htm>].

<sup>58</sup> Wertheim, *Combat Fleets*; 147.

<sup>59</sup> Naval-technology.com, *Flyvefisken Class (SP 300) Multi-Role Vessels, Denmark* (2009) [<http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/fly/>].

<sup>60</sup> Naval-technology.com, *Absalon Class Combat/Flexible Support Ship Denmark* (2009) [<http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/absalon/>].

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Defence Talk: Global Defence and Military Portal, “Denmark F-35 Fighter Decision Postposed,” (April 29, 2009) [<http://www.defencetalk.com/denmark-f-35-fighter-jet-decision-18247/>].

Like Canada, Denmark has begun to redevelop its Arctic security policy; but, it is somewhat further ahead of Canada in the actual building of its new capabilities. The Danish forces are being outfitted for a combat capability with the clear intention that most of its forces will be able to operate in or near Arctic waters. These forces have also given Denmark an increased global reach. The same *Thesis* that landed troops on Hans Island has also been used to participate in anti-piracy patrols off the coast of Somalia.

## NORWAY

The central issue for Norwegian Arctic security is their relation with Russia. It is clear that while they want to maintain a friendly and cooperative relationship, they are concerned by what they see as increasingly assertive Russian actions in the Arctic. As a result, they have launched a nuanced set of policies to maintain good relations with the Russians while at the same time building up their military forces in case the relationship deteriorates in the future.

Like all of the Arctic states, Norway has also issued new northern foreign and defence policies. In November 2005, the Norwegian Government issued its policy platform entitled *The Soria Moria Declaration on International Policy*. Chapter 2 identifies the north as the most important region for Norwegian security into the future:

The Government regards the Northern Areas as Norway's most important strategic target area in the years to come. The Northern Areas have gone from being a security policy deployment area to being an energy policy power centre and an area that faces great environmental policy challenges. This has changed the focus of other states in this region. The handling of Norwegian economic interests, environmental interests and security policy interests in the North are to be given high priority and are to be seen as being closely linked.<sup>63</sup>

The policy makes it clear that while the Norwegian Government believes that there are no immediate threats to its security, including from Russia, it still sees a need to ensure that it has the ability to protect its interests in this region as it transforms.

This was followed by a Norwegian foreign policy on the High North.<sup>64</sup> This document makes it clear that Norway believes that it is in the best interests of both Norway and Russia to cooperate in the region. At the same time this policy statement also reaffirms that the Norwegian armed forces need to maintain a robust capability in the region.

This was then reaffirmed in their defence policy issued in June 2008:

The northern regions are Norway's prime area for strategic investment. Norway's position as a significant energy exporter and as a country responsible for the administration of important natural resources extending over large sea areas, has an important bearing on security policy. We must be able to uphold our sovereignty and our sovereign rights, and to exercise authority in a proper way in areas under Norwegian jurisdiction. Even though the day-to-day challenges we face in the north are linked with economic factors, the administration of natural resources and regard for the

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<sup>63</sup> Norway, Office of the Prime Minister, "The Soria Moria Declaration on International Policy," (April 2, 2007) [<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/documents/Reports-and-action-plans/rapporter/2005/The-Soria-Moria-Declaration-on-Internati.html?id=438515>].

<sup>64</sup> Norway, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Norwegian Government's High North Strategy* (December 1, 2006) [<http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/UD/Vedlegg/strategien.pdf>].

environment, the Armed Forces play an important role by virtue of their operational capabilities with the emphasis on maintaining a presence and upholding national sovereignty in the North. A robust Norwegian military presence represents a security policy threshold and ensures a capacity for good crisis management, so contributing importantly to the creation of stability and predictability in the region.<sup>65</sup>

Very recently the Norwegian Minister of Defence Grete Faremo has made it clear that while Norway does not see an immediate military threat coming from Russia, they remain concerned that their relationship could deteriorate in the future over northern issues. Speaking on January 4, 2010, she said:

At the same time, of course, we see – from our position in the orchestra stalls as it were – that Russia has resumed its military activities in areas adjacent to our borders. Even though we may not see this as a threat directed towards Norway, we have to follow developments closely. Norway's situation from a security policy standpoint is affected to a large degree by developments in Russia. That is why it is so important to strengthen cooperation with Russia in areas including defence. At the same time we must allow for the possibility that situations may arise in which we have conflicting interests.<sup>66</sup>

The Norwegians are now engaged in a very substantial rebuilding of their forces. In the most expensive single defence project ever undertaken by Norway, they are building a new class of *Aegis* capable frigates.<sup>67</sup> These five frigates – *Fridtjof Nansen* class – are being outfitted with an *Aegis* combat system.<sup>68</sup> This is an American-designed system that is highly expensive and provides naval vessels with an air-superiority capability. It is for use in high-intensity combat environments. Few other states have been willing to pay for the system; most are content to use less capable systems. The first was laid down in September 2003 and commissioned in 2005. The last of the class is expected to come into commission in 2010.

It is impossible to know for certain why Norwegian policy makers decided to purchase such an expensive system, but, it seems probable that they believed that Norway could face an environment in which such a capability would be needed. Given the geographic location of Norway, it would seem that Russia could be the only state that would warrant such concerns, yet it seems unlikely that Norway expects to be able to defend against Russia by itself with only five such vessels. The question that follows, then, is would Norway be forced to operate alone? If they were to find themselves in a future confrontation with Russia, the selection of an American system would seem to suggest that they are planning, or hoping, that that the United States and probably NATO would also be involved. This remains speculation, and all that can be concluded is that they have purchased a very expensive, very combat capable system. The question remains why?

They have also been building the *Svalbard*, which is a new armed, ice-capable Coast Guard

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<sup>65</sup> Norway, Norwegian Ministry of Defence, *Norwegian Defence 2008* (June 2008):7-8, [[http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/Dokumenter/Fakta2008\\_eng.pdf](http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/FD/Dokumenter/Fakta2008_eng.pdf)].

<sup>66</sup> Defence Processionals, "Capable and Ready for Action Norway's Armed Forces 2010 - speech by the Norwegian Defence Minister to Oslo Military Society," (January 4, 2010) [<http://www.defpro.com/news/details/12437/>].

<sup>67</sup> Wertheim, *Combat Fleets*; 515.

<sup>68</sup> Jeff Head, "Norway Nansen Class FFG," *Aegis and Aegis-like Vessels of the World* (May 28, 2007) [<http://www.jeffhead.com/aegisvesselsoftheworld/nansen.htm>].

Vessels. It carries a Bofor 57mm gun and is NBC (nuclear, biological, chemical) protected.<sup>69</sup> This ship entered service in 2002. The willingness of the Norwegians to invest in such an expensive purchase suggests that they believe they may be in a hostile aerospace-maritime environment. This ship's capabilities exceed those required simply for constabulary duties such as fisheries or environmental protection, and it is also designed to fight, as well as guard, Norwegian northern resources.

The Norwegians have also built a new class of very fast and capable guided missile patrol vessels. The six *Skjold* class ships are capable of speeds in excess of 55 knots (100 km/hour).<sup>70</sup> The first was built as a test ship in 1999 and it spent 2002-2003 on loan to the United States Navy. The five remaining vessels are all expected to be in service by 2010. These vessels are stealth built, and are equipped with both anti-ship and anti-air missiles as well as a 76 mm gun. While they are noted to operate in very shallow waters, with a draught of only .9 metres, it is unknown if they can operate in ice conditions. Nevertheless, these vessels demonstrate that the Norwegian's main focus is to continue rebuilding its military forces with modern combat capable forces.

Their choices in modernizing their air force also support this claim. They have signed a contract to buy forty-eight F-35 fighter aircraft from the US.<sup>71</sup> This is the most capable, modern (and expensive) aircraft on the market. It is also intended to be used in a high threat environment. There had been speculation that they were planning to buy a cheaper less capable fighter from Sweden; however, this was proven wrong as the Norwegians continue to buy highly combat capable American designed systems.

The Norwegians have also re-established large-scale military exercises in their northern region. Named Exercise Cold Response, these operations have been conducted in 2006, 2007 and 2009. These exercises began in 2006 and involved more than 10,000 Norwegian and NATO troops.<sup>72</sup> This was repeated in 2007 with 8,500 troops participating and in 2009 with 7,000 troops from more than fourteen nations participating.<sup>73</sup> These exercises are conducted in mid-March and are designed to provide Norwegian forces with the opportunity to practise operating on a large scale with their allies in winter conditions.

These expensive programs and exercises suggest that notwithstanding their statements of cooperation in the north, even if Norwegian officials do not see an immediate military threat in the north they are spending as if they are expecting one to develop. Both their recent purchases and exercises also demonstrate a desire to work closely with the United States. It is clear that they place a high premium on keeping the military relationship strong. They will be able to integrate themselves with US forces for operations in a high threat environment. Despite statements about how well they cooperate with their Russian neighbours, the Norwegians are concerned enough now that they are building a significant combat capable force for use in the north should the need arise.

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<sup>69</sup> Canadian American Strategic Review, *Background - Arctic Offshore Patrol Ship* (August 2009) [<http://www.casr.ca/bg-icebreaker-svalbard.htm>].

<sup>70</sup> Naval-Technology.com, "Skjold Class Missile Fast Patrol Boats, Norway," (2010) [<http://www.naval-technology.com/projects/skjold/>].

<sup>71</sup> Military.com, "Norway Picking F-35 over Gripen NG," (November 20, 2008) [<http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,179623,00.html>].

<sup>72</sup> Norway, Norwegian Armed Forces, "Winter Exercise" March 23, 2006 [<http://translate.google.ca/translate?hl=en&sl=no&tl=en&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mil.no%2Ffol%2Fstart%2Farticle.jhtml%3FarticleID%3D119294>].

<sup>73</sup> Norway, Norwegian Armed Forces, "Cold Response 09," (2009) [<http://www.mil.no/ovelser/cr09/english/start/fact/>].

## RUSSIA

Russia is perhaps the most difficult state to understand in terms of Arctic security. While in no way as secretive as it had been during the Cold War, it tends to be more closed than the other Arctic states. Consequently it is often difficult to fully understand Russian actions. This is further complicated by the reality that it sees itself as a recovering world power. The 1990s was a period of extreme economic collapse for Russia. Its military was drastically slashed at that time. Their economy began to recover in early 2002 due in large part to the increasing world price of oil and gas. This coincided with Boris Yeltsin's retirement and Vladimir Putin's rise. One of Putin's main actions was to consolidate the government's control of the energy sector,<sup>74</sup> and as a result, the Russian Government was able to begin rebuilding its military capabilities. Given its geopolitical location, as well as the location of much of its oil and gas, much of this recovery was Arctic centric. This was explicitly recognized by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev who proclaims the use of Arctic resources to be central to Russia's energy security and, in turn, to Russia's security in general.<sup>75</sup>

The Russian Government, as in the case of the other Arctic states, has also been developing new policies and issuing statements on their security concerns in the Arctic. On September 18, 2008, the Russian Government approved the *Principles of State Policy in the Arctic to 2020*.<sup>76</sup> As with all of the other Arctic states, this document calls for international cooperation in the Arctic. It warns of the dangers of climate change and the need to address the problems that this is creating across the entire Arctic.

The main focus of the document calls on the need to improve the socioeconomic conditions of Russian northerners. To this end, the document bears some similarities to the Canadian *Northern Strategy* and the Norwegian *Foreign Policy of the High North*. The Russian document makes it clear that Russia would prefer to develop its Arctic policies in a spirit of cooperation with its Arctic neighbours; however, similar to both the Canadian and the Norwegian documents, the Russian document also talks about the development of new military forces to be deployed to the Arctic as outlined in section 8b. It is difficult to determine what this means. The former head of the Russian Northern fleet, Vyacheslav Popov, has dismissed the idea of new forces being placed north,<sup>77</sup> yet this has been disputed by other Russian news reports that suggest that Russian officials plan to build new forces for the north.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, one senior Russian official stated that Russia was already training its forces for conflict in the Arctic. Lt. Gen. Vladimir Shamanov, who heads the Defense Ministry's combat training directorate stated in June 2008 that:

After several countries contested Russia's rights for the resource-rich continental shelf in the Arctic, we have immediately started the revision of our combat training programs for military units that may be deployed in the Arctic in case of a potential conflict.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> National Bureau of Asian Research, *NBR Analysis - Russian Energy Policy and Strategy* vol 19 no.2 ( July 2008) [<http://www.nbr.org/publications/analysis/pdf/vol19no2.pdf>].

<sup>75</sup> OilWeek, "Medvedev says Arctic resources crucial for Russia's economic future," (Sept 17, 2008) [<http://www.oilweek.com/news.asp?ID=18679>].

<sup>76</sup> Russia, Security Council of Russia, *Principles of State Policy in the Arctic to 2020*, (September 18, 2008) [<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/98.html>]. It should be noted that the Russians did not publicly release the document on their web-page until March 2009. It should also be noted that some accounts refer to the title of the Document as the *Foundations of State Policy in the Arctic to 2020*.

<sup>77</sup> Vyacheslav Popov: "Murmansk region - a springboard for the development of the Arctic," *Murmansk Gazette* (September 26, 2009) [<http://www.mvestnik.ru/shwpgn.asp?pid=200909262050>].

<sup>78</sup> RT, "Russia to Create Arctic Armed Forces," (March 28, 2009) [[http://rt.com/Top\\_News/2009-03-28/Russia\\_to\\_create\\_Arctic\\_Armed\\_forces.html?fullstory](http://rt.com/Top_News/2009-03-28/Russia_to_create_Arctic_Armed_forces.html?fullstory)].

<sup>79</sup> RIANovosti, "Russia prepares for Future Combat in the Arctic," (June 24, 2008) [<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20080624/111915879.html>].

He went on to state that the Russian northern fleet was also extending its reach into northern waters.

Thus it is hard to understand the direction in which the Russian Government is headed. Even when examining current Russian Arctic military construction and operations, the picture remains confusing. Part of the problem lies in the fact that due to Russia's geography, any effort that the Russians take to modernize their navy is perceived as being directed against the Arctic. Following the disintegration of the USSR, the Russian state was left with ports in the north (the Kola Peninsula) and those in the Far East (Vladivostok). The northern bases are more important for the Russians; therefore, it becomes difficult to separate the new naval construction that is Arctic capable but really intended for global operations from those forces that are designed specifically for Arctic purposes. In addition, it is difficult to verify information on the Russian forces.

Nevertheless, the core of Russian rebuilding is based on their 2007-2015 rearmament program,<sup>80</sup> which calls for a general rebuilding of Russian military forces. The Russian plan to rebuild their submarine force will have the most significant impact on the Arctic.<sup>81</sup> They are proposing to build five to eight new SSBNs (project 995)<sup>82</sup> and two new SSNs (project 885).<sup>83</sup> Currently they have completed one of the SSBNs, the *Yuri Dolgoruky*, that should soon be commissioned for service. The Russians are also building two others – *Aleksandr Nevskiy* and *Vladimir Monomakh*. A fourth – *Saint Nicholas* – will commence construction in December 2010.<sup>84</sup>

Progress on these submarines has been hindered by Russian problems with the missile that is to be carried by these submarines. Their first missile, the "Bark" R-39M, was a failure. The submarines then required a major redesign for the new missile; however the Bark's replacement, the *Bulva* SS-NX-30 missile, has also been failing many of its tests and now there are fears that it may also be a failure.<sup>85</sup> The Russian navy has been modernizing its fleet of older submarines, the Delta IVs.<sup>86</sup> The belief is that this will ensure that the Russian navy maintains its SSBNs even if the new class is further delayed.

The Russian Navy has also announced that it will be building up its surface capability. At the heart of this rebuilding are five to six carrier battle-groups.<sup>87</sup> Admiral Vladimir Visotskiy, commander of the Russian Navy, confirmed the navy is planning to deploy six aircraft carrier groups with its Northern and Pacific fleets by 2030. Very recently, the Russian Navy also announced that it will be re-commissioning two of its missile battle-cruisers that had been

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<sup>80</sup> MSNBC, "Russia plans Ambitious Military Buildup," (February 7 2007) [<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17028363/>].

<sup>81</sup> RIANovosti, "Russian Navy to get 8 new-generation submarines by 2015," (February 10, 2008) [<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20081002/117393965.html>].

<sup>82</sup> Vladimir Isachenkov, "Russia Plans new ICBMs, Nuclear Subs," *Washington Post* (February 7, 2007)[[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/07/AR2007020700350\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/07/AR2007020700350_pf.html)].

<sup>83</sup> RIANovosti, "Russian Navy to receive Severodvinsk nuclear submarine in 2010," (November 11, 2008) [<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20081119/118404317.html>].

<sup>84</sup> BarentsObserver.com, "New nuclear submarine to be named after Saint Nicholas," (August 26, 2009) [<http://www.barentsobserver.com/new-nuclear-submarine-to-be-named-after-saint-nicholas.4625023-58932.html>].

<sup>85</sup> Yury Zaitsev, "Bulava missile not ready for Mass Production," *RIA Novosti* (August 27, 2008) [<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20070827/75176580.html>].

<sup>86</sup> BarentsObserver.com, "Modernized nuclear subs to be delivered in January," (January 12, 2009) [<http://www.barentsobserver.com/modernized-nuclear-sub-to-be-delivered-in-january.4683986-58932.html>].

<sup>87</sup> Defence Update, "Russia Plans Building Six Aircraft Carrier Groups," (August 8, 2008) [[http://defense-update.com/newscast/0808/070803\\_russian\\_navy\\_expansion\\_plans.html](http://defense-update.com/newscast/0808/070803_russian_navy_expansion_plans.html)].

laid up at the end of the Cold War.<sup>88</sup> The Russians are the only Arctic state that has continued to build large icebreakers. The icebreaker, *50 Years of Victory*, was completed in 2006.<sup>89</sup> It is nuclear-powered and is the largest and most powerful icebreaker in the world. The Russian Air Force is also planning to update its strategic bomber fleet. A new TU strategic bomber to replace the Tu-95MC Bear, Tu-160 Blackjack and Tu-22M3 Backfire should be designed by 2017 with production beginning in 2020.<sup>90</sup>

While the Russians have announced substantial plans to redevelop forces that can be used in the Arctic; however, they are experiencing problems with many of these new systems and it remains uncertain as to when they will be available. At the same time, however, the Russians have already shown an increased willingness to use their existing forces in the north. Following the end of the Cold War, their forces had seldom ventured outside their bases, let alone into the challenging environment of the Arctic. In August 2007, the Russian air force resumed long-range bomber patrols,<sup>91</sup> in which they pass over the Arctic and proceed up to Canadian and American airspace.<sup>92</sup> While they have been careful to remain in international airspace, they have not provided advance notice of these flights to the northern NATO states. The head of Russian Strategic Aviation has recently suggested that the current deployments could be doubled.<sup>93</sup> It is not clear if the Russians intend to do this, nor is it not clear why the Russians would now engage in such actions. It is possible that they are only attempting to demonstrate that they have regained their global reach. Nevertheless, their geographic location still means that such demonstration will have an Arctic character. At the very least this is renewed Russian military activity in the region which has been sustained for over three years. The Russians obviously feel it is worthwhile to devote the resources to this activity.

In summer 2008, the Russians resumed surface naval patrols in Arctic waters.<sup>94</sup> On one occasion, two warships – the *Severomosk* and the *Marshal Ustinov* – sailed into the disputed waters between Norway and Russia on the rationale of “protecting” Russian fishermen in the region.<sup>95</sup> While they did not break any international laws in this deployment, they did send a clear political message to Norway that they intended to defend Russian interests in the

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<sup>88</sup> Jacob Kipp, “Russian Navy Recalibrates its Oceanic Ambitions,” *The Jamestown Foundation* (October 30, 2009)

[[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=35677&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=e48e898db8](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=35677&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=e48e898db8)].

<sup>89</sup> Bellona, “Russia to get new nuclear-powered icebreaker this year,” *Russian Nuclear Icebreakers Fleet*, (March 1, 2006 ) [[http://www.bellona.org/news/news\\_2006/Russia\\_to\\_get\\_new\\_nuclear-powered\\_icebreaker\\_this\\_year](http://www.bellona.org/news/news_2006/Russia_to_get_new_nuclear-powered_icebreaker_this_year)].

<sup>90</sup> RIAovosti “Russia to develop new Strategic bomber by 2017,” (December 12, 2009) [<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091223/157335991.html>].

<sup>91</sup> BBC News, “Russia Restarts Cold War Patrol” (August 17, 2007) [<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6950986.stm>].

<sup>92</sup> This is perhaps one of the most difficult developments to document. The Canadian Government has issued statements that these flights have substantially increased, but they will not release specific information on numbers or locations. It is expected that they have come close to, but have not violated, Canadian airspace. Part of the problem is that to release such information could provide information to the Russians on Canada’s surveillance ability. Of course the fact that Canadian officials are so concerned suggests that there are new (renewed) Canadian security concerns about the activity of Russia.

<sup>93</sup> RIANovosti, “Russia could double number of bombers on strategic patrols - general,” (December 22, 2009) [<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091222/157325197.html>].

<sup>94</sup> Associated Press, “Russian Warships to Again Patrol Arctic,” (July 14, 2008) [<http://www.military.com/news/article/russian-warships-to-again-patrol-arctic.html?ESRC=topstories.RSS>].

<sup>95</sup> Russia Today, “Navy sent to Norway to protect Russian Fishermen,” (July 14, 2008) [[http://russiatoday.com/Top\\_News/2008-07-14/Navy\\_sent\\_to\\_Norway\\_to\\_protect\\_Russian\\_fishermen\\_.html](http://russiatoday.com/Top_News/2008-07-14/Navy_sent_to_Norway_to_protect_Russian_fishermen_.html)].

region with a very powerful force.

In 2009 they sent two nuclear-missile carrying submarines (Delta -IVs) (SSBN) escorted by nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN) into Arctic waters, where they test-launched several missiles.<sup>96</sup> This demonstrated that they could re-enter ice-covered waters to fire their missiles. Of course the voyage of one submarine task force does not indicate a trend, but the fact that they announced this voyage to the world suggests that they want to signal that their submarine force has regained an ability to go into Arctic waters. What is interesting is that during the Cold War, their Bastion strategy required them to keep their SSBNs close to port as to better protect them from possible USN SSN attack. So the question arises as to why the Russians would now test fire from the high north rather than from close to Murmansk. This question remains unanswered. Finally, the Russians have also announced that they will land paratroopers at the North Pole in 2010.<sup>97</sup>

Since 2007, the Russians have been increasing their military activity in the Arctic, and they have also announced plans to substantially increase their forces based there. These actions have driven many in the West to accuse the Russians of increasing tensions in the region; but, Russian leaders have consistently taken the position that the use of military force would not be in anyone's interest, Russia's included.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore many members of the Russian media and academic community suggest that the Russian Government is only responding to the military actions of the Western Arctic states.<sup>99</sup> There is no question that as they increase their actions in the north, the other Arctic states will respond in kind.

It should be clear that the Russians have been according a growing importance to the Arctic region. They continually issue statements affirming their commitment to peaceful cooperation in the Arctic, which show up in the form of public statements by their leaders and in their primary documents. These same leaders are also very quick to condemn the actions of the other Arctic states as being aggressive and a threat to international peace and security in the region whenever they engage in any form of military related activity. It is clear, however, that the Russians have embarked on a much more assertive use of military force in the region by taking various action – the missile test launches near the pole, the sudden and substantial resumption of the long-range bomber patrols, and the voyages of their surface units into the disputed zones – which exceeds that of any of the other Arctic states. Furthermore, the Russians' proposed rearmament plans greatly exceed the plans of any other Arctic state. Thus, the Russians have excelled at portraying themselves as cooperative while taking increasingly assertive action. The question remains as to why? Are they merely reasserting themselves as a global power, or, does this new action point to an increasingly assertive Russia? This is not known.

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<sup>96</sup> RIANovosti, "Russia outwitted US Strategic Defences with Missile Test," (July 15, 2009) [[http://en.rian.ru/military\\_news/20090715/155530936.html](http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090715/155530936.html)].

<sup>97</sup> BarentsObserver.com, "Russia paratroopers head towards North Pole," (July 29 2009) [<http://www.barentsobserver.com/russia-paratroopers-head-towards-north-pole.4615739-116320.html>].

<sup>98</sup> RIANovosti "Russia against arms race in Arctic - foreign ministry," (July 21 2009) [<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090721/155575416.html>].

<sup>99</sup> Ruben Zarbalyan, "Russian subs become Canada's wonder of the year," *RT* (August 12 2009)[[http://rt.com/Top\\_News/2009-08-13/russian-subs-become-canadas.html?fullstory](http://rt.com/Top_News/2009-08-13/russian-subs-become-canadas.html?fullstory)]; *RT* "NATO interference into Arctic debate could be dangerous," (April 7, 2009) [[http://rt.com/Politics/2009-04-07/\\_NATO\\_interference\\_into\\_Arctic\\_debates\\_could\\_be\\_dangerous\\_.html](http://rt.com/Politics/2009-04-07/_NATO_interference_into_Arctic_debates_could_be_dangerous_.html)].



## UNITED STATES

Characterized as the “reluctant Arctic power,”<sup>100</sup> the United States has seldom regarded its Arctic region as central to its core interests. However, events such as the Japanese invasion of two of its Alaskan islands and the development of weapons technology, like nuclear-powered submarines, forced the Americans to think of Arctic security and they did so with vigour and determination. Any examination of American foreign and security policy will illustrate that the US does not normally think of itself as an Arctic state, or even pay any attention to the Arctic; however, as with all of the other Arctic states, the United States has begun to think of Arctic security.

Ironically, the United States has been the only Arctic state to consistently produce formal Arctic policies. To a certain degree these policies, released every 10 to 15 years, have normally produced little real impact on American policy in the Arctic region. They are released with little notice and quickly fade from view; therefore, it is telling that the most recently released American Arctic policy did gain international media attention.<sup>101</sup>

The Bush Administration released its Arctic Policy in January 2009,<sup>102</sup> that ranked Arctic security as the United States’ number one polar priority. The 1994 Presidential Arctic Directive had ranked the need to meet national security as the last of six priorities in the 1994 policy.<sup>103</sup>

The 2009 policy stated:

It is the policy of the United States to:

- 1) Meet national security and homeland security needs relevant to the Arctic region;
- 2) Protect the Arctic environment and conserve its biological resources;
- 3) Ensure that natural resource management and economic development in the region are environmentally sustainable;
- 4) Strengthen institutions for cooperation among the eight Arctic nations (the United States, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and Sweden);
- 5) Involve the Arctic’s indigenous communities in decisions that affect them; and
- 6) Enhance scientific monitoring and research into local, regional, and global environmental issues.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Rob Huebert, *The United States Arctic Policy: The Reluctant Arctic Power – The School of Public Policy: SPP Briefing Papers Focus on the United States*, vol 2, issue 2, (May 2009):1-26. [[http://www.policyschool.ucalgary.ca/files/policystudies/SPP%20Briefing%20-%20HUEBERT%20online\\_2.pdf](http://www.policyschool.ucalgary.ca/files/policystudies/SPP%20Briefing%20-%20HUEBERT%20online_2.pdf)].

<sup>101</sup> Gerd Braune, “Cold War in the Arctic?” *Spiegel Online* (March 23, 2009) [<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,614900-2,00.html>]; Tom Doggett, “Bush issues US policy on Arctic energy supplies,” *Reuters UK* (Jan 13, 2009) [<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKN12505915>]; and Mike Blanchfield and Randy Boswell, “Bush asserts US sea power over Arctic Straits,” (January 12, 2009) [<http://www.financialpost.com/m/story.html?id=1169665>].

<sup>102</sup> The White House, President George Bush, National Security Presidential Directive and Homeland Security Presidential Directive no 66/ Homeland Security Presidential Directive 25 (January 9, 2009) [<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2009/01/20090112-3.html>].

<sup>103</sup> US Department of State, “Fact Sheet: US Arctic Policy,” *Dispatch* December 26, 1994.

<sup>104</sup> Office of the President *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD 66 – Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD 25 – Subject: Arctic Region* (January 9, 2009):3 [[http://media.adn.com/smedia/2009/01/12/15/2008arctic.dir.rel.source.prod\\_affiliate.7.pdf](http://media.adn.com/smedia/2009/01/12/15/2008arctic.dir.rel.source.prod_affiliate.7.pdf)].

Thus, like all of the other Arctic states, the United States has created an Arctic policy that speaks to both cooperation and security; however, unlike any of the other Arctic states, the American policy clearly places the protection of national security as its' number one priority.

While previous American Arctic policies have quickly faded, there are signs that the US is now serious about consolidating its policy. Senior American military officials are increasingly discussing the American need to strengthen their Arctic security capabilities. This has included statements from Northern Command (NORTHCOM) chief Air Force Gen. Victor Renuart.<sup>105</sup> At the same time, the CIA has begun to monitor the Arctic:<sup>106</sup> in November 2009 the United States Navy issued an "Arctic Roadmap" outlining the direction that it wishes to develop for protecting US maritime Arctic security.<sup>107</sup> In short, senior American military leaders are now focussing their attention on Arctic security.

Unlike the other Arctic states, the United States maintained some of its most important military capabilities in the Arctic in the post-Cold War era. Throughout the 1990s its military presence in Alaska was never dramatically reduced. In the early 2000s one of three anti-missile interceptors was positioned at Fort Greely, Alaska. This location was selected because it provides good coverage for any missiles fired from North Korea.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the Arctic remains a strategically important location for the US.

During the 1990s and early 2000s the US Navy decommissioned a number of their older nuclear-powered submarines that could operate in the Arctic. Furthermore, when it announced that they would be building a new class of SSN (attack submarines) – the Virginia class – it was noted that they were not going to be ice-capable,<sup>109</sup> although the limitations in their ability to operate under the ice were never made clear.<sup>110</sup> Technically all nuclear-powered submarines can go under the ice, but not all can do so in what is considered a safe manner. To do so, a submarine needs at least three special attributes. It needs an upward looking sonar; diving planes that can either be retracted into the hull or rotated 90°; and an ice-hardened sail. It needs all three to punch through the ice. This is considered necessary for a host of reasons but includes responding to an emergency on board, such as a fire or crew illness, as well as to send and receive messages. Within western navies it is considered unsafe to operate a submarine under ice if it cannot make an emergency surface through ice.<sup>111</sup> Until 2009 only the Los Angeles<sup>112</sup> and the Sea Wolf<sup>113</sup> attack submarines were used to go to the Arctic, but in November 2009, the USN publicly announced that the USS *Texas* – which was the first Virginia class submarine to operate in

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<sup>105</sup> Marina Malenic, "U.S. Military Wants Fresh Look At Arctic Policy," *Defence Daily*, (December 18, 2008).

<sup>106</sup> Lee-Anne Goodman, "Arctic a growing security issue for the US," *theStar.com* (January 12, 2009) [<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/749795--arctic-a-growing-security-issue-for-u-s>].

<sup>107</sup> The document can be found at [[http://www.wired.com/images\\_blogs/dangerroom/2009/11/us-navy-arctic-roadmap-nov-2009.pdf](http://www.wired.com/images_blogs/dangerroom/2009/11/us-navy-arctic-roadmap-nov-2009.pdf)].

<sup>108</sup> US, Missile Defence Agency, "Missile Defence Agency Emplaces First Interceptor at Fort Greely," *For Your Information* (July 22, 2004) [<http://www.mda.mil/global/documents/pdf/04fyi0012.pdf>].

<sup>109</sup> Wertheim, *Combat Fleets*; 936.

<sup>110</sup> FAS - Federation of American Scientists, *SSN-774 Virginia-class NSSN New Attack Submarine Centurion* (November 10, 2009)

[[http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/uswpns/navy/submarines/ssn774\\_virginia.html](http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/uswpns/navy/submarines/ssn774_virginia.html)].

<sup>111</sup> Richard Compton-Hall, *Submarine versus Submarine: The Tactics and Technology of Underwater Confrontation* (Toronto: Collins, 1988):79-85.

<sup>112</sup> For the specifics of the ice capabilities of the LA class see Federation of American Scientists, "SSN-688 Los Angeles-Class," (January 18, 2010)

[[http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/uswpns/navy/submarines/ssn688\\_la.html](http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/uswpns/navy/submarines/ssn688_la.html)].

<sup>113</sup> For the specifics of the ice capabilities of the Seawolf class see Federation of American Scientists, "Seawolf-Class," (January 18, 2010)

[[http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/uswpns/navy/submarines/ssn21\\_seawolf.html](http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/uswpns/navy/submarines/ssn21_seawolf.html)].

Arctic waters – had reached the North Pole.<sup>114</sup> This makes it clear that all three classes of the US Navy's attack submarines are capable of reaching the high Arctic.

The Americans have also been updating their fighter aircraft based in Alaska. Throughout the post-Cold War era the Americans had deployed a relatively older version of the F-15C, based at the Elmendorf base near Anchorage, for use by the Alaska National Guard. This entire class of aircraft was grounded because of a crash in 2007. Canadian CF-18s were temporarily called in as replacements.<sup>115</sup> Within two weeks the F-15Cs were flying again, but a decision was soon made to replace them with the new F-22 raptors.<sup>116</sup> Although the Americans recently announced that they will be cutting back on the total number of F-22s due to cost by building only 183 new aircraft, they will be deploying 20%, or 36, of these aircraft to Alaska.<sup>117</sup> This suggests that the Americans place a high priority on the Arctic region.

The US Forces did experience a reduction in ice-breaking capabilities during the 1990s and 2000s. Officially the Americans now have three icebreakers; however, two of these vessels are aging and it is doubtful that one of them will ever be taken out of its current reserve status. That leaves the US Coast Guard with only two icebreakers, only one of which – the USCG *Healy* – is in good condition. Despite prolonged debate on building new icebreakers, no progress has been made since the addition of the *Healy* in 2000.<sup>118</sup>

Like the other Arctic states, the US has also been increasing the scale of its military exercises. Beginning in 1993, the US began an annual exercise named "Northern Edge."<sup>119</sup> These exercises include all elements of the American forces and are normally held in June of each year. They include anywhere between 8,000 and 14,000 troops. In 2009, the exercise numbered 9,000 troops and included the participation of the American aircraft carrier USS *John C. Stennis*.<sup>120</sup> The presence of one of their large carriers and such a large number of troops suggest that the Americans are serious about maintaining their Arctic capabilities; however, they share one weakness with Canada: both North American militaries conduct these exercises during the optimal time of the year. By conducting these operations in June (Canada does so in August), the American troops are not exposed to the real challenges of winter conditions. Given that the Americans have been conducting these exercises since 1993, it appears that they do not see a need to develop the means of being able to operate in the winter. Furthermore, the USN will not deploy any of its carriers into waters that contain ice, and thus their deployments during these exercises is strictly for summer operations in northern waters.

Overall, the United States is acting somewhat like the other Arctic states: it is releasing new

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<sup>114</sup> Honoluluadvertiser.com, "USS Texas pays icy visit to Arctic," (November 8, 2009) [<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/20091108/COLUMNISTS32/911080383/0/COLUMNISTS32/USS-Texas-pays-icy-visit-to-Arctic>].

<sup>115</sup> CBC "Canadian fighter jets temporarily fill in for US air defences," (November 27, 2007) [<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2007/11/27/fighter-jets.html>].

<sup>116</sup> KTUU.com "Elmendorf F-15 Fighters to be phased out," (May 20 2009) [<http://www.ktuu.com/Global/story.asp?S=10400469>].

<sup>117</sup> F-16.net, "F-22 Raptors begin operational in Alaska", *F-22 Raptor News* (August 8, 2007) [[http://www.f-16.net/news\\_article2468.html](http://www.f-16.net/news_article2468.html)].

<sup>118</sup> Rob Huebert, "United States Arctic Policy: The Reluctant Arctic Power," *The School of Public Policy Briefing Papers* Vol 2, issue 2, (May 2009) [<http://policyschool.ucalgary.ca/files/publicpolicy/SPPBriefing-HUEBERTonline.pdf>]

<sup>119</sup> United States, Elmendorf Air Force Base, "Northern Edge History," (October 30, 2007) [<http://www.elmendorf.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=10444>].

<sup>120</sup> United States, United States Pacific Command, "Joint Exercise Northern Edge Begins in Alaska," (June 15, 2009) [<http://us-pacific-command.blogspot.com/2009/06/joint-exercise-northern-edge-begins-in.html>].

documents on Arctic security; it is conducting northern exercises; and its leaders are beginning to discuss the need to build further capacities. The US differs from the others in that it is somewhat muted in its calls for cooperation. American documentation does call for greater international cooperation, but the Americans make it clear that this is not the highest priority for them. Instead, they are more concerned with protecting American interests and are quite willing to state this.

It is difficult to fully understand the American position on Arctic security because, as is the case with the Russians, some of the key elements of their position are classified. Until the USS *Texas* arrived in Arctic waters, most of the authoritative sources on US submarines stated that they were not capable of operating under ice. Two conclusions can be drawn with the arrival of the *Texas* in the Arctic. First, is that the US Navy carried out a misinformation campaign about the Virginia class abilities, and that they always had the ability to operate under the ice. The second possibility is that following the increase in Russian submarine activity in the last few years, the Americans added the necessary capabilities to the *Texas*, if not all of the Virginia class submarines, to operate in the Arctic. Were the Americans always planning to be in the Arctic and did not want anyone to know, or did they just spend substantial resources retrofitting their newest submarines to go into an area they had previously regarded as unimportant? This remains unknown. Either way, it is clear that the USN now puts a priority on operating its submarines in the Arctic.

## CONCLUSION

What conclusions can be made in regards to the following analysis? First, the main Arctic states are developing new policies that focus on both their foreign and their defence policies in the region. It is telling that the Arctic is now receiving this much attention. The processes that are transforming the Arctic are causing these states to take this region much more seriously than they have in the past. Publicly it is clear that these states want to be perceived as cooperating in the region. As they have all proclaimed that they intend to maintain the Arctic as a region of peaceful cooperation. The Ilulissat Declaration signifies this intention.

At the same time, the Arctic states' military abilities, whether developing or already developed, are growing substantially. Notwithstanding their proclamations of cooperation, the Arctic states are now rearming. Despite the claims made by most of the Arctic states that their military's role in the region is only for constabulary roles such as enforcement of environmental standards, fishery patrols or search and rescue capabilities, most of the Arctic states are now developing combat capable forces. Canada is the only Arctic state that will establish new Arctic forces designed primarily for constabulary functions. Denmark, Norway, Russia and the United States have either invested, or are about to invest, in weapons systems designed to fight wars.

How then is it possible to account for this new development? The resources that are being expended on these new forces exceed what a simply prudent "insurance policy" of military force should warrant. There is reason to believe that these programs represent a fear that force will be needed to protect their interests in the region and that they need to be prepared for this.

Yet it is hard to conceptualise what that conflict would look like. From a rational perspective, any conflict over resources would not provide the "winner" with meaningful gains. A conflict over resources or boundaries in the region would undoubtedly result in huge environmental damage to the region. Such a conflict would never be profitable to any side from a rational perspective. It is highly unlikely that any side would attempt to pursue such a policy as an aggressor. Here is the real problem: because each of the Arctic states is in the process of rearming "just in case," they are all contributing to the growing strategic value of the region.

As this value grows, each state will attach a greater value to their own national interests in the region. In this way, an arms race may be beginning. And once the weapons systems are in place, states can behave in strange ways. Denmark's escalation of the Hans Island issue is a prime example. The island has little value to either Canada or Denmark. The ongoing exchange of alcohol prior to 2002 seemed the best way that both sides could pretend that they cared, but really did not. Only when the Danes obtained a new military capability did the issue suddenly escalate. If this can happen for an insignificant issue between allies, what are the risks for issues that are of significant importance?

In order to avoid this potential outcome, the Arctic states need to act on their stated intention to cooperate. Discussions need to be held to ensure that these new capabilities do not ignite an arms race in the region or led to deterioration in the relationships that already exist. The Arctic Council – the main multilateral body for the Arctic – has a prohibition on discussing issues related to security. Now is the time to eliminate such restrictions. The Arctic states need to have an open and frank discussion. Measures for building confidence and cooperation must be established.

There is one final twist to all of this. Some of the states are developing their forces because they fear their neighbours. Norway's military build-up is directed against Russia. While they would clearly prefer to cooperate with Russia, recent statements by their leaders suggest that they do not believe this may always be possible. Thus, the Norwegian build-up is to prepare for a future that contains a much more aggressive Russia. This leads to a fundamental catch-22: will the build-up of Norwegian and others inevitably push Russia to become even more assertive? Yet it could be dangerous for the Norwegians to not build up their forces if the Russians are moving to a more aggressive position regardless of Norwegian action. Move too late and they place themselves at the mercy of an aggressive Russia; move too soon and they risk creating a threat where none exists. Ultimately the issue comes down to intent. What is the intent of the Russians and the Norwegians? This is something that this paper is not able to address, but what is clear is that subsequent studies must examine the intent of the Arctic states as they continue to develop their Arctic security capabilities.

Despite the positive rhetoric of the Harper Government, Canada is increasingly finding itself back in its traditional Arctic position. It has developed a good plan of action, but seems unable to implement it. The Harper Government has been in power for 3 ½ years and has been developing its plan from its first successful campaign. Yet public progress on its key capital programs has not been released. Notwithstanding the government's assurances that these projects are proceeding well, contracts have not been signed for the AOPS or for the new icebreaker. Similarly, while the *Canada First Strategy* promises new long-range patrol aircraft and fighters, signs of progress on either of these files are not forthcoming. Also, the proposed ice-strengthened JSS project has been on hold since the government rejected the bids it received.

What should Canada be doing? First, it needs to examine the developing Arctic strategic environment. A review of Canadian strategic needs in the Arctic was conducted in 2000.<sup>121</sup> Since then, no further studies assessing Canada's future strategic environment in the region have been undertaken. The government need to conduct a study to determine why the Arctic states are developing their combat capable forces. If an arms race is beginning to develop due to the NATO Arctic states' misinterpretation of Russian action and vice versa, then Canada should make every effort to break this cycle. This can be accomplished by launching a diplomatic initiative to improve relations. Canada could do this through strengthening the Arctic Council. As Canada will be resuming the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2013,

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<sup>121</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, "Arctic Capabilities Study, "1948-3-CC4C (DGSP) (June 2000) [[http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/uswpns/navy/submarines/ssn21\\_seawolf.html](http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/uswpns/navy/submarines/ssn21_seawolf.html)].

Canadian officials could devote their attention to this issue. However, if Canadian defence officials find that Norway, Denmark and the United States' concerns about Russian behaviour in the Arctic have validity, then Canadian officials need to ensure that the new Arctic capital programs are given more robust capabilities. This should be focussed primarily on emulating the Danish example of building vessels that can be given upgraded abilities should the need arise. At the same time Canada should also work more closely with its existing northern allies. Canada should consider participating in the American, Danish and Norwegian exercises while at the same time ensuring that these countries participate in the Canadian northern exercises.

## APPENDIX

### New Northern Defence Security Construction 1989-2010

Country	System	Type	Numbers	Status	Ice-Capable	Combat-Capable
Canada		Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessels	6 to 8	Project Definition stage	Yes First Year	No
	John Diefenbaker	Large Icebreaker	1	Project Definition stage	Yes	No
Denmark	Thetis	Frigate	4	Built 1988-1992	Yes First Year	Yes
	Knud Rasmussen	Offshore Patrol Vessel	2	Built 2005-2009	Yes First Year	Yes
	Flyvefisken	Offshore Patrol Vessel	10	Built 1985-1996	No	Yes
	Absalon	Command and Support Vessel	2	Built 2004-2005	Unlikely	Yes
	Ivar Huitfeldt	Frigate	3	Building 2008-2013	Unlikely	Yes
Norway	Fridtjof Nansen	Frigate	5	Building 2000-2010	No	Yes
	Svalbard	Offshore Patrol Vessel	1	Built 2000-2001	Yes	Limited
	Skjold	Fast Patrol Vessel	6	Built 1997-2009	Possible	Yes
	Harstad	Offshore Patrol Vessel	4	Built 2003-2005	Limited	No
Russia	Yuriy Dolgorukiy(aka Borei)	Nuclear Powered Ballistic Missile Submarine	4	Building 1996-?	Yes	Yes
	Severodvinsk (aka Yasen)	Nuclear Powered Attack Submarine	2 (5 more planned)	Building 1993-2015	Yes	Yes
	St. Petersburg (aka Lada)	Diesel-Electric Submarine	4	Building 1997-?	Yes (AIP)	Yes
	50 Years of Victory	Nuclear Powered Icebreaker	1	Built 1989-2007	Yes	No
US	Seawolf	Nuclear Powered Attack Submarine	3	Built 1989-2005	Yes	Yes
	Virginia	Nuclear Powered Attack Submarine	3 Built; 6 Building; 12 planned (?)	Building 2000-?	Yes	Yes

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