Introduction

Since the end of the 20th century the notion of security has evolved considerably. The very concept has been extended in several dimensions: from security of a state to security of a group or individual (downwards); and from security of a state to security of the whole international system (upwards). Moreover, the understanding of security has gained political, social, environmental and many other perspectives.[1] Redirected from "hard" military issues to "soft" civilian matters, security has become more human-oriented, which made its understanding more holistic and comprehensive.[2]

Indeed, the international security political agenda has become far more diverse. In 1970s the security concept had already included international economics, as it became clear that the U.S. economy was no longer the independent force that it had been before; on the contrary, it became powerfully affected by economic policies in dozens of other countries. The 1973 embargo of Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on oil export dramatically affected the hydrocarbons market prices and, after that, energy security became an issue of a day. By the 1990s climate change has shifted its status from optional discussions at conferences towards the higher agenda of international affairs.

Contemporary global developments like globalisation and the opening of borders suggest the need for another analogous broadening definition of national security that would include and give a greater priority to energy security issues and environmental threats as well as demographic issues, drugs, public health and many other problems.[3] Nowadays there are very few states in the world that are actually experiencing an imminent threat posed by another state's military forces. Therefore, the "hard" or military security agenda is not dominating over "soft" security challenges any longer. Maintaining internal order against the threat of insurgency and/or contributing to regional or global order and justice is more the issue of the day.[4]

The security challenges relevant to the Arctic Region are naturally linked to climate change

processes, in particular, global warming. In the High North most of the threats are of a non-military character. Furthermore, a great part of security challenges are on the agenda of international cooperation institutions. Except one, it is military security concerns that were emasculated from the table of negations at the very birth of the Arctic Council, a major international entity when it comes to Arctic affairs. The discussions on traditional security matters are very limited, only some of them take place bilaterally in less institutionalised frameworks. However, avoiding a dialogue does not necessarily produce a more stable strategic environment.[5]

Being a very sensitive topic, hard security is less discussed in academic circles compared to environmental risks, maritime transportation, fishery, hydrocarbons exploitation, legal regimes and international cooperation. It is the mass media that covers the topic, and very often it inadequately labels the political situation with such tags as “the scramble for territory and resources”, “remilitarisation of the Arctic” (see, for example, the Guardian 13 May 2009; *Rusnet* 31 March 2009; *Reuters UK* 13 May 2009; *Barents Observer* 29 March 2009, etc.).

The Arctic is an area in which military security, economic security, and environmental security overlap. In fact, it is an example of a postmodern arena of world politics, where short-term national interests clash with long-term global objectives. The question is whether the national interests can be reined in so that they will not jeopardise the overriding global objective, i.e. the maintenance of security and stability in the Arctic.[6]

The multi-level web of institutionalisation that deals with soft security matters is in place and is effectively managed so far, nevertheless, the Arctic Region is still experiencing geopolitical tensions emerging from conflicts of overlapping interests in sovereignty claims (e.g. Beaufort Sea, Lomonosov Ridge), differences in perceptions of scientific data (e.g. viability of fish stocks, the prognosis on natural resources reserves) and diametrical approaches to some legal regimes (e.g. The Fisheries Protection Zone around Svalbard, navigation via Northern

Sea Route (NSR) and Northwest Passage (NWP).

All the Arctic States refer to international law in their national strategies and policies for the development of their respective northern territories. From the legal perspective, bilateral negotiations and provisions of Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS) are meant to be the only and overarching international instruments designed to solve any possible conflict of national interests. However, in practice, the stability of the region, a commitment to the rule of law, as well as transparency and accountability are in the hands of national governments and their goodwill.

Nowadays the Arctic Region attracts a lot of international attention due to significant environmental changes as well as vigorous political developments. This article is devoted to security issues and the evolution of the definition of security from the geopolitical perspective of the Arctic. The author will discuss historical perspectives on the presence of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the current role and status of the Alliance in the Arctic Region. The author will also analyse the position of the Arctic States on NATO's involvement into the Circumpolar Region and the new Strategic Concept of the Alliance. This paper is not meant to be a final word on the subject, but a part of Master's thesis research. This article is meant as a springboard that can open up a very complex discussion.

The Arctic as a Geopolitical Pivot

The term "geopolitics" reflects the connection between political powers, national interests, strategic decision-making and geographical space in international relations. Geopolitics is closely related to the political school of "realism", which focuses on the concept that states must pursue their objective interests. The existential threats to their sovereignty are

considered of the highest importance.

In the beginning of the 20th century, long before the arms race between East and West started, two American geostrategists, Halford J. Mackinder and Nicholas J. Spykman, laid the groundwork for the most enduring perspective on the conflict of a century: land power versus sea power. The natural conflict of landlocked the Euroasian Heartland and Western maritime nations became a core geopolitical doctrine in Western strategy regarding the containment of the Soviet Union,[7] which later became a *raison d'être* for NATO.[8]

Traditionally, Northern America is defined as a sea power due to its open and free access to the high seas: to the Pacific Ocean in the West and the Atlantic Ocean in the East, not to mention navy forces. Although Soviet Union had, and now Russia has, four fleets, still it is a land-based and continental state, since all of its navies would have to overcome considerable geographical barriers to participate fully on the warfare theatre. The Black Sea Fleet needs to pass the straits of Bosporus, Dardanelles and later Gibraltar, while the Baltic Sea Fleet needs to pass the Gulf of Finland and the Danish Straits to enter the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. As for the Far East Fleet, it has a direct access to the Pacific Ocean, but its remoteness from Moscow's strategic centre should be perceived as a geographical obstacle. The only exception is the Northern Fleet, which is more mobile and faster in any response.

The Heartland theory by Mackinder says that the world is divided into "Inner", "Outer Crescents" and the "World-Island", with "Heartland" in its centre. Even though geographically this area has been shifting a little bit on the map, traditionally this theoretical concept includes Russian Siberia, which is rich in hydrocarbons and minerals. Mackinder postulates: "[He] who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; [he] who rules the World-Island controls the world."[9]

As for Spykman's "Rimland", this concept describes the maritime fringe of the World-Island as a key to control the whole Eurasian continent. Rimland as a geographical line has also been continuously moving and changing frontier. Today it is the Arctic that is often called the last frontier. To some extent, Mackinder's dictum was reformulated into the following:[10] "He who controls Heartland, controls Rimland; he who controls Rimland controls the world."

Even though none of geostrategists addressed the Arctic region directly, that was mostly due to the reason of its geographical remoteness and harsh climate conditions, the ice-covered Arctic Ocean being perceived as a natural containment wall. Nevertheless, Spykman was addressing the crucial role of the port of Murmansk as the eastern terminus for supplies from the western allies in World War II, as well as the establishment of the Soviet Northern Fleet in 1933 and the growing importance of sea routes linking ports along the Eurasian Arctic coast to the Soviet Union. Nowadays the Heartland and Rimland doctrines are being adapted to the diversification of state and non-state actors in international relations, the widening of securitization issues, as well as climate change.

Looking at the map of sea ice extent initiated by the US National Snow and Ice Data Centre, we can see how fast the Arctic Region with the thawing icecap is turning into a coastal Rimland, through with the relative strategic insignificance of an Outer Crescent. On the other hand, looking at the same map, it is possible to approach the Arctic more like an Inner Crescent region enclosed in the Heartland, through still far away because of its enduring ice and cold climate. Thus, the Arctic is "outer" in spirit though "inner" in geographical continuity.[11]

The following table of represents levels of awareness regarding main Arctic issues and the thawing icecap in the Arctic:

	Conflict	Mutual distrust	Mutual interest	Cooperation
Territorial jurisdiction	?			
Military activity		?		
Energy resources		?		
Shipping			?	
Fishing			?	
Environmental issues				?

Source: The New Geopolitics of the High North. (Claes, Osterund, Harsem 2010)

The area North of the Arctic Circle has an estimated 90 billion barrels of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil, 1,670 trillion cubic feet of technically recoverable natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of technically recoverable natural gas liquids in 25 geologically defined areas thought to have potential for petroleum. These resources account for about 22 percent of the undiscovered, technically recoverable resources in the world. The Arctic accounts for about 13 percent of the undiscovered oil, 30 percent of the undiscovered natural gas, and 20 percent of the undiscovered natural gas liquids in the world. About 84 percent of the estimated resources are expected to occur offshore. More than 70 percent of the undiscovered natural gas is estimated to occur in three provinces: the West Siberian Basin, the East Barents Basins, and Arctic Alaska.[12] Technically recoverable resources are those resources that can be extracted using currently available technology and industry practices. In addition to that, there should count in significant deposits of gold, lead, copper, silver, zinc, tin, iron and diamonds that are experiencing strong market demand and can be important for the future developments in the High North.[13] Apart from hydrocarbons and mineral recourses, there is also an opportunity to utilise alternative wind and river flow energy sources. Not to mention Arctic sea waters rich in market-valuable fish stocks and sea fruits. Moreover, trans-Arctic navigation can contribute a lot to the economy of a state, which is able to change the world trade routes. To sum up, Heartland together with the attached icy sea of

the Arctic are perceived as “an immense reservoir of resources” of all kinds. Today the world’s leading economies are looking at the High North, its opportunities and challenges.

The role of NATO in historic perspective

If we look at the Arctic map, we will see 8 Arctic Council member-states 5 of which are founding members of the Alliance: USA, Canada, Denmark (Greenland and the Faroes), Iceland and Norway signed the North Atlantic Treaty, also known as the Washington Treaty, which brought NATO, the political but mostly military alliance, into existence in 1949. The bedrock of the organisation and the establishing treaty is Article 5, confirming mutual solidarity and protection:

“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.”[14]

NATO as such has been present in the Arctic since its establishment and now it is the only intergovernmental organisation and security community in the High North.[15] NATO remains to be a forum where Europe and North America organise their collective defence, and it remains one of the key actors through which they do crisis management and cooperative security. It means that hard military security will still retain its importance in the Circumpolar North in foreseeable future. The question is how will the Alliance define and respond to new

security challenges?

Historically, being a border region, the Arctic has experienced a heavy military presence as a measure to endorse and control the state's sovereignty and national borders. Being one of the warfare theatres in World War II, the Arctic demonstrated its strategic importance having lease convoys transported from the USA *via* Icelandic and Norwegian coastlines to Murmansk and Archangelsk in Russia. After World War II, political system competition gave *carte blanche* to a bipolar model of world politics. NATO and then-Soviet Union became immediate neighbours sharing a territorial border with Norway in the West and a marine border with Alaska in the East. The shortest air route between the USA and the USSR was, and still would be, across the Arctic Ocean. Thick polar pack ice was and is a perfect screen for submerged submarines. The ambient noise of the pack and marginal ice was and is severely limiting for any acoustic tracking. Naval vessels as a major counter-measure to submarines efforts were and are unable to operate and patrol the icy Arctic waters. These environmental conditions shaped and are still shaping the strategic importance of the region from a military security perspective. These geographical opportunities were vigorously exploited by the military. During the Cold War the Arctic had been characterised by heavy militarisation and development in offensive/defensive systems. The geopolitical competition was based on possibility of nuclear exchange over the Arctic Ocean, ad in practice it involved an arms race of intercontinental ballistic missiles and long-range bombers[16] deployed over the Arctic airspace, while nuclear submarines (SSBNs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) plied up in North Atlantic and Arctic waters.[17]

The Early Warning System installed on the territory of NATO parties in the 1950s could serve as another example. It included 26 radar stations comprising the Aleutians (Adak), Point Lay in Alaska, Cape Dyer on Baffin Island in Canada, plus a chain formed by the Faroe Islands, Greenland (Thule, Søndre Strømfjord, Kulusuk, Qaqqatoqaq, Andissoq and two more on the Ice cap), Iceland, as well as Rockville in England, Fylingdales and Vardø in Norway. In 1958 the North American Aerospace Defence Agreement (NORAD) was signed by the USA and Canada in order to monitor the airspace and aerospace above North America, including the

Arctic, to provide warning and possible response to threatening nuclear activities. Later in the 1980s the DEW line was upgraded to the North Warning System. The DEW line in Greenland was decommissioned, whilst Søndre Strømfjord station was evacuated, and then replaced in the late 1980s, as well as Rockville in the early 1990s.[18]

Thus, traditional defence and territorial security were on the highest priority during the Cold War period. A game of cat-and-mouse between NATO and the Soviet Union unfolded. The Arctic States that were also NATO members participated in a web of numerous national, bilateral and multilateral defence agreements, and not always strictly within the NATO milieu only. For example, the Thule airbase project was based on a secret agreement between the USA and Denmark in 1953.

But there was also another model of behaviour among Arctic NATO member-states: I would like to focus upon the Norwegian perspective on relations with the Soviet Union. Norway was the only country that had an actual territorial border with the Soviets and due to its geographical proximity, the northern territories of Norway became a concentration area of electronic surveillance and intelligence directed towards the Soviets strait soon after Norway joined NATO. Nevertheless, the tensions between the two states, such as maritime disputes in the Barents Sea and the status of waters around the Svalbard/Spitsbergen archipelago, were kept at a low level. The key-reason was the remoteness of the Arctic from the major political frontline of the Eastern opposition to the West. The USA/NATO strongly believed in the idea that the concrete military threat was located in central Europe, presumably in the form of a conventional attack from the East. Norway was considered as vulnerable and a "forgotten flank of NATO" dispensable to Soviet exposure.[19]

The way the Norwegians perceived the threat from the Soviets in the North was with no doubt more sensitive and more serious that the attitude of the Alliance in general, especially during the outbreak of Korean and Afghani wars in the early 1950s and late 1970s

respectively. The invasion in Afghanistan particularly sharpened the Norwegian perception of threat, because Afghanistan and Norway were both neighbour countries of the Soviet Union. By joining and contributing to NATO, Norway had sought security in the common lap of the allies, and crucially, under the American nuclear umbrella. Yet it is interesting that at the same time Norway introduced the following restrictions to its membership in the Alliance:

I. 1.Refusal to station allied forces on the Norwegian territory, or the so-called “base policy”;
II. 2.Refusal to store nuclear warheads or building missile bases on its soil;
III. 3.Ban on foreign vessels calling at Norwegian ports with nuclear armaments onboard;
IV. 4.Establishing a “no-go” area of 250 km from the Soviet border for NATO forces, for example, aircrafts or warships.

The explanation of such a line was a clear understanding among Norwegian authorities that the co-operation and membership in NATO could be interpreted as provocative by then existing Soviet Union. Moreover, all NATO installations, airports and other intelligence and surveillance infrastructures located on the Norwegian territory could become a potential target for the Soviet nuclear and conventional arms. That is why Norway limited its integration to the Alliance by self-imposed restraints applied during peacetime “as long as Norway is not attacked or threatened with the aggression.”[20]

NATO’s strategic concepts during the Cold War

The emergence of nuclear-armed long-distance strategic missiles as the main Cold War weapon made offensive military installations located geographically close to the adversary largely redundant. Although NATO has been in the Arctic since its establishment, it took

decades for the Alliance to enter the region from this strategic point of view.

First of all the, geographical perception of where the North was, got relocated to higher latitudes only around the end of the 1960s. The “northern flank” was associated with the southern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula, the Baltic Sea and its straits. The area was considered to be a potential attack corridor in a Central European Front, i.e. the main potential theatre of the Cold War for the central organisation of NATO. At the same time, Scandinavia was a buffer between transatlantic Lanes of Communication (SLOCs) and the Soviet bases on the Kola Peninsula. Moreover, it served as a barrier for the Soviets to access temperate waters, whilst the bases located there could be used most effectively for counter-offensive operations due to favourable geographical conditions for detection and early warning installations. That is why the headquarters of the northern flank had already been placed in Oslo in 1951.

Second of all, the shift in perception of strategic posture of the region took place also in the late 1960s. Being just a tactical flank of the Central Front the High North turned into a possible independent theatre of war. This evolution in approach followed several specific political events in international relations that boosted or, on the contrary, hampered the strategic reorientation.

From the beginning, one of NATO’s pillars was to have large conventional forces easily available along its central borders. However, European member-states, economically exhausted after World War II, could not afford their maintenance. Besides, nuclear weapons of mass destruction had been actively developing at that time, both in numbers and scale. Thus, it became a cheaper and more effective alternative to balance the rising military numerical and material capacity of the Soviet Union, which leaped forward also in rocket technology. Therefore, NATO officially adopted its strategy of Massive Retaliation by the end of 1956, as of the Military Committee document MC 14/2.[21]

However, soon after the Cuban missile crisis, controversies detonated over the very rationality of the nuclear policy as a security strategy. Being on the verge of the nuclear exchange, US president John F. Kennedy introduced a new doctrine of Flexible Response, which was a new strategy for both the United States and NATO. It primarily made a stake on limited conventional war; it also suggested a nuclear exchange on condition that conventional forces should fail. However, Kennedy's assassination in 1963 hampered discussions on implementing Flexible Response in the Alliance's strategy until late 1967.

There was another attempt to shift a solid NATO's strategy of Massive Retaliation by the Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT) which became increasingly aware of the Soviet naval build-up in the Barents Sea after World War II, while the general circles of NATO had hardly had these developments on the agenda in the early 1960s. In 1965, SACLANT issued two maritime studies called "Contingency Study for Northern Norway" and the "NATO Maritime Strategy". It highlighted how the Soviets were focusing on the use of the open seas as a theatre of war as the submarine fleet became capable of a strategic strike while remaining undetected. To be able to counter-balance this power, the studies suggested two new concepts, that is, standing naval forces and maritime contingency forces, which would be more a flexible counter-power relying on nuclear attack as a very last measure. The three stages of response were then developed. The "Direct Defence" was about seeking out the enemy to defeat him at a conventional level. Had it failed, "Deliberate Escalation" would start. At this level, tactical nuclear weapons were to be used to force the attacker to cease the conflict and withdraw from NATO territory. Finally, the last resort was to go to a "General Nuclear Response".[22]

These suggestions were shelved, though, until the Brosio Study was published in 1969. The document was named after NATO's Secretary-General, who was strongly supporting SACLANT's views and initiatives. The main focuses of the research were: firstly, the relative strength of the maritime forces of the NATO members and the Warsaw Pact; secondly, an

analysis of their respective maritime strategic doctrines; thirdly and most importantly, it included only one main scenario of military clash, which was of naval powers in and around the Norwegian Sea. At the same time, the relations between the two blocks turned towards the policy of *détente*, relaxation, as the US withdrew a considerable part of their contingents in Europe in order to reach positive agreements with Soviet Union with regards to Vietnam. Thus, an alternative area of power accumulation seemed needed.

As a result, the high Arctic waters became of strategic importance and at the heart of the Alliance's attention. The region was no longer viewed as just a subordinate tactical flank of the European Central Front, but an independent theatre of war. By the late 1960s, NATO had dramatically altered its perceptions on the strategic importance of the High North and the Brosio Study remained remarkably topical in the NATO's strategy till the end of the Cold War

After the Cold War

The collapse of the Soviet Union and, accordingly, the end of the Cold War changed significantly the political atmosphere in the Arctic Region. The Circumpolar North experienced a demilitarisation process due to both political and economic reasons, but nowadays NATO's presence is being shown through once more, for example, the Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS), including fighters on Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) and regular AWAC airborne early-warning fights and military exercises.[23] It could be argued that, being the only intergovernmental organisation and security community up in the North, NATO has some qualifications to undertake the dialogue on military security matter. The question is whether the Alliance is capable to implement them without endangering stability and prosperity in the Arctic Region with regard to relations with Russia, which is very sensitive to any NATO activity.

Relations between NATO countries experienced a crucial transformation over recent decades.

In 1991 formal cooperation between Russia and NATO started within the framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In 1994 Russia joined the Partnership for Peace programme. In 1997 NATO-Russia relations were institutionalised in a Permanent Joint Council forum, which evolved in the Russia–NATO council created in 2002 for handling security issues and joint projects.[24] A number of issues identified after 2002 by the NATO–Russia Council as suitable to be addressed jointly are particularly relevant to the Arctic. These include the struggle against terrorism, counter-narcotics, airspace management, military-to-military cooperation, submarine-crew search and rescue, crisis management, logistics and civil emergencies.

At the same time, there were also political shifts in other dimensions of the High North: Finland initiated its Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, Norway introduced the idea of the Barents Region Cooperation in 1993, and with the Canadian initiative the Arctic Council was established in order "to promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States."

But the most important thing was that most military installations and units were either reduced or dismantled in the region. Nevertheless, shaping the Arctic coastline as an arena to play "nuclear muscles" during the Cold War has brought long-lasting effects. NATO–Russian relations are still characterised as strained due to many factors originated outside of the Arctic context: possible enlargement of the Alliance, the Georgian crises, the Syrian question, etc. Nowadays Arctic coastal states are continuing maintenance of military facilities, conventional and nuclear, albeit reduced in numbers, such as: navies, submarines, air forces, radar system, new weapon testing, military applications, training and exercises, intelligence strategies making the world move as though by inertia.[25] It seems likely that NATO will remain engaged in the Arctic for a very long time. [26]

However, the major geo-strategic significance context changed too. There is no more the risk of a larger interstate conflict between two military blocks that was in place during the Cold War. Nowadays, the Arctic is politically stable, surrounded by states with robust governmental systems and there are relatively harmonious relations between these states.[27]

In the 21st century, the strategic importance of the region is defined by its untapped economic potential: offshore and onshore hydrocarbons exploitation and to be more specific, by energy security.

So far the major political framework on NATO's role in the Arctic Region is very modest and limited to conferences and meetings. For example, the Chairman's conclusions at the NATO Conference on "Security Prospects in the High North", held at Reykjavik, Iceland, in January 2009 and the seminar of **NATO's Parliamentary Assembly** entitled "Changes in the High North: Implications for NATO and Beyond", held in Tromsø, Norway, in June 2011. But NATO's concern about regional security in the Arctic is growing.

The following issues were addressed during both roundtables: the increased attention paid to Arctic development strategies; emerging opportunities and challenges of northern economies; navigation, energy and mineral explorations; as well as claims on continental shelf and existing institutional and legal framework. The question of energy security is particularly an important one for the alliance, a point agreed in 2008 during the NATO summit at Bucharest. With increasing Arctic oil and gas production North of Norway and Russia, and continued exploration above Canada and the United States, the Arctic is an obvious location to exercise that mandate.[28]

NATO's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer acknowledged in his 2009 speech in Iceland that increasing accessibility will lead to more human activity in the region, with positive and negative consequences, and highlighted "what is very clear is that the High North is going to require even more of the Alliance's attention in the coming years."[29] Alliance spokesman James Appathurai labelled the Arctic "a region of enduring strategic interest to NATO and allied security."[30] By 2010 the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic

Defence and Security Cooperation had issued a report calling for “proactive engagement” and cited increasing desire from within the alliance’s Arctic members (particularly Norway, Denmark and Iceland) for increased attention to the region**.**

The international role of the Circumpolar North is shifting, as well as security matters in the region. Security in the Arctic is not about state-centric traditional security only. Driven by climate change, it is beyond a fear-based, military-as-solution conception.[31] It involves many actors and “soft” issues. Unsurprisingly, the Alliance’s perspective on security is also gradually changing. Since 2001, NATO has reframed its entire concept of security. The Alliance’s operational agenda has shifted towards dealing with non-traditional, transnational threats such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation and weak states.[32] At the Lisbon Summit held in November 2010, the 6th Strategic Concept in NATO’s sixty-year-long history was adopted**.** The official document outlines NATO’s enduring purpose and nature and its security tasks. It also identifies the central features of the new security environment, therefore acknowledging the comprehensive and extensive approach towards contemporary understanding of security: “Any security issue of interest to any Ally can be brought to the NATO table, to share information, exchange views and, where appropriate, forge common approaches”,[33] such as, *inter alia*, “the key environmental and resource constraints, including health risks, climate change, water scarcity and increasing energy needs will further shape the future security environment in areas of concern to NATO and have the potential to significantly affect NATO planning and operations.”[34]

The Strategic Concept also specifies the core tasks of the Alliance:

1.The collective defence principle establishes obligation of assistance among member states in case of attack according to the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

2.The crisis management principle refers to the conflict situations that have the potential to affect Alliance's security. It includes political, civil and military instruments to manage and prevent crises from escalation; to stop ongoing conflicts where they affect Alliance security; and to restore and maintain stability after a conflict.

3.The collective security principle means engagement in international security affairs, through partnership with countries and international organisations; contribution to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament issues; and promoting membership in the organisation.[35]

In sum, its Strategic Concept equips the Alliance for security challenges and guides its future political and military development. A new Strategic Concept is reflecting an evolving security environment and an evolving Alliance. But is NATO capable indeed to adequately respond to emerging security issues? Climate change, energy scarcity, global economic and financial governance, the role of the emerging powers, are these threats, entailing use of military force or rather political action? Such matters as energy security, cyber-security, or even terrorism, are not best tackled by a holistic foreign and security policy, including police and justice dimensions, within which the military instrument is a very last resort? Once one starts to add other types of contingencies than an armed attack, such as energy or cyber-security, a grey zone quickly emerges, making it more difficult to decide what constitutes sufficient ground to invoke Article 5.[36]

So far, there is no consensus within the Alliance that NATO has any role to play in the Arctic. While Norway is fully supportive of the Alliance's commitment, Canada strongly opposes any NATO involvement on sovereignty grounds and awareness of the likely negative reactions from the Russian side.

Norway. As an initiator of the Barents cooperation, on the one hand, and an active NATO member on the other, Norway's policy is aimed at equilibrium between the value of military concerns and civilian ones, including human-oriented collaboration with bordering countries, such as Russia. Its High North strategy of 2007 refers only to cooperation with "allies" and to the need to keep up cooperative "allied operations" in the North rather than mentioning NATO as an organization.[37] Nevertheless, the Norwegian goverment is pushing for the formilised role of the Alliance in the High North. It should be noted that Norway was the first country that moved its military headquarters to the Arctic region: from Stavanger up above the Polar Circle in Bodø.

Denmark's bid in the Arctic is Greenland. The involvement of Denmark into NATO affairs was established in 1951 by signing the Defence Agreement with the US. The main military installation in Greenland is the Thule airbase, founded by another treaty signed secretly by the Danish and American governments in 1953. The base is still functioning, while the missile defence station of the BMEWS radar is being now upgraded to scan the relevant area of potential threat, though the Danish strategy mentions NATO only in connection with the status of the Thule base.[38]

Iceland's contribution to the Alliance is represented by radar systems that are part of NATO's Alliance-wide Integrated Air Defence System, comprising sensors, command and control facilities, and NATO Air Surveillance operations from Iceland's territory. However, another example should be mentioned: in 2006 the U.S Maritime Patrol Aircraft, rescue helicopters and fighter aircraft operating in the far North Atlantic withdrew from the base in Keflavik after 55 years of stationing there. After that Iceland has asked NATO for more frequent exercises and military visits[39] as now its membership in the Alliance is seen as a cornerstone of national security.[40]

Canada appears to have one of the most individualistic visions of its own role in the Polar

region. This is due possibly to unresolved conflicts in the Beaufort region with the USA and the Lincoln Sea with Denmark over the Hans Island, as well as the legal regime of the NWP. Though the Canadian forces regularly practise together with American and Danish forces in the Arctic and have staged several large joint exercises, the Canadian diplomats are eager to emphasise that these exercises are conducted outside of NATO's framework and are bilateral.

The **US** as well as other Arctic States has its own document regarding the Arctic, but this region is relatively low in the general political agenda. Talking about military aspects in 2009, the Navy Arctic Roadmap was issued to cover aims and goals for the Navy forces in the High North until 2014. The primary policy guidance statements influencing this roadmap are the National Arctic Policy as defined in National Security Presidential Directive 66/Homeland Security Presidential Directive 25 (NSPD 66/HSPD 25) and the Cooperative Strategy for XXI Century Sea power (CS21).[41] Several administrations have reaffirmed that NATO is and should remain a foundational pillar of the Arctic's security architecture.[42]

Although Arctic nations follow some kind of an individualistic approach when building their national strategies, still they recognise the Alliance as a backbone of its security and defence. Sovereignty and national security are among the strategic priorities, or priority areas of the Unites States, Canada, and Denmark,[43] NATO is appreciated as an instrument to sustain the regional stability that serves the countries' political and even economic interests in the Arctic.

Nuclear Containment in the Arctic.

When the Cold War was over, the Iron Curtain fell down together with the Berlin Wall. Both

were borders dividing politically and ideologically the world into a capitalist West and a communist East. That division vanished and “the end of History” was claimed to have come about. The Arctic ice cap that used to be a geographical factor of containment used to separate two nuclear superpowers. Now this natural border is rapidly melting away, opening an area that is rich in resources and opportunities. None of the states wears a status of a superpower anymore; nevertheless, nuclear potential remains the same and is still there. The new Strategic Concept of NATO says:“as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance.”[44] So, probably as Nye suggests, perhaps the end of the Cold War has heralded not so much the “end of history” as the “return to history”.[45]

The process of restraining from nuclear armaments started with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty signed in 1968/1970 and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty of 1996/2007. But the world entered the 21st century still nuclear-armed, although the numerical amount of these weapons in general has decreased. However, it should be said that nowadays the military industrial sector is aimed not at the quantity but at the quality of production.

	Deployed warheads	Other warheads	Total
USA	2 150	6 350	8 500
Russia	2 427	8 570	11 000

World Nuclear forces

Source: All estimates are approximate and are as for January 2011 (SIPRI 2011)

Today the Russian Northern Fleet possesses 22 nuclear-powered submarines, 7 of which carry ballistic missile nuclear warheads, and 1 aircraft carrier. The marine aviation has around 100 aircrafts, including 30 missile carrying bombers. The USA have 25 multipurpose nuclear-powered submarines and 6 strategic submarines that make together around 580 nuclear warheads, plus 4 aircraft carriers with 360 aircrafts. The allied forces of the UK and France can add 4 SSBMs each (350-450 warheads) to the marine strategic forces and 15 nuclear-powered submarines and 6 aircraft-carriers with 200 aircrafts.[46]

The main factor that prevents the states to use their nuclear weapons is a concept of mutual nuclear containment and strategic stability inherited from the Cold War era. The concept of strategic stability means a balance of military forces. A first nuclear attack from any side would be tactically impossible, because it could not prevent the adequate response from the other side. The paradox of mutual nuclear containment is that this security concept does not respond to any contemporary problems such as international terrorism or trans-border organised crime. It is absolutely ineffective in halting the production and trade of other weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear containment does not promote the military cooperation either, for example in ballistic missile defence.

Still, the Senate of the US, in its Resolution Of Advice And Consent To Ratification of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in 2010, mentioned the following: "policies based on mutual assured destruction or intentional vulnerability can be contrary to the safety and security of both countries, and the United States and the Russian Federation share a common interest in moving cooperatively as soon as possible away from a strategic relationship based on mutual assured destruction."[47]

Irrespective to what is mentioned above, the concept of mutual nuclear containment is still shaping defensive capacity and weapon-based security. And new military installations or facilities hosted by any region in the Northern Hemisphere can be a threat to nuclear

containment. This issue has a vital importance for the High North due to the geographical proximity of the states. Critical situations in the Arctic might directly influence the military relations between Russia and NATO on a global scale. For example, one of the latest events in international politics was the Russian counter-measures announced in November 2011 by the Russian president concerning the European missile defence shield being shaped in Europe by NATO. For the Russians, establishing ABM facilities close to its borders constitutes a threat to the current military strategic balance.

The Arctic community is aware of new nuclear arm race. Environmental degradation on Novaya Zemlya because of nuclear testing, or the crash of a nuclear bomb carrier in the Thule are not the only examples. Nowadays, discussions on security matters take place bilaterally in less institutionalised milieus. But institutionalisation of such dialogues and the opening up of discussions regarding possible routes to collective security and non-proliferation[48] could have far more positive effects on regional security. There is a clear correlation between such a high degree of institutionalisation and a low or declining level of violence both within and between states.[49] Simply avoiding talking about difficult developments in power politics might not be the best approach to the Arctic peace project. Talking about military security does not in itself produce negative outcomes. While all NATO member-states have been actively developing their national strategies for the Arctic development, for the moment the Alliance itself performed in relatively modest way. However, as security organisation it follows the major trend of evolution of the security *per se* by expanding its programme agenda with non-military threats.

Nevertheless, the idea to involve NATO in the Arctic agenda as a forum for discussion has been introduced already in the aforementioned Reykjavik seminar. It could include itself several additional dimensions of dialogue: with Sweden and Finland, for instance, with Russia, and probably with China.[50] Secondly, it could become a platform to address civil emergencies and large-scale search and rescue operations,[51] ecological relief and maritime security issues conjointly with Russia in the NRC framework. Thirdly, NATO could exercise a *détente* policy, or relaxation of tensions with an adversary in the Arctic, such as

the renewal of arms control or disarmament.[52]

The Arctic Region has a history of great military strain between two political alliances, i.e. NATO and the Warsaw Pact, but it should be said that today the Arctic is transforming into a territory of dialogue. While scientists and especially environmentalists are investigating primarily negative consequences of climate change, politicians issue countries' strategies to adjust to the new reality and benefit from global-warming impacts. The speech by Danish Minister of Defence Søren Gade at the 2009 NATO seminar on "Security Prospects in the High North" included the following motto: "From yesterday's problems to tomorrow's opportunities**.**"[53]

On the other hand, it is becoming clear that in terms of military security both global warming and the thawing icecap make the rear of all Arctic states insecure. Not only because the geographical ice-wall is diminishing, but also because new resources and economic facilities are opening up and attracting global stakeholders. The key to the military strategic balance of mutual nuclear containment is turning out to be out of date. It cannot respond adequately and effectively to the security challenges of the 21st century. It cannot prevent such problems as international terrorism or proliferation of weapons of mass distraction. On the contrary, very often it appears to be a stimulating factor of these challenges. What is more, mutual nuclear containment does not promote a cooperative spirit among the Arctic countries as much as the environment, civilian or topics related to economic development would sometimes do.

The NATO parties and Russia can hardly become full military partners in the nearest future, perhaps unless they redirect their potential against extremist violence, including terrorist activities. Furthermore, nuclear weapons play no useful role in the challenges of the rapidly evolving Arctic itself.

The current geopolitical threat level is nebulous and low. But remilitarisation of the High North must be prevented. For example, “High North – low tension” is the dictum that the Norwegian Arctic police promotes.[54] There is enough room for cooperation on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and more comprehensive and holistic approaches to security. Rather than preparing for battle, the Arctic states should commit themselves towards increasing diplomatic resources, harmonising regulations, multilateral efforts to deal with nuclear waste, scientific cooperation, economic integration and search and rescue.

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